



**Scene of the Crime: Exhibition held at Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center on July 23-October 5, 1997**

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Due in large part to the bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building, the crash of TWA Flight 800, and the O. J. Simpson trial, the once-arcane field of forensics has taken hold of the popular imagination. *Scene of the Crime*, which accompanies an exhibition of the same name organized by UCLA at the Armand Hammer Museum and supported by the Fellows of Contemporary Art, considers the art object as a kind of forensic evidence. Like the chalk outline of a murdered body, certain works of art invoke off-screen drama, prior trauma, or a history redolent of criminality, violation, or mysterious turbulence. From the evidentiary traces presented in these exhibits, the viewer is prompted to reconstruct behavior, motivations, and events. This forensic approach emphasizes the viewer's role as investigator while underscoring the cluelike and contingent status of the art object.

The book is *not* about works of art that simply document criminal acts. Rather, it is about a strain of art that presents the art object as a clue to absent meanings or actions. From seminal works by Ed Ruscha, Bruce Naumann, Barry Le Va, and David Hammons to recent works by Paul McCarthy, Sharon Lockhart, James Luna, and Anthony Hernandez, this art declares that it is about more than meets the eye, raising the suspicion that a significant segment of contemporary art is concerned with forensic strategies and demands an investigative approach.

### **Artists:**

Terry Allen, D-L Alvarez, John Baldessari, Lewis Baltz, Uta Barth, Nayland Blake, Chris Burden, Vija Celmins, Bruce Conner, Eileen Cowin, John Divola, Sam Durant, Vincent Fecteau, Bob Flanagan and Sheree Rose, Janet Fries, David Hammons, Richard Hawkins, Anthony Hernandez, Alexander Jason, Mike Kelley, Ed and Nancy Kienholz, Barry Le Va, Sharon Lockhart, James Luna, Monica Majoli, Mike Mandel and Larry Sultan, Paul McCarthy, Richard Misrach, Bruce Nauman, Robert Overby, Nancy Reese, Michelle Rollman, Ed Ruscha, Alexis Smith, George Stone, Jeffrey Vallance.



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