



TO LIVE & DIE TRYING

IN

*Introduction & interviews
by Katya Tylevich*

*All portraits and photographs of LA
by Alexei Tylevich*

LA



For a pest control inspector, this guy is far too sensitive. Considering the horrors he must see on a daily basis, you'd think he'd be able to handle a little laughter. It's not at his expense, anyway. But this being Los Angeles, I shouldn't make assumptions. The man might not be an inspector at all, just another out-of-work actor preparing his read-through for 'The Exterminator II' audition. That, or the guy's temporarily working this nine-to-five to cover the expenses of starting a high-profile cult in

the desert. Brainwashing pamphlets and custom narcotics don't pay for themselves, you know.

So, speaking of (shockingly appropriate, perfectly reasonable) stereotypes: back to the reason I'm laughing. Has anyone ever heard of something called 'The California Rat'? Holy hell. Unlike its out-sized brothers and sisters in New York, or the entire continent of Europe, the lean, muscular California Rat favours sunshine and fresh air over sewers, and sticks to a strict vegan diet of berries and twigs – 'no garbage in my rock-hard bod,

thank you.' Something of a loner, The California Rat is the rodent equivalent of self-employed, keeping its own hours and answering to no one. Nor does this Rat do 'nocturnal' with the rest of the bridge-and-tunnel; instead, it opts for me-time in broad daylight, soaking in that Vitamin D, inhaling that Pacific breeze, and working-out solo, jumping from one flat mid-century modern rooftop in the North-Western Los Angeles hills to another. Fancy, fancy. The California Rat targets 50s modernist enclaves along the ocean's lush hills. I wonder, does this animal also

This Rat: a social drop-out of sorts, a leaping contradiction, a vagabond that actually sticks to one place, an ostensibly free-spirited total workaholic, head full of healthy ideals, mind set on bodily preservation, but always consciously on the brink of demise, whether by way of mudslide, earthquake, or tsunami like the rest of us here; or by way of 'organic' deathtrap... also like the rest of us here. A grand and powerful symbol of Los Angeles it is!

There. Suck it, Mickey Mouse. The California Rat is at once personification of a 'type' living along the LA coast, and a reminder that this city's preconceived 'types,' as determined by geographic location, are as easy to dismiss as they are fun to perpetuate. Think of it as a local pastime here: breaking down big, hard-to-chew Los Angeles into bite-sized comfort snacks such as:

- Westside: *shorthand* for berries & twigs, surfing & drum-circles, health nuts in flip-flops, tourists, and ad-agency creatives.

- Eastside: *shorthand* for berries & twigs, coffee & cigarettes, skinny jeans in hipster bars, and garage band creatives.

- Pockets and peripheries: *shorthand* for anything & everything, but good luck finding it without a specific address to put in your GPS.

This city is a mascot for the saying, 'There's nothing more permanent than temporary.' It is over-crowded and traffic-jammed with those who came here by choice and stayed by accident, and those who came here by accident (being born counts as accident) and stayed by choice. It is the model of architectural im-

practice yoga and go surfing? Does it cycle, smoke medicinal marijuana, drink green tea from ceramic cups, and shop for designer chotchkie on Sundays? How many more 'Westside' clichés does it subscribe to? And, really, is it any small wonder that there are California Rat infestations in precisely those ocean-view LA neighbourhoods where people opt for 'organic' methods of pest control? (Not that there's anything wrong with that.)

'I'm on to my next client,' the inspector tells me. Oh no, sir, you're on to something much bigger.

Zen garden? Why is the most beautiful view of the mountains from the leftmost lane of a five-track highway? Why are the underground scenes typically high above sea-level, and why do I need a security gate password to get to them?

One is always between a headshot and a mugshot in Los Angeles, as likely to be discovered by a talent scout as an undercover popo; but *most* likely not to be discovered here at all. Whether by design or by mistake, literally or figuratively, it's easy to get lost in LA.

There are layers upon layers of textures to Los Angeles, a million contradicting flavours and tastes, feasts and junk-foods for the eyes, and many more clichés where those came from. No, I don't want to describe the artists on the following pages as 'vibrant' and 'interesting' and 'representative of something' and 'fascinating' and 'invaluable contributors to LA's visual fabric', because that's exactly what they are and it's boring and hackneyed to say so, and I want to be different, just like everybody else in this damn city.

I will say that the following artists represent different ways of living in Los Angeles, different ways of responding to it and dealing with it. The artists' works range from paintings, drawings, and illustrations to unclassifiable visual performances on page, canvas, screen, and various other platforms. And I see these works as visual 'allergies' to life in this city. But that's just one person's opinion. I will let the artists do most of the talking from here on. But LA being such a 'Talkshow Town,' people here tend to keep things close to their chests. Special

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It is the model of architectural impermanence

are the conversations that move beyond, 'How are you?' 'What are you working on?' 'How much did you get for your last script?' There are exceptions, of course. People pay good money to talk openly to their therapists, and they tend to spill all to casting agents (because their managers think it will get them noticed). People also tend to say too much to their arresting officers, before they've had a chance to call their lawyers, that is. Okay. Duly noted. Tactics appropriated. The following artists have not been read their Miranda Rights. Enjoy their confessions ●

MONEY MARK



Money Mark (musician, producer) was born Mark Ramos-Nishita and, judging by the way he's holding that thing, with a giant gong in his hands, 'This is Richard Nixon's,' he's serious. He found it at a yard sale being used as a table. \$Mark (his signature) is a successful hunter-gatherer of unbelievable things, and he's generous with his findings.

'I've got a keyboard for you,' he says, scavenging his Silver Lake studio — a one-level, two-room funhouse of instruments, collectable Boomboxes, cassette tapes (from self-help to riot grrrl), recording equipment, deconstructed pianos, tools, and toys. There's a Banksy on the wall. 'People give me things,' \$Mark says. 'If you get rid of presents, you get in trouble with high powers.'

What high powers, God?

'I didn't say that,' he says, laughing. He probably means his friends and collaborators. In the context of artistic cred, the chapters of \$Mark read like holy scrolls: The Book of Beastie Boys; The Books of Yoko Ono, Porno For Pyros, and Beck;

The book of a fruitful solo career; with scripture like: 'and Money Mark played keyboards with artist Raymond Pettibon on vocals,' or, 'Money Mark scored Aaron Rose's Beautiful Losers film about street-artists like Geoff McFetridge and Shepard Fairey.'

'I'm this close to being done with music,' \$Mark says — disarmingly casual, with a smile, as always. He's reading a how-to on comedy writing. He says he lives and works in his own bubble, but I see him as undeniably connected to LA's arts scene ('scene' doesn't always have to be a dirty word, you know). 'I'm shy,' \$Mark tells me. 'I've never had cameras in my studio.' Then he lifts his favourite Boombox over his shoulder, pumps up the Saturday Night Fever soundtrack and, like a modern-day Southern California Moses, instigates a journey over a metal fence, and along the cement slabs lining the green (yeah) Los Angeles River.

'I love it here,' he says, as if this river stroll — all 'night fever, night fev-er-er' — is daily routine for him. Later, we get into our respective cars, turn on our respective engines, and there's an earthquake. No kidding. Thanks for riffing with us, Plate Tectonics. How LA of you.

POLICE INTERROGATION

Are you in LA by choice, or accident?

Accident first, choice later. When I was five-years-old, my parents came to LA from Detroit where I was born, because my older brother needed a special heart surgery at UCLA Medical Center. Our family ended up staying, and our first abode was in the West Athens district not far from Watts. I remember eating pomegranates, Santa Rosa plums, and kumquats right off the trees for breakfast, walking through a dirt alley on the way to school.

Do you love it, or love to hate it?

I love living and working here. I know the

*Aaron Rose would say
I'm one of the 'beautiful losers' — maybe that's
the only club I'm in*



city very well, yet I'm still uncovering new sights and sounds, meeting cool and inspiring people. I travel to every neighborhood, trying to find its soul.

Eastside, or Westside?

I don't polarize the city like that. Each area is distinct and offers amazing energy I can't live without. There is no single heart of the city.

Thriving arts scene, or cemetery for big dreams?

I'm not too much of a scenester — mostly, I work in the evenings — but I know that every night of the week I get invited to some art, music, theater, or dance happening. Personally, I've been able to work consistently in Los Angeles, no problem. But I can tell there are a lot of people trying to 'make it in show business,' as they say.

Do you feel like you're part of a 'community of artists'?

I feel like I'm in my own bubble, but that's probably by choice. In my music, I usually play all the instruments, so I only need my instrument 'friends' around me. Aaron Rose would say I'm one of the 'beautiful losers' — maybe that's the only club I'm in.

AUDITION QUESTIONNAIRE

Favourite complaint about Los Angeles: 'Baby you can drive my car!' Traffic and bad drivers. It's amazing and frustrating at the same time. Fortunately, I don't have to drive in peak hours. Beep beep!

Favourite natural disaster here: earthquakes! 'Shake shake shake... Shake your booty!'

Best celebrity sighting: Angelyne driving her pink corvette.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

What comes to mind at mention of:

Surfers: late for school.

Cars: my second home.

Schwarzenegger: ugh ●

LLYN FOULKES

On the edge of downtown Los Angeles, Llyn Foulkes (b. Yakima, Washington) lives and works in one of the 300 studios at The Brewery Art Colony, a complex of renovated warehouse lofts sitting pretty on twenty-three industrial acres, marking its territory as the largest live-work art colony in the world. There's a 'Members Only' policy: only residents involved in creative work need apply. Honestly, I would break some sort of privacy law and do time in a slammer to see the lease papers signed by Foulkes. I mean, how did he answer the question: 'What do you do?' I hope he stabbed a reprint of *Deliverance* [an oil and acrylic depiction of himself holding a cocked shotgun, standing over a rigor mortis Mickey Mouse] to those lease papers and, in the space provided, wrote something like, 'Don't you know who I am?'

