

Kristina Kite Gallery, "Scripts for the Pageant" installation view

Shana Nys Dambrot

West Adams Is L.A.'s New Gallery Row

SHANA NYS DAMBROT | AUGUST 3, 2018 | 6:51AM

□ In the beginning, there was La Cienega. For a while in the 1960s, the West Hollywood gallery district was the destination center for the Los Angeles art world and beyond. Later, in the 1990s, came Bergamot Station in Santa Monica, then Culver City, and more recently the downtown Arts District. It's a truism in the contemporary art business that you will move to a dope space in a suddenly on-trend part of town more than once during the life of your

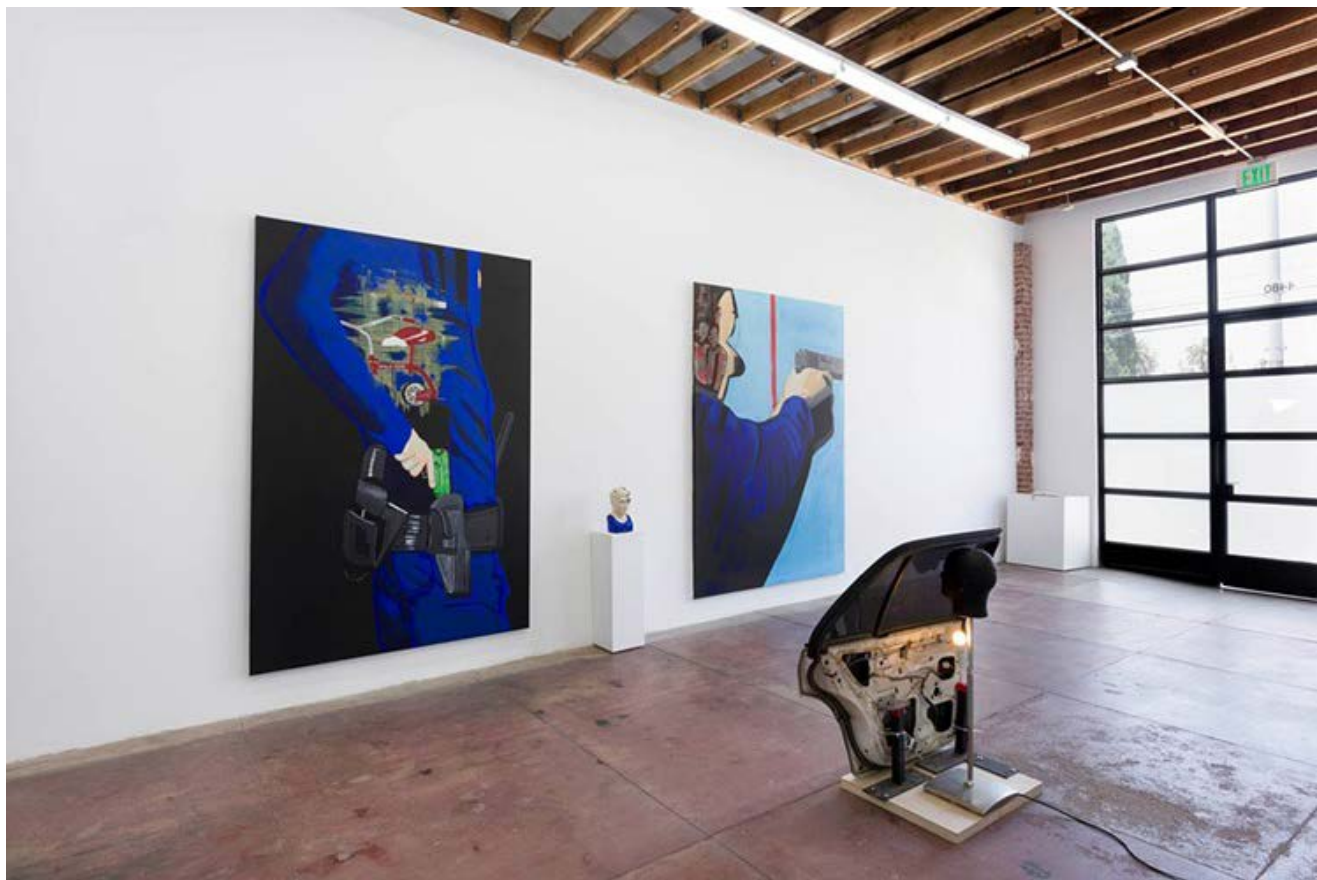
gallery.

