

THE LOS ANGELES PROJECT

2014.9.13 –
2014.11.9

UCCA

Ullens Center for
Contemporary Art
尤伦斯当代艺术中心

Kathryn Andrews

Aaron Curry

Alex Israel

Matthew Monahan

Sterling Ruby

Ryan Trecartin

Kaari Upson

THE LOS ANGELES PROJECT

2014.9.13 – 2014.11.9

In a critical examination of one of the most important art centers in the Western world, UCCA will dedicate its entire exhibition space to an anthology of seven shows of contemporary artists living and working in Los Angeles. They are Kathryn Andrews, Aaron Curry, Alex Israel, Matthew Monahan, Sterling Ruby, Ryan Trecartin, and Kaari Upson.

These seven artists represent a generation of creative practitioners drawn to a global nexus, one whose rich cultural legacy and robust network of art schools, galleries, and institutions act as a magnet for top talents in the field of contemporary art. Outside of Hollywood, specific cultural connections between Los Angeles and Beijing have been lacking despite their imagined proximity as Pacific Rim cities. Los Angeles has long been imagined as a “city of the future” in much the same way that urban development in China has unfolded against the backdrop of an implicit utopianism. As China’s creative scene matures into a multipolar terrain of geographies, contexts, and subjectivities, Los Angeles and its cultural topography become especially relevant to Beijing and its current position as the mainland’s creative capital.

Rather than a thematic group show, “The Los Angeles Project” at UCCA uses the Center’s wide range of spaces to juxtapose a set of positions with regard for the individual character of each artist’s practice. Accompanying the show is a publication in the form of a collection of seven distinct artist books, as well as a range of multidisciplinary public programs. The UCCA exhibition is the first showing in China for most of the participating artists and the first time the art of Los Angeles has been comprehensively presented in the region.

In keeping with the anthological character of the exhibition, instead of a single catalogue UCCA has produced a collection of seven distinct artist books designed by each of the participants in “The Los Angeles Project.” Following in the great artist book tradition of John Baldessari and Edward Ruscha, these publications reflect the tremendous range of practices and positions presented within the UCCA exhibition, from a DIY sticker collage to a photographic record of destroyed artworks to a dystopic juxtaposition of Beijing and Los Angeles.

All of the artist books are available for purchase at UCCA. They are co-published with Koenig Books and supported by Artron Art Group, with editorial support from Karen Marta and Brian Roettinger.

