

# Sacramento City College celebrates a rich legacy of art

By Chris Macias

[cmacias@sacbee.com](mailto:cmacias@sacbee.com)

AUGUST 25, 2016 08:00 AM,



UPDATED AUGUST 25, 2016 11:00 PM

From floor to ceiling, the four gallery walls will be packed with paintings, digitally derived works, pen-and-ink pieces and so much more. The Gregory Kondos Gallery at Sacramento City College is a fairly tight space, just about 500 square feet in size, but it will teem with history for the next month as the community college displays a rich artistic legacy that's been honed over the decades.

Sacramento City College, which was founded in 1916, celebrates its centennial this year. And with that milestone comes an homage to its acclaimed art department, with an exhibition titled "One Hundred Years, One Hundred Artists." The show, which runs through Sept. 30 at the campus's Gregory Kondos Gallery, brings together the school's artistic forces from the past and present, with works from more than 100 living artists on display.

The leafy Land Park campus has served as a laboratory for many students who would later find acclaim in the national and international art worlds. The alumni include Mel Ramos, the figurative painter known as a contemporary of 1960s pop artists such as Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol. Kondos, for whom the school's gallery is named, is an internationally renowned landscape painter who is among the inaugural honorees in Sacramento's [Walk of Stars](#) project.

And that's just the start for all the alumni who will be represented at the show, including Fred Dalkey, Annie Murphy-Robinson, Jerald Silva, Tower Records founder Russ Solomon and more than 100 others. Just about all the wall space will be filled, along with sculptures, ceramics and much more on the gallery floor.

"We intended it to be a little overwhelming," said Chris Daubert, the show's curator and chair of Sacramento City College's art department. "It's everything from beautiful portraits that were done in 1956, to 3-D modeled still lifes moving on a screen and lots of ceramic sculptures. It's as rich and varied as we are."

Sacramento City College has about 1,000 students in its art classes each semester. Founded four years after the college, the art program includes an array of studio classes, where students can learn the essentials of figure drawing, composition, printmaking, metal arts and much more.

Kondos, now 93, remembers a humbler time for the school, when it was known as Sacramento Junior College. He attended the school for two years in the early 1940s, long before Sacramento boasted its own [mural festival](#) and hosted its [Second Saturday](#) art walk. Students could learn the fundamentals of art, but its scope didn't go much beyond that.

"The early faculty was good faculty," said Kondos. "But they were not programmed to teach us the real facts about what makes international coverage. Those first two years (at Sacramento Junior College) were still very important in my life. If I had to do it all over again, I wouldn't change anything about it, really."

Kondos later became a faculty member in the art department before retiring from academic life in 1982. He's since emerged as an internationally acclaimed landscape painter, known for fluid brush strokes and an economical use of color. The effect highlights the feelings of solitude and tranquility in otherwise open spaces, including mountain ranges, beach scenes and farmland.

The current show includes a 48-by-36-foot, oil-on-canvas work by Kondos titled "Yosemite," which captures the serenity and majesty of Half Dome.

Daubert believes the dedication that Kondos and other art faculty showed over the years toward teaching helped solidify the department. The program enrolls students with different artistic aspirations, from those seeking a career in the topsy-turvy art world to those pursuing art academia at a four-year university to hobbyists. Along with mastery of their artistic media, the faculty members need to be skilled in instruction as well.

"The unifying factor across the years is that they're all really dedicated to teaching," said Daubert about the generations of faculty. "They all have that extra bit of energy. The comments from 30 years ago really stuck with (the students). We want to show how (these alumni) were doing then and today, and how their time here affected who they are."

The centennial show also includes new works by distinguished alumni. One painting by Jack Ogden, who graduated from the college in 1953, was completed this year.

The final piece of the exhibition can be found in the program, where all of the living artists were asked to pass along words of advice to current students. Kondos suggested that students keep an open mind and remember that the learning never stops, no matter how long you've been out of school.

"I consider myself a student even now," he said. "I always say that you can put the word 'student' on my gravesite. I am still learning and I'm proud of that."