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2015 Top Tens

by george melrod, molly enholm, shana nys dambrot, peter frank, dewitt cheng, matthew kangas, richard speer, michael paglia, donna tennant, jon carver, james yood

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TOP TEN 2015: LOS ANGELES MUSEUMS By George Melrod



Black, Brown and Biege (After Duke Ellington), 1989

Noah Purifoy

Mixed media, 68" X 113"

Photo: Seamus O'Dubslaine, © Noah Purifoy Foundation, courtesy: LACMA

1) LACMA, "Noah Purifoy: Junk Dada"

From Watts to Joshua Tree, Purifoy's raw, jazzy riffs on junk assemblage finally got a much-deserved spotlight.

2) The Broad, "Inaugural Exhibition"

Forget the quibbles: in a lesser city, this would be the modern art museum. The inaugural show gave but a glimpse.

3) LACMA, "New Objectivity: Modern German Art in the Weimar Republic, 1919-1933"

An engrossing, and enlightening, survey of a vital moment in the 20th-century zeitgeist.

4) The Getty, "Light, Paper, Process: Reinventing Photography"

Focusing on the object-hood of photography, this tight exhibition startled with its physicality.

5) Craft & Folk Art Museum (CAFAM), "Art & Other Tactics"

Potent survey of veterans' art, notable for its anguish, materiality, and conceptual oomph.

6) Pasadena Museum of California Art (PMCA), "Someday Is Now: The Art of Corita Kent"

A forgotten pioneer, who combined spirituality and social activism with a Pop Art bravado.

7) MOCA, "The Art of Our Time"

Curator Helen Molesworth's engaging reinstallation of MOCA's greatest asset: its powerhouse permanent collection.

8) Blum & Poe, "The Avant-Garde Won't Give Up: Cobra and Its Legacy"

Museum-quality curated exhibition, juxtaposing works by Northern European "Cobra" group of 1950s and '60s with kindred recent art.

9) LACMA, "Frank Gehry"

One needn't be a Gehry fan to admire the scope of his vision, as evinced by an effusive panoply of models, drawings and images.

10) The Hammer, "Mark Bradford: Scorched Earth"

The LA art star's first hometown museum show featured only his newest work, but still ...

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VISUAL ART SOURCE CALENDAR

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TOP TEN 2015: LOS ANGELES By Molly Enholm*Cape Hope, 2015***James Turrell**

L.E.D. light, etched glass and shallow space, 50 3/4" x 82 1/4"

Photo: Robert Wedemeyer courtesy of Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles

1) Human Resources, "It's Just the Beginning: Umbrella Movement Anniversary Exhibition"

Artwork, photographs and documentation of the democracy protest in Hong Kong, lest we forget.

2) LACMA, "New Objectivity: Modern German Art in the Weimar Republic, 1919-1933"

This powerful exhibition educates on the diversity of artistic leanings and practices during the turbulent interwar period in Germany.

3) Kayne Griffin Corcoran, "James Turrell"

Three transcendental Elliptical Glass installations bathe the viewer in ephemeral washes of colored light.

4) Samuel Freeman, "Blue McRight: Drink Me"

Binding, wrapping, and combining, McRight evokes the ecological, the sublime and the surreal.

5) KP Projects, "Sashie Masakatsu"

Mysterious floating orbs haunt post-apocalyptic landscapes: a cautionary tale.

6) Richard Telles Fine Art, "John McAllister: Sultry Spells Rapture"

Intricate patterning, optical illusion, and manipulations of synthetic hues challenge rational perspective and perception.

7) Orange County Museum of Art, "My Generation: Young Chinese Artists"

The Post-Mao generation breaks through preconceptions of form, weaving together influences of East and West, antique and contemporary.

8) Edward Cella Art and Architecture, "Homeland: Pontus Willfors"

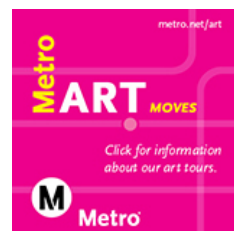
Domestic objects reimagined suggest a reconsideration of the value of their source materials.

9) Meliksetian | Briggs, "Mustafa Hulusi"

Diagonal, torn test strips fracture photographic vistas and aestheticize the war-torn island of Cyprus.

10) Peter Blake Gallery, "Larry Bell"

Historic contextualization aside, it's always great when you go to see your favorite band and you like the "new stuff" best.

TOP TEN 2015: LOS ANGELES By Shana Nys Dambrot



Installation view: *Let Power Take A Female Form*

Photo: Fredrik Nilsen, courtesy of the artists and The Box, LA

1) The Box, "Eugenia Butler, Eugenia P. Butler, Corazon Del Sol: Let Power Take A Female Form"

Emotional and scholarly three-generation matrilineage yields an esoteric, witty, conceptual, indelible masterpiece of cake, underpants, bread, flies, and understated theatrics.

2) ACE, "Ben Jones"

Art historical, neon-hued multimedia romper room spectacle merging Op Art and 8-bit.

3) Anat Ebgi, "Jen DeNike: If She Hollers"

Dream, nightmare, escapism, reality merge in slow-motion melo- drama of hypnotic video trilogy and culled still photographs.

4) Gavlak, "Vincent Szarek: Like a Rock"

Desert landscape strangeness takes abstract geometrical form; from planar color studies to plain air rebellion.

5) Marine Projects, "Salon No. 13"

All-women group show of avant-garde ceramics, shaped canvases, eccentric paintings, and areas in-between exploring nature and un-naturalism.

6) C. Nichols Project, "Rory Devine: Iconoclastic Works of the Early 21st Century"

Gloriously fine, goopy poodles; a colorist's dream of a hirsute bikini-clad trucker; color-study wall of party balloons like pixels of joy.

7) The Mistake Room, "Cao Fei: Shadow Plays"

Epic Second Life-generated simulations of modern/historical Beijing's real-life surreality.

8) Walter Maciel, "John Bankston: Sundry Stories"

Paintings like children's books illustrations reveal grown-up allegories, starring fantasy furries and real-life chimeras.

9) Mark Moore, "Julie Heffernan: Pre-Occupations"

Luscious, alarming self-portraits and symbolist landscapes; trees in captivity, humans in the wild, climate change in art history.

10) Klowden Mann, "Alexandra Wiesenfeld: when i when if when lie when life (Xavier Villaurrutia)"

Human experience in landscape form: awkward, intense, saturated, dystopic, dyspeptic, and prismatic.

TOP TEN 2015: NATIONAL MUSEUMS By Peter Frank