

Art

## Your Concise Los Angeles Art Guide for February 2023

Your list of must-see, fun, insightful, and very Los Angeles art events this month, including Alicia Piller, Brad Phillips, Mulyana, the MexiCali Biennial, and more.



Matt Stromberg January 30, 2023



Carolyn Castaño, "Latin American Stuffable (Arepa)" (2022), video (courtesy the artist and MexiCali Biennial)

February is a big time in the Los Angeles art world, with four art fairs (Frieze, Felix, Spring Break, and the LA Art Show) coming to town later this month (not to mention **Museums Free-For-All** day). Galleries and museums here are mounting ambitious shows to take advantage of the moment. These include Alicia Piller's Laocoönicl assemblages at Craft Contemporary, Trulee Hall's phantasmagorical multi-media environments at Rusha & Co, and the Fowler Museum's show of Amir Fallah's captivating paintings that pull from centuries of high and low visual culture. The peripatetic MexiCali Biennial touches down at the Cheech in Riverside with their latest edition focused on the contested histories of food and agriculture throughout California and Mexico, while UC Irvine's Contemporary Arts Center Gallery presents British sibling duo Jane and Louise Wilson's video installations that dig into the Cold War and its contemporary echoes.

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## *Bridget Mullen: Sensory Homunculus*



Bridget Mullen, "Make Me Wavy (New York)" (2020–2022), flashe and spray paint on linen, 40 inches x 60 inches (photo by Matt Grubb, courtesy the artist and Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles.)

A sensory homunculus is a scientific figure of a human that illustrates how much of our brain is dedicated to controlling certain areas of the body. Its hand and mouth are monstrously oversized, given the exceptional neurological resources devoted to them. Bridget Mullen's solo show at Shulamit Nazarian takes its name from the goblin-like creature, and her paintings elicit a similar sense of corporeal unease. With a nod to surrealism and psychedelia, she grapples with the tension between abstraction and figuration, as pools, blobs, and skeins of paint transform into body parts, hair, and effluvia. For both Mullen and the homunculus, representation is not limited to the visually mimetic.

Shulamit Nazarian ([shulamitnazarian.com](http://shulamitnazarian.com))

616 North La Brea Avenue, Fairfax, Los Angeles

Through February 10

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## ***Brad Phillips: I Know What I did Last Summer***



Brad Phillips, "Brian De Palma's Door #2" (2022), oil on canvas, 36 inches x 24 inches (photo by Jacob Phillip, courtesy the Artist & de boer, Los Angeles)

Canadian artist and writer Brad Phillips's oeuvre is characterized by contradiction. His work jumps between autobiographical, photo-realistic paintings and deadpan text-based one-liners that transform familiar phrases into darkly humorous slogans. He continues to chart a course through the poles of sincerity and irony with his second solo show at de boer, *I Know What I Did Last Summer*, which features intimate portraits of artist Christine Brache, alongside cheeky fictional scenes from the home of director Brian De Palma, himself a genre-hopping auteur.

de boer ([deboergallery.com](http://deboergallery.com))

