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ON THE COVERS: PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANNY LIAO
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The People Issue is about people, but it isn’t about just anyone. It’s about a certain type of person — those who, through adversity or with ingenuity or as a result of fate, get shit done.

The 50 Angelenos we chose for this issue inhabit different worlds: a high-end gallery and a downtown food bank, major Hollywood sets and a DIY punk venue, NASA’s Jet Propulsion Lab and, at one point, a van that doubled as home. Each of them made the most of the world to which they belonged. Some created a whole new one.

For Glen Curado, the journey started with a traffic ticket (well, quite a few traffic tickets). Forced to do community service, he got an up-close look at the shoddy way in which food banks operate. So he turned the model on its head, revolutionizing the concept while reducing food waste and offering cheap, quality groceries to everyone.

Miry Whitehill’s mission began with a jumperoo, one she tracked down for a family of refugees with a restless infant. Within a few months, Whitehill was running an organization of her own creation that was delivering a lifeline to close to 100 refugee families from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Syria.

Yesenia Mateo’s stroke of inspiration was born of a despair that quickly spread on Nov. 8. After the 16-year-old and her Los Angeles High School classmates protested the president-elect with a campus walkout, the once-shy teenager discovered she had a knack for mobilizing her peers.

Legendary designer Gere Kavanaugh has been evolving her craft for four times as long as Mateo has been alive. At 88, she still works every day. “There are a lot of things I still want to get done,” she says.

When DJ Dahi started making beats, he was a dorm adviser — and worked on a track for an up-and-coming rapper named Kendrick Lamar. Dahi went on to produce seven tracks on Lamar’s Damn., and he describes his work ethic in a way that any of our People Issue subjects might, whether they’re superstars or just starting out: “You can’t let money cloud your creative process,” Dahi says. “If you’re passionate and love what you’re making, everything else takes care of itself.”

The people in this issue love what they’re making. And as a result, they’re making L.A. a better place.

—MARA SHALHOUP

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANNY LIAO
During the roughly five years she spent living in New York City, Rachel Bloom was hit by people on bicycles on two separate occasions. This only came up because, during our interview outside the boat-house cafe in Echo Park, an aggressively drunk cyclist calling himself “Captain Maniac” miscalculated the width of his berth and slammed directly into our table, collapsing in a pile at Bloom’s feet. After we made sure the guy wasn’t hurt, the Golden Globe–winning actress and co-creator of the hit CW series Crazy Ex-Girlfriend politely suggested that perhaps it would be safer (for everyone) if he walked his bike instead of riding it. In response, he slurred something to the effect of “Maybe you should walk your bike” and sped away with a defiant “woot.”

Bloom has said in interviews that growing up in Manhattan Beach she always sort of felt like an outsider, a neurotic New Yorker with a “hamster-wheel” brain born into a land of lolling palm trees and gentle breezes. I like to think Captain Maniac just made her feel a little more at home.

On Crazy Ex-Girlfriend, Bloom plays Rebecca Bunch, a fish out of water who leaves a lucrative job at a high-powered New York City law firm and relocates to West Covina to rekindle a romance with summer-camp crush Josh Chan. It probably goes without saying but Rebecca makes bad decisions, a tendency that’s rooted in — among other things — unresolved abandonment and
inadequacy issues, compliments of a derelict dad. We laugh when she does something like set her apartment on fire while burning an ex’s stuff, but we sort of love and admire her for acting on all of our most questionable impulses.

Originally developed for Showtime, the show’s defining feature is that its characters frequently break out into song-and-dance numbers about things such as urinary tract infections, the heft of one’s breasts and the experience of accidentally falling for a fuck buddy.

“At the end of the day, it’s our take on musicals,” says Bloom, who performed in productions at Mira Costa High School and graduated with a degree in drama from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts in 2009. “Everything has this sardonic lens on it, because the whole show is about deconstructing tropes and stereotypes. “I love musical theater, and even as someone who loves musical theater there are a lot of parts of musical theater that I hate,” she says. She’s heard people refer to the show as a “musical for people who hate musicals.”

Bloom’s first big thing was “Fuck Me Ray Bradbury,” a comedic music video that went viral over the course of a day in 2010, thanks in part to a tweet by nerd king Neil Gaiman. She got an agent, was quickly hired as a writer on Jonah Hill’s animated Fox series Allen Gregory and moved to L.A. where her then-boyfriend (now husband), Dan Gregor, was already living.

Shortly thereafter she was set up on a “blind date” with The Devil Wears Prada screenwriter Aline Brosh McKenna, who wanted to help Bloom pitch a musical TV show. “At first she was going to supervise while I wrote it, maybe co-wrote it with someone, [but] the more we met with each other, we conceived the show,” Bloom recalls. “I have the email where she’s like, ‘Do you just want to just write the show together?’ Now it’s all she and I do.” They’ve also developed a close friendship. “I call her my sister-mother-wife,” Bloom says. “I see her, at this point right now, more than my husband.”

Bloom, McKenna and the show’s team of writers, songwriters and consultants (her husband among them) are currently working on season three. The show’s story arc concludes with the fourth season, so, as of now, the plan is to end the show there.

Returning to L.A. has been good for Bloom. “I think that being in L.A., or back in L.A., kind of settled me down. It kind of balanced out my anxiety a little bit,” she says. She even appreciates the time she gets alone in the car, saying the isolation is “productive to her personality.” In that sense, Bloom — the only child of a stay-at-home mom and a health care lawyer father — had an unconventional upbringing: She was raised in a family of walkers. Her mother doesn’t drive at all and her grandmother, who lives in Torrance, prefers to walk as well. Bloom explains: “Between my mother and grandmother I would just spend a lot of time walking around. Everyone else would be in cars and I really got a sense of, you know, the good and bad of Southern California.”

It’s a perspective that would come to inform how L.A. and its environs — the San Gabriel Valley in particular — are presented on Crazy Ex: SoCal as viewed from the sidewalk by a person who’s slightly suspicious of its charms. Experience withstanding, she probably should watch out for cyclists.

—GWYNEDD STUART

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GNARLY CHARLY
A ctivist-anarchist-cyclist-rocker-gymnast Gnarly Charly seems to have arrived from another dimension, one where the laws of gravity and the rules of society don’t apply. The 28-year-old’s multiple creative callings make for an impressive résumé — leader of “bike punk” band Pedal Strike, de facto jefe of an underground cycling sect, designer of wild traffic-punk streetwear, builder of chopped lowrider bicycles (he rides what he calls a custom “Resistance to the Man, Rolling Chicano Power Kinetic Sculpture Machine”), gymnastics instructor for the city and a paragon of parkour capable of eye-popping feats.

He was born in Highland Park, to parents who were “first-generation Mexican Chicanos, originally from Michoacán,” he says. “I got into skateboarding and it opened everything — skateboarding is a gateway drug! There was no ocean where I grew up; I rode concrete waves. And from there I got into punk, DIY culture, just being extreme at everything at a very young age.”

Skateboarding introduced him to punk and DIY culture, as well as an attitude that carries him through all his endeavors. “As a skater I wasn’t afraid to take a fall,” he says.

Skating also led to gymnastics, which in turn led to the world of parkour. “It’s literal freedom; you can do anything. And parkour is a discipline, not a sport — it’s a way of life. And it all combines when I perform with Pedal Strike.”

Pedal Strike deliver an idiosyncratic, high-velocity sound intensified by Charly’s eye-popping handstands and backflips. “I always say I’m like a cobra and the boys are the snake charmers. I get hypnotized, open up, and I can do anything.”

Charly’s no mere bandstand show-off. “I did a stint on the Cypress Park Neighborhood Council,” he says. “I wanted to hear what the community needed, but what I really learned about was bureaucracy. I had a lot of ideas about land use, open spaces, pop-up playgrounds, community gardens, but — red tape, yo. We did get the first Rio de Los Angeles Music Festival done, that was something.”

The all-day free event, presented by the neighborhood council in Rio de Los Angeles State Park and featuring half a dozen bands plus the Xipe Totec Danzantes Aztecas dance troupe, was no small achievement. But Charly’s community vision goes far deeper.

“When on the council, I learned a lot about the system,” he says. “Of course I wanted to be more radical. I follow anarchy — it was ‘infiltrate and hide in plain sight.’ So I’ve been doing the Bartertown festivals — the first was down in Joshua Tree — and afterward I thought I’d like to do one in an urban setting.”

These no-admission, anything-goes, word-of-mouth eruptions of tribal merrymaking are vintage Charly. He’ll prep the site using found material such as dried river cane, spread the word among his wildly disparate underworld cohorts, and see what happens.

At the last Bartertown, held at abandoned freight switching facility Taylor Yard, “We had about 100 people, fire spinners, a bow-and-arrow workshop,” Charly says. “I invited my circus family, the Trace Deep Parkour crew, the punk community, my Northeast Alliance activist homies. It’s an urban primitive movement.”

Charly still has one foot in the legit system, inspiring youth all over the county as an instructor for the Department of Recreation & Parks’ kids gymnastics pilot program. He does all of his activities, official and off-the-grid, with a singular philosophy.

“Activate the land that’s usually just rotting,” he says. “Open your eyes to a new way of life in Los Angeles; that’s the Pedal Strike agenda. Live in the moment and document it with your soul, not with Instagram.”

—JONNY WHITESIDE
"The guys call me Blue," Melissa Reese says. The blue-haired, classically trained composer is kicking back in holographic sneakers at her home in Larchmont, on break from touring with the guys: Guns N’ Roses. Outside of her work with GNR, Reese composes for TV, film and video games at breakneck speed. Her work has appeared on Fox, The CW, E! and Sony PlayStation franchises like Infamous. To keep up with her deadlines, she takes a mini recording studio with her on tour. “When I get offstage, the first thing I do is go back to the hotel and set up my rig.”

Before a gig, she’ll eat a box of See’s candy, topped with Diet Coke, which helps her get jacked for a three-hour set. In New Jersey, she puked. “I didn’t know what to do! I swallowed it because I didn’t want it all over my rig.” The crew gave her a blue bucket matching her mane, which has become GNR cosplay. In Mexico, black-market vendors outside shows hawked blue wigs. “Little girls waited in hotel lobbies to tell me that they played piano because of me, which warmed my heart.”

It’s been a year since Reese joined GNR as keyboardist and backup vocalist. She had two weeks to prepare for the reunion tour, spending 15 hours a day in the studio mastering 50 songs, and zoning in on rock’s mightiest instrument: “I studied Axl [Rose]’s phrasing like a hawk.”

She’s also the band’s “enhancer,” using an Akai sampler among other tools to trigger “new-school productions” off Chinese Democracy, or play classic parts, such as the Moog synthesizer on “Paradise City.” “I don’t want to get in the way of these songs,” she says. “On the keys, I add sonic layers to thicken our sound, without sticking out like a sore thumb. Anything from synths [to] organic patches and samples.”

No matter what she does, she knows she’ll be criticized for being the “chick in the band,” which is something she’s long dealt with in the male-dominated industry of producing.

“I’m one of the only women doing what I do, so I use the hate to fuel my composing, or just rip onstage.”

Reese grew up in Seattle, where by age 3, she could play Bach by ear. She was hired by GNR in March, but waited until the band’s third show, on April 9, to inform her parents. “I didn’t want to stress them out,” she says.

As a child, she was discovered by Tom Whitlock, who co-wrote “Take My Breath Away.” With his support, she could have been a pop star, but she moved to California and began to study music technology. “I wanted to become more independent in the studio,” she explains. “I didn’t want to be controlled.”

Once in L.A., Reese connected with drummer Bryan “Brain” Mantia over a shared appreciation of old-school Dr. Dre beats. The two rented a Santa Monica studio together in 2010, and from there they became a digital Wrecking Crew, turning out tracks for a variety of projects.

Reese, hopped up on caffeine and candy, would work at a frantic rate. “Brain, who did a lot of the rhythm stuff, would take coffee breaks,” she says. “By the time he got back, I had written 15 hooks over finished beats.”

Their work includes scoring and remixing Taylor Swift’s “Bad Blood” for the music video version. Reese also wrote the end title theme for the recent Walter Hill film The Assignment, starring Michelle Rodriguez, and is now finishing up work, with Mantia, on Joseph Kahn’s new film, Bodied. She’s also going back on tour with GNR in May, a gig that has made her a national star.

“I had no idea what I was getting myself into,” Reese says. “But I’m eternally grateful to Axl and the rest of the band for taking a chance on me.”

—ART TAVANA
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Ever since he received a skateboard as a gift from his cousin as a little kid, Theotis Beasley has had a way to stay busy. But over the course of the past 12 years, the Inglewood native has gone from the kid at the skate shop who asks too many questions to one of the top skateboarders in the world.

“I was just a little skate nerd growing up,” Beasley says. “I used to always collect DVDs every time I’d go to a skate shop, and they were all I wanted to watch when I was young. Every time a new magazine would come out, I’d be in the skate shop getting it.”

After growing up repeatedly watching videos of skateboarding heavyweights like Paul Rodriguez, Chris Cole and Eric Koston, Beasley got his first chance to shine on camera in 2005’s Baker 3 video. From there, Beasley became a mainstay on the Baker Skateboards team while also picking up sponsorships from the biggest names in the sport, such as Nike SB and Mountain Dew.

Just as every kid in the skate park dreams of becoming sponsored, Beasley will never forget his early career. Aside from living out his dreams of skating in videos alongside his heroes, Beasley was ecstatic to get boxes upon boxes of free gear from his sponsors after growing up in a home where every penny mattered.

“When I got that first box, I was so hyped I took it out to the homies on the block,” Beasley says. “I wasn’t thinking about money back then, and I still don’t as long as I can make a living. My mom used to stretch that dollar out every month, and I would just get what I could. Once I started getting the products coming in, I was getting so many boxes, my mom thought I was stealing it.”

Now 26 and entering his sixth year as a pro, Beasley’s come a long way since that first Baker 3 segment. Since then, he’s appeared in 16 more videos, for everyone from TransWorld to Shake Junt, and his unique and graceful street skating has made him a hit on YouTube and all over social media.

Rather than focusing on competitions — although he’s participated in both the X Games and Dew Tour — Beasley is happy tweaking and perfecting his tricks everywhere from the skatepark in his Carson home’s backyard to the farthest international reaches.

“I’ve been to Greece, China, Dubai, Paris, Barcelona, all over the world, on a $50 piece of wood,” Beasley says. “Just seeing all the spots you can skate out there — you can skate on some perfect marble over there, whereas here we just have cement with cracks in it. When I went on my first trip out of the country, I almost didn’t want to come home. But one thing I’m not a fan of is trying new food. The first time I went to China, people were eating squid and everything. I just ate fried rice, french fries and Coca-Cola every meal.” —Josh Chesler
Ted L. Nancy is a customer in need of service.

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sk Gere Kavanaugh about her life spent in design, and the conversation may well cover ikat fabric from India, the finer points of teapot design, the iconic aesthetics of the 1984 L.A. Olympics, or any of the numerous artists and designers she has befriended or collaborated with, from acclaimed architect Frank Gehry to sculptor Ruth Asawa. For more than six decades, Kavanaugh has worked in just about every facet of design, from textiles, ceramics and color theory to furniture, lighting, retail interiors and exhibition design. Some 80 years after she took her first art class at age 8, she shows no signs of slowing down.

Born in Memphis in 1929, Kavanaugh knew early on that she wanted to be a designer, crediting influential midcentury magazine *Arts & Architecture* with opening her eyes to the field's potential. She studied at the Memphis Academy of Arts, where her textile designs caught the eye of Francis Henry Taylor, then director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, who lobbied for her to come to Parsons School of Design in New York. Instead Kavanaugh chose to go to graduate school at Cranbrook, the interdisciplinary art and design school outside of Detroit. She was only the fifth woman to attend the Design Studio there.

Cranbrook’s open course of study—dissolving barriers between the “fine” and “applied” arts—proved invaluable, but what was happening outside the classroom was just as important to Kavanaugh’s education. “It was a very interesting time to be in Detroit,” she recalls, recounting how she would benefit from the critical mass of architectural and design offices in the city. “[Minoru] Yamasaki’s office was in Detroit; so was Victor Gruen’s. Down the back road was Eero Saarinen’s office. After the studios closed, we could go there and sort of hang out and find out what they did during the day.”

After Cranbrook, Kavanaugh designed retail interiors and showrooms for General Motors and Gruen, the father of the shopping mall, who offered her a position in his L.A. office. She moved West in 1960 and immediately became part of a small, close-knit community of designers, architects and artists. “It was a very exciting climate; you knew everybody,” she says. “It was like a colony.”

She struck out on her own in 1964, opening Gere Kavanaugh Designs, and sharing a studio in a Santa Monica bungalow with then-budding architect Frank Gehry. “We kept our drawings in the bathtub,” she jokes. The two soon moved to a larger space on San Vicente, which became a kind of gathering place for their creative community. “Everybody began to hang out at the space. Charles and Ray Eames would come, and Cesar Pelli and Tony Lumsden. It was a real hub. We had camaraderie and it really worked.”

Over the ensuing decades, Kavanaugh would take on a wide range of projects, including retail spaces for department store magnate Joseph Magnin, exhibition design for the Huntington Library, numerous household and industrial objects, and textiles, which she has traveled around the world to produce. In the mid-’60s she created a simple and smart set of urban planning toys, “Mini City,” which was acquired for LACMA’s permanent collection.

Despite her prolificness, she still felt the stigma of being a female designer in a male-dominated field. “I had a designer friend say, ‘I know you can do fabulous designs, Gere, but can you really cook pork chops?’” she recalls. “That was the mentality at the time when I started out.”

As she has done throughout her career, Kavanaugh is still constantly coming up with new ideas and projects inspired by her voracious cultural consumption. (“Oh, that is just to LIVE FOR!” she is fond of exclaiming about designs, artworks or even foods that delight her.) Her latest project is a light based on a 19th-century green glass lampshade fused with a component of a contemporary photographic clamp.

“I’ve had a very interesting time, and it’s not over yet,” she declares. “I work every day. There are a lot of things I still want to get done.” —MATT STROMBERG
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Tom Morello is an optimist. You might think the former Rage Against the Machine guitarist, famous for his left-wing views, would be sitting on this couch in his home studio slump-shouldered in defeat, contemplating four bleak years of what he calls the “Trump-Pence regime.” Instead, he’s leaning forward, animated, punctuating his rhetoric with an infectious laugh.

“I think an important mantra is to aim for the world you really want, and to not just be constantly defensive,” he says. “Let’s be the ones doing the rabbit-punching on a daily basis.”

Morello has thrown more than a few left-hook rabbit punches in his time, and not just through such vitriolic RATM songs as “Bulls on Parade” and “Killing in the Name.” He’s fought for prison reform, raising the minimum wage and farmworkers’ rights. He was a regular presence at Occupy Wall Street protests, and when he uses the term “anarcho-syndicalist politics” in a sentence, you can tell he knows what he’s talking about.

His latest project, the rap-rock supergroup Prophets of Rage, began in this very room, a cozy space in his Hollywood Hills home littered with guitars, drums and amps and dominated by a vintage mixing console. It was here, roughly a year ago, that he and fellow ex-Ragers Brad Wilk and Tim Commerford came together with Cypress Hill’s B-Real and Public Enemy’s Chuck D and DJ Lord as what Morello calls a “clandestine cell,” working out new arrangements of songs by their component bands.

“Each of those bands is mighty in its own right, but there’s no guarantee when you play together it’s gonna be any good at all,” he says. But gradually they found their chemistry and built up a set list. Their first audience member at rehearsals was Shepard Fairey, who designed the band’s logo and show posters.

Prophets of Rage debuted with a surprise gig at the Whisky a Go-Go on May 31, 2016, and would go on to tour the country, culminating in a show in Cleveland during the Republican National Convention. “No sleep ‘til Cleveland!” — a play on The Beastie Boys’ “No Sleep ‘Til Brooklyn” — was a rallying cry at Prophets concerts.

Though the band stopped short of endorsing any one candidate, it’s hard not to see Trump’s victory as a worst-case-scenario defeat for the kind of progressive politics Prophets of Rage espoused. But Morello says he and his bandmates have an ongoing mission.

“This band was not a one-off, hooked to a particular election cycle,” he insists. In March, they completed their debut album with producer Brendan O’Brien, who worked on three of RATM’s four LPs. They played their first show outside the United States in Mexico City and begin a run of dates in South America and Europe this month. “We’re about to make the world rage.”

Morello has other irons in the fire, including an untitled solo project featuring “big Morellian riffs and some of my favorite EDM producers and artists, from Pussy Riot to Wu-Tang Clan.” But for now, Prophets of Rage remain his top priority — the “soundtrack to the resistance,” as he puts it.

“It’s my hope that the [anti-establishment] movement that the Trump-Pence regime is bringing into existence will not just dethrone the regime but will also help to transform the United States of America into a more just and decent place,” Morello says. “This is the beginning of the counteroffensive.” — ANDY HERMANN
Eva Longoria’s sonorous laugh bounces off the walls and echoes up the spiral staircase of her Hollywood Hills home. She’s all of 5 feet 2 inches tall as she pads around the kitchen barefoot, cooking a feast for friends amid the jungle of floral arrangements she’s amassed for her birthday. She’s laughing because there are so many bouquets that it looks like it’s her funeral.

In the adjacent living room, framed photos of friends and family members cover every surface. The frames are packed in so tightly that you have to lift them from the table to get a clear look. Longoria, who already has everything she needs, asks only for those photos when Christmas comes along.

Longoria, who launched her career playing Gabrielle Solis for eight seasons on Desperate Housewives, has become a credentialed advocate for Latinx voices in media and government in Southern California. The actress-producer-director-activist moved to Los Angeles 20 years ago, leaving her family in Texas, and because her beloved aunt always told her “to grow where you’re planted,” she immersed herself completely in the culture of L.A., in both the industry and politics.

While some fans may have been surprised that Longoria pursued her master’s in Chicano studies at Cal State Northridge while filming Desperate Housewives, she says, “If you knew me, you wouldn’t be surprised at all!” — she was the last in her immediately family to earn a graduate degree.

“I come from a family of volunteers. I knew the word ‘volunteerism’ very early, and that was in my DNA,” she says. “When I arrived in California, I knew that was going to be a part of who I was here.”

In Longoria’s living room, I peruse an entire table of photos of the actor with Barack and Michelle Obama, Nancy Pelosi, Joe Biden, Al Gore and other political figures, and she tells me how she read Rodolfo F. Acuña’s book Occupied America: A History of Chicanos and really “felt” the wealth of information and “diversity within diversity” right here in Los Angeles. (“Chicano” doesn’t even exist in Texas. It’s such a California Mexican thing!”) She then met with Acuña, who convinced her to take some online classes.

“I took three classes, and [the university] told me, ‘You know, you have to enroll now,’” she laughs. “I was nervous about committing to a two- or three-year plan, but I just pulled the trigger. Before, I was politically active in presidential campaigns and with farmworkers for a very long time, but I still had this curiosity to learn more deeply.

Since then, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Longoria has used this expanded knowledge and awareness to help transform the landscape of television; without Devious Maids, the Lifetime show she executive produced for Desperate creator Marc Cherry, there would likely be no Jane the Virgin, for instance — she proved it was possible to have a diverse cast and crew with great ratings, opening the door for others.