Of course, I'm sure he didn't. Llyn Foulkes is far too genial. Throughout the course of our three-hour talk, he makes clear his feeling that, no, actually, people don't know who he is. Not enough people, anyway. Not outside of artists' circles, and that bothers him.

On the pop-art time-line, Foulkes is a contemporary of Andy Warhol. He had his first solo show at LA's Ferus Gallery in 1961, predating Warhol's one-man de-

but there by a year (see: Campbell's Soup Cans). Minutes after I cross the threshold of Foulkes' studio, the artist issues the verbal equivalent of an eye-roll vis-à-vis Warhol. Unprompted, I swear.

The studio, by the way, is tall and spacious, and on this atypically rainy day in Los Angeles, it's also theatrically dark. The artist's works-in-progress rest side by side on his cement floors, bigger pieces lean against walls. A telling cross-section of his many techniques and subjects. There are his textured 'post-cards': mixed-media landscapes and fragments of the loneliest views and visions along the routes of America's Southwest. There are his oil and acrylic topographies — rocks and mountains, bare, dry, and ominous. There he (or it) is again: that menacing, brainwashing, 'don't believe my babyface' Mickey Mouse. And then, another reoccurring character in the oeuvre of Llyn Foulkes: Llyn Foulkes.

The 75-year-old artist is visibly passionate. He's energetic. To say that his motions and facial expressions are 'animated' is to expose the failures of the word 'animated' — the artist pops his eyes out, gesticulates with purpose, does imitations, speaks in voices, he is a one-man show. And a one-man band. For those who

I remember years ago, when I was doing POP (1986-1990) in my old studio in Topanga [Western LA], this little four-year-old kid comes in, stands there, turns to his mom and asks, 'Mom is that real?'

don't know: I mean that literally. 'I suppose you want to see The Machine,' he says, and leads me stage right to... a stage.

Foulkes has set up a small theatre in his studio, where he holds weekly concerts. I struggle to find the appropriate simile for this 'Machine.' It looks like some Mad Max flying-motorcycle, I suppose, its front bumper made of bike and car horns, its engine a xylophone, the pedals keep a beat. What follows is a half-hour impromptu performance. Foulkes, who drove a taxi when he first arrived in LA from Yakima to attend Chouinard Art Institute (now Cal Arts), maps Los Angeles and his history with it in his lyrics — *Topanga* (goes bang-a, bang-a), *El Monte*, *The Ghost of Hollywood*, a chorus about how lonely it is being a one-man band.

The artist makes intelligent and engaging conversation, but not linear. He jumps from topic to topic to opinion. That said, he navigates his tangents remarkably well. When I ask him 'what does that have to do with anything?' — he gives satisfying and revealing responses. So it would be deceptive of me to present our talk as if it were a cut and paste Q & A with a clear beginning and end. Far more appropriate to tune into our conversation, already in progress:





Opposite:
Deliverance
Mixed media
182.9 x 213.4 cm
2004-2007
Courtesy of the Artist and
Kent Gallery, New York

Left:
The Assassination
Mixed media
55.2 x 40.01 cm
1973
Private collection

Below:
Crucifixion
Mixed media
73.7 x 53.3 cm
1985



Llyn Foulkes: All I want is a voice.

Katya Tylevich: You have a voice.

No I don't have a voice. I have a voice in a very small artistic circle. I'd like to get on television, but they're not going to allow me on television, because I'm anti-commercial. I've got something to say. I'm not a Warhol who gets on a talk-show, then doesn't say a word — just sits there looking like a freak. [Laughs.] He was right about the fifteen minutes of fame because he was part of it.

But you've had documentaries made about you.

That doesn't do me any good. I would like to reach a lot of people, that's all. I think my music reaches a lot of people.

More so than your art?

Well, both. There are people here who don't know about my art until they come to see 'the guy on his Machine.' I like that. I remember years ago, when I was doing POP (1986-1990) in my old studio in Topanga [Western LA], this little four-year-old kid comes in, stands there, turns to his mom and asks, 'Mom is that real?' [Laughs.] That's the best, because their minds aren't filtered. Come on: Respond! So people come in here, and I start playing the horns, and: [imitates someone's jaw dropping]. I understand that, because I'm a regular person, see. I'm looking at my Machine there and thinking, 'Yeah, if I was a regular person I'd say, "God that's

really cool. I've never seen anything like that before.'" So that's why I think I could be really public. I keep wondering, with television the way it is now. I know the Internet's getting bigger, and things are happening — they're starting to put performances up.

What are you saying? That you want to be a celebrity?

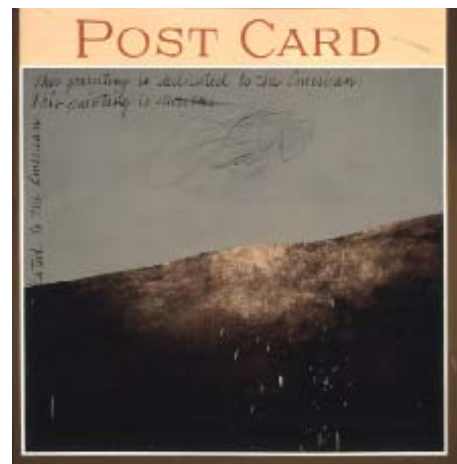
[Speaks over me.] I don't want to be just a cult figure! My idols growing up — well. I grew up without a father. My father left when I was a year old. My grandfather was there, but he was just a shadow, so I made my father up. My first father was probably Walt Disney, because at age five or six I would draw Mickey Mouse and all

I believe in process, I believe in change. Mistakes make things happen. Just like in jazz – the mistakes wind up being the right thing



that stuff, right? And then my father was [American musician & bandleader] Spike Jonze, because he did 'cartoon music' with horns and bells and gunshots and stuff like that, so I responded by imitating the record and all that stuff, right? And then my next big one was Salvador Dalí, I saw him up in Yakima. That's the only book I ever stole from the library, and I still have it: *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*. I didn't know anything else up in Yakima, and I just poured through that book. I was extremely influenced by it – I had just started out in my painting. Then my next father was Charlie Chaplin. I saw *City Lights* and it blew me away.

Wait, tell me how this relates to your wanting to be more than a cult figure?
Everybody in the world knew who Charlie Chaplin was, and everybody loved Charlie Chaplin! He would get crowds of people in Times Square, in London, huge! He was bigger than Muhammad Ali, or everyone else. And that's one of the things I've had to live up to — it never happened to me, and it happened to him when he was real young. By the time he got to be my age, he couldn't do anything any more.
You want to be the kind of person crowds line up to see in Times Square?
That would help. [Smiles.] Yeah, right. I can see my Machine in Times Square.



I can see that. That would be really cool.
Did you originally come to Los Angeles from Yakima to become a celebrity?
No. No no no. I got out of the army, I was twenty-one, and my father, whom I had never seen before, knew I was coming to Los Angeles to go to art school, so he invited me to see him and decided he was going to make up for everything. So he got me a screen test at Universal Studios, and I turned him down. I told him, 'I want to be an artist.' Probably because I was scared to fucking death! When I first came down to LA, if I saw a movie star, my face would get three shades of red. I would get really embarrassed. That's changed

Far left:
Llyn Foulkes playing *The Machine*

Left:
Post Card
Oil on canvas
161.3 x 158.1 cm
1963

Left middle:
Death Valley
Oil on canvas
166.4 x 164.5 cm
1963-65

Left bottom:
Post Card
Oil on canvas
165.1 x 166.4 cm
1963

Below:
Double Trouble
Mixed media
83.8 x 61 cm
1991

Right:
Money in the bank
Mixed media
35.6 x 33 cm
1977
Collection of Geraldine Spreckels Fuller, New York



a lot [Laughs]. But, you know, I was just a local yokel from Yakima. I could have gone into movies, but I was too... I would have needed a lot of support, back then. No! I would never think about doing that. Those poor movie actors, they get old and you watch them do stupid things. Those poor people.
Do you feel good living in this artist's community?
I like being down here. And there are a lot of young people. When I see people my own age it's kind of like, 'Well, been there, done that. I guess I'll never be what I was.' I can't take that sort of thing. It stifles me. And, you know, I have good friends my



age back in Topanga, but I rarely see them because they're so far away. It gets lonely. And it's a good thing there are people around here. It makes me feel good just to go down to the café and sit down and talk to the people I'm living with. Everybody in there knows who I am, and I try to remember peoples' names. But it's not the same as having a soul mate.
Foulkes invites me to sit down across from his painting, 'The Awakening,' which he has been working on for years, and which he says is about his divorce. It depicts two haunting figures — Foulkes and a female, side by side in bed. Foulkes is upright, reading a book. The female, in foetal position,

hugs a giant egg. The artist thinks aloud about the way he has to tweak the dimensions, about the work he still has to put into the piece.
I believe in process, I believe in change. Mistakes make things happen. Just like in jazz – the mistakes wind up being the right thing.
It's very touching to see this piece outside of a museum.
That's because it isn't competing with anything in this room.
Do you get out to the galleries often? Do you keep a close eye on what others are doing?
I rarely go, unless there's a particular show I want to see — and sometimes I'm

Below:
I got a job to do
Oil on canvas
112 x 143.5 cm
2003

Opposite:
The View
Mixed media
33 x 33 cm
2004



surprised. But I also see a lot of stuff out there that makes me wonder, 'What's in here?' [Presses his hand to his chest.] When someone gives a great review, I have to see where their mind's at. They're saying the exhibit is thrilling! And amazing! But the way they're describing it — how can that possibly be thrilling and amazing? They always refer to the same people, and Warhol's Brillo Boxes. So sometimes I have to go walk by, because I've got to see where these people are at. Just like I watch Fox News. I watch what the enemy is doing. [Smiles.] I don't know where art's at, but I'm sick of it, to tell you the truth. I'm sick of the P.T. Barnum thing. 'The bigger

the better! Blow up a fire-truck!' Artists shouldn't be irresponsible — 'I just want my thing and you guys pay for it!'