FOUNDATION
GUY & MYRIAM ULLENS

Lead Sponsor



TOMORROW
ART

Publication
Support



New Media Art
Production Partner

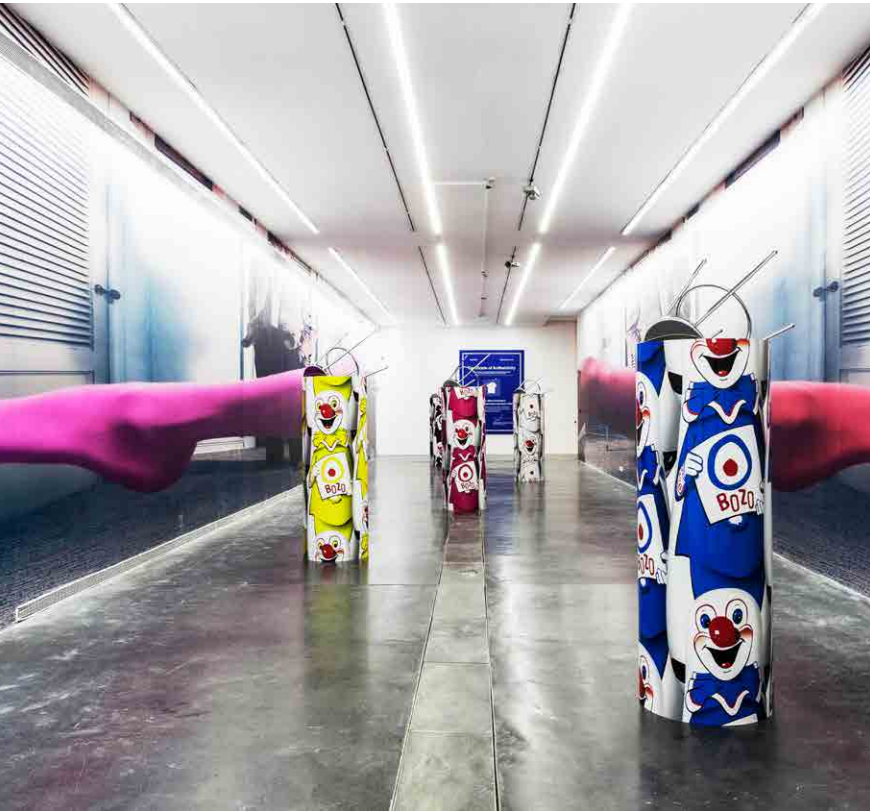


Floor Plan



Kathryn Andrews

Kathryn Andrews' tripartite presentation for "The Los Angeles Project" appropriates scenes, icons, and objects from Hollywood and entertainment culture while introducing minute formal alterations and bodily relationships that disrupt the symbolic resonance of this material. For her mural-like wall stickers, the artist reproduced an image of the iconic seduction scene from the classic American film *The Graduate* in her studio, enlisting new actors and distorting the colors. With copies of the temptress's leg spanning the two parallel walls of the gallery, Andrews transforms the architecture and the entire installation into an eroticized body, in which she situates the viewer. In the middle of this tableau, the artist places five aluminum cylinders, each printed with the storied American children's character Bozo the Clown. The artist legally licensed the character's likeness for her sculptures, though she has modified some of his most iconic traits, including his trademark red hair and blue suit. The final component is the artist's first painting, a recreation of a certificate of authenticity for "Tom Cruise's Hero Black T-Shirt" from *Mission: Impossible II*. The ostensible legitimacy of the document is called into question by layers of facsimile and alteration evident in the artist's depiction. Together, Andrews' works explore how narratives of authorship, originality, and authenticity are employed and distorted.



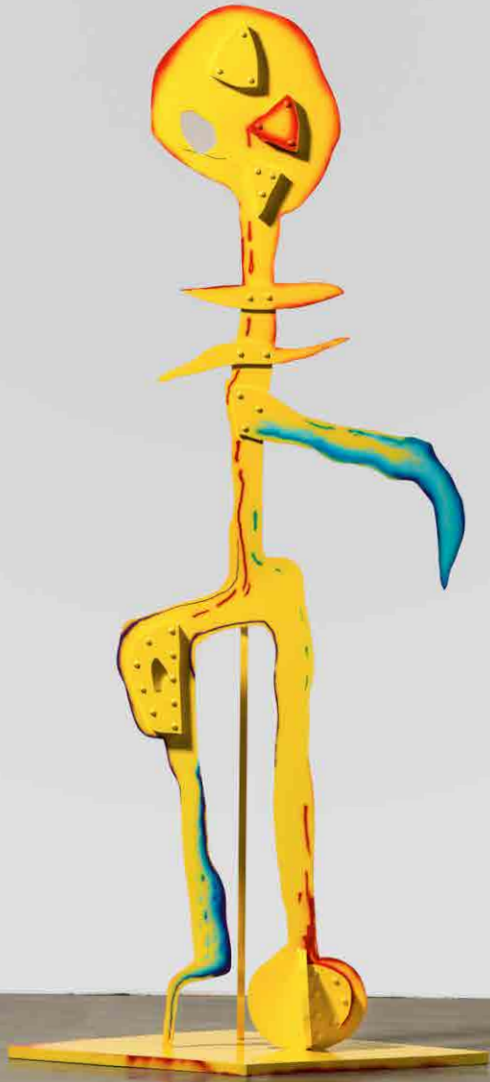
Installation view of Kathryn Andrews' presentation for "The Los Angeles Project"

Kathryn Andrews (b. 1973, Mobile, Alabama) has shown widely at major museums and institutions across the globe. Select solo exhibitions include "Kathryn Andrews: D.O.A. | D.O.B." (David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, 2011); "Special Meat Occasional Drink" (Museum Ludwig, Cologne, 2013); and "Kathryn Andrews" (TC: Temporary Contemporary series, Bass Museum of Art, Miami, 2014).



