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L.A. Weekly Critics' Choices

Highlights from the fall season

By L.A. Weekly Art Critics

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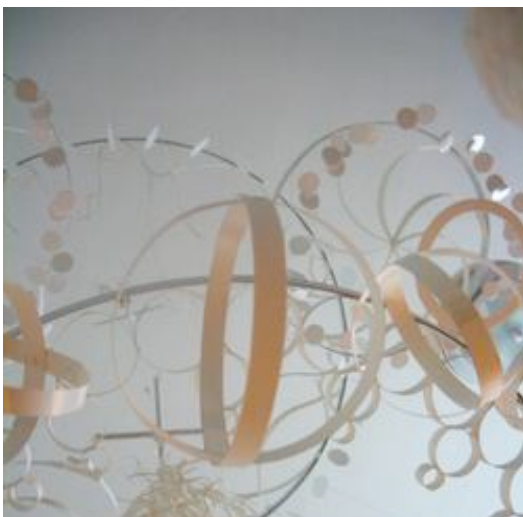
Wally Hedrick at the Box

Wally Hedrick (1928–2003) was one of the seminal figures of the West Coast Beat-era artistic renaissance. It was Hedrick, in fact, who approached Allen Ginsberg in 1955 to do a poetry reading at the Six Gallery, resulting in the famous ground-zero happening of the Beat phenomenon, including the first public reading of Ginsberg's "Howl." Hedrick was a founding member of Bruce Conner's Rat Bastard Protective Association, introduced Jerry Garcia to the blues, and supported his wife — painter Jay DeFeo — as she labored on her 2,300-pound masterpiece, *The Rose*, for eight years. He was a beloved and influential teacher in the Bay Area for decades.

So why is his upcoming solo show at the Box in Chinatown only his third in Los Angeles? Granted, that S.F. assemblage crowd was pretty disdainful of L.A. — especially after Wallace Berman was hounded out of town



Greg Gorman, *Grace Jones With Sunglasses, Los Angeles* (1995), from "Greg Gorman: A Distinct Vision 1970-2010," opening at the Pacific Design Center on Sept. 15





Nancy Jackson, *Untitled* (2010), at Rosamund Felsen Gallery, opening Sept. 10



Alberto Burri, *Legno e Rosso 3* (1959), from "Combustione: Alberto Burri and America," at the Santa Monica Museum of Art, opening Sept. 10



Paul McCarthy, *Train, Mechanical* (2003-2009), at L&M Arts, opening Sept. 25



— and Hedrick was notoriously uninterested in the social dimension of Art World stardom. But the fact that Hedrick was using his art practice to actively denounce America's presence in Vietnam as early as 1959 might have had something to do with it as well.

Although Hedrick created stellar artworks that anticipated assemblage, kinetic art, pop, neo-expressionism and so on, his habit of not-very-carefully concealing messages like "Fuck the FBI" in his paintings (*Bury-Berry*, 1964) pretty much guaranteed his status as an artist's artist. His two previous L.A. shows — both posthumous — were almost polar opposites: Michael Kohn Gallery's 2007 "Estate Sale" featured mostly Hedrick's late, deadpan appropriation paintings of antique advertising engravings. The Box's previous outing re-created 1967's *War Room*, an architectural environment originally built from early works Hedrick had overpainted in black monochrome. The new exhibition — opening September 17 — will land somewhere in between, focusing on his sometimes garish political paintings from the '80s, but ranging from 1962 to 2000. — Doug Harvey

THE BOX | 977 Chung King Road, L.A. | (213) 625-1747 | Sept. 17-Oct. 23 | Reception Fri., Sept. 17, 6-9 p.m.

Ruben Ochoa at Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects

What started as some kind of post-Chicano take on the urban fabric has transformed into an all-out assault on the industrial materials that built this city. No hard-headed minimalist content to stack bricks or box up plywood, Ruben Ochoa fashions his concrete into amorphous bodies with spidery rebar legs. This month, Ochoa will spear concrete with choreographed fence posts, trying to make playful these humble urban props usually used to make boundaries. —Andrew Beradini

SUSANNE VIELMETTER LOS ANGELES PROJECTS | 6006 Washington Blvd., Culver City | Sept. 10-Oct. 23

Dani Tull at Mark Moore

Dani Tull's work over the last decade has frequently referenced psychedelia, as with the peyote cacti and tie-dye



Mimi Lautner, *Crane's Hut* (2010), at Marc Selwyn Fine Art, opening Sept. 10



Ann Summa, Exene Cervenka and John Doe, *West Hollywood* (1982). At Track 16 Gallery, opening reception Sept. 11, 6-9 p.m.



sky framing Tull's depiction of our scavenging prehistoric ancestors in (*Study for*) *Unfolding the Stone* (the painting that graced the cover of the *Weekly* for its 2008 "Some Paintings" art issue), or the heavy-lidded stereotypical stoner cartoon on the faux cover of his hypothetical hippie zine, *My Fluorescent Beatitude* (2005).

