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## *Editorial Introduction to the Inaugural Column "Conceptual Art"*

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## Editorial Introduction to the Inaugural Column “Conceptual Art”

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Michael Zheng

We are pleased to announce a new column “Conceptual Art” to introduce artworks and artists on the frontier of conceptual art and their historical link.

In this inaugural column, we introduce one of the founders of the West Coast Conceptualism in the United States, Paul Kos. As one of the leading figures of the movement, along with Tom Marioni, Terry Fox, Howard Fried, and Bonnie Sherk, Kos has been playing an instrumental role in forging and the development of what eventually was called the West Coast Conceptualism in the US. In contrast to the system- and language-based Conceptualism in NY, the West Coast Conceptualism has a distinctive interest in phenomenology and the intrinsic nature of materials, often engendering a lyrical effect in their works. For this issue, we provide two views on Paul Kos. The first view is an interview of Kos by Andrew McClintock, first published in SFAQ. The second view is an interview of Kos by Jarrett Earnest, first published in Brooklyn Rail. These are reprinted here with permission from the original authors. Together, they cover a wide range of Kos’s work, and provide insights into his role in the West Coast conceptual art movement, the nature of conceptual art, and his unique role in art education, often providing invaluable insights into the practice of art. Of particular relevance to the Art Frontier, the McClintock interview also touched upon Kos’s view of the role of an independent art magazine.

Since the early 1970s, Paul Kos’s work has challenged conventions of art media and subject matter. He has

exhibited internationally and his work is in major museum collections including: New York’s Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum, the Guggenheim Museum, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Louis Vuitton Foundation and the Kadist Foundation in Paris. A 2003 retrospective *Everything Matters* traveled from the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive to the Grey Gallery in New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego, and the Contemporary Art Center in Cincinnati. Kos has received grants and awards from a range of institutions, including the Dodd Chair appointment at the University of Georgia, a Eureka Fellowship, a Flintridge Foundation grant, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Rockefeller Fellowship, a Tiffany Fellowship, an AVA award and six NEA grants.

The second article in this column is based on a forum organized by the Art Frontier, in which art critic Max Blue and artist Michael Zheng engaged in conversations around the topic of “Ch’an Buddhism (禪宗)’s influence on conceptual art”. Owing to its vicinity to Asia, the West Coast of the United States, especially the San Francisco Bay Area, has a distinctive affinity to the spiritualism from Asia, including the spiritual practices that came to the US from India in the 1960s, as well as the Ch’an or Zen practices from the Far East. The thinking and practices such as ko’an in Ch’an Buddhism, have a marked similarity to the conceptual art practice.