

5 Free Art Shows to See in L.A. This Week

By [Catherine Wagley](#)



Courtesy of the artist and Thibault & Sunder

This week, a magic mirror appears on a college campus, and two young artists try to learn from the 1992 L.A. riots.

Sluttier than what?

The sculptures Ashley Bickerton created for "Wall-Wall," currently hanging in Thibault & Sunder's new space in Arlington Heights, look like miniature mashups of arcade games and climbing walls. Little neon-colored, resin rocks bulge out of fluorescent rectangular backgrounds. The press release quotes Bickerton, active since the 1980s and now based in Bali, saying he just wants "to make sluttier, smaller, ingratiating, colour-soaked sexual work that just panders to the viewer." "Sluttier than what?" one wonders. But certainly, these pander to the kind of viewer who likes the colors and brightness of video games but still finds abstract, tightly crafted objects more seductive than cartoon characters. *1817 & 1819 Third Ave., Arlington Heights; through May 21. (323) 487-1644, thibaultandsunder.com.*

Rose-petal pink plastic

Pink plastic shopping bags have been among Maren Hassinger's key materials for more than 30 years. According to Mary Jones, who interviewed Hassinger in 2015, the artist's apartment brims with them. Sometimes she puts love notes inside them. Sometimes she hangs them in trees. Once, in 1982, she went to a blighted Lynwood neighborhood, where houses had been torn down to make room for a freeway, and, wearing a suit of pink plastic, replaced trash in a park with trash she'd painted rose-petal pink. Now, at the Landing, a large circle made of her inflated pink bags fills a back wall. It looks both cheap and seductively voluminous, the bags all bulging in different ways. The installation is part of a group show, "Signifying Form," featuring work by black female artists in Los Angeles. The oldest sculpture dates back to 1935, though most of the art has a weathered maturity that makes it hard to think of the works in terms of new and old. *5118 W. Jefferson Blvd., West Adams; through June 3. (323) 272-3194, thelandinggalleries.com.*

Pow wow seeker

Miami-based artist Dara Friedman placed an ad on Powwows.com, an online calendar of the Native American gatherings, to find actors for her film *Mother Drum*. Then she traveled to the Swinomish Reservation in Washington, Coeur d'Alene Reservation in Idaho and Crow Reservation in Montana to meet and film those who responded. The drum circles and dancing depicted in her film, currently playing at Kayne Griffin Corcoran, were just for her camera, separate from any larger gatherings happening at the same time. Still, the footage has a documentary feel. The dancers' intricate costumes and long braids contrast with their relatively mundane surroundings (a parking garage, a shed in the background), but Friedman has done little to make her film seem portentous or to impose any narrative structure on its actors. She seems just to be acknowledging that there is power in these communal acts by indigenous Americans at this moment in history. One of the performers, Cynthia Jim, wrote in a letter that's posted on the gallery's website: "The drum, a transformative animate member of creation, awaits the life-giving instructions of all those that engage in its power." 1201 S. La Brea Ave., Mid-Wilshire; through May 13. (310) 586-6886, kaynegriffincorcoran.com.

Mirror, mirror

A magic mirror separates the two sides of Isabell Spengler's installation at the Los Angeles Museum of Art (LAMO), the 14-by-9-foot museum that artist Alice Könitz built in 2012. Spengler divided the mobile museum, which has lived at Occidental College since 2015 but will leave the campus after this show, into a light half and a dark half. Each half has its own entrance and a shabby-chic decor, with a vanity at the center and antique-looking pairs of slippers on a shelf. On opening night, Spengler held court before the mirror on the dark side, holding a flashlight up to her face when people on the light side leaned close to the glass. They'd catch a glimpse of her then, and often react with surprise. A film Spengler made plays on a small monitor in a glass case on the dark side. Its protagonist, a former actress in glittering clothes, lives alone in a small, romantic hut in the woods in Southern France and goes by the name Starlight. She wears a fantastic blue-green sleep mask even while

awake. *1600 Campus Road, Eagle Rock; through May 8.*

losangelesmuseumofart.blogspot.com.

Fighting again

“We are all fighting against the same unfair system that prefers we compete against each other,” artist Grace Hwang read as collaborator Heisue Chung-Matheu used a projection of a TV screen as if it were a laser pointer to highlight the faces of protesters from the 1992 L.A. Riots. These faces appeared on a large screen behind Hwang and Chung-Matheu, who were performing at the Hammer in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the riots, making parallels between their parents' experience of racial injustice and their own. “I hope you can consider this: The American Dream is not only for your children,” Hwang said, addressing her words to her immigrant parents. This week at the Women’s Center for Creative Work, Hwang and Chung-Matheu will talk about remembering rebellion and resistance of the past, and how it can help us resist political oppression in the present. *2425 Glover Place, Elysian Valley; Mon., April 24, 7:30-9:30 p.m.*

womenscenterforcreativework.com.

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