How do you work on so many different projects at once? Do you have a routine?

I flip from one to another. When it gets to a certain point, I know. Tomorrow, I was hoping to go to the swap-meet in Pasadena, but it looks like it's going to rain. I was hoping to find old photographs and get some kind of frames, and sometimes I just need to get out, because I get so bogged down. There's the music, too! I'm recording. I'm keeping busy. I've worked a long time. And I've turned down offers on paintings — I've had to really bite it — but

I know I have to finish everything right. If I let it go, it will always haunt me. But I'm staying afloat. I'd like to make a lot of money because, hell, I'd like to do an LA musical. There are a lot of things that I would like to do. But I'm not a pusher. I can talk about myself, but I have never gone to a gallery and said 'I'd like to be in your gallery.' Everything's come to me, don't ask me why. I don't want to go out there and try to explain to somebody, 'Yeah, I'm a one-man band.' I went through some of that a long time ago. I've gone through a lot of stuff, you know. Now, I just want to get out there and do it the way I want to do it ●



KOZYNDAN



Kouze (born in Ichikawa-Daimon, Yamaguchi, Japan) and Dan Kitchens (Long Beach, CA), partners and partners since they met at a painting class in the late nineties, share a home-studio in an industrial part of Culver City, which doesn't ring 'art scene' in the way 'Venice', or 'Silver Lake' do. Kozyndan like that silence. According to their official bio, they also like dipping their heads into bowls of raspberry jelly and lemon curd. Like artists, like artwork. Kozyndan's projects and illustrations plunge head first into the graphic equivalent of high-fructose corn syrup. Take one of their digitally painted urban panoramas, which depicts a gang of Chinese ladies in San Francisco hurling dim-sum at cartoon likenesses of SARS [The

Yum-cha Militia, 2003]. Or, aw, what's that? Adorable comic mammals in various positions of sick, wild fornication [Horny Kozyndan, 2003]. A commission for a Japanese soft-porn mag, which, at Kozyndan HQ, sits perfectly at ease next to album covers for Weezer and The Postal Service, magazine covers for Giant Robot, commercial projects for IdN and Nike, comic depictions of Kozy's battle with a cold, and a clothing line for Puma. Yeah. No prudes allowed. No prudes allowed as neighbours, either. This husband and wife take advantage of LA's open, sunny spaces and, um, collaborate outdoors. Thanks for sharing, guys. Guess you can add 'mental images' to your long list of creations.

POLICE INTERROGATION

Are you in LA by choice, or by accident?

Kozy: Choice. It's the logical place for us. All the action is in LA, many friends live in LA, and our first solo show was in LA. It's what made sense when we were just beginning, and it turned out to be perfect for us.

Eastside, or Westside?

K: As we are sea-creatures, we need to be by the sea. Westside for life.

Thriving arts scene, or cemetery for big dreams?

D: We pay zero attention to the arts scene, so we really haven't a clue.

Is LA inspiring to you as artists?

D: LA is inspiring because it's easy not to be influenced by what everyone else is doing. Also because it's a mix of high and

We wish we had amazing public transportation in LA, but when we think about how many people are kept from moving here by horrendous traffic, we're almost glad it's there

low culture, and a mix of international cultures. The light, landscape, and seascape are all inspiring.

Do you feel like you're part of a 'community of artists'?

D: I think we are. Our group of friends are all creatives, in one way or another. Even though we don't follow the arts scene, it's easy to find many like-minded people making things. Music, writing, fashion, photography, film, art — we all appreciate one another.

AUDITION QUESTIONNAIRE

Favourite way to meet daily caloric intake in LA:

K: The Farmer's Market in Santa Monica — one step closer to reconnecting with the food and Earth that we, as citi-

zens of industrialized nations, have lost touch with.

Favourite place to take it easy:

D: Our backyard! Laying on the grass, watching the plants grow, eating lunch, or having sex in the sun.

Favourite view of the city:

D: That's a hard one. LA is surrounded by mountains, carved up by hiking trails. I also like to walk around the rooftop bar of the Downtown Standard Hotel. The drinks are a rip-off, the crowd is whack, the music usually is cheesy, but the view is amazing.

Favourite complaint about Los Angeles.

K: Traffic. But we work at home so we only have to be out during bad traffic by choice. We wish we had amazing public transportation in LA, but when we think about

Below:
Springtime un Nakano
Pencil and digital
198 x 38 cm
2009

how many people are kept from moving here by horrendous traffic, we're almost glad it's there.

Favorite natural disaster here:

D: I love earthquakes — like a rollercoaster ride! Kozy hates them, though.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

What comes to mind at mention of:

Surfers: wish we were part of that tribe!

Cars: driving stoned.

Helicopters: the beach.

Avocado: our bedroom.

Bladerunner: Rutger Hauer is badass.

Architecture: Disney Concert Hall.

Schwarzenegger: this guy's flying a plane every morning from LA to Sacramento and claiming to care about the environment?! ●



ED FELLA



Technically part of Los Angeles County, Valencia, CA, is a planned community, modeled after the most popular preconception of what heaven looks like, which is to say, the place feels like a golf course. A good fifty kilometres (over two hours in traffic) northeast of Downtown LA's dystopian skyscrapers: rolling hills, palm trees, and the absence of, well, most other things. Needless to say, Valencia doesn't look like one of those characteristically LA artistic enclaves — on the measuring stick of 'fake boho,' there's no notch for it between 'dreadlocks & drum circle' and 'slim pants & collectible Neutra lamp.' Still, owing to the fact that it's the grounds for CalArts, Valencia is completely packed with artists. Some of the most established and promising artists in Los Angeles today, in fact. Among

them, world-famous graphic designer and typographer: Ed Fella (born in Detroit, Michigan).

Fella strolls out to the main lobby of CalArts to meet me. 'I've got all day. I'm retired,' he says, even though he still teaches and keeps a studio, and produces an enviable amount of work daily. 'Do you have time to grab a coffee? I can show you around, we can have a conversation.' For all the talk about Los Angeles being 'friendly and relaxed,' it actually comes as a shock to talk with someone who isn't constantly checking his iPhone and visibly trying to keep his blood pressure from rising. I mentally reprimand myself for thinking about the traffic I'll hit if I leave here at rush hour. I turn off my phone.

Fella has been in Valencia for over twenty years. After graduating from high

school in his native Detroit, he practiced for thirty years as a 'commercial artist' ('they didn't have the word "graphic design" back then,' he says). In 1987, he earned an MFA in Design from Cranbrook Institute of the Arts (what'd he do that for? We'll get there), and moved to Los Angeles shortly thereafter. The archives of his lifelong work are so stacked, so thick — pages upon pages — they could comprise a manmade island. The man is incredibly prolific, and so varied in his techniques. To quote Fella's own categories for his work, there's Lettering; Drawings & Illustrations; Collages & Found Art; Photographs, Polaroids and Scrapbooks; Flyers, Posters, and Graphic Design; a mountain of fragments, details, miscellaneous, and uncategorizable work.



Previous spread, left:
LA Collage
Sketch book page
2007

Previous spread, right:
CalArts Graduation day after
Collage
2009

Guess what? Fella doesn't really consider his collected works 'art.' Well, there's one exception. 'I do have a body of work that I consider art, although the art-world doesn't consider it art,' he says. And that is? 'My sketchbooks,' those bound volumes of impeccable 'doodles' that Fella works on religiously, 'automatically,' while sitting at a lecture, out to dinner with his wife, with his signature four-colour ballpoint pen. 'The work is completely unique, it doesn't fit in graphic design and it doesn't actually fit in art, but it is an art practice that I could say is as avant-garde now for me as it ever was. That is the basis of my real work — those sketchbook pages.'

Ah, we've slowly made our way to Fella's studio: an office inside the institute, cozy with those sketchbooks — boxes of them! Shelves of them! I've forgotten all about traffic at this point. Fella is a master raconteur. At times self-deprecating, always very amicable, Fella is extremely well-versed in the history of art and graphic design, and highly conscious of his seminal role in it. For a while, I can't get a word in edge-wise. Not that I want to, really. He's an eloquent speaker, what he has to say is interesting. So I have let the artist do most of the talking. Eventually, I chime in there, also. Toward the end. Around the part where Fella tells me he's 'not a very interesting artist.'

Excuse me?

