

Jing, Li, "Beijing center hosts art exhibition inspired by Los Angeles," *ChinaDaily.com*, September 19, 2014



## Beijing center hosts art exhibition inspired by Los Angeles

By Li Jing in Beijing, 2014-09-19

The Los Angeles Project, featuring the artwork of seven artists from the California city, is on display at an exhibit at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) in Beijing.

The artists' work was either created for the show or brought from a previous collection. Each artist has an independent room to showcase their talent and the exhibit, which opened on Sept 13, occupies nearly all of the UCCA's exhibition halls. The result is a charming mix of modern American art, including film strips, bronze sculptures and a mural-sized depiction of Anne Bancroft's extended leg from the 1967 movie *The Graduate*.

"I make my work in a way that can be integrated into the cultural production as much as I can," said artist Alex Israel. Israel creates a site-specific mural that recreates the experience of driving around Los Angeles with activity and a cityscape from which Israel derives many of his ideas. As with his previous works, these wall pieces are inspired by Hollywood set pieces and are produced by commissioned specialists in film backdrops instead of professional artists, itself a dubious construct.

Born in Los Angeles, Israel has his own workshop in a Warner Bros. studio, and much of his artwork is created through Hollywood production channels to mirror the form and construction of film sets.

Bozo the Clown, the American baby-boom era cartoon figure, is central to artist Kathryn Andrews' work at UCCA. She installed aluminum barrels covered with pictures of Bozo topped with aluminum stools. The mural-sized reproduction of the seduction scene from *The Graduate* is also from Andrews.

Other exhibits include mattresses and couches molded out of silicon from artist Kaari Upson.

"LA is a special place that I can create any world I want to," said Upson, who in 2003 came upon an abandoned house in LA and discovered a host of personal items of a man she called Larry.

The last 10 years of her artistic career have involved a re-imagining of Larry's life. Upson's UCCA presentation includes a set of mattresses, cushions, couches, and other objects molded in silicon and displayed within an environment designed by the artist.

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Matthew Monahan, whose exhibit at UCCA includes bronze sculptures and charcoal drawings, is the only artist among the seven that previously visited China. He drew some inspiration from traveling to China in 2002 when he says his "vision of the world was altered".

His sculptures and charcoal drawings explore the interaction between two-dimensional and three-dimensional art and recreate classic aesthetics from the perspective of post-modernism.

The show is a "case study of a city where art matters," said US-born Philip Tinari, director of the UCCA in Beijing.

For most Chinese, Los Angeles is a popular tourist destination. "People go there for shopping, sightseeing - Hollywood and Disneyland. But the Chinese might be less familiar with the vibrant art scene that is going on there," said Alan Clark, assistant cultural affairs officer from the US Embassy.

Since there has been so much talk of California in the art world in recent years, the UCCA curators thought "it would be a cool idea to do something in Beijing that has an effect on the situation back in LA," Tinari said.

Though based in Beijing, Guy Ullens, founder of the Ullens Center, is immersed in the LA art scene. It was one of the catalysts that prompted him and his curatorial team to start considering the connection between the two cities.