

Made in L.A. 2016: a, the, though, only at the Hammer Museum

**June 12 –
August 28, 2016**

The biennial occupies a particular space in the art ecosystem, often aiming to have a specific regional focus, and be of the moment. Given the pluralistic nature of art and culture in late capitalism, using contemporaneity and adjacency as an organizing principle often ends up forcing connections between too many aesthetic ideas, resulting in cacophony. *Made in L.A. 2016: a, the, though, only* upends those expectations, pretending to be neither local (the artists are not all Los Angeles-based), nor particularly current (many of the works in the show were made before 2000), nor comprehensive (there are only 26 artists in the exhibition). Much of the work was not even intended for a gallery or museum context when it was made. The curators Hamza Walker and Aram Moshayedi mostly eschewed traditional, self-contained objects, instead giving a small group of artists ample space for installations that in one way or another present cultural, archeological, or sociological inquiries: What kinds of systems are at play here? How does our labor create meaning? How can

these processes become more open and expansive?

In Rafa Esparza's work, *tierra* (2016), objects which have been buried and unearthed are displayed on a floor of bricks which were made by Esparza, his father, and other family and friends. The labor and the laborers, often elided in the artistic presentation, are here foregrounded. In burying these objects before putting them on display, Esparza employs a form of ritual that brings attention to how the earth is an active participant in all our human activities. Lauren Davis Fisher also emphasizes labor in her installation *SET TESTS* (2016), turning sculpture into an open-ended activity where the elements are changed every week. The work then culminated in a formal performance at the end of the exhibit. This ongoing performance changes the static nature of sculpture into a system of fluid aesthetic relationships, where the objects' identity, function, and relationship to each other remains in motion, subject to change. Both these works, along with the films of Laida Lertxundi, integrate the materiality of their creation into their presentation so that the story of the making of the works was felt in their physical presence.

Across the exhibition, many other works are sites where different kinds of descriptive systems and categories of knowledge are rendered visible. The artist is sometimes creating, but more often gathering, organizing, transcribing, and unearthing. Often, this

involves a transforming of that which is controlled, prescribed, and defined into something more open, interpretable, and felt. For instance, musical notation is traditionally a specialized language that is designed to precisely replicate the performance of a given piece of music. In the case of Wadada Leo Smith's scores, this constrictive language is discarded and replaced with a form of visual syntax, that instead creates a loose, free-form structure upon which to improvise. Smith does this in part by combining the visual language of painting with the structure of musical notation, thereby cross contaminating both systems. Similarly, Arthur Jafa's books are culled from magazines and other commercial sources, where they are part of a system intended either to sell a product or tell a story. Here, the images form a kind of open-ended cosmos, in which relationships are fluid and intuitive. In changing the dynamics of these images and their circulation, Jafa gives the viewer tacit permission to see all images differently, and to recombine them using logics other than the ones initially intended. Both Jafa's and Smith's reconfigurations have powerful ramifications, creating options and freedom out of prescription and definition.

However, the inclusion of so many large and fragmented installations came at the expense of more self-contained art objects, like painting, sculpture, and drawing. This, and the overuse of vitrines and

other display systems, created a visual dryness that prompted viewer fatigue. Given the relative scarcity of painting and sculpture in the exhibition, the choice to include two frequently exhibited Los Angeles artists working in these mediums was disconcerting. In particular, Sterling Ruby's welding tables felt extraneous and overweening, and the happily variegated paintings of Rebecca Morris felt out of place in this context. Counterbalancing these odd inclusions, Walker and Moshayedi unearthed dynamic oeuvres from relatively obscure artists: the unsettlingly beautiful assemblages of Kenzi Shiokava, and Huguette Caland's heterogeneous, erotic body of work. It was a joy and a surprise to discover these artists here, in what was a deeply appreciated act of art historical excavation.