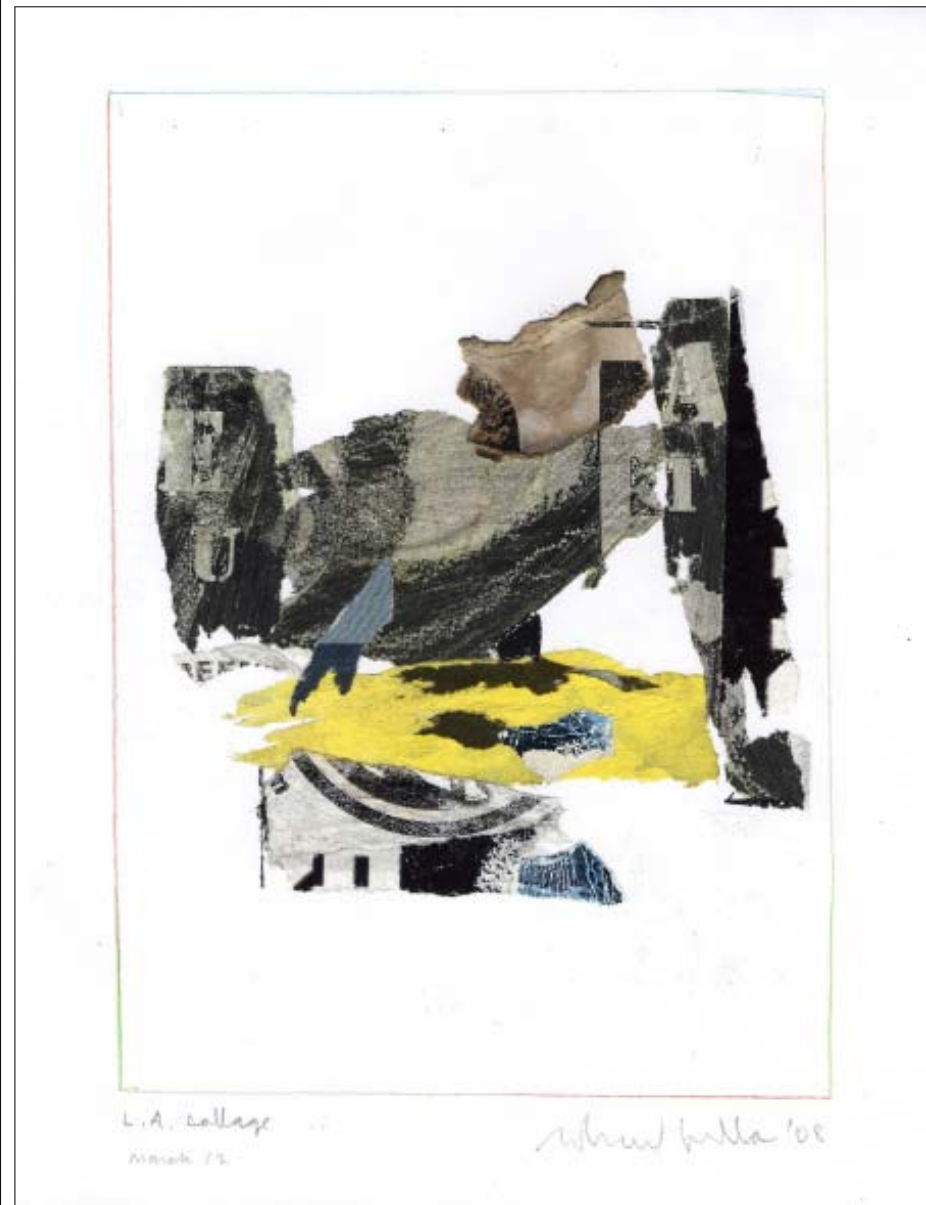
LIFE BEFORE LOS ANGELES

I come from working class Detroit. There, it was natural that you went to trade school and became a commercial artist. The idea of a fine artist was off the radar, although there's no reason why I couldn't have gone to art school. I got a scholarship to go to Herron [School of Art and Design in Indiana.] But I didn't want to go to Indianapolis, I wanted to go to New York or Los Angeles, so I didn't take the scholarship. I thought, 'Oh, I'll just go get a job,' which I did, and I was a successful commercial artist for all those years.

Actually, here's the funny story. When I was in high school, the way it worked was that if you won a scholarship for art school, they would put your portfolio in a

Below:
Los Angeles street
Collage
2008

Opposite:
Work for 1898 Magazine
Typographic collage
2010



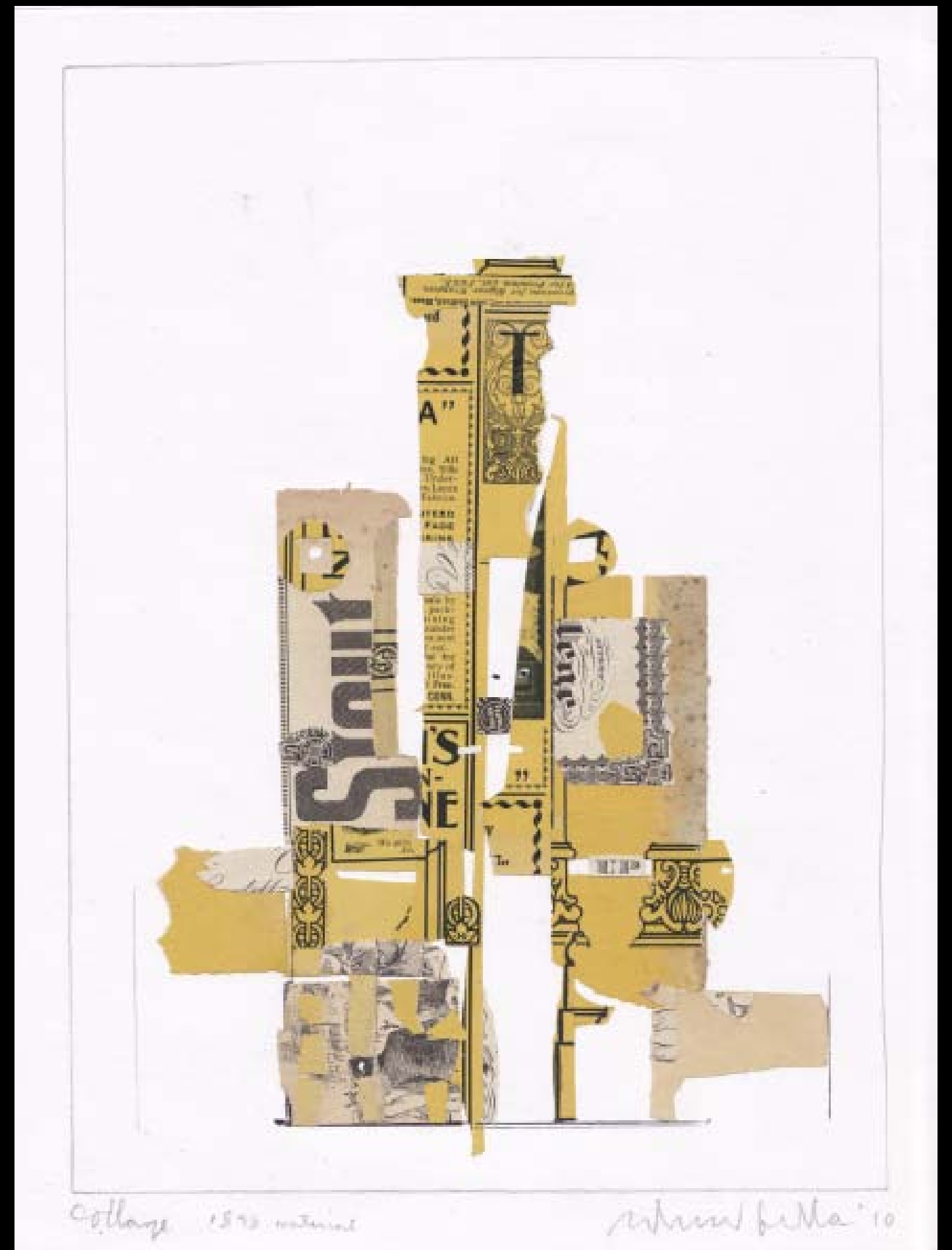
pool and the schools would decide whom they took. You could state your preferences. I put down New York, Los Angeles, Chicago. But none of my preferences came through. Chouinard Art Institute [in Los Angeles] didn't pick me. Actually, I know whom they did pick: they picked Ed Ruscha! From Oklahoma! Of course, the irony is that Chouinard is CalArts, so I actually got into Chouinard, only at the age of fifty.

The way I wound up here was by complete fluke. You know how life is. People al-

ways ask me, 'Well, why'd you go to Cranbrook?' Well, the real reason was empty nest syndrome! At the time, I was a single parent with two kids, and both were going to college. So the solution was: Well, why don't you go off to college, too? Because I never went to college. I didn't take that scholarship, I went to work instead.

