



Art

10 Must-See Gallery Shows during L.A. Art Week 2023

Neyat Yohannes

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Alison Saar, installation view of "Uproot" at L.A. Louver, 2023. © Alison Saar. Courtesy of L.A. Louver.

Art fairs are descending upon Los Angeles this week, and there's more to see than ever before. This year, Frieze expands to the Santa

Monica Airport, and Felix Art Fair rings in its fifth iteration with an extra day of laid-back poolside viewing. Meanwhile, L.A. Art Show enters year 28 with a larger global presence, as SPRING/BREAK arrives with the promising theme of “Naked Lunch.”

But if all that isn't enough, the city is bustling with unmissable gallery shows too. Because fair fatigue is real, galleries can serve as a quiet space of refuge for those looking to catch their breath without sacrificing time away from art itself.

Below, we share 10 must-see gallery exhibitions that make for the perfect interlude between fair festivities.

Huma Bhabha and Michael Williams, “Bhabha Williams”

David Kordansky Gallery

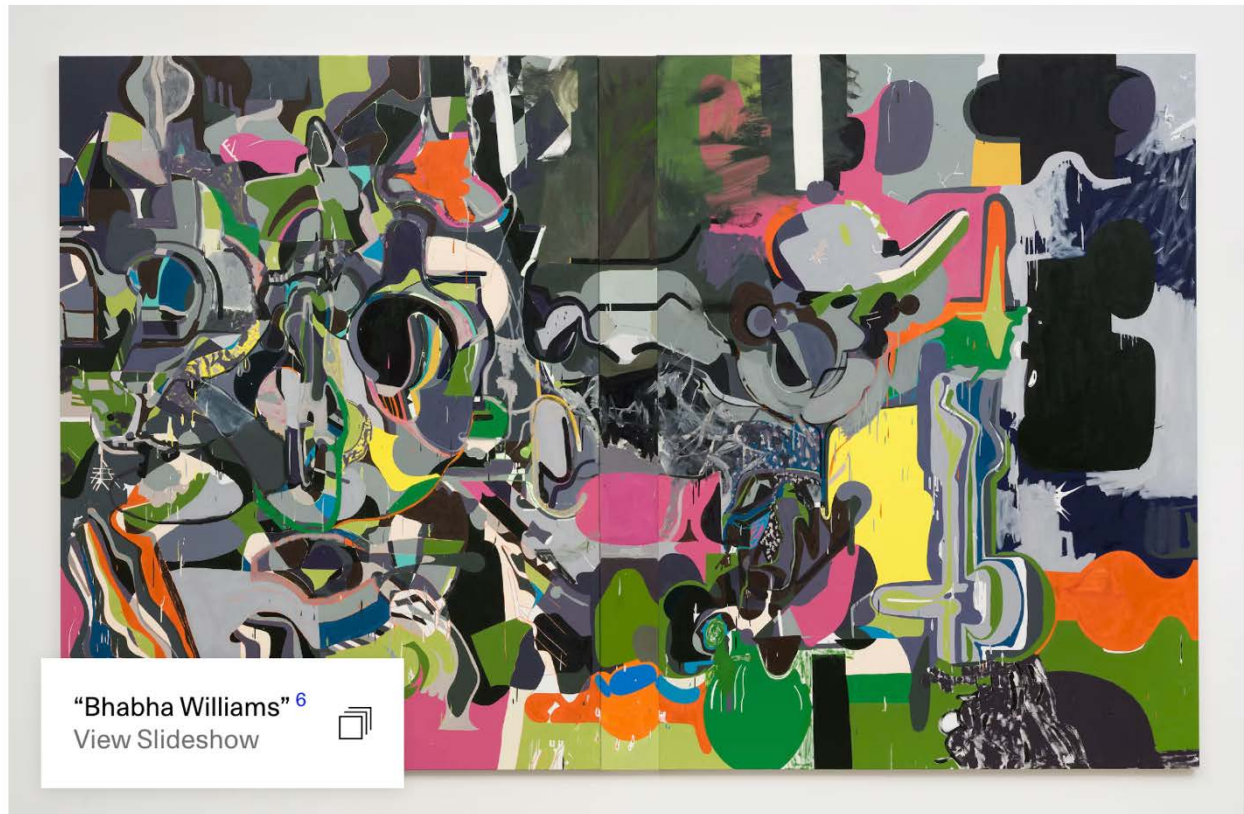
Jan. 21–Feb. 2



Huma Bhabha and Michael Williams, installation view of “Bhabha Williams” at David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, 2023. Photo by Jeff McLane. Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery.

[Huma Bhabha](#) and [Michael Williams](#) pair up for the first time to present an exhibition of new works at [David Kordansky Gallery](#). Together, Bhabha’s sculptures and works on paper, with Williams’s paintings and drawings permeate the space with an electric dissonance that intrigues with its consideration of clashing sentiments. Attraction and repulsion, playfulness and seriousness,

figuration and abstraction, the literal and the allegorical, plus the human and the extraterrestrial all collide in “[Bhabha Williams](#).”



Williams’s abstract “Puzzle” series of large-scale, oil-on-canvas paintings bring a cacophony of gray-toned textures with the occasional interruption of color. The diptychs and triptychs feel frenzied and take on a graphic quality, especially against the measured stillness of Bhabha’s cork and wood sculptures, which feature totemic figures humanized by titles that double as job descriptions, as seen in *Writer* (2022) and *Pilot* (2022). The individual works of each artist sit comfortably in their contradictions, but in conversation, they start to dig into larger universal questions.

