

Slenske Michael, "I'm With Her," *Cultured*, Fall 2016, pp.176-187

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I'M WITH HER

We visit the studios of five
Los Angeles women who are redefining
the art world from the Left Coast.

"Every 10 years or so becomes another year of the woman," says feminist art critic and curator Jenni Sorkin, who played a very big part in making 2016 one of those years by co-curating "Revolution in the Making: Abstract Sculpture by Women, 1947-2016" with Paul Schimmel for the March opening of Hauser Wirth & Schimmel in Downtown L.A. In the wake of that show, the gallery gave its fall slots to two other female powerhouses: Maria Lassnig and Isa Genzken. Meanwhile, the Broad's debut special exhibition was filled with 120 works by Cindy Sherman, just as Catherine Opie pulled the rare L.A. trifecta with concurrent shows at LACMA, MOCA and the Hammer Museum. And that's to say nothing of the numerous rising stars making their debuts at a raft of pioneering female-helmed galleries (like Various Small Fires, Shulamit Nazarian, Honor Fraser, Itd Los Angeles, Harmony Murphy and Night Gallery).

Still, says Sorkin, despite this year's recent flurry of activity—or the possibility of the first female POTUS—we're still far from parity for women artists in museum collections, solo exhibitions and gallery representation at large. "There is still so much work to be done," says Sorkin. "Let me be clear: I am very proud of 'RITM.' It is an important group show that consciously crafts an argument that abstract sculpture by women in the post-war period to the present absolutely changes the terms of historical engagement, as the canon has largely focused on male abstract painters. It offers an alternate historical trajectory. Group shows can initiate new ideas, but they cannot create systemic institutional change."

BY MICHAEL SLENSKE
PRODUCED BY TAL JAFFE

KATHRYN ANDREWS

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alking into the Highland Park studio of Kathryn Andrews one could easily get the impression of entering into an avant-garde architecture firm that doubles as a novelty shop. In the front office you'll find schematics for *Sunbathers I* and *Sunbathers II*, the fanning and spritzing monoliths (one emblazoned with the phrase "Beyond This Point You May Encounter Nude Sunbathers") that have adorned Manhattan's High Line since May. Her storage areas brim with precisely coded boxes of performance props and found objects, everything from Vegas coffee cups to vintage beer cans and color-coded cigarette boxes. Meanwhile, the studio is filled with photo proofs for her recent *Door Girl* sculptures (life-sized portraits of American Apparel-esque models in absurdist poses framed inside steel doors) and various movie props in one corner vying for placement in future concepts—think Lucille Ball lipstick prints and the front page of "The Gotham Globe" from *Batman Forever*. It's all part and parcel of an increasingly complex sculptural practice mining the intersections of advertising appropriation and Pop icons, Minimalism and market politics.

"The work really deals with how we see images and materials differently," says Andrews. "I try to set up situations that add a variety of ways of looking. Take the logics of Pop Art and Minimalism; I'm interested in what happens when we collide the lessons of the two."

What began about six years ago with a simple exploration of birthdays and clowns as fodder (Warhol-meets-Heilmann paintings of candles or shiny metal fences anchoring balloons and rainbow-colored costumes that come with rules for

exhibition/ownership) has turned into a world of Andrews tropes—not unlike those mined by her former boss Mike Kelley—which now include Santas, Easter Bunnies, hobos and superheroes.

"It's like a system that's branching," she explains. Last fall, those branches spread into the political sphere with "Kathryn Andrews: Run for President," a traveling mid-career survey that debuted at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago in November and just opened at the Nasher Sculpture Center on September 10. It includes paintings depicting historic Presidential campaign posters while housing well-known costumes for the Joker, Spider-Man or Wee Man embedded with the outfits worn by Jack Nicholson, Tobey Maguire and the *Jackass* star Jason Acuña. It even explores the subversive identity politics of Mr. T, as captured in a photo of him at a White House Christmas party wearing a Star of David chain and a sleeveless Santa suit, with Nancy Reagan perched on his lap.

This fall she's ratcheting up the dark humor even further with her *Black Bar* wall works for her new solo show at L.A.'s David Kordansky gallery opening in November. The shadow-box-like sculptures feature hand-silkscreened images of girls, picnic foods, cartoons and sharks hidden behind a layer of printed Plexiglas.

"I'm very interested in the phenomenon of how we want to view an artwork as a self-contained, autonomous, unchanging thing," she says. "But there's an inherent problem with that way of thinking because the second you put it in a new context, it takes on a new meaning."

PORTRAIT BY STEVEN PERILLOUX

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