At the moment, West Adams has caught the eye of a diverse group of gallerists whose backgrounds and programs are as ambitious as they are eclectic. They've moved in slowly over the past three to four years and quickly in the last 12 months. Pro tip: It's called "West Adams" but most of the galleries are actually on West Washington Boulevard, between about La Brea and about Arlington. However, that same stretch of Adams Boulevard a couple of blocks to the south is making a play. There's even a micro-scene further southwest, along Jefferson Boulevard.

Besides these first- and second-wave venues, you'll see a lot of pop-ups and indie spaces with more sporadic but no less salient programming, and there are rumors of big gallery names like Rosamund Felsen, Luisotti and Shoshana Wayne moving into the area this year. Will any or even all of these dozen-plus galleries sync up their openings, to create an even deeper sense of district? Most will open their new season with shows on Saturday, Sept. 15, so at least this once, it seems so.

With exhibitions and experiences ranging from traditional galleries to progressive and experimental new models for activating cultural spaces, these venues occupy myriad architectural settings, from the historical to the industrial, in fresh renovations, adaptive reuses and bohemian garages. Most of the area is small-business boulevards and residential side streets. The region is supported by groups including the West Adams Neighborhood Council (est. 1999) and the West Adams Heritage Association (est. 1930), which for the time being seem to be genuinely supportive of the influx of creative businesses and cafe culture. Many of the art venues that have moved in describe a welcoming ethos and a neighborhood whose residents prioritize both preservation and beautification as shared interests.

From its pioneers to its newbies, *L.A. Weekly* presents the 13 best West Adams art spots that you should have on your radar now.



Chimento Contemporary's Forrest Kirk show, installation view

Courtesy Chimento Contemporary

Chimento Contemporary

West Adams' most recent arrival is Chimento Contemporary, which opened its new doors with a very well-received show of paintings by Forrest Kirk in June. Owner Eva Chimento is the happiest she's ever been in her bright and breezy storefront location, after two years near downtown on Anderson Street. Her space is part of a newly adapted creative-business block of Adams Boulevard, with tall glass windowpanes, high ceilings and elegant dark wood façades. "It's all women-owned businesses in this building," she beams. "I feel very supported here. They come in all the time, and we talk and tell each other our stories. I love it so much." Chimento opens Sept. 15 with new work by Richard Hobblock.

Chimento Contemporary, 4480 W. Adams Blvd.; (424) 261-5766, chimentocontemporary.com; Tue.-Sat., noon-5 p.m.; free.



Band of Vices

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Band of Vices

"For 19 years I've moved around the city," says Band of Vices owner Terrell Tilford. "But this is my home." His classic corner spot on Adams Boulevard had hosted his peripatetic gallery in pop-ups previously, but Tilford officially made it his gallery's home in May of this year with a sold-out show of powerful mixed-media work by April Bey. Tilford was born and raised in L.A.; he attended Los Angeles High and his daughter goes to school down the street. This is his neighborhood, and helping to maintain it with love, amid issues of change and ownership, is a priority for him. "I was first on Pico, all by myself in Culver City ... but I'd rather be here, and effect change from within." Feeling that preservation doesn't have to mean stasis, and change doesn't have to mean loss, some of Tilford's favorite moments are when people who have never been in a gallery before, who have never had one in their neighborhood, just come in and look around. Sharon Barnes shows paintings and sculptures through Aug. 4, and the gallery reopens Sept. 15 with

collages by Chelle Barbour.

Band of Vices, 5376 W. Adams Blvd.; (323) 480-4220, bandofvices.com;
Wed.-Sat., noon-5 p.m.; free.