Alison Saar, “Uproot”

L.A. Louver

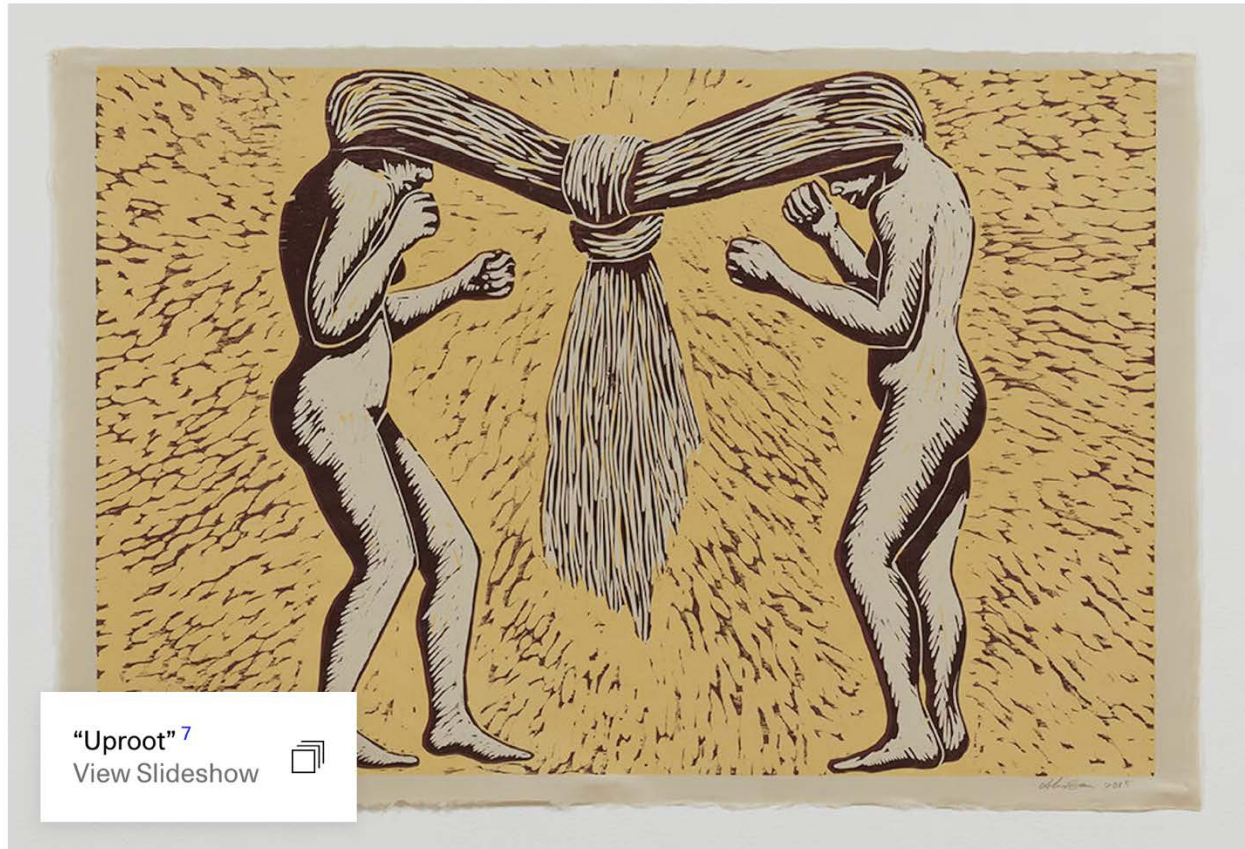
Jan. 25–Mar. 11



Alison Saar, installation view of “Uproot” at L.A. Louver, 2023. © Alison Saar. Courtesy of L.A. Louver.

The works in [Alison Saar](#)’s “[Uproot](#)” at [L.A. Louver](#) rely on a host of demanding actions like culling, carving, stitching, and cobbling. One piece, *Shear’d* (2023), called for the hammering of 1,000 individual nails into a bust, serving as strands of freshly “uprooted” hair. In her reconfiguring of historical portrayals of Black womanhood, the artist uses labor-intensive processes that parallel that of cotton pickers and

railroad chain gangs. Subversion and counter-narratives prevail in her push towards promoting Black women's sovereignty over suffering.



In her eighth solo exhibition with the gallery, Saar also uses images of the Sable Venus, who carries a shell in one hand and a sickle in the other. Here, Saar mines the intersection of racialized gender inequality and reproductive rights, which feel particularly relevant with the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* by the Supreme Court—a ruling that disproportionately affects women of color.

Mimi Smith, “Head-On”

Luis De Jesus Los Angeles

Jan. 14–Mar. 4



Mimi Smith, installation view of “Head-On” at Luis De Jesus Los Angeles, 2023. Courtesy of the artist and Luis De Jesus Los Angeles.

[Luis De Jesus Los Angeles](#) presents [Mimi Smith](#)'s first West Coast solo exhibition, [“Head-On,”](#) which includes sculptures, paintings, and drawings that span the pioneering artist's six-decade career. Predating the feminist art movement of the 1970s, Smith's bold work excavated the nature of womanhood and domesticity before it was popular. It was also prescient in introducing autobiographical elements into work when formalism instructed that art should be removed from emotion.