An important function of art objects is to engage the types of understanding that come through the senses, speaking to the body through a synesthetic engagement with intentional, haptic objects. Walker and Moshayedi instead chose works that unpack the complex systems and representations that are in play in contemporary global culture. When artists such as Daniel Small and Gala Porras Kim bring to light the inherent biases in Western constructions of race and cultural otherness, or Martine Syms and Kenneth Tam unfold the vulnerability in gendered bodies and spaces, they are speaking to how these cultural constructions play

out in everyday life. The work in this iteration of *Made in L.A.* created space for imagining other kinds of structures by bringing our attention to these kinds of systems and the labor that operates in the creation of culture.

Doug Aitken: Electric Earth at The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA

**September 10, 2016–
January 15, 2017**

There's a dreamy international drift to Doug Aitken's retrospective at MOCA, *Electric Earth*. In a scene from *Black Mirror* (2011), Chloe Sevigny, in an ambiguously international hotel room, reads off a list of disparate cities over the telephone—we're left wondering who is on the other end. The film projects within the interior of a mirrored architectural structure; Sevigny and vague scenes of industry and landscape multiply and, ostensibly, animate the installation's architectural pretensions. Yet, the end result is something monolithic, even turgid: the polished, reflective surface, the beautifully-rendered *ennui*, the unspoken and unremarked upon underpinnings of class, access and privilege. In *Black Mirror*, far-flung locale are material, and then immaterial; nature is affect.

Aitken's work is sumptuous: beautiful, if cerebral,

and comfortable to become lost within. Its comforting qualities are also the rub: appealing dreamscapes that teeter along the twin precipice of esotericism and meaninglessness. Landscape, as a fluid material in the hands of Aitken's films, is stripped of geographic identity; electricity is harnessed, materials are mined, surfaces polished, ad nauseum. Beauty becomes comfort becomes tedium in this arena of aestheticized privilege.

MOCA's staging invites an easy meander on the part of the viewer, and usefully contrasts Aitken's sculptural and two-dimensional works against his many films. Perhaps fittingly then, Aitken's filmic space is not the space of action, but, instead, of perpetual transience, trafficking in a time-based monotony reminiscent of a strain of '60s and '70s European cinema practiced by Antonioni or Ackerman.

In many cases, the entrance of a sole human subject into the frame saps the power of Aitken's picturesque. The centerpiece and exhibition namesake, *electric earth* (1999), with its crackling movement and intonation of urban tunnels and neon light, is an exception, in that the lone protagonist has both agency and anonymity (celebrities, like Sevigny, fill many of the acting roles elsewhere). Though *electric earth's* central metaphor—dance as transformation—feels strained and overstated at points, it is here that Aitken synthesizes an animistic vision of nature and culture collided, and grown into one another.

Contrast this with *Song 1* (2012), in which a slow parade of recognizable figures languidly mouth the words to “I Only Have Eyes for You” along a mammoth cylindrical screen (the piece originally screened on the exterior of the Hirshhorn Museum). The specter of celebrity here comes off as distracting at best, grossly ostentatious at worst, and unrevealing all around. To frame those in power with beauty and composition (and flattery) is to underscore one’s own proximity to this power, and the access—to air travel, high-end hotels, modernist domestic architecture—that comes in tandem with it. Though the experience is far from unenjoyable, it is disquietingly commercial in a museum setting.

The flow of raw materials as a substratum of the flow of material goods is—despite its deeply troubling relation to capitalism—an awe-inspiring thing, and has captivated Western culture since the advent of trade and shipping routes. Michel Serres, in his book *Statues*, makes poignant material out of the flow of the earth into the structures that surround us everyday.¹ Aitken’s slow-pans across the Namib Desert in *diamond sea* (1997) revel in picturesque locations showing only the signs of a human touch either long-gone (ruins) or opportunistic (industry). What one is to make of the landscape itself is entirely speculative, both in the open-ended, and oily real-estate senses.

