

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

DISCOVERIES | ART SCENE



1. Artist Kathryn Andrews poses with a work in progress at her Los Angeles studio.
2. *Crazy Straw*, 2015.



LOOK AGAIN

Blending cultural references both high and low, sculptor Kathryn Andrews transforms the familiar into meticulous mysteries

There are artists whose stamp is unmistakable—Jackson Pollock’s splatters, for example, or Yayoi Kusama’s polka dots. Kathryn Andrews has no such obvious signature. Over the past decade the Los Angeles–based sculptor has created a diverse body of work that explores issues of authorship, mixing found pictures and artifacts (political, pop cultural) in highly polished, meticulously produced pieces. “How do we create associations with what we’re seeing? How do those associations become a crutch, stopping us from looking in an engaged way?” she asks, walking through her Highland Park studio. “A lot of what I make deals with these questions.”

For one series Andrews juxtaposed graphics from 19th-century presidential campaigns with actual superhero costumes from Hollywood blockbusters. For a separate installation she hung a mirror opposite a work by John Baldessari, incorporating the reflection of his creation—and the likeness of the viewer—into her finished piece. Recent sculptures blend slick images of lips with sleek steel pedestals.

“She’s working at the crossroads of Pop and appropriation,” says Cecilia Alemani, director and chief curator of High Line Art. “Her rigorous approach questions our visual surroundings in a critical and humorous way.” Alemani’s organization recently commissioned Andrews to make two pieces for the

elevated park in Manhattan. On view until March 2017, that presentation coincides with a traveling survey of her work, currently at the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas.

Her latest feats, meanwhile, are now debuting at L.A.’s David Kordansky Gallery, in a solo show that runs through December 17. Titled “Black Bars,” the exhibition features compositions of overlapping familiar images (Popsicles, cupcakes, melon slices) obscured like redacted text and set in deep frames. “I think of this imagery as quite vapid,” reflects Andrews, who studied at Pasadena’s Art Center College of Design and later worked for Mike Kelley. “I try to make it as beautiful as I can.”

If her work defies easy categorization, Andrews concedes that leitmotifs appear, whether film props or polished metal. “You do need a language that recurs so there is something for people to grab on to,” she says. “Otherwise you’re talking only to yourself.” —SAM COCHRAN