



Highway 14, No. 2, 2000-2002, Oil on canvas, 3 x 12 feet in 3 panels

Marta Chaffee: The Places We've Lived

Armory Center for the Arts
 July 1 - December 16, 2018
 Aandrea Stang, Curator

Marta Chaffee is an artist who lives and works in her native Los Angeles. Raised in

Pasadena, CA, she received a B.A. from Occidental College. After studies at University

of California, Los Angeles and the Arts Students League in New York, she earned an

M.F.A. from Otis Institute. Chaffee's paintings and drawings focus on images of the

California landscape. Her work has been exhibited throughout the western states, New

York and Florida, as well as Seoul, Korea. Her work is held in numerous private and public

collections. The artist lives with her husband in Pacific Palisades. They have two daughters.

Andrea Stang is an independent curator and consultant with a focus on contemporary

and socially engaged art practices. Stang developed and launched the education program

at Hauser Wirth & Schimmel and, prior to that, the gallery and campus-wide curatorial

program Oxy Arts at Occidental College. From 2002 until 2012 she developed and

produced public programming for The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, where

she was responsible for MOCAs Engagement Party, the pioneering program that ran from

2008 to 2012 and offered residencies to artists exploring socially engaged artwork.

Armory Center for the Arts, in Pasadena, CA, is one of the Los Angeles region's leading

independent institutions for contemporary art and community arts education. The Armory

believes that an understanding and appreciation of the arts is essential for a well-rounded

human experience and a healthy civic community. Armory exhibitions inspire dialogue

art; include residency programs that encourage experimentation and outreach; and

introduce contemporary visual art to Pasadena, the Los Angeles region, and beyond. The

Armory also offers studio art classes and related educational programs to more than fifty

schools, community sites, and juvenile justice centers in the greater Los Angeles area.



Armory Center for the Arts

145 North Raymond Avenue

Pasadena, California 91103

armoryarts.org/exhibitions

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Admission is always free.

12 - 5 PM (closed Tuesdays)

Gallery Hours

Exhibition Checklist

All works courtesy of the artist

unless otherwise noted.

Mandeville Canyon Series, No. 1

1977

Oil on paper

7 1/4 x 11 1/8 inches

Mandeville Canyon Series, No. 2

1977

Oil on paper

7 1/4 x 11 1/8 inches

Mandeville Canyon Series, No. 4

1977-1981

Oil on paper

7 3/8 x 12 1/8 inches

Mandeville Canyon Series, No. 17

1977-1984

Oil on paper

9 x 14 inches

Mandeville Canyon Series, No. 31

1977-1980

Oil on canvas

15 x 44 1/8 inches

Pacific Coast Highway No. 33

1986-2001

Graphite on Rives

29 3/4 x 125 1/4 inches

Pacific Coast Highway Series, No. 19

1988-1993

Oil on canvas

41 x 31 inches

I-5 Highway Series: No. 8

1988-1990

Oil on paper

7 1/4 x 11 1/8 inches

I-5 Highway Series: No. 15

1988-1990

Oil on canvas

10 1/8 x 17 1/8 inches

I-5 Highway Series: No. 19

1988-1990

Oil on paper

15 x 39 7/16 inches

I-5 Highway Series: No. 21

1988-1990

Graphite on Rives

15 1/8 x 22 1/8 inches

Black Cloud

1992

Graphite on Rives

15 x 44 1/8 inches

Lompoc Valley Series: No. 14

1998-1999

Oil on paper

7 x 10 inches

Lompoc Valley Series: No. 19

1998-1999

Oil on paper

7 x 9 7/8 inches

Lompoc Valley Series: No. 21

1998-1999

Oil on paper

7 x 10 inches

Highway 395: No. 1

2000-2001

Graphite on Rives

15 x 44 1/8 inches

Highway 395: No. 5

2000-2002

Graphite on Rives

15 x 44 1/8 inches

Highway 14, No. 2

2000-2002

Oil on canvas

3 x 12 feet in 3 panels

Courtesy of Linda Millard

In preparation for *Marta Chaffee: The Places We've Lived* my mother and I sat down to talk about her life and her practice. We discussed how she grew up with the Los Angeles art world of the 1950s, '60s and '70s. The environment was just that to her – an environment. As an artist Marta has been influenced by her surroundings, not only by the landscape of California but also the nascent post-War art scene that was developing in Los Angeles. As a wife and mother, Marta returned to graduate school at the age of 40 with two small children. While there, rather than dig into art school life, she was overseeing a home building project, acting as board president of her daughters' school, and attending to the various mundane tasks of daily life. Her dialogue with other artists was limited. Her paintings were defining where she was, and how she wanted those places to be. Of the hours of interview, we excerpted the following conversation. - A.S.

AS: You made paintings and drawings about the places that we've lived, including images of the ocean, and the 395 on the way to Walker Lake to visit grandma and Ernie.

MC: I was always driving and I've established this format that's kind of a long horizontal. I think it might have something to do with the fact that's the windshield shape. And that's kind of the way I saw things. It was a way of seeing things that was appropriate for me.

AS: And when you were working on these paintings were you thinking about getting places? Or going places? Or being places? Or did the road just look good in the paintings?

MC: No. I was thinking about how the road anchors you where you are, that you're looking at various things from the road. Whether it was going up 395 on the east side of the Sierra Nevadas, Pacific Coast Highway, or I-5, the road was kind of an anchor.

It does reflect my life in the sense that I'm seeing through a windshield a lot of the time. When I get back to the studio then I have that vision and I can play with it.

AS: Do you see those paintings as being fantastical at all or about escape?

MC: No, I don't see them as being about escape. I don't see them particularly as fantasy either. I see them as my personal vision of the subject, say Pacific Coast Highway.

AS: Right. But you didn't go and take a picture along the beach where there's a trashy parking lot. You take photos and then you remove elements from the pictures. So there is some fantasy.

MC: I do not feel that I have to be true to what's in the photograph.

AS: That's not what I'm saying.

MC: You're saying why did I choose the more lyrical side of life?

AS: Maybe. I wouldn't have described it that way, but sure.

MC: To me that's the way I think about it. You know, I want something that to me is beautiful. I'm not interested in a dirty parking lot that shows "Southern California." I'm much more interested in a tree or the grass...

AS: You're not painting A Place.

MC: No, I'm not.

AS: You're painting the elements of the place. I mean, you're painting the line of the hillside or the color of the grass. It's the stuff of the place.

MC: The stuff of the place. I think that's fair. These are the things that feed my soul, and that's what I'm trying to create.



I-5 Highway Series: No. 19, 1988-1990, Oil on paper, 15 x 39 7/16 inches