

Works in the Exhibition

Purple, 1961
Oil on canvas with painted milk bottle,
67 ¾ × 66 ½ × 11 ¾ inches (overall)
Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles

House Painting (Grey), 1963
Oil on masonite, 48 × 48 inches
Collection of Iris Mink

House Painting (Grey), 1963
Oil on masonite, 48 × 48 inches.
Grey Art Gallery of New York University

Untitled (Staircase), 1971
Painted wood, 74 × 73 × 8 inches
Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, Los Angeles

Still Puck, 1997–2010
Painted wood, 21 × 25 × 25 inches
Collection of the artist

Untitled (Torn Cloud), 1974
Oil on canvas, 72 × 96 inches
Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, Los Angeles

Breathless, 1976
Oil on canvas, 83 × 83 inches
Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum,
Washington University in St. Louis

Untitled (Commissioned Work) [Blue], 1979
Oil on canvas (3 parts), 60 ½ × 127 ½ inches
Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, Los Angeles

Drag Strip, 1978
Oil on canvas, 72 × 66 inches
Collection of the artist

Scab, 1978
Oil on canvas, 72 × 66 inches
Collection of Iris Mink

Slick, 1978
Oil on canvas, 72 × 66 inches
Collection of Dallas Price and Bob Van Breda

Oak Rock, 1980
Oil on canvas, 52 × 96 inches
Collection of Carole Katleman

Environmental Impact 16, 1980–81
Oil on canvas, 54 ¼ × 96 ¼ inches
Collection of the artist

Whew! (Tornado Triptych), 1992
Sumi ink on washi paper, 168 inches × 468 inches
Collection of the artist

Know Means No, 2013
Acrylic on fiberglass, 96 × 96 inches
The Collection of Howard and
Roberta Ahmanson, California

Cruising, 2013
Acrylic on fiberglass, 96 × 96 inches
Collection of Roderic Steinkamp

Devil and the Deep, 2013
Acrylic on fiberglass, 96 × 96 inches
Courtesy the artist and Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles

So Still, 2013
Acrylic on fiberglass, 96 × 96 inches
The Collection of Howard and
Roberta Ahmanson, California

Joe Goode (b. 1937, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma) lives and works in Los Angeles. Recent solo exhibitions have been held at Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles (2014); Texas Gallery, Houston (2002, 2004, 2010, 2012); Franklin Parrasch Gallery, New York (2009); and Manny Silverman Gallery, Los Angeles (2001, 2005). Goode’s work is included in numerous major museum collections, including the Saint Louis Art Museum; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Minneapolis Institute of Arts; the Victoria and Albert Museum; the Smithsonian Institution; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Whitney Museum of American Art; and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Joe Goode is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Jeffrey Uslip, Chief Curator.

This exhibition is generously supported by Eve Steele and Peter Gelles; Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles; Joan and Mitch Markow; and Sally and John Van Doren. Special thanks to Joseph Shaikewitz, curatorial intern.

Related Programs

Breakfast with the Curators

Friday, March 20, 8:30 am / Tour starts at 8:50 am
Open to all membership levels. Complimentary coffee and baked goods. Register at camstl.org/breakfast.

Symposium: Natural Disasters, Free Speech, and the Death of Painting

Saturday, April 11, 10:00 am–4:00 pm



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Gallery Guide
Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

January 16–
April 11, 2015



Joe Goode



Untitled (Commissioned Work) [Blue], 1979. Oil on canvas (3 parts), 60 ½ x 127 ½ inches. Collection of the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, Los Angeles.

Throughout the past fifty years Joe Goode (b. 1937, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma) has developed artistic strategies for cutting through and penetrating various surfaces as a means of analyzing the complexities of American life. This exhibition, the first major survey of Goode’s work in recent years, situates the artist within his Midwestern origins and presents the iconography of tornadoes, shotguns, and expansive skies in the milieu from which the imagery came. Often identified with Southern California pop art, Joe Goode ultimately transcends this genre, creating diverse bodies of work that transform common objects into ciphers for cultural critique.

