



The ADAA Art Show
Paulina Peavy
Booth C15

Paulina Peavy

Andrew Edlin GALLERY

Paulina Peavy (1901-1999)'s provocative art spanned most of the twentieth century and her career paralleled major transformations in American culture: the women's movement, the civil rights era, the space age, the sexual revolutions, and several technologically advanced wars. Peavy responded to these changes with her work and also explained the esoteric and occult foundation behind her artistic imagination.

In her long and productive creative life, she developed many phases, each more interesting and complex than the last, as she evolved as a person, creator, and spiritual being. Peavy was not only a painter, architect, designer, craftsman, teacher, mother, entrepreneur, gallerist, author, and filmmaker. She was a seer: an ardent feminist, a guide to other worlds, and a devoted pacifist and healer of the modern age.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Peavy probed the reaches of the available esoteric literature and philosophy and joined the ranks of other women channeler-artists including Hilma af Klint, Georgiana Houghton, Emma Kunz, Agnes Pelton, and Ithell Colquhoun. What set Peavy apart, though, was her relationship with Lacamo, the distinct, bodiless entity whom she purported she first encountered at a séance in 1932 and to whom she dedicated the remainder of her life. Lacamo guided Peavy to create a far-reaching body of work, and her belief in her creations as tools to change humanity rather than objects merely to be appreciated would ultimately polarize her from the established fine arts community.

In 1935 Peavy's art was shown at Los Angeles' prestigious Stendahl Gallery, whose stable of artists included Kandinsky and Jawlensky, followed later that year by a solo exhibition at Alma Reed's Delphic Studios in New York, where the Transcendental Painting Group which included Emil Bissttram, Raymond Jonson and Agnes Pelton, had been exhibited. Peavy was accorded a special showing and presented thirty paintings at the 1939 Golden Gate International Exhibition -- the West Coast counterpart to the New York World's Fair the same year-- which celebrated the completion of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge in 1936 and the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937.

Little understood outside the small circle of visionary artists, philosophers, and astroculture aficionados she kept company with, Peavy was a prophet. She espoused Lacamo's cosmology that humanity would evolve from males to females and eventually to an androgynous state of higher evolution and enlightenment. Her focus on gender fluidity was prescient as the issue of nonbinary gender and sexual fluidity permeates much of American social discourse today. And she would no doubt be pleased with the recent news that NASA is creating a commission to seriously investigate UFOs. Her reputation required the passage of time to come to terms with the unorthodox ideas that were the foundation of her art and life.

– Ilene Susan Fort, Ph.D and Laura Whitcomb, drawn from the foreword to *Paulina Peavy: Painting in Multiple Dimensions*, a forthcoming monograph by Laura Whitcomb.