His latest body of work will be previewed as part of Mark Moore Gallery's "Ultrasonic V: It's Only Natural" opening on September 11. Titled "Golden Eagle," the new work is a radical departure from his earlier work, and not only for its obvious abandonment of cartoonish representation for elaborately carved, reflective encaustic abstractions — kaleidoscopic mandalas of golden, featherlike striations that shift dramatically depending on the viewer's point of view.

The new works still deal with psychedelics, but rather than filtering the topic through the plausible deniability of pop culture-mediated irony, they derive from the artist's recent commitment to the exploration of mystical states of consciousness through the shamanistic use of plant entheogens, and are intended to act as "technological objects that charge and release transcendent energy." Now that's what I call functional art! —Doug Harvey

ULTRASONIC V: IT'S ONLY NATURAL | Mark Moore Gallery, 2525 Michigan Ave., A-1, Santa Monica | (310) 453-3031 | Sept. 11-Oct. 16 | Reception Sat., Sept. 11, 5-7 p.m.

Dirk Skreber at Blum & Poe

Dirk Skreber believes icons of any manner after World War II, from popular ads to photos and paintings, should not only be distrusted but also twisted, sullied or placed at a distance. Basically, clean-cut, buttoned-down imagery offers only the fantasy of a utopian lifestyle swiftly headed to its demise. Skreber's work ranges from sober to manic, from Gerhard Richter to Sigmar Polke, often presenting tight-lipped, fuzzy disaster paintings next to full-size cars, twisted audaciously around poles. Disaster fetishes in art don't always have a point, but for Germans, they almost always do. Skreber's paintings are smart, laced with historical poison, and more than they seem. —Ed Schad

BLUM & POE | 2727 S. La Cienega Blvd., L.A. | Sept. 18-



Michel Garnier, A Fashionably Dressed Young Woman in the Arcade of the Palais Royal, Paris, (1787), from "Eye for the Sensual: Selections From the Resnick Collection" at LACMA, opening Oct. 2

Oct. 23 | Reception Sat., Sept. 18, 6-8 p.m.

Michael C. McMillen at L.A. Louver

L.A. native Michael C. McMillen's 1981 installation *Central Meridian (The Garage)* remains one of the most subtle, poetic and experiential critiques of the institutional art environment ever devised. A longtime cornerstone of LACMA's old, shabby Anderson Building (now the Art of the Americas Building), *The Garage* provided a sudden

bubble of mystery-and-nostalgia-laden privacy in the midst of the white-cube panopticon ride of big-museum design and management. Enormously popular with the public, the work has been "not on public view" since "Transformation: The LACMA Campaign" bumped the Modern Art west to the Ahmanson. Supreme bummer.

The good news is that McMillen's first solo gallery show in almost seven years opens September 15 at L.A. Louver, and it promises to be another triumph of the kind of installation-as-theater we have come to expect from the *Blade Runner* model maker. "Lighthouse" will consist of two chambers nested within the reduced white-cube panopticon ride of L.A. Louver, one displaying a series of illuminated oil paintings and bronze sculptures cast from found materials; the inner containing the titular installation showing a raggedy-ass building stuck in a tar pit, with a whited-out billboard acting as a drive-in screen for McMillen's flickering dream-within-a-dream projections. One of McMillen's earliest mentors was a neighbor who made the Tesla coils for James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931). McMillen's installations are a kind of avant-garde walk-through cinematic experience with one foot there — in predigital Hollywood-effects culture — and the other in the criminally uncharted postmodern legacy of West Coast assemblage and installation. The scary thing is ... it's alive! —Doug Harvey

L.A. LOUVER | 45 N. Venice Blvd., Venice | Sept. 15-Oct. 30 | Reception Wed., Sept. 15, 6-8 p.m. Screenings of McMillen's digital films: Wed., Sept. 22, 2-5 p.m. & Sat., Oct. 9, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. | RSVP: (310) 822-4955

