

DON SUGGS

1945 – 2019



Photo: Paul O'Connor, 2005

We are deeply saddened to convey the loss of our dear friend and artist Don Suggs. Don died on July 30, 2019 in Los Angeles. He was 74 years of age. The cause of death was a pedestrian traffic accident.

Suggs leaves behind a rich body of work that he created over five decades. Eluding formal categorization, his art is representational, but also conceptual. It combines signs, symbols, logos, language and realism, and references styles including photorealism, Cubism, Surrealism, Symbolism, Pop, Minimalism, Assemblage, Dada and Abstraction. He translated his ideas into painting, drawing, collage, photography and sculpture, works that critic Doug Harvey describes as “gorgeous not in spite of their deep irony, but in conjunction with it.”

Suggs was also an extremely talented and beloved teacher, influencing many hundreds of artists living and working in California and around the world. A handsome man, distinguished by his shock of white hair, movie star looks, piercing blue eyes, gravelly voice and sardonic smile, Suggs was known for his quick wit and ironic sense of humor. He possessed a keen intellect and extensive knowledge of his subject, which he united with a vigorous work ethic and enormous generosity of spirit. A voracious reader, he enjoyed conversation and debate, but was also a deeply private person.

Born in Fort Worth, Texas in 1945, Suggs was raised in San Diego. He moved to Los Angeles in 1962 to study at UCLA, where he earned BA, MA and MFA degrees. He returned to teach at the university in 1983, until his retirement in 2014. Between 1972 and 1984, he also held teaching positions at Florida State University at Tallahassee; Franconia College, New Hampshire; the University of Southern California, and Otis College of Art + Design, Los Angeles.

Suggs began showing his work at L.A. Louver the year the gallery was founded in 1976; in 1977, the gallery presented his first solo exhibition. During the intervening years, seven solo exhibitions followed, each representing a significant shift in Suggs' approach while embodying a strong conceptual thread throughout. The most recent exhibition, entitled "Paradise," was presented May – July 2016. "Don was the first artist I represented at L.A. Louver, and it was through our 46-year personal and professional relationship, that I learnt what it meant to run a contemporary art gallery," says L.A. Louver Founding Director, Peter Goulds. "He represented the ethos of L.A. Louver." While Don's work has been included in over a hundred museum and gallery exhibitions, its range and scope was finally given full rein with his retrospective "One Man Group Show" that was curated by Meg Linton and Doug Harvey at the Ben Maltz Gallery, Otis College of Art and design in 2007. "I admired his voracious curiosity, and depths of investigation," remarked Linton. "His bold body of work will only grow richer, deeper, and more profound with exposure and time."

He is survived by his wife, artist Linda Stark, sister Carol Ambrosia, and her children and grandchildren.

A memorial will be held in Suggs' honor. Details will be announced in the coming weeks.

