

EDUCATION

Originally from South Pasadena, California, multidisciplinary artist Paul Benavidez began his art studies at Pasadena City College (PCC) in the late 1960s, where he was taught and mentored by artist David Schnabel. The painter George De Groat, who taught at Otis Art Institute and the Art Center College of Design, was also a mentor. It was in this period that Benavidez came to know other notable artists including Joseph Mugnaini who was the main figure at Otis along with Charles White. It is important to note that Benavidez was and remains today influenced by the work and philosophy of Rico Lebrun.

In 1973, Benavidez moved to the Santa Barbara area to attend Santa Barbara Art Institute (SBARTI) where painter Priscilla Bender-Shore and the international sculptor, Alice de Creeft, were faculty. After a year at SBARTI Benavidez transferred to the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) specifically to study with Howard Warshaw. On entering UCSB, Benavidez was accepted into the Howard Warshaw Drawing Program where he studied until Warshaw's death in 1977. Benavidez was also accepted to the prestigious UCSB College of Creative Studies where he studied contemporary sculpture under John McCracken. Leaving UCSB in his senior year to raise his family, Benavidez returned in 1994 to finish his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Art Studio in 1996. There he studied with contemporary artists Karen Carson and Harry Reese.

In 2009, Benavidez began his graduate studies in visual art at Vermont College of Fine Arts (VCFA), where he was mentored by Faith Wilding and other notable artists. At VCFA, Benavidez expanded his multidisciplinary studio art to include the genre, Public Practice. He received his Master of Fine Arts Degree in 2012.

AWARDS, ACHIEVEMENTS & ACTIVISM

Benavidez is the recipient of numerous awards, including First Place in California's "Millard Sheets 2005 Contemporary Fine Art Competition, Category Figurative" held in Los Angeles. He won Third Place in the Los Angeles "Municipal Art Gallery 2008 Los Angeles Juried Competition."

Before moving to Northern California in 2019, Benavidez was a key figure in establishing the City of Fillmore California Arts Commission and Public Art Policy. He was Art Commissioner for the city for a four-year tenure.

Benavidez donated artwork to raise awareness of Dr. Roger Nelson's Global Consciousness Project at Princeton University. He also donates his time and artwork to Unequal Wealth Distribution (UWD) discussion group, and he is currently an artist and activist for the crucial climate change project, MEER: ReflEction (www.meerreflection.com) directed by Dr. Ye Tao.

Today, he continues his multidisciplinary studio practice in Sacramento and Emeryville, California.