Goode first gained international recognition following his inclusion in Walter Hopps’s seminal exhibition *New Painting of Common Objects*, organized at the Pasadena Art Museum in 1962. In that exhibition, Goode debuted his seminal *Milk Bottle* paintings where he positioned an everyday milk bottle, entombed in layers of oil paint, in front of a formidable monochrome. In this body of work, the artist demonstrates a painting’s potential to encourage social contemplation: an iconic

1950s glass milk bottle is transformed from an emblem of American domesticity into a memorial to postwar national exuberance.

Through a selection of works spanning 1961 to the present, this exhibition reveals how Goode’s signature depictions of the sublime refer to issues ranging from environmental vandalism to the Second Amendment. By exhibiting works created in large part through acts of destruction and depicting images particularly resonant to the region, CAM’s survey repositions Goode’s work as intrinsically tied to, and in dialogue with, a lived Midwestern experience.



Audio Tour
Download the CAM app at camstl.org/app or ask for an iPod at the front desk to hear directly from the curator on the audio tour.

Milk Bottle Paintings

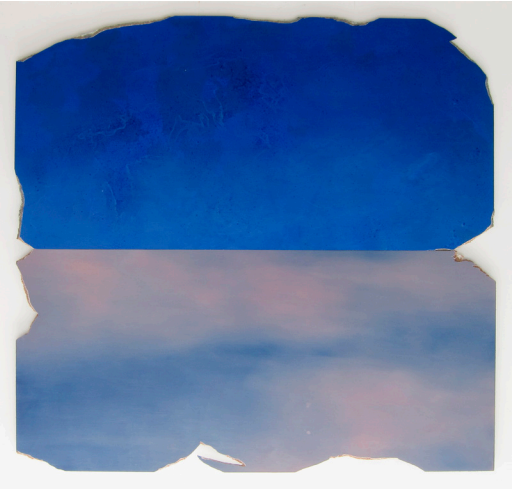


Purple, 1961. Oil on canvas with painted milk bottle, 67 ¾ x 66 ½ x 11 ¼ inches (overall). Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles.

The milk bottle is emblematic of Goode's artistic beginnings alongside some of Southern California Pop Art's most notable figures. The usually transparent glass bottle—here paint-encrusted and made opaque—foregrounds Goode's concept of seeing through the picture plane, allowing viewers to contemplate their own personal and cultural associations within, and through, his pictorial spaces. Goode's poignant use of this motif recalls the graphic symbolism of artists such as Ed Ruscha, Wayne Thiebaud, and Andy Warhol, all of whom exhibited work alongside Goode in Walter Hopps's 1962 exhibition *New Painting of Common Objects*. Privileging quotidian objects as the focal point of their work, these artists debunked postwar strategies of abstraction in favor of a newfound interest in the familiar and the

commonplace. Engaged in dialogue with the emerging Pop movement, Goode's milk bottle references the condition of American domesticity in the 1960s: a memorial to the nation's collective past and a projection of its changing future. This body of work allegorizes a period in American history defined by the tension between national hope (Kennedy's election) and impending doom (the Bay of Pigs Invasion). In Goode's hands, the everyday milk bottle becomes the visual harbinger of seismic shifts in the nation's political, cultural, and social consciousness, marked by the onset of the Cuban Missile Crisis and the ongoing Vietnam War. Goode's *Milk Bottle* paintings ultimately become meditative spaces and reveal themselves as a profound visual metaphor for heightened social awareness.

Flat Screen Nature



Cruising, 2013. Acrylic on fiberglass, 96 x 96 inches. Collection of Roderic Steinkamp.