Aitken is, thankfully, no stranger to humor, nor is he un-adept at wringing

awe and curiosity out of a kind of skewed everyday—the low-frequency, high-volume roar of late-’70s concert goers in *Hysteria* (1998-2000) in that regard occupies a zone of equivalency with the hum of industrial machinery (*diamond sea*) or the din of tectonic plates shifting far below the earth (*Sonic Pavilion*, 2009). So it seems the wall text accompanying *Sunset (black)* (2012) (“this sun never sets or fades”) would ring false, or least ironic, to Aitken himself. Electricity, or access to it, is not, after all, a perpetual state, but one dependent on the cooperative structures of society. Aitken spends quite a bit of time in this exhibition reminding us of the quickened geologic pace of the post-industrial era, in which various geologic eras are regularly intermixed—permanence routinely mined, then undermined. Aitken amply gives the lie to an anachronistic Newtonian notion of stability that occupies our culture like a ghost—or, in other words, Aitken’s work will last as long as the lights are turned on, and as long as there are lights to turn on.

Mertzbau at Tif Sigfrids

July 16–
August 20, 2016

Joe Sola’s recent exhibition at Tif Sigfrids, *Mertzbau* (featuring the late artist, Albert Mertz), cycles through ideas in threes.

The press release claims that *Mertzbau* is “a celebration of art, trash, life, and the slippery distinction between the three.” A third artist, the inimitable Kurt Schwitters, is present in spirit alone—Schwitters’ grand work, *Merzbau* (1937), in which he transformed most of his family home in Hanover, serves as the inspiration and bridge connecting Sola and Mertz. For this semi-collaborative presentation, Sola utilizes 419 salvaged wooden chairs to form three tunnels, the light at the end of each is a distinct work by Mertz. The title of the show adds Mertz’s “t” to the aforementioned Schwitters work—a subtle linguistic gesture that the Granddaddy of Dada would no doubt appreciate.

Sigfrids has whited out the exterior windows to her Hollywood storefront and put a compact piece of cardboard on display, which contains a quote by Schwitters transcribed by Mertz in 1948. It reads: “Being active in several different art forms was a matter of necessity for me as an artist. My goal with the ‘Merzkunst’ was the total work of art that comprises all other forms of art in one artistic unity.” By both revoking viewership from the street and offering only a cryptic clue, Sigfrids has set a situational stage for multi-generational works to perform.

However, this stage is cluttered to capacity with chairs collected from city streets, precariously balanced in a thoroughly conceived frenzy. Dinged and dented, functional or fragile, garish yet

1. “Flow does the Garonne, flow do the sands with the water and the gravel through buckets, hoppers, cement mixers...finally hardening around metal frameworks in the respective forms of pillars, walls or

ceilings, deep piles or vertiginous towers. The water of the river freezes into sand; the mortar sets in order to build the house.” Michel Serres, *Statues*. Trans: Randolph Burks. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.

Keith J. Varadi

Jean-Pascal Flavien & Mika Tajima at Kayne Griffin Corcoran

September 10 –
October 29, 2016

gratifying—these pieces of furniture are no longer meant to be sat on and are not really meant to be seen, either. Despite the exhibition being billed as a solo show by Joe Sola, featuring Albert Mertz, Sola has chosen to play the role of supporting actor, using his contribution to highlight Mertz's oddly enchanting, more nuanced works. Individually and collectively, these works are emblematic of Mertz's consistent yet varied practice.

The first Mertz work on view, *Untitled (Red/Blue on homemade stretchers)* (1971), is a small and seemingly slapdash minimalist painting of two squares on a ratty primed canvas; staples protrude around the sides and strings sneak from behind. The next, *Untitled (framed landscape painting)* (1979), is an innocuously compelling rural scene covered in blue dots and contained within a weathered frame, dotted in red. The third and last, *Untitled (Chicago-Caesar)* (1981), was made a decade after the first on display and uses a book cover by California crime novelist W.R. Burnett as the central icon, surrounded by vague earth tones, dotted and lined with more of his signature blue and red.

These three paintings don't waste anything: materials, time, or effort. They concisely communicate what they need to with just enough panache, rigor, and savvy. They do not reveal too much too quickly, nor do they go out of their way to conceal any information either. Sola, for his part, counters this approach

with his audacious assemblage. By creating this absurdist environment for his predecessor to shine within, Sola graciously pays homage to a brilliant and overlooked talent.

