



Paulina Peavy

In 1932, Paulina Peavy (1901 – 1999) attended a séance at the home of Ida L. Ewing in Santa Ana, California, where she claims to have met a spirit/UFO from another world named Lacamo. From that moment forward, Peavy, a university-trained artist, painted with a brush that “moved on its own.” Peavy’s artistic path centered around her convening with beings and forces beyond the visible plane to create her work. Paulina Peavy was born in 1901 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. She graduated from Oregon State College (OSC) in 1923 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Vocational Education; she completed studies equivalent to an MA at the Chouinard School of Fine Art in Los Angeles before it became a degree-granting institution, and eventually was absorbed into the present-day CalArts.

Peavy’s roots in California, where she lived and painted from 1923 to 1943, were deeply embedded in the emerging abstract art scene of the 1920s, where enthusiastic explorations of the occult were embraced. She was a student of Hans Hofmann at Chouinard and joined the circle of California’s first Surrealists led by Lorus Feitelson. Her professional and social circles included members of the occult-inclined Group of Eight as well as Synchronists, who formed the first abstract art movement in America. Beginning in the late 1920s, Peavy played a vital role in the emerging West Coast art scene: she established a gallery, school, and salon under her name, where she conducted her own classes. She also hosted classes of the foundational Los Angeles Art Students League and showed these artists’ works alongside her own. Her legacy in the emerging West Coast art scene was almost forgotten, in part because she moved to New York City when the West Coast art scene was gaining its most influential chroniclers; in addition, her cosmology was considered too radical for mainstream culture to accept.

While in California Peavy showed at some of the most significant galleries of her time, including the Stendahl Gallery in Los Angeles. She was included in the opening of the San Francisco Art Association Annual group show which opened in January 1935 at San Francisco Museum of Art (now SFMOMA) and thirty of her paintings were exhibited during the Golden Gate International Exposition of 1939-40 at the Temple of Religion.

Peavy was encouraged to move to Manhattan after the positive response to her 1935 exhibit at Delphic Studios in New York City, a gallery that exhibited work by other important occultist painters. Many of Peavy’s painted panels from the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition (some at 72”x42”) were also exhibited in New York. And it is in New York where Peavy more fully realized her complex cosmology, including the revelation of the secrets of the universe from Lacamo, secrets that became the subject matter of her art, costume, poetry, films, and manuscripts. Peavy wrote numerous manuscripts describing her cosmology, with *My Life With a U.F.O.* from the 1980s as the most detailed account. Over time, she developed a belief that

the world evolved in 12,000-year cycles that are broken down into four 3,000-year periods, each of which corresponds to one of the four seasons. She predicted that in the 3,000-year Summer Age, the last of which occurred during the reign of the Egyptian pharaohs, people will become spirits of UFOs, inhabiting the universe as invisible atoms or electronic beams that can take on different forms when descending to Earth from the far reaches of the universe. Her manuscripts and films explain Peavy's complex intersection of a utopian future accomplished through the dissolution of gender.

Peavy lived and worked in New York from 1943 until close to the end of her life. She died in Bethesda, Maryland in 1999, at the age of 98, a witness to nearly the entire twentieth century.

Paulina Peavy's work was featured in the 1936 exhibition *Painters & Sculptors of Los Angeles* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and a selection of thirty of her paintings were shown at the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco in 1939. Past solo exhibitions include *Paulina Peavy: An Etherian Channeler*, curated by Laura Whitcomb, at *Beyond Baroque* in Venice, California (2021), *Paulina Peavy: Astrocultural Messenger*, at Andrew Edlin Gallery (2023), and *Paulina Peavy* (2025) at Emanuela Campoli, Paris. *Paulina Peavy: Etherian Channeler*, a monograph written by Whitcomb, was published in 2023.

Her art is included in the permanent collections of the the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Minneapolis Institute of Art, the National Gallery, Oregon State University, the Portland Museum of Art, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Previous:

Sam Vandivert, [Peavy on Long John Nebel Radio Show], 1958.
Courtesy Paulina Peavy Estate

Right:

Photographer unknown, [Photo of Peavy painting *Come Unto Me*], 1939
Courtesy Paulina Peavy Estate