In this most recent body of work, Goode's investigations of opacity, the picture plane, and the notion of big sky come full circle. The artist delineates a single sheet of industrial fiberglass into two demarcated halves, suggesting a horizon line between land and sky. Goode saws the edges to produce a jagged and irregular perimeter. In the process, he disrupts the inherent symmetry of his compositions while revealing the honeycomb structure of their surface. By allowing the spectator to look through and within the paintings' structural material—specifically manufactured to withstand forces against it—Goode stresses the notion of looking through an image to an extreme degree. The intricate makeup of the fiberglass introduces a sense of visible depth and material complexity that speak to the expanded presence of technology in today's culture; viewed from up close, the honeycomb texture of the surface evokes the pixelated view of our world provided by computer and television screens. Continuing to subvert conventions of painting's most rudimentary elements, Goode extends his earlier investigations of breaking down the surface and is once again engaged

Staircase



Untitled (Staircase), 1971. Painted wood, 74 x 73 x 8 inches. Collection of the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, Los Angeles.

Debuting in 1966, Goode's *Staircase* series augments the domestic vignette represented in his earlier *Milk Bottle* series and represents a critical departure from Goode's two-dimensional investigations into the sculptural realm. Expanding upon his use of the ready-made in previous works, Goode replicates and reorients existing staircases collected from domestic environments. Jutting out from the gallery wall, the staircase uncannily calls attention to its own third dimension. Though structurally confrontational, the carpeted staircase remains separate from the architecture of the gallery space, ascending into *nowhere*. The artist turns the suburban home in on itself, isolating and making public its internal component parts. Exposing these components individually overturns both suburban uniformity and domestic privacy, casting light on an otherwise unremarkable subject, and making transparent the structural elements. These works further develop Goode's interest in the subtleties of the American quotidian, subverting expectations of the appearance and function of these architectural structures.

Tornado Triptych



Whew! (Tornado Triptych), 1992. Sumi ink on washi paper, 168 × 468 inches.
Collection of the artist.

Spanning 40 by 14 feet, Goode's *Tornado Triptych* epitomizes destruction as iconography. Both seductively beautiful and viscerally harrowing, Goode's tornado speaks to the meteorological conditions of the Midwest, recalling most recently the impact of the traumatic natural disaster in Joplin, Missouri, in 2011. Goode shows us the impact of the tornado at touchdown, from within, and as it continues off into the distance. A native of Tornado Alley, the artist is intimately familiar with the destructive and reconstructive power of tornadoes, objects which he describes as "very strong and very violent and at the same time, very beautiful." Working on such a scale required Goode to solicit the aid of a broom, mop, and spray tank in order to replicate the intensity

of the whirling winds. The artist's approach to creating the triptych—walking on top of the paper that once stretched across the floor—both recalls the practice of Jackson Pollock and humanizes this Abstract Expressionist impulse. Ultimately, by focusing on the violent movement and overwhelming force of his subject, Goode recognizes and admires its destructive nature and assumes a Romantic attitude toward the natural landscape. Furthering the aesthetic impulses reflected in the work, ranging from Caspar David Friedrich's landscape paintings to Carleton Watkins's westward expansion photographs, Goode's triptych captures the sublime—the opposition of awe and terror found within nature.

House Paintings



House Painting (Grey), 1963. Oil on Masonite, 48 × 48 inches.
Collection of Iris Mink.

In his *House* paintings, after first masking off a small area of negative space, Goode envelops the canvas in a field of monochromatic gray. This "non-space" serves as the backdrop for intricate sketches of small-scale, California-style bungalows in the center of the composition. The houses—floating in an abstracted, indefinite space—recall the centralized figures of medieval icon paintings or, alternatively, Warhol's flattened depictions of Marilyn Monroe in a vast expanse of metallic gold from the same year. In these works, the image of the benign home is transformed into a common object; Goode's intent is to reflect the ubiquity of the suburban white picket fenced house. The iconography of

the *House* paintings invites a contemplation of what lies within the walls and roofs, despite the compressed space that the images occupy. Goode assimilates the various contrasting elements of the paintings—intricate drawings, broad brushstrokes of oil paint, a familiar subject, a conceptual depiction of space, and a reinforced assertion of the picture plane—in order to emphasize the complexities of the otherwise architecturally ordinary residence. Moreover, Goode's childhood home serves as the subject of one of his *House* paintings, reinforcing the autobiographical relevance of the lived Midwestern experience in the understanding of his work.

