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Surf and skateboard art pioneers coming to Virginia Beach for event

By Teresa Annas, Correspondent
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Courtesy of Dusters California L
artists with boards

IF YOU GO

California Locos

Art show – 7 to 11 p.m.
Saturday at Studio 17, 536
Virginia Beach Blvd. at the
Oceanfront. Open noon to 6
p.m. Mondays through
Saturdays. Ends Aug. 27.

Los Savages concert – The
artists will perform in their
band, 7 p.m. Tuesday at Studio
17.

Skateboard contest – Work
Release, 759 Granby St.,
Norfolk, 4 to 8 p.m. Thursday.

Auction/panel discussion on art
collecting – Hermitage Museum
and Gardens, 7637 N. Shore
Road, Norfolk, 6 -9 p.m. next
Friday.

Good luck with that.

But if you did that research, or if you already knew it, you'd be ready to greet the pioneering artists known as the California Locos who are headed to Virginia Beach this week.

As to the wow factor, all the surf and skate crowd needs to hear is that one of them designed the poster for the 1966 surfer film "The Endless Summer."

Four of the five famed Locos will be here in coming days for two purposes. One is to attend an exhibition of their latest art opening Saturday at Studio 17 and other local events as part of this area's CAN Festival, sponsored by the arts education-oriented Contemporary Arts Network Foundation.

The other reason they're flying cross-country is to promote a newly released "California Locos" line of skateboards produced by Dusters California. The skateboard company has designed boards bearing artwork by each of the Locos.

Wave Riding Vehicles' Oceanfront store just installed the new line on its walls last Friday, said L.G. Shaw, operations manager. "We've already sold one or two." The custom detailing includes colored wheels and built-in bottle openers.

"As soon as you see the collection, you can feel the history and the aesthetic of the group," Shaw said. "You can see the connection between their work and some younger artists they've inspired."

A set of these boards also will be on display at Studio 17; Nano Nobrega, Dusters' co-owner and creative director, plans to attend the show's opening.

Shaw said area skaters and surfers are stoked. At least, those who know about it. Last weekend, information was still trickling out about the Locos' upcoming entry into the local scene.

The best known of the Locos is John Van Hamersveld, legendary for designing the iconic poster for "Endless Summer." He used flat, bold colors to show the sun rising as surfers neared the ocean; the poster would remind any Pop Art fan of Andy Warhol's photo-silkscreen paintings, begun just four years earlier.

The film is a cult classic "because of the ideals it instills, that surfing is an ageless, timeless way of life," Shaw said. "It's kind of a fountain of youth in some people's minds, and that movie encapsulates it."

Nobrega, who designed the boards using existing work by each artist, said that when he was studying design, "John was always a huge influence for anybody."

Van Hamersveld also created album covers , including the Beatles' 1967 "Magical Mystery Tour" and the Rolling Stones' 1972 "Exile on Main St."

The Locos show and skateboards premiered in late June in Venice Beach, Calif., and are coming here largely because one of the Locos (Dave Tourje) is friends with and mentor to Asa Jackson, a local artist who heads the CAN Foundation.

But it's also true that Dusters California wants to break more strongly into the East Coast market. Nobrega said he heard that "Virginia has a huge skate and surf scene." He said 700 people attended the West Coast opening, and in Virginia Beach, "we're expecting a lot of people."

Some of the Locos events will be listed at www.thecanfoundation.org, while WRV's Locos schedule, to include a skate park event at 2 p.m. Saturday, will be posted at www.waveridingvehicles.com/blogs/news, Shaw said.

Other Locos heading our way:

n Dave Tourje, the lead Loco, pegged the group's outlook for Huffington Post: "It was about the artists who were raised here. They came up outsiders to the art parade. They came from the surf, skate, graffiti and punk scenes, not the gallery scene." His work is a blend of graphic, comic and gestural imagery. He is a former punk musician.

n Norton Wisdom has practiced live-painting in collaboration with music ensembles since 1979, touching off an international movement. His paintings are abstract.

n Gary Wong is a well-known blues bandleader around L.A. known as "Charlie Chan." His visual language is a mix of West Coast postmodernism and surf-skate-rock culture.

The missing Loco is Chaz Bojorquez, who is known as the godfather of Cholo writing, a graffiti style that came out of the East L.A. Mexican American neighborhoods.

On Monday, Troy Summerell, owner of Studio 17, was busy painting over murals to make a clean gallery for the Locos' art. He is familiar with the Locos.

Summerell is a surf-inspired artist, too. "When you hear the people they inspired" – such as street artist Shepard Fairey – "those are the people who inspired me."