

Frieze

Critics'
Guides /



BY SIMONE KRUG
14 FEB 2019

Crystal Balls, Red Light Spectacle and a Pop Art Nun: the Best Shows in Los Angeles

As the inaugural Frieze Los Angeles opens this week, here are the exhibitions you shouldn't miss across the city



Kelly Akashi, "Figure Shifter",
2019, installation view.
Courtesy: the artist and
François Ghebaly, Los Angeles

[Kelly Akashi: 'Figure Shifter'](#)

François Ghebaly

2 February–10 March

Stare into Kelly Akashi's ethereal glass orbs and gently trickling fountains and sink into a realm permeated by celestial, spectral sheen. Cast hands and graceful glass blown forms swell, descend, and shrivel in the artist's exhibition 'Figure Shifter'. These forms seem to reflect our own appendages – a palm prostrate, its outstretched recumbent digits curled in leisure or repose. Here, there is an odd beauty in the curvature of a thumb wrinkle. Fingers dip into sleek bulbous vessels, a louche touch balanced and lingering on the artist's vaguely anthropomorphic silhouettes.

Akashi's objects are not simply appealing in their sheen, but provocative shapes that seep into globs and form puddles at once uncanny, appealing, and familiar. In *Flowing Figure* (2019), water dribbles out of a glass conch pump into an upturned bronze umbrella, an unlikely fountain both sputtering and beautiful. Elsewhere intricately patterned glass orbs descend from thin twine, they resemble heavy lesions or internal organs that allude to the tug of gravity and of time. Bright chromogenic photograms present scans of her glass blown forms that appear as fragments of flora and fauna rendered as floating outlines or abstracted studies of paleontology. The show is a whisper, a satisfying secret where the swells and tiny knots on a sea shell, the protruding root and of a shriveled onion, and the contorted whorl of a lump of speckled glass seem to offer up all the marvel of a crystal ball.

Krug, Simone. "Crystal Balls, Red Light Spectacle and a Pop Art Nun: the Best Shows in Los Angeles," *Artillery*, February 14, 2019.

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