EXIT-LEVEL DESIGNER

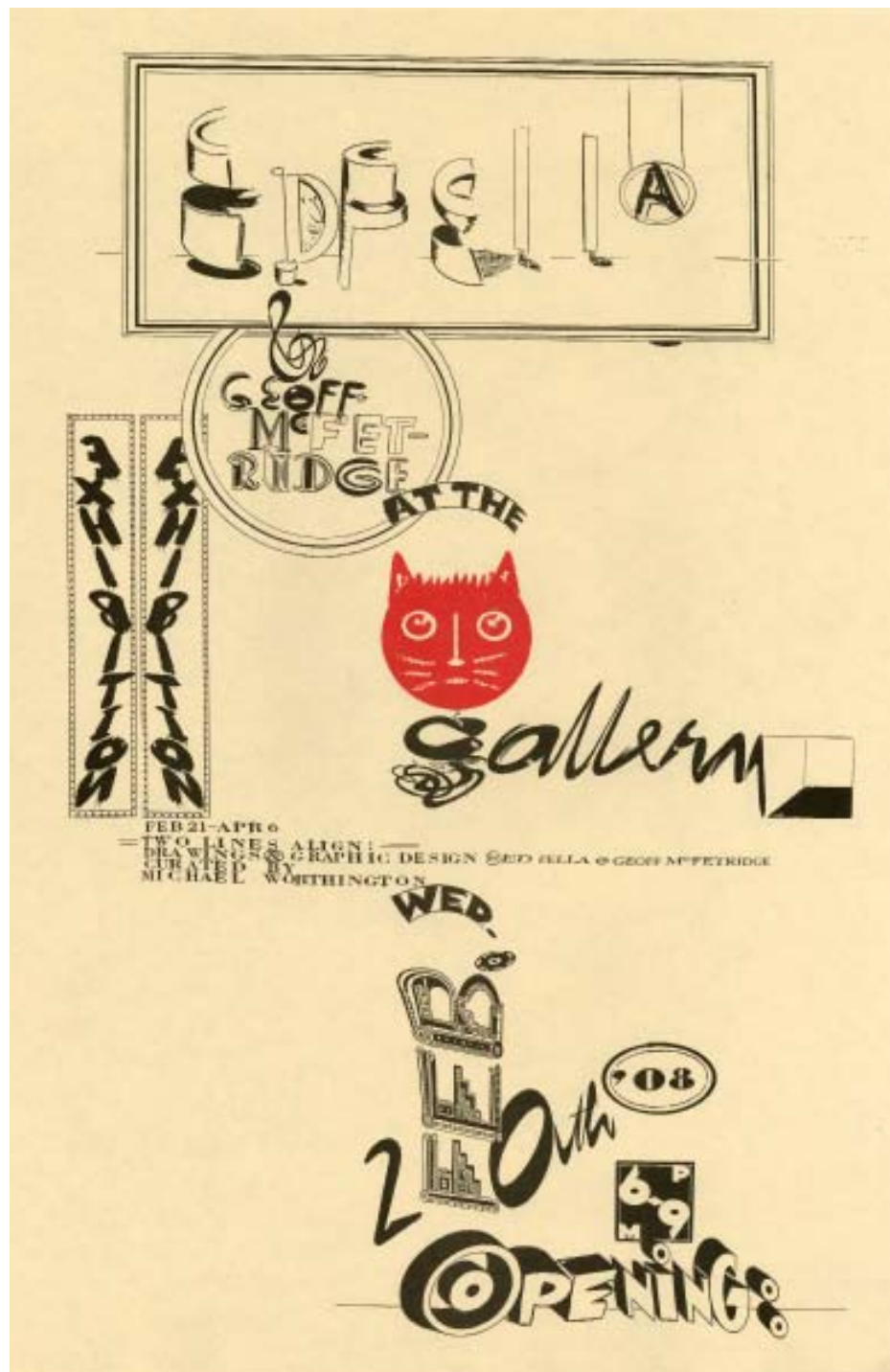
Ed Fella: So by the time I came here to teach, I was fifty. Basically, I was done



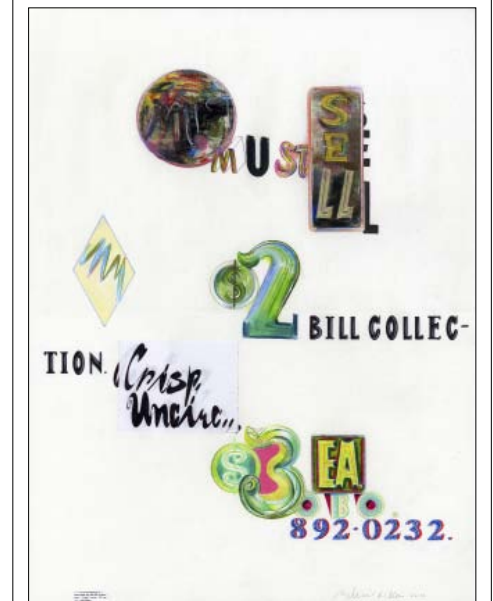
Below:
Sketch book drawing
Blue ball point pen with
white pencil
2010

Right and opposite left:
Exhibition flyers
Offset printed on paper
27.9 x 43.2 cm
2008

Opposite right:
Poster contribution to
The NY Type Directors
Club 'Beautifully Banal'
fundraiser
Colour pencil and pen on
paper
2010



I am not a very interesting artist in terms of 2010, but on the other hand, I'm an interesting artist from the fifties — it's just that I didn't do the work then



with work and called myself an 'Exit Level Designer.' I didn't do any more commercial jobs, no more clients, nothing like that. So all the years I've been here — twenty-two years — I've been teaching, and even that isn't full time. The rest of the time, I'm retired. I spend time in the studio and make my own work. I'm seventy two now, my health isn't the best. I don't want to go traipsing around the world anymore doing lectures.

I had a successful career, you know. I sent my kids to college, I sent myself to graduate school, bought a house. My obligations are over. So I can live out this lit-

tle idea of exit-level design. I have a little teaching job and encourage the next generation, but I don't compete with them. Actually it's great, never having to do client work again.

I think it's a great time to be a designer. I'm done, but I love the idea of teaching the next generation. There are more interesting books about design and typography now than ever before. Some are still kind of banal, but most of them are avant-garde as can be! And the internet allows everything instantaneously — does anyone not know anything anymore?

COUNTERFACTUAL ALTERNATIVE HISTORY

Ed Fella: My parents were immigrants from Europe, so when I was growing up, I always had this idea of 'A Painter,' where you work in your studio and you just make paintings. Like Picasso, or someone like that. My parents were German and Austrian, so even the word when I was a child — the Maler — there was something there, even when I say it now in German — Maler — it's like, 'Oh my God! That's a painter.' In English it still doesn't mean as much to me as it does in German.

So there's this idea in the culture that a commercial artist is a failed painter. If you fail as a fine artist, you become a commercial artist, you sell out. Well, I was a commercial artist and a successful one. But now that I'm retired from commercial art, my next step is to be the bad painter. It's something I call my 'Counterfactual Alternative History.' I pretend that in 1957, when I got out of high school, instead of going to work in a commercial art studio, I actually went to art school and became a painter. What would I be doing in that case? What kind of painting would I be making? In the fifties, I was into

abstract expressionism, non-objective painting, gestural painting. So, for the last couple years, I've been making these drawings — literally hundreds and hundreds of them — that I call 'drawings for paintings.' Behind them is the idea that I would have been doing this in 1957, 1959, 1962. I try to put my head around what I would have been at the time.

I am not a very interesting artist in terms of 2010, but on the other hand, I'm an interesting artist from the fifties — it's just that I didn't do the work then. Now I'm doing the work. And there's something authentic about that. It would be

inauthentic for me to jump in now and say 'Oh, now I'll be an artist!' I'm too old, really. I'm not that connected with the culture. But I am connected with that culture. That was my coming of age.

Do you exhibit your faux-fifties work, anywhere?

Nowhere! I don't exhibit. That's another thing I'm not interested in: The whole art world. I do have lots of shows — a whole list here, but those are all design shows. I've got one in the Czech Republic, in San Francisco. Universities call me to come out and lecture. I say, 'Forget the lecture! I'll send you some stuff. Have an exhibit.'



Right:
Published Program Cover
1985

*In Los Angeles, you
don't hit the road. When
you're here, you're here.
In Detroit, you hit the road
because you want to go to
a city like Los Angeles*

*Have you formed a strong connection with
Los Angeles, in your years here?*

The truth is, it's almost the opposite. I came here at fifty. I had already been married, and had just remarried again. So my whole young life of chasing girls, and needing a 'scene' with clubs and bars was already behind me. I didn't need it. It didn't seem important. I was also a completely mature artist, by then, so I never consider myself a 'Los Angeles artist,' since I had nothing to do with the history of Los Angeles. I come from a whole different context. The other thing is, I came here to CalArts, which is its own little city, in a way. My studio is here, inside the school. Actually, all members of the faculty can have a studio, but no other faculty wants one.

Why is that?