Smith's sculptures feel more relevant than ever against the current cultural landscape. *Camouflage Maternity Dress* (2004), for example, features the combat pattern as suggested in its title, but incorporates a clear plastic dome that could encase and prominently display a would-be baby bump, undoing the function of camouflage altogether. The artist compares the challenges of navigating pregnancy to that of being on a battlefield, but her way of subtly weaving her personal experience into the works is what gives them a signature sense of immediacy and relatability.

“JA – RT – LA – 23”

Charlie James Gallery

Jan. 28–Feb. 25



John Ahearn, Rigoberto Torres
Shellyne's Radical Education, 2022
Charlie James Gallery
US\$35,000



John Ahearn
Chico, 1981
Charlie James Gallery
US\$30,000

[Charlie James Gallery](#) presents “[JA – RT – LA – 23](#),” its second exhibition dedicated to legendary New York–based artists [John Ahearn](#) and [Rigoberto Torres](#) as the duo enters their fourth decade of collaborative artmaking. Old and new sculptures mingle in a survey that includes the familiar *Chico* (1981), as well as pieces that were made as recently as last year. In fact, a pair of sculptures made of the same person over 30 years apart, *Nikki* (1991) and *Nico* (2022), have a way of bridging the past with the present.



Rigoberto Torres
Rigoberto w/His Doctor, 1998
Charlie James Gallery
US\$25,000



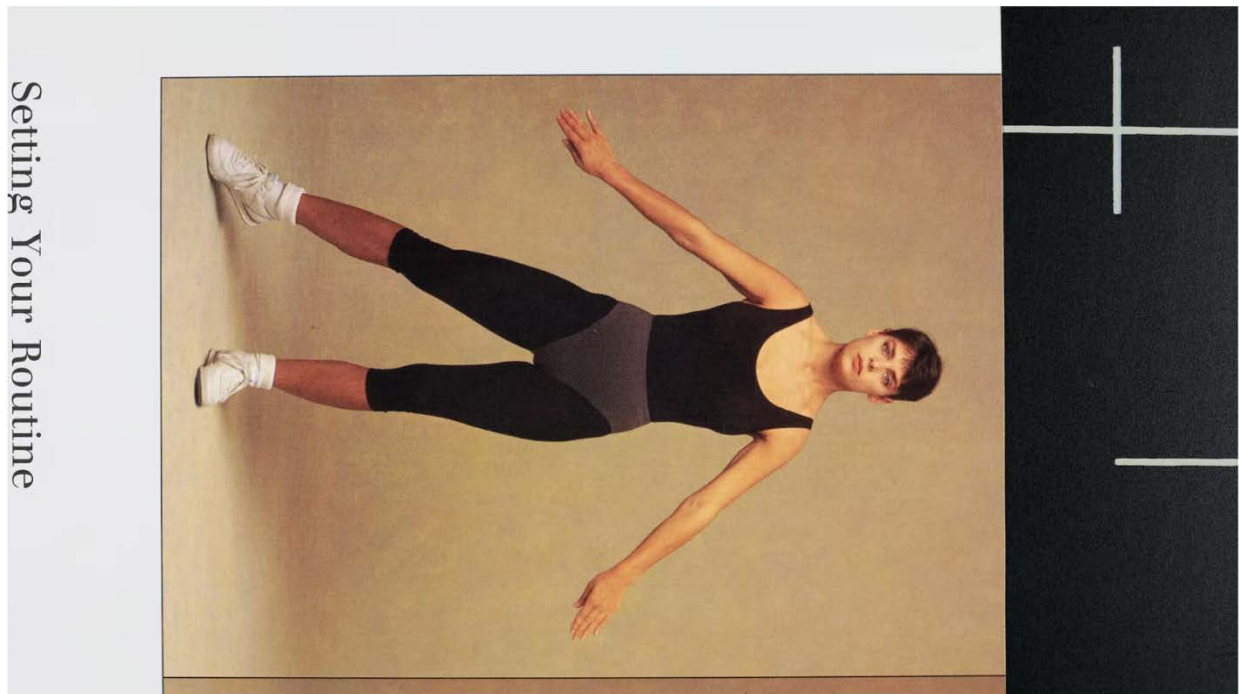
Rigoberto Torres
Uncle Tito at His Liquor Store, 1983/1998/2020
Charlie James Gallery
US\$35,000

Plaster portraits of artist friends, a doctor, a mango man, an Uncle Tito at a liquor store, Torres himself, and others form a crucial retrospective, but more so, an ever-growing community imbued with a tangible, textural warmth. The subjects alternate between smiles and quiet contemplation, but they each, in one way or another, feel deeply connected to the artists themselves.