Mimi Lauter at Marc Selwyn Fine Art

Mimi Lauter just finished her MFA at UCI, but has been showing samples of her talent in group and small solo shows around town for a few years. She drew inspiration for her latest works — small to large pieces in oil and soft pastel, oil paint and colored pencil, with fine detail carefully scratched into the surfaces — from Bible stories and Russian folklore. You likely wouldn't know that from looking at her images, which are equal parts abstract, familiar and otherworldly, as Lauter takes the imagery, and the sense of light, space and color she intuits from source tales, and runs far afield with it all. But one thing that is clear is that she also didn't take her cues from the de rigueur of academia or the du jour of the marketplace. She neither is, nor pretends to be, an outsider, a folk artist, or, in the quaint and sometimes demeaning way in which the term is used, a visionary. But she's visionary enough to see the worth of the terrain visionaries tread, and both empathetic and savvy enough to know that the rest of us might have a place for a more secularized, abstracted dose of the visionary in our hearts and minds, and on our walls. Simultaneously timeless, placeless and yet just right for the here and now, Lauter's works are in

ways rough and raw, and wide-awake, and yet they issue something of a calling to that part of each of us that is able to be sensitive, that might dare to be fragile, and that might be willing to dream. —Christopher Miles

MARC SELWYN FINE ART | 6222 Wilshire Blvd., L.A. | Sept. 10-Oct. 23

Alberto Burri at the Santa Monica Museum of Art

You should know about Alberto Burri. He was traumatized into art during World War II, his gnarly, blowtorched, gashed and cracked canvases, often punctuated with clots of blood-red paint, positioning him as a key postwar Italian artist, an instrumental part of the *arte povera* movement and a major influence on the young early-'50s minds of American masters like Robert Rauschenberg and Cy Twombly. The Santa Monica Museum of Art's presentation is timely and important, offering a slightly obscure modernist painter ready to be discovered anew. Wild and shell-shocked, Burri's paintings make Jackson Pollock and Clyfford Still look polite and boyishly naive. —Ed Schad

COMBUSTIONE: ALBERTO BURRI AND AMERICA | Santa Monica Museum of Art, 2525 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica | (310) 586-6488, smmoa.org | Reception Fri., Sept. 10, 7-9 p.m.

Brad Eberhard at Tom Solomon Gallery

Brad Eberhard is equally proficient as an abstract painter and collage artist — not to mention rock & roll, as the hulking leader of local post-garage idols Wounded Lion (who just concluded a successful West Coast blitzkrieg and are playing UC Irvine and the Smell next week). In his two previous shows with Tom Solomon (one each of the paintings and collages, and both last year!), Eberhard seemed on the brink of merging the two traditions, melding his meticulous abstract-formalist modulations with the wit and narrative evidenced by the cut-and-paste work.

In new works like *Whaler* (2010), he seems to have made the leap, carefully recreating the improvisational patchwork geometry of a torn-paper collage in oils, and passing the threshold into deliberate pictorialism — in this case the titular sailing vessel. Other works pull back from easy legibility, with fragments of landscapes and figures flickering among the layers of luminous blobs, inserting a bit of grit in the Kandinskian idealism of his purely abstract concoctions, which at times seem to come too easily to him. Sometimes it's beneficial to allow the outside world to intrude a little. —Doug Harvey

THOMAS SOLOMON GALLERY @ COTTAGE HOME | 410 Cottage Home St., L.A. | (310) 428-2964 | Sept. 11–Oct. 9 | Reception Sat., Sept. 11, 6-8 p.m.

Carlee Fernandez at ACME

"Monster," wrote Alfred Jarry, "is the unfamiliar concord of dissonant elements, the centaur, the chimera." By Jarry's definition, sculptor Carlee Fernandez traffics in monsters. She builds curious taxidermy figures that combine the organic and the man-made (a buffalo-head suitcase, for instance) to, at the very least, underscore crass consumerism. Her new show at ACME goes a step further in realizing Jarry's concord, with even larger pieces and more complex contrasts (a bobcat

mash-up!) — objects that stand beyond hierarchies, labels and aesthetic order. Nevertheless, they somehow veer toward classical painting. —Paul Young

ACME | 6150 Wilshire Blvd., L.A. | (323) 857-5942 | Sept. 11–Oct. 9 | Reception Sat., Sept. 11, 6–8 p.m.