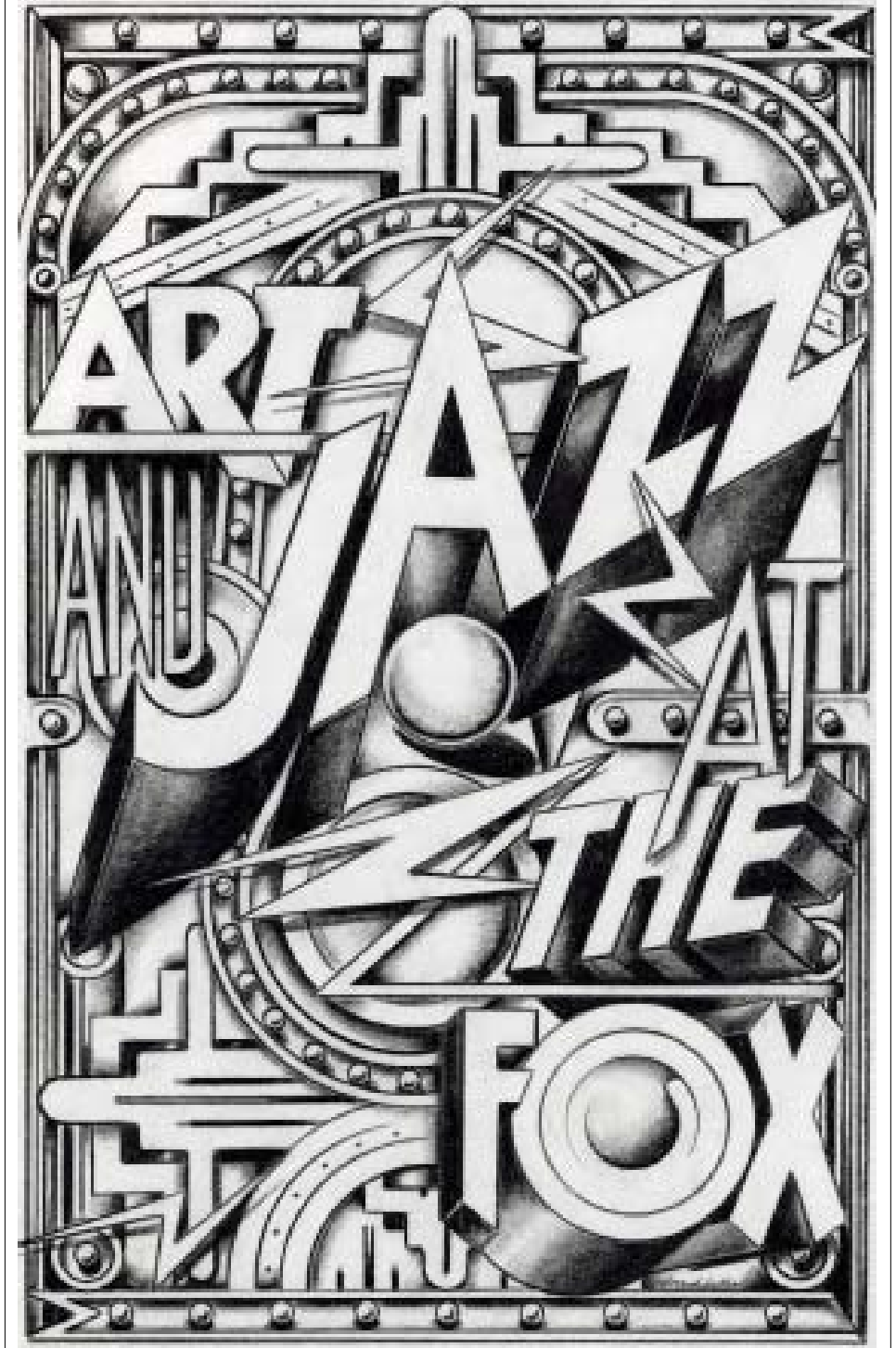
They want to be down in LA, where the action is. I don't blame them. The students want to be down there, too. All the designers, they're down in LA. There's not much up here in this, kind of, bedroom suburb. For me, it's great to have this kind of distance, but when I came here twenty years ago, I did explore the city of Los Angeles. I drove the streets, through all of the different neighbourhoods, discovering bookstores and things like that. I've always been a solitary traveler in the car. I got in my car and drove across the country in 1960 for the first time, and I've driven across the country thirty times at least in my life. I'm from Detroit, where this kind of car culture comes from.

You can't say 'car culture' without thinking of LA!

True, but they make the cars in Detroit. Also, in Los Angeles, you don't hit the road. When you're here, you're here. In Detroit, you hit the road because you want to go to a city like Los Angeles.

Do you have any of that same excitement for the city, now?

I've always been interested in what things look like around me. Something that's always struck me about Los Angeles is that it's all so fresh and new. Detroit is an old



Below:
Material from 1932 schoolbook
Drawing with collage
2009

Below right:
Splash page for 'Pocket Radio'
Collage
2007

Opposite:
Collage with drawing
2008



city. Detroit's decaying. Here, everything is new. Especially this area [Valencia, CA]: all brand new houses, brand new pavement, everything! New in the sense of thirty years. That's pretty new. Young people might complain about it, but old people think, 'Oh, it feels nice to be where everything is new and fresh!' Because old reminds you that you're old! Decay reminds you that you're decaying! But somehow, being in a place where everything is new and newly built feels good. It feels energetic.

Do you feel like you're part of the energy and 'action,' as you say, in LA — like you're part of a community of artists here?

I'm not. Because of my age, and also because I'm not an artist. And I'm not a graphic designer anymore, because I don't work professionally. So I'm not part

of the business community of graphic design, and since I don't really function in the art-world — I don't show at galleries — I'm really not part of the art community, either. This is a kind of isolation that happens to older people. You can say, well, 'It's kind of sad,' but in my case, I don't really feel sad about it. I don't really mind. Actually, I find any kind of social and community stuff a waste of my... well, a waste of my very precious time. Because, I hate to say this, but at seventy-two, and with my health, I realize I don't have a lot of time left. And there's so much that I value, and that I still want to do. I'm so much into my own work and my own — oh, I've got all this stuff saved! Just look at this room full of stuff! So you know, I feel that I don't need to be part of a community, anymore.

I'm an old man and I disdain all the lifestyle stuff. I don't go to restaurants, my wife buys my clothes at TJ Maxx, my shoes have diabetic insoles in them. So, here I am. Untrendy as can be



But by name and reference, you're part of the art and design community, whether you like it or not.

The work I did was important twenty years ago. It's over. It's part of the culture, but its influence and impact and newness was at that point in time, which is what happens. Work comes out, it's there, it's recognized and even influential, but eventually it just becomes part of the general mix. It becomes history. So, you know I'm a famous designer, but I'm not a trendy designer. I like the idea that I'm not an 'art trendy.' You know, I'm an old man and I disdain all the lifestyle stuff. I don't go to restaurants, my wife buys my clothes at TJ Maxx, my shoes have diabetic insoles in them. So, here I am. Untrendy as can be ●



Collage with drawing

EDDO STERN



He's like the mutual friend between medias that don't mix and concepts that typically ignore each other. Eddo Stern (born in Tel Aviv, Israel) forces unlikely subjects and objects into the same room—or onto the same wall, screen, or piece of paper—and leaves them with no choice but to make self-conscious small talk. Or, in some cases, insane hallucinatory conspiracy-theory megalomaniac talk in surround-sound, as in Stern's completely nuts (in a good way) *Waco Resurrection* (2004), a multi-dimensional installation piece that allows participants to literally crawl into the skin, mind and 'reality' of notorious self-proclaimed prophet, David Koresh.

Stern's series of kinetic shadow pup-

pets—made of plastic, paper and electronics—are no less unusual meeting grounds for shadowy characters and colorful notions. Some keywords to consider: World of Warcraft, Chuck Norris, Steven Seagal, and elf lovin'. The machinima digital film *Landlord Vigilante* (2006), on which Stern collaborated with artist Jessica Hutchins follows a chubby, stretchy-pantsed LA cabbie-turned-landlady who's gung-ho for 'individual freedoms and the marketplace.' Which is all to say, while Stern's work can be very dark (politics! Warfare!), very timely, it can also be very funny. Stern's brand of crossover irony translates well in LA of all places, where what's fantasy-land and what's not is kind of a toss-up, and where 'history' is

nebulous, and the visual chatter dizzying. Notably, Stern was a founder of the now-retired C-level, a lab for 'artists, programmers, writers, designers, agit-propers, filmmakers and reverse-engineers,' which called on nerds of all categories—video game, gallery scene, programmer, art and film—to congregate in a basement in LA's increasingly gallery-forward Chinatown. Not your typical underground visual arts scene. Which is really the point of underground, isn't it?

POLICE INTERROGATION

Are you in LA by choice, or by accident?
Arrived by choice, stayed by accident. I moved to LA to attend Cal Arts ten years ago. Afterward, I started an artist-run

Left:
MELF
Plastic, paper, wood, electronics
1.5 x 1.5 x 0.6 m
2009

Below:
Tsunami
Plastic, paper, wood, electronics
2.1 x 1.5 x 0.6 m
2007

Right above:
Narnia Again
Plastic, paper, wood, electronics
2.1 x 1.5 x 0.6 m
2007

Right below:
Lotusman
Plastic, paper, wood, electronics
2.1 x 1.5 x 0.6 m
2007



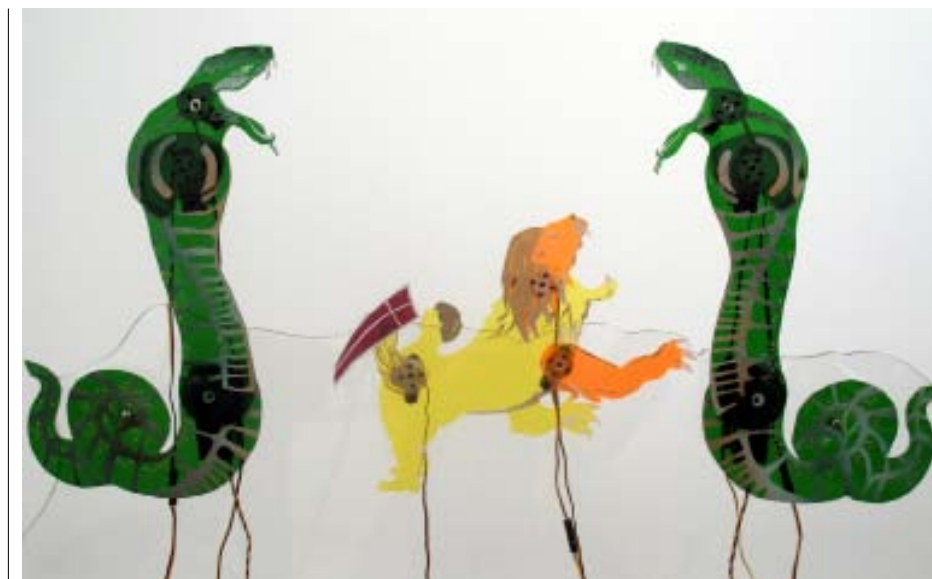
space with a group of friends and that kept me busy in the city for a few years. I then moved to the desert near Mojave, and recently moved to Venice each. Each period and experience of the city is completely new.