Mungo Thomson, “Time Life”

Karma Gallery

Jan. 14–Mar. 4



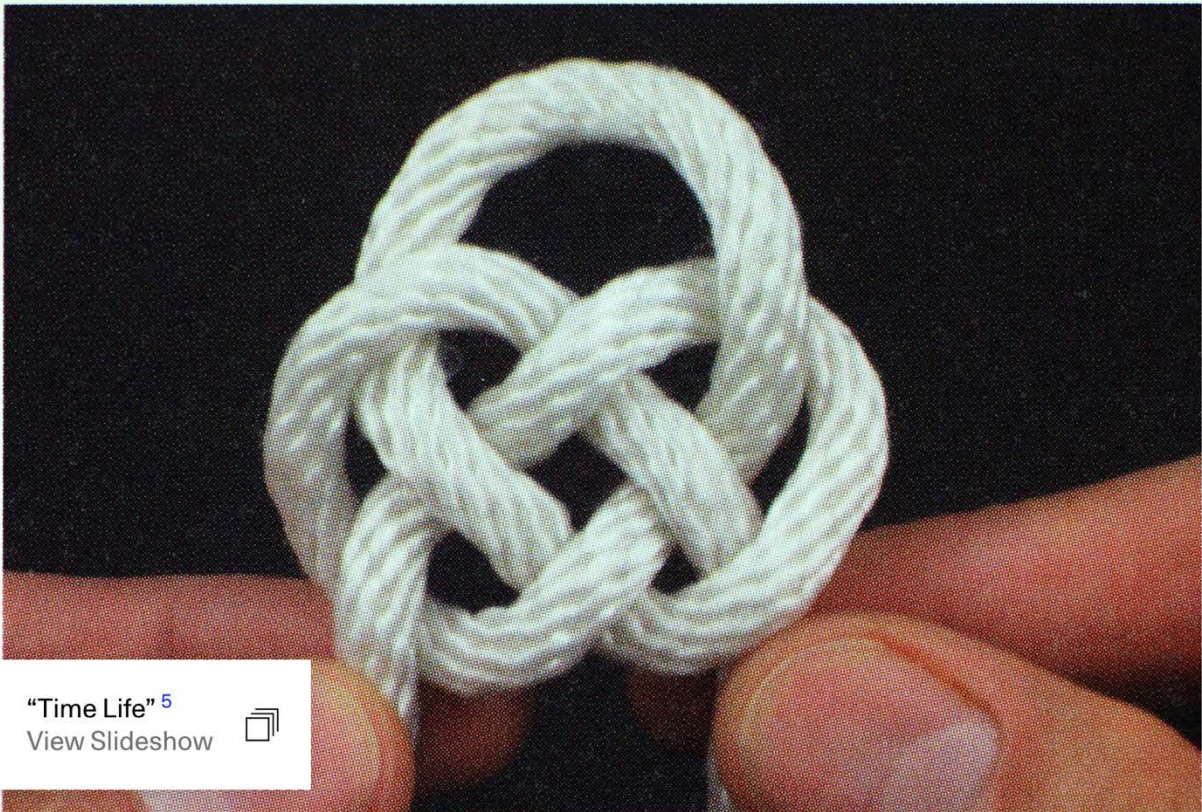
Mungo Thomson

Volume 2. Animal Locomotion, 2015-22

Karma

Price on request

[Mungo Thomson](#)'s "[Time Life](#)" comes to [Karma](#) after a decade of artistic evolution. The solo exhibition consists of eight short videos, the subject matter of which the Los Angeles–based artist has mulled over for years. The videos are presented as distinct chapters and straddle the line between digital and analog.



On-screen, reference texts like encyclopedias and how-to guides become digitized, while banal events of human existence are used to explore geological time. Highly choreographed, a rush of images featuring mundane activities like exercising and cooking whizz past. Here, Thomson considers everyday activities on a cosmic level to look at time from our larger shared reality.

Shuzo Azuchi Gulliver, “Synogenesis”

