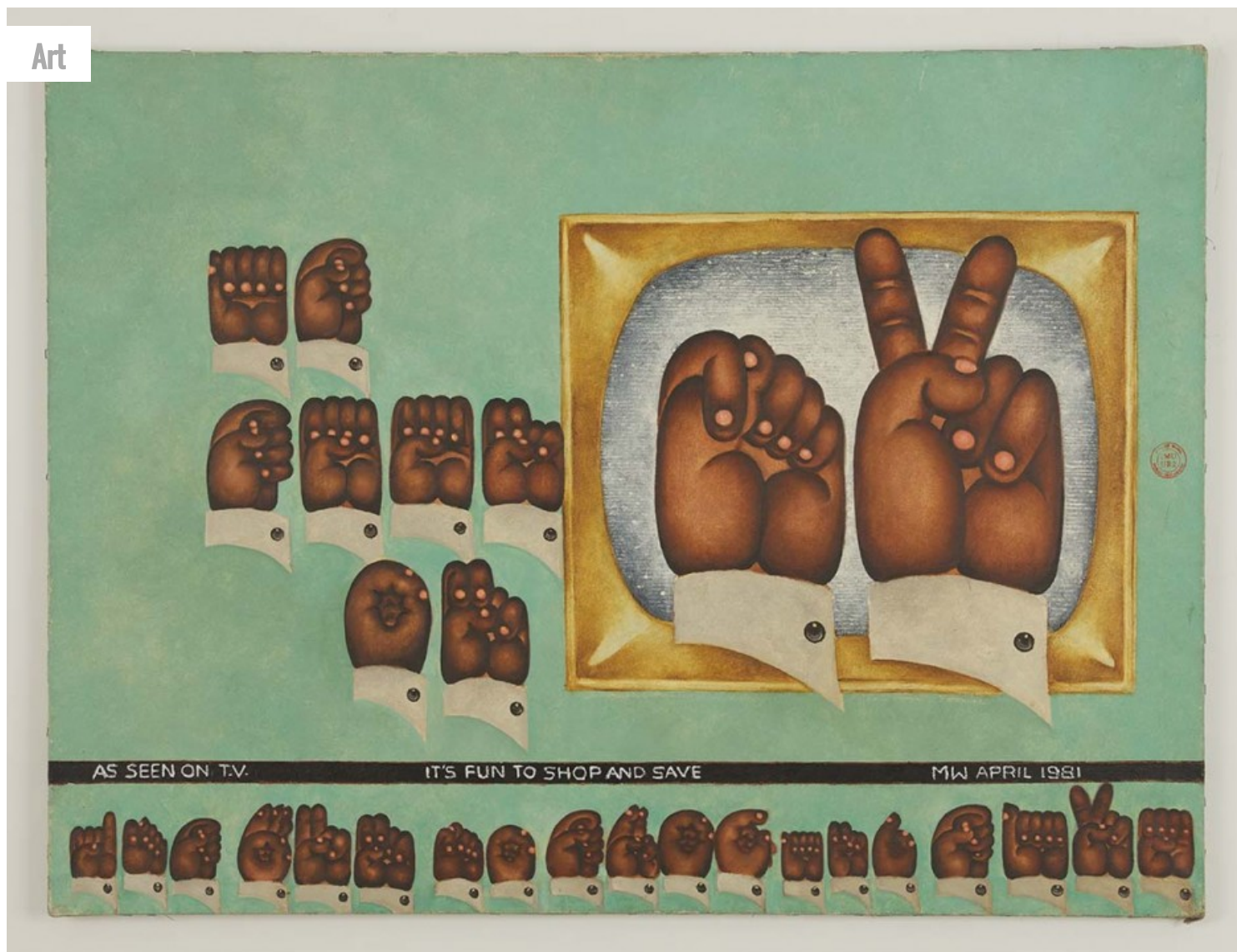




Art



TWEET



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Nuyorican Painter Martin Wong Opens In San Francisco Tonight

By Cacy Forgenie on March 13, 2015

Nuyorican painter Martin Wong was strange looking fellow even for a Lower East Side resident.

Born in Portland, Oregon and raised in San Francisco, Wong spent most of his adult life living and painting in the Lower East Side in the 70s, 80s and 90s, creating realistic works in a hood known for graffiti. He also wore a Fu-Manchu mustache with a cowboy hat, was sinewy, and had a fondness for rough but beautiful Puerto Rican men, some of whom he immortalized in his paintings when he wasn't running the streets with Nuyorican Poet Cafe founders Miguel Algarin and Miguel Pinero.

Wong, if you couldn't tell by his name, was Asian American. When he hit the L.E.S in the late 1970s and hooked up with Pinero and them, he became a Nuyorican and helped to usher a renaissance. He also managed to accumulate the world's **largest graffiti collection in the process.**



Since his death at age 55 in 1999 in San Francisco, Wong's estate has been managed by PPOW Gallery. Tonight's opening at the Wattis Institute sees the artist in his first solo show in the city of his birth and demise. *Martin Wong: Painting is Forbidden* encompasses writing, calligraphy, drawing, ceramics, theatrical set design, painting, poetry, and collage. The exhibition's title is taken from the following passage in his journals: *Painting is forbidden. The joys and pleasures of being a painter are almost identical to those of being a serial killer: the solitary quest, the thrill of the hunt, the compulsion of trying to complete an imaginary set, to live totally in the imagination, the suspense, the urgency, and finally the uncontrollable spasms...*

Martin Wong: Painting Is Forbidden is organized by the 2015 class of the Graduate Program in Curatorial Practice at California College of the Arts, with the support of the Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts.

Through April 18.