Aaron Curry

Aaron Curry's room-size installation strikingly evolves a motif that originated in a 2010 solo exhibition. His site-specific construction of complementary freestanding sculptures against a backdrop of custom wallpaper is his most radical collage-like environment to date, not only for its expansive scale but also because Curry adopts a stark, minimal surface treatment throughout—white paint accented by DayGlo yellow, orange, pink, and purple hues—granting each sculpture, if not the whole space, an incandescent, ghostly presence. Situated within a gallery covered in 238 pieces of cardboard, the five painted wood sculptures at the center of the space display similar visual acrobatics in their juxtaposition of biomorphic cutouts intersecting at X, Y, and Z axes. Each sculpture is a mature formulation of Curry's trademark formal language, an idiosyncratic blend of science fiction, hot rod culture, and Modernist sculpture. His two-dimensional works juxtapose gestural marks with the artist's own footprints and other detritus accumulated as he worked on them on the floor, and indexical linkage to Curry's physical practice and the inverted connection between museum and studio space, wall and ground.



Aaron Curry, *Mr Machine Gun Bodymind*, 2013, aluminum, paint,
369.6 x 168 x 124 cm. Courtesy Fondation Guy & Myriam Ullens.

"The Los Angeles Project" is Aaron Curry's (b. 1972, San Antonio, Texas) first exhibition in China. Major exhibitions include "Hammer Projects: Aaron Curry" (Hammer Museum, Los Angeles 2008); "Aaron Curry" (High Museum of Art, Atlanta, 2012); "Melt to Earth" (Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York, 2013); and "Bad Brain" (CAPC Musée d'Art Contemporain, Bordeaux, 2013).

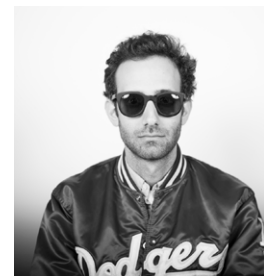


Alex Israel

Taking the form of a twenty-meter-long mural installation, Alex Israel's array of images evoke the visual disjoints of a Hollywood studio lot, including the presence of conspicuously absurd objects and props. The artist keeps his studio in a former scenic painting studio within the Warner Bros. main campus, and many of his pieces are created through Hollywood production channels to mirror the form and construction of film sets. A sense of perceptual disruption arises in observing firsthand visual forms that are meant to be experienced through the mediation of the lens. The museum space endows them with a narrative dimension through the interplay of symbols, their L.A. significance imputed top-down by the conceptual priming of the exhibition. Israel's presentation also includes a one-off, live version of his "As It Lays" series of video works. In these pieces, the artist plays the part of a talk show host, asking celebrities questions that range from the ridiculous to the awkward to the provocative in a discomfiting yet humanizing inversion of television formats and media consumption.

Instagram: [#AlexIsrael](#)

"The Los Angeles Project" marks the first exhibition in China for Alex Israel (b. 1982, Los Angeles, California). His major solo exhibitions include "Alex Israel" (Peres Projects, Berlin, 2011); "As It Lays" (presented by the Museum of Contemporary Art at the Henson Soundstage, Los Angeles, 2012); and "Alex Israel" (Le Consortium, Dijon, 2013).



Alex Israel, *Star Waggon*, 2014, site-specific mural. Courtesy the artist.



Matthew Monahan, *Column I*, 2014, patinated bronze, stainless steel, plate steel, brick, 196.9 x 45.7 x 45.7 cm. Courtesy the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York.

Matthew Monahan

Matthew Monahan remains fascinated by the extended possibilities of sculpture in an era when the aesthetic and epistemological frameworks that classically grounded it have fallen by the wayside. His works often contemplate the unstable distinction between content and form, or mass and space, by making visible certain traces of their own making. This particular group of works, spread across various media but united by a monochromatic palette, shows the range of his thinking. In columnar sculptures, first wrought painstakingly from blocks of foam, then cast in bronze, figures emerge like dying slaves while still remaining contained and constrained by the rectangular blocks from which they were hewn. Another sculpture, made from a sawdust-and-spit-polish mix of marble dust and epoxy, refigures the slaves, via the molds used for their eventual casting, into a Laocoön-like constellation. Three monumental, mashed-up charcoal nudes, named alliteratively for their imaginary sitters, wrestle with the distinction between the edge of the sheet (onto which they were straightforwardly drawn, and only later rearranged) and the outline of their own figures. The “Body Electric” oil-paint drawings, finally, postulate a figurative world where the basic symmetry of the human form is displaced and arrayed along multiple axes. As in all of Monahan’s work, “accidental” marks and gestures—kneeprints, folds, traces of the rudimentary implements with which they were made—reveal the parameters of the very structure they so eloquently question.