“There definitely isn’t a pipeline of talent like there is for other ethnicities,” she says of trying to find a Latina TV comedy director. “I’m not going to say it was impos-
A DESPERATE HOUSEWIFE NO MORE

EVA LONGORIA
An evening at the Coconut Club — a tiki-inspired pop-up event that takes place at various venues around Los Angeles — will most likely begin with Nathan Hazard. The bearded and bespectacled barman greets guests from behind a table decked with glassware. With an intimate crowd gathered around, Hazard fills each glass with blue punch — a witches’ brew of butterfly pea blossom tea, gin and simple syrup. When he adds falernum, bitters and lime juice, the glowing azure morphs to an electric violet. And so the show begins.

As co-founder and cocktail impresario of the Coconut Club, Hazard takes his liquor pretty seriously. His apartment brims with bottles of booze — he has a penchant for gin, rum and amaro especially — and when he's not experimenting with them at home, he's likely out hunting for obscure labels in odd corners of the Southland, including Jons Marketplaces and Chinese markets in the San Gabriel Valley. And his “collector brain” isn’t just fixated on liquor. Tiki mugs, antique wine openers and punch bowls are among other bric-a-brac in his Highland Park place.

Hazard says that collecting runs in the family, as does artistic flair. A native of Tucson, Arizona, Hazard’s own creative eye was influenced by his mother, who was a curator at a gallery, a skilled quilter and a natural at any artistic endeavor she set her mind to. After Hazard left home for college in Oregon, his parents put their talents to use in an unexpectedly quirky way. They started planning annual summer tiki parties by their pool. The stories were enough to draw Hazard back for the shindig, where he fell into the role of bartender.

“My first year [at the party], it was cliché stuff: a blue Hawaiian, a mojito, the Trader Vic’s mai tai,” he said. “But each year I got a little deeper, a little more into the history. I started reading books on tiki and made drinks like the Polynesian Paralysis and a chi chi. Then I moved to L.A. and realized I was sitting on a wealth of information, since this is where tiki really started.”

Though postcollege music video projects with friends are what initially brought Hazard to L.A. — he ended up working in A&R for many years as his day job — he also kept up other side endeavors, including a food blog and The Table Set, a podcast about creative and thematic entertaining. In 2014, Andy Windak (also of The Table Set) and Darren Herczeg joined forces with Hazard to debut the Coconut Club.

The success of the pop-up has opened other doors for Hazard, including a consulting role at Pedro Mandinga Rum Bar in Panama City’s Casco Viejo district. Closer to home, his biggest endeavor yet is on the horizon. In May, he launches Drink Special, a private event company, which he'll run with friend and Coconut Club colleague Malina Bickford. The project, which debuts at ETA in Highland Park, will have few boundaries, he says. Bompas & Parr, a British design agency known for multisensory culinary experiences such as a walk-in alcoholic cloud bar, is one source of inspiration.

Hazard has first-hand experience with such events, having creatively managed a number of private parties over the years. One was actor T.J. Miller’s wedding afterparty in Denver. For this, he and Windak worked together on a surrealist theme complete with drinks in Magritte-inspired green apples; a wall of tiny doors with edible surprises behind them, à la the rabbit hole in Alice in Wonderland; and pistols that shot out a rose-flavored whiskey cocktail.

He chuckles as he paints a picture of a dance floor full of people firing liquor into one another’s mouths. “That’s the kind of over-the-top creative stuff Malina and I want to do,” Hazard said. “We want to be who you go to for not-your-average event. And the cocktail is my canvas.” —CHELSEE LOWE
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There’s been a lot written about the “marijuana moms” of Beverly Hills and the Nancy Botwins of the weed scene. As the website Fusion put it last year, cannabis culture has become “a white girl thing.” Bonita “Bo” Money, however, is working hard to keep at least some of the proceeds from the nation’s green rush flowing to minorities.

She recently founded Women Above Ground, a group dedicated to educating and supporting fellow women of color who want in on the industry. And this year she plans to bring her own cannabinoid cream, That Glass Jar, to market. Its active ingredient, CBD (for cannabidiol)—which doesn’t produce a high—has shown promise as a treatment for epileptic seizures, inflammation and psychosis. Money swears it helped a girlfriend recover from the antibiotic-resistant infection known as MRSA (Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus). “She was dying and I was looking for something that would save her life,” she says.

Though Money is her father’s actual surname, she was born in Seoul and originally took the name of her Korean mother’s family, Pak. Money was a globetrotting Army brat, but her family finally settled in Monterey. She came to Los Angeles to study psychology at USC in the 1980s but lasted only a year and a half. She moved to New York to study theater arts and then returned to the West Coast to work in Hollywood.

Her introduction to entertainment included working on videos and an unreleased film for Dr. Dre in the ’90s. Money has credits for casting, acting and production in film and television spanning 15 years. Her work in Hollywood means that when she organizes Women Above Ground events, people such as TV host Montel Williams, former Overstock.com president Stormy Simon and retired NFL player Marvin Williams show up to participate.

Now, she says, “I’m working on a reality TV series about women in weed.” While her famous friends have been supportive, Money says the cannabis industry is much less so. She finds the weed business even less diverse than Hollywood, which hasn’t exactly been praised for its inclusiveness in recent years. That’s what inspired her to launch Women Above Ground in February.

“I knew there needed to be an organization for women of color,” she says.

She recalls that she recently was invited to participate in a “diversity summit” on marijuana that was otherwise an “all-white panel.”

“This is the kind of stuff the cannabis industry is dealing with these days,” she says. Diversity is important to Money because the legalization of recreational marijuana in California and the evolution of medical pot regulations, including state and local licensing that’s expected to launch Jan. 1, can provide some serious business opportunities for people of color. With African-Americans and Latinos bearing the brunt of marijuana-related arrests in the Golden State in recent years, it’s about time for economic justice.

“It’s very important that this be an inclusive industry,” Money says. “If you’re white, you can be part of our organization.”

—DENNIS ROMERO
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W VAPES

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Miguel García, who’s among the most accomplished civil-rights litigators from L.A.’s Chicano Power era, sold his law practice on Whittier Boulevard in East L.A. a year ago and packed up 46 years’ worth of legal mementos. He kept the cards he had printed in 1971, recruiting Chicano law students to a first-of-its-kind association at Loyola Law School.

He says of his philosophy about the field of law: “There’s a flexibility to the law, a part that is left for interpretation. ... You have to be able to form your own opinion of what the law is, to read the opinions, to insert your own value system.”

One of the mementos is a black-and-white photo from 1978, is a study in contrast. Three white men in austere suits stand facing the camera, with García at the end. He is wearing a button-down shirt open at the collar, his thick mane of dark hair is combed back, and he’s cupping a cocktail in one hand and grinning through a dark beard.

Four decades later, at age 74, García is a well-mannered, white-haired gentleman with reading spectacles. Somewhere in the intervening years, he has traded in the corduroy suits and leather boots for a cream-colored guayabera and two-toned suede moccasins. Like his style of dress, García’s political passion has become more moderate. But he continues carrying out his life’s work to break down barriers for Angelenos of Mexican descent.

In law school, García was one of two students with a Spanish surname in his class at Loyola. There were only 27 Mexican-American lawyers in all of L.A. County the year he graduated, he says.

As a law student, García volunteered at a police malpractice center at First and Soto. He detected a pattern among clients showing outward signs of having suffered police brutality: They themselves were being charged with brutality, against the officers. García discussed it with other like-minded young Chicano lawyers: How do we get ahold of the personnel records of the officers?

In García’s first full year of practice, he took on the case of César Echeverría, who was severely beaten by an L.A. sheriff’s deputy; the attacking deputy claimed self-defense and charged Echeverría for excessive force.

García’s strategy was to get the names of other people beaten up by the same sheriff — “people that didn’t even know César Echeverría; otherwise César Echeverría would be all alone.” Other colleagues had tried and failed to access a deputy’s personnel file. García tweaked the wording on an earlier motion that was rejected, and the judge authorized a subpoena. But instead of handing over the records, Sheriff Peter J. Pitchess appealed the decision. The California Supreme Court heard the case in 1973, and in a landmark ruling decided in favor of García.

“One [the] Pitchess [case] was law, defense attorneys all over California were filing motions,” he says. “LAPD paid overtime to shred 25 years’ worth of personnel records. They weighed over 2 tons. Over one million pages they destroyed in three days.”

Word of García’s professional success reached César Chávez, leader of the United Farm Workers, who at the time was trying to establish a union in Bakersfield. Sheriff’s deputies were frustrating the union effort, targeting pro-union workers for arrest and beatings. García says the case he eventually took arose from more than 100 alleged instances of police brutality and unlawful prosecution by the sheriffs and district attorneys of Kern County.

The pace and intensity of police excessive-force cases eventually took their toll. “So many people needed help,” García says. “I was getting off balance.” He went on hiatus for the latter half of the 1970s. When he came back to work, he returned to police use-of-force cases for a period in the 1990s.

These days the focus of García’s legal activity has shifted to the legislative branch. He is president of the Whittier Voters Coalition, a group formed to increase Latino representation at the city level.

Under the old way of doing things in Whittier, the minority of white voters in town had an outsized influence on determining the outcome of every council race. All voters chose everyone on the city council, and even though Latinos account for about 65 percent of voters, Latino candidates lost every year, García says.

Using the threat of a lawsuit under the California Voting Rights Act, García’s group successfully pressured Whittier officials in 2014 to change the city charter to district elections, in which geometrically divided groups of voters each elect their own representative.

JUSTICE FOR AVRAHAM

Striking Back Against Judicial Tyranny

Natan Avraham was accused by sitting judge Matthew St. George in Los Angeles Family Court of being a threat to society. This just because Mr. Avraham dared to publicly protest against rulings during divorce hearings, which have cost Mr. Avraham his property, savings, credit and family reputation.

This slanderous and unsubstantiated public statement was issued by Commissioner St. George on Sept 3rd, 2015, and was recorded in official court transcripts:

“But I want him to know this. I am considering having sheriff patrols around my house because people like him are a threat to society. We’ve seen it on the news every day. Everybody says, oh, they are just a little crazy. Yeah, and the next thing you know they get a gun and shoot a lot of people or kill my family.” Family Court Commissioner Matthew St. George, September 3rd, 2015

In public protest, Mr. Avraham undertook a hunger strike at the Santa Monica Courthouse for 26 days, but still has no justice. The unpaid damages from this unfair hearing are outstanding and ignored by the courts and government.

Avraham's fight is everyone's fight for basic rights and fairness in California's courtrooms. On September 3rd, 2015, Commissioner Matthew St. George trampled Mr. Avraham's rights. Tomorrow it could be your rights crushed under the gavel.

For more information about this abuse of justice visit:


Or www.Facebook.com/JusticeforAvraham
It’s hard to say whether Andrea Crawford’s career traces the culinary evolution of L.A., or if she actually created it.

She moved here from Berkeley in 1985 to build a garden for Wolfgang Puck, thinking it would be only a six-month project. For a few years she’d been maintaining, along with a few Berkeleyites, Chez Panisse’s lettuce and herb garden, which had started with the restaurant’s legendary owner, Alice Waters, taking some salad greens from Crawford’s home garden.

“Alice came into the yard and said she wanted to borrow some salad because the Random House editor was coming over for lunch, and I just said, ‘Help yourself, we have way too much.’ She said, ‘Well, if you have way too much, you can always bring it to the restaurant and we’ll buy it.’ I thought, ‘Well, I could have too much every day.’”

To hear Crawford tell it, the gardens were an experiment in unofficial urban homesteading that went terrifically right. She was growing a mix of greens, including frisée, chervil, arugula and nasturtiums, plus most kinds of lettuce — enough to supply a restaurant — all in yards around town.

But Crawford kept hearing interesting things about Los Angeles. In 1984, she had a cookbook author friend — the one who kept telling her that in L.A., money grows on trees — ghostwrite a letter to Wolfgang Puck.

“I said to him, ‘I’ve got this salad garden for Chez Panisse and it’s going really well and I don’t really want to start selling to other customers in the Bay Area because I feel like it’s something I did for [Waters]. Are you interested in something like this for Spago?’” Puck called her soon after, asking when she was coming down.

“Then when I got here, I realized that I could do it much easier all year round, because the weather was so much better,” she says, “so I ended up staying. I was only going to stay for six months, but I’m still here.”

The little lettuce garden launched a quiet empire called Kenter Canyon Farms. You’ve seen their boxes and bags of mixed lettuces in many grocery stores. But in the early 1990s, it was a new idea partly kicked off by Crawford and her partner, Robert Dedlow.

Despite her mainstream success, she’s still a fixture at L.A.’s farmers markets, where she’s debuted her new passion project: Roan Mills, selling flour, grains, breads and pastas.

“I started to make my own bread because I couldn’t find any good bread to eat in Los Angeles,” she says, “so I learned to bake and I learned to make tortillas.”

The wheat was added to Kenter Canyon’s fields as a rotation crop, but the heritage grains Crawford chose introduced her to a community of “grainiacs.” This group of farmers and foodmakers works with heritage grains, most often the wheats grown here before California was a state, back when farmers published booklets describing their various wheats in the manner of wine.

Crawford and Dedlow figured that there wasn’t a big market for wheat, so they decided to sell baked bread, too. It will be a challenge to infiltrate a market that’s saturated with cheaper, processed, long-lasting loaves of bread. But Crawford has faith in L.A.’s young people especially. “Millennials are ... more do-it-yourself–oriented anyway, and they’re curious and they’re willing to try new things.” —KATHERINE SPIERS
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The Los Angeles River is largely a brutalist slab of concrete, but there’s a stretch near Atwater Village that feels almost alive. Framed by the stark gray channel, trees sprout from the water, Canadian geese skronk and swim in the stream and, in the background, the hum of the freeway almost sounds like ocean waves crashing, punctuated by the howls of passing trains. Here, in this uncanny marriage of urban expanse and constrained wildness, artist Rafa Esparza watches the rushing rapids, still swollen from recent rains. “This is a special place,” he says, as the sun begins to set behind the mountains and power lines.

At the confluence of the Arroyo Seco and Los Angeles rivers, just a few miles away, our city first put down its roots, as indigenous communities settled on the banks. And it’s here on the river’s edge that Esparza laid the groundwork for his latest body of work.

The born-and-raised Angeleno has been known for his often politically charged, queer performance art, which often pushes his body to extremes. He’s inserted hooks into his chest as an homage to Aztec sun dancers; half-buried himself with a noose around his neck at Elysian Park’s gay cruising spots; and on a street corner across from downtown’s prison, submerged his body in wet concrete and had to chisel himself out after it dried.
response to officer-involved shootings in 2015, Esparza’s performance *Red Summer* involved him walking nearby the Police Academy firing range with a sequined target on his back. Over the course of 12 hours, whenever a shot resounded in Elysian Valley, he fell to the ground.

But lately his visual art has become more organic while maintaining its subtly confrontational approach. Earlier this year, Esparza made a huge impact at New York City’s esteemed Whitney Biennial with his installation *Figure Ground: Beyond the White Field*, a large adobe structure made from Elysian Park dirt, featuring photographs of queer people of color. Within the white walls of the gallery space, Esparza created his own museum for marginalized communities.

“When I was thinking of working with adobe, I was thinking of working with a material that was inherently brown that could be used to build a space and reflect the color of bodies not usually represented in traditional art spaces. It’s a material that can speak to local geographies of the West and Mexico, and also layered with personal history of labor.”

*New York Magazine* art critic Jerry Saltz noted the political nature of Esparza’s Whitney work, noting that photos humanized the subjects, showing “portraits of exactly the sort of so-called ‘Mexican rapists’ and brown youth that Trump supporters rail against.”

Esparza’s work with adobe has been exhibited locally at the Hammer Museum’s “Made in L.A.” exhibition, as well as Hollywood’s LACE gallery, where he created a building inside a building using 5,000 bricks. But it all started here by the river.

In 2015, arts organization Clockshop collaborated with artist Michael Parker to dig a 137-foot, sidelong obelisk into the neglected asphalt expanse, like an impotent Washington Monument. The giant shape became a site for performances and art installations, redefining the space from its environmentally strained yard — which had been purchased by California State Parks yet lay dormant — into a stage for creativity. Esparza had been invited to perform there, and his first visit sparked the idea of working with earth. “I remember seeing a lot of the sediment built up under the gravel,” he says. “I saw seashells and earth, and it took me back to imagining what the river looked like before the cement banking.”

To return the space to its more elemental form, Esparza covered the obelisk with adobe bricks he made with his father, who had once built an adobe home in Durango, Mexico. “It was important to have my father lead this production. Knowing how he sourced the material from his surroundings, we used water from the L.A. River, returning it to being a natural resource.”

Yet for Esparza, the bricks weren’t just building materials; they’re political symbols, too. “L.A. has a history of adobe brick-making; our missions were made from them, with slave labor. Brown labor and brown bodies have often been invisibilized, or not seen as valuable.” Through his projects, Esparza makes “invisible” populations and neglected places visible once again.

—DREW TEWKSBURY
If you were anywhere between Los Angeles and Lesotho in 2012, you inevitably heard Kendrick Lamar’s “Money Trees.” Amid the many indelible songs on the Grammy-nominated Good Kid, m.A.A.d City, Lamar’s anthem to home invasions and impossible decisions stood out for its ferocious rapping and woozy psychedelic melodicism. Blending a Beach House indie-rock sample with the ectoplasmic vocals of singer Anna Wise, the track captured the imagination like a burning palm tree crashing onto white sand.

What you might not have known is that its producer, DJ Dahi, was then still working as a resident adviser in the Marymount California University dorms in San Pedro — busting kids for smoking weed, often while they were listening to his beat.

“That was when I knew I had to quit that job,” Dahi, now 34, laughs a half-decade later. “But until then it had been great because it allowed me so much time to make beats.”

The Inglewood native is now one of the best producers in music. His résumé includes collaborations with both mainstream rap hitmakers (Drake, Big Sean, Dr. Dre) and pop stars seeking a more muscular sound (Madonna, Banks, Kelela). He’s not the guy you turn to for the radio smash but, rather, the quietly brilliant deep cuts that slice into your marrow.

“I never cared to be the biggest producer or the No. 1 guy; that’s when people try to steal your sound and run with it,” Dahi says, whose garb is as understated as his philosophy: classic black-and-white-striped Adidas and a Vince Staples Summertime ’06 hoodie (another album on which his production played a vital part).

“You have to challenge yourself and work with artists that help you grow, rather than just trying make music that’s momentarily hot,” he continues. He describes his latest work with Kendrick, heard on several tracks on last month’s Damn, as “trying to take stuff to the future — where, when people hear it, the first thing they’ll say is, ‘What the fuck?’”

The best hip-hop producers usually mirror the experimental impulses of boundary-pushing chefs. They mix esoteric instrumentals and incongruous textures that ostensibly shouldn’t go together — yet the alchemy yields a strange brew, initially odd but eventually addictive.

Born Dacoury Natche to a father from the Ivory Coast and a mother from North Carolina, Dahi grew up playing drums and went on to play the tenor sax in school bands at Morningside High. His religiously devout mother banned music with curse words, which meant that most of his adolescent exposure came from his dad’s classic soul records and Buzz Bin-era MTV. During the era when 2Pac rapped “Inglewood, always up to no good,” Dahi wasn’t even allowed to hear it. He was busy listening to The Verve, Third Eye Blind and Goo Goo Dolls.

Hip-hop didn’t take over until he matriculated to UC Santa Cruz. Drawn to Quentin Tarantino and Christopher Nolan’s work, he studied film, DJed and began making beats for fun. There were no illusions of hip-hop stardom. After a stint in San Francisco, he returned home a decade ago, working odd jobs in education by day, passing off beats to the rising crop of L.A. rappers at night. His first underground hit, Dom Kennedy’s “My Type of Party,” led him to Drake and Kendrick Lamar. His talent, intelligence and assiduous work ethic handled the rest.

“You can’t let money cloud your creative process,” Dahi says. “I never try to make hits. I just try to make music that sounds dope to me. If you’re passionate and love what you’re making, everything else takes care of itself.” —JEFF WEISS
The Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum wishes all the moms a Happy Mother’s Day and invites you to treat mom to a Coliseum Historic Tour! Present this ad and get $5.00 off your guided or self-guided tour.

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Karen Civil is jaywalking across busy Slauson Avenue in the scorching afternoon sun, trailed by her entourage and dressed in a gunmetal-gray sequined gown. As the crew cuts through traffic, the driver of an eastbound car pokes her head out of the window — and not because she’s pissed. “Girl,” she yells across the street, “you’re beautiful!”

Civil flashes her trademark grin. It’s doubtful that the woman is among Civil’s 1.8 million followers on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram — which means it’s doubtful she knows who Civil really is. But no matter. Just like that, Civil has another fan.

The 30-year-old social media maven might look like an Instagram princess, but her ascent was no fairy tale. “I get this thing where people are like, ‘Man, you got to tell me what to do’ — like I have a cheat code to being successful.” The actual path is devoid of glamour. “It’s hard work, it’s trial and error,” she says. “I failed, but I never let failure get to my head or to my heart.”

Civil has helped some of the biggest names and brands in hip-hop get even bigger. She got her own big break back in 2010, when she helped Lil Wayne launch a website, WeezyThanxYou.com, to keep up with fan letters while he was jailed for a year at Rikers Island on a gun charge. “I was doing great,” she says. “I bought my first car.” But it dawned on her that she might be a little too comfortable. She had the car and a three-bedroom apartment in the town where she grew up, Elizabeth, New Jersey. She had the Weezy site and a digital marketing gig. She knew exactly what her next steps were. That was the problem.

So she ditched all that and moved to L.A. in 2010, where, based on her social media prowess, she landed a job at Beats by Dre. “The first year was the hardest for me. I really didn’t have no friends, I didn’t know who was for me, who wasn’t,” she says. “I felt like Los Angeles was breaking me.”

Her next break came in the form of a pair of gold headphones. It was a long shot, but she tweeted at then–New England Patriot Chad Ochocinco, asking if the wide receiver — who had gold fronts on his teeth — would be interested in 24-carat headphones from Beats by Dre.

She didn’t know him at all and didn’t think he’d respond. He did. Somehow, she convinced him to buy Beats by Dre headphones for the entire team to celebrate its 2011 Super Bowl appearance. She orchestrated a similar move at the 2012 NBA All-Star Game, getting Lil Wayne to wear diamond-encrusted Beats headphones courtside.

“All these moments, you’re getting millions of dollars in media,” she explains. “That’s the way my mind works: creating a moment where everybody wins.”

In time, Civil went off to start her own digital marketing firm, keeping Beats as a client. Last year, she landed an even bigger project. Based on her huge social media following and success reaching millennials, Civil was tapped by Hillary Clinton’s campaign to help with outreach to young voters. Essentially, she was tasked with making Clinton hip.

“I wasn’t too much into politics, but she and her team made me realize what’s going on in America, things we need to be thinking about: closing the wage gap, minimum wage, equal rights for everyone, climate change. “She was for us. And I thought life was going to change on Nov. 8.”

Election Day also was Civil’s 30th birthday. “I had the cake ready, with sparklers, Lady Gaga was there. I was thinking, This is what the new America’s going to be. Look at the change we had in eight years — we’re going to have another change.”

The change was not the one she expected. But the brief time she had with Clinton was a new level of inspiring. “I can go back and tell my family this story: We dusted off our shoulders together, we high-fived, we fist-bumped. It was an incredible experience.”

