



Neha Choksi: *The Sun's Rehearsal/In Memory of the Last Sunset*, 2016

UCLA Hammer Museum

Ambitious, Diverse and Topical: “Made in L.A. 2018” Is the Biennial We Need Right Now

JORDAN RIEFE | JUNE 8, 2018 | 12:30PM

UCLA Hammer Museum curators Anne Ellegood and Erin Christovale visited roughly 200 studios last year on their way to choosing artists for the fourth edition of the museum’s biennial, “Made in L.A. 2018,” a celebration of established and emerging L.A.-based artists, on display through Sept. 2.

The pair employed no agenda when they selected 32 artists, including

veterans as old as the legendary Luchita Hurtado, 97, who has 13 paintings in the show, as well as newbies and established practitioners like Naotaka Hiro and Candice Lin.

“As we were identifying the artists we wanted to work with, it happened that it was two-thirds women, two-thirds people of color. I think it just grows out of the fact that this is a very diverse city and there are artists of all backgrounds who work here who call this city their home, and that’s reflected in the exhibition,” Ellegood tells *L.A. Weekly*. “We’ve always been committed to diversity in a very deliberate way, but I would say that we didn’t have any predetermined scenarios.”

Artwork created specifically for the show yielded common themes and threads that define "Made in L.A. 2018." The show’s poster, by Neha Choksi, features a piece of red paper being consumed by flame. Turned on its side, the reddish-orange complexion and the yellow whip of fire combine to form the profile of a not-so-beloved president who casts a long shadow over the show.

“We didn’t want to make a show that was explicitly about this current administration. I think we wanted to make a show that sort of showed the various aspects and people that are being affected by the administration,” Christovale says. “I think more than ever their experiences are being heightened in the way they’re being polarized or misidentified.”



MPA: *Faultline*

Jordan Riefe

Polarization is key to MPA's installation, *Faultline*, which features an oversized pair of sunglasses with one lens in a gallery and the other on the wall outside overlooking the courtyard. From her practice in Twentynine Palms, MPA drew inspiration from the nearby San Andreas Fault for the new work, which doubles as both the perfect metaphor for our fractured electorate as well as current political chaos and upheaval.

Interrelated themes of the body and identity are consistent throughout the show, including Linda Stark's layered canvases like *Stigmata*, in which the word "feminist" is carved in red into the palm of a hand, or *Fixed Wave*, an impasto torso in green with a watery blue vagina fronting the outline of a uterus and fallopian tubes.