Matthew Monahan (b. 1972, Eureka, California) previously participated in a residency program at the Chinese European Art Center in Xiamen, which culminated in the dual show “Civilized Special Zone” (2002) with Lara Schnitger. Other major solo and dual exhibitions include “Zeno’s Quiver” (Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1997); “Focus: Matthew Monahan” (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2007); and “Mineral Spirits: Anne Chu and Matthew Monahan” (Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, 2010).



Sterling Ruby

Sterling Ruby's expansive practice looks at materials in supposed states of decay, perhaps as an allegory for an America on the brink. In his stalagmite sculptures, gravity and urethane combine to ornament homemade militarized forms in unlikely and organic ways. In the monumental painting cycle "SP217," his initial interest in canvas as palimpsest—stemming from the graffiti-modulated gang turf wars in his former Los Angeles neighborhood—takes a turn for the sublime, creating a thirty-meter horizon which oscillates in tone and tenor along a single wall. His more recent bleach collage works, both the "BC (4771)" series framed and hung opposite the painting cycle, and the two new "FLAG" pieces, created specifically for this show, repurpose studio detritus into compositions that recall, albeit ambiguously, American subcultures from hippies to punks. "My intention is to use many media as a kind of schizophrenic labor strategy," Ruby has said, "But it has taken me years to convey that this scattered routine belongs within a coherent trajectory."

Sterling Ruby (b. 1972, Bitburg, Germany) has previously exhibited in Beijing as part of the UCCA group exhibition "Stray Alchemists" (2008) and in a solo show at Pace Beijing entitled "VAMPIRE" (2011). Other major solo exhibitions include "SUPERMAX 2008" (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2008); "SOFT WORK" (Centre D'Art Contemporain, Geneva, 2012); and "SUNRISE SUNSET" (Hauser & Wirth, New York, 2014).



Sterling Ruby, *Monument Stalagmite / The Peace Officer*, 2012, PVC pipe, foam, urethane, wood, spray paint, formica, 524.5 x 106.7 x 160 cm. Courtesy the artist.

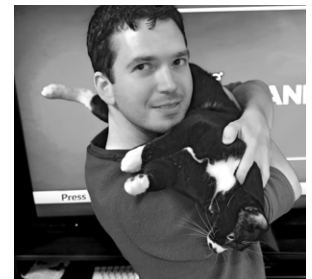


Ryan Trecartin, *The Re'Search (Re'Search Wait'S)*, 2009-10, HD video, 40'6". Courtesy the artist.

Ryan Trecartin

The four movies that comprise Ryan Trecartin's UCCA presentation are drawn from the series, "Any Ever" (2009-2010). Intricately connected through recurring characters and motifs, each video features nearly indecipherable, multi-linear narratives structured within a disorienting mixture of digital effects. The movies are written, directed, and edited by the artist, but include the performances of a large cast of collaborators. Principle among these collaborators is Lizzie Fitch, who works with Trecartin on all aspects of the movie production. The resulting artworks probe issues of identity, self-presentation, and youth culture in an age when advancements in media technology have outpaced humanity's understanding of them. Trecartin is interested in performative personality in light of the ubiquitous camera. In his videos, characters move seamlessly between atomized suites of dialogue, manner, and costume, momentary embodiments of digital era archetypes. Central to Trecartin's practice is his use of language, through which the artist breaks down and recombines stock phrases of contemporary media-saturated slang into quasi-poetry that sounds familiar, yet remains strange. The movies are presented within an environment created by Fitch and Trecartin, an immersive installation of sound and stylized seating that acts as a tonal preface to the space of the videos, further complicating the relationship between real and fictional, physical and digital.

Ryan Trecartin (b. 1981, Webster, Texas) is an artist working in video, sculpture, and installation. "The Los Angeles Project" is Trecartin's first presentation in China. Major exhibitions include "Ryan Trecartin: I-Be Area" (Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2008); "The Generational: Younger than Jesus" (New Museum, New York, 2009); and "Ryan Trecartin: Any Ever" (MoMA PS1, New York, 2011).