Humor is a crucial aspect of Sola's work, and here, the over-the-top physical comedy of the installation shakes the body and rattles the mind. One walks in and out of these tunnels, tuning in and out of infinite tone zones. Is this safe? Is this sane? Is this good? Is this bad? None of these questions are justifiably answerable. At a certain point, it must be understood that not all inquiries can be qualified or quantified; instead, perhaps the value of the question can rest within the constant shifts in confusion and discovery surrounding its loose punctuation.

So then, what can we learn from Schwitters? Art is trash; trash is art. Art is life; life is art. Life is also trash, and the slippery cycle goes on. And what can we learn from *Mertz-bau*? More or less the same. Think outside this exhibition, and the idea of "the exhibition." We will continue to slip up and repeat for as long as our lives allow us to go on. When we nosedive into the most foul of piles, it is immediately a horrid sensory nightmare, but then gradually, our sense of hope and idealism becomes heightened. This show strongly suggests one to take the leap, with Mertz in one ear, whispering, "Don't fear death," and Sola in the other, whispering, "For now, just don't fear bedbugs."

It seems fitting that Los Angeles born Mika Tajima's first show in her hometown includes one of her candy-colored Jacuzzi paintings. What could be more quintessentially L.A. than a sunset-ombré hot tub, its slick sexy object-ness epitomizing the glamor of Hollywood. Her co-exhibitor Jean-Pascal Flavien likewise embraces the city's marquee industry with *statement house (temporary title) Los Angeles* (2016), a diminutive baby pink house—sited in the gallery's lush courtyard—to be occupied intermittently by two screenwriters over the run of the show. Both artists are preoccupied with people: how we work, how we live, how we communicate, and the way in which the objects and environments that surround us define and manipulate our interactions.

Office furniture has been a source of inspiration for Tajima for some time. In 2011 she made sculptures repurposing an original 1970s Herman Miller Action Office system, the first office "cubicle." She also has an ongoing series, *Furniture Art* (a reference to Erik Satie's *Furniture Music [Musique d'ameublement]*, 1917), a

Katie Bode

series of infinitely repetitive compositions meant to blend into the background like aural decor. As much as she enjoys the formal possibilities of the everyday office's visual vocabulary, Tajima's interest also lies in the role of the workplace itself as a site of production and performance. A number of textile works are included in the show from Tajima's *Negative Entropy* series (2015-16): a set of Jacquard-woven "acoustic portraits" of workers recorded in their factories and offices which are then abstracted into patterns for the looms. The end result is as painterly as a Rothko while still distinctly digital in a lo-fi, '80s sort of way (Jacquard looms are early precursors to modern computers). Here too Tajima fortifies her sensual objects with a consideration of the intricacies of production and labor.

In opposition to the many-pronged manifestations of Tajima's output, Jean-Pascal Flavien's contribution to the exhibition is singular to the point of being monolithic. A single form—the shape taken from the footprint of the built house in the courtyard—is repeated in cutout aluminum sheets hung throughout the main gallery. The intention of the house is to exist as a framework for language, an empty box to be filled with the potential possibility for engagement. As with previous iterations of his house projects, Flavien invites collaborators to inhabit the space, creating texts to compliment and complete the work. For

this particular version two screenwriters have occupied the bungalow, composing Tweets that script its daily activities throughout the run of the show.

A perusal of their respective Twitter feeds finds them both funnier and less myopic than I expected from such an intellectually staged feedback loop. This proved to be the saving grace for a project that could have easily read as real-estate-as-performance. Market forces and speculations are briefly addressed in a few early Tweets, but given the current heated conversation on the role of galleries and artists in gentrification, it seems remiss that such issues are mostly ignored. In his formal, repetitive simplicity Flavien attempts to make physical the endlessly possible scenarios of a space. But this openness, inactivated, can start to look more like emptiness.