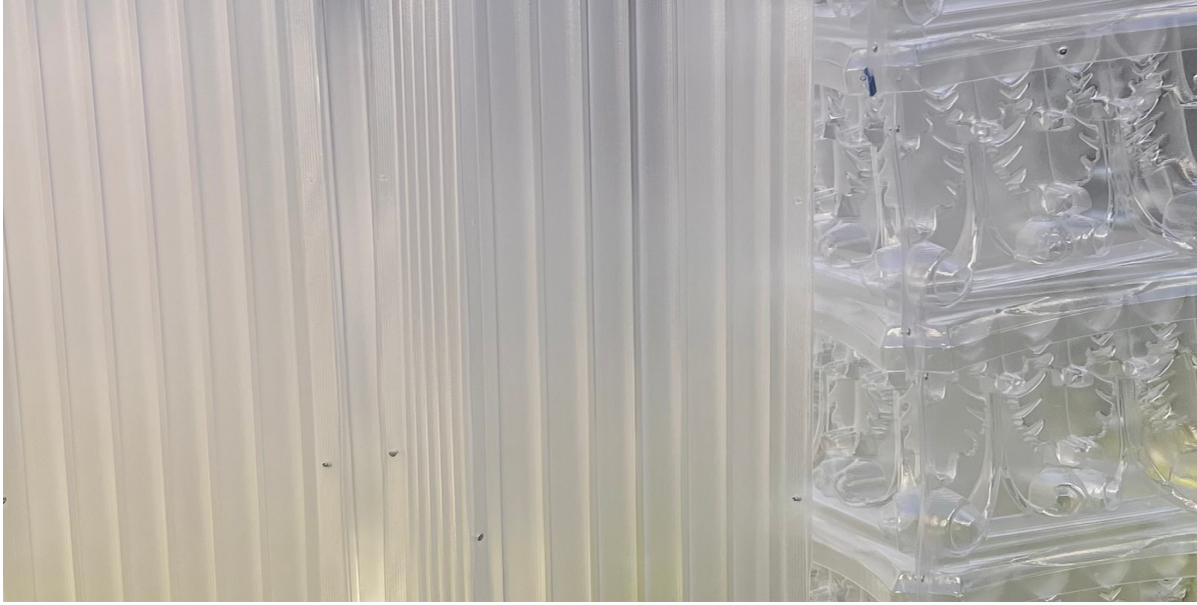
3311 East Pico Boulevard, Boyle Heights, Los Angeles

Through February 25

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## *Emily Barker: Illusions of Care*



Artwork by Emily Barker (courtesy Carlye Packer and Christian Jarod Vitug)

For the 2022 Whitney Biennial, LA-based artist Emily Barker crafted a kitchen that was scaled up, so standing visitors could experience the challenges the artist faces as a wheelchair user in the domestic space. With new sculptures and installations included in *Illusions of Care*, they continue to lay bare the prejudices and barriers that society imposes upon those it deems “physically divergent.”

Carlye Packer ([carlyepacker.xyz](http://carlyepacker.xyz))

2111 Sunset Boulevard, Echo Park, Los Angeles

February 4–March 11

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## Trulee Hall: Plays on Foreplays



Trulee Hall, "Tiger Licks for Levitating Lady" (2022), acrylic, oil, and collage on panel with wood frame, 74 inches x 98 inches (photo by Ed Mumford, courtesy the Artist and Rusha & Co.)

Firing on all cylinders, Trulee Hall conjures her unapologetically erotic visions across multiple media. A scene that begins as a painting might be transformed into a stop-motion animation, then a live-action video, and finally a theatrical performance. Actors are mirrored in cinematic and real space; film props return as sculptures. Part celebratory, queer camp, part playful material investigation, Hall's liberating, libertine world offers an inviting challenge to staid aesthetics and morality.

Rusha & Co. ([rusha.co](http://rusha.co))

244 West Florence Avenue, Florence, Los Angeles

February 4–March 11

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*Dreamtime™: Jane and Louise Wilson*



Jane and Louise Wilson, "Dream Time" film still (2001), Super 16mm film transfer to HD transfer to 35mm film, duration: 7 minutes and 10 seconds (© Jane and Louise Wilson; courtesy Maureen Paley, London)

British sibling duo Jane and Louise Wilson are known for their cinematic installations that often focus on institutional spaces such as governmental or military spaces, and the historical legacies they represent. *Dreamtime™* looks at the Cold War, a quintessentially 20th-century conflict that has taken on a new life in the 21st. The exhibition is anchored by two works: "Stasi City" (1997), which was filmed at the former headquarters of the defunct East German spy agency; and "Dream Time" (2001), which takes its title from an American media company that advertised on the side of a Russian rocket en route to the International Space Station in 2000.

Contemporary Arts Center Gallery, UC Irvine ([uag.arts.uci.edu](http://uag.arts.uci.edu))

Mesa Parking Structure, 4002 Mesa Road, Irvine, California

Through March 25

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## *Mulyana: Modular Utopia*



Mulyana, "Ocean Wonderland" (2020) Yarn, Dacron, cable wire, plastic net, metal rod, and felt fabric (courtesy STUDIO MOGUS)

With his immersive installations made from knit and crocheted objects, Indonesian artist Mulyana gives intimate hand-craft a monumental spin. For *Modular Utopia*, his first solo show in LA, he continues his explorations of undersea environments that are shaped by his own personal mythology and Indonesian folk traditions and costumes. He fills his tableaux with imaginary creatures alongside depictions of a full-sized whale skeleton and dying coral reefs, mixing fantasy with the realities of fragile marine ecosystems.