Or, in social media parlance, it was fire.

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There are about 15 people milling around the Smell on a warm early March night — half shaggy teens, half noise-scene longhairs — waiting for a two-piece of drums and sax to take the stage. Then there’s Jim Smith, standing outside in his buttoned-up Oxford shirt, black hair trimmed close, leaning against the battered outside wall.

“A lot of people who have lived or worked downtown for decades didn’t know we existed, until all the publicity around our demolition. I think...” A musician interrupts to ask if she can start playing. Smith runs inside to set her up.

“I think,” he continues after a moment, “that kind of exposure can actually help. What we’re doing is a good thing. The more people see that, the more help we’re going to get.”

Smith, 48, the Smell’s soft-spoken owner, serves as steward of the nearly 20-year-old venue, which has become L.A. DIY culture’s symbolic locus. The Smell has played a part in launching everyone from Ty Segall to clipping., and earned its stripes as one of America’s vital underground venues.

In the year since the city pasted a demolition notice on the venue’s front door — the work of its new landlord, a parking lot company — Smith’s mission has expanded. It now includes not only running the venue but saving it, by organizing fundraising shows, allying the Smell with other underground venues and getting the word out about the space’s good work. As DIY spaces around the city continue to close, his fight has come to symbolize a bigger struggle for the future of off-grid music spaces here.

Unlike the underground venues recently shuttered by the city, the Smell is fully permitted, and maintains its DIY cred with a stage accessible to up-and-coming bands, a no-frills downtown space and its longtime alcohol-free policy. The policy means that, unlike the vast majority of music venues in L.A., every one of the Smell’s shows is all-ages.

There wasn’t any place like the Smell for young Jim Smith. At least there wasn’t until Jabberjaw, the legendary under-the-boards rock club, opened in 1989, when Smith was 20. The venue sparked his interest in community-driven music venues.

Years later, Smith opened the Smell in North Hollywood with a couple of friends. They moved downtown two years later; he later became the sole owner.

“DIY wasn’t even a term,” Smith says. “It was more like, ‘We’re going to be all-ages, we’re going to be volunteer-run, we’re going to be focused on the music and the art, and it’s going to be a community.’”

He’s famous for giving out keys to the Smell so bands can practice or record. In turn, the sound of the venue became the sound of a movement. In 2006, when Smell regulars No Age and Health broke out, their records sounded like a show at the Smell, all splintering noise and reckless independence.

Smith now works for the local Teamsters union and admits that, between his two vocations, he doesn’t get much sleep. He says the secret to the Smell’s longevity has been letting it define itself. Most of its shows now are booked by volunteers. “It’s not just me,” he says. “There is no shortage of people signing up to volunteer to do whatever needs to be done. I couldn’t do it if it was just me.”

On this night, the venue is a swirl of sax and drums, complicated by the sound of blaring cumbia seeping in from the bar next door. It’s the type of night that makes you proud to live in this city, to participate in a moment so free.

Smith is proud to think of this creative incubator as his legacy. “It’s hard not to think that way of something you have done for 20 years of your life,” he says. “I get satisfaction out of seeing young artists develop, and I get satisfaction out of their careers.”

—CHRIS KISSEL
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The stage inside the Masonic Lodge at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery is narrow, barely wide enough to contain the bundle of energy that is Kera Armendariz. Nattily attired in a white shirt and black suit, an undone polka-dot bow tie slung casually around her neck, she shimmies and shakes as a five-piece version of her band, Kera & the Lesbians — occasionally augmented by backup singers and a harpist — cranks through a set of the music she describes as “bipolar folk,” an insouciant mix of gypsy, swing, surf and rockabilly sounds. “It is so cramped up here that I can’t be free!” she exclaims between songs, pulling off the bow tie, as though that might give her more room to move.

For a few years now, Kera & the Lesbians — made up of Armendariz and a rotating cast of supporting musicians — have built a reputation as one of the best live acts in Los Angeles, thanks mainly to the irrepressible energy of their frontwoman. “Performing is probably the only place where I feel comfortable,” she says.

She attributes much of her sound to long drives with her father, listening to oldies radio; she mentions Santo & Johnny’s lilting steel-guitar instrumental “Sleep Walk” as a major influence, as well as Elvis Presley’s Sun Sessions. “I’m a sucker for that slap delay,” she says of the King’s early vocals.

Her fondest childhood memories are of Hawaii; she was less enamored of her family’s next stop, San Diego’s North County, but the tedium of suburbia inspired her to devote more time to music. After logging time in several other bands, she began playing her own shows, first as Kera Dominique (her middle name), then as Kera & the Lesbians.

At first, given that her bandmates were mostly men, the name Kera & the Lesbians was something of an inside joke: “I had to find a way to not get upset by another straight male telling me that [he was] a lesbian,” she says. But now she enjoys the way it plays with people’s expectations — as well as the fact that it’s a declaration of her own identity as a queer woman, an identity it took her many years to embrace.

“I grew up being misgendered a lot, so for a long time I wasn’t sure where I fit in the scale of sexuality,” she explains. “I knew I loved women, but I wasn’t necessarily sure if I was supposed to be born a male and slowly transitioning, or what. And it’s taken me years to just finally embrace the fact that I’m a woman of color, and also just a woman. My pronouns are ‘she’ and ‘her.’ But it’s taken me a long time to get to that.”

After releasing a self-titled Kera & the Lesbians album in early 2016, Armendariz now is focused on putting out singles, preferring to treat each song as a discrete project. She’s found the new process invigorating, especially since the hustle of being a full-time musician was starting to burn her out. She continues to perform regularly around town, feeling a greater sense of responsibility to stay connected to her fans and community since the last presidential election.

“Just me being a performer is a political statement in a way. I’m a queer artist. I’m a gay person of color,” she says. “I love bringing people together — creating a space for everyone to exist and be comfortable in. As long as they’re with me, they’re safe.” — ANDY HERMANN
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When Anthony Anderson was 9 years old, he saw his mother rehearsing for a production of *A Raisin in the Sun* at a community college in Compton. “I’ll never forget,” says the actor, now 46. “I was in the back of the theater with my two brothers. I just happened to look up onstage and say, ‘That’s what I want to do with the rest of my life.’” When I suggest that it must’ve been an inspiring performance to have left such an indelible mark, he makes a correction: “She was horrible. She’s a horrible actor.”

In case he hadn’t sufficiently articulated his mother’s lack of ability, he continues, “Seriously. It’s no lie. There’s a reason you’ve never seen my mother in a stage production or on a television show or in a movie. There’s a reason for that.”

Actually, there’s a decent chance you have seen Anderson’s mother, Doris, on TV. She recently appeared in an episode of Anderson’s hit ABC sitcom *Black-ish* and she serves as co-host and scorekeeper on the *To Tell the Truth* reboot Anderson hosts on the same network. She may suck at acting, but she’s hilarious. When asked what her favorite part is about her recent brush with fame, she frequently says that it’s her paycheck, which Anderson jokes serves to support her “bingo habit.”

He can joke all he wants, but the story is much sweeter than that, which he reveals when I ask what it’s been like to work with his mom, who was a telephone operator at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center for nearly 40 years. “It’s been great. Entertainment is something my mother always wanted to do. She had to put that dream on hold, raising me as a single mother at one point. For me to be able to allow my mother to finally live out her dreams is truly a blessing.”

Raised in Compton in the 1980s “at the height of crack cocaine, gang violence and all that” and a graduate of the Hollywood High arts magnet, Anderson has enjoyed a career that’s consistently allowed him to develop both as an actor and as a TV persona. Besides a slew of movies, the sitcom — which he also executive produces and helped create — and the game show, he hosted the Food Network travel show *Eating America With Anthony Anderson,* and currently hosts *Animal Nation With Anthony Anderson,* Animal Planet’s take on a late-night talk show.

If the average American filmgoer wasn’t familiar with Anderson at the outset of 2000, chances are that by the end of that year, they could at least pick him out of a lineup. He had supporting roles in *Romeo Must Die, Me, Myself & Irene, Final Destination 2* and *Big Momma’s House* (which, say what you will, was the 17th highest-grossing film of the year, outperforming *Remember the Titans, The Patriot* and *Miss Congeniality*).

But while it was all happening, Anderson never recognized that he was breaking out. “I never thought about, ‘Oh, this is my jump-off moment,’ you know?” he says. “No, it just so happened that one opportunity got the next one. I was like, ‘OK. Hopefully this keeps going.’”

A more recent boon came when a manager arranged a meeting between him and television producer Kenya Barris, who’d co-created *America’s Next Top Model* with Tyra Banks. “In talking to one another, we quickly threw business out the window and realized that we had more in common than we didn’t,” Anderson recalls. Barris is from Inglewood and Anderson’s from Compton. They’re both married, “first-generation successful” black men raising kids in predominantly white L.A. neighborhoods and sending them to elite private schools. “We’re from the ’hood and still connected to the ’hood and want our children to have that connection, not only to the ’hood but to their identity,” Anderson says. “[We both want them to know] who they are and where they come from in this homogenized world that we live in.”

*Black-ish* was born of that conversation, and certain storylines have been borrowed directly from Anderson’s life, for instance the time his then-13-year-old son came home from school and told him he wanted to have a bar mitzvah (that made it into the show’s pilot episode). Anderson has two children. His 21-year-old daughter is studying sociology and African-American studies at the University of San Diego and wants to “write policy and change the world.” “That’s why I work so hard,” Anderson says, alluding to the high cost of her tuition.

His 17-year-old son, however, wants to be an actor. In 30 years, when someone asks the younger Anderson how he got into acting, it’s safe to say he’ll have a more flattering anecdote to share.

—GWYNEDD STUART
Jackie Kajzer looks like a medieval empress. There’s a Victorian pendant of a black spider dangling from her neck, a red ruby on her pinkie and dark leather straps around her wrists. Anthrax sang, “We’re soldiers of metal and we rule the night.” As Full Metal Jackie, Kajzer now rules the airwaves of the night. Her nationally syndicated radio show plays purely heavy metal across 70 stations.

She picked up her pseudonym in the mid-’00s, while hosting a show called Chaos on Indie 103.1. Her fellow DJ, ex-Sex Pistols guitarist Steve Jones, once remarked: “Oh look, there goes full metal Jackie,” and the name stuck.

Kajzer arrived in L.A. in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks. Her roots can be traced back to New Jersey, where in the mid-’90s she was indoctrinated into metal at Seton Hall University’s 89.5 WSOU-FM, “the only rock or metal station in the area,” she says. She graduated in 1998 and got a job at alternative station WHTG-FM, where former MTV VJ Matt Pinfield was once program director. “There weren’t any females doing what I wanted to do,” she says. “Matt was the encyclopedia of music. So I wanted to emulate him.” Before MTV, Pinfield would DJ at local haunt the Melody Bar. Kajzer, following in his footsteps, did the same. “I was the only girl DJ there. So I took it very seriously.”

In her quest to become a metal goddess, Kajzer scored a gig at the Firm, an L.A. management company, where she was the only woman in the trainee program. She then pitched Indie 103’s program director on a concept. “It was crazy, because they were an indie station, but I just saw a hole in the market, and nobody else was doing a metal show, and nobody had the balls to give it a chance.”

Kajzer got the gig and remained on Indie 103 for five years, before the station was sold in 2009. Her interviews with the likes of Black Sabbath, Metallica, Pantera’s Phil Anselmo and Megadeth gained the attention of stations across the country; they began to air a syndicated version of her show, on which she played such bands as Iron Maiden, Death Angel, Mastodon, Lamb of God and Testament.

One interview at Indie 103, with Gene Simmons, never made the air. “He lived up to his whole persona as a woman hater,” Kajzer says. “He called me a ‘baby maker’ on the air. He was such a dick, so I never aired it.”

A year and a half ago, she was picked up by 95.5 KLOS-FM, where she launched a new show called Whiplash. “KLOS is the closest thing we have to a rock station in this market,” she says. Since then, she’s become nationally synonymous with metal and hard rock. She’s hosted the “black carpet” of the Golden Gods Awards for every year except one, while juggling a career as nationally syndicated DJ and manager of metal band Five Finger Death Punch.

If MTV was still MTV, and heavy metal got the respect it deserved, Kajzer probably would be hosting an even more metal version of Headbangers Ball. Instead, her mission is a pure, simple one: “It’s more important now than ever to get people to go out to shows.” —ART TAVANA
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Phil Pirrone is a family guy. He is the father of Desert Daze music festival, the father of the Moon Block parties, the father of independent bookers Space Agency and the father of the 1-year-old daughter often seen attached to his hip. It’s all rewarding, but it’s also draining. Every time you encounter Pirrone, he sounds both exhausted and beaming with life.

Recently, he’s returned from Desert Daze Caravan, a monthlong tour featuring Temples, Night Beats, Froth, Deap Vally (which includes Pirrone’s wife, Julie Edwards, on drums) and his band JUUJJUU. “Oh man, it was so good,” Pirrone says. “Considering there were five fucking bands, it could’ve been a disaster. I’ll never forget it.”

Pirrone grew up in Chino Hills, the son of an insurance salesman father and a librarian mother. “My mom was the quintessential soccer mom. She’d drive all the kids to practice and throw pizza parties.” Pirrone grew up angling toward college via a soccer scholarship. “But then music got in the way,” he jokes. His friends were in a ska band. He crowd-surfed at his first gig. “They dropped me on the ground, and as my ass hit that concrete I just knew: This is what I’m gonna do.”

From the age of 15, Pirrone toured for eight years. A car accident put him in a coma after breaking his back and ribs and puncturing his lungs. He quit his band, started a label and put on outdoor gigs.

Moving back to Pomona in 2011, he lived in a loft near the Glass House. Discovering it cost $40 to get a street permit, he threw a block party — 55 bands, free entry, 100 percent DIY. “It was the best thing I ever did,” he says. Out of that first event, Pirrone founded Moon Block, the party organization for which he continues to serve as creative director. Moon Block would soon lead to Desert Daze, at a time when the current L.A. psych scene was beginning to take shape.

Palm Desert venue Dillon’s Roadhouse invited Pirrone to throw a party. They sold it out. When Coachella announced that it would do two consecutive weekends in 2012, Dillon’s invited Pirrone back to throw parties both weekends. Pirrone thought it a better idea to do an 11-day festival across both Coachellas. That mad undertaking, featuring 122 bands, put Desert Daze on the map.

“It was like psychedelic boot camp,” he laughs. “I can’t believe we lived through it.”

Desert Daze spent its next three years at Sunset Ranch Oasis in Mecca, then found its true home last year at the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Institute of Mentalphysics in Joshua Tree, where it seeks to remain. “I love music festivals,” Pirrone says. “But I hate them in parking lots and baseball fields. That shit’s dumb.”

The staunchly independent festival, which last year featured headliners Television, Primus and The Brian Jonestown Massacre, has built a home for fans of counterculture and become the glue for the extended family that is Pirrone’s team. The site manager is married to his oldest friend; the artist manager used to sneak into his window during high school.

“We are the family restaurant of music festivals,” he says. “It’s like we’re in this platoon overcoming adversity.” —EVE BARLOW
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At a recent cocktail reception on Cinefamily’s back patio — coincidentally for the second-season premiere of HBO’s animated Animals — Marnie the Dog is holding court. Granted, that doesn’t involve much more than lounging in her owner’s arms with her head cocked, her tongue lolling out of the left side of her mouth and her big, cartoonish eyes glinting in the party lights. Full-grown adults practically scream when they see her. Incredulous, they comment on how she seems like she’s not even a real thing. With her fluffy sandy-tan fur, angelic demeanor and limbs that protrude in ways that seem to defy logic, she’s like a sentient stuffed animal — one that happens to have 2.1 million Instagram followers.

Some New Yorkers retire to Boca Raton, Florida, in search of warmer climes and perpetual sunshine. Brooklynite Marnie the Dog retired to Los Angeles. Adopted from a shelter in Connecticut at age 11 by first-time dog owner Shirley Braha, Marnie, now 15, is a golden girl with a millennial’s social media reach. Her massively popular Instagram posts — which feature funny captions written by Braha in Marnie’s “voice” — have made her a late-in-life celebrity and an ambassador for senior dog adoption.

Since the duo relocated to L.A. around eight months ago, Braha and Marnie have become fixtures at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, not far from their Hollywood home, where Marnie visits weekly to cheer up sick kids. “It just seems like a really good use of our time,” Braha says modestly. “These are kids who really need it; you’re really changing their day.”

She also released a book — Marnie the Dog: I Am a Book — that benefited the ASPCA.

A former producer/creator of indie-rock shows on both New York public television and MTV’s online portal Hive, Braha had been searching for dogs for two weeks when she discovered a shih tzu named “Stinky” on Petfinder. “There were a couple, but then I saw Marnie and I was like, ‘Holy shit, I have to get that dog,’” Braha recalls. After repeated calls to the shelter to express her interest, she took the day off work and took the train to Connecticut. At that point, no matter what, she was taking the dog, but Stinky didn’t look so good. “I didn’t really care if she was cute or not,” Braha says, but quickly corrects herself. “Well, you hope your dog’s cute, but more than that it was like: A.) I hope she’s nice; and B.) Let’s hope she lives, because she really looks kind of sick.”

And she was. Besides a case of worms, a vet was concerned that her head tilt was the result of brain cancer. “That was like maybe three days after I adopted her, but it’s like $2,000 to get a brain scan so I was like, ‘OK, I guess I’ll just try to make these last three months of her life happy,’” Braha says. “Then three months passed, four months passed, and I was like, ‘Hey, I think we’re going to be OK, Marn.’” As it turns out, that now-signature head tilt is a remnant of vestibular syndrome, a sort of extreme case of vertigo.

Marnie didn’t become Instagram-famous overnight. Braha started the @marniethedog account shortly after the adoption and posted a few times to little reaction. “But then, like a year after I got her, someone tagged a picture of her, and then I had like 300 followers. I was like, ‘OK, I’ll post more pictures. People seem to like this, so I’ll put a little more effort in.’”

She continues, “I didn’t want to like be like delusional, like ‘I’m going to make my dog famous,’ because what are the chances of that happening? But it took off pretty fast. If it didn’t take off quickly, I don’t think I would’ve kept posting pictures of her.”

At the moment, Braha has devoted herself to being Marnie’s full-time companion. And, as Instagram frequently indicates, whether they’re hiking, eating sushi with friends or hanging out with celebrities, they’re both enjoying the L.A. lifestyle.

“Having her has been super magical,” Braha says. “To see the world through another creature’s eyes is so cool.” —GWYNEDD STUART
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Maybe it was the fact that the baby was the same age as one of her own sons. Maybe it was the familiar look of exhaustion on the mother’s face. Whatever it was, Miry Whitehill felt an immediate connection to this family she’d never met, even though she couldn’t speak to them in their native language, Arabic.

It was September 2016, and a friend had mentioned to Whitehill that a family of Syrian refugees — mother, father, 5-year-old twin girls and a 5-month-old boy — needed some help. Whitehill, a full-time mom to two sons, figured the baby could use that most useful of mom tools: a jumperoo. She posted a note on Facebook asking if anyone had one they didn’t need.

Within a few hours, a friend offered one. Whitehill, who lives in Eagle Rock, picked it up and drove it to the apartment building where the family lived. She walked in, introduced herself, picked up the baby and put him in the jumper’s seat. He started playing and bouncing. She glanced at the mom.

“She was equal parts completely overjoyed and relieved.”

Whitehill could have left it at that. Instead, she started walking through the apartment. The family had lived there a month and it was almost empty, without even a crib for the baby. Whitehill started making a list.


She posted that on Facebook, too. Neighbors and friends donated everything.

“In about two weeks their house was full of all of the things that a family of five would need,” Whitehill says.

She started calling around to refugee resettlement groups. She put together a list...
for another family the following month, then a third. Soon she had lists going for two families at a time. Then four.

At 9 p.m. the night before Thanksgiving, she posted on Facebook that she’d be visiting four families on Thanksgiving Day, in case anyone had anything they’d like to unload. “The next morning, I opened the front door and there were piles of donations all the way to the gate.”

In seven months, Whitehill has helped nearly 100 families — most of them refugees from Syria, the rest from Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan — create a new semblance of home.

“I didn’t make an executive decision to start an organization,” she says. “I just all of a sudden was running an organization.”

Today, that organization, Miry’s List, has a team of 30 people working to keep the machine running. Most families come to Miry’s List as a lead from a caseworker or a motel manager, or a text in Arabic from a number Whitehill doesn’t recognize.

The list-making begins promptly. A team member who speaks the family’s language calls to get the vital stats: names, ages, genders, clothing and shoe sizes. They visit the home to get a better sense of what the family needs. All of that info is passed to a volunteer personal shopper, who crafts an Amazon wish list of 100 or so items, from socks to dish drainers to boxes of crayons.

Whitehill herself reviews each list, then posts it to MirysList.org/lists with a photo of the family and their bio. Within days, the family opens their door and there’s a pile of boxes from Amazon.

“Each package represents a family who picked those items out for them,” she says, “and decided to send a gift to a stranger.”

Whitehill now hopes to open a Miry’s List center in Glendale where refugee families can get child care and take English classes. And there are plans for an app that would automate much of what Whitehill and her team do, so that Miry’s Lists can be rolled out in every city in America that’s home to refugees.

The lists provide the type of comfort that goes beyond a fluffy towel or a set of pajamas. They show these families, who’ve had so much ripped from them, that they can start to put their lives back together, piece by piece.

Whitehill got a Facebook message recently from a father from Iran whose family already had a list. He wanted to share with her a photo of an item he’d received in the mail — a box of tea — and the note that came with it.

“Dear Babak,” read the note from a stranger. “My fondest memories of trips to Iran are sitting in the Persian teahouses. I’m so happy you’re here. Welcome to America.”

—MARA SHALHOUP
If snapping fiercely were an Olympic sport, comedian Louis Virtel would be the reigning gold medalist.

Virtel first snapped his way into the public consciousness as a contestant on Jeopardy!. After correctly answering a Daily Double, he threw out a snap so retro-cool that within a short time it had garnered more than 3 million views on YouTube. Even the GOP appropriated a GIF of it (to Virtel’s horror) to promote its Snapchat feature, “Snap of the Union.”

To many in the gay community, Virtel’s Jeopardy! performance was nothing short of an exclamation point. But to Virtel it was a lost opportunity to actually say the words “I’m gay” on television.

“I’m obsessed with game shows,” Virtel says. “I grew up with them. But I never saw gay people on TV. And in retrospect I just wanted people to acknowledge that about me — to let them know that gayness exists. So I had no choice but to throw a seismic gay tantrum.”

Growing up in a large Midwestern family in Lemont, Illinois, Virtel didn’t even know such a thing as gayness existed. He figured it out on his own only after a chance encounter with a gay neighbor who was, as far as teenage Virtel knew, the only other gay person in Illinois.

A journalism degree from the University of Iowa and an internship with The Advocate soon followed. In Iowa City, one of the most gay-friendly cities in the nation, Virtel found both his crowd and his calling.

After graduating, he moved to L.A. to write about pop culture for Movieline. He did stand-up comedy on the side for fun but never seriously considered it as a career. Others, however, took notice, particularly after he debuted his YouTube series Verbal Vogueing, in which he snapped away while exploring “the most important issues of the day, like pop culture and pop culture.”

The series landed him a gig writing first for MTV’s gay blog, After Elton, and then for his own series called — what else? — The Snap for entertainment news website HitFix.