The Landing, "Materializations" installation view

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The Landing

The Landing has been open on Jefferson Boulevard since November 2015, the offshoot of an established West Hollywood design gallery, where the owner used to show contemporary art "on the landing" with such popularity that he opened this satellite dedicated to it. Behind a crisp and clean but unassuming light gray cinderblock façade opens a skylit, trussed-roof slice of white-box heaven, home to group and solo shows mixing local and national, established and emerging artists across all media — with a special love for work that embraces craftsmanship. The current exhibition features artists working in textile and/or ceramic mediums. "Materializations" is open through Aug. 25, followed on Sept. 22 with historical work by Ken Nack and Michael Arntz.

The Landing, 5118 W. Jefferson Blvd.; (323) 272-3194,
thelandinggalleries.com; Wed.-Sat., 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; free.



Castelli Art Space, "Chase" opening night

Bryan Birdman Mier

Castelli Art Space

A master framer's shop beloved by L.A. artists for decades, last year Castelli Art Space renovated a big, gorgeous industrial space on its property into a first-rate gallery. On the eastern edge of Culver City, or the western edge of West Adams (depending on who's asking), Castelli hosts a robust and eclectic program of curated shows, hosted pop-ups and special events featuring some of the city's most popular independent artists and organizers.

Castelli Art Space, 5428 W. Washington Blvd.; (310) 204-6830, castelliartspace.com; Mon.-Wed., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Thu.-Fri., 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sat., noon-10 p.m.; Sun., noon-9 p.m.; free.



Opening night of MuzeuMM's "Lena Moross: For the Love of Carmine"

Jack Burke for DiversionsLA

MuzeuMM

Run by a family of artists whose pedigree includes internationally famous art restoration, edgy contemporary painting and Soviet dissident Motown, MuzeuMM has been keeping West Adams wacky since 2009. That's when the family turned part of the restoration studio into a public gallery. Since then, dozens of artists, groups, curators and pop-ups have enlivened its walls and patio with exhibitions, installations, concerts, talks and performances, while enjoying the family's eccentric and frequently food-rich hospitality.

MuzeuMM, 4817 W. Adams Blvd.; (323) 533-0085, muzeummm.com; Mon.-Fri., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; free.



Hilde, "MK ULTA" installation view

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HILDE

Since its very first show on Washington Boulevard, HILDE staked its claim as a post-millennial force for avant-garde fine-art experiences. The space is curated with a love of mythology, narrative and high-concept unconventionality, resulting in works of elevated craftsmanship that share an other- or parallel-world aesthetic.

HILDE, 4727 W. Washington Blvd.; (914) 482-8532, hilde.co; Wed.-Sat., noon-6 p.m.; free.



Karma International's Juliette Blightman show, installation view

Courtesy ContemporaryArtDaily.com

Karma International

With one of the higher-profile galleries in the neighborhood, the building now occupied by Zurich outpost Karma International is also one of the most historic. The gallery is the second location for this avant-garde international program, which was founded in 2008 in Switzerland. About three years ago, Karma dipped its toes in the warm L.A. waters, staging pop-up exhibitions in this venue that was once a puppet theater, then was administered by a series of galleries and art-friendly lease-holders. That changed in 2016, when Karma officially took it over, using its high narrow space and magical landscaped garden patio to curate group and solo shows by a local, national and international roster of young interdisciplinary art stars.

Karma International, 4619 W. Washington Blvd.; (323) 688-9778, karmainternational.org; Wed.-Sat., noon-5 p.m.; free.



Big Pictures Los Angeles, installation view of "Transmutations"

Shana Nys Dambrot

Big Pictures Los Angeles

B.P.L.A. is an interdisciplinary, artist-run project space, a self-funded propagator of art and cultural development, operated by painter and curator Doug Crocco, whose own art studio unfolds behind the perfect white-box storefront he personally renovated for public display purposes. With almost four years in business, this space was definitely an early adopter, and its eclectic and engaging program remains one of its anchors.

B.P.L.A., 2424 W. Washington Blvd; (323) 800-7670, bigpictures.la; Fri.-Sat., noon-5 p.m.; free.



The Underground Museum's "Purple Garden" is used for movie screenings.

