

For Immediate Release  
August 1, 2022

The Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art presents  
*To Bough and To Bend*



On view: Tuesday, August 30, 2022–Sunday, March 26, 2023

Opening reception: Saturday, September 10, 3–6 PM

Malibu, CA—Pepperdine University’s Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art presents the exhibition *To Bough and To Bend*, curated by Bridge Projects.

*“Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free,  
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,  
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,  
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.  
When true simplicity is gain'd,  
To bow and to bend we will not be asham'd,  
To turn, turn will be our delight,  
Till by turning, turning we come round right.”*

“Simple Gifts” is the Shaker song from which *To Bough and To Bend* borrows its title. Written by Joseph Brackett in 1848, the song was both an instruction for social dance and also for how to

live a life of simplicity. Inspired by those ideas, the curators of this exhibition ask, “Do trees not also teach us how to embody this humble posture as they bend their boughs to greet us?”

As they do in Shaker spirituality, trees also feature prominently in many of the world’s religions. Ancient history recounts how their shade and branches have been sites of contemplation, suffering, and renewal. The Bodhi Tree is said to be the site of Siddhārtha Gautama’s awakening as the Buddha. The Tree of Life is found in both the beginning of the Jewish Tanakh and in the last book of the Christian Scriptures. Ancient Chinook prayers address God as the “Maker of Trees.” Trees are rightly called the “architecture of imagination,” writes the novelist Richard Powers.

Today, trees still speak: blunt stumps communicate deforestation while charred limbs speak of Los Angeles fires started by our own hands—or our negligence. New discoveries of communicating root systems speak to a tangled web of connections just below the surface of the visible world, just as LA’s iconic—and imported—palms evoke the vast impacts of our colonial past.

*To Bough and To Bend* explores these ecological issues and looks to religious and historical art practices to guide us back into fellowship with these old friends and the living world we share.

The first iteration of *To Bough and To Bend* opened at Bridge Project’s Hollywood gallery in March 2020, on the eve of the COVID pandemic lockdown. Given the circumstances, the exhibition was seen by very few visitors. “A tree can be only as strong as the forest that surrounds it,” writes Peter Wohlleben in *The Hidden Life of Trees*. In the solitude of our isolated quarantines, this bore itself out as a human reality as well. The Bridge Projects curatorial team, consisting of Cara Lewis, Meaghan Ritchey, Vicki Smith, and Linnea Spransy, adds, “We are deeply grateful to the Weisman Museum for giving the exhibition a second life. It is our sincere hope that, like a forest canopy on a hot day, *To Bough and To Bend* will be a shared space of reflection and rest.”

Featured artists: Robert Adams, Miya Ando, Charles Burchfield, Pamela Burgess, Daniel Cheek, Zoe Crosher, Kieran Dodds, Chris Garofalo, Ken Gonzales-Day, Todd Gray, Tim Hawkinson, Leonor Jurado, Kazuo Kadoyama, Corita Kent, Siobhan McDonald, Ralph Eugene Meatyard, Jarrett Mellenbruch, Billy Joe Miller, Ahram Park, Kate Parsons, Katie Paterson, Heather Rasmussen, Lucas Reiner, Ben Sanders, Tal Shochat, Ben Vance, Ellen Wagener, Patty Wickman, and Amir Zaki.

*To Bough and to Bend* will be on view from August 30, 2022 to March 26, 2023. For information about virtual and in-person programs, visit [arts.pepperdine.edu/museum](https://arts.pepperdine.edu/museum), and follow the Weisman Museum (@weismanmuseumofart) and Bridge Projects (@bridgeprojects\_la) on social media.

## **IMAGE CREDITS**

Left to right: Ralph Eugene Meatyard, *ZEN #2*, 1959, courtesy of DC Moore Gallery, New York; Tal Shochat, *Rimon (Pomegranate)*, 2010, courtesy of Meislin Projects, New York; Lucas Reiner, *Station II (Cross)*, 2010, courtesy of the artist.

## **THE FREDERICK R. WEISMAN MUSEUM OF ART**

Pepperdine University  
24255 Pacific Coast Highway  
Malibu, CA 90263

The Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art at Pepperdine University was dedicated in September 1992, and since then, has showcased modern and contemporary art by internationally recognized artists, with a focus on the art of California. Past exhibitions include *Claes Oldenburg: Drawings* (2004), *Chihuly Los Angeles* (2005), *Jim Dine: Some Drawings* (2007), *Mercedes Matter: A Retrospective Exhibition* (2010), *Roy Lichtenstein: In Process* (2011), *Thiebaud: Works on Paper* (2014), *Andy Warhol: Life and Legends* (2016), *Larry Bell: Pacific Red* (2017), *Richard Diebenkorn: Beginnings, 1942–1955* (2019), *Rodin and Women: Muses, Sirens, Lovers* (2020), and *The Cultivators: Highlights from the Kinsey African American Art and History Collection* (2021), in addition to numerous exhibitions drawn from the collection of the Frederick R. Weisman Foundation.

Located on Pepperdine's Malibu campus, the museum is open Tuesday–Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and is closed on Mondays and major holidays. Admission is always free and advance reservations are no longer required.

## **ABOUT BRIDGE PROJECTS**

Bridge Projects opened in Hollywood in 2019 as a contemporary art gallery and curatorial project based in Los Angeles, featuring experimental, research-driven exhibitions by local and international artists. Each exhibition project includes a series of parallel public events—lectures, workshops, performances, salons, conferences, community programs, etc.—in which we gather prominent scholars and artists to help situate these exhibitions within broader art-historical, philosophical, and religious contexts. Our programming is especially aimed at fostering more advanced and more open interdisciplinary explorations of the relations between contemporary art, spirituality, and religious traditions. After three years, Bridge Projects closed its brick and mortar space in Hollywood on July 30, 2022. Through collaborations with institutions like the Weisman Museum of Art, Bridge is hopeful that the work curating for and convening audiences at the intersection of contemporary art, spirituality, and religious traditions will continue to take root and bear fruit.

## **MEDIA INQUIRIES**

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