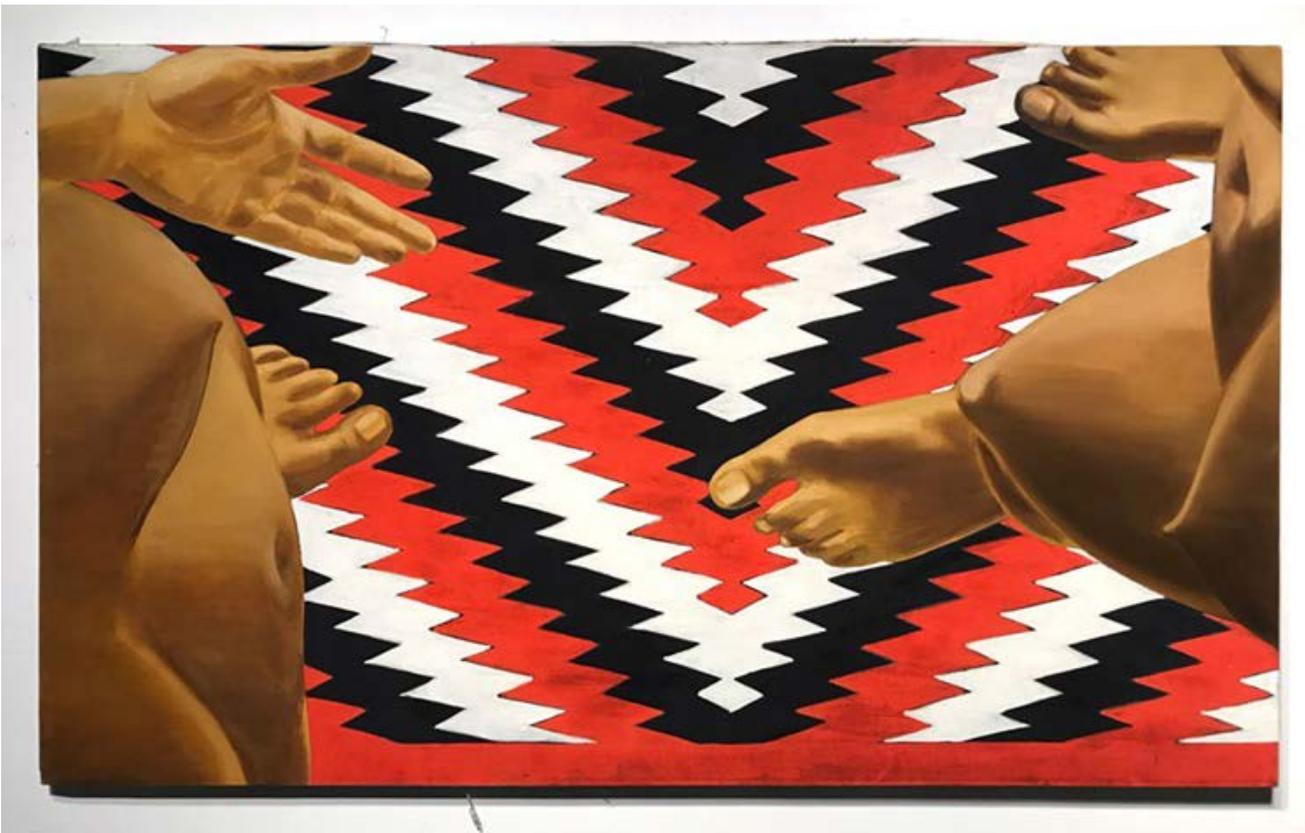


Linda Stark: *Self Portrait With Ray*, 2017

UCLA Hammer Museum

“These are artists who, rather than getting angry, are saying, ‘If this is trying to be taken away from me, I’m going to reclaim it and make it my own.’ They make physical things about that which tends to be pushed aside or marginalized, whether that’s the body or a particular culture or a particular history,” Ellegood says.

Hurtado’s canvases include self-portraits from the artist’s point of view, looking down, past her breasts, tummy and knees, to her feet. After a move to Santa Fe, New Mexico, her later canvases incorporate similar bodyscapes into landscapes, adding feathers and cerulean skies.



Luchita Hurtado: *Untitled*, 1970

Courtesy of the artist and Park View/Paul Soto, Los Angeles and Brussels

With Naotaka Hiro's work, his body becomes his easel as he places his legs through two holes in the canvas and encases himself within where he paints in the dark. "It's a process of figuring out what I am and knowing unknowns and understanding unknowns. It's more dealing with my inner issues," Hiro cryptically explains.

Also dealing with inner issues is Charles Long, whose *paradigm lOst* occupies a full gallery. From his Mount Baldy studio, Long looked forlornly at the fallen trees around him, victims of bark beetle, a common forest malady, and cursed what he sees as a willful indifference to climate change.



Charles Long: *from paradigm IOst*

Jordan Riefe

For reasons unexplained, at the time he was also studying scientific cross-sections of penises, which became a prominent motif in the work. Featuring a painted backdrop of fallen and partitioned penises with similar sculptures in the foreground, Long's installation includes an homage to Salvador Dali's "The Persistence of Memory" with flaccid cross-sections in place of Dali's watch faces hanging from a penis tree, as well as a sculpted penis man reclining and smoking what looks like a fat penis-shaped cigar."

"I think that whole project grew out of a lot of anger about patriarchy, about Trump getting elected and where are we now," Ellegood explains. "It is a response to the environmental degradation and patriarchy but also with humor, with a grotesque sensibility that he knows will be off-putting, and creating an environment that is completely immersive. When you're in the space, even though you're literally surrounded by severed penises, it doesn't feel aggressive."

Candice Lin's *Chinese Charade* features a bed of red clay she smuggled from

the Dominican Republic, poppy seeds and guano fertilizer with an impression of a Charada China figure used in a gambling game. It's meant to comment on the "coolie" trade, forced Chinese labor commonly practiced in the Caribbean and California. "I'm interested in how colonial, political and imperial politics live into the present," Lin explains. "Mine deals with the politics that have to do with embodiment, but it's like the overlapping webs of the moment."



Candice Lin: *System for a Stain*, 2016

UCLA Hammer Museum

With attacks on immigrants on the rise, the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment and the Trump administration's efforts to defund Planned Parenthood, it's no surprise that artists are reclaiming identity, whether physically or culturally. "A lot of work in the show is referencing personal narratives," Christovale says. "There's a sensitivity or a tenderness around these personal narratives that comes to the fore, that functions as being very welcoming and inviting you into an artist's journey or their lived experience."