

# FRIEZE

## California Dreamin': Artists Shaped by LA and the Golden State at Frieze Los Angeles

Art from California and the West Coast is everywhere at Frieze Los Angeles 2024, from LA icons Betye Saar and John Baldessari, to emerging artist Ser Serpas

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Frieze Los Angeles 2024 mirrors the city's creative landscape. Nearly 50 percent of this year's fair is dedicated to galleries operating in the Greater Los Angeles region, many presenting diverse local voices. Here are some of the artists who work in—or have been shaped by—the Golden State.

LA-based Roberts Projects will exhibit works by artists that interpret and/or subvert the idea of “oasis” from a range of perspectives: calm to nurture the human spirit and the hardships from which we seek refuge. A major highlight of the booth is Betye Saar's neon work *Oasis*, which debuted at MOCA Los Angeles in 1984. This year marks the 40th anniversary of that transcendent solo exhibition of room-sized installations, which offered profound insight into tradition, spirituality and African American identity. For Frieze Los Angeles, Saar will also debut new works in an installation designed by the artist for Roberts Projects, which will be on view for the duration of the fair. Occupying the intersections of historical narrative and ancestral memory, ritual and metaphysical truth, the presentation is testament to Saar's enduring legacy as a pioneer of assemblage art, and as a cultural icon.



Betye Saar, *Oasis*, 1984, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Courtesy: the artist and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles; photograph: Squidids & Nunns

Vielmetter will present Los Angeles-based artists Andrea Bowers and Whitney Bedford. Both have created new works for the fair, addressing issues of man's relationship to nature—Bowers from a political viewpoint of eco-feminism and Bedford from a historical view of landscape painting in the Western tradition. The power comes from the juxtaposition of Bowers's intimate and close-up depictions of small birds with Bedford's expansive views of the "natural" world.



Andrea Bowers, *Eco Grief Extinction Series, Large Kauli Thrush*, Declared Extinct October 2021, *Bird's-Eye View*, 2023, acrylic on cardboard, 46 x 46 x 6 cm, Courtesy: the artist and Vielmetter Los Angeles, photograph: Bruce Wilcox

Another local gallery, L.A. Louver, will stage a survey of US artist and musician Terry Allen. Over six decades, Allen's polymath practice will be presented through drawings, sculpture and mixed-media works. Born and raised in Lubbock, Texas, Allen and his wife and collaborator Jo Harvey Allen moved to Los Angeles in the early 1960s. Since then, the storyteller and songwriter has created more than a score of different bodies of work that weave together conceptual, narrative, musical and theatrical frameworks to reflect on American darkness, existential dread and human absurdity. During Frieze Week, Allen will perform two concerts with his Panhandle Mystery Band at the Masonic Lodge at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery.



Terry Allen, *MemWars*, 2016, video still. Courtesy: the artist and L.A. Louver

Los Angeles has a great history of galleries operating in alternative spaces, and the contemporary Parker Gallery also functions in this tradition—the exhibition space is based in gallerist Sam Parker's home (learn more about the gallery in our [video](#) profiling the city). For the fair, Parker's group presentation includes works by Melvino Garretti (b. 1946, Los Angeles), known for his ecstatic ceramic sculptures and assemblage pieces. Employing colorful glazes, Garretti's gestural marks evoke the improvisational rhythms of free jazz, stemming from his engagement with local neighborhood Leimert Park's historic music scene and its Pan-African futurist aesthetics.



Melvino Garrett, *Untitled*, 2023, glazed ceramic, 19 × 27 × 14 cm. Courtesy: Parker Gallery, Los Angeles

Internationally operating gallery Sprüth Magers, which has a 14,000-square-foot outpost in LA, will feature a wide-ranging selection of works by artists of multiple generations, demonstrating the breadth of their aesthetic approaches and brilliant conceptual explorations across media and disciplines. The booth will have a special focus on representative works by artists associated with Los Angeles, such as John Baldessari, Robert Irwin, Senga Nengudi, Sterling Ruby, Analia Saban and Kaari Upson, and will include a new site-specific wall work by Barbara Kruger.



Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (More Perfect)*, 2024, digital print on wallpaper, 366 × 665 cm. Courtesy: the artist and Sprüth Magers

Also in the *Galleries* section is an immersive environment by LA-based artist, Awol Erizku, presented by Sean Kelly. Blending symbols from Western and non-Western traditions, Erizku rejects Eurocentric notions of beauty and art history in favor of his own unique Afrocentric aesthetic—one he refers to as “Afro-esotericism”. In the presentation, the walls of the booth will be painted dark grey and silk-screened floor-to-ceiling with likenesses of the 18th Dynasty Egyptian queen, Nefertiti. Works draw upon disparate sources such as Ancient Egypt, Marcel Duchamp and hip hop, wrought in media as varied as photographs, lightboxes, silkscreens and neon, evincing Erizku’s expansive practice. The installation will also acknowledge the essential role music plays throughout the artist’s work, with a new mixtape accessible via a QR code in the booth.



Awol Erizku, *Nefertiti (Lit Freestyle)*, 2018-20, digital chromogenic print. Photograph: Adam Reich

Apart from her participation in **“Made in LA 2020”** at the Hammer Museum and Huntington Library, the Latinx transgender artist and activist Ser Serpas has rarely exhibited or made work in Los Angeles, her hometown, and yet the city’s influence is clear. Frieze Los Angeles 2024 is a chance to see Serpas’s diverse practice as part of the *Focus* section, presented by Quinn Harrelson. The artist is best known for her sculptures composed of discarded objects—textiles and detritus obtained from the streets of global metropolises—serving as reflections on the cities, and implicitly the local inhabitants’ desires and

aspirations. This tactility of material can also be seen in Serpas's close-up paintings of bodies on unmounted canvas, which will feature at the fair.



Ser Serpas, *Untitled*, 2024, oil on canvas, 246 × 380 cm. Courtesy: the artist and Quinn Harrelson

## Frieze Los Angeles

**Frieze Los Angeles** is at Santa Monica Airport, February 29–March 3, 2024.

<https://www.frieze.com/article/california-dreamin-artists-shaped-la-and-golden-state-frieze-los-angeles>