USC Fisher Museum of Art ([fisher.usc.edu](http://fisher.usc.edu))

823 Exposition Blvd, University Park, Los Angeles

February 25–April 8

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## *Pedro Pedro: Table, Fruits, Flowers and Cakes*



Pedro Pedro, "Untitled" (2022), acrylic and textile paint on linen, 72 inches x 63 inches (courtesy the artist and The Hole)

Pedro Pedro creates sumptuous still lives that capture the unsettling binary of abundance and despair that defines our contemporary moment. Like the Renaissance still lifes which they reference, Pedro's paintings depict tables laden with flowers, fruit, meat, and cakes, however there is always a hint of decay, a watermelon rind, or fallen rose. His cartoonish, Pop-inflected style is at once exuberant and disquieting. All of these delights are flattened and pushed up against the picture plane in a Mannerist flourish, threatening to slide off the surface and out of our grasp.

The Hole ([theholenyc.com](http://theholenyc.com))

844 North La Brea Avenue, Fairfax, Los Angeles

February 14–April 29

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## *Alicia Piller: Within*



Alicia Piller, "Psychological seeds overgrown. Wildflowers blaze a path" (2022), mixed media, 75 inches x 85 inches x 11 inches (courtesy the artist)

Alicia Piller's awe-inspiring sculptures give the impression of everyday material run amok, threatening to expand and overwhelm us like a mutant mycological strain. Her constructions incorporate xeroxed photos, found objects, and dried plants, with resin and latex, creating forms that are alien on the macro level but familiar up close. *Within* is her first solo museum exhibition, a site-specific installation curated by jill moniz that zooms between geological vastness and biological minutiae to bring forgotten histories into sharp focus.

Craft Contemporary ([craftcontemporary.org](http://craftcontemporary.org))  
5814 Wilshire Boulevard, Mid-Wilshire, Los Angeles  
Through May 7

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## Amir H. Fallah: *The Fallacy of Borders*



Detail of Amir H. Fallah, "No Gods No Masters" (2020), acrylic on canvas (courtesy the artist and Shahin Tabassi)

Amir Fallah draws on a rich mixture of sources, from Persian miniatures to children's books, botanical illustrations, maps, and textile patterns to compose his vibrant, maximalist paintings. Born in Iran during the tumult of the Islamic Revolution, Fallah emigrated with his family to the US at age 7. He came of age in the punk and street art scenes of the 1990s, and co-founded seminal art and design publication *Beautiful/Decay* as a photocopied and stapled zine when he was just a teenager. *The Fallacy of Borders*, his first museum show in Los Angeles, presents painting, sculpture, stained glass, and printed matter that reflect his own experiences with migration, material culture, and multi-faceted identity.

Fowler Museum at UCLA ([fowler.ucla.edu](http://fowler.ucla.edu))

308 Charles E. Young Drive North, Westwood, Los Angeles

Through May 14

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## *MexiCali Biennial: Land of Milk & Honey*



Jessica Wimbley and Chris Christian, "The Unauthorized Histography of California, Volume 2: Fieldnotes" (2022), video collage (courtesy the artists and MexiCali Biennial)

Launched in 2006 by artists Ed Gomez and Luis G. Hernandez, the MexiCali Biennial explores the cultural and artistic terrain of California and Mexico. This year's edition, *Land of Milk & Honey*, focuses on the region's agricultural and culinary significance and associated issues surrounding labor, ecology, and politics. California was touted as a bountiful Eden by early promoters of the state, however the flipside of this starry-eyed view was exclusion, exploitation, and corruption, themes that the Golden State is still reckoning with. Participating artists include Carolyn Castaño, Edgar Fabián Frías, Narsiso Martinez, Ruben Ochoa, Jazmín Urrea, and many others.

The Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art & Culture ([riversideartmuseum.org](http://riversideartmuseum.org))

3581 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside, California

February 25–May 28