But it wasn’t until 2014, when he began writing for Funny or Die’s gay game show Billy on the Street, that he realized he was better at being funny than he was at “insightful journalism.”

The truth, however, is that Virtel is one of those rare comedians who manages to do both at the same time, for instance when in December he tweeted, “Mick Jagger is having kids in his 70s but please call Madonna desperate for dancing in a car.”

Today Virtel spends his days honing his pointed social observations for TV Land’s Throwing Shade, which he describes as “a gay, feminist Daily Show.” During his downtime, he plays pub trivia while wearing a T-shirt from his impressive collection, all featuring images of classic actresses: Faye Dunaway, Jane Fonda as Cat Ballou, Cate Blanchett as Carol.

No one would ever mistake Virtel for straight. And he’s good with that. “I want to be the Madonna of stand-up comedy,” he says. “To let people know that gayness exists and it’s OK.” —JACKIE FOX
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From the stage of the Clubhouse in East Hollywood, comedian Olivia Haidar delivers a stinging joke to the crowd: “I am a homeless, Middle Eastern, transgender woman, so if anyone is thinking about murdering anyone tonight — come and see me after the show.” She adds, “I’m your best bet in the hate-crime triple crown.”

The joke is typical of her style: dark and sardonic; self-deprecatory with a hint of nostalgia. Coolly weaving the microphone cord through her painted fingertips, Haidar measuredly walks the audience through the trans experience, from dating and social issues to her adventures in her current residence: a red Toyota Sienna minivan.

The 29-year-old Indiana native grew up in a low-income household, living in a trailer behind her grandmother’s farm. To escape the stress of an abusive stepfather, the self-proclaimed “history and religion type of nerd” tore her way through horror movies and books. With her life in a constant state of flux, movement was the norm for Haidar.

“I would go on a lot of family trips, spent a lot of time with my relatives and stuff — traveling was a big part of my youth. Traveling has always been a bit of a bug.”

After high school, Haidar kept it up. Wanting to move to L.A., she listlessly bounced back and forth between Chicago and Indiana while her dysphoria grew in time with her depression. It was then that 25-year-old Haidar happened upon a study about people with gender dysphoria who didn’t pursue transition — and the life-threatening danger that amplified at every stage of their life.

“[The study] wasn’t framing it in the traditional trans narrative, the stereotype of a boy wearing pink and playing with Barbies,” Haidar says. “I grew up in the country, I played in the woods. The study spoke to me, my situation, and I went for it.”

Concurrently, another narrative developed: Haidar’s journey as a stand-up. In March 2014, she finally moved to L.A. and, after a short-lived job at the ArcLight Cinemas in Sherman Oaks, decided her best financial move was to cut her lodging costs. Haidar put a mattress in the back of her mom’s red Sienna and began writing during the day and hitting open mics at night.

Three years later, the van can be seen parked in open spaces around Silver Lake. It’s been robbed from, stolen from and broken into. The dichotomy between Haidar’s homelessness by day and comedy renown by night isn’t lost on her, but she is resolved to focus on the day-to-day: finding places to shave, staying connected by phone and keeping out of harm’s way. In the long term, Haidar is working toward having gender reassignment surgery, recording a podcast (when she gets electricity) and continuously pushing herself to be a better stand-up.

“If there’s one thing that’s driven me to improve, it’s the conversations I’ve had with other queer or marginalized people after a good set,” Haidar says. “People come up to me and say, ‘I never hear about the gross side of being queer. Or the messed-up shit.’ It’s validating, that these issues have affected their life in another way. That’s really why I’m here.” —REBECCA LEIB
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Like so many Americans, Kevin de León experienced in waves the dawning realization that Donald Trump was going to be the next president of the United States. First confusion, then shock, then dread, fear and vulnerability. Shortly before midnight on Nov. 8, the bleary-eyed president of the California Senate began writing his first press release of the Trump era: “Today, we woke up feeling like strangers in a foreign land.”

To a certain extent, de León has always felt like a stranger in a foreign land. He grew up in a poor neighborhood, Logan Heights, near Chicano Park in San Diego. He never really knew his father, a cook of Chinese decent, and was raised by his mother, Carmen Osorio, a housekeeper from Guatemala. She moved the family, including de León and his two older half-sisters, back and forth between San Diego and Tijuana. One of his half-sisters died last year, after years of struggling with meth addiction and homelessness.

De León was the first and only person in his family to graduate from high school and attend college. He started out at the University of California Santa Barbara, but it was a challenge. He had moxie but no organizational skills, no practice at taking notes or studying for a test. He didn’t last long.

He couldn’t go back home and tell his mother of his failure. Instead, he went to work for One Stop Immigration Center, a nonprofit in Los Angeles that helps undocumented immigrants fill out paperwork and teaches them English, history and organizing.

“That’s where I cut my teeth politically,” de León says. “I didn’t know how to do a press release, so I’d call the local Assembly member and say, ‘Hey, can you fax me one of your press releases?’ ‘Which one?’ ‘Any one.’

‘On the seat of my pants, I learned certain things. Just hustling.’

Eventually, de León went back to school, graduating from Pitzer College with a degree in political studies. He had no ambition to run for office until the California State Legislature passed a law banning undocumented immigrants from obtaining driver’s licenses. Worst of all, the bill had been sponsored by a Democrat.

“That was the very first time I thought, well, maybe one of us needs to think about running,” he says. “Because here we are organizing in the trenches. And clearly, our power was limited.”

De León campaigned against the anti–illegal immigrant Proposition 187 and later served as campaign manager to his friend Fabian Nuñez. De León was elected to the State Assembly in 2006, besting Cesar Chavez’s granddaughter, Christine Chavez, in the primary with the help of Nuñez. Three years later, de León made a play to become speaker of the Assembly but was outmaneuvered by another L.A. assemblyman, John Pérez. De León fought his way back, winning a state Senate seat in 2010.

When his Democratic colleagues elected him president pro tempore of the Senate in 2014, it was something of a coup: De León was the first Southern Californian to lead the Senate in decades, and the first Latino to do so since 1883.

De León now finds himself thrust—or has thrust himself—into the national spotlight as one of the leaders of the Trump resistance. Should Trump follow through on his promise to withhold federal funds from so-called sanctuary cities or states, de León says: “If they attempt to do that, we’ll meet them in court. And we can beat them in a court of law. This is not just a tactical issue. It’s about our values.”

Or, as de León’s Election Night press release promised: “California was not a part of this nation when its history began, but we are clearly now the keeper of its future.” —HILLEL ARON
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It’s a warm morning in March and Jenn Duong is sitting on the stoop of a soundstage pondering the future of virtual reality. “I love interactive virtual reality. I play that all the time, but I think the unique thing is you’re putting someone into a headset right now. I don’t know if it will be this way forever,” she says. “In my dreams, VR and augmented reality [AR] will converge in glasses that are like ours, and we’ll take them on and off.”

Duong, who recently turned 21, is a freelance VR director who got her start at Mack Sennett Studios and 1215creative; she’s also the co-founder of SH/FT (Shaping Holistic Inclusion in Future Technology) and the group Women in VR. And she did all this without being able to legally drink or rent a car.

Duong is one of those young mavens who is both highly adaptive and willing to take chances, which makes her well suited for the high-stakes slings and arrows of tech. She eschewed a more predictable path (college, a business degree, all that jazz) for a career in the California gold rush of VR and AR tech. Born and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in a Vietnamese-Chinese household, Duong moved to Redondo Beach when she was a teenager. It was there that she caught the bug for theater and film. She sold sweatshirts to raise funds to buy her first camera. She also taught herself Photoshop to design cover art for Asian DVDs she’d rip off the internet so her family could watch them, which in turn led to learning editing and motion graphics.

Although her mother wanted her to attend business school, the young autodidact applied and was accepted into NYU’s film school, but she was concerned about how much debt she was going to incur. That all became moot when she “fucked up and forgot to send in a piece of paper to the financial aid office.” She continues, “My biological father is out of my life, so I couldn’t provide his financials, but I blanked on doing it for NYU.” She wasn’t wild about any of her options, so she enrolled in community college.

Then she caught the VR bug. At first, she says, she didn’t really get it. “But after I got an internship at Speculative Theory, I’m like, ‘Holy shit, this is it.’” she recalls. “So we had a colleague that ran a VR company and I was like, ‘I’m a fast learner. Hire me. I’ll be one of the best hires you ever have.’ And then for some reason they did, and that’s kind of how I got my VR career kickstarted.”

She dropped out of school and went to work. “It was one of those things where, when I told my parents, they thought I was insane. I was like, I have a really unique opportunity here, and it was kind of the first time that I realized that it’s so important that you live your life for yourself and not anyone else,” she says.

While at Speculative Theory, Duong and Julie Young co-founded Women in VR, which connects women in the industry and vets all its prospective members. But it’s not just for women; a fifth of the membership is men. “We very much feel like it’s important to have a male perspective in these different types of conversations,” Duong explains. “But what’s really interesting is a lot of our conversations aren’t even necessarily around gender; it’s more like actual technical questions, like, ‘How do we do this?’” She also co-founded SH/FT, an organization dedicated to underrepresented voices in VR, which has, for example, established VR scholarships for women and minorities.

Duong’s debut as a VR director came in April with “Three Points to the Recollection of My Future,” which is a VR music video experience and collaboration with the singer Banks. The project — an intense undertaking — turns various songs by the singer into a poetic, dance-driven interactive experience, which is an interesting experiment with the music video format.

Duong reminds that this isn’t VR’s first rodeo. “This is the sixth wave of VR. But this is the one that seems to be staying the most. I think everyone’s figuring out what works and what doesn’t for them and especially, like, why is this story being told in a 360 setting instead of in a flat setting?” The future, it appears, is constantly evolving and as uncertain as ever. —JONNY COLEMAN
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On the crowded patio of the Coffee Bean in Los Feliz, Buck Angel reaches his huge, tattooed bicep across the table and shows me an iPhone video of him stroking his clitoris using a silicon attachment about the size of a large button mushroom. I’ve agreed to watch it after admitting that I don’t know how the Buck-Off — the sex toy he designed and the first ever invented for trans men to masturbate with — actually works. Angel, who has a shaved head and a ginger-colored mustache tinged with gray, squeals with excitement at the opportunity to demonstrate.

“If we don’t educate, how are people going to learn?” says the 54-year-old nicknamed “tranpa” by young trans and queer kids who come to him for advice.

It’s the kind of teachable moment that delights the porn star turned filmmaker, activist and weed entrepreneur. (His new business, Pride Cannabis, which sells THC vape cartridges, is marketed to the trans community, which Angel says “has been totally given narcotic prescriptions up the ass”; he sees marijuana as a more natural alternative). His eagerness to talk about sexuality and the human body has earned him speaking engagements at universities and conferences around the world.

His candid discourse about his vagina — along with his identifying as a transsexual, a non-PC term — has caused conflict with trans activists who argue their genitals are not up for discussion. But Angel sees it as an obligation. It’s the reason he chose to appear on mainstream media programs such as The Tyra Banks Show, The Howard Stern Show and The Joe Rogan Experience, where he was often exploited and portrayed as a freak long before TV shows like Transparent ushered in a new era of transgender awareness.

Angel grew up in Van Nuys, where he was athletic, androgynous and often mistaken for “a little surfer California boy.” A teenage track-and-field star, he ended up homeless and suicidal after getting kicked out of three high schools in a row for his addiction to drugs and alcohol. Now sober for 28 years (aside from marijuana, which he uses to treat his anxiety), he has never completed high school. He transitioned to male in the mid-1990s and began performing in adult films soon after, purely as a business decision. “I saw a niche that wasn’t being filled, and I saw money,” he says.

His career took off, and in 2007 he became the first and is still the only man to win Transsexual Performer of the Year at the sex industry’s AVN Awards.

Recently, he transitioned again — this time from a porn star to an activist and filmmaker. Through his self-titled entertainment company, he produced a 2011 documentary about trans-male sexuality; he’s determined to get more trans men to share their stories — and their bodies — in front of the camera.

Still, he says, he struggles with guilt about all the years he spent getting loaded and worrying his parents.

“I’m making up for lost time, really proving myself to the world,” he says. “I should be dead, but I’m not, so that’s a good thing. I’m here for a reason.” —JENNIFER SWANN
Once, during Prohibition, I was forced to live for days on nothing but food and water. – W.C. Fields

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On a recent Sunday night at République, wine director María Garcia is working the floor, dressed casually in a white sweater bedecked with dinosaur illustrations. Well-versed in fine-dining choreography from her years at Spago, she glides easily between diners in the crowded front room, carrying two glasses and a bottle of Loire Valley cabernet franc to a table where a shared plate of agnolotti with pancetta and English peas has just arrived.

Like all good sommeliers, she offers a few tasting notes as she pours, but nothing too specific; she likes to let diners decide for themselves how the wine hits their palates. There’s a mention of cab franc’s “green notes” and how they play with the freshness of the spring peas. Then she plunges back into the bustle of the restaurant, leaving her patrons to marvel at what an unexpected and perfect pairing she’s given them.

It’s fitting that Garcia, a unique figure in the L.A. wine scene (and not just because she sometimes wears a dinosaur sweater to work), should be in charge of one of the city’s unique wine programs. Most restaurants with deep wine inventories present their entire cellar in a doorstop of a list that can be overwhelming to all but the most dedicated cork dorks. But at République, Garcia curates her 1,800 selections into lean, approachable list of 60 or so options, which she updates daily. If diners want to order from the unprinted “reserve list,” they can — but they have to trust Garcia and her somms to help them find the right bottle. “It might be a little confusing to some, but I think it’s a little more interactive,” she says.

Garcia inherited this “off-list” approach from her predecessor, Taylor Parsons, but since becoming wine director in January, she’s put her own stamp on it. Her lists lean heavily on Italy, Burgundy and the Loire but cherry-pick small producers and unusual offerings from all over the world. “I try not be crazy judgmental when presented with wine,” she says. Even when the wine in question is something seemingly familiar, such as a Napa Valley cabernet, “It might be something amazing. I think,” she adds with a laugh, “that’s kind of how I want people to think about me.”

Since entering the wine world roughly a decade ago, Garcia, 34, has gotten used to defying expectations. The child of Mexican immigrants, she’s petite, easygoing. As soon as she went to culinary school and landed her first wine job, at a high-end shop in the Beverly Hilton — a world away from Norwalk and Whittier, where she grew up — she realized, “I have to work harder to make sure that people take me seriously” in what is still a predominantly white and male-dominated profession.

Her hard work paid off, especially during a four-year stint at Spago, where she worked her way up from “cellar rat” — handling inventory, storage protocols and other unglamorous, behind-the-scenes duties — to on-the-floor sommelier. She joined the team at République in 2014 and immediately connected with Parsons’ philosophy of replacing showy wine lists with friendly dialogue.

“I’m gonna be like, ‘What are you looking for? You like Burgundy? OK, cool.” From there, the discussion can move to subregions, styles, price points, what pairs well with the dishes diners have ordered — or even steering guests toward a comparable but more affordable region or varietal, such as Beaujolais or barbera.

“People are increasingly open to these conversations,” Garcia says. “People are becoming a little more comfortable with their somms.”

When your somm is as personable and down-to-earth as Garcia, that’s not hard to do. “I don’t think of myself as a female somm,” she notes, “but I do think I bring a different experience to the table. It’s kinda cool. I kinda like that.” —ANDY HERMANN
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Tafarai Bayne is as serious about cycling as it gets — but you won’t find him in a pair of Spandex shorts. He’s more likely to be donning a fedora, scarf and button-up shirt, and it’s a given that his shoes and socks will, as he says, “pop.”

Born in Watts and raised in the Crenshaw district, Bayne has long been an avid cyclist. More recently, the 34-year-old has been able to parlay his love of cycling into a full-time job. For nearly half his life, Bayne has worked in the nonprofit sector. After founding EMH Creative, a nonprofit-focused consultant group that handles planning, media and design, he spent two years working with the California Endowment on its Building Healthy Communities initiative in South L.A.

In January he signed on as chief strategist for CicLAvia.

Prior to joining CicLAvia full-time, Bayne worked with the nonprofit for five years, serving on its board of directors and helping bring the organization’s signature open-road bike ride to Leimert Park and Central Avenue in 2014.

“Being on a bike gave [me] a really strong visceral connection to places,” he says. “You really get to know a neighborhood from the bike more than you do from driving around in a car.”

Modeled after a weekly event in Bogotá, Colombia, CicLAvia has shut down a total of more than 133 miles of L.A. streets in its seven years of operation. About 1.25 million people from across SoCal have gathered to bike, walk, skate or just hang out in neighborhoods from the San Fernando Valley to Culver City.

CicLAvia has continued to grow, with four events last year and five planned for 2017, Bayne says. And it continues to show L.A. residents that cycling can be a way of life even in this car-dominated city.

“I think it’s critically important that we carve out space in Los Angeles and show people what it’s like to live pluralistically, live together, live not in fear, and to trust each other,” says Bayne, who’s currently serving as vice president of the Board of Transportation Commissioners for L.A.’s Department of Transportation.

In that role he can influence policy from the inside. He works with city officials on mobility improvement plans such as Vision Zero, which aims to have zero traffic-related deaths in L.A. by 2025 through better street design, more effective community outreach and additional funding to transform and redesign L.A.’s streets.

Throughout the years he’s spent promoting cycling and community engagement, Bayne has helped loosen the death grip that cars have had on L.A. by making bike lanes safer and bringing them to communities such as South L.A.

Along with changing the way this city moves, he has his sights set on changing the way it operates. He’s helped orchestrate events like Powerfest, a music and arts festival put on by the South L.A. Community Coalition. Admission is free, and the event promotes civic engagement through efforts such as voter registration.

“It only takes like 3,000 votes to win a council office in South L.A.,” Bayne says. “It doesn’t take that much to shift politics in this city, if you really wanted to make a move on it.”

—HAYLEY FOX
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The annual costume contest was introduced at the finish line with winners including rock 'n' rollers, bacon strips, hot dogs, and dinosaurs.

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There are a lot of jobs in the art world, and Pilar Tompkins Rivas has had most of them. “From the academic side, the museum side, the commercial gallery side, working as an artist, as a curatorial assistant, development, grant writing, I’ve learned something from every role I’ve had to play,” she says. Last May she took on her latest role, director of the Vincent Price Art Museum, making a splash with her first exhibition, “Tastemakers & Earth-shakers: Notes From Los Angeles Youth Culture, 1943-2016,” an ambitious, interdisciplinary tour of seven decades of predominantly Latino art, music and fashion in L.A. She’s the first Latina to hold the position.

Although she studied studio art and trained as a muralist, it was a passion for dance that brought Tompkins Rivas to L.A. from her home in Dallas. On Memorial Day weekend 2001, she came to attend the West Coast Salsa Congress, a festival celebrating salsa music and dance, and decided to stay for a few weeks.

Building on her experience as a muralist, she quickly found a job with the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC), restoring canvas panels painted by famed Angeleno artist Judy Baca, using the old Spruce Goose hangar in Marina del Rey as her studio. “I … became very involved in the Chicano art community as soon as I got here,” Tompkins Rivas recalls. “That was the first community I connected to, being a Chicana coming from Texas.”

Then tragedy struck. Her parents’ Texas home was hit by lightning and burned to the ground. “They barely made it out,” she says. “The firemen had to resuscitate my dog. I said, ‘Mom, I’m on the next plane home.’ And she told me, ‘There’s no home to come home to. If you have a place to stay and a gig, you should stay out there.’”

So she stayed, got an apartment and switched gears, working in a commercial gallery for Patricia Faure, “one of the grand dames of the L.A. art world,” as Tompkins Rivas puts it.

After two years with Faure, Tompkins Rivas moved on to the L.A. branch of Harlem gallerist Christian Haye’s the Project, and then in 2006 found herself at a crossroads. She didn’t want to continue in the commercial gallery world but couldn’t quite see herself as a curator yet, so she decided to test the waters with a few projects, including co-organizing the Mexicali Biennial, which staged art, performance and actions along the U.S.-Mexico border. “It gave me a jump start to begin thinking about my own curatorial practice and what that could be,” she recalls.

From there, she moved on to a position as curator of the Claremont Museum of Art, where she organized “Vexing: Female Voices From East L.A. Punk,” which told the overlooked story of Latina musicians and artists in the Los Angeles punk scene. Since then, she has curated numerous exhibitions at venues all over the city, from LACMA to the Watts Towers Arts Center, and mostly notably for the Getty’s Pacific Standard Time initiatives. The latest edition, titled PST: LA/LA, for which she is co-curating two shows, launches this fall and focuses on the artistic and cultural connections between Los Angeles and Latin America.

The Vincent Price Art Museum may not have the same cachet as the museums farther west, but for Tompkins Rivas, all she sees are opportunities. “Coming into an institution like this, you can look at it two ways,” she says. “You can say, ‘This is all we can do,’ or ‘What are our resources? What do we need, and what are we going to do to build and to get there?’ I want to see how much we can possibly do. The sky’s the limit.” —MATT STROMBERG
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Glen Curado opens up the fat binder that documents every family that has come through World Harvest Food Bank, his nonprofit food-assistance center. “We don’t ask them for ID or proof of income or any of that,” he says. “We just want to know how many families we’ve helped.” He flips to the back of the book. “4,922. Almost 5,000 families. The 5,000th family will get free groceries for a year.”

“Free groceries for a year is a pretty incredible gift, but it’s not that much more incredible than what World Harvest already provides those 4,922 families.” The food bank, which is located just south of downtown on Grand Avenue, is set up like a grocery store. For a $30 “donation” you get a shopping cart, its bottom half and child’s seat compartment already loaded with food. The main compartment is empty — that’s for you to fill with whatever is available that day. There’s always a wide array of vegetables, displayed on shelves just as they’d be at an upscale market. There’s always bread.

On a recent visit, carts came preloaded with big boxes of artichokes and red peppers and apples, containers of seaweed salad, bags of rice. Two freezer chests full of seafood stood ready for people to pick out packages of surf clams or sashimi-grade fish. The food is donated by large grocery chains, including Vons, Albertsons and Whole Foods.

Curado estimates that 60 to 70 percent of World Harvest’s offerings are organic, and that a full cart can fit about $200 worth of groceries in it. It looks to me as if it could be double that value.

And if you can’t afford the $30? You can sign up to volunteer for four hours, which gets you the same massive cart full of food. Curado, who was born in Taiwan, spent some of his childhood with his grandmother, who ran a noodle shop. Every evening, an old man came to the shop and helped his grandmother clean up, and then she fed him. It was that memory that inspired Curado’s work-for-food model at World Harvest.

But it was unpaid traffic tickets that launched Curado on this path. After putting off the tickets for years, he eventually tried to pay them but was ordered to perform 200 hours of community service as punishment for his tardiness. He did that service at a food bank. “I saw what they were doing, and I was horrified,” Curado says. “You give out one bag to each person — it has canned soup, mac and cheese and one loaf of bread. No vegetables, no good food. It seemed like a scam to me. Everyone who ran the place was in a suit and tie, had nice cars and a nice salary. But they’d yell at me if I tried to put more than one loaf of bread in the bag.”

He envisioned a different kind of food bank, one where a family can get a full pantry’s worth of food, and one where everyone is welcome.

