

ARTS POWER

FROM TOP-NOTCH CURATORS TO EXCITING NEW
TALENTS, WE EXPLORE SOME OF THE MOST
INTRIGUING INDIVIDUALS SHAKING UP THE L.A. ART SCENE.

By Britt Collins, Laura Eckstein, Amanda Friedman, Susan Michals, Maile Pingel,
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Forget Paris, New York and even Berlin: These days, it's Los Angeles that's being defined as the new center of the art world. Douglas Christmas, of the city's famed Ace Gallery, notes, "Wherever you are, be it Zurich, New Delhi or Mexico City, if you ask where the new energy is, without question, the answer will be Los Angeles." Economic factors may be one reason young artists have flocked here; after all, there are still pockets of space that can be had at a reasonable price. Then, of course, there's the sunshine and a strong creative community. Whatever the cause, the City of Angels has become the City of Artists, exploding with painters, sculptors and mixed-media masters. Following this proliferation of new and exciting talent are the collectors who are swarming to our shores in droves, like bees to honey (or perhaps, more accurately, a honey pot), looking for the next big thing.

Many L.A. artists—such as Aaron Curry, whose sculptural installation at Lincoln Center in New York is a critical smash—are enjoying their local profile while also finding success beyond the city's reach. Drumming up beaucoup sales at auctions this year, art stars like Raymond Pettibon, Mark Grotjahn, Mark Ryden and Sterling Ruby are bringing even more attention to new work coming out of SoCal. And at 76, David Hockney, the adopted art patriarch of light-drenched L.A., is back in town and better than ever.

Adding to all of this is a strong collaborative spirit, something that has always permeated this city and set its art scene apart. In the words of painter Lari Pittman, who is currently exhibiting at Highland's Regen Projects, "Los Angeles still feels artist-driven; we all watch each other's back. I think artists have power here—not individually, but as a collective—whereas, maybe in other cities individual artists have power. It's a nice thing."

As L.A.'s art scene continues its evolution, *Angeleno* takes an inside look at its burgeoning world: the artists, gallerists and curators helping to change the local landscape with bold moves and even bolder strokes.



MODERN LUXURY

NEW GUARD VS. OLD GUARD

Two gallerists, one emerging and one established, discuss the state of L.A.'s art scene.



THE NEW GUARD

Claressinka Anderson started Marine Art Salon in 2009 to foster an exchange between artists, young collectors and people new to buying art. Her Abbot Kinney gallery, Marine Contemporary, represents a diverse roster of exciting, international artists.

What are collectors looking for right now from Los Angeles artists? As a city that once relied heavily on artistic production, but not so much presentation, I think L.A.'s galleries and museums are starting to compete on a global level. There's something romantic and seductive about L.A. in terms of how it is viewed by New Yorkers. People outside of the city are interested in work produced here, and people who live here want to support our institutions more than ever before.

Who are some artists, curators or gallerists you feel are changing this dynamic? Night Gallery downtown has helped reinvigorate the scene here, particularly for cutting-edge, emerging artists. The young, savvy women that head the gallery [Davida Nemeroff and Mieke Marple] are doing exciting things for the city. There's also a new nonprofit

space opening in 2014 by Cesar Garcia, The Mistake Room, which will focus on groundbreaking international programming, something L.A. really needs.

How do you feel about Jeffrey Deitch leaving MOCA? Jeffrey was a controversial figure from the moment he arrived. An ex-dealer from New York, he was never going to have an easy time as director. While I personally didn't like his programming at the museum, I understand what he was trying to do—namely, raise money by widening the museum's audience—and I think the community here thoroughly enjoyed hanging him out to dry. I have to wonder if he would have received the same reception in another city.

Any hopes for L.A. producing a Basel- or Frieze-style art fair in the coming years? Does the

city need or even want that? Honestly, I think we are all experiencing a level of fair fatigue. I don't think we need another Basel-level fair in yet another city.

What is the most exciting thing you have encountered visually or conceptually coming out of L.A. this year? I really enjoyed James Turrell's *Perceptual Cell* series, a part of his current retrospective at LACMA. The opportunity for a solitary viewing experience is rare, especially one enclosed in pure light. The Turrell show is another example of where L.A. is right now in the wider context of the art world—presented in conjunction with exhibitions at the Guggenheim in New York and the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. I think this type of experiential show appeals to a wider audience, but at the same time, it is still thoughtful and relevant to what is going on today.



THE OLD GUARD

Having operated a successful gallery in Los Angeles for more than 25 years, **Michael Kohn** is switching gears, moving east from Beverly Boulevard to Highland Avenue in Mid-City. Look for the cavernous gallery space to open in early 2014.

What are collectors looking for right now for Los Angeles artists? Over the last 25 years the art market has become big enough to be inclusive of various markets simultaneously. So the idea that there's one sought-after thing no longer exists. However, so many

L.A. artists have made their mark internationally, so one can support L.A. artists exclusively and still have a world-class collection.

Who are some artists, curators or gallerists you feel are changing this dynamic? Erica Redling has very interesting exhibitions. And Hannah Greely is an L.A.-based sculptor making great art.

How do you feel about Jeffrey Deitch leaving MOCA? I think Jeffrey had no idea how difficult and complicated the director position would be, and if he did, he would have thought twice about accepting the job. I'd like to see MOCA move into the Pacific Design Center, something I've said for 15 years now.

Any hopes for L.A. producing a Basel- or Frieze-level art fair in the coming years? Does the city need or even want that? There are now so many art fairs that the timing is too difficult and the competition too thick. Nevertheless, the Art Los Angeles Contemporary fair in January has progressively improved and could turn out to be a very important fair in the near future.

What is the most exciting thing you have encountered visually or conceptually coming out of L.A. this year? Frankly, it is the new gallery I am building on Highland in Hollywood. Designed by Malibu-based architect Lester Tobias, this building will house a 75-foot-long main gallery with

22-foot ceilings and two other spaces, all pre-wired for video. I'm looking forward to expanding the role my gallery has played in the L.A. art scene since 1985.