The lynchpin for social practice artwork always lies in collaboration, or how well the participants engage with one another. There is an ever-present danger of the work being swallowed by its own intentions, either closing in on itself or opening into gross spectacle. It is clear that both artists are good collaborators, Tajima with the fabricators, translators, and operators that make her objects possible, Flavien with his activating inhabitants. It's also interesting to find so many objects in a show so preoccupied with interaction. What the objects themselves communicate is harder to quantify. Tajima's almost

archivist eye towards industrial design translates easily into covetable luxury objects. But her works also carry within themselves a consideration of their humanity, however artfully abstracted. Flavien's plans for utopian environments of possibility can seem more like souvenirs on display next to the tourist attraction, shorthand symbols for an idealized experience that might never have happened at all.

Mark A. Rodriguez at Park View

July 23–
September 10, 2016

Owning things comes with complications. A certain amount of stuff is required to sustain life, but there's a point when too much is too much; even necessary things spurn attachment as they break down, go out of style, or decompose. Mark A. Rodriguez's recent exhibition at Park View embodied the passions and problems of obsolescence, provoking barbed questions about what it means to hold onto things, including art.

Two works containing a few-thousand cassette tapes each addressed these themes most clearly. *1st Gen* (2010-2016) and *2nd Gen* (2010-ongoing) are sculptures whose primary building blocks are exhaustive collections of Grateful Dead concert recordings. *1st Gen* also includes a cleanly designed mahogany shelving unit that holds

Stuart Krimko

the tapes, neatly ordering the spine of each tape's cardstock insert, and shedding light on the archival preferences, penmanship, and stylistic tics of the individual collector who catalogued it. Occupying a middle ground between homespun minimalism, home décor, and luxurious audiophile altarpiece, the piece occupied an entire wall of Park View's modest apartment setting. The most visually dominant works, meanwhile, were a series of cartoonish, larger-than-life wooden cutouts of flowers painted with menacingly gleeful facial expressions (2015 and 2016) inspired by street-level advertising Rodriguez encountered outside a local garden store. The flowers loomed everywhere, yet *1st Gen* was the exhibition's center of gravity.

On the surface, the piece is a study in the variety of fandom that reveals the fastidious side of a fan base best known for its Dionysian tendencies. As a Deadhead (full disclosure), however, I found myself drawn beyond this sociological facade into thornier territory with concerns about property—intellectual and otherwise. The Grateful Dead allowed its fans to record concerts with the proviso that the tapes were not to be commercially distributed. By incorporating them in artworks that bear his name rather than the Dead's—Rodriguez affixed a carved plaque with his signature and the image of a rose to the lower right side of *1st Gen*'s shelving unit—and by exhibiting it in

a gallery where it might be sold, he was calling upon art's ability to act as a super-efficient conductor of authorship. As in any act of post-Duchampian appropriation, the tapes become, at least temporarily, his own intellectual property. And like the slippery copyright issues that are re-shaping the music business today, their use by Rodriguez provokes questions about how and when artists can ethically absorb each other's work.

The extremity of Rodriguez's commitment to the project, however, suggested that he is interested in something that goes beyond putting his stamp on the Dead's legacy. What he has appropriated, finally, are the tapes as containers of music rather than the music itself. Given the warmth of its physical presence, *1st Gen* becomes a paean to the importance of real things that can be touched. But considering the time he spent traveling and meeting with tape collectors, as well as the care taken in the construction of the shelving, the work's impact is as a performative and durational—or even devotional—gesture rather than a purely sculptural statement.

This paradox was only emphasized by the subtle presence of *2nd Gen*, a work in progress for which Rodriguez is attempting to obtain a recording of every documented show the Dead played during their 30-year career. It includes the many duplicates he amassed while sourcing tapes for *1st Gen*—those for

which he had no duplicates he spent years dubbing himself—and was installed in several dozen cardboard boxes stacked underneath a table lodged against the gallery's rear wall. Rodriguez demoted the gallery from fine art space to storage facility. As a result, I felt like I was being asked to exchange the experience of aesthetic pleasure for a sadder meditation on the way possessions pile up as mute witnesses to the passage of time.

