

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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*Pharmaka is proud to announce:*

**WALLWORKS:**

**The Art of Wall Batterton,**

**1959 to Present.**

**Curated by internationally-renowned artist, Ed Ruscha.**

**March 8<sup>th</sup> to May 5<sup>th</sup> 2007**

**Artist's reception Thursday, March 8th - 6pm to 9pm**

**Pharmaka Gallery**

**101 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street**

**Los Angeles, CA 90013**

Wall Batterton was a student of Chouinard Art Institute along with Ed Ruscha and many other artists that helped to define the Los Angeles art scene of the 1960s and 1970s.

Batterton was also a member of the group "Students 5" that consisted of Wall Batterton, Jerry McMillan, Ed Ruscha, Don Moore, Pat Blackwell and Joe Goode.

Ed Ruscha writes for the intro of the exhibition catalogue: *"As students, we were always searching for names for the surface area an artist happens to work on. We called it a working area; then, we called it a "playing field." Wall once referred to it as a "construction site" amusing us to no end. My mind keeps referring to a small painting he once did of a desert landscape. In his construction site, each object, item or thing displayed had gone through a period of scrutiny, then it was put to use in the picture. Likewise, all the pictures on display in this exhibition have gone through similar moments of introspection, adventures and accomplishments."*

Batterton first began exhibiting in Los Angeles with the Los Angeles County Museum Annual Exhibition in 1961, and continued to show throughout the 1960s with exhibitions at the Pasadena Museum, the Downey Museum of Art, the Molly Barnes Gallery, and his one-man exhibition at the Souza Gallery in Mexico City, thanks to Jose Luis Cuevas.

In 1964, Batterton began using aluminum paint that culminated in the Pasadena Museum show. Batterton states his reason for choosing this material -- *"I used aluminum paint (a reflective non-color to me) in several sky treatments and for the illusion of wetness that we see in the distance as we travel a long stretch of highway."*

In 1970 Batterton showed his "Aluminum Paintings" at Anhalt Gallery and continued to exhibit in California, Arizona and New Mexico.

The materials that Batterton used - aluminum paint and car lacquer - led to very serious health problems, prompting Batterton to cease painting for 10 years, and after a period of de-tox from hazardous materials, Batterton resumed painting with more traditional mediums and moved out of Los Angeles.

This retrospective that Ruscha has titled WALLWORKS, begins in 1959 with a woodcut, titled "Self-Portrait" and traces its way through the drawings and paintings of his "Dodger Stadium Series" of 1962, to the alligator ceramics and surrealist works from the mid-60s to the alligator paintings and the abstract series titled "Denny Run" of the late 60s and early 70s, to the mixed media "Puzzling Sites Series" of the late 1980s.

The exhibition comes full circle with Batterton's return to painting in the current series titled "It's Running Again" which were begun in 2004 at his current home in Tucson, Arizona. Combining the playfulness and freedom of the 60s work with the painterly drips from the 70s to re-establish Batterton's love of materials with abstracted spaces that echo the "long stretch of highway" while giving us the source of his "Denny Run" drips through a personalized, calligraphically-visual story.

Ed Ruscha's curatorial choices explore Batterton's body of work that engages many chapters of art history while simultaneously approaching art as the beginning of something where rules are to be discovered...but not necessarily followed.

This exhibition runs through May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at Pharmaka.

**Gallery Hours:** Wednesday through Saturday 12 – 6 pm  
***A Non-Profit Institution in Downtown Los Angeles' Gallery Row District***  
**Pharmaka** is a nonprofit art gallery that has been in operation since January 2005.

Pharmaka's mission is to bridge the gap between the commercial galleries and the museums of Los Angeles.

Los Angeles is home to one of the most creative artistic forces in the world. Pharmaka Art's goal is to exhibit curated shows that address the pluralistic nature of the contemporary art scene with a focus on painting.