

Peter Krasnow: Maverick Modernist

Michael Duncan

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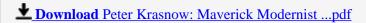
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Peter Krasnow (1886-1979) is the great California modernist you don't know. Although revered during his lifetime by a coterie that included Edward Weston, Richard Neutra, Rudolph Schindler, Galka Scheyer, Frederick Sommer, Grace Clements, Lorser Feitelson, Helen Lundeberg, June Wayne, and Jules Langsner, Krasnow remained largely out of the public eye, cantankerously resisting publicity or self-promotion while dedicating himself to an artistic ideal. He demonstrated extraordinary skills in each of his three major phases: the early representational paintings and wood carvings (1910-1930), the abstract wood sculptures (1936-1943), and the hard-edged geometric and patterned paintings (1940-1979). Although his mature work in some ways presages abstract art by modern artists such as John McLaughlin, Karl Benjamin, Inez Johnston, Isamu Noguchi, and Raoul Hague as well as contemporary art by Steve Roden, Alma Allen, Zach Harris, and James Siena, it remains unique. In 1977 Lorser Feitelson said of Krasnow, "I call him both the youngest old artist in Los Angeles and the oldest young artist. Because his art doesn't date. It's ever present."

? Michael Duncan, guest curator



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