Kaari Upson

Kaari Upson populates a fabricated interior space with eerie interpretations of domestic objects. As the viewer enters, a wallpaper installation sets the tone for her presentation. The putative glamour and allure of the wall's subject, Angelina Jolie's lipstick impressions, stand in stark contrast with its blemished visual representation. Past this, forms of couches, mattresses, and rugs exist as preternatural vestiges, rendered bleary distant cousins of their original referents by the intense and manipulative sculptural process they underwent. The artist's painterly gestures are captured and distorted as they seep into the material and dry, a technique Upson has only partial control over. The sense of materiality within these objects, evoking grime, domestic decay, and bodily stains, evince a psychic potency rooted in the juxtaposition of instinctive associations and formal aesthetics. Alongside these are a series of doors and cinderblocks. As Upson pours their base materials (urethane foam and cement respectively), the flexible molds expand, engaging counterintuitively with standard mold-making practices, giving the pieces their bloated look. This visual/material irony is enhanced by their placement, with the cinder blocks positioned as if supporting the doors. These artworks coalesce with Upson's ongoing series "The Larry Project," in which the artist recreates the history of a man she knows only through discarded personal effects, this time taking a less specific house as subject.



Kaari Upson, *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue*, 2014, urethane, pigment, dimensions variable.
Courtesy the artist and Massimo De Carlo, Milan.

"The Los Angeles Project" is Kaari Upson's (b. 1972, San Bernardino, California) first exhibition in China. Her major solo shows include "Hammer Projects: Kaari Upson" (Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2007); "I am bound to have some anxiety about this so please if I say stop, don't stop" (Maccarone Gallery, New York, 2009); "Kaari Upson" (Overduin and Kite, Los Angeles, 2011); and "Sleep With the Key" (Massimo De Carlo, Milan, 2013).



Public Programs

“The Los Angeles Project” at UCCA features seven artists living and working in Los Angeles, the first comprehensive presentation of the city’s art in China. The exhibition does not claim to fully represent L.A.’s kaleidoscopic range of artistic production, nor does it aim to directly comment on Los Angeles as a cultural center; instead, the exhibition brings together a set of outstanding young and mid-career artists to explore the multiplicity of voices and dialogues emerging from Los Angeles today. To this end, UCCA will organize a four-day event dedicated to Los Angeles, featuring talks and other events from some of the city’s most renowned cultural figures. Spanning the exhibition’s opening weekend, the Los Angeles Art Weekend will be roughly divided into two sections, one on the art scene and one on the city’s broader cultural landscape. Speakers will include participating artists as well as curators, authors, directors, and academics from L.A.

The Los Angeles Art Weekend

2014.9.11 – 9.14

9.11 17:00

Artists in Conversation: Kaari Upson and Sterling Ruby
Venue: UCCA Auditorium
Language: In English with Chinese translation

9.12 14:00-14:30

Book Launch: The ForYourArt Guide to Los Angeles
Speaker: Bettina Korek
Venue: UCCA Auditorium
Language: In English with Chinese translation

14:30-15:30

Book Launch: “The Los Angeles Project” Art Books
Speakers: Karen Marta, Brian Roettinger

9.13 14:00-14:30

Alex Israel: As it LAys
Venue: UCCA Atrium
Speakers: Alex Israel, Edison Chen
Language: In English with Chinese translation

15:00-16:30

Artists in Conversation: Alex Israel and Kathryn Andrews
Venue: UCCA Auditorium
Language: In English with Chinese translation

17:00-18:30

Artist Talk: Matthew Monahan
Venue: UCCA Auditorium
Language: In English with Chinese translation

19:00

UCCA Premiere: *Los Angeles Plays Itself*
Speaker: Thom Andersen (filmmaker, professor at the California Institute of the Arts)
Venue: UCCA Auditorium
Language: In English with Chinese subtitles

9.14 14:00-16:00

California Video from the 1960s to Now
Speaker: Glenn R. Phillips (acting head of the Department of Architecture and Contemporary Art, Getty Research Institute)
Venue: UCCA Auditorium
Language: In English with Chinese translation

16:30

Get Out of the Car
Speaker: Thom Andersen (filmmaker, professor at the California Institute of the Arts)
Venue: UCCA Auditorium
Language: In English with Chinese translation