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The Underground Museum

As much a cultural phenomenon as an exhibition and event venue, the Underground Museum was the brainchild of late artist Noah Davis, whose talents as an artist, curator and leader continue to be honored by his wife, acclaimed artist Karon Davis, and the nonprofit gallery's extended family. That this family now includes curatorial and institutional support from MOCA is also a huge help in its goal of fulfilling the promise of Davis' powerful vision. That is, the scholarship and presentation of socially engaged contemporary art, with special appreciation for work by people of color. When he died too young in 2015, he left behind a file of exhibition ideas. With his archive of notes in hand, the Underground Museum realizes those shows now. The latest, *Water & Power*, is the fourth such exhibition, and features haunting works by Olafur Eliasson, Hans Haacke and James Turrell on loan from MOCA's collection, along with Light & Space pioneer Fred Eversley and L.A. poet laureate Robin Coste-Lewis. The exhibition is on view

through September, and is augmented by the gallery's robust slate of weekly movie screening parties in its giant backyard, the meditative and celebratory Purple Garden.

The Underground Museum, 3508 W. Washington Blvd.; (323) 989-9925, theunderground-museum.org; Wed.-Sun., noon-7 p.m.; free.



Patrick Jackson's "Know Yer City" is part of the "Scripts for the Pageant" show at Kristina Kite Gallery.

Shana Nys Dambrot

Kristina Kite Gallery

It's stiff competition for the title of "best floors" among contemporary art spaces, especially creatively reused locations, but Kristina Kite is a serious contender. The extant patchwork of old-timey checkerboard tile is impactful in its own right — though it's easy to imagine it might make curating in the carved-out Beaux Arts ground-floor rooms something of a challenge. But since 2017, Kristina Kite, formerly of Overduin & Kite, has made it work, with a program that includes multicity gallery-share programs and an eccentric roster that often includes video and installation art. The operatic

photography installation "Scripts for the Pageant" activates the space until Aug. 4.

Kristina Kite Gallery, 3400 W. Washington Blvd.; (323) 643-4656, kristinakitegallery.la; Wed.-Sat., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; free.