Nonaka-Hill

Feb. 4–Mar. 25

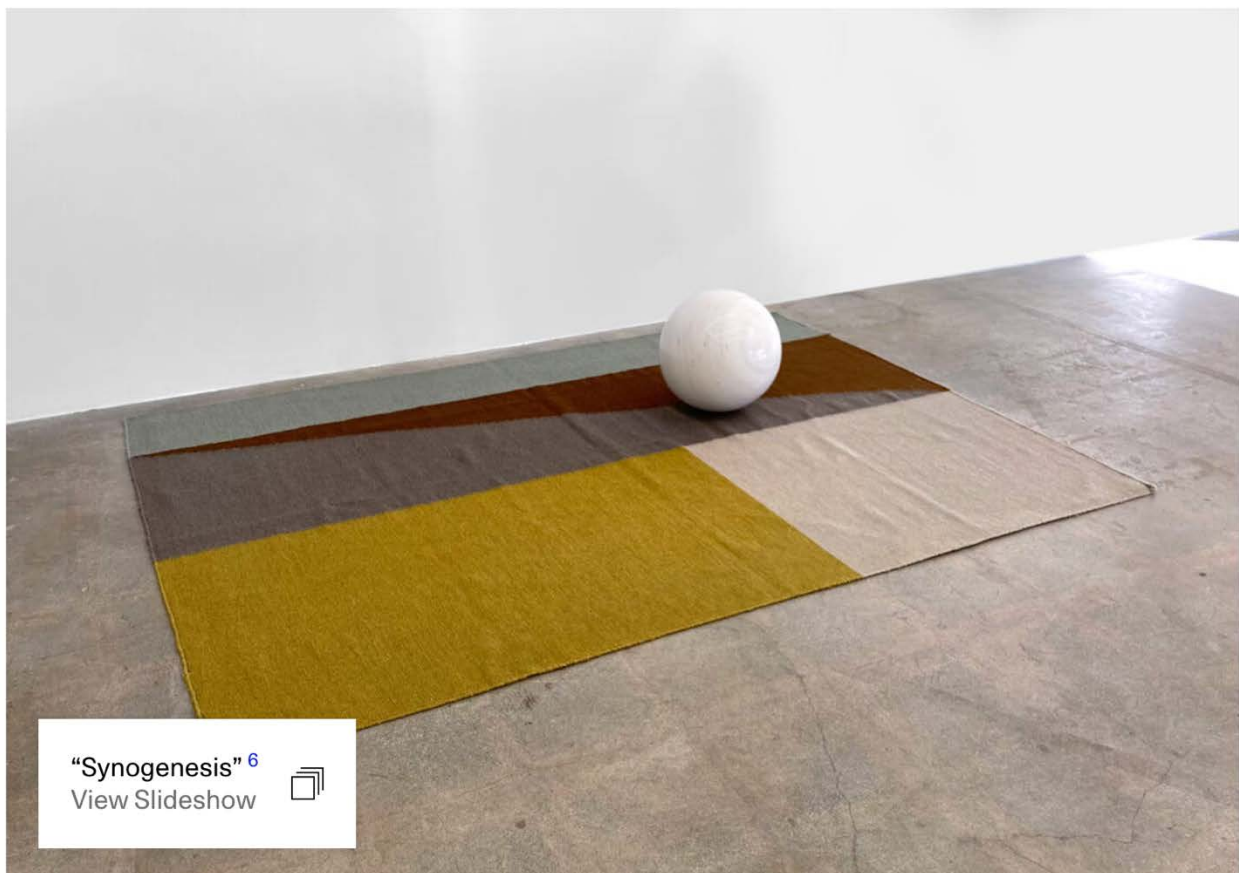


Shuzo Azuchi Gulliver
Weight (Human Ball), 1978
Nonaka Hill
Price on request

[Nonaka-Hill](#) celebrates [Shuzo Azuchi Gulliver](#)'s career with the artist's first West Coast solo exhibition, “Synogenesis.” The survey of

multimedia works spans half a century of artmaking, with the most recent piece made in 2022.

Azuchi's practice was first shaped by [Marcel Duchamp](#) after coming across a book of the [Dada](#) artist's work in 1963. This inspired Azuchi to stage his first happening in high school that same year. One performance from that period includes *Grassfields* (1963), in which nine performers weeded a plot of the schoolyard while viewers watched from the roof.



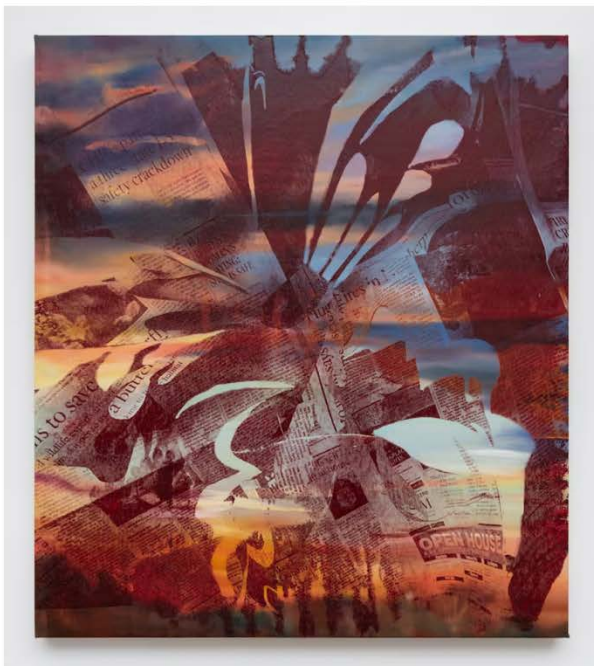
Constant throughout the years has been Azuchi's liberated use of the body as a reference point to its relation to time and space. He often takes a comical approach to the nature of reality and relies on one's

physical presence to better understand the more intangible aspects of the world.

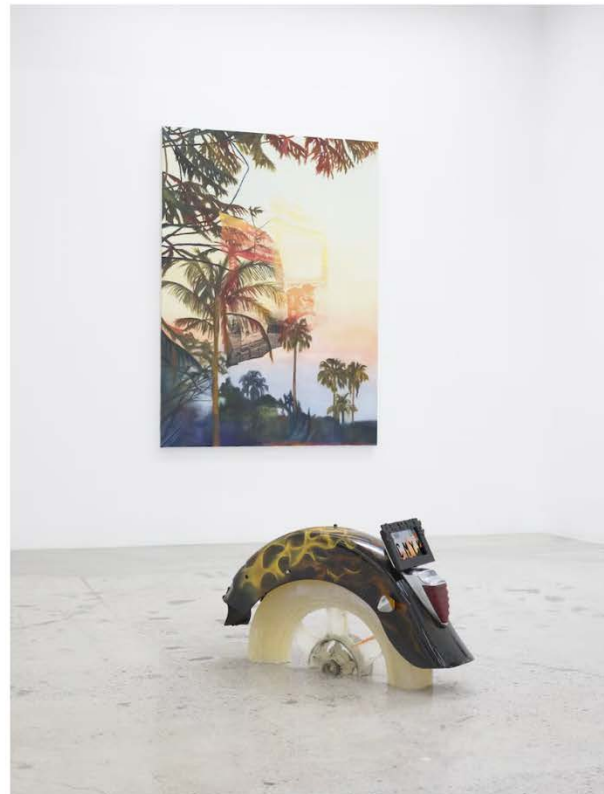
Jessica Taylor Bellamy, “Endnotes for Sunshine”

Anat Ebgi

Jan. 21–Feb. 25



Jessica Taylor Bellamy
Afterimage (butterfly), 2023
Anat Ebgi
Price on request



Jessica Taylor Bellamy
In view, if not in reach, 2023
Anat Ebgi
Sold

In “[Endnotes for Sunshine](#)” at [Anat Ebgi](#), [Jessica Taylor Bellamy](#) reflects on her personal experience as a native Angeleno to consider notions of home, and L.A.’s precarious cultural and

environmental structures. Bellamy juxtaposes the handmade with the mass produced by pulling images and text from newspapers, photographs, and videos from her personal archive. She layers cut, rearranged, and rephotographed newsprint that she then converts into large-scale silkscreens before painting the images on canvas.

