

MEDIA ALERT
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Hackett Mill presents *Jess: A Family Collection*
November 8, 2018 - January 25, 2019
Opening Reception: November 8th from 5:30-7:30pm



Jess (Collins), *Land of the Mangaboos*, 1955, oil on burlap mounted on plywood, 26 x 40.75 inches

Hackett Mill
www.hackettmill.com • 415-362-3377
145 Natoma Street, San Francisco

Hackett Mill is pleased to present a special solo exhibition of the seminal Bay Area artist, Jess. The paintings, drawings, collages and assemblages on view will be accompanied by ephemera documenting the relationship between Jess, his partner (the poet Robert Duncan), and their life-long family friends, whose collection forms this show. The work has remained with the family and will be on view for the first time outside their home in Berkeley, CA. The exhibition spans multiple decades of artistic production from the late 1940s to 1990. *Jess: A Family Collection* highlights the idiosyncratic and diverse nature of Jess's artistic practice. The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue that includes a conversation between Stephen Burton, who grew up in his family's home surrounded by the artwork, and the writer/poet and Professor Emeritus of American Literature at UC San Diego, Michael Davidson.

Jess, (b. Burgess Collins 1923), began his academic studies in chemistry at Caltech in the 1940s. After being drafted to work on the Manhattan Project and subsequently haunted by the mass destruction from nuclear technology, Jess chose to abandon science for art. This decision would create a permanent rift between him and his family, underscored by their inability to accept that he was gay. The scientific inclination of experimentation, along with an impending doom and preoccupation with apocalyptic destruction followed Jess throughout his life and filtered into his artistic practice.

Though Jess was not associated with any specific Bay Area schools, groups, or styles, he maintained important lifelong relationships with artists, poets and thinkers and collectors including Pauline Kael, the Burtons, and Jess's partner, the well-known poet Robert Duncan. This circle of relationships was very influential to his work, particularly in his preoccupation with narrative and mythology, where Jess's figurative paintings often provide an interdisciplinary engagement with works of literature from Frank L. Baum to Miguel de Cervantes.

While Jess's work was dominated by a fascination with mythology, fantasy and fantastical narrative, it is also noteworthy for its pure experimentation. *Jess: A Family Collection* will highlight the range of this avant-garde artist as seen through the lens of a single patron. The exhibition reestablishes Jess as a singular artist of his time and provides insight into the magnetic variety of his life's work.

About Hackett Mill

Hackett Mill, founded by Michael Hackett and Francis Mill, presents rare works from the 1950s and 1960s by significant American, European, and Asian artists. The gallery provides a platform for unique juxtapositions between the historical and the contemporary by offering a contextual and scholarly scaffolding to create exciting collections that span movements and eras, united by the universal truth of the artistic struggle. Engaging their passion and deep insight for art and architecture, Hackett and Mill share a genuine and infectious enthusiasm for creating unique and personalized client experiences, imparting erudite and inspirational perspectives for building collections. The gallery represents the estates of David Park, Robert Schwartz and the artists David Beck, Masatoyo Kishi, Manuel Neri, Raimonds Staprans and Brian Wall.

For more information: hackettmill.com | 415-362-3377

Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Friday, 10 am - 5 pm

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