

HYPERALLERGIC

Your Concise Los Angeles Art Guide for February 2022

Your list of must-see, fun, insightful, and very Los Angeles art events this month, including Ulysses Jenkins, EJ Hill, Carlos Almaraz, and more.

Matt Stromberg and Elisa Wouk Almino | January 31 2022

A number of talented Los Angeles artists are having important solo shows this month, including contemporary artists EJ Hill and Ulysses Jenkins, and key figures of the Chicano art movement, Carlos Almaraz and Richard Duardo. If you're into art fairs, February is host to three, and don't miss the Getty's fascinating-sounding exhibition on art and anatomy.



Tori Wrånes: *Mussel Tears*, Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles, January 29–March 12, 2022. Courtesy of the artist and Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles. Photo: Ed Mumford.

Tori Wrånes: *Mussel Tears*

Norwegian artist Tori Wrånes's multi-disciplinary practice encompasses performance, sound, painting, and sculpture to produce fantastical worlds strung between reality and myth. *Mussel Tears* is inspired by her hometown of Kristiansand, a small fishing village, whose mussels are now threatened by environmental decline. Sculptures of intertwined humans and animals, corporeally suggestive abstract painting, and mussel shells embedded in cement are joined by the artist's non-verbal vocalizations, pointing to an interconnectedness of life forms.



Matthew Thomas, "Realms of Intentions" (2016), acrylic on wood, 72 x 49 inches (image courtesy the artist)

Matthew Thomas: Enlightenment

Matthew Thomas began studying Eastern religions in the late '60s, and his artwork over the past 50 years reflects a deep, life-long engagement with Buddhist spiritual practices and ways of thought. These take the form of brightly colored geometric abstractions filled with sacred symbols borrowed from not just Buddhism, but numerous cultures and religions, a kind of road map to enlightenment. His solo show at CAAM will feature recent paintings capturing his ideas of universal harmony as well as a site-specific installation.



Ulysses Jenkins, "Without Your Interpretation rehearsal documentation" (1984), color print. 3 1/2 x 5 inches (image courtesy the artist)

Ulysses Jenkins: Without Your Interpretation

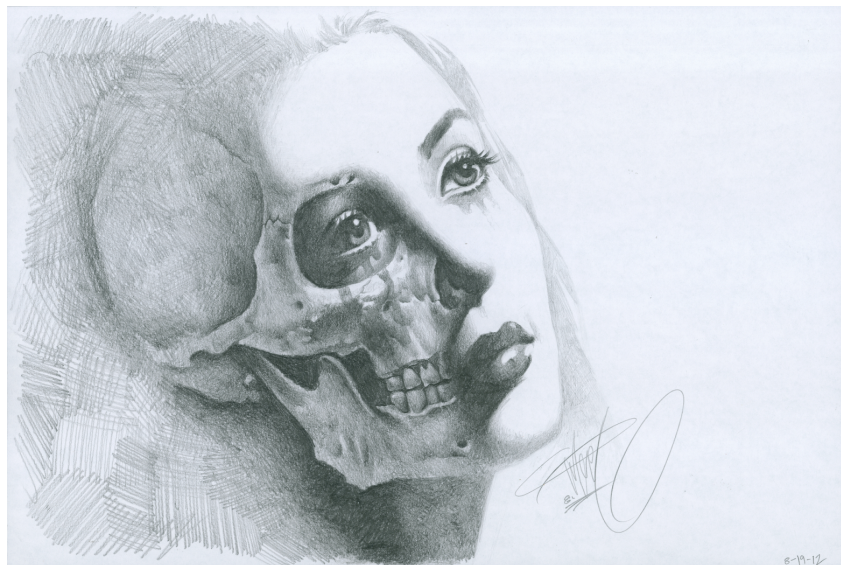
Without Your Interpretation is the first major retrospective of pioneering video and performance artist Ulysses Jenkins. The exhibition covers 50 years of work from the LA-based artist, who dubbed himself a "video griot," a moniker that reflects a fusion of oral and musical traditions with forms of mass media. Beginning with the collective he founded in the early '70s, Video Venice News, through collaborations with artists like David Hammons and Senga Nengudi, and his own solo projects, Jenkins's work implicates the media in enforcing systems of white supremacy, while showing the potential of video and technology to offer independent narratives.



Jamal Cyrus, “Pride Frieze—Jerry White’s Record Shop, Central Avenue, Los Angeles” (2005–2017), collage on album cover, acrylic paint, plywood, wax, Plexiglass, 121 ¼ × 126 ½ × 12 inches (image courtesy the artist and Inman Gallery, Houston, photo by Adam Neese)

Jamal Cyrus and Sara Cwynar at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

The ICA LA is simultaneously opening two exciting exhibitions: the first museum survey of Jama Cyrus and a presentation of Sara Cwynar’s most recent video works. Cyrus’s exhibition spans two decades of his work, including sculptures, assemblages, and textiles that mine African American identity, with a special focus on the culture of record shops. Cwynar’s videos, which include essay-style films, includes a six-channel installation called “Glass Life” (2021) and a video on the color red as a symbol of beauty.



