

Analysis

Is Art Los Angeles Contemporary the West Coast's 'It' Fair?

The fair is planting roots and building serious momentum.

Eileen Kinsella, January 26, 2016





Heather Guertin, 4 Visions (Blue, Yellow, Red, Green), 2016. Image: Courtesy of Brennan Griffin.

While other LA art fairs have struggled to plant roots and build meaningful year-to-year momentum here, Art Los Angeles Contemporary (ALAC), now in its seventh year, continues to forge ahead with an eclectic roster of contemporary galleries and an increasingly lively schedule of talks, performances and events that reflects the city's fast-growing, dynamic art scene.

ALAC opens Thursday January 28 and runs through Sunday January 31, at Santa Monica's Barker Hanger with 73 exhibitors that hail from the east and west coasts of the US, as well as a healthy sampling of galleries from Europe, Australia, Korea, and Argentina.

"The Los Angeles art market grows every year," fair director Tim Fleming told artnet News via email. "That's reflected not only in all the blue chip galleries opening up second outposts, but also in new fairs during ALAC weekend. So it felt like the time to add to what we do."

Fleming said the fair "broke with tradition," this year by creating "Freeways," a new section dedicated just to young gallerists. "Specifically for galleries under four years old to show one or two artists. We constantly consider the best way to make room for new talented

galleries on the rise without ballooning our gallery numbers,” Fleming added.



Tamar Halpern *Blame It On Disco* (2015).
Image: Courtesy of On Stellar Rays, New York.

Los Angeles obviously has a very interesting landscape at the moment,”said Candice Madey, director of lower east side gallery On Stellar Rays. “We’ve always had a great audience and reception in LA for our artists.”

The gallery is presenting a solo booth of new paintings by native LA artist Tamar Halpern. “Presenting strong and focused solo projects in smaller fairs can be very effective,” said Madey.

Several exhibitors praised Fleming’s leadership and credited his efforts with the fair’s continued success

and growth.



Henrik Eiben *Sidewinder* (2015).
Courtesy of Galerie Christian Lethert, Cologne.

Merle Reker, a spokesperson for Cologne-based Galerie Christian Lethert told artnet News via email: “We met Tim Fleming a couple of years ago and followed his engagement in establishing a fine, high-quality and young fair in LA, so we gave it a try, liked it a lot, and come back every year.”

The gallery is bringing work by Henrik Eiben, a young artist from Hamburg. Noting the West Coast penchant for “color and material,” Reker says the fair represents

“a chance to introduce Eiben’s beautiful and subtle works to ALAC visitors.”

Nicholas Irzyk, associate director of Lower East Side gallery Brennan & Griffin, another repeat exhibitor, told artnet News “the gallery’s roots are in Los Angeles, we work with a number of LA based artists so it’s a good chance to see our friends and colleagues. The fair is a nice size and feels carefully curated. Tim Fleming and his staff are great.”

This year Brennan & Griffin is showing new paintings by Keith Boadwee and Heather Guertin, the latter of whom is based in New York. “We’re excited to have the opportunity to introduce her work to the west coast,” said Irzyk. “Most people are familiar with Boadwee’s earlier work. The fair is an excellent way to build on that familiarity and show his new paintings.”

The busy lineup of related events includes an opening night performance by artist Alison O’Daniel titled *Centennial Marching Band Forwards and Backwards*. O’Daniel is collaborating with a marching band from Compton, who will perform a song that is constructed and deconstructed in real time, based on formations and the space constraints of Barker Hangar.

Fleming noted ALAC is working with not-for-profit space [JOAN \(http://www.joanlosangeles.org/\)](http://www.joanlosangeles.org/) to bring in O’Daniel. He described the project as “full scale pageantry,” adding “we’ve never done anything like that.”

“Conversations With Myself” is a curated series of talks and lectures that will include filmmaker Kenneth Anger, curators [Neville Wakefield \(http://joanlosangeles.org/tag/los-angeles-non-profit-art-space/\)](http://joanlosangeles.org/tag/los-angeles-non-profit-art-space/) and Rita Gonzalez, and artist Kathryn Andrews. In a talk titled “[Unfriend Me \(https://artlosangelesfair.com/event-146/charlie-white-and-amanda-ross-ho-unfriend-me\)](https://artlosangelesfair.com/event-146/charlie-white-and-amanda-ross-ho-unfriend-me),” Charlie White and Amanda Ross-Ho will explore how the Internet and social media have negatively affected art making.

The fair will also mark the second issue of the free art newspaper, the *Art Los Angeles Reader*, which takes Southern California architecture as its theme. The paper will include a new work designed especially for newsprint by artists Math Bass and Lauren Davis Fisher.



Rosha Yaghmai *Optometer, Sickle* (2015)
Image: Courtesy of Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles.

“As an LA-based gallery it makes sense for us to have a presence at our local fair to support the institutions, foundations and events that make LA a dynamic arts community,” said Bill Griffin, a partner of Kayne Griffin Corcoran and a first time exhibitor at ALAC.

Griffin says he is looking forward to presenting new works by LA based artist Rosha Yaghmai. “Rosha had an exhibition with us in 2015 and this is an opportunity to present her new work to a wider audience.”

Noting the challenges of having several art fairs take

Noting the challenges to having several art fairs take place at once given the city's geographic sprawl (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/driving-the-los-angeles-gallery-scene-77777>), Meredith Darrow, who operates her art advisory business from bases in New York and LA, told artnet News, "having a successful art fair here is a tough prospect. But having said that, the fairs are bringing quite a few people to town and bringing all these events surrounding the fair has created an LA art week."