Do you love it, or love to hate it?

Probably more of the latter. Public transportation could fix a lot, but for my work, this is a very stimulating place to be. There are very evolved subcultures and industries here—gaming, technology, space exploration, DIY, fashion, design, special effects and Hollywood, Indie film and music, porn, military, surfing, hippies, anime, religious cults, and activists.

Eastside, or Westside?

I live in Venice, but prefer the Eastside for



everything except the beach, the weather, and the commute.

Is LA inspiring to you as an artist?

It is. It still remains unfamiliar.

Do you feel like you're part of a 'community of artists'?

Yes. What I like about LA is its multiplicity of art contexts beyond the art world, and that artists are informed by a wide range of experiences. I also like the fact that one can drop off the planet here for years, and it still works.

AUDITION QUESTIONNAIRE

Favourite way to meet daily caloric intake in LA: mostly Asian food—Chinese (real Sichuan), Korean (BBQ), Vietnamese (Pho), Japanese (Everything).

Favourite view of the city: driving through downtown after midnight on the 110 Freeway.

Favourite complaint about Los Angeles: the public transportation. And that the streets are too wide.

Favourite natural disaster here: traffic.

Best celebrity sighting: Shrek

PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

What comes to mind at mention of:

Surfers: guitar.

Cars: Grand Theft Auto.

Helicopters: Grand Theft Auto.

Avocado: aphids.

Bladerunner: toytown.

Architecture: Bonaventure Hotel.

Schwarzenegger: Venice ●

EDGAR ARCENEUX



LA native, Edgar Arceneaux often saturates his drawings and installations with the same harshly casual paradoxes that this city is so expert at breeding. In LA, a McMansion and a cardboard box can stand next to one other shrugging, 'what of it?' In Arceneaux's drawings, disparate figures and faces come tête-à-tête, very subtly, very quietly — 'what could be more natural?' For example: a gradually 'mating' triptych of Spock, Tupac, and Tuvac. Or the unexpected pairing of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Ralph Waldo Ellison; or the actor James Earl Jones and James Earl Ray [the man accused of assassinating Martin Luther King]. The personalities don't interact with one another. Rather, they look past each other, and sometimes past the viewer, too. The unions can be as sobering as they are familiar. We know these faces, after all. They can also be oddly funny. Clearly, Arceneaux savors wordplay, and inseparability of pop culture history and history history. The more ironic, the better. Arceneaux says that Los Angeles seems to get his artwork. Maybe because this city consciously runs on the kind of contradictions and junk-food histories that Arceneaux's works explore. A graduate of both

Art Center (BFA) and CalArts (MFA), Arceneaux really is a regular presence on museum walls and bookshelves in the city. Since 2007, he's been a vocal activist on Los Angeles' streets as well, spearheading an artist-driven urban revitalization project in South LA's Watts Neighborhood, the site of the famous Gaudi-off-his-meds Watts Towers by self-made architect Simon Rodia. In the course of three years, Arceneaux has organized a team of well-known artists, designers, and architects (working pro-bono) to help make the neighborhood a more livable place for its residents. The result is a noteworthy and unusual collaboration between artists and non. As Arceneaux jokes when I meet him on site in Watts, 'It's hard getting people in LA to trust an artist.'

POLICE INTERROGATION

Do you love LA, or love to hate it?

It's home.

Thriving arts scene, or cemetery for big dreams?

Growing and thriving. There is an optimism about the arts scene in LA.

Is LA inspiring to you as an artist?

Absolutely. It's a complex and diverse city full of contradictions and borders that

**Opposite, clockwise
from top left:**

*Beyond The Great Eclipse:
Impossible Perspective Full
Spectrum One*
Direct to plate aquatint
edition
63.5 x 44.4 cm
2009

*Beyond The Great Eclipse:
Burn Baby Burn*
Direct to plate
photogravure and aquatint
63.5 x 44.4 cm
2009

*Drawings of Removal
(detail) Inverted House*
Graphite, gesso and ink on
paper
6.4 x 8.9 cm
1999 - present

Detroit
Acrylic, graphite on paper
185 x 156.5 cm
2009

draw me to cross them.

Do you have a favourite place to work?

As a matter of circumstance, not choice, in my car.

Do you feel like you're part of a 'community of artists'?

Yes, one that I cherish and am completely dependent on.

AUDITION QUESTIONNAIRE

Favourite way to meet daily caloric intake in LA: not eating.

Favourite place to take it easy: hum, I don't take it easy very much, but when I do, retreating into my own head has become a luxury.

Favourite natural disaster: how macabre. Instead of favorite, I'd say the most awe-inspiring are the meteors. Those craters possess mythic other-worldly qualities, because they are literally other-worldly.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

What comes to mind at mention of:

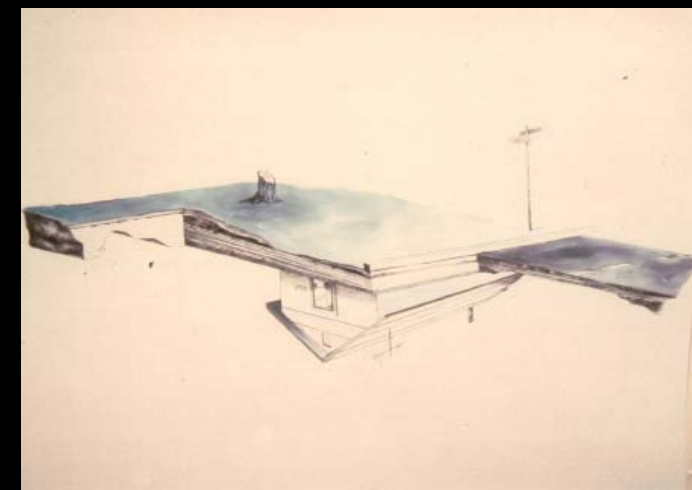
Surfers: Refracted Light.

Cars: crashes.

Helicopters: Projected Light.

Avocado: ice cream.

Schwarzenegger: a gap. We both have a gap in our front teeth ●



MACHINE HISTORIES



Steven Joyner (born in Waycross, Georgia) and Jason Pilarski (Allentown, Pennsylvania) are eye-candy swingers, dabbling with illustration and graphics, architecture, interior and industrial design, and mass production. Their works can live in galleries, as well as living rooms or public foyers. Their concept sketches range from psychedelic and bizarre, to 'my, what Futurist typography!' Therefore, it's not surprising when galleries exhibit just their drawings, and not what grew from them. Machine Histories' 3D objects are informed by CNC, but more than that, by accident, imperfection, and experimentation - their artist's palette includes a colostomy bag, for God's sake. I'd watch a Reality TV show about these guys. Especially if filmed at their studio, a 'former sweatshop' in East LA's industrial outskirts. I catch them there before their scheduled drop off the face of the planet. Big ideas call for no distractions, they tell me. In this city of a million artists, Joyner

and Pilarski practice like they're the last two on earth. It's not feeling alone in LA that takes effort, they tell me.

POLICE INTERROGATION

Are you in LA by choice, or accident?

Jason Pilarski: A victim of circumstance. I was in New York when someone suggested Art Center [College of Design in Pasadena]. I called an instructor there, who said he lived in Hollywood and I thought, 'damn the teachers there live like stars!' Shows how little I knew about LA. Ultimately, Hollywood is something other than a field of dreams.

Do you love it, or love to hate it?

Steven Joyner: I love to hate it and hate to love it. When I first moved here, I ordered a pizza and the delivery guy, easily forty-eight years old, showed up rockin' a pair of Run DMC Cazal glasses, curly shoulder-length Quite Riot hair, a flipped-up Tour de France biker cap, a thick gold rope, shorts, and a stained kitchen apron

Below:
Fossil-data mining for rendering for cnc
Machine urethane
96.5 x 96.5 x 10.2 cm
2009



that gave the impression he could very well be naked up under there. I had no frame of reference for this creature, but I knew I was in the right place.

JP: Love it now, but the transition took years. When I first got off the plane, I stayed in Inglewood. I went out for beer, and by the time I got back, the forty oz was empty from sharing it along the way. I also picked up a prostitute, but not by choice, she just made assumptions. The drive to Pasadena was otherworldly, with concrete monoliths emanating upwards and onwards. It's still difficult for me to see this city as 'beautiful.'

Eastside, or Westside?

SJ: Venice Beach is terrible. Well, then again, where else can one make a career playing a guitar in a turban while rollerblading? There are guys there, who can seriously fuck it up on a pair of roller skates, which is fun to watch, until a bunch of credit-card hippies break out a drum circle. I prefer the Eastside. It's

Right:
Not after labor day
Waterjet cut aluminium
and corian fixture
45.7 x 61 x 40.6 cm
2007

Below:
Puff
Programmed containment
and community
Plywood, styrene, lycra,
pneumatics, micro-processor
2.4 x 1.8 x 1.8 in
2006



dirty and somehow seems more legit.

Is LA inspiring to you as artists?

JP: This city exists as a perpetual present simply because it doesn't have the same hierarchy of taste or the divisions of class you find elsewhere.

Do you have a favourite place to work?

SJ: Our studio, which we built ourselves. I'm very particular about my workspace. It has to be exactly to my liking, otherwise I freak out. I've re-built our office five times. I'm lucky Jason doesn't care. Give him a laptop and a five-gallon bucket to sit on and he's happy as a clam.

