



## 2025 Commencement Honorary Doctorate Recipient: Peter Adams

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Distinguished contemporary American artist Peter Adams was born and raised in Los Angeles. His work reflects a unique synthesis of classical training and cross-cultural influences. He received his formal education at respected institutions including the Art Center College of Design, Otis Art Institute, and the Instituto de Bellas Artes in San Miguel de Allende. The foundation of his artistic development was laid at the Lukits Academy of Fine Arts in Los Angeles, where he underwent a rigorous seven-year program from 1970 to 1977. During this time, he served as a personal apprentice to Theodore N. Lukits (1897–1992), a renowned muralist and portraitist celebrated for his classical approach and appreciation of Asian aesthetics. Under Lukits' mentorship, Adams studied still life compositions featuring Asian objects d'art, cultivating a deep and lasting interest in Eastern art and antiquities.



Honorary doctorate recipient Peter Adams

This affinity for Asian culture became a defining element of Adams' career. In 1981, he became the first American artist to travel and paint unescorted throughout the People's Republic of China. His international focus continued in 1987, when he was the only American artist to accompany and paint the Mujahideen rebels in Soviet-occupied Afghanistan. In 2010, he spent a month in Jerusalem in preparation for a commission to paint the Fourteen Stations of the Cross. These global experiences helped shape his artistic philosophy, which blends Eastern compositional design with Western atmospheric depth.

From 1993 to 2021, Adams served as president of the historic California Art Club, founded in 1909. During his leadership, the Club's membership and influence grew significantly, positioning it as a national leader in the contemporary realist art movement. He now holds the title of President Emeritus.

Adams' work is represented in prominent collections such as the Bowers Museum, The Irvine Museum, Pacific Asia Museum, California Club, Jonathan Club, Carnegie Art Museum, Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art, Stephen's College, Our Savior Church, and Caruso Catholic Center at USC, and the Forbes Magazine Collection. His numerous accolades include the California Art Club's Gold Medal Award, the Fine Arts Club of Pasadena's Visual Arts Award, PleinAir Magazine's Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Autry Museum's John J. Geraghty Award.

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*Adams was bestowed an honorary doctorate by Academy of Art University President Dr. Elisa Stephens on Thursday, May 15. He delivered the following speech to this year's class of graduating students.*