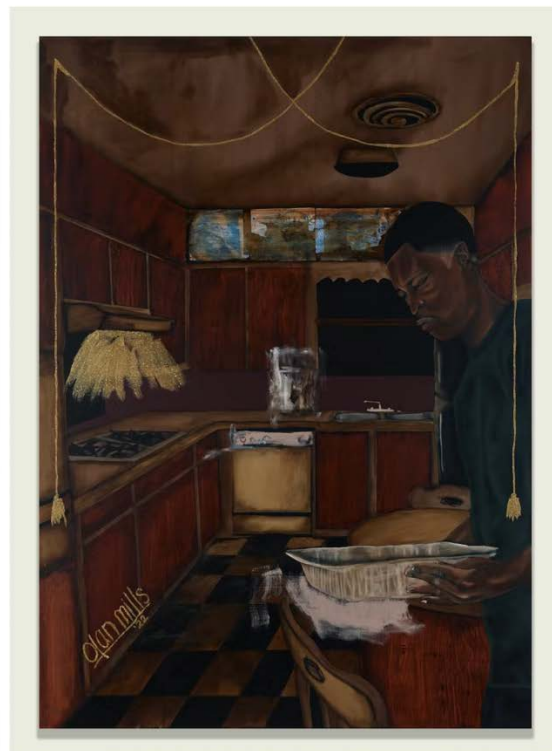
Jammie Holmes, “Somewhereinamerica”

Various Small Fires

Feb. 14–Mar. 11



Jammie Holmes
Three cowrie, 2022
Various Small Fires
Price on request



Jammie Holmes
Picture that in 2022, 2022
Various Small Fires
Sold

[Various Small Fires](#) presents “[Somewhereinamerica,](#)” a solo exhibition of paintings, sculptures, and watercolors by [Jammie Holmes](#). The Dallas-based artist looks to personal and communal memories—both familial and historical—to inform his paintings about community, resilience, and belonging. Holmes’s perspective on Black American life has a palpable empathy that extends to other minority groups and humanity as a whole.



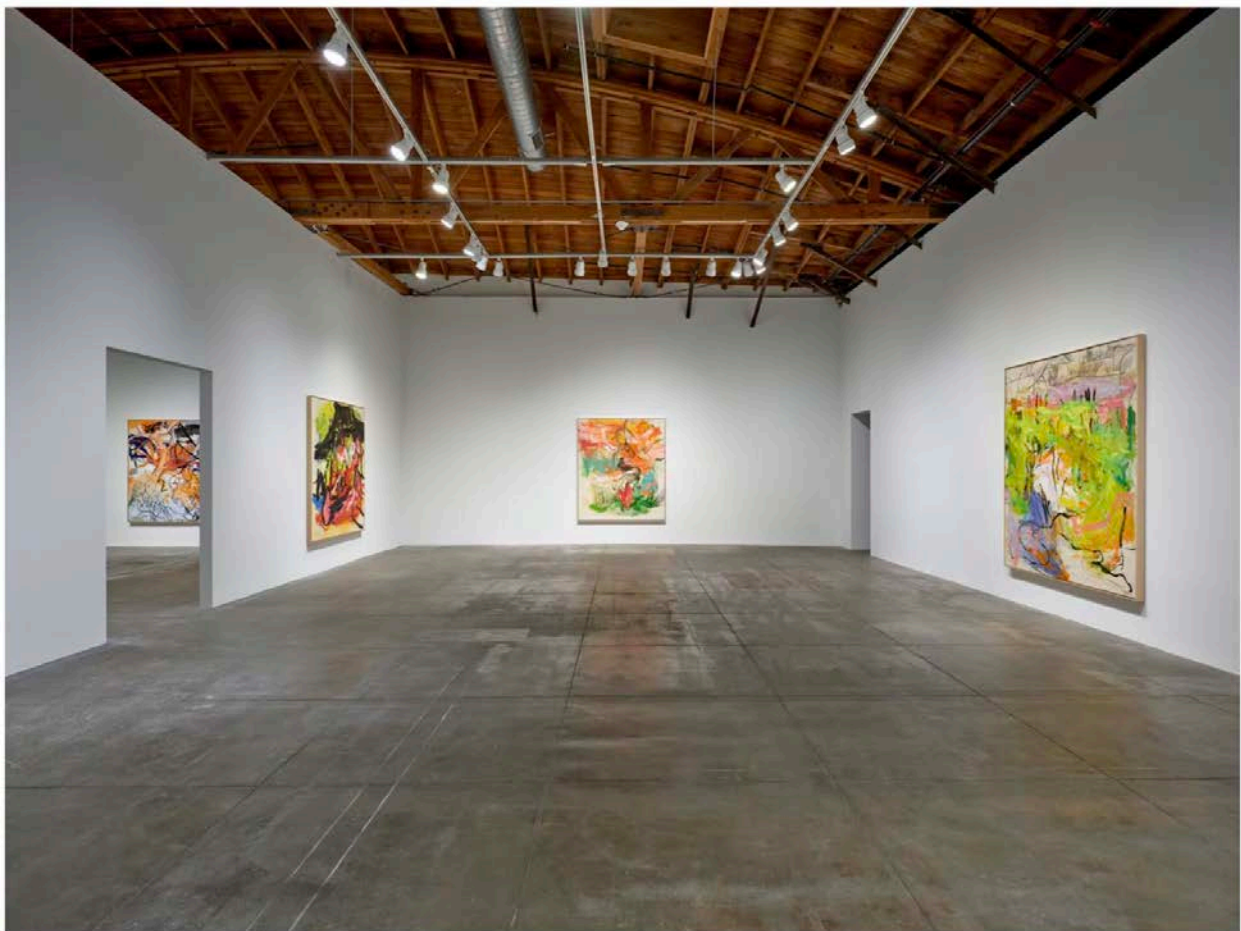
In “[Somewhereinamerica,](#)” modest domestic interiors fold into luxurious atmospheres of success. Meanwhile, other paintings reappropriate the mammy figure in a study of power. The stark contrast between these themes is not unlike the whiplash people of color experience when moving from familiar community spaces to

