



THE RAY STRONG PROJECT

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN SULLIVAN GOSS AND THE SANTA BARBARA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 17, 2016

RAY STRONG: AMERICAN ARTIST IS ON BOOKSTANDS

A COMMUNITY'S CROWD SOURCED AND CROWD FUNDED BOOK IS FINALLY PUBLISHED!

SANTA BARBARA, CA - On May 5th, 2016 from 5–8pm - as part of the Santa Barbara Downtown Organization's **1st THURSDAY** event - Sullivan Goss - An American Gallery will host a book release party for **RAY STRONG: AMERICAN ARTIST - the first ever hardbound monograph on RAY STRONG**. Produced in collaboration with the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and with the help of innumerable community stakeholders, curators, and collectors, the **256 page book** has finally arrived!

Ten years ago, this book could not have existed. Without online funding platforms like **Kickstarter**, where THE RAY STRONG PROJECT raised \$30,000 to print this book, the printing would have been cost prohibitive. Without online document sharing platforms like **Google Drive**, the difficulty of using six different scholars to share research and produce the text would have been unmanageable. Desktop publishing software placed the layout within reach. Social media platforms and a blog helped raise awareness of the project among local collectors. The production of this book creates a possible model for other communities who want to celebrate and historicize their local heroes.

Of course, Ray Strong is a special case. Frank Goss and Jeremy Tessmer of Sullivan Goss undertook the leadership of the book's production as a passion project, but needed help. The **Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History** made itself available as a financial partner. The artist's former dealers, **Ellen Easton** of The Easton Gallery, **Marlene Miller**, formerly of the Arlington Gallery, offered their archives. Local artists from Ray Strong's **OAK GROUP**, **Arturo Tello**, **John Iwerks**, **Chris Chapman**, and others have helped assemble Ray Strong documents, stories, and images. Community cooperation has been key. Only an artist like Ray Strong could have inspired it.

RAY STRONG: AMERICAN ARTIST is now available and retails for \$50. The book features an introduction and six essays chronicling the chapters of the artist's life and various aspects of his career as well as **171 illustrations** in a substantial and attractive 10 x 10 7/8 inch format. Among these illustrations are many of the works that were featured in a Santa Barbara city wide celebration of the artist's work last summer at venues like the the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, the Santa Barbara Historical Museum, the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, and the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum. It also features a selected exhibition history, annotated chronology, and collections and murals list. Many of the photographs for the reproductions were taken by one Ray's long time artistic collaborators, Bill Dewey.

THE ESSAYISTS:

NANCY MOURE, former Assistant Curator of American Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, has worked for the last 35 years as an independent art consultant and writer for pre-1945 California art. Although she has curated several exhibitions on historic Southern California art, she is best known for her survey book *California Art: 450 Years*, a foundational book that covers the history of painting from the Native Americans to the year 2000, as well as for her 13+ volume series, *Publications in California Art*, which aids researchers seeking rare and obscure information on early California artists.

DONALD J. HAGERTY is an independent historian who has written extensively on Maynard Dixon. His books include *The Art of Maynard Dixon* and *The Life of Maynard Dixon* besides numerous periodical articles. Among his other writings are *Leading the West: 100 Painters and Sculptors*, *Ed Mell: Beyond the Visible Terrain* and *Holding Ground: The Art of Gary Ernest Smith* plus monographs on James Swinnerton and Gerard Curtis Delano. In addition, he has curated exhibits for museums such as the Museum of New Mexico, Tucson Museum of Art, and the Pasadena Museum of California Art. Currently he serves as vice president for the California State Library Foundation.

DENNIS M. POWER served as Director of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History for 22 years, during a time when Ray was actively painting and helping nurture the next generation of plein air painters. During this time they became good friends. In honor of his service to the museum, the bird hall where Ray's dioramas are located has been called the Dennis M. Power Bird Hall. Dr. Power was also Executive Director of the Oakland Museum of California, and more recently, President of Laguna College of Art & Design in Laguna Beach.

MICHAEL WHITT is a physician, poet and environmentalist. He is the co-founder and curator of the Marin Agricultural Land Trust art show *Ranches and Rolling Hills* and has contributed essays on Ray Strong and the Oak Group to *Along the Way: Ray Strong Landscape Painter*, Wildling Art Museum 2002, *The Oak Group Twenty Years 1986-2006*,

and *Ranches and Rolling Hills Art of West Marin – A Land In Trust*. He was a friend of Ray's for 25 years.

SANDRA FRANCIS is a retired broadcasting, advertising and film executive and a longtime resident of Marin County. With her husband, artist, Jon Francis, she owned and managed a Los Angeles recording studio and a successful commercial film production company. Thirty years after receiving her BA degree, she returned to college, first at Dominican University and then Mills College where she earned a master's degree and honed her skills as a writer. Encouraged by her husband's growing art business, she developed her appreciation for California landscape painters, finding something especially compelling about Ray Strong's Marin County landscapes.

MARTHA LEE OWEN is descended from early Adirondack settlers on both sides of her family, and is the second generation of her family to operate Adirondack Realty, where she has been a real estate agent since 1979. After graduating from Mount Holyoke College, she participated in and worked for multicultural and international educational programs for seventeen years, including Crossroads Africa, American Field Service, Head Start, Chinatown Planning Council (NYC), and California public schools. She is married to Frank Owen, an artist.