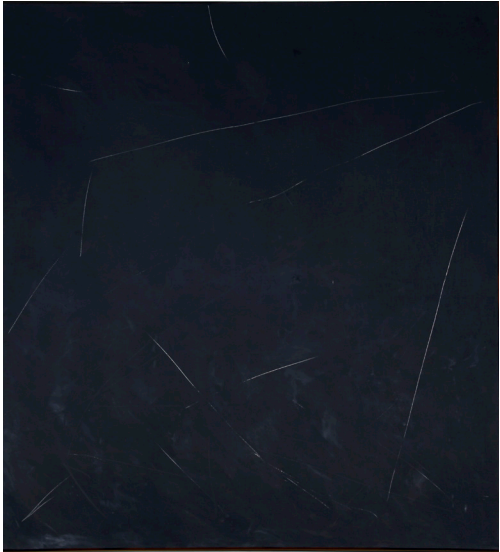
Torn Cloud Paintings



Untitled (Torn Cloud), 1974. Oil on canvas, 72 x 96 inches. Collection of the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation.

Goode's *Torn Cloud* paintings signify a critical point of departure in the artist's career. Whereas in earlier series the artist situated a familiar subject amid all-encompassing backgrounds, these works forgo the object in order to explore the expansive space that lies behind and beyond the picture plane. Goode approximates vast stretches of cloud-filled sky by slashing through painted blue fields and sometimes overlaying slashed canvases on top of one another. Goode's violent, erratic lacerations to the surface both reference and rupture the Abstract Expressionist tradition of the performative gesture. The artist's strategy of creation-through-destruction resonates with ongoing interests across artistic movements of the time, most notably among the French Supports/Surfaces group, active in the late 1960s. By establishing an image, Goode challenges the additive nature of the aesthetic process. The canvas no longer serves as a backdrop for rendering an image, but rather pervades the artwork through its very manipulation. Goode's dual engagement with both process and form re-imagines the sky as a space subject to the negative effects of human intervention.

