

ART

Four Up-and-Coming Angeleno Artists to Know Now

BY KEVIN MCGARRY | JUNE 15, 2016

This week, the third edition of Los Angeles’s homegrown biennial survey of art from SoCal, “Made in L.A.,” opened at the Hammer Museum in Westwood. Curated by the institution’s own Aram Moshayedi with Hamza Walker from Chicago’s Renaissance Society, this year’s show is tighter than previous iterations in the number of artists featured — just 26 — but somehow more expansive in the breadth of disciplines and practices that are integrated. Case in point: The subtitle of the show is itself an artwork: a poem by the biennial’s most senior artist, the minimalist writer Aram Saroyan. It goes “a, the, though, only,” a string of words that evoke particularity and universality at the same time. Here are four other highlights from “Made in L.A. 2016.”



Kelly Akashi, “Eat Me (Interior)” and “Eat Me (Exterior),” 2016. Credit Sarah Golonka, courtesy of the artist.

Swooping over the Hammer's courtyard are a suite of tenuous new sculptures by **Kelly Akashi** called "Eat Me." Long pieces of rope stretched across or hung from ledges on the museum's upper level variously cradle and dangle a pink shell, bronze castings of hands miming hoisting gestures and threadbare shavings of rope that look something like a nest of human hair. Making an exhibition space out of a seemingly impossible void suspended in the air, Akashi captures her disparate, organic subjects at different points of degradation, freezing them in an artful, aerial limbo.



Rafa Esparza's "tierra," 2016. Credit Brian Forrest, courtesy of the artist.

Around the corner is a new installation by **Rafa Esparza**, "tierra." Its foundation is a swarth of roughly hewn adobe bricks which he fashioned with the assistance of his father and others in northeast Los Angeles, following a tradition of brick-making common in Mexico. Before moving to the United States, Esparza's father constructed a home in Mexico by the very same means. Here, it serves as a kind of stage upon which a silent play unfolds: Esparza invited peers and collaborators to dig up items buried in Elysian Park — the site of the Dodgers Stadium, which was once a traditionally Mexican neighborhood. Those they elected to contribute to the exhibition — a cactus, a tin mailbox, a retro blue armchair — sit on the brick flooring as a metaphoric reoccupation.



Lauren Davis Fisher's "SET TESTS," 2016. Credit Brian Forrest, courtesy of the artist

Inside the museum, **Lauren Davis Fisher**'s "SET TESTS" is a dynamic installation which will change throughout the course of the summer. But visitors will not actually see her reconfigure the boxes or their contents, and that's precisely the point: to underscore the invisibility of labor. To begin, a cartoonish sculpture that resembles an egg yolk splashing into a white will take center stage — but throughout the show, what is at center stage one day will likely end up waiting in the wings the next.



For the "Made in L.A." art show at the Hammer Museum, Tam solicited men from social networking online forums to bring them together for a workshop of sorts in male bonding. Publish Date June 14, 2016.

Kenneth Tam's new video, "Breakfast in Bed," an excerpt of which is above, continues the artist's work drawn from encounters with strangers. In this case, Tam solicited men from Craigslist, Reddit and other proto-social networking online forums to bring them together for a thoroughly analog workshop of sorts in male bonding. Rather than having the participants led by an expert or curriculum of some kind, he leaves the nonactors more or less to their own devices, to role-play, team-build, dance and otherwise generate intimacy in a process that resonates on screen as both authentic, in its loosely directed realness, and bizarrely stilted by ritual.

"Made in L.A. 2016: a, the, though, only" is on view through Aug. 28 at the Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, hammer.ucla.edu.