17:00

Experimental Films from Los Angeles
Venue: UCCA Art Cinema
Language: In English with Chinese subtitles

Los Angeles: A City on Film

2014.9 – 2014.10

Curator: Xie Meng

Held in concert with the exhibition “The Los Angeles Project,” UCCA Art Cinema will host “Los Angeles: A City on Film,” a series of screenings that examine one of the most culturally complex and compelling cities in America through Hollywood classics and independent films. Screenings range from classics such as *Sunset Boulevard* to contemporary productions like *Pulp Fiction* and *Chinatown*, from independent films such as *Killer of Sheep* to experimental films like *Meshes of the Afternoon*, all aimed at discussing the past, present, and future of this cinematic city.

Artist Books

In keeping with the anthological character of the exhibition, instead of a single catalogue UCCA will produce a collection of seven distinct artist books designed by each of the participants in “The Los Angeles Project.” Following in the great artist book tradition of John Baldessari and Edward Ruscha, these publications reflect the tremendous range of practices and positions presented within the UCCA exhibition.

All of the artist books are available for purchase at UCCA. They are co-published with Koenig Books and supported by Artron Art Group, with editorial support from Karen Marta and Brian Roettinger.



Alex Israel: *Alex Israel's Sticker Book*

Alex Israel invites readers to join him in his ongoing exploration of mise-en-scène through this unique sticker book. Drawing on the culture of Hollywood production and set design, his artist book lets the reader create their own installations using his artworks.



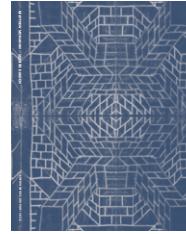
Aaron Curry: *Boxxes*

For his artist book, Aaron Curry created 160 unique pieces of art which he then destroyed. Before their destruction, Curry photographed these works so that the book would contain not only the last record of all these works but would transform and combine them into a new singular work of art.



Ryan Trecartin: *Yet*

For his first artist book, Ryan Trecartin compiles over one hundred images culled from his personal Instagram and Snapchat feeds, screenshots, and photos, all captured and archived on his phone. These images functioned as both reference material and conceptual springboards for the artist's recent projects.



Matthew Monahan: *Square Garden*

For *Square Garden*, Matthew Monahan reproduces a series of thirty six-foot drawings. Made from carbon paper folded into rice paper, the book unfolds like a labyrinth of recurring images and themes that rise and fall like the cultural documents of a fictional empire. The book was in part inspired by the artist's residency in Xiamen, China, in the early 2000s.



Sterling Ruby: *LA/BJ*

Struck by the eerie similarities of the two giant megalopolises of Los Angeles and Beijing, Sterling Ruby compiles photographs of landscapes and interiors in Los Angeles and Beijing, all found and shot by the artist. Framed by the artist's iconic stalagmites, these two cities merge gives rise to a dystopic, quasi-science fiction environment.



Kathryn Andrews: *Strip*

In her first artist book, Kathryn Andrews presents a selection of snapshots of Hollywood Boulevard's Walk of Fame, resulting in random but systematic juxtapositions of street performers and gawking tourists. Rows of images progress like film strips, an image of a fragmented Hollywood emerging from the book's chance encounters.



Kaari Upson: *The House*

For her first artist book, Kaari Upson draws upon a variety of source materials from her signature series “The Larry Project.” Combining them with automatic drawings and sketches, Upson systematically presents this history through different combinations and organizational systems.