In 2007, when he was trying to get World Harvest off the ground, Curado wrote to a large corporation to ask for a grant. And the company, which he refrains from naming, sent him a check for $50,000. “I sent it back,” he says. “They had a long list of conditions. The money had to be used only for people who made under $12,000 a year. It could not go to veterans who were receiving benefits.” As a former member of the Air Force, Curado found that stipulation particularly galling. But mainly, he wanted World Harvest to feed anyone who felt they needed food, regardless of their situation.

In fact, Curado doesn’t mind who shops here, even if they have plenty of money. Part of his aim is to reduce food waste, and he brings in a lot of food. The more people who come in, the more folks are paying that $30, which allows him to pay his rent. He also has shelves on one side of the warehouse with items for sale, things that have been donated but are more specialized, such as Maldon salt and large containers of olive oil. World Harvest charges about half what you’d pay in a regular retail shop for those nonperishable items.

Since his one attempt at requesting outside money, Curado has applied for no grants. World Harvest is self-funding.

But his rejection of that first big check was not without controversy. His wife made him sleep downstairs on the couch for two weeks when he sent the check back. “I lay there and I thought and thought about how I’m gonna make this work,” Curado says. “At the end of the two weeks, I had the plan I’m still using today. There’s the couch right there!” He points to an old chaise lounge in the corner of his office. “I keep it here to remind me. To be creative, and move forward.” —BECHA RODELL
Jamillah James loves horror movies, detests Claire Danes and fist-pumps to Metallica in her car on the way to work. The pop culture-savvy James, 36, is the friend you see Get Out with at Arclight Hollywood on a Sunday night and the ride-or-die bestie who is always down for an evening of drinking wine and binging true-crime TV on the couch.

Because she is so much fun to hang out with, it is easy to forget that James is also a knowledgeable, innovative and increasingly important museum curator. Her recent appointment as curator of the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (ICA LA), scheduled to open downtown in September, means that some of your favorite museum shows, in years to come will likely be the product of her hyperactive, imaginative brain.

Before she became a curator, James was a curious, meandering 20-something who didn’t know what she wanted to be when she grew up.

The daughter of a public school music teacher in New Jersey, James played violin and tuba, contributed to the school newspaper and started a zine in high school. Initially she called her zine Claire Is an Eyesore (because she “hated My So Called Life and was just like, ugh, Claire Danes is the worst”). Eventually she chose the title A Wasted Style (because she was “a little indie-rocker teenager nerd” who lifted the phrase from a Pavement lyric).

After high school it took James seven years, nearly as many majors, two colleges and a cross-country move from Baltimore to Chicago before she ultimately graduated from Columbia College with an interdisciplinary degree in cultural studies and art history. Along the way she hosted a Sunday night radio show called Calculated Beats for the Soul Impaired, played drums in a band, put on DIY shows in her loft and studied creative writing, film, sound engineering and studio art. “I definitely failed drawing in college,” she laughs. “Partly because of lack of ability and also because I went on tour with my band for three weeks and was just like, ‘byyyyyeeeeee.’”

After college James moved to New York, where she paid her dues at a dull copywriting job until, on a whim, she moved to Baltimore. It was there that, for fun, she organized a massive, well-received art show called “Agenda: Queering Popular Media.”

At that point James realized her calling. There was a common thread running throughout all her interests. Regardless of the format (zine, radio show, DIY house show), she had always loved the process of researching and engaging with art, organizing it thoughtfully and presenting it to an audience. Even before she decided on it as a career, James was a curator.

Following fellowships at the Queens Museum and the Studio Museum in Harlem, James came to Los Angeles in 2014 to work as an assistant curator at the Hammer Museum. “I love L.A.,” she says. “I was a very quick convert. I’m just like a little Benedict Arnold from the East Coast.”

With her new position at ICA LA (formerly the Santa Monica Museum of Art), James has her first sustained opportunity to steer the direction of a museum’s programming. She’s excited to further establish her voice as a curator and build on the institution’s history as she works to shape its future.

In a 2012 lecture at MoMA PS1 in New York, James gave the following advice: “Be accessible, and if you can’t be accessible, at least be engaging. If all else fails, be weird.” Luckily for L.A., James is all of those things, and we get to see what her smart, weird, hamster wheel of a brain comes up with next. —CATHERINE WOMACK
Yesenia Mateo, a 16-year-old junior at L.A. High, was headed to nutrition class when a throng of students in the main stairwell stopped her in her tracks. Mateo hadn’t come to school that day planning to walk out, and she isn’t sure any of the other students did, either. She says she remembers being in a stupor that morning, still distressed from the election results the night before. She spent the evening in tears beside her mother, a Mexican immigrant whose efforts to legalize her status seemed in deeper jeopardy as the TV pundits declared one crucial swing state after another for Trump.

It was Mateo’s first semester at the school in Mid-Wilshire. After years of enduring the traffic back and forth to attend better schools in Venice, she had transferred to L.A. High, within walking distance of her home.

The anger that morning in the stairwell was palpable, she says. Shouts of “Fuck Trump” spread through the crowd. Students were jammed down the stairwell and past the main office to the only door in the school that wasn’t locked. Someone pushed it open, and someone else yelled “Walkout! Everyone walk out!” The crowd surged forward.

“A lot of people were scared to walk out. And then everyone was like, ‘Come on! Come on!’” she says. “And the principal didn’t really do anything. She really couldn’t do anything. She was just standing there. And then I was like, ‘Oh shit, they are down!’”

It was a spontaneous act, a public outburst as unanticipated as Trump’s victory the night before. Altogether in the L.A. area, hundreds of students walked out on Nov. 9. For Mateo, the feeling of being carried away in the crowd brought a reprieve from the sense of isolation.

Mateo comes from an activist family. Her older sister was president of MEChA, the Chicano student group at Venice High School, and Mateo founded a chapter of the group when she transferred to L.A. High. “I think being a Chicana is being a strong person of color,” she says. “Even though in the dictionary it says a first-generation Mexican-American person, I think the word ‘Chicana’ for me, as a Mexican-American, is just [a description of the] resistance and the strength I have. And the pride, the pride of our culture, of our traditions and our history as fighters, as warriors.”

The student body of L.A. High is 79 percent Latino and 12 percent black, but Mateo says that prior to the walkout most students “didn’t really give a fuck about getting involved and trying to change things in our school system.” No more than a few students came to MEChA meetings earlier in the school year. Now the group has a core of a dozen activists.

In addition to the MEChA chapter, Mateo started a new group with broader appeal, part of a citywide network called Students Deserve. One of its first orders of business was organizing a second walkout on Inauguration Day.

A notice of the walkout was posted on Instagram, and word spread. Not everyone was in favor. Mateo and other organizers heard from peers saying protests don’t accomplish anything. She says she understands where they’re coming from.

“Because, shit, we live in a fucking capitalist country, and yeah, honestly, protests aren’t going to do anything. I agree with that,” she says. “But it’s just the time for us to get united, to show our strength, to show our resistance. Our stand needs to be shown.”

Mateo says that on the morning of Jan. 20, about 60 students walked down the main hallway out the door of L.A. High. This time the march didn’t dissipate. It proceeded straight to West Adams Preparatory High School, more than three miles away, where school security was attempting to block the students there from walking out. Not long after the L.A. High students gathered at the entrance, the school guards relented and the students pushed open the doors, joining the march of students from about 17 schools to City Hall.

“I guess it was just our time to shine,” Mateo says, “to unite with everybody who was oppressed by him.”

Mateo says Trump’s victory has kickstarted a larger interest in student organizing in L.A. public schools. She is working to voice student demands to reprioritize how the district spends its budget — less money to school security, for one, which she says is creating a siege mentality among students, and more money for things like student health services and the hiring of college counselors, custodians and teachers.

She says the group that grew out of the anti-Trump walkouts is also advocating for new school electives such as women’s studies, queer studies, Chicano studies and black history studies. Of the current electives on offer to students, she says the most visible are Junior ROTC and wood shop. “It’s like they’re preparing us for these kinds of jobs, showing us these are the only opportunities that we have.”

She says one good thing has come of Trump: His animus toward immigrants and people of color is driving the new student activism.

“It’s basically our future that depends on what he’s trying to do,” she says. “As black and brown people, we’re in a public school because we can’t afford private schools. Most of our parents, most of our families are working minimum-wage jobs, we’re cleaning houses, washing cars, washing carpets, all that stuff, because that was kind of our only option.

“So having no voice and having our future depend on him, it is a big weight on us.”

—JASON MCGAHAN
A deep, throbbing sub-bass rattles the floor under a welcoming circle of dancers at Hollywood’s Sound Nightclub. The largely college-age crowd is headbanging, jumping and fist-pumping to Y2K, who’s going back to back with fellow bass producer Jackal. One guy waves a black flag emblazoned with the phrase “It’s Lit.”

For most people, it’s a crazy weeknight. For Space Yacht co-founders Henry Lu, Rami Perlman and Ollie Zhang, it’s just another Tuesday.

For the past two years or so, the three friends have thrown dance-music parties on what is usually one of the deadest nights of the week. (Their motto is “Ruin your Wednesday.”) Yet at 9 p.m. on the dot, there’s already a line outside Sound, where Space Yacht has had a residency since January.

Things have changed a lot since Space Yacht launched in 2015. “We started out with some rough nights,” Zhang admits. Their first party was sparsely attended, but the lineup included Ghastly and Ookay, both of whom have gone on to play the festival circuit and sell out larger venues such as Exchange L.A.

Zhang, Lu and Perlman met in 2012 working for theAudience, an L.A.-based social media agency co-founded by Perlman in 2011. Perlman, a New York native, came out to L.A. in 2003 to play guitar and keys in indie bands. Over the years, his interests veered toward house music, and he started producing under the moniker LondonBridge.

Meanwhile, Zhang and Lu, both SoCal natives, were old friends from UC San Diego. There, they worked together on the college’s annual Sun God Festival — “It’s like the Coachella for colleges,” Lu says — until they graduated in 2012.

All three currently maintain full-time gigs in the music business, where they focus on marketing and events, though Lu did take off last year to dedicate all his time to Space Yacht, until a job at EDC Las Vegas producer Insomniac lured him back to the 9-to-5 world.

The trio soon discovered that their musical chemistry was undeniable. “It was our tastes that brought us together,” Lu says. “Ollie’s about breaks. I’m about bass music, and digging for the buzzy stuff. Rami loves house music.” Their complementary interests meshed well, and they bonded over the desire to get the artists they were listening to before an audience.

The first official Space Yacht party happened in January 2015 at Golden Box, and then continued there weekly, growing from a few dozen people to a couple hundred by the end of the year. Space Yacht became known for its surprise guests; early on, Steve Aoki showed up to play a back-to-back set with Autoerotique, and artists including Snails, Slushii and SNBRN have all hit the decks for an impromptu late-night spin.

“Space Yacht has become this testing platform for artists to play stuff they may not be comfortable playing at other venues,” Perlman says. “You’ll hear a lot of them get on the mic and say, ‘I just wrote this today at 5 o’clock.’ That’s a sense of trust with the audience.”

“I’m very emo about it,” Lu says. “We want to create culture, to create a community around this music.”

Bass producer Ookay, a regular on the Space Yacht lineup, agrees. “There’s no judgment there,” he says, “which makes it a great stepping stone for getting into L.A. and meeting people, both as an artist and as a fan. I met my best friends there.” — SARAH PURKRABEK
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Jacqueline Lyra’s home may be in Los Angeles County, but her work is on Mars. “One thing leads to another, and you’re a Martian,” she says.

Lyra is a mechanical and aerospace engineer who has worked on recent Mars missions at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Lab, or JPL, in Pasadena. “So far I landed four Rovers on Mars: Sojourner, Spirit, and Opportunity, and Curiosity — and now I’m working on the next generation of Rovers that are going to be launched in 2020,” Lyra says. The new Rover has yet to be named.

Lyra has been working for JPL for 29 years and oversees other engineers on the Mars Rover projects; her specialty is temperature control. “A spacecraft is just like a person; they want to be in the right temperature,” she says. Part of the work she does is ensuring a spacecraft doesn’t fail when it’s extremely cold. On frosty Mars, the temperatures plunge to negative 195 degrees and warm up to approximately 70 degrees, depending on the planet’s proximity to the sun.

Lyra has always been fascinated by the mysteries of outer space. She grew up in Rio de Janeiro hooked on Star Trek. She remembers turning her play kitchen into a spacecraft with a command station. “It wasn’t until I actually saw Neil Armstrong landing on the moon that I thought, oh, this is a career. This is actually something that I can do.”

Though she excelled at math and science, her options in Rio were limited. “There were only two colleges in Brazil at that time that had anything that was close to an aerospace engineering career — and it was two military schools,” Lyra recalls. “At that time that was for men only, so I could not even try. That never stopped me — I had to look for another path.”

After a year of college in Brazil, she followed her brother to the United States and applied to schools, eventually receiving her master’s in aerospace engineering from the University of Texas in 1988. Soon after she landed at JPL and started working on the infamous, Saturn-bound Cassini spacecraft.

It’s a story she shares when she’s doing student outreach at her daughter’s school. “One cool thing is that a picture of the Spirit and Opportunity is now the cover of the eighth-grade science book, so kids see the Rover that I worked on,” Lyra says. Her daughter used to point to the textbook and tell her classmates, “This is my mom’s robot.”

When she talks at schools, it’s not just the kids who are thrilled by her intergalactic work. “Some of the parents approach me, and they are from Mexico or from another South American country, and they sometimes get very emotional,” Lyra says. The parents thank her for being someone their kids can identify with and look up to.

Lyra never expected to be a role model. She shyly admits that in Brazil she’s actually famous. “An interesting fact is that I have a song that was written by a very famous Brazilian singer and songwriter that was made for me and the Mars folks,” Lyra says. The song is called “Samba de Marte,” and was written by Brazil’s “Godmother of Samba,” Beth Carvalho. It name-checks Lyra, NASA and JPL.

Lyra recognizes the enthusiasm behind Carvalho’s fan letter to another planet. After all, she and her NASA colleagues can’t be the only Martians. “We have to believe there’s a possibility of life on Mars,” Lyra says. “That’s why we go there.” — SOPHIA KERCHER
It was the shake that caused a sensation. When the Eagle Rock outpost of the Oinkster opened in 2006, local foodies obsessed over founder Andre Guerrero’s signature ube milkshake, made from the delicious purple yam. Among its fast-casual restaurant’s offerings of burgers, pastrami, pulled pork and roasted chicken, the shake was widely seen as a nod to Guerrero’s Filipino heritage. It’s hard to imagine now, but 11 years ago, food media wasn’t clamoring to learn more about Filipino food. So why’d he add it to the menu?

“I thought about this neighborhood. There’s a lot of Filipinos here, for one. Two, ube is delicious. I mean it’s really good,” Guerrero says. He says he knows “all the Filipino chefs” in town, but still, the response surprised him. “We put it on just to run as a special, and people went crazy. All the Filipinos were just calling up, and they’re telling all their friends, ‘Oh yeah, try this ube shake at the Oinkster. The chef is Filipino.’”

Guerrero, a cook and chef in Los Angeles for decades, is perhaps best known right now for the Oinkster and that shake. But back then, he didn’t think the time was right to launch a full-fledged Filipino restaurant. He half-heartedly tried a couple of times and found the response to be “lukewarm.”

Part of the problem, as he sees it, is the way that food media in the United States has approached Filipino food. “With Filipino food, for a long time — and this still happens now — when there’s an opportunity to showcase it or talk about it, what do these journalists do? They try to sensationalize the weird shit, like the partially incubated duck egg. OK, you know what? Most of the Filipinos I know don’t even eat that. But the way [the media] talk about it, the audience goes, ‘Yuck. They eat partially incubated duck eggs and blood soup?’ Now they sensationalize it and they’ve got the audience’s attention, but in a very negative way. Why aren’t you talking about the really delicious food that non-Filipinos would embrace and really love? Well, because it’s not as interesting.”

But as Guerrero sees it, it was only a matter of time before all of America embraced Filipino food, as Filipinos make up the second-largest Asian-American group in the country. He’s proud of the chefs in the unofficial L.A. Filipino-American chefs group, called Barkada. Bold-faced names including Charles Olalia, Isa Fabro, Alvin Cailan and the Valencia brothers are associated with it — and Guerrero wouldn’t mind seeing them trying out ever more traditional flavors and techniques.

“I’m like the senior statesman in the group,” he says. “I don’t really hang out with them, because I’m like the old fogey. I mean, most of them are younger than my sons.”

Though he is toying with the idea of trying out Filipino food commercially again, figuring out what kind of pop-up model makes the most sense, Guerrero’s senior statesman role makes him more shepherd than chef in the Filipino food movement.

“I’m in a position where I can help people,” he says. “I know my way around this industry. I know my way around the legal aspects, the economics, the financing of projects, and I’d love to see these guys really make a statement.”

He then goes on to describe a Filipino pork shank recipe with soy sauce, sugar, dried banana blossoms and dried shrimp. He’s probably not going to exit the kitchen anytime soon. —KATHERINE SPIERS
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From the center of L.A., the quest for seafood at El Coraloense probably involves a freeway trifecta. One might take the 10 to the 5 to the 710. There it is, nestled in an unassuming strip mall with a liquor store and a chiropractic office. Pay no attention to the unadorned edifice or the blue interior with nautical knickknacks. You’re here for the seafood, and chef-owner Natalie Curie, 24, plans to deliver.

Open since 2008, El Coraloense serves fare that blends the cuisines of Sinaloa and Nayarit — Curie’s mother is from the former Mexican state, her father the latter. The result of that marriage is an exceptional list of ceviche tostadas and entrees that regularly turn heads and excite taste buds.

“There’s always gonna be that person that comes in with low expectations because of where we are and what we look like,” Curie says. “It can be frustrating. But when someone tells me that they were skeptical at first, then impressed, that feels good.”

Expected items such as tacos, seafood cocktails and empanadas are on the menu, too, but Curie gets a particular twinkle in her eye when she describes the original ceviches. “Eighty percent of the menu is our creation,” she says. “Yes, we incorporate traditional dishes, but we give many a twist so that it’s not boring, for lack of a better word.”

In Sinaloa, it’s common for ceviches to be prepared with mayonnaise. Curie took that and ran with it, making about a dozen distinct aiolis and incorporating them into different dishes. For example, the nina fresa is a tostada with marinated shrimp ceviche, topped with sliced fresh strawberries, honey and a tahin sauce. Then there’s the ceviche de sierra, made with marinated Spanish mackerel (a Nayarit staple), shredded carrots, chayote, cucumber, tomato and a tostada shell brushed with lemon aioli.

El Coraloense began as a family affair — it was Curie’s father’s second business, after operating the now-closed Leonardo’s Ceviche Company in Downey for a handful of years — but Curie has emerged as the new leader, and other relatives have stepped back to let her shine.

As a child, Curie was always by her dad’s side in the kitchen. Leonardo loved food, and treated their home as a testing ground. Curie assisted him with chopping and dish composition from a very young age.

“He was really passionate,” Curie says. “I remember sitting down at the dinner table, watching him portion out tostadas or cocktails, and he’d say, ‘When we open our restaurant, this is how it’s going to be.’”

After high school, Curie attended Le Cordon Bleu in Pasadena and interned at an Italian restaurant in the Czech Republic before coming back to work with her family. Today, Leonardo is mostly an off-site mentor, though his comedic side lives on via dish names such as the viagra.com — oysters on a half-shell with a Mexican ponzu sauce with cooked shrimp and avocado.

Curie’s mother watches over certain components of the restaurant’s finances, and one of her brothers helps run the front of house. But the bulk of the responsibility rests on Curie’s shoulders, from the cooking, hiring and firing to payroll duties, ordering and cleaning.

“The load may be heavy, but Curie is happy to be at the helm. And if she has it her way, she’ll have a second location — closer to the sea, perhaps in Long Beach or Santa Monica — by the end of the year.

“In the beginning, it was tough to be out here in Bell Gardens,” Curie says. “Many customers would arrive and see the ceviches with aioli and fresh fruit and think, ‘What is that?’ That attitude has changed over the years, though. More and more, guests are open to our food and appreciate that it’s different. But we’d like to expand, to show more people what we’re all about.” —CHELSEE LOWE
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ENJOY, BUT DON'T OVERDO IT.
Inside the mental health ward of the Twin Towers jail in downtown Los Angeles, 35 incarcerated men in brown and blue jumpsuits responded with raw emotion as the tender, sometimes tumultuous sounds of Robert Schumann’s First String Quartet in A Minor washed over them.

“That music sounds like the way I feel,” an inmate told Vijay Gupta, the L.A. Philharmonic violinist whose nonprofit organization, Street Symphony, presented the jailhouse concert.

Gupta vividly remembers another man’s response that day: “He said to me, ‘You know why I love this music? All these composers had real shit happen to them. Bach was an orphan. Mozart’s mom died. Beethoven’s dad beat the shit out of him. And Schumann? Schumann died in a place like this.’”

Gupta was stunned by how accurately the men’s responses mirrored his own feelings. “I went home from that concert and sat in my bed and cried and ate pizza and ice cream. I couldn’t wrap my head around the fact that I had this life-changing conversation with these incarcerated men,” he says. “And I got to leave.”

Stout, brown-skinned, tattooed and sporting a thick head of slick, shiny black hair, Gupta often sees himself in the inmates and homeless people he and his Street Symphony collaborators meet in L.A. county jails and on Skid Row.

The child of Indian immigrants, Gupta picked up his first violin when he was 3. By the time he was 7, he was studying at Juilliard. He enrolled in college when he was 13 and by 15 was simultaneously pursuing two undergraduate degrees (one in music and one in biology). At 19, after graduating with a master’s degree in music from Yale, Gupta beat out more than 300 applicants for a seat in the L.A. Philharmonic’s violin section.

But that extraordinary, seemingly privileged upbringing was shrouded in a haze of instability, familial dysfunction and abuse. For the first two decades of his life, Gupta’s aggressively controlling parents were his wardens, and their impossible definition of success his prison.

As an adolescent, Gupta sat in the front row of high-level college biology classes, eagerly raising his hand to correctly answer the professor’s every question. But as much as he thrived in that intellectually freeing environment, he suffered from social isolation. “My voice hadn’t changed yet, and I was tiny,” he recalls. “It was fucking terrifying. The wound for me was, I’ll never belong.”

Music was a lifeline. When his parents were fighting bitterly in the next room, Gupta took refuge in practicing the violin. He found the love and community he longed for in chamber groups and orchestras.

As a young adult, when his relationship with his parents was severed completely over his decision to marry a white woman, his L.A. Philharmonic colleagues supported him like family at his wedding.

Gupta began Street Symphony in 2011 after he met and began teaching a schizophrenic, Juilliard-trained violinist who lived on Skid Row. Since then, the organization has given more than 200 concerts in homeless shelters and jails.

“The work isn’t just about us performing and leaving,” Gupta says. “It’s about staying. For me personally, staying matters. The Street Symphony is my family. The L.A. Phil is my family. There is something powerful about being in relationship through music, and applying that relationship to folks who are incarcerated or living on Skid Row.”

He adds, “When I say that staying matters, I’m also saying that these people matter, their lives matter and their neighborhoods matter. Every person deserves access to a creative and expressive life.”

—CATHERINE WOMACK
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Founder:
Katie Beckley
Culture Club 101 is many things: a fermentation shop, a cafe, a marketplace, a coffee, kombucha and water-kefir stop. But above all else, the Pasadena spot is an education facility. And at the helm is entrepreneur and health advocate Elaina Luther.