Until I consulted the checklist, it hadn't occurred to me that the table sheltering *2nd Gen*, about as featureless an object as one could imagine, was an artwork too. On top of *Table* (2015-2016)—and the related but more diminutive *Night Stand* (2016), located elsewhere in the gallery—Rodriguez placed several examples of his functional *Common Lamp* (2015) sculptures, in which brass and copper elements echo the colors and textures of the pennies filling the aluminum pans serving as bases. As inflation takes its course, pennies are increasingly on the verge of uselessness, so that the lamps provide storage for objects whose utility is on the wane.

Seen together these works bring to mind Dieter Roth and his tables and desks, which started out as sites for art making and ended up as art objects. Depending on one's perspective, this either dilutes value—because anything the artist touches has the potential to become art—or allows it to become a free-flowing force with the

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1
Kenzi Shiokava, *Made in L.A. 2016: a, the, though, only* (2016) (installation view).
Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.
Photo: Brian Forrest.

2
Doug Aitken, *Black Mirror* (2011)
(installation view at Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt). Photo:
Norbert Miguletz.



3



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3
Joe Sola with Albert Mertz,
Mertzbau (2016) (installation
view). Image courtesy of
the artist and Tif Sigfrids,
Los Angeles. Photo:
Steven Rimlinger.

4
Jean-Pascal Flavien, *statement
house* (temporary title) *protocol*
Los Angeles (2016). Various
material, 8.5 × 16.5 × 16.5 feet.
Image courtesy of the artist
and Kayne Griffin Corcoran,
Los Angeles. Photo:
Robert Wedemeyer.

5



6



5
Mark A. Rodriguez, *Earth Day af*, (2016) (installation view).
Image courtesy of the artist
and Park View, Los Angeles.
Photo: Jeff McLane.

6
The Weeping Line (organized by
Alter Space) at Four Six One
Nine (installation view). Image
courtesy of Alter Space, San
Francisco. Photo: Phillip Maisel.

potential to imbue common things with something akin to religious energy. In either case, what ends up being shown as art in spaces designated for the purpose are relic- or corpse-like objects that point outward from themselves, toward life and the inevitable processes of decay that delimit it. The quietly radical conclusion here is that art, like life, can never really be contained. What fills our galleries and museums are mere by-products of otherwise ephemeral processes.

***The Weeping Line*
Organized by
Alter Space
at Four Six
One Nine
(S.F. in L.A.)**

**April 28–
July 23, 2016**

Female representation in the art world is maddeningly low, even decades after the emergence of the feminist art movement. However, too many exhibitions of women artists take an essentialist view based on gender, thwarting a complex and nuanced reading of their work. *The Weeping Line*, organized by the San Francisco-based gallery Alter Space, and hosted by Four Six One Nine, opts instead to treat gender as beside the point, rather than as the lazy, reductionist frame so often used to group female artists together. Free of gendered

cataloging, the focus stays on the work itself, which can be evaluated on its own terms.

The three artists featured in *The Weeping Line* do not readily fit together, thereby encouraging a teasing out of the aesthetic and conceptual connections between the work. The show features three female artists from three different cities, working in three different mediums, spanning roughly three decades in age. While the artists may come from varying perspectives, running through all their work is an emphasis on the handmade—on craft, the physical, and the tactile. The exhibition feels unapologetically old-school.

Chicago-based artist Mindy Rose Schwartz has created rough and funky mixed-media constructions, composed of *papier-mâché*, feathers, and string. Her all-white sculptures channel Louise Bourgeois's body-based surrealism. Oversized masks teeter on long, furry necks in *Harlequin Romance* (2016), with strings of tears streaming from their eyes. The piece walks the line between absurd and sincere. In *The Hands of God* (2011), two large, puffy hands hang down from the ceiling. They are meant to reference the *Yad*—literally translated as *hand* from Hebrew—which is the pointer that is used to read the Torah. Instead of the elegant, silver or gold instrument however, Schwartz's are misshapen, bulbous objects, further grounded in the material realm by the small, gremlin-like figures emerging from

their centers. Here is the sacred made profane; the divine found in the debased.