AUDITION QUESTIONNAIRE

Favourite way to meet daily caloric intake in LA:

SJ: Cafe Tropical in Silverlake for Cuban sandwiches, funky guava pies and brutal espressos. Din Tai Fung in Arcadia for perfect fried rice, garlic green beans and amazing Tiawanese dumplings.

Favourite place to take it easy:

JP: I have a typically California mid-century modernist home. Although it's not in the Hollywood Hills, sometimes I still feel I'm living the dream. Go middle class. SJ: The loft I built above our studio. I made my bedroom small with a lot of angles, hid fluorescent lighting in the structure, and painted everything white. I crank up the air-conditioning and literally chill there. It's like living in a glacier.

Favourite view of the city:

JP: Driving from the 210 onto the two just after it rains. You feel like somehow today is the day.

SJ: Coming into LA from the carpool lane of the 105, merging into the 110 North. It's a giant roller coaster with a jaw-dropping view: palm trees, downtown encased in a layer of smog, the mountains.

Favourite natural disaster:

JP: I've been evacuated from two different homes because of pending forest fires. It's just something you learn to live with, since the weather's so nice.

Below:
She's got legs
Small table study
Appreciating Casalino and ZZ Top
Corian, walnut, jelutong
66 x 50.8 x 40.6 cm
2010



Favourite complaint about Los Angeles:
SJ: Nothing is real.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

What comes to mind at mention of:

Surfers: JP: I'm technically one. If you watch early Bruce Brown movies, surfing was an intriguing subculture. Those guys were beatniks on the water. But then surfing became stoner-based, which isn't nearly as outsider.

Cars: SJ: I just saw a totally pimped-out Prius: lowered, 18" rims, low profile tires, blacked out windows.

Avocado: JP: We don't get them in our yard, but we do get lemons, tangerines, strawberries, and apricots. Again, the weather here is really nice.

Helicopters: SJ: The police shouldn't be allowed to use them, it disturbs the peace.

Schwarzenegger: SJ: Sausage ●



Dutch-born Rene Daalder (born in Oosterend, Texel) and Folkert Gorter (Oosterend, Friesland) work out of the ultimate East-side studio: a spacious Victorian house (that's about as historical as you get in LA), injected with that trademark LA filling: one part nerves wracked with deadlines & eyes strained with laptops, two parts sunshine, people casually strolling in and out, communal tables, and relaxed music. In very basic terms, Daalder is a film-maker and occasional gallery curator, Gorter is a graphic and interactive designer, and online gallery curator. The two collaborate on projects and exchange ideas frenziedly, but they're not necessarily a team. Both together and independently, Daalder and Gorter peer pressure visual arts and its followers into genre-bending and stepping beyond comfort zones.

Daalder, for example, is largely credited with breaking ground in virtual reality and digital film. His sci-fi film *Habitat* (1997), about the earth without ozone layer, was the first digital HD feature, and is an experimental smorgasbord of visual textures and hyperactive colours. In pre-production right now is *Strawberry Fields*, a computer-animated musical feature and gaming event for which Daalder and Co. secured the rights to the Beatles catalog. Daalder is the high-school friend of Rem Koolhaas (with whom he's writing several screenplays), and a one-time landlord to The Sex Pistols (while working on *The Great Rock & Roll Swindle* in the late '70s). He doesn't knock before entering the worlds of architecture, art, and music — all part of the same structure, in his view.

LA is an urban tabula rasa that allows us to fill in the blanks. What better place to think about the future than in this transient city

A structure Gorter has been instrumental in building. In 2001, Gorter co-created the influential design community, Newstoday, among the most-visited online communities for artists, designers and other 'creative-types' and the first design portal to allow users to co-create new content. Among Daalder and Gorter's joint efforts is SpaceCollective, a highly graphic online think-tank for those 'living the lives of science fiction today,' followed by Cargo, a web publishing and virtual hobnob for designers, artists, et al. In essence, Daalder and Gorter's collective works are a virtual Melrose Place for experimental art and design, an open platform where wild and unlikely roommates cross paths, do frequent double-takes, and engage in various forms of sexy experimentation.

POLICE INTERROGATION

Are you in LA by choice, or by accident?

Rene Daalder: By choice. Unfortunately, Hollywood's power has been waning in the last decades, so if I were immigrating today, I might end up elsewhere.

Do you love it, or love to hate it?

RD: Whatever there is to hate about LA is precisely what I love. Like the fact that people living in this endless suburban sprawl are so prepared for our increasingly virtual existence. As opposed to Europe or the East Coast, LA is an urban tabula rasa that allows us to fill in the blanks. What better place to think about the future than in this transient city, where cultural and geological circumstances don't allow us to take anything for granted?

Below:
Image of Bas Jan Crying
Screenshot of basjander.com
2007

Bottom:
Gravity Art poster
Flyer for Gravity Art
Exhibition curated by Rene Daalder
TELIC Arts Exchange, Los Angeles
2008

Right:
Cargo logo images
Images from cargocollective.com homepage
Illustrations left top and bottom by Mark Weaver
Bottom right illustration by Joel Speasmaker
2009

Right bottom:
SpaceCollective logo exploration
Collaboration work with Remon Tijssen
2006

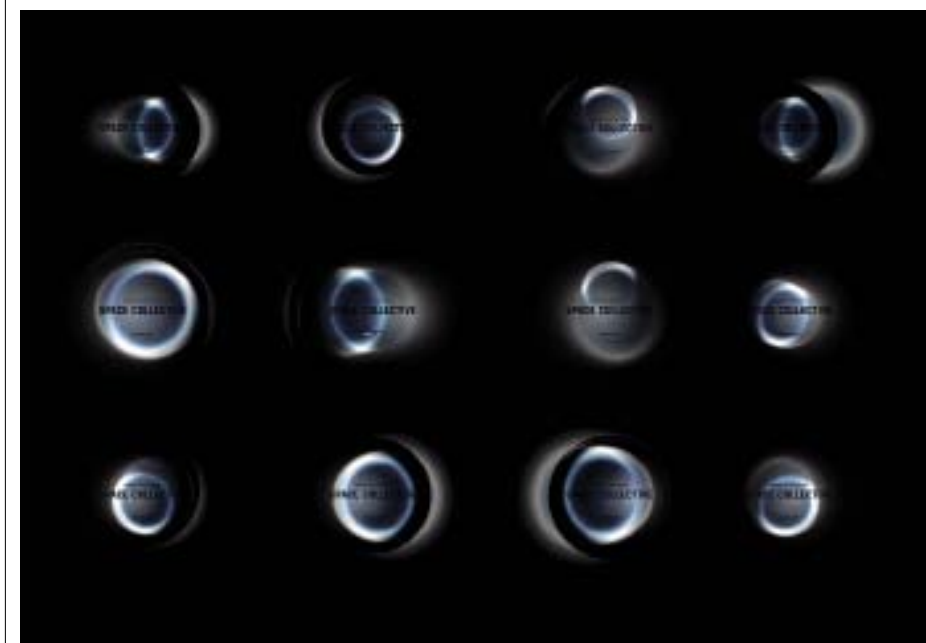
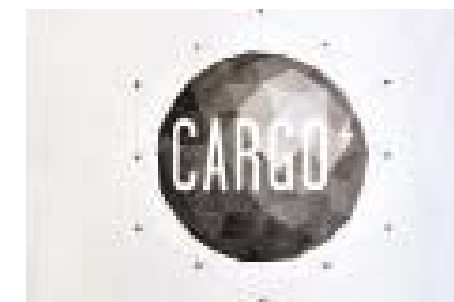
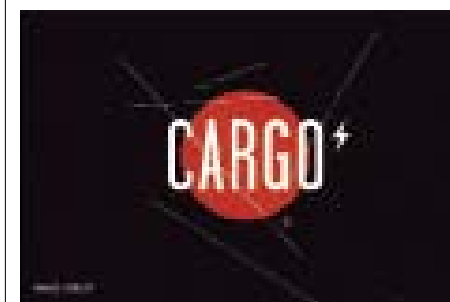


Is LA inspiring to you as artists?

Folkert Gorter: Living in LA means not being subject to the usual templates of city life and instead being offered something of a blank slate and a platform to create new structures and connections, unhindered by the impositions of the city's own agenda and ideas of how to do things, like you find in so many other cities.

Do you feel like you're part of a 'community of artists'?

RD: Not just artists, but architects, designers, computer programmers, animators, musicians, thinkers, scriptwriters, and so on. Creatively, this is a town of survivors constantly motivated to reinvent themselves. LA's uncertainty and freeform life-styles have fostered a creative community unlike any other in the world.



AUDITION QUESTIONNAIRE

Favourite way to meet daily caloric intake in LA:

RD: my friends' restaurant in Silver Lake, Speranza, which is largely frequented by architects.

Favourite place to take it easy:

FG: it's LA — we take it easy all the time.

Favourite view of the city:

FG: high above the Batcave in Bronson Canyon, one ridge west of Griffith Observatory, one east of the Hollywood sign, at sundown.

Favourite complaint about Los Angeles:

RD: Dorothy Parker's observation: 'There is no there there.'

Best celebrity sighting:

RD: the people I knew before they became celebrities.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

What comes to mind at mention of:

Surfers: RD: living out the great metaphor of the Pacific lifestyle. The Zen moment of catching the wave.

FG: someday I will be one, too. Well, maybe not. Probably not, the sharks and all.

Cars: FG: I've seen a good-looking car once, it was a long time ago.

Helicopters: RD: anything in the California sky tends to look good.

Architecture: RD: architectural proposals for future buildings always have blue California skies, no matter the geography and climate of the site. It gives architects over here an advantage.

Schwarzenegger: RD: talk about reinventing oneself! ●