

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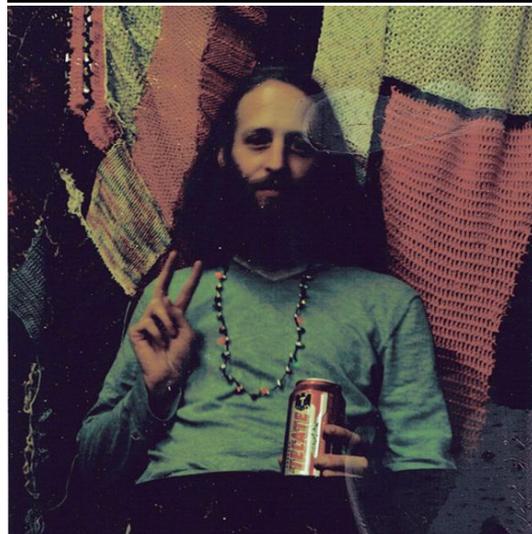
have come to Los Angeles in pursuit of becoming an artist. I see a lot of work that is made by artists in a studio in Los Angeles that is intended for New York or Glasgow or Berlin or wherever it's exhibited. So, there are a number of artists in the show who have very prolific careers, but rarely show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