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Forbes

Edward Goldman's Own 'Made In LA' — Pandemic Version

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Installation view ART and HOPE

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“How has this difficult time affected your art making?”

Art Critic Edward Goldman, who for 30 years delighted NPR affiliate KCRW listeners with his weekly “Art Talk,” and who continues to chronicle his art adventures with his weekly

newsletter *Art Matters* as well as his private tours and classes on Art and Art collecting, asked this of LA artists during the pandemic.

So, when Selma Holo, the esteemed Executive Director of Museums at the University of Southern California (USC) suggested he curate a show at USC's Fisher Museum of Art about Art made during the pandemic Goldman readily took on the challenge.



Damian Elwes , Memory of Basquiat , 2021

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND USC FISHER MUSEUM

As he explains in the exhibition catalogue (actually a newsprint broadsheet), “All of the above made me think about the well-known saying ‘Complaining is easy but doing something about it is

hard'. Dramatic and Tragic Events in our lives can sometimes inspire the creation of great works of art. Leo Tolstoy would not have written his famous novel *War and Peace* without Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. Picasso would not have painted his famous *Guernica* without the tragic bombing of the city of Guernica in 1937...."

Goldman is by nature an optimist and as artists told him repeatedly that they had put this time to constructive and creative use, he decided to title the exhibition, "ART AND HOPE at the end of the tunnel."

Goldman then brought his powers as a critic, a reporter, and an irresistible schmoozer to the task. As Goldman explained, "for this exhibition I chose the artists whose work I was able to see despite the restrictions and limitations we all experienced during the pandemic." He also asked the artists to provide statements answering his organizing question about the pandemic.

"As an artist this pandemic has had some unexpected silver linings," Andy Moses wrote in response. "It allowed my mind to slow down."

During this time of isolation, reflection, adaptation and reinvention, artists continued to create. In some cases, they chose subjects at hand, or new materials. In many cases, they dug deeper into their practices, freed from professional and social obligations.

"The Pandemic has not affected me that much luckily," Roger Herman wrote in his personal statement, "I do not leave the house much and stayed busy in the studio. Making art, Cooking, getting fat."

Goldman assembled the work of more than thirty artists, a diverse cross-section of LA artists working in a variety of mediums. The exhibition features a bevy of artists familiar to LA Art

aficionados, such as Alison Saar, Gaijin Fujita, Lezley Saar, John Nava, Andy Moses, and Roger Herman.



Renée Petropoulos, *Georges Perec*, 2020

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND USC FISHER MUSEUM

Rene Petropoulos, perhaps best known in LA for her ceiling mural inside LA's Central Library main entry hall, pivoted from a practice of conceiving civic monuments to making collage works on paper. Petropoulos says she was inspired by writers she admired, beautiful designs that recall artists of the early 20th Century, such as the Russian Constructivists.

Many of the featured artists I was encountering for the first time. *Hands off - Shomer Negiah*, the bold work of Karen Amy Finkle Fishof that greets you upon entering the exhibit is a certainly a product of our times. As Finkle Fishof wrote, Finkle Fishof explains that the work “is a piece about empowerment...The work engages the viewer to examine their pre-existing ideas of casual touch.”

“The various losses and traumas of this phase of my life,” wrote Farrah Karapertian, “deepened my commitment to pursue projects that I feel truly fill gaps in representation.”

LA’s art practice takes many forms including the work of Kate Ingold, whose Appalachian quilt is a conceptual work involving a gold thread. While Karen Davis whose practice is rooted in live body casts — which she could not do during the pandemic — pivoted to using casts already in her studio and assembling them. I also was quite taken with Damian Elwes’ portrait of Jean-Michel Basquiat, part of Elwes’ ongoing series of artists and their studios.

Goldman does not shy away from the political. Included are Leo Marmol’s *Cuban Flag*, about which he writes, “During the darkest days of Trump and Covid-19, I created a series of four American and four Cuban flags. These flag paintings were my meditation on the relationship between my country of birth and my Cuban heritage.” In a similar political vein, Keiko Fukazawa’s has created Wedgwood plates portraits of corrupt authoritarian leaders of the 20th Century, such as Mao Zedong, Donald Trump, Kim Jong-un and Vladimir Putin.



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The other artists featured include Kelly Berg, Ken Gonzales Davis, Pam Douglas, Chris Engman, Alfonso Gonzalez, Jr., Alexandra Grant, Mark Steven Greenfield, Chaz Guest, Lia Halloran, David Hicks, Mark Steven Greenfield, Farrah Karapetian, Annie Lapin, Lawrence Levy, Brendan Lott, Deborah McAfee, Laurie Raskin, Hadi Salehi, John Sonsini, Simon Toporovsky, and Zoe Walsh.

“The digitization of so many aspects of pandemic life illuminated the urgency of my desire for other modes of encounter and embodiment,” Zoe Walsh wrote.

“ART AND HOPE at the end of the tunnel” is, following the dearth of art exhibitions in the last 18 months, is not merely an embarrassment of the richness of LA’s art scene, but also a richly rewarding experience. To my mind, Goldman’s exhibition is a more satisfying survey of art “Made in LA” than the Hammer Museum’s most recent biennial. Goldman’s eye, and his friendships with the artists resonate throughout this exhibition, demonstrating, as his newsletter proclaims, that “Art Matters.”

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/tomteicholz/2021/10/19/edward-goldmans-own-made-in-la--pandemic-version/?sh=3475a033e985>