

Charles Garabedian

Works from 1966 - 1976

22 March - 12 May 2012

Opening reception for the artist:
Thursday, 22 March, 5-8 pm



Charles Garabedian, *Daytime TV*, 1966
Flo-paque, ceramic on board, 41-3/8 x 61-3/8 in. (105.1 x 156 cm)

Venice, CA -- L.A. Louver is pleased to present an exhibition of paintings and sculptures by Charles Garabedian. Created between 1966 and 1976, the works exemplify the rich diversity of form, image making, and materials that hallmark this early stage of Garabedian's career.

Garabedian's work is wonderfully perverse, since he is completely uninterested in abiding by the rules of good taste, draftsmanship, appropriate subject matter, formal composition, or stylistic consistency.

--- Marcia Tucker

Garabedian's work is frequently figurative, often narrative (although narratives are elusive) and occasionally abstract. He tackles the extremities of life and death, offering a rich stew of passion, greed, sex, violence, celebrity and modernity, in distinctly personal work that embraces his love of literature, and of the ancient cultures of China and Greece.

The encroaching influence of the moving image projected into American homes is the subject of *Daytime TV*, 1966. Garabedian used Flo-paque (a plastic paint) and fired ceramic to make this collaged collision of images, and painted the TV's surround to suggest a city scene outside the viewer's window. The influence of camera lens perspective is evident in *Restaurant (The Waitress)*, also 1966, with its female figure far-grounded, and dwarfed by the receding perspective of looming industrial-sized kitchen equipment aglow under harsh ceiling lights.



Charles Garabedian, *Untitled*, 1967
painted wood, 14 x 36 in. (35.6 x 91.4 cm)

During this same period, Garabedian made three-dimensional abstractions in wood and resin after seeing an exhibition of Japanese sculpture in 1965. The current exhibition includes two of these works (dated 1967 and 1970); horizontal, floor-bound forms that he created intuitively. Garabedian has stated: "I started making sculpture and it was just wonderful. I had a great time. Stuff looked good, and I had no problems, no restrictions."

Garabedian also used resin to make the vertical visual breaks and text of *Wood China Wall*, 1968; to create the cut-out shapes in *Jack Nicholson*, 1973; and to form layers in *Go Get 'Em Boy*, 1974. *Wood China Wall*, together with *The Meeting of Greece and China*, 1970, demonstrate Garabedian's fascination with, and self-described "fast-moving appreciation" of the cultures and



Charles Garabedian, *Henry Inn No. 3*, 1975
acrylic on canvas, 83 3/4 x 97 in. (212.7 x 246.4 cm)

history of both countries. A book about Chinese gardens held Garabedian's imagination for several years during this period, and led to a lyrical marriage of figurative and abstract forms in a series of works that he enigmatically titled *Henry Inn* after the book's author.

Charles Garabedian was born in Detroit in 1923, and moved to California at age nine. During World War II, he was a gunner in the United States Air Force and served as staff sergeant. Following the war, Garabedian studied literature and philosophy at UC Santa Barbara on the GI Bill. He went on to study history at the University of Southern California, and earned his BA in 1950. Thereafter, Garabedian pursued several occupations that included working for Union Pacific Railroad. Encouraged by his friend Ed Moses, he studied painting with Howard Warshaw, and at age 34 entered the University of California, Los Angeles. In 1961, he graduated from UCLA with an MA in art, and stayed to teach at the university, holding several positions until 1973.

Garabedian's work has been seen internationally, with his inclusion in important group museum exhibitions including the Whitney Museum of American Art Biennial, 1975 and 1985; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA, 1976; the Venice Biennale, 1976 (also 1982, '84 and '85); The High Museum Atlanta, GA, 1980; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1984; Brooklyn Museum of Art, NY, 1989; the Sezon Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan, 1991; and the Corcoran Biennial, 1993. Garabedian received a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in 1977, a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 1979, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters award in 2000.

Garabedian has been honored with several solo museum exhibitions: The La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art presented a survey of Garabedian's work in 1981; and in 1983, the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University, Massachusetts held a mid-career retrospective. In 2003/2004, a survey exhibition of works on paper was presented at the Luckman Gallery, California State University, Los Angeles, and traveled to the Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art, Logan, Utah. More recently, the exhibition *Charles Garabedian: A Retrospective*, curated by Julie Joyce, was presented by the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, CA, 22 January - 17 April 2011. Michael Duncan, Christopher Miles and Nevin Shriner joined Joyce in contributing essays to the accompanying catalogue.

Charles Garabedian: Works from 1966-1976 is part of L.A. Louver's exhibition programming in conjunction with the Getty initiative Pacific Standard Time. Further Pacific Standard Times exhibitions that include Garabedian's work are *Under the Big Black Sun: California Art 1974-1981*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, 1 October 2011 - 13 February 2012; and *L.A. Raw: Abject Expressionism in Los Angeles, 1945-1980 from Rico Lebrun to Paul McCarthy*, Pasadena Museum of California Art, Pasadena, CA, 22 January - 6 May 2012.

Garabedian lives and works in Los Angeles, and continues to paint. An exhibition of new work recently opened at Betty Cunningham Gallery in Chelsea, New York, on view through 24 March 2012.

Concurrent at L.A. Louver, 22 March – 12 May, 2012:

First Floor: **Frederick Hammersley**. Hunch, organic and geometric paintings from 1958 to 1991, and a series of early unique lithographs. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue.

Skyroom: **Matt Wedel: Figure**. A new ceramic sculpture.

Viewing room: **Michael C. McMillen: Station 9**. A new multi-media work that incorporates sculpture and film.