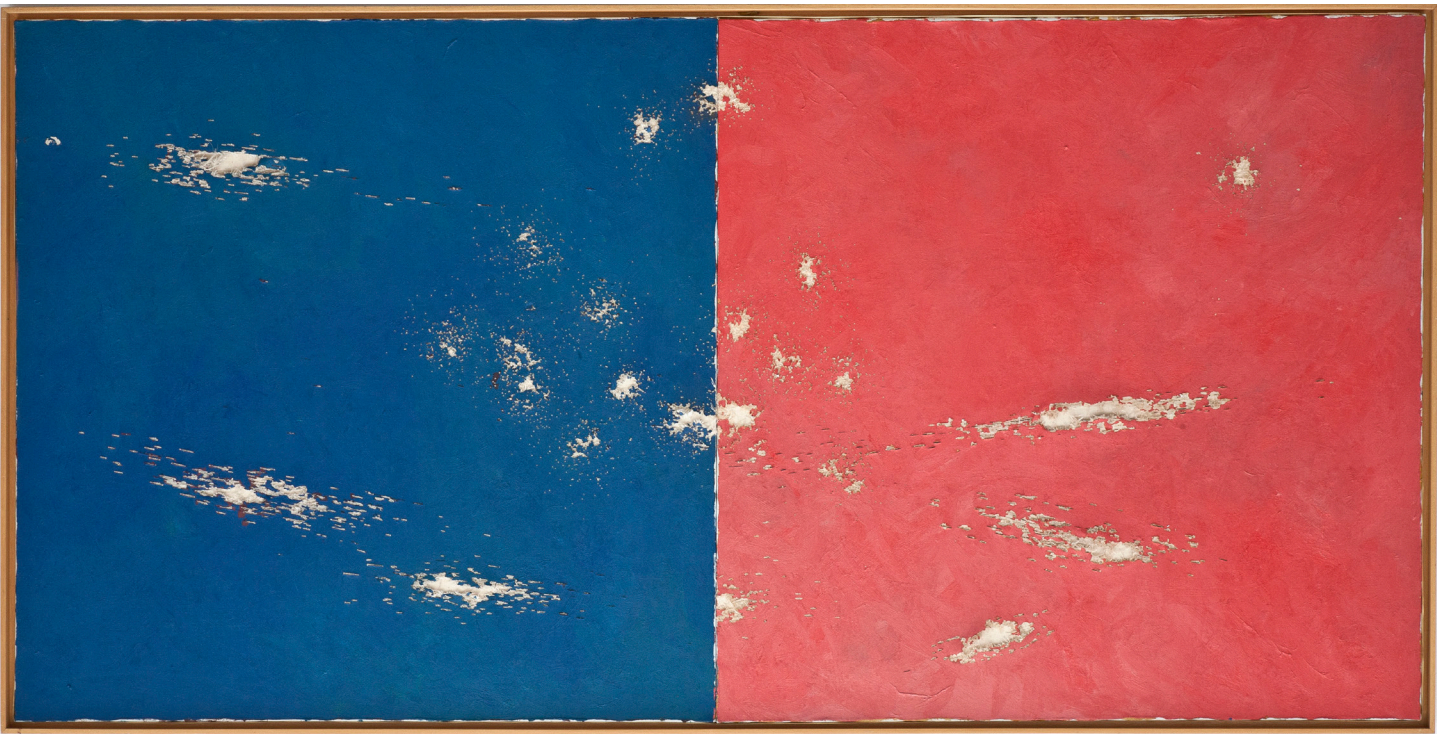
Nighttime Series



Drag Strip, 1978. Oil on canvas, 72 x 66 inches. Collection of the artist.

Goode's *Nighttime* series furthers the artist's interest in the monochrome. Historically, beginning with Kazimir Malevich and continuing through Ad Reinhardt and Robert Ryman, the monochrome represented a theoretical end of painting. Goode, however, subverts the singular chromatic nature of the picture plane to highlight a different compositional focus. The black oil paint captures every trace of the artist's gestures—whether slashing, clawing, or puncturing the canvas to create an image. This artistic device underlines Goode's notion of evoking the sublime through acts of destruction while providing a counter to his *Torn Cloud* paintings. Through his depiction of the night sky with titles including *Slick* and *Scab*, Goode allegorizes the severity of destruction and the ubiquity of such impact. The austere black surface reflects the gravity of environmental vandalism: *Slick* might refer to an oil spill whereas *Scab* connotes the healing of an open wound. If Goode's *Torn Cloud* series is meant to depict the opening up of the day sky, the artist's *Nighttime* series reflects sustained and continual damage to the environment.

Environmental Impact Series



Environmental Impact 16, 1980–81. Oil on canvas, 54 1/2 x 96 1/2 inches. Collection of the artist.

Goode's performative mark-making becomes amplified by the artistic and social investigations of his *Environmental Impact* series. Using a shotgun to blast through the monochromatic surface of the canvases, Goode relies on the velocity of the bullet to create a chance composition. Employing ammunition as his medium, Goode references ongoing debates surrounding gun rights, particularly during the Age of Reagan, who assumed the presidency at the onset of these works. An artist's implementation of firearms can be seen in a wide range of international practices following the postwar era—performance artist Chris Burden, a decade before the *Environmental Impact* series, had himself shot in the arm in a California gallery; the Midwestern artist and writer William Burroughs was employing a shotgun in his contemporaneous works; and Niki de Saint Phalle fired paint directly upon the surface of her *Shooting* Paintings. For Goode, the use of a shotgun expands his aesthetic of creation through destructive means. The traces of the bullet allow the opaque surface to be seen through, particularly in areas of concentrated impact. Perceptually, Goode violates the once-opaque monochrome with moments of perforated transparency. As the bullets puncture the canvas, they transform the painting from a two-dimensional surface into a series of sculptural abrasions. If Ryman and Reinhardt took viewers to the theoretical death of painting, Goode literalizes their intention by blasting through the monochromatic surface as if envisioning the shotgun as an extension of the artist's hand.