unknown territory where acceptance is not guaranteed yet necessary for success.

Rita Ackermann, "Vertical Vanish"

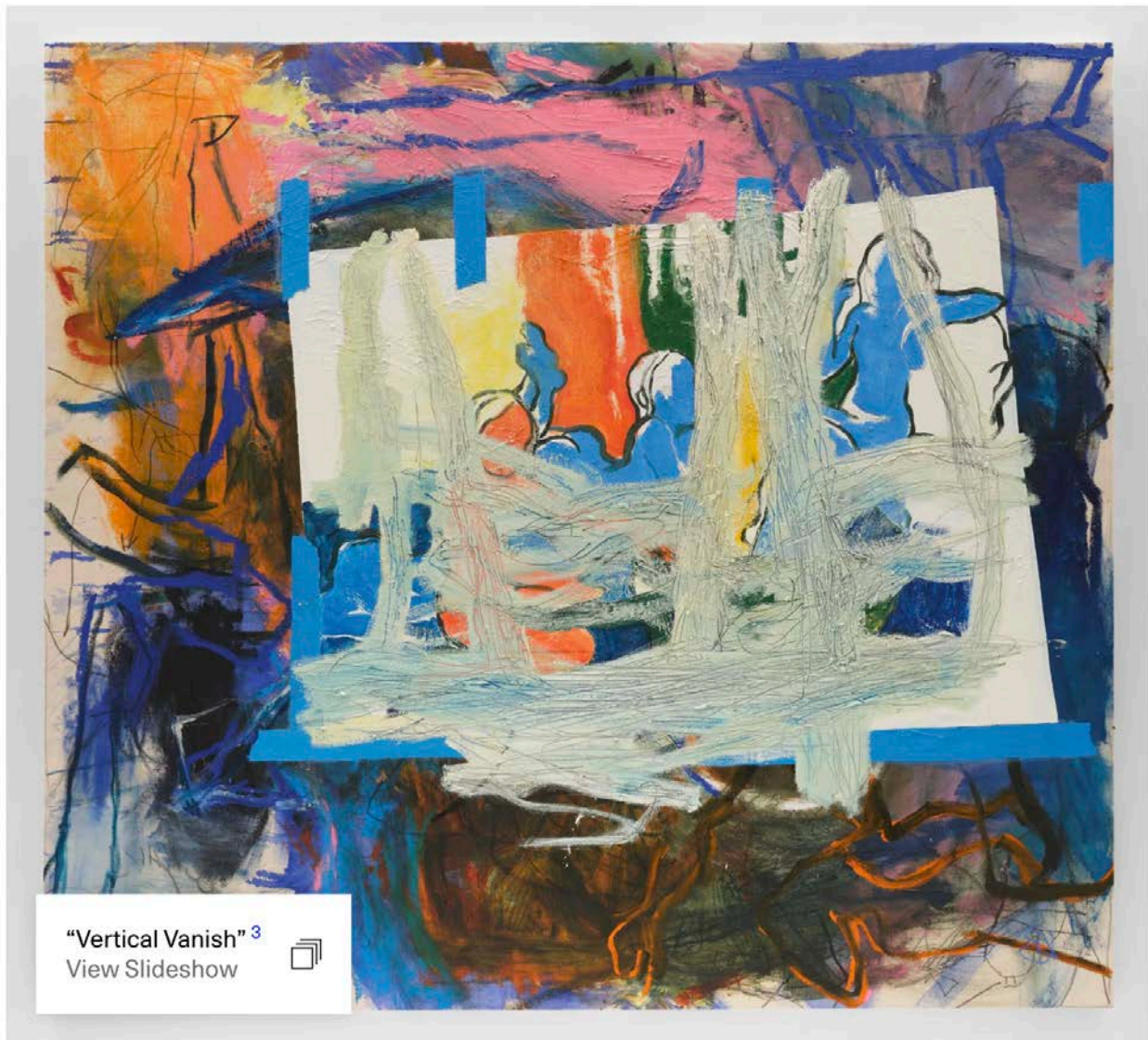
Hauser & Wirth

Feb. 2–Apr. 30



Rita Ackermann, installation view of "Vertical Vanish" at Hauser & Wirth, Los Angeles, 2023. © Rita Ackermann. Photo by Keith Lubow. Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth.