William Eggleston at LACMA

William Eggleston was one of the first photographers to compile a compelling body of work in color — to think so vividly in and with and about color that he got us to do so as well. Eggleston, along with a handful of other mostly American shutterbugs in the early 1970s, was thinking like a painter and was capitalizing on new dye-transfer techniques to produce images that appeared at once psychedelically disorienting and as homey and natural as a front lawn. As well, Eggleston was, and remains, unafraid to celebrate his native South, helping to remystify the erstwhile Land of Cotton by reveling in its very garishness and banality. This retrospective includes his shots of Graceland, his equally classic *The Democratic Forest* and the rarely seen video *Stranded in Canton*. —Peter Frank

WILLIAM EGGLESTON: DEMOCRATIC CAMERA—PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEO, 1961–2008 | LACMA | 5905 Wilshire Blvd., L.A. | Oct. 31, 2010–Jan. 16, 2011

Paul McCarthy at L&M Arts

The stately Upper East Side Manhattan gallery inaugurates its big Westside L.A. location with McCarthy's first hometown show in years, and it's all out with three new major sculptures. The offering includes an automated humpfest between a pair of pigs and a George Bush/pirate hybrid figure, and a pair of monumental sculptural tableaux inspired by German Hummel figurines — one resembling a cross between kitsch statues and *The Raft of the Medusa* re-envisioned as a Toontown massacre, and the other recasting Adam and Eve as deformed Brobdingnagian überkinder. Not exactly what one might expect as an icebreaker, but a welcome addition to the neighborhood nonetheless. The amazing thing about McCarthy is how the more ambitiously and insanely f'd up his visions become, the more embraceable and familiar they seem. —Christopher Miles

L&M ARTS | 660 Venice Blvd., Venice | Sept. 25–Nov. 6 | Reception Sept. 25, 2–5 p.m.

Charlie White at LAXART

Artist and graduate chair at USC Charlie White continues to make us really uncomfortable. For "Casting Call," LAXART will be split by a pane of glass, where on one side patrons of the arts will watch White on the other as he attempts to cast the perfect "California Girl" from a cheerful retinue of ambitious 13- to 16-year-olds. The lucky aspirant will appear next month on a billboard above LAX, the 5-year-old Culver City nonprofit. Verboten teenage sexuality vs. teen-to-tween females as a premium consumer category, plus good old-fashioned California Dreamin': By framing off as a performance something that likely goes on in L.A. all the time, White lets us in on just how skin-crawl creepy the whole strange process can be. —Andrew Beradini

LAXART | 2640 S. La Cienega Blvd., L.A. | Performance on Sept. 11, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. | LAXART billboard through October

My Barbarian at the Hammer

L.A.'s performance-art supergroup My Barbarian (aka Malik Gaines, Jade Gordon and Alexandro Segade) takes the Hammer with a video installation titled *The Night Epi\$ode*. Inspired by vintage bump-in-the-night TV shows like *Rod Serling's Night Gallery*, the work incorporates six short videos conflating supernatural unease with the economic meltdown. —Christopher Miles

HAMMER MUSEUM | 10899 Wilshire Blvd., L.A. | Oct. 23, 2010–Jan. 23, 2011

The Resnick Collection at LACMA

Do private collectors still collect "Old Masters"? A century ago, American plutocrats were scouring Europe for Renaissance altarpieces and 17th-century still lifes and leaving the art of their time to a scruffier crowd. These days, by contrast, gazillionaires go for the Warhols. But, lest you think that all the masterpieces now hang in British hunting estates and the Louvre, behold the selections from the Lynda and Stewart Resnick Collection — featured, aptly enough, as an inaugural display in LACMA's Lynda and Stewart Resnick Pavilion. The Resnicks fancy some pretty fancy stuff — French rococo portraiture, examples of the Flemish Baroque, paintings from Venice's "second Golden Age," and the height of romantic realism. The couple has a particular jones for sculpture, so Houdons and Clodions stand amid the Fragonards and Rubenses. The Pavilion itself is a neomodernist temple, so it's sweet irony that it be filled with these old-school gods. —Peter Frank

EYE FOR THE SENSUAL: SELECTIONS FROM THE RESNICK COLLECTION | LACMA | 5905 Wilshire Blvd., L.A. | Oct. 2, 2010-Jan. 2, 2011

Todd Schorr at Ben Maltz Gallery; Gustavo Herrera at Human Resources

If you've been out of town for the summer, or just hibernating, you may have missed a couple of shows that close after this weekend, but shouldn't be missed. At Otis' Ben Maltz Gallery, lowbrow/pop-surrealist/whatever painter Todd Schorr is the subject of a last-decade survey featuring more than 50 paintings, drawings and sculptures from Schorr's pop culture-saturated fever-dream imagination, rendered with a meticulous technique that blends his illustration training with a passion for the Old Masters, and a *horror vacui* compositional frenzy that is equal parts Will Elder (early *MAD* magazine) and Hieronymus Bosch (early ergot poisoning).

