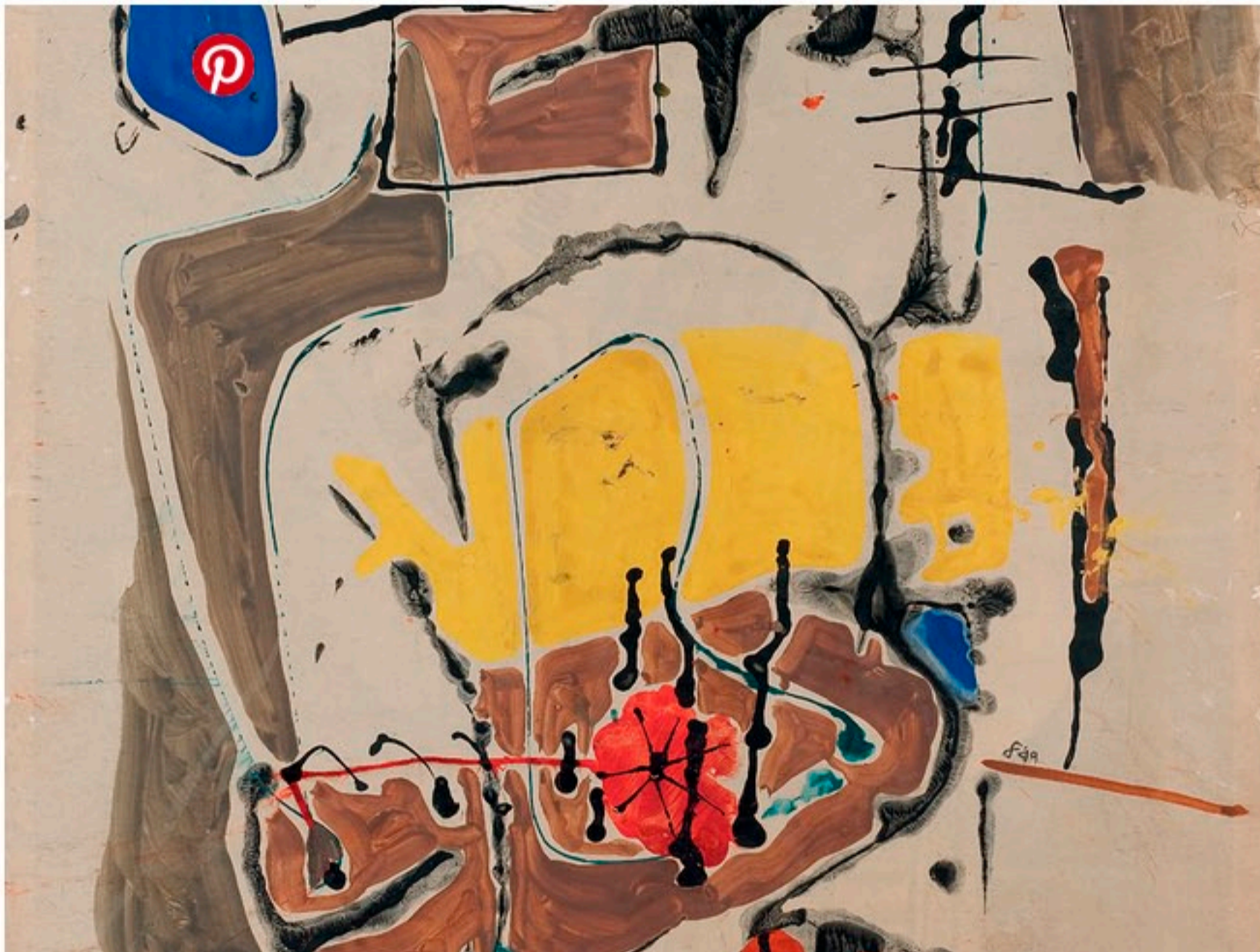


Why You Can't Miss Claire Falkenstein's Retrospective This Spring

April 19, 2016 | [Culture](#)

LA arts pioneer Claire Falkenstein gets a long overdue retrospective.



Over the course of her 70-year career, Claire Falkenstein exhibited at the crème de la crème of the world's art centers: The Louvre, Tate, Whitney, Met, and LA's LACMA, MOCA, and Hammer Museum. *Barcelona #2, 1949*, seen here, lives at LA's Jack Rutberg Fine Arts, Falkenstein's longtime West Coast gallery space.

While most famous for her large-scale sculptures, Claire Falkenstein (1908–1997), one of America's most experimental and prolific 20th-century artists, innovated techniques and styles in an enormous variety of media. This spring, her first full museum retrospective, at the [Pasadena Museum of California Art](#), will bring to light her range: The 67 pieces on display will represent her work in sculpture, painting, drawing, lithography, jewelry-making, glass-working, and more. Standout pieces include *Orbit the Earth* (1963), a nine-panel painting almost 20 feet wide, depicting an entire abstract map of the earth, and *Fluids in Motion*, also called *Circuit* (1947), a sculpture of relief-carved Plexiglas mounted onto painted wood and illuminated with fluorescent light. Such a diverse body of work bespeaks a panoramic talent, says the show's curator, Jay Belloli, who cites several Falkenstein "firsts"—the first to create abstract ceramic sculpture (in the late '30s); the first to paint on curved aluminum (a decade later); and among the first to experiment with different shapes for her canvases and frames. "She innovated so quickly," he says. "She took chances at every turn." It's a spirit LA helped foster—the city freed Falkenstein (who lived and worked in California for much of her life, including her last 34 years in Venice) to experiment without the strictures of long-held artistic traditions. "The vastness of LA creates an incredible variety of art," says Belloli—an ethos perfectly personified. *April 17–September 11, 490 E. Union St., 626-568-3665*



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