[Hauser & Wirth](#) presents “[Vertical Vanish](#),” [Rita Ackermann](#)’s West Coast debut with an exhibition of recent oil paintings. Working in both large and small scale, the Budapest-born artist plays with repetition of gestures, figures, and motifs.



Shades of rich green, blue, black, and red sprawl across Ackermann’s work. She applies thick washes of paint in layers, later scraping or erasing some away to reveal hidden figures once

obscured by abstraction. In the titular painting *Vertical Varnish* (2022), figural forms beneath the surface are overlaid with revelatory bursts of color. Ackermann manages the chaos with purposeful markmaking and conscientious unveilings that suffuse her surfaces with a sense of harmony.

Alma Allen

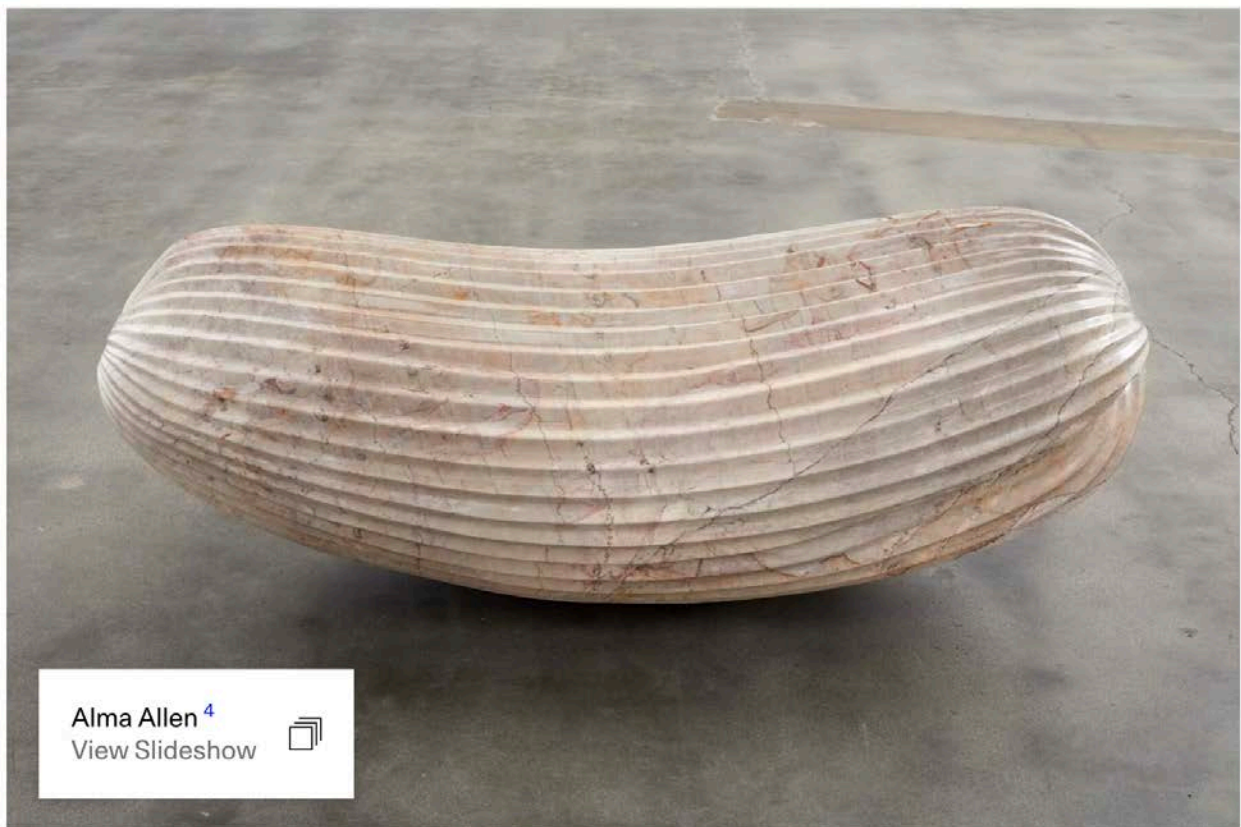
Blum & Poe

Jan. 14–Feb. 25



Alma Allen, installation view at Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, 2023. © Alma Allen. Photo by Evan Walsh. Courtesy of the artist and Blum & Poe, Los Angeles/New York/Tokyo.

[Alma Allen](#) returns to [Blum & Poe](#) with his fourth [solo exhibition](#) with the gallery. When the artist lived in Joshua Tree, his sculptures were usually born of carved wood. Since moving to Topoztlán, Mexico, however, the artist has shifted to the mediums of bronze and stone. Debuting at Blum & Poe are Allen's wall-hanging bronze relief sculptures featuring soft black patinas, reflective surfaces, and singular shapes. In the center of the gallery is *Not Yet Titled* (2022)—the name that all the works share—a milky colored marble piece carved with neat pleats that draw the eye to its ridged surface.



Outside, a bronze work sits on a pedestal, catching pools of glimmering light between the folds of its curves. The sculpture, from its centrally located perch, begs to be admired from every angle—not unlike Allen's larger body of work.

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<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-10-must-see-gallery-la-art-week-2023>