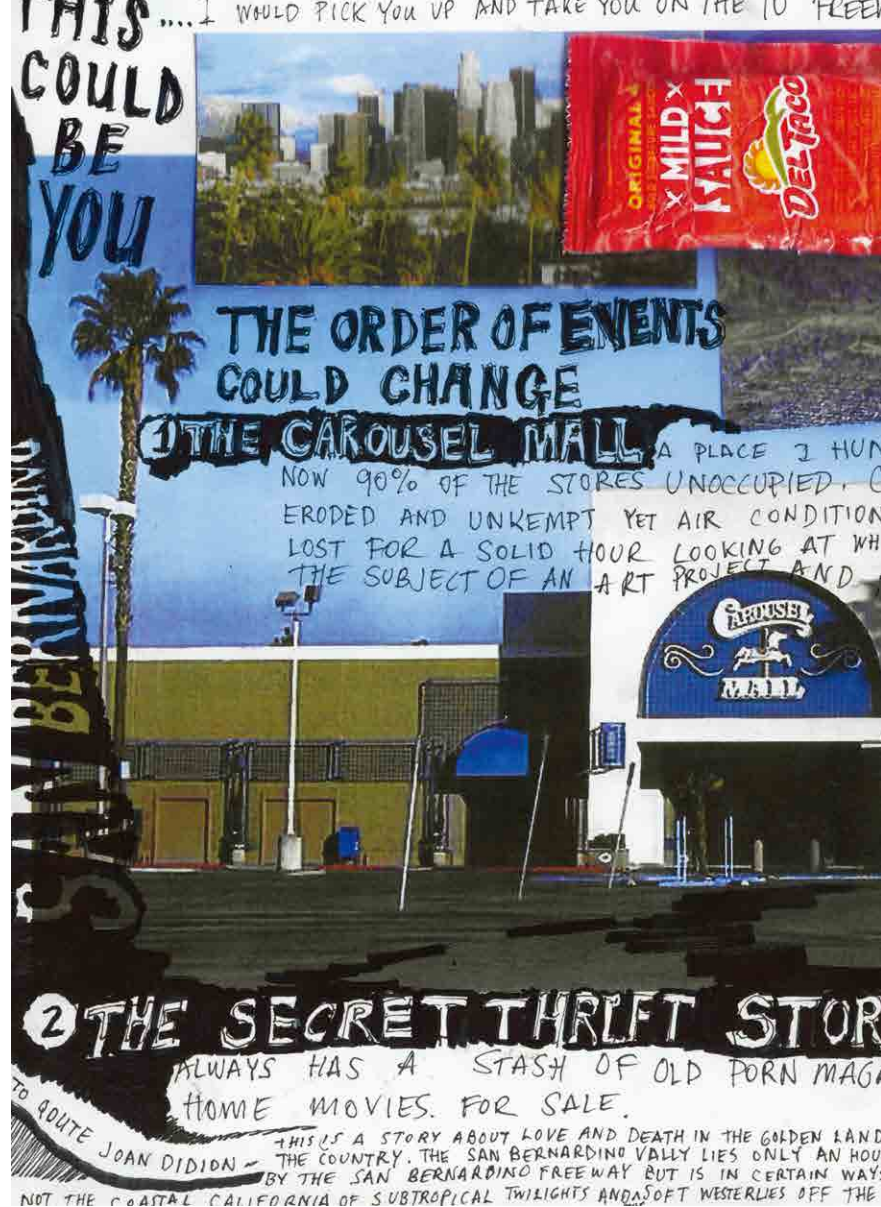
The ForYourArt Guide to Los Angeles

In collaboration with the Los Angeles art tourism platform ForYourArt, UCCA invites each of the seven artists participating in "The Los Angeles Project" to contribute to a travel booklet featuring their perspective on what to see and do in the dynamic city. The guide opens with an interview with Los Angeles anthropologist Jim Heimann, who provides a brief overview of the city's histories, ambitions, and neighborhoods. After, the artists each give a sense of their view of their city, whether by sharing a place they visit often or through an imaginary tour. From Aaron Curry's favorite barber shop, to a scenic drive with Alex Israel, to Sterling Ruby's architectural missive to Chinese Pritzker Prize-winner Wang Shu, the artists present seven perspectives on the city of Los Angeles as diverse as their respective practices.

The final section, "LA to Z," provides a list of destinations with a map to give a sense of how to navigate the city with the highest concentration of artists in the world. It is accompanied by a list of cultural practitioners and other Angelinos to follow on Instagram: whether your interests lie in art, food, fashion, or civic leaders, this list is the best way to keep up on L.A. life and culture from across the Pacific.



Unknown photographer, *House in Country Club Park*, 1930. Courtesy the Los Angeles Public Library.



Poster by Kaari Upson for the ForYourArt Guide to Los Angeles

Hours

Tuesday – Sunday, 10:00-19:00

Last entry at 18:30

Closed on Monday

Address

Ullens Center for Contemporary Art

798 Art District, No. 4 Jiuxianqiao Road

Chaoyang District, Beijing 100015

Tel: +86 10 5780 0200

www.ucca.org.cn/en/