By contrast, the pastel and graphite drawings of San Francisco-based Koak have a completely different feel: they are lyrical and sensuous. These figurative works pull from the sweeping lines of Art Deco as much as from contemporary cartoon illustration. The female protagonists in her drawings—all ample curves and solid volumes—threaten to spill over the boundaries of the paper. The way in which Koak folds and twists these figures seems not so much like external violent manipulations, but rather organic expressions from within. In Koak's gorgeously sinuous wall drawing, *Creep* (2016), a larger-than-life nude figure looks back at an open doorway, perhaps casting the epithet at anyone who gazes upon her form. Women are on view, but they also look back.

Ironically, the youngest of the trio, painter Mattea Perrotta from Los Angeles, creates work that feels the most like it could be from another era: confident, geometric abstractions. With prominent paint handling, she delineates imprecise, organic forms. *Garden in Bloom* (2016) features two irregular, pink hills set against a black background and topped with small bumps, revealing them to be breasts, unashamedly free. A small painting that resembles early Kandinsky, *The Swimmer at Playa Santa Maria* (2016) depicts a white body floating over brightly-colored waves. The titular

beach could be referring to a location in Cuba, giving the historically passive genre of the bather an active and potentially charged subtext.

Perrotta's most compelling piece is *Fata Morgana* (2016), a large orange-pink trapezoid on a coarsely brushed grey ground. The title refers to a nautical mirage that takes its name from Morgan le Fay, the fairy witch of Arthurian legend, who would conjure visions of floating castles over the ocean, luring sailors to their death. In this context, the painting functions as a rebuke against the unchecked male gaze: stare at your own risk.

What's perplexing about the title's allusion to weeping is the implication of emotional vulnerability, if not hysteria, that is often cited to delegitimize female perspectives. On the contrary, these artists insist that vulnerability does not preclude a wider range of emotions, as can be seen in the humor, pathos, and bite on view. The show displays a range and depth that could be easily lost by viewing it through an overly gendered lens. Despite the marked differences in their styles, all three artists engage with fairly well established artistic modes. The results however, mark quite a departure from historical precedents, proving that traditional media need not be abandoned to convey a contemporary message.

Review Contributors

Molly Larkey is an artist and writer based in Los Angeles.

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Keith J. Varadi is an artist, writer, poet, performer, and curator, who has mounted solo exhibitions at Night Gallery (Los Angeles), Cooper Cole (Toronto), and Et al. (San Francisco) this past spring. His writing has appeared in *Art in America*, *Carla*, *Kaleidoscope*, *LEAP*, and *Spike Art Quarterly*, among other publications. Additionally, he has recently released a book of poetry and photography (Maga Books) and a limited edition 7" record (Night Gallery).

Katie Bode is an Independent Curator and writer who lives and works in Los Angeles. Bode's various projects and exhibitions signify and champion the current energy among emerging artists in Los Angeles. Her writing can regularly be found in *Contemporary Art Review Los Angeles*.

Stuart Krimko is a poet, astrologer, and translator. A chapbook of his new poems is forthcoming from Song Cave later this year. Other recent books include *Belleza y Felicidad: Selected Writings of Fernanda Laguna and Cecilia Pavón* (Sand Paper Press, 2015), which he edited and translated; and *New complaints. New rewards*, a collaboration with Mark So (DEATH-SPIRAL, 2014). Krimko also organizes Astrologers Anonymous, a series of talks on divinatory symbolism.

Matt Stromberg is a freelance arts writer based in Los Angeles. In addition to *Contemporary Art Review Los Angeles*, he writes for *KCET Artbound*, *Hyperallergic*, *LA Weekly*, *Daily Serving*, and *Artsy*, in addition to contributing artist profiles for the book *LA Artland* (2005), and catalogue essays. He received his M.A. in Arts Journalism from USC in 2014.

Exquisite L.A. Contributors

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