OG Abel (Abel Izaguirre), “Love & Hate” (August 19, 2012), graphite on paper in *LA Liber Amicorum / Graffiti Black Book* (Los Angeles, 2012), Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (gift of Ed and Brandy Sweeney © OG Abel)

Flesh and Bones: The Art of Anatomy

The body is beautiful and amazingly complex — it’s no wonder that it has been the subject of art for centuries. This exhibition examines art and anatomy from the 16th century to the present, including scientific illustrations, anatomized sculpture, and 3-D stereoscopic photographs.



EJ Hill, "good evening" (2022), 61 x 50 3/4 inches (image courtesy the artist and OXY ARTS, Los Angeles, photo by Ian Byers-Gamber)

EJ Hill: Wherever we will to root

A throughline in EJ Hill's work is an insistence on representation and visibility, especially for those who have previously been marginalized and excluded from cultural spaces. For the Hammer Museum's Made in LA 2018, this took the form of a grueling durational performance, during which Hill stood on a podium for every hour the museum was open during the exhibition's run. With Wherever we will to root, Hill pivots to a less physically demanding tactic, one rooted in healing, rebirth, and joy. The show features 13 large-scale floral paintings, completed during his 2021 Wanlass Artist Residency at Oxy Arts, representing a defiant act of "noncompliance to the expectations built around certain bodies and their cultural production," as Oxy Arts Director Meldia Yesayan notes.



Nathan Gulick, "Not Long for This World" (detail) (image courtesy the artist)

Infrastructure Lovers

In the US, the promises of freedom, prosperity, and independence have largely been made possible through a robust infrastructure system. Conversely, when those networks of roads, bridges, and dams begin to fail through neglect, the cracks in the American Dream become evident. Infrastructure Lovers, a group show at collective Monte Vista Projects, brings together artists who explore the potential of infrastructure to foster connection and progress, while critiquing the pitfalls of unfettered expansion and short-sighted development.



Ben Sakoguchi, "Towers" (2014) (image courtesy Bel Ami)

Art Fairs: Frieze, Felix, and Spring/Break Art Show

After a pandemic-related hiatus last year, Frieze LA is back. The third LA edition of the international art fair will feature 100 galleries from 17 countries including 38 from Los Angeles. Offering a more curated selection than the main section, Amanda Hunt, director of Public Programs & Creative Practice, Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, has organized Focus LA, dedicated to 11 younger homegrown spaces including Garden, Gattopardo, In Lieu, Stanley's, and Bel Ami. One big change is the venue, which will shift from the iconic Paramount Studios lot to 9900 Wilshire in Beverly Hills, next door to the Beverly Hilton hotel.



Eric Andre at Anat Ebgi's booth during Felix 2021. Neon peacock by Greg Ito. (photo by Mike Vitelli)

Felix, the relatively scrappy, laid-back alternative to Frieze, returns to the storied Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, just six months after the 2021 edition. Sixty international galleries will occupy the cabanas around the pool (painted by David Hockney), and the tower suites. Participating galleries ranging from established veterans to young upstart include Gavlak, Jack Hanley Gallery, PPOW, Chris Sharp Gallery, Nicodim, and Nonaka-Hill. And a third edition of the Spring/Break Art Show is coming to a 30,000-square-foot warehouse in Culver City with 50 immersive installations (their installations tend to be *actually* immersive).



Snake whisky still life and other stories, installation view, Various Small Fires Los Angeles. (Photo credit: Various Small Fires, Los Angeles / Dallas / Seoul)

Snake whisky still life and other stories

Snake whisky still life and other stories features artists represented by or associated with Bockley Gallery in Minneapolis, especially Native American and Indigenous artists. It includes photographs by Cara Romero that depict Native American, female experiences; Jim Denomie’s symbolic paintings that reflect his Ojibwe heritage; and Eric-Paul Riege’s performance-based textile works. The gallery’s sound corridor is filled by the sound of galloping hooves, an audio installation by collective Postcommodity referencing the recent photos of Border Control agents on horseback intercepting Haitian migrants.



Carlos Almaraz, “What Ever Happened to the Incas?” (1985), edition 54/130, color serigraph on paper, 28 ¾ x 40 ½ inches (copyright 1985, the Estate of Carlos Almaraz, courtesy the Estate of Carlos Almaraz and Bermudez Projects, Los Angeles)

Carlos & Richard: Almaraz Serigraphs from Modern Multiples, 1985–1990

Carlos Almaraz’s artworks are explosions of deep color: a purple sunset at Echo Park, a fiery car crash. Known for his paintings and murals, in the last decade of his life he made a series of prints with fellow artist Richard Duardo. This exhibition shares this friendship and collaboration between two key figures of the Chicano art movement in Los Angeles.