Inspired and encouraged by lowbrow sensei Robert Williams, Schorr ditched a lucrative commercial-illustration career in the mid-'80s to become one of the first artists to define the underground movement of populist imagism that became a worldwide grassroots phenomenon in the following decade. Fan favorites like *The Anguish of Carl Akeley* (2008), *The Spectre of Monster Appeal* (2000, collection of L. DiCaprio – eeeeeeeek!) and *Ape Worship* (2007), the showstopper from Laguna Museum's 2007 "Juxtapoz" show (and an in-person must-see if only for its ornate Schorr-designed frame) vie with lesser-known works to give a solid glimpse of the kind of obsessional visionary craftsmanship that guarantees this frequently scorned subculture isn't going to go away. But don't take my word for it; start your Saturday gallery crawl with Schorr and

curator Meg Linton in conversation in the Ben Maltz at 3 p.m.

Across town at the dead end of Chinatown — and at the far end of the meticulousness spectrum from Schorr — Gustavo Herrera has resurfaced with a roomful of his dark, funny, formally virtuosic but slapdash constructions. Herrera — whose similar installation is pretty much the only thing I remember about the first "All-MFA Supersonic" exhibit in that wind tunnel in 2004 — had a couple of crazy-ass shows at Black Dragon, including the one with his former collaborative posse 10lb Ape, where they boarded themselves inside a multimedia assemblage cube and blew pot smoke out at bewildered viewers.

Then Herrera dropped off the radar for a while, only to pop up here, at Human Resources — a new collective-project gallery in the former Parker Jones/David Kordansky space at the end of Bernard Street. "The Birth of Satan" is a multimedia interactive art installation including paintings, sculpture, assemblage, a hilarious video installation, a table of satanic zines and other literature, and a series of performances. There are cardboard and macaroni masks, abstract sculptures named for famous friends of Satan (e.g., Kenneth Anger), a Duchampian reclining-nude installation and a cutout silhouette of the USA collaged with horrific celebrity photos of Paul McCartney, Prince Harry, etc. — all amended with a little Hitler mustache. Everything is deceptively slackerish: Spend any time with the work and you'll be bowled over by Herrera's scathing wit, philosophical and art-historical sophistication, and seemingly offhand aesthetic virtuosity. —Doug Harvey

TODD SCHORR: DESIGNED FOR EXTINCTION | Ben Maltz Gallery, Otis College of Art and Design, 9045 Lincoln Blvd., L.A. | (310) 665-6800 | Through Sept. 11 | Conversation with Todd Schorr and Ben Maltz Gallery director Meg Linton, Sat., Sept. 11, 3 p.m.

GUSTAVO HERRERA'S THE BIRTH OF SATAN | Human Resources, 510 Bernard St., L.A. | Through Sept. 14

Ala Ebtekar at Charlie James Gallery

Whether it's his epic drawings on prayer-book pages or sublime female-warrior portraits, Iranian-American artist Ala Ebtekar's transcendent line quality creates the ideal of the modern Persian masterpiece. "Indelible Whispers of the Sun" is the Bay Area art star's first solo show in Los Angeles. —Shelley Leopold

CHARLIE JAMES GALLERY | 975 Chung King Road, L.A. | Through Oct. 16 | Reception Sept. 11, 6-9 p.m.

Krysten Cunningham at Thomas Solomon Gallery

Krysten Cunningham's second solo show with Solomon reinforces what makes her one of the most interesting and genuinely idiosyncratic sculptors working in Los Angeles. The show revolves around her new video *3 to 4*, which documents a choreographed dance performance of Cunningham's design. Participants dressed in red, green and blue (RGB) costumes construct and engage with a sculpture representative of a fourth-dimensional fusion of object, space, action and perception. —Christopher Miles

THOMAS SOLOMON GALLERY | 427 Bernard St., L.A. | Sept. 11–Oct. 9 | Reception Sept. 11, 6–8 p.m.

OTHER RECOMMENDED SHOWS

- The Artist's Museum at MOCA's Geffen Contemporary
- Nancy Jackson at Rosamund Felsen
- Thomas Helbig at China Art
- Paul Winstanley at 1301PE
- Richard Aldrich at Marc Foxx
- Ana Rodriguez at Steve Turner
- Lester Monzon at Kincaid Contemporary
- Alison Saar at L.A. Louver
- Ann Summa at Track 16
- Joshua Aster at Carl Berg
- Jen DeNike at The Company