

Williams, Maxwell. "Made in L.A. 2014 Curator Michael Ned Holte on SoCal Cultural Microclimates," *KCET.org*, 20 February 2014.



In a 2012 article published in *ArtForum*, curator Michael Ned Holte wrote, "The first edition of Made in L.A. left open the question of whether the city really needs such a determinedly local biennial." There is an irony in that statement, since a mere two years later, Holte would take the helm of the Hammer Museum's exhibition, which opens on June 15, and endeavors to survey the Angeleno artistic landscape. The list of artists was released on the evening of February 18, offering a glimpse into what fruits were born from the hundreds of studio visits and conversations Holte and his co-curator Connie Butler had.

Their list culls from the requisite rising talents and upstarts, but Holte and Butler have also selected an interesting contingency of overlooked mid-career artists deserving of a reassessment. "Channing Hansen hasn't really had a gallery presence, and certainly hasn't had a museum presence, in Los Angeles," says Holte. "And there's Judy Fiskin, who Connie and I summoned out of semi-retirement. She hadn't made any new work for a while, and she made a new video work that is going to debut at Made in L.A., and it's terrific."



Holte credits "listening to artists and what they're into" as one of the resources the two curators utilized in their search. This resulted in several artist-run institutions being represented, which creates several sub-categorically curated segments by artist Alice Könitz's Los Angeles Museum of Art (a 9' x 14' x 8' exhibition space in North East Los Angeles), the artist-run pirate radio station KCHUNG, and Public Fiction, an exhibition space and publication run by curator Lauren Mackler.

"In addition to these artist-run institutions, there's also the example of Michael and Magdalena Suarez Frimkess, who are an artist couple," says Holte. "Artists that I take very seriously in terms of their antenna brought their work to my attention; artists like Ricky Swallow, Shio

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Kusaka, and Mark Grotjahn were deeply invested in supporting the Frimkesses work. That was a cue for us to pay attention to these artists who have been working away in Venice for the past 40 years."



As Holte and Butler made their way around the city, he noticed that one of the things he wanted to expose was an appreciation of the diversity of artistic practices in Los Angeles, a pattern he came to term "microclimates" after the Southern Californian atmospheric phenomena of small areas where the climate differs from its surroundings. "My essay for the Made in L.A. catalog is actually called 'Microclimates,'" says Holte. "When I first moved to L.A., I was interested in the fact that a city known for its great weather would actually have an incredible range of small climatic conditions. I felt that was true of what I was seeing in artists' studios, going from Inglewood to Eagle Rock to Arcadia -- art that responded to a very local context, but all somehow seemed to fit together and form some kind of idea of what Los Angeles is. Radically different ideas about art making are somehow able to coexist peacefully."

A lot has changed in the two years since the first iteration of Made in L.A. Chiefly, as the city becomes removed from Pacific Standard Time (a city-wide initiative set forward by the Getty Research Institute in order to canonize L.A. post-war art in a way that would punch it into the history books), there is a sense that L.A. is finally shaking off the luster of newness, and settling into its role as a grown-up global culture center. The New York Times immediately ran a story when the Made in L.A. artist list was announced, noting the overlap with the Whitney Biennial. Which means, now could be an opportune time for an even-handed approach to discussing L.A.'s art contributions.

"I'm interested in thinking about Made in L.A. as an incredibly local show, but in a city and community that is incredibly global," explains Holte. "We have artists in the show who are initially from or have lived in a very diverse range of places - from Tehran, Mexico City, Nairobi, Australia, Germany, Brussels, and all over the United States - and all those people

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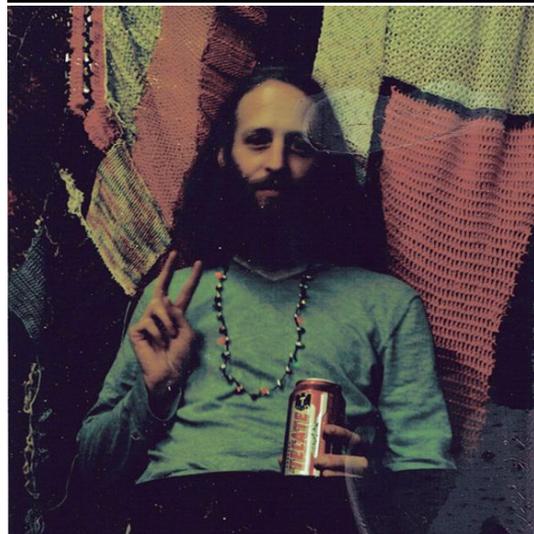
have come to Los Angeles in pursuit of becoming an artist. I see a lot of work that is made by artists in a studio in Los Angeles that is intended for New York or Glasgow or Berlin or wherever it's exhibited. So, there are a number of artists in the show who have very prolific careers, but rarely show in this city."

If nothing else, the show promises to be its own "microclimate" where Angelenos can see artists they may have missed out on or have yet to discover. Whether that answers the question Holte raised of the necessity of the Made in L.A. concept altogether, of course, we won't know until the show actually opens, because the artists, especially the ones creating commissioned work, still need to finalize their projects. "The list of artists is a very important part of the work, but a lot still has to happen," says Holte.

The Full roster for Made in L.A. 2014:

Juan Capistrán
Danielle Dean
Harry Dodge
Lecia Dole-Recio
Kim Fisher
Judy Fiskin
Magdalena Suarez Frimkess and Michael Frimkess
Mariah Garnett
Gerard & Kelly
Samara Golden
Piero Golía
Tony Greene: Amid Voluptuous Calm
Marcia Hafif
Channing Hansen
Jibade-Khalil Huffman
James Kidd Studio
Barry Johnston
KCHUNG
Devin Kenny
Gabriel Kuri
Caitlin Lonegan
Los Angeles Museum of Art
Tala Madani
Max Maslansky
Emily Mast
Jennifer Moon
Brian O'Connell
Harsh Patel
Marina Pinsky
Public Fiction
Sarah Rara
A.L. Steiner
Ricky Swallow
Clarissa Tossin
Wu Tsang

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Top Image: Public Fiction. Emily Mast "B!RDBRA!N (Epilogue)," 2012. Exhibition and performance as part of Public Fiction's Theatricality and Sets series. | Photo: Anitra Haendel.