Seeking answers to her own health problems, Luther went from being a massage therapist and instructor to fermentation scientist in the early 2000s. She craved fruit and fruit juices but they made her feel sick. Searching for some way to get her fix, she stumbled upon the Weston A. Price Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to the promotion of nutrient-dense foods. Luther’s research took her down a rabbit hole from which she’s never quite escaped.

“I thought, maybe if I ferment it, I can enjoy it without feeling so bad,” she says. “I learned that the process of fermenting allows good bacteria to eat the sugar in the fruit. I started fermenting pomegranate juice I got from the [Pasadena] farmers market, and bingo. I could actually drink it.”

From there, Luther set out to share her findings, giving away free samples of her pomegranate “soda” to gauge shoppers’ interest. Demand was high for her alternative drink. By summer 2009 — about three years ahead of Health-Ade Kombucha’s debut at the Brentwood farmers market — Luther was running her own stall in Pasadena.

But she had never wanted to be in the food and drink business. She aimed to educate and empower others to take control of their well-being. That summer, Luther found a tiny shop on Wilson Avenue and got permitted as a private club. Members, most of whom she’d befriendd at the farmers market, frequented the shop for Luther’s fermentation workshops. Though the classes were plenty successful, Luther quickly saw that there was also a need for a market with ready-to-eat goods and the ingredients needed to replicate the dishes she demonstrated.

“I saw firsthand how busy people are — they don’t have time to make bone broths and other nutrient-rich foods,” she says. “So little by little we morphed into a store. We were only open two days a week, but by then we had 1,000 members, and with no advertising at all. We were a community.”

Profits were strong, but when new orders came down from the health department in 2014 — the city now classified her as a convenience store, and her location wasn’t zoned for that — Luther needed to move. She was devastated but also aware that the time had come to find a bigger place. It took a full year to find a replacement storefront and another year to build it out. But Luther couldn’t have been happier with the process. The space was paid for entirely by the community via donations, crowdfunding campaigns and prepaid shopping carts. She’s already mentored other entrepreneurs on how to raise money socially without getting loans.

Everything inside the new Culture Club 101, which opened in October, is sustainable, too. Ingredients used for cafe items are organic, non-GMO and sourced from local farmers. Luther’s favorite offerings, which are made by her son, Marcus Guttilla, include the vegan coconut curry and the pasture-raised rotisserie chicken.

While the cafe and coffee counter bring people in, it’s the sales from the market that bolster the business, as was true at the original location. Only the best of the best goes on the shelves, Luther says. Sprouted black rice, house-made bone broths, sauerkrauts made in Luther’s on-site, temperature-controlled fermentation room, raw milk from California’s Organic Pastures.

The space is open to the public, though some still opt to pay the $99 annual fee to be members. Benefits include discounted or free classes, which take place in the store, too. Recent class offerings include a foraging foray in the San Gabriel Mountains, after which participants made wild sauerkraut with their findings; kombucha and kimchi workshops; and a gluten-free treat-making class.

But as much as Luther wants you to stop in for lunch or pick up groceries, she hopes you’ll become a student at some point, too.

“My interest has always been teaching,” Luther says. “There’s so much joy in seeing a spark — seeing the light go on in someone else. Handing off the torch? That is priceless.” — CHELSEE LOWE
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One recent Sunday night, Daniel Dismal collected $10 cover charges from behind a folding table at Boyle Heights’ gritty BLVD bar for a four-band heavy metal show that had been moved from Complex in Glendale just hours earlier, due to flooding. Dismal, a burly, bearded biker type, booked (and rebooked) the event and acted as its sound engineer. The hastily relocated show was just another example of the roll-with-the-punches DIY ethic central to his 17 years behind Church of the 8th Day, L.A.’s preeminent promoter of underground metal bands.

“It’s become like my child,” he says over lunchtime beers at a cafe near his Kagel Canyon home. “I’ve seen it flourish and grow. Sometimes it’s let me down and sometimes I’ve let it down, and at the end of the day we’re still hugging it out.”

Once best known as “Dan from Crematorium” (he’s fronted the local death-metal mainstays since 1996), he’s now more usually “Daniel from Church of the 8th Day,” putting on 160-plus shows each year — mostly extreme metal subgenres but also punk, hip-hop and indie rock — on top of his day job with metal record label Century Media.

“I actually am friends with the [pay-to-play promoters] who work in Hollywood and I understand what they have to go through,” he says. But it was clear many bands needed an alternative. “So I became that guy.”

Initially booking only Crematorium dates, Dismal soon recognized that other bands could benefit from his ability to put together bills and tirelessly publicize them. He mostly books the 200-capacity Complex but also does shows at the Echo/Echoplex and Regent Theater in collaboration with Spaceland Presents, and at the Fonda, El Rey and Roxy with Goldenvoice. He’s had two different partners in Cot8D (currently Eric Schuman), which “makes money, but it’s not a lot.” Already earning a living from his regular job, Dismal shuns “presale” shows and, whenever possible, pays bands.

Key to Dismal’s credibility is the three-day “Murderfest” he created, initially at Downey’s Hully Gully in 2003, then annually at the Knitting Factory until it closed in 2009. Despite losing $14,000 on Murderfest’s second incarnation, Dismal made subsequent editions viable, while putting bands such as Despise You, Converge, Baroness and Eyehategod before large crowds. He said Murderfest’s return now “seems more realistic” thanks to his work with Spaceland and, in the meantime, offers smaller “Mini-Murders” at Complex.

Dismal also staged early shows by metal luminaries such as Suicide Silence and Mastodon, but says that perhaps his greatest joy in Cot8D is simply empowering hardworking musicians. He lovingly recalls the “what-the-fuck?” reaction of a previously pay-to-play band when he handed them $4,000 for an unusually well-attended 2007 show.

“It’s a fulfillment,” he says. “That’s the whole reason why the name is Church of the 8th Day: because I believe that music, to us, is our religion and it fulfills a hole inside of us.” —PAUL ROGERS
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Like so many award-winning brewers, Devon Randall didn’t set out to make beer for a living. After getting her start at some of San Diego’s biggest names in craft beer, she definitely never thought she’d be doing it back in her hometown of L.A., which only began to boast a beer scene of its own in the years since she left, nearly seven years ago.

Yet the low-key 30-something, now brewmaster at Arts District Brewing Co., is a stellar addition to downtown’s booming beer community. “I really strive to have a balanced tap list,” she says. “I try to have a little bit of something for every mood and everybody.” With her ability to craft consistent, quality beers in a variety of international styles—from Baltic porters to Scotch ales to IPAs—she’s exactly the kind of talent L.A. needs to make this a next-level beer town.

Randall’s road back to L.A. is a testament to her dedication to variety. After the Westside native graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in mass communications, she worked in L.A. real estate marketing.

But she took note as her then-boyfriend joined Pacific Gravity Homebrew Club and made monthly brews in their kitchen. She fondly remembered her time in college working at Raleigh’s, a Telegraph Avenue craft beer bar with 20 semi-rotating taps from Sierra Nevada, Anchor and Stone. Back in 2000, the Oakland bar was ahead of the game when it came to craft brews.

When that relationship ended, Randall bought a homebrew kit of her own, started attending regular homebrew club meetings and, eventually, was brewing on her own about once a week. “I don’t know what it was, but I found myself really choosing beer over everything else,” she says.

Randall couldn’t find local breweries where she could get hands-on experience, so while in San Diego to interview for another real estate marketing position, she stopped by breweries there to see if they needed help.

Then she got the gig that launched her career in the beer industry. The Lost Abbey, the San Marcos powerhouse known for making both hoppy American-style beers and European barrel-aged experiments, said she could volunteer. “Lost Abbey was the perfect place to work first because it’s production but it’s also creative,” she says.

She began to develop her own ideas when she became head brewer at Pizza Port Solana Beach, and medaled at the Great American Beer Festival with her oatmeal stout.

Now an award-winning beer maven, Randall moved back to L.A. in 2015 to become the brewmaster at Arts District, a new project from the craft cocktail masterminds at 213 Hospitality and Brian Lenzo of Hollywood’s Blue Palms Brewhouse. Last October, she took home another GABF medal, a silver in the Smoke Beer category for Cowboy Curtis, a smoked porter.

Of the 20 or so house beers on tap at any given time at the 300-capacity Arts District, nearly all are traditional styles, free of fruity additions or in-your-face adjuncts—there’s even an English Summer pale ale in homage to Raleigh’s, the pub that started it all.

“I guess it’s more fun trying to stay ahead of the trend than just doing what the trendy people are doing,” she says. “Let’s go for the next thing.” —SARAH BENNETT
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THIS BUD’S FOR YOU.
If you ask David Schlosser what’s the most complex dish he serves at his restaurant, Shibumi, he’ll proudly say it’s the Japanese delicacy karasumi. The fermented caviar is made from the prized eggs of grey mullet, which are harvested only two months a year. The 41-year-old chef cures the eggs in various percentages of saltwater baths before setting them out to dry. When his pièce de résistance is complete after a month’s time, he serves it sliced and paired simply with sake.

It’s this kind of patience, simplicity and complexity that sums up the experience at Schlosser’s downtown L.A. kappo restaurant, which feels like a dark and moody Tokyo eatery. It’s rare to find kappo cuisine in L.A., and Schlosser’s goal is to present “a different side of Japan that [diners] can’t [normally] get here,” he says.

Think of kappo as the more relaxed sibling to the elegant, multicourse experience of kaiseki: still refined, but set in a more casual environment where you can watch the chefs behind the counter work with fresh and seasonal ingredients, and employ similar techniques of grilling, boiling and stewing. At Shibumi, shiso flowers and caviar top a giant Iwagaki oyster, and grilled slices of Holstein beef are served alongside fresh wasabi and narazuke pickles.

Although Schlosser’s passion is Japanese cuisine, he got his start in French fine dining and, most notably, staged at the three-Michelin-star Georges Blanc in France. “It really helped me set the standard for my whole career when I got into Georges Blanc, because I realized when we’re young, we’re sponges — we take in information,” Schlosser says. “The standards were so high there.”

It wasn’t until he was on a three-day layover in Japan that he became smitten with the country. When Schlosser returned to L.A., his friend helped get him a gig at Beverly Hills’ Ginza Sushi-Ko, and he became the first non-Japanese employee to work under renowned chef Masayoshi Takayama. He later worked with Takayama’s protege at Urasawa, one of the most expensive sushi restaurants in the country.

But Schlosser grew tired of sushi. “I wanted to learn pre-sushi, everything in Edo period and before — what makes Japan, Japan,” he says. “Sushi doesn’t make Japan, Japan. Sushi is so new, but when you start studying and looking into the culture of Japan, it’s intense. There’s a lot going on.”

He figured the only way he could learn more was to move to Japan. Schlosser became the chef to the U.S. ambassador to Japan and then diligently spent the next four years learning how to cook at lauded kaiseki restaurants, studying the language and poring over Japanese cookbooks.

Schlosser reluctantly came to the conclusion that opening a kappo restaurant in the midst of hundreds of other kappo eateries in Japan didn’t do anyone any good. He decided it would be better to introduce the cuisine to Americans, and give Japanese people living stateside a chance to taste their home country’s delicacies again. Schlosser says leaving Japan was “one of the hardest things I’ve ever done.”

Nowadays, you can find Schlosser behind the counter at Shibumi six days a week. He fondly thinks about how last December he served a delicious persimmon by just cutting it open, placing it on a plate and serving it with Riesling. “That’s the basis of Shibumi,” Schlosser says. “It’s about restraining what you create, to express confidence and mastery of what you do. The older I’m getting, the more I feel that this whole three Michelin [stars] and this whole fancy [thing], it’s very ego-driven and it has to do with, ‘I’m the best.’ I don’t want to do that anymore. I thought I wanted to be the best, but now it’s about transferring traditions and passing that along.” —JEAN TRINH
Lila Higgins’ family thought she was crazy for wanting to move to Los Angeles.

As a child growing up on a farm near Worcester, in the British Midlands, she spent her free time running through the woods, playing in a creek and crawling into hollow trees pretending to be a badger. She adored nature. How could she move to L.A. — land of concrete, smog and freeways?

“I was like, ‘I’m going to show you all! I’m going to prove you all wrong!’” Higgins says. She’s sitting in the garden that she helped design outside the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, where she works as the manager of the citizen science program. She is infectiously enthusiastic. A bird in a nearby tree starts rapidly chirping, and Higgins giggles and says, in her British accent, “That mockingbird’s just like, ‘Heeeyyyyy, I’m here too, guys!’”

Higgins is an educator; her job is to teach people — usually younger people — about nature, the environment and diversity. But you could also call her a cheerleader for nature in Los Angeles.

When Higgins first moved to Southern California in 1994, halfway through her freshman year of high school (“from the British Empire to inland empire,” she jokes), she experienced what she calls “nature shock.” The summers in England were so lush and green. Here, the colors were gray and brown.

“It’s very difficult to wrap your head around that,” she says.

But that’s not to say there’s a shortage of nature in L.A. “There’s so much wildlife here,” Higgins says. “We’re in a biodiversity hot spot. There’s plants and animals that live here and nowhere else in the world.”

Higgins spent years on the outskirts of Greater Los Angeles, getting her undergraduate degree in entomology from UC Riverside (“for four years I studied bugs,” she says, still bewildered) and her master’s degree in education from Cal State San Bernardino. She finally moved to the city after she got a job at the Natural History Museum in 2008. Shortly thereafter, she discovered the soft-bottom section of the Los Angeles River near Frogtown, where the dirt and shrubs peek out from the river’s “concrete corset,” as poet Lewis McAdams put it.

“I just walked down there, and I was like, ‘I’ve come home,’” she says. “I know, it sounds so cheesy and clichéd.”

She started hanging out by the river, walking her dogs and having picnics. When she went on one of the famous L.A. River tours conducted by Jenny Price, she was enthralled. She told Price: “I’m really interested in volunteering. I’m not a loser! I work at the Natural History Museum! I have certified interpretive guide training!”

Price, as it happens, was about to leave town. So Higgins soaked up what she could from Price and, along with fellow guide Kat Superfisky, took over the tours when Price left.

“A lot of people don’t realize this is a public space,” Higgins says. “It’s our space, even though there’s some dumb legal issues about where and when you can be around the river.”

Through her work on the river, Higgins was introduced to a whole L.A. subculture of urban planners, of bicycle and pedestrian and public transit advocates, all of whom are excited about the river and about public spaces. She tries to bring a scientist’s perspective to the issue, perhaps even a bug’s perspective.

“At all the meetings, I’m always like, ‘how do you think the insect sees the city?’” she says. “I’m always like, ‘Nature, nature, nature!’ I see so much potential.” —HILLEL ARON
On one hand, Ted Cizma sees himself as the chef of a small-town restaurant. “If you think about it, SpaceX is a small town,” he says. On the other hand: “I get to go to work every day in a rocket factory! How cool is that?”

We’re sitting on a mezzanine at SpaceX that overlooks the production floor where workers are indeed building rocket ships, as well as a large glassed-in room that any moviegoer would immediately recognize as Mission Control. There are the rows of desks and chairs facing a huge wall, upon which charts and maps and data are projected, along with a live-stream image of Falcon 9, SpaceX’s rocket, waiting for launch. The mezzanine doubles as one of the two full-service restaurants at SpaceX, which Cizma oversees along with a number of smaller cafes and food trucks scattered throughout the campus.

SpaceX has employed Cizma since 2011 to feed workers at its Hawthorne facility. While most companies of this size have in-house food service operations, practically all of them engage outside vendors to set up and run those operations. Perhaps unsurprisingly, SpaceX’s enigmatic leader, Elon Musk, did not want to do things the normal way and opted instead to hire a chef to design a food program in-house. Cizma has built the food program from scratch, hiring his own workers, building restaurants and kitchens in the facility, and finding his own vendors. “There was no road map. We made it up as we built it,” he says.

The result is corporate cafeterias that focus on health, on local purveyors and local produce, and on a work culture about which Cizma feels immense pride. “In five years I’ve not had one employee leave voluntarily,” he says. “They are all employees of SpaceX. That makes a difference. We are incredibly tight-knit.”

Cizma has come on what he calls a “long, strange trip” to get to this point. Born in Chicago, both his father and his grandfather were butchers. But his parents wanted more for him, and he went to college to study political science. When he graduated, however, “Instead of law school I went to work for Charlie Trotter,” he says.

After working with the famous chef, Cizma’s career followed a standard, though charmed, trajectory. He opened one restaurant, and then another. Grace opened in Chicago in 1999 (no relation to the present Chicago restaurant of that name), and Cizma says it was “the right place at the right time — at the peak of the first restaurant boom.” That year he received glowing reviews and features in magazines and newspapers and was named one of *Food & Wine*’s Best New Chefs in America.

After opening a third restaurant, in 2003 Cizma was given the opportunity to sell all his businesses and real estate in one deal. He recalls discussing the matter with his wife when his 11-year-old daughter (one of three children at the time; he now has five) walked in. “Is she wearing your shirt?” he asked his wife in disbelief. “Is she wearing a bra?” He realized that the life of a working restaurant chef was robbing him of his life as a father.

“As a chef, things are going to work out one of three ways,” Cizma says. “You stay in restaurants and end up burnt out and divorced and hooked on drugs or alcohol. Or you take a corporate job and get some stability. Or you become Emeril [Lagasse]; a consultant, a media figure.”

Cizma went the middle route, working for Sodexo for a while, then in hotels. He was running a resort in Sedona, Arizona, when he got a call from a headhunter looking to hire a chef for a company in Los Angeles. He was well into the interview process before they would even divulge the name of the potential employer.

Working for Musk has not always been easy, partly because of his penchant for building brand-new systems rather than following an old model. “There were times early on when I questioned his directives,” Cizma says. “But he was right every single time.” He declines to elaborate on those conflicts, saying, “I have come to the conclusion that Elon’s mind works at a level different to anyone else’s. He’s the smartest person I’ve ever encountered.”

So is Cizma involved in discussions of how to achieve some of Musk’s grander plans, from a food perspective? He doesn’t want to talk about that either. But after a pause, he says: “You can say that down the road I do hope to be providing food in space, or on Mars.” —BESHA RODELL
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If you look and listen long enough, you can hear fragments of L.A.’s rich, continually expanding musical history via terrestrial radio. Turn to KDAY for locally grown rap from the ’90s and early 2000s, Power 106 for the remote possibility of hearing Kendrick Lamar and YG, or public radio (KCRW, KPFK, KCSN) for slivers of every other genre sandwiched between talk programming.

To truly tune into the city’s vast soundscape, you would need 24-hour programming from a diverse set of DJs, a station unconcerned with Nielsen ratings or fidelity to major record labels. Since 1999, nonprofit internet radio station Dublab has been that place, cataloging the sounds of the city without forsaking the inexhaustible reserves of music from elsewhere around the world. This year, Dublab will celebrate its 18th anniversary and finally make the leap to FM.

Alejandro “Ale” Cohen, the station’s affable director, says, “99.1 FM. We have the gear. We’re close to confirming the place for the antenna. Later this year, we’ll be up and running.”

Broadcasting from the same building that houses the Virgil, Dublab HQ is open yet cozy, the walls a calculated mosaic of station ephemera and art commissions, with one corner devoted entirely to vinyl. Cohen, 42, often works seven days a week. As he leans back in his office chair, the eyes behind his glasses brimming with youthful vigor, a glass neon sign in the studio booth reminds us that Wendy Hsu of ghost-pop band Bitter Party is “on-air.”

Founded by Mark “Frosty” McNeill, Jon Buck and several KXLU alums, Dublab ranks among internet radio’s earliest pioneers, broadcasting more than a decade before streaming became de rigueur.

“It was so innovative,” Cohen recalls. “I went to the web page on a friend’s computer. It had a tiny video screen of the studio, and the resolution was minimal. You could tune in for a little bit, but then you had to tune out because you were using your phone line.”

Born in Buenos Aires, Cohen moved to Altadena at 21. When not working for the California State Assembly, he gigged around L.A. with his band Languis, an independent, alt-rock/electronic outfit that likely was ahead of its time.

A fan of Languis and of Cohen’s organizational aptitude, Frosty asked him to become Dublab general manager in 2005. Cohen then spearheaded the station’s candidacy to become a nonprofit. Due largely to his efforts, the station receives funds from various grants and the National Endowment for the Arts. It also gets donations from devoted listeners and a break on rent.

“Our landlord is a big Dublab supporter and gives us a good rate,” says Cohen, now an Eagle Rock resident. “He is one of the unsung heroes of Dublab, a great patron of the arts.”

The station pays all its employees, and though DJs do their shows gratis, Cohen does his utmost to get them gigs around town, especially for Dublab events at places such as LACMA, MOCA or downtown’s Grand Central Market, where it has an ongoing Friday night DJ series.

“It’s definitely a labor of love. That being said, I try to offer all of the employees stability. Even if it’s not a lot of money, at least you can count on it,” Cohen explains. “Offering stability in the art world is really a luxury.”

Right now, Cohen doesn’t have the luxury of relaxing. In addition to his responsibilities as Dublab director, he’s finishing an album with his band Pharoahs, scoring documentaries for public television and working with developers to update Dublab’s phone app. He’s also on the air every Wednesday.

“I still haven’t lost that excitement of discovery. ... I feel excited for new music, trends and styles,” he says. “The spirit of what we’re doing will not change on FM.” — MAX BELL
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There’s an L.A.-based podcast called Pop Rocket, in which a panel of local luminaries weighs in on the pop culture issues of the week — topics ranging from President Trump’s eating habits to depictions of lesbianism on television.

“A deep, hidden desire for d” is too often the denouement in small-screen sapphic tales, cohost Karen Tongson lamented on a recent episode.

Tongson is the “fifth Beatle” of Pop Rocket, a frequent guest who eventually became a permanent co-host. It’s no surprise that a woman who was born into a family of musicians and named after Karen Carpenter would have an innate interest in all things pop culture. But her ability to turn it into an academic career is a more remarkable feat.

The USC professor had moved to California as a child, after living in the Philippines and Hawai‘i. She had toured around Southeast Asia with her parents’ band, Pacifica. Her mom, Maria Katindig Dykes, sang in a voice that reminded many of Karen Carpenter.

“She was famous in the ’70s in her own way,” Tongson says of her mother. “She was part of these ensembles. She never necessarily established herself as a solo artist; the girl singer doesn’t get to be famous. I’ve written a lot about that.”

In fact, Tongson is currently writing a book called Why Karen Carpenter Matters. “It’s a really short book about Karen Carpenter as a vocalist and as a drummer and her sound, and how that was cultivated in Southern California, in Long Beach in the choir rooms of Cal State Long Beach, playing the Jolly Roger, venues in the greater Downey region,” Tongson says.

Tongson’s pop sensibilities have led her around the world: She’s delivered dozens of lectures about karaoke, from Riverside to Germany. She’s written journal articles on topics from Downton Abbey to the collaborations of pop music artists, and gave a talk in London about the legendary Studio K, the Knott’s Berry Farm all-ages nightclub that was a hot spot throughout the 1980s. The classes she teaches at USC range from gender studies to contemporary literature to the culture of Southern California.

Tongson also has turned her attention to the less talked-about aspects of SoCal culture — or, perhaps more accurately, the parts that are apt to be derided. She writes about Riverside in terms of the British industrialists who capitalized on the citrus industry and imbued the area with Victorian architecture and sensibility. She explores the sprawling suburbs of “lesser Los Angeles,” to borrow a term from writer-performer Sandra Tsing Loh, the neighborhoods that stretch toward the desert and are full of seemingly cookie-cutter houses.

“They’re actually deeply customized,” Tongson says. “People have decided to add this fence or to paint it a particular way or put a bouncy house in the front yard. ... And with that, they bring with them their sense of style, their sense of what makes a home.”

Tongson sees herself as a culture “concierge” for Los Angeles, both lesser and greater. She delights in exposing her students, some of whom barely leave campus otherwise, to art galleries in Chinatown and music genres that originated in Long Beach.

“L.A. never ceases to surprise me,” she says. “I never feel like I have it figured out. Just when you think you have something figured out, it will confound you. It will frustrate you. Or you will find something completely out of the blue that you had no clue existed.”

“You never know what’s going to be up with L.A.” — KATHERINE SPIERS
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According to patients at the Center for Restorative Medicine, a discovery has completely transformed their lives.

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This unorthodox philosophy is what led Dr. Gundry to create an at-home method for fatigue — which has since become remarkably successful with his patients. “They’re reporting natural, long-lasting energy without a ‘crash’ and they’re feeling slim, fit and active,” he revealed yesterday.

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It makes a lot of sense, and it sounds great in theory, but we’ll have to wait and see what the results are. Knowing Dr. Gundry, however, there is a great deal of potential.

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f power in Los Angeles can be measured by the ability to cut the line at Howlin’ Ray’s, then George Yu is our city’s sovereign. Since the late 1970s, as executive director of the Chinatown Business Improvement District, Yu has been involved in various efforts encouraging the neighborhood’s growth, from attracting new entrepreneurs to minimizing the influence of gangs. But it wasn’t until a few years ago that Yu realized the singular power of restaurants to attract large crowds.

He’s responsible for the revitalization of Chinatown’s Far East Plaza, a two-story building wrapped around a courtyard that contains a now-empty fountain. Today the plaza is one of the most dynamic food centers in L.A., where hot spots include a chain of one-hour photo stores. Yu started dealing with food professionally in the late 1970s, when he joined the company that built, and still owns, Far East Plaza. In an extremely forward-thinking decision, every storefront was zoned for restaurant use. It would take almost three decades before the genius of that decision was fully realized.

“I don’t think anybody could have predicted the San Gabriel Valley coming into its own like that back in the ’70s. My mom actually purchased a property in 1977. She found a property in Monterey Park. And back then, we said, ‘Mom ... Monterey Park, I’ve barely heard of it.’” Two months after the sale went through, the previous owner returned, offering to buy back the building for twice what he’d sold it for.

In the 1980s Yu’s attention turned from Chinatown to pursuits in other parts of L.A., including a chain of one-hour photo stores. Still, he knew that Chinatown had cachet because it’s something to do to make ends meet — versus all these new guys, who are very educated. They have a plan and they have a passion,” he says.

His family made due with the limited Asian groceries they could find. Sesame paste, which in Taiwan is commonly paired with cold noodles, was re-created by the Yu family with Skippy peanut butter and salt. Yu started dealing with food professionally in the late 1970s, when he joined the company that built, and still owns, Far East Plaza. In an extremely forward-thinking decision, every storefront was zoned for restaurant use. It would take almost three decades before the genius of that decision was fully realized.

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In the 1980s Yu’s attention turned from Chinatown to pursuits in other parts of L.A., including a chain of one-hour photo stores. Still, he knew that Chinatown had cachet among a certain cohort of Angelenos. “Many of the places [in Far East Plaza] were open late at night, until after midnight for sure. Because there was no other place to go. So that’s where foodies back then went. There was certainly quite a lot of white folks waiting in line for these places,” he says.

But it was still the bad old days, when gangs were running extortion schemes against small business owners and the rotting corpses of rats hit by cars would fester in the streets for weeks. Yu, responding to both the entreaties of Far East Plaza’s owner and the dearth of government services in Chinatown, returned his focus to the neighborhood. “I ended up going on a lot of health inspections with tenants just to translate with the health department.” He also had city forms and health codes translated into Chinese. Then, in 2001 the Business Improvement District was implemented.

“The first 10, 12 years of the BID, I paid such little focus to Far East Plaza. And that’s my fault, but there was so much other stuff that we needed to do in the rest of the community,” Yu says. Once basic health and safety issues were addressed, Yu turned his attention to bringing a new generation of restaurateurs to Far East Plaza. The game had changed since the 1970s.

“It’s different from the original Chinese restaurants [in America] where people are typically not educated. They fall into it because I would never charge them rent until their store actually opens.”

Yu’s role has changed in many ways. It seems a lot more fun now than during the decades in which his most frequent phone calls were to exterminators and security companies. Scores of Angelenos would agree that there’s no better reward for a career spent working to a moment when Howlin’ Ray’s exists in a shopping center in Chinatown. —KATHERINE SPIERS
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In 2009, Rachel Sumekh popped up a table outside the dining hall at UCLA with a makeshift posterboard sign encouraging her peers to donate their extra meals to someone in need. The eager undergraduate and her friends saw an opportunity to revolutionize what they saw as a wasteful food system. One in seven college students is considered food-insecure, while their peers lose millions of extra meal points because they don’t use the entirety of their predetermined plan. Using one problem to address the other, Sumekh co-founded Swipe Out Hunger, which reallocates unredeemed meals to students in need.

While the solution seemed intuitive enough, university bureaucrats initially found it hard to swallow. Sumekh first gave students to-go boxes to collect extra food. But she was met with resistance. She recalls that a dining director actually smashed the boxes of collected food and issued them a warning: “Get this program the hell off my campus.”

Sumekh refers to the incident as a point of praxis. “It became so clear to me in that moment that we had to switch from being angry about how we pursued our work and think about it through the lens of partnership.”

After donating more than 300,000 meals to the hungry as a student organization, Swipe Out Hunger became a bona fide nonprofit and Sumekh signed on as executive director. Under her watch, the organization has grown up, serving more than 1.3 million meals to date.

At her desk at program headquarters, perched upon the glittering high-rise of downtown’s Gas Company Tower, the Woodland Hills native recounts her manifesto: “We need universities to view food on campus differently, as a human right. It’s actually about equity.”

At the helm of Swipe Out Hunger, Sumekh has leaned into the adversity of going against the grain. She has expanded the student-run chapter program to 26 universities across the nation and counting.

Last year, the University of California system commissioned Swipes for all nine campuses and Sumekh helped introduce a bill to the California State Assembly, which could put Swipes in the dining hall of every college in the state.

Swipe Out Hunger’s success is fueled by Sumekh’s self-reflection and brave experimentation. Leaving no life hack untested, she says she routinely questions how she can be a more mindful leader. “With each person I talk to, I get to have another glimpse into the world from their understanding,” she says. She describes her leadership style as “relationship-based.”

Despite myriad accolades, including being named a “Champion of Change” by President Obama and recognition on this year’s Forbes 30 Under 30 List for social entrepreneurs, Sumekh is notably down-to-earth. She demystifies her success at every turn in order to encourage others, whether she’s onstage at a public speaking gig or authoring a dispatch on social media. “Everyone is a leader, and I’m committed to having people realize that,” she says.

To understand the 25-year-old’s burning drive for sustainable systemic overhaul, one can look to the mantra emblazoned on her keychain: “Fucking shit up, thoughtfully.” —MARNIE SEHAYEK
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#LABURGERS
When reporters, lawyers and cops need a “gang expert,” the person they turn to often has a badge. The result can be a one-sided and myopic depiction of barrio life, says Alex Alonso, a professor of Chicano and Latino studies at Cal State Long Beach.

In Alonso’s view, law enforcement often dehumanizes gangsters, making it easier for society to embrace a lock-'em-up-and-throw-away-the-key approach. Yes, there are killers on the streets, and justice awaits them. But Alonso believes that each soul has redeemable qualities.

“We have been manipulated and brainwashed to believe a narrative fed to us by law enforcement: Most gang members are diabolical,” he says. “The opposite is the case.”

The academic got a close-up view of L.A.’s gangs while growing up in Mid-City and attending John Burroughs Middle School and Los Angeles High. He has documentation even from back then of his fascination with gangs. “I went to all the gang members,” he recalls, “and I said, ‘Hit up your gang in my yearbook.’”

Alonso’s dad is a street-hardened Korean war vet, and his uncle was a shot caller in a New York Puerto Rican gang. By the time he achieved his dream of going to USC to study geography as an undergraduate, Alonso was drawn to gang classes taught by legendary professors Malcolm Klein and James Vigil.

As a student in the mid-1990s, Alonso jumped on a geography class assignment to create a web page that came with university hosting. He created streetgangs.com, a repository of the history and vital stats of L.A. gangs.

Intended as a destination for the local gang-curious, the site grew to become encyclopedic, with histories, rivalries and links to news stories about shootings, beefs and court cases. It has become a magnet for gang members themselves, who often “net bang” by arguing with enemies and making threats in comment threads. Some post a “roll call” of clique members. Others offer rest-in-peace messages.

Alonso’s insight is rare. He downplays, for example, a recurring theme in law enforcement and media lore: that Latino gangs are constantly targeting African-Americans solely because of their race. While there allegedly have been hate crimes perpetrated by Latino gangs such as Big Hazard and Canoga Park Alabama, there is almost always a personal beef at their core, Alonso says.

Part of Alonso’s job involves knowing the rules of the streets and interviewing local gang legends with names like OG Beefy and Nutty Blocc. His YouTube videos profiling local gangs have amassed hundreds of thousands of views in total. In one of them, an Inglewood Family Bloods member describes “taking a shot to the head” that temporarily blinded him. In another, an ex-Boyle Heights Primera Flats member describes being a rare African-American member of a Latino gang; he started as part of a Pee-Wee Locos clique of elementary school-age gangsters.

“We were in the park and some black brothers came to the park,” the ex-member says, “and one of the guys pulled out a shotgun and blew one of our older homeboys’ heads off in broad daylight.”

It’s a gig that would make some quiver, but Alonso’s right at home. “Once I meet a lot of these guys, they think of me and treat me as one of them,” he says. “It goes back to me knowing how to navigate the streets since I was a kid — how to talk, how to walk, how to look, how not to look. My dad was very street-savvy, and this is everything that he taught me. The streets don’t change.” — DENNIS ROMERO
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L.A. IS A LONGTIME HUB FOR CREATIVE ARTS EDUCATION

Los Angeles has been a magnet for “creative types” for over a century, and the city’s higher education culture has evolved accordingly. We talked to five area schools offering bachelor’s degrees in the creative arts.

**CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF THE ARTS (CalArts)**

*Valencia*

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“CalArts, which focuses on the creative aspect of all art forms, is counter to most other conservatories, which emphasize mastery of technique,” said Robert Borden, CalArts’ Dean of Enrollment Management. “Experimentation is highly valued and encouraged. We seek those students who are clearly developing unique artistic voices, and encourage them to challenge the norm.”

All students pursuing bachelor’s degrees at CalArts are studying to earn a Bachelor of Fine Art (BFA) degree. A private university, it comprises six schools, each with its own concentration, spanning Art, Critical Studies, Dance, Film/Video, Music, and Theater.

“With a 6-1 Student-faculty ratio, class sizes are small and intimate,” said Borden. “Each student is assigned a personal mentor who helps guide their studies, their growth as an artist, and helps them plan and prepare for the career they seek.”

The majority of CalArts’ faculty members are professional artists, with specialties spanning everything from graphic design and photography to installation, digital media, and interdisciplinary visual art forms. Drawing upon diverse backgrounds, skills and philosophies,
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they help prepare graduates for an array of careers, with alumni working for the likes of Nike, Urban Outfitters, Pixar, and the Latin American Film Institute.

“These folks are creative directors, artistic directors, performers, founders, artists, writers, composers, actors, dancers, producers, technology visionaries and much more,” Borden explained.

CalArts graduates have also won Tony, Grammy and Emmy awards, with alumni including Pixar founder John Lasseter, actor Don Cheadle, and director Tim Burton.

“We have a Career Services office that helps students prepare for life after CalArts, helping them write resumes, obtain internships, become entrepreneurs, etc.” said Borden. “CalArts has an electronic ‘gig-board’ to share job openings. It has developed strong ties with industry partners who look to our students and graduates as the future talent pool for their enterprises.”

Examples of CalArts’ synergy with the “real world” of professional art include its Theater School’s Center for New Performance, which enables students to work shoulder-to-shoulder with celebrated artists to acquire experience that transcends any curriculum, and its HIVE Incubator, which helps support student product or business ideas.

“Students are also encouraged to take risks, fail, try again, collaborate, challenge authority and tradition,” Borden concluded. “The description that resonates deepest for me is that we are a ‘conservatory of the creative process’.”

ARTCENTER COLLEGE OF DESIGN

Pasadena

Opened in 1930 as Art Center School, today’s ArtCenter College of Design offers undergraduate and graduate programs in a wide variety of art and design fields at its two Pasadena campuses.

“[ArtCenter] offers a new model for art and design education in the 21st century. It’s rooted in the vision of our co-founder and first president, Edward ‘Tink’ Adams, who in 1930 pioneered a no-nonsense curriculum to prepare artists and designers for roles in industry,” said Kit Baron, ArtCenter’s Senior Vice President, Admissions and Enrollment Management. “While the College has expanded significantly since those days, and students now participate in
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a wide range of learning experiences, our reputation still revolves around the
caliber of our faculty and the intensity of our degree programs.”
A nonprofit, private college, ArtCenter offers undergraduate degrees in
Advertising, Entertainment Design, Environmental Design, Film, Fine Art,
Graphic Design, Illustration, Interaction Design, Photography and Imaging,
Product Design, and Transportation Design.
“Like a conservatory for aspiring performing artists, we offer a space for
dedicated art and design students to grow and thrive under the guidance of
a faculty of working design professionals and artists,” Baron explained. “Our
project-based interdisciplinary curriculum emphasizes ‘making’ and mirrors
real-world experiences.”
Widely recognized as the art and design college with the closest
connections to the professional world, ArtCenter provides an immersive,
intensive educational experience that is challenging yet supportive of
students’ personal development.
“Students will work hard, and through that hard work achieve substantial
growth,” Baron continued. “The ArtCenter experience involves mentoring
by an adept faculty, a culture of active critique among students and faculty,
and a program that provides a methodology for both skill and conceptual
development.”
The majority of ArtCenter faculty either own creative businesses or are
working full-time in professions taught at the school. In turn, their students
go on to careers in everything from art direction and character development
to furniture design and motion graphics. Alumni include Michelle
Christensen, Acura’s first female exterior car designer, and footwear industry
leaders Safir Bellali (Vans), Al Van Noy (Adidas) and Martin Lotti (Nike).
ArtCenter supports paid internship opportunities and includes a
Mentorship Program which brings students together with industry leaders.
“As a graduating student, you will have opportunities to network with
professionals and other valuable contacts while showcasing your work,” said
Baron. “We invite employers from around the world to visit open studios,
view student work, and discuss their organizations and positions currently
available.”
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Located in the heart of Hollywood Entertainment District, The Los Angeles Film School offers both associate and bachelor’s degrees relating to the entertainment industry. Founded in 1999, it introduces students to the professional requirements of the industry, including proficiency in current technical tools, while placing equal emphasis on imparting an understanding of the real-world landscape, hierarchy and business of entertainment.

“LAFS is not a school for hobbyists nor is it a liberal arts college, where one might defer a specific focus until they have completed general education courses,” said Joe Byron, LA Film School’s Director of Student and Alumni Engagement. “From orientation onward, students are instructed in how to succeed in the industry from participation in industry events, compiling portfolios and credentials to building their own brands and networking.”

LA Film School offers bachelor’s degrees in Film Production, Animation and Visual Effects, Entertainment Business, Digital Filmmaking, and Graphic Design. Its campus features soundstage and production stages as well as pro-sound recording, Foley, ADR, and mixing studios. Post-production equipment includes industry-favored Avid, Pro Tools, and other professional systems. Hands-on classes feature industry-standard cameras, lighting, and grip equipment (which are also available outside of classroom hours for student projects).

“The programs and projects are not simulations. Students are immersed in the professional aspects of their area of study, and we like to think they are interning for their future careers,” Byron continued. “The experience is accelerated, intense, and productive. Through passion and hard work, students experience the ethos of the industry and find they can be much more productive than they ever thought.”

LA Film School’s faculty boasts both industry experience and academic credentials. Notables include Hal Lieberman, program director of the Entertainment Business B.A. and active film producer (“Terminator 3” and “Bridge to Terabithia”); past President of Production for Universal Studios, Barbara Dunphy; and Linda Cowgill, author of “Writing the Short Film” and “The Art of Plotting.”

The college’s Career Development Department offers career advisement, internship and job search assistance, and a resource library, as well as hosting employer presentations and on-campus interviews.

“Many [alumni] pursue skill positions in cinematography, production design, sound, post-production, or other areas. These can lead to both union participation and entrepreneurship,” said Byron. “Likewise, content developers such as writers, directors, and producers may start as production assistants, coordinators, or interns working up the ladder, or due to the powerful demand of cable and streaming providers, many are able to create sellable product much sooner than in the past.”

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CALIFORNIA LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY
Thousand Oaks

Established in 1959, California Lutheran University (Cal Lutheran) is a private liberal arts university providing a broad range of academic programs including bachelor’s degrees in art, multimedia, music, music production and theater arts.

"With an average class size of 15 students, Cal Lutheran students have many opportunities to work closely with faculty members who are experienced and accomplished in the creative arts," said Karin Grennan, Cal Lutheran’s Media Relations Manager. "The possibilities for creative arts graduates are endless including careers as artists, actors, musicians, educators, designers, animators, web designers, graphic designers, art directors, choir directors, accompanists, sound engineers, mixers, producers, writers and technicians."

This fall, Cal Lutheran will unveil its new William Rolland Art Center: an $8 million, 20,000-square-foot building which will include studios for drawing, painting, multimedia, sculpture and ceramics. The university is also be adding a dance minor for the first time in the fall.

Cal Lutheran’s creative arts students are provided multiple opportunities to gain invaluable experience in their chosen field. Art and multimedia students produce a body of work that serves as the basis for their professional portfolio and seniors work together to design and install an exhibit of their collective work in campus galleries, while music students can perform with the Cal Lutheran Choir, Women’s Chorale, University Symphony and wind, percussion and jazz improvisation ensembles.

“Music production majors work in state-of-the-art studios and labs and put on the annual CalLuPalooza [music and arts festival],” Grennan explained. “Theater arts students can not only perform in multiple productions a year, but also get experience behind-the-scenes in publicity, sound, lighting, makeup, and stage and costume design.”

Most Cal Lutheran faculty members have earned doctorates or the terminal degrees in their field, while many are also award-winning current or former professionals.

“Many art professors use an atelier-inspired approach that allows students to observe them at work in their on-campus studios, and music faculty give regular concerts on campus,” Grennan continued. “With their many connections in professional and academic circles throughout the world, art faculty launched The Representational Art Conference in 2012.”

Cal Lutheran offers career counseling and coaching, as well as various internship programs. Ninety-seven percent of its graduates find a job or enroll in graduate school within nine months. Accomplished alumni include award-winning opera singer Jacquelyn Fontaine, celebrated glass sculptor John Luebtow, Emmy-nominated visual effects supervisor Ben Campanaro, and popular electronic dance music producer and DJ Patrick Borghei (aka PatrickReza).
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In January, Hollywood’s Gnomon – School of Visual Effects announced its first ever Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree program. Its BFA in Digital Production is a full-time, four-year program designed to produce production-ready artists.

“The BFA program has been in the works for 10 years, since the owners, Alex Alvarez and Darrin Krumweide, conceived of it as the next step in Gnomon’s educational offerings,” said Andrea Adams, Gnomon’s Director of Education: BFA. “The BFA builds carefully on the time-tested success of Gnomon’s signature vocational programs.”

Founded by Alvarez in 1997, Gnomon has been called “the MIT of visual effects” (by Fast Company magazine) and boasted a 96% placement rate for its students in 2016. Offering full-time two- and three-year programs, specialized courses for high school students, and over 100 individual courses for professional enrichment, Gnomon has educated many of the world’s best digital artists.

“Gnomon has a unique balance between traditional visual arts learning and cutting-edge 3D instruction,” said Adams. “The imagery our students create is professional-grade work, but because our foundation courses support the thoroughly-developed 3D technical pipeline, the art of storytelling remains intact.”

Gnomon’s instructors run the gamut from working animators with advanced degrees in fine art to industry veterans with experience on triple-A video games and blockbuster movies.

“Students should expect to work incredibly hard and be duly rewarded,” Adams continued. “Gnomon is small, community-engaged, and supportive. It’s not a typical college experience, of course – we’re located inside the Television Center Studio lot in the middle of Hollywood – which adds to the invigorating and purpose-driven atmosphere.”

Gnomon’s Placement and Alumni Relations Office works with students from orientation to graduation (and beyond), helping shepherd them into externships and career opportunities worldwide. Alumni are currently working everywhere from Industrial Light & Magic in San Francisco, London, and Singapore, to Weta Digital in New Zealand, as well as at major studios here in L.A.

The new BFA in Digital Production only expands the already broad range of educational and career opportunities offered by Gnomon.

“It’s a Generalist degree. Students are trained in a broad range of skills, from general education courses to highly technical 3D curricula,” Adams explained. “This provides students the ability to specialize within a specific field after graduation. Generalist graduates often are sought by studios in many aspects of production: commercial work, feature work, animation, and games.”
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here is no greater, more convenient combo than the liquor store/deli hybrid. Except for maybe KFC/Taco Bells — those are pretty fantastic, too. Oh and also those bars where they have a bunch of arcade games from the mid-'90s, because getting thrown out of a Chuck E. Cheese for brown-bagging it isn’t a good look for anyone. But when you’re in the market for a ham sandwich, a tall boy of Tecate and a brown-bagging it isn’t a good look for a solid sub sandwich to go along with all your beach drinking needs. But you can buy alcohol anywhere. What separates Redondo Liquor from the rest of the venerable hybrids is Los Caballitos, the in-store deli counter, which makes a shockingly good chorizo breakfast burrito (as long as some shredded iceberg in your breakfast burrito doesn’t weird you out). If you want to stick to the classic deli ahtick, you can get an OK pastrami or tuna salad sandwich, but don’t be afraid to branch out and eat a steak picado plate on the hood of your car in the parking lot. 529 S. Catalina Ave., Redondo Beach; (310) 540-6789.

Tinfoil Liquor & Grocery

One thing that makes the LSDH so great is the lack of intent. It was born from pure convenience — people need alcohol and life necessities, and people need sandwiches, so they might as well exist under the same roof. Creating a LSDH and trying to pass it off as a “sandwich speakeasy” for irony’s sake while slinging $15 hipsterized sandwiches seems antithetical to all the reasons LSDHs exist. That said, once you actually go to Tinfoil and shove a roast beef sandwich slathered in yuzu kosho (a citrus-chile-salt rub) in your mouth, you start to get the appeal. There’s a tone of whimsy to what’s otherwise quite a serious sandwich joint.

Tinfoil Liquor & Grocery

That said, should you choose to experience it right, this is an LSDH at its finest. You can get a bottle of champagne for $4.99 and there’s a full list of slightly Italian-leaning subs and salads at the deli counter. Get the crumbled meatball sub — it’s like an Italian sloppy joe, and it’s the exact type of tasty, convenient, whimsical-ass food LSDHs were made for. Multiple locations. vendomes.com.

Vendome Wine & Spirits

The Fullerton-based mini-chain has locations in Toluca Lake, Studio City and Beverly Hills, making convenience food more convenient than ever. Calling Vendome a liquor store would really be giving it short shrift. The stores have a well-curated, well-manicured selection of wines from around the world — some of which fall in the triple-digit-dollar club — and they offer tastings on weekends. That said, should you choose to experience it right, this is an LSDH at its finest. You can get a bottle of champagne for $4.99 and there’s a full list of slightly Italian-leaning subs and salads at the deli counter. Get the crumbled meatball sub — it’s like an Italian sloppy joe, and it’s the exact type of tasty, convenient, whimsical-ass food LSDHs were made for. Multiple locations. vendomes.com.

Greenblatt’s Delicatessen & Fine Wine Shop

This 90-year-old, two-story Sunset Boulevard institution is like being inside your bubble’s knish-and-pinkie wine-filled fever dream. It’s an absolute trip. There’s a full-on dining room upstairs, and the downstairs section is all sprawling deli meats and worldly wines. The matzoh ball soup has huge chunks of mirepoix and oily schmaltz bits floating on the broth, the latkes are served with an unnecessar-ily large bowl of applesauce, and, of course, there are giant piles of paper-thin pastrami and/or corned beef in just about every sandwich. Being able to pick up a bottle of Cotes du Rhone to pair with your chicken liver on pumpernickel is an experience that every Angeleno should have. 8017 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood; (323) 656-0606, greenblattsdeli.com.

Mickey’s Italian Delicatessen & Liquor Store

Ambiance is a factor that should never be overlooked in the LSDH experience. At Mickey’s, just a bottle cap’s throw from the ocean, you can bask in the seaside breeze under an umbrella on the patio, or sit at a communal unfinished-wood table next to the deli, surrounded by towering cases of wine. It’s a good place to be. And the sandwiches at Mickey’s are absolutely top-notch. The eggplant Parm has a glorious mush of tomato and cheese, and while the Italian Combo won’t exactly rival the Godmother, it still hits all the right notes. Mickey’s gets bonus points for having some killer pizza by the slice, too. You won’t be blown away by the craft beer selection, but sometimes a 30-rack of Coors Light does the job just fine. 101 Hermosa Ave., Hermosa Beach; (310) 376-2330, mickeysdeli.com.

RESTAURANT HISTORY

Olvera Street’s Oldest Restaurants Serve Up Mexican-American History

By opening new restaurant Chiguacle, Sabor Ancestral de Mexico, on Olvera Street this year, owners Alonso and Elsa Arelleno have achieved two notable feats. One is offering a menu that includes pre-Hispanic “ancestral flavors of Mexico,” such as mole made from huitlacoche. It is also one of the few restaurants to open on the historic street in decades. Its nearest neighbor, La Luz del Día — a relative newcomer in Olvera Street terms — has been there since 1959. While Olvera Street’s long-lasting restaurants occasionally are dismissed today as tourist traps that serve mediocre Tex-Mex fare, at their inception they were innovative and groundbreaking, adding something important to L.A. culture.

The story of food on modern-day Olvera Street begins with the magnetic restaurateur Consuelo Castillo de Bonzo. Called “the spirit of Mexico, the patron saint of Olvera Street, the ideal of Mexican charm and culture for many thousands of us” by columnist Lee Shippey in a 1932 L.A. Times column.
article, Consuelo was born in Mexico before her mother brought her, still a baby, to Los Angeles around 1899. She grew up enameored of her Mexican heritage and determined to revive Mexican culture in an increasingly whitewashed Los Angeles. “At that time everything was called Spanish, even though it originated in Mexico,” she told the Times in 1955. “There’s as much difference between the two as English and American!”

In 1924, the effervescent and enterprising de Bonzo, whose Italian husband had recently fallen ill, decided to open her first restaurant at 123 S. Spring St. She planned to serve traditional recipes passed down from her mother and others in the community. She also insisted on honoring her Mexican heritage, and faced discrimination and skepticism as a result. According to a 1932 profile in the Times:

“She decided to open a Mexican restaurant where the City Hall now stands. Everyone advised her not to do it. Some urged her to call it a Spanish restaurant. The health department eyed her suspiciously. She couldn’t even get a license at first but operated under a temporary permit, for authorities believed her venture couldn’t last more than a month. But she showed such a desire to have just the place the health department would approve that she aroused interest. When she opened the restaurant, a big banner announced “Mexican Cooking.” It was good because she did most of it herself. She had good crowds from the first.”

And so the first contemporary Mexican restaurant in Los Angeles was born. When a few years later de Bonzo was forced to move due to the construction of the new City Hall, she opened a new restaurant, La Mision, which became enormously popular with both city officials and popular film stars like Ramon Navarro. So it was no surprise that when socialite Christine Sterling began to lay out plans to transform Olvera Street, the site of the original pueblo of Los Angeles, into a romanticized, living-history replica of pre-U.S. Los Angeles, she went to her friend de Bonzo for support. De Bonzo told the Times, “It looked like an impossible dream, but it was the first important effort to give Los Angeles and its visitors a new vision of Mexican arts and customs. I wanted to aid such a movement as that, whether it succeeded or not. And Mrs. Sterling was so ardent about it that it seemed possible when she talked — though it seemed impossible when I went and looked at the squalid street as it then was. So I was the first to move in.”

On April 19, 1930, de Bonzo’s new restaurant, La Golondrina Cafe, made its debut. Situated in the historic Pelanconi House, L.A.’s first brick home (built circa 1855), the warm and inviting cafe served as the anchor of the new Olvera Street. A banquet was held, with de Bonzo’s mother offering the blessing, and the doors were thrown open to L.A.’s social elite. The next day, Olvera Street was officially opened to the public.

La Golondrina and its charming owner, who also acted as the restaurant’s hostess, were an immediate hit. De Bonzo championed Mexican dancers, singers, musicians and artists at La Golondrina. Mexican superstar Dolores Del Rio was a regular. There were nightly concerts and dances featuring traditional Mexican performances, and whenever possible, de Bonzo attempted to introduce her (mostly white) patrons to her culture’s customs. The same 1932 Times article said:

“Last New Year’s Eve, when midnight struck and throughout the city people were shooting, ringing bells and making outlandish noise, Señora Bonzo cried, ‘Friends, I have asked you here to follow Mexican customs, and in Mexico at this moment we always say a little prayer.’ And her crowd, including Hollywood actors, reverently followed her lead. Where else can you find a restaurant with that kind of atmosphere?”

Other restaurants soon joined La Golondrina. Elena Pelufo and Frank Webb opened El Paseo Inn in 1930. In 1934, a Mexican woman named Aurora Guerrero, who had come to Los Angeles with her children in search of her husband a few years before, asked Sterling if she could open a food stand on the corner of Alameda and Macy Street (now Cesar Chavez Avenue). Sterling agreed, but only if she would “sell something different” from the other food vendors on Olvera Street. Guerrero accepted the challenge, and after numerous tests runs her world-famous taquitos with avocado sauce were born.

The Guerrero family soon was selling the taquitos out of their food stand, which they named Cielito Lindo. With no kitchen or running water, they initially cooked the food at home and drew water from a nearby gas station. In 1947, Aurora’s daughter Ana Natalia opened the perennially popular Las Anitas Restaurant across Olvera Street from her family’s iconic stand. Despite the success of families like the Guerreross, de Bonzo remained the Olvera Street food scene’s undisputed grand dame. As is tradition on Olvera Street, de Bonzo’s family worked with her at La Golondrina. “My parents met here; they fell in love,” granddaughter Vivien recalls. “My mother was a singer and worked for my grandmother, and my father used to sweep. We learned a work ethic in our family.”

The hardest worker may have been de Bonzo herself. She continued to team with Sterling in their shared mission to keep Olvera Street thriving. According to Vivien, “They were both bossy females, and they were too big for their britches. They had some good fights, I’ve heard. They ended up friends.” Throughout the ’40s, ’50s and ’60s, de Bonzo could be found “holding court nightly” at La Golondrina. During the day she was busy with one of the many charities she was involved with, including the Mexican Welfare Committee, the Latin American Civil Defense Corps and the National Conference of Christians and Jews. When she died in 1977, Señora Bonzo was hailed as the “Queen of Olvera Street.”

Today, visitors to Olvera Street can still eat at La Golondrina, El Paseo Inn, Cielito Lindo and Las Anitas. Or they can patronize other long-running Olvera Street eateries such as Juanita’s (established in 1944), which have occupied smaller stalls for decades. And if they are in the mood for something both new and old, they can venture into Chiguacle for some pre-Hispanic home cooking. —Hadley Meares
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On May 5, 1862, a ragtag group of Mexican soldiers enjoyed an improbable victory over the better-outfitted French forces in the Battle of Puebla, so now a bunch of Americans commemorate the day by eating tacos and drinking beers. Isn’t history funny that way? There’s no better place to do those aforementioned things than at Hecho in L.A. Taco Madness, a Cinco de Mayo taco bonanza at La Plaza de Cultura y Artes. Vendors including Mariscos Jalisco, Chichén Itzá Restaurant, Tacos Punta Cabras, Cantinas El Momo, Guerrilla Tacos, Yuca’s Restaurants and Churro Boss will have eats available for purchase, and I Love Micheladas will be on the scene slinging mix to add to your Golden Road beer. Mexican-American DJ trio Metralleta de Oro and DJ Que Madre spin songs so you can dance off the tacos. And then eat more tacos. La Plaza de Cultura y Artes, 624 N. Main St., downtown; Fri., May 5, 6 p.m.-mid.; free. facebook.com/events/845723565689543.

–Gwynedd Stuart

FOOD & DRINK

Where There’s Smoke ...

Yes, it’s customary to eat Mexican food on Cinco de Mayo (see above), but if you’ve got smoked meats on the brain, flee to the far reaches of L.A. County for BBQ & Beer Festival. The festivities kick off Friday with a beer-centric evening featuring free craft beer samples from local and national breweries. Saturday is all about the BBQ: Nosh on ribs and things from Busy Bee Cafe, Black Sugar Rib Company, It’s in the Sauce BBQ, and West BBQ and others, while sipping suds from national and SoCal breweries, like Angel City, Golden State Cider and Bootleggers Brewery. All three days feature live music, but Sunday’s focal point is the blues, with tunes from Tommy Castro and the Painkillers. Central Park, 27150 Bouquet Canyon Road, Santa Clarita; Fri., May 5, 5:30-9:30 p.m.; Sat., May 6, noon-8 p.m.; Sun., May 7, noon-6 p.m.; $40 Fri., $10 Sat. & Sun. bbqandbeerfestival.com. –Gwynedd Stuart

DANCE

Bigger & Better

For its fifth edition, the L.A. Dance Festival has gone on steroids, expanding to three weeks with a bumper crop of 45 choreographers spread over seven shows at two venues. The festival is well known as the annual event to catch up with established and emerging local dance, but this year producer Deborah Brockus has assembled an expanded roster with pretty much all of the big-name local companies and choreographers. Master classes and centralized company auditions launched the festival last weekend, but this week begins the Fringe performance component at the festival’s traditional home near downtown; next week the action moves to West L.A. for the Main Stage shows. Diavolo Performance Space at the Brewery, 616 Moulton Ave., Lincoln Heights; Fri., May 5, 8:30 p.m.; Sat., May 6, 7 & 9:30 p.m.; Sun., May 7, 6 & 8 p.m.; $25-$30. ladancefest.org. (Also at Theater Raymond Kabbaz, 10361 W. Pico Blvd., Century City; Thu., May 11, 7-10 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., May 12-13, 8 p.m.; Sun., May 14, 6 p.m.; $25-$40. thea treraymondkabbaz.com.) –Ann Haskins

ARTS & CULTURE

Needles and Pins

Pin collecting never went away; people have long been gathering the tiny souvenirs as an extension of their love of places like Disneyland and events like the Olympics. Still, enamel pins are having a moment right now, and Gallery Nucleus is showcasing the artsy variety of these collectibles with its first Pin-Pal-Palooza. The Alhambra hot spot for pop culture–related shows has assembled a hefty group of vendors, including 100% Soft, Joe Ledbetter, Kimchicat and more, to set up shop inside the gallery on Saturday afternoon. Of course, they’ll have pins for purchase, in addition to other items. At press time, illustrator Kevin Jay Stanton is known to be releasing a new pin for this event; other pin debuts will be announced via Gallery Nucleus’ socials. Gallery Nucleus, 210 E. Main St., Alhambra; Sat., May 6, noon-7 p.m.; free. (626) 458-7482, gallerynucleus.com. –Siran Babayan

FUNDRAISERS

I’m Only Humane

Founded in 1999 by Melya Kaplan, the Santa Monica–based nonprofit Voice for the Animals promotes animal protection through education, rescue and legislation; recently, the foundation has been attempting to move a Malaysian-born elephant named Billy from the L.A. Zoo, his home since 1989, to a sanctuary where he can roam more freely. For the organization’s annual fundraiser, comedian Paul Scheer hosts Wait Wait, Don’t Kill Me!, a quiz-style comedy show (in the style of NPR’s Wait Wait ... Don’t Tell Me!), where guest panelists Craig Ferguson, June Diane Raphael, Whitney Cummings, Casey Wilson and Lily Tomlin, an honorary board member, will compete in various animal-themed games. UCLA Royce Hall, 340 Royce Drive, Westwood; Sat., May 6, 8 p.m.; $25-$100. (310) 392-5153, vftafoundation.org. –Liz Ohanesian
sun 5/7

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Well Composed

In 2014, the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film began including statistics on female composers in its Celluloid Ceiling Report, and the results were groundbreaking, showing that only 1 percent of the music in the top 250 films of that year was composed by women. That number had risen by the 2016 report — but only to 3 percent. The Future Is Female: A Concert for Women in Film counters those dire statistics. Here, 10 women who work in various aspects of the film and television music world will showcase their original compositions, played by the Hollywood Chamber Orchestra. They include Tori Letzler, a young composer known for her work as a singer on projects like American Horror Story: Coven and Batman v Superman; and Vivian Aguilar-Buff, who founded her own studio after working on projects like Captain America: The Winter Soldier and Big Hero 6. Ann and Jerry Moss Theater, 3131 Olympic Blvd., Santa Monica; Sun., May 7, 8 p.m.; $15. (310) 828-5588. ffcerten.com. —Liz Chanesian

tue 5/9

POP CULTURE

Bite Your Tongue

ABC’s new family sitcom Speechless, currently in its first season, centers on a not-so-wealthy couple living in upscale Newport Beach raising three kids, including a teenager with cerebral palsy, who communicates by using a board attached to his wheelchair and with help from a school aide. Hosted by the Paley Center for Media, An Evening With Speechless features an episode screening and discussion with the cast and crew, including actors Minnie Driver, John Ross Bowie, Mason Cook, Micah Fowler, Kyla Kenedy and Cedric Yarbrough, in addition to executive producers Scott Silveri, Melvin Mar and Jake Kasdan. The Paley Center for Media, 465 N. Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills; Tue., May 9, 7 p.m.; $25. (310) 786-1000, paleycenter.org. —Siran Babayan

wed 5/10

POP CULTURE & FOOD

Everybody Loves Phil

Everyone knows Phil Rosenthal as the creator of Everybody Loves Raymond, but what you may not know is that for one season he had his own food travel show on PBS, I’ll Have What Phil’s Having (soon to air on Netflix). The series followed Rosenthal as he tried the cuisine in Paris, Barcelona, Tokyo, Hong Kong and parts of Italy, as well as in his home turf of Los Angeles, with help from Ray Romano, Martin Short, Norman Lear, Paul Reiser, Allison Janney, Roy Choi and Ludo Lefebvre. Moderated by food writer Lara Rabinovitch, Ph.D., Skirball Cultural Center’s Hollywood at the Table features Rosenthal and Lefebvre
discussing “life in the creative and culinary spotlights.” Lefebvre, chef and co-owner of restaurants Trois Mec, Petit Trois and Trois Familia, will sign his first cookbook, 2005’s Crave: The Feast of the Five Senses. Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Brentwood; Wed., May 10, 8 p.m.; $15. (310) 440-4500, skirball.org. —Siran Babatyan

thu

MUSEUMS

Summer of Love

Before Woodstock, Glastonbury and Coachella, there was the Monterey International Pop Festival. Held over three days in June 1967 in Monterey, it was the first American rock festival and the breakout stage for Janis Joplin, Otis Redding and Ravi Shankar, as well as The Who and the Jimi Hendrix Experience, who, as the famous story goes, tossed a coin to see which would perform first. The Grammy Museum’s current exhibit, “Monterey International Pop Festival: Music, Love and Flowers, 1967,” features co-producer Lou Adler’s personal artifacts, in addition to items belonging to Joplin, Hendrix, Shankar, The Grateful Dead and other concert artists and photographs by Henry Diltz, Tom Gundelfinger O’Neal, Elaine Mayes and Ed Caraeff. The display is among many 50th-anniversary events happening this year, including the Monterey International Pop Festival in June and the rerelease of D.A. Pennebaker’s 1968 documentary, Monterey Pop. Grammy Museum, 800 W. Olympic Blvd., downtown; opens Thu., May 11, 10:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. (through Oct. 22); $12.95, $11.95 seniors & students, $10.95 children, free under 5. (213) 765-6800, grammymuseum.org/exhibits/current-exhibits/monterey-pop. —Siran Babatyan

FILM

Viva Mexico

Despite the tequila-soaked antics of many an American spring breaker, Cinco de Mayo is not simply an excuse to party. Nor is it, as many north of the border have mistakenly assumed, Mexico’s Independence Day (that would be Sept. 16). Instead, the holiday commemorates the 1862 Battle of Puebla, in which an outmanned and outgunned Mexican force managed to vanquish the invading French army, then considered the finest in the world. A symbolic rather than strategic victory, the battle was a source of pride and unity for the Mexican people, and the holiday still inspires such feelings in Mexicans around the world. Rafa Lara’s 2013 film Cinco de Mayo: La Batalla depicts the political machinations and military strategy behind the conflict with plenty of the action-packed battle scenes that we’ve come to expect from this kind of historical epic. Centro Cultural Cinematográfico México, 2401 W. Sixth St., Westlake; Thu., May 11, 4:30 p.m.; free. facebook.com/events/1085577774879760. —Matt Stromberg

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BY CATHERINE WAGLEY

This week, three Boyle Heights shows explore otherworldly spirituality, aliens and corporate cults, while a filmmaker tracks down the nearly extinct white rhino.

Did aliens take the babies?
Monarca Lynn Merrifield’s paintings have more over-saturated, sci-fi intensity than covers of fantasy paperbacks. She has, in fact, illustrated books: Her painting of wise men following a UFO rather than a star graces the front of the *The Bible and Flying Saucers* (1968). Even fuller, more vibrant paintings by Merrifield hang in “The Basilisk,” currently up at Nicodim Gallery. In *Passover* (2016), the pyramids glow in the distance as UFOs arrive in the sky from every direction, sending beams of light down on livestock, tents and a baby wailing in the foreground, his mother equally distraught behind him. In *Adam*, the first man dives naked and fully formed from a spaceship toward our waiting planet. 571 S. Anderson St., Boyle Heights; through May 27. (323) 262-0260, nicodimgallery.com.

Satanic cult of Hobby Lobby
COBRA and Ken Kagami’s collaborative, six-minute video is hard to watch. The protagonist has lost his penis (he looks down and it’s just not there), so he pulls off his bedding, looking everywhere. All the while, it’s taunting him from the side of the screen, a rubber member hopping up and down. Later, when he’s served up a plate of rubber penises with sauce, you might have to turn away (I did). The video plays in the basement of 356 Mission, part of a group show called “Sayonara Jupiter,” pulled together by two Tokyo-based art spaces: XYZ Collective and Misako & Rosen. Stephen G. Rhodes strung up fabric curtains to make his assemblages, which look like puppet show sets. In *Bad Hobby Freedom Amendment: Bad Buddies*, Rhodes continues a project he began after the Hobby Lobby decision: imagining what would happen if a Satanic cult, perhaps desiring the same religious freedoms, were to undertake a remodel of the craft store. Two doll ducks wearing cowboy hats and bandit masks dangle from patterned fabric, positioned inside a triangle made of pink thread. 356 S. Mission Road, Boyle Heights; through June 4, (323) 609-3162, 356mission.com.

The last rhino
Diana Thater traveled to Kenya this year and last, filming the landscape and the last surviving white male rhino. In the slow-moving, hypnotic videos she made, now at the Mistake Room, the rhino is always in the company of armed guards, stationed to protect him from poachers. Often he appears alongside quiet footage of a majestic landscape, a meditation on vastness and finitude, since with this one rhino dies a species. Thater has constructed stand-alone viewing structures by intersecting two see-through screens and projecting footage from two ceiling-mounted projectors. You have to walk in circles to get the whole feel of the footage, though this means you feel compelled to move while watching videos that otherwise encourage stillness. 1811 E. 20th St., downtown; through June 3, (213) 749-1200, tmrla.

No talking heads
Arthur Jafa, whose ever-shifting, eating-then-violent video collage plays at MOCA, will screen his earlier film *Dreams Are Colder Than Death* (2014) this week. A documentary, *Dreams* pairs a voice-over of interviews with specialists, artists and others about being black in the 21st century with images culled from pop culture and film history. So we see charged depictions of cultural realities and fantasies while hearing the experts, and non-experts, speak. For the film, Jafa interviewed Saidiya Hartman, author of a searing book on terror and resistance during and after slavery. She will interview him after the screening. 152 N. Central Ave., downtown; Thu., May 11, 7 p.m.; $8-$15. (213) 625-4390, moca.org.

Praying in the apocalypse
Certain paintings in Christopher Orr’s “The Inmost Light” at Ibid, recall HBO’s *The Leftovers*. The world might be ending and a lot of ad-hoc religious ceremony seems to be going on. Some paintings recall thrift-store finds, half-finished scenes made with grisy colors but endearing all the same. In one painting three figures, all waist-deep in water, stand in a circle holding hands as massive leaves arc over them. Sketch marks in the greenish-yellow background give this painting its half-finished feel. A rock — a meteor? — nearly hits the dirt ground of a vaguely defined landscape in *Untitled (Why Are We Sleeping)*. 670 S. Anderson St., Boyle Heights; through July 8. (323) 395-8914, ibidgallery.com.

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A KISS WITH A TWIST
Odyssey Theatre’s relationship melodrama Kiss morphs into another kind of play altogether

BY DEBORAH KLUGMAN

In Kiss, directed by Bart DeLorenzo at the Odyssey Theatre, Chilean playwright Guillermo Calderón explores the gap (one might say chasm) in perspective between people who live in a war-free society (ourselves, at least for now), and those trapped in the horrors of war who are subject to atrocities committed by vile men, like Syria’s Assad.

But that intent isn’t evident at the start of the play, whose opening sequence involves two couples who become caught up in a network of obfuscation and betrayal after one of the men, Youssif (Kevin Matthew Reyes), falls passionately in lust with his buddy’s girlfriend, Haleel (Kristin Couture), — and she with him. Each man, unbeknownst to the other, has chosen the same day and time to