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Deborah Vankin, "Hammer Museum names the artist lineup for 'Made in L.A. 2020,'" *Los Angeles Times*, January 21, 2020.

Los Angeles Times

Hammer Museum names the artist lineup for 'Made in L.A. 2020'



"Woman With Waves Coming Out of Her Mouth" by Christina Forrer, 2014. Wool, cotton and linen, 50 by 56 inches. (Joshua White/Christina Forrer, Luhring Augustine, Corbett vs. Dempsey)

By DEBORAH VANKIN | STAFF WRITER | JAN. 21, 2020 6 AM

The Hammer Museum in Westwood announced last fall that it was partnering with the Huntington Library, Art Museum and Botanical Gardens in San Marino to stage its next "Made in L.A." biennial at both locations, and on Tuesday the museums revealed more about what that cross-town art conversation will look like.

"Made in L.A. 2020: a version," curated by Myriam Ben Salah and Lauren Mackler, will include 30 artists, writers, filmmakers and performers. It will highlight conceptual throughlines in the artists' work, including entertainment, horror and the theater-film convention of the fourth wall.

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Kahlil Joseph will present his “BLKNWS,” a news feed spotlighting original video footage as well as film clips, academic lectures, music videos and other found images. It will be broadcast at locations such as barber shops or hospital waiting rooms — “environments where people are waiting for something, in the middle of their day,” Ben Salah said, “and aren’t necessarily looking for an art experience, but are open to receiving content.”

“It’s about challenging this authority of who decides what is the news,” Mackler added.

Justen LeRoy, who works under the name SON., will create a biweekly podcast that’s intended to be listened to as artgoers travel between “Made in L.A.” venues. Some of the podcast content will come from a conversation series the artist will host in the back of a South L.A. barbershop.

Several projects address the use of archival materials and overlooked histories.

Painter Monica Majoli’s “Blue boys” mines the archives of Blue Boy Magazine, a gay lifestyle and porn publication that started in the mid-’70s. She will present new watercolor woodcut transfers that depict delicate, pastel-colored naked bodies of young men based on images in the magazine. The works are beautiful but also tragic, Mackler said. “She invests in models from the late ’70s, this time right before the AIDS epidemic, and many of them died or stand in for men like them.”

Writer and curator Sabrina Tarasoff is looking at the history of the longtime Venice literary arts center Beyond Baroque and the local ’70s and ’80s-era poetry scene. She will have a haunted house installation built, where each room takes on the theme of a single poem by authors such as Dennis Cooper, Amy Gerstler and Ed Smith.

“Made in L.A.” spotlights emerging and under-recognized artists from the Los Angeles area who are working in sculpture, painting, textile, multimedia, performance, assemblage, photography and installation. Over the last decade, it has become a mainstay of the local culture scene.

Mackler and Ben Salah — along with assistant curator of performance Ikechukwu Onyewuenyi — visited about 300 artists’ studios over nine months last year. Artists who were addressing entertainment, they said, were using it as subject matter or working within it as a medium. Those incorporating elements of horror were using the genre’s aesthetic or questioning the broader definition of what constitutes horror. Many of the artists playing with the idea of the fourth wall — that invisible barrier between performers and the audience — were exploring the interplay between fiction and truth.

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“They’re responses to our current climate, pop-culturally, politically and socially,” Mackler said. “What creates a sense of horror seems relevant now.”

Added Ben Salah: “We chose a more oblique response to the political climate, rather than plainly political work. It’s talking about things in a more poetic way, to use art for what it is, this augmented representation of a certain time and era, not a direct representation of it.”

The title of the exhibition, Mackler said, “came from thinking about this biennial as one in a series, a long thought for the museum, one permutation of many. But we also really tried to create a biennial that would distinguish itself from those that came before, and build off of them.”

Each “Made in L.A.” artist will be shown at both museums. The two presentations aim not to mirror each other but rather to seem different parts of the same biennial, Onyewuenyi said.

“We’re housing just as ambitious projects at both locations,” he added. “A lot of the artists are thinking about making sure there’s some kind of cross-talk between the works they present.”

“Made in L.A. 2020: a Version” runs June 7-Aug. 30.

The participating artists are: Mario Ayala, Aria Dean, Hedi El Kholti, Buck Ellison, Niloufar Emamifar, Christina Forrer, Harmony Holiday, Patrick Jackson, Larry Johnson, Kahlil Joseph, Ann Greene Kelly, Jacqueline Kiyomi Gordon, Nicola L., Brandon D. Landers, SON. (Justen LeRoy), Ligia Lewis, Monica Majoli, Jill Mulleady, Diane Severin Nguyen, Alexandra Noel, Mathias Poledna, Umar Rashid, Reynaldo Rivera, Katja Seib, Ser Serpas, Sonya Sombreuil/Come Tees, Jeffrey Stuker, Sabrina Tarasoff, Fulton Leroy Washington (a.k.a. Mr. Wash), **Kandis Williams.**