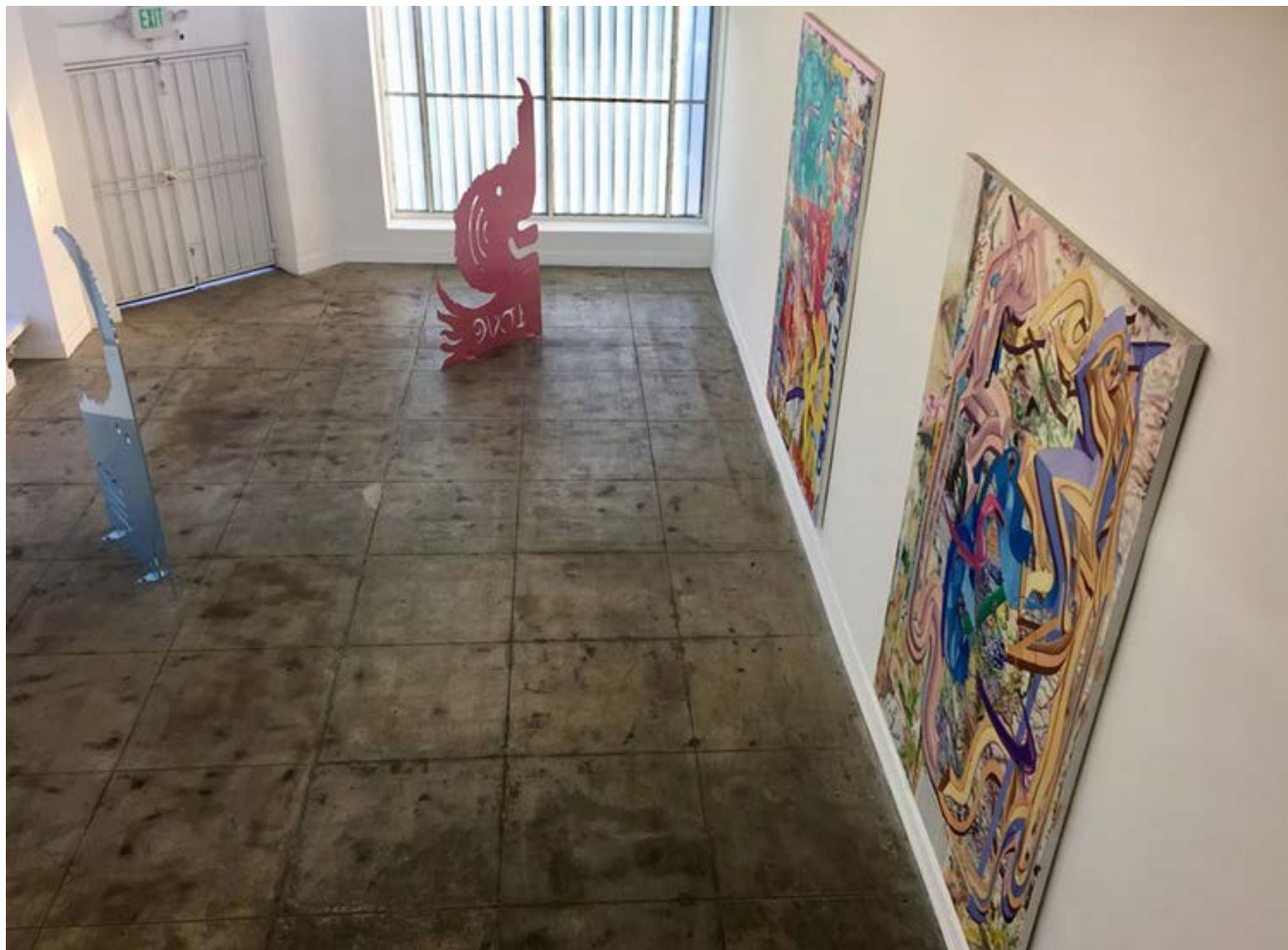
Shoot the Lobster

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Shoot the Lobster

Chelsea-based Martos Gallery had a project space in NYC called Shoot the Lobster. Then Martos opened its L.A. branch in 2014. Then Martos Gallery moved to the Lower East Side, and in 2016 its L.A. location became the outpost of Shoot the Lobster instead. Got all that? The bottom line is that STL's 1,000-square-foot space on West Washington trades in bicoastal, boundary-blurring art shows that, "like its East Coast accomplice, feature a mix of exhibitions, performances, concerts, pop-ups and more." Too cool for weekdays, the gallery is open Saturday and Sunday afternoons only.

Shoot the Lobster, 3315 W. Washington Blvd.; shootthelobster.com; Sat.-Sun., noon-5 p.m.; free.



OCHI Projects, "Rive Granade" installation view

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OCHI Projects

Since 2015, Pauli Ochi's L.A. branch of a gallery with another location in Sun Valley has presented solo and group shows in West Adams with a distinct penchant for toeing the lines between abstract aesthetics and a storytelling soul, across painting, sculpture, video and the in-betweens. Its big summer group show, "To Have or to Be," runs through Sept. 8.

OCHI, 3301 W. Washington Blvd.; (323) 641-7177, ochiprojects.com; Wed.-Sat., noon-5 p.m.; free.



Mother Culture Los Angeles

Shana Nys Dambrot

Mother Culture Los Angeles

Mother Culture is something special. It's a gallery, which is to say that it's a physical space in which visual art is shown and discussed. But that's where the similarities to business as usual end. Founded in December 2017 by Jake Cruzen and Jared Madere along with an extended family that includes Kate, Cindy, Milo, Marie and Negashi, Mother Culture is more of an open platform that exists in a collaborative methodology in support of "parenthood, sustainable living, contemporary art, journalism, spirituality, music, education, appreciation and social consciousness to create digital content and physical exhibitions." As far as those exhibitions go, it's really more of one giant never-ending, "cumulative" exhibition continuum, in which objects and artworks are added, removed and rearranged periodically in response to real-time events and out-of-town visitations. In lieu of regular opening receptions, the gallery hosts monthly drop-in talks and other happenings by and with the artists — known as "contributors" — who have work in the space at the time. Currently, that includes but shall not remain limited to special contributions by Kelly Akashi, Jasper Spicero, Anna-Sophie Berger and Jessi Reaves — but keep checking.

Mother Culture, 1819 Third Ave.; (510) 928-1964, motherculture.love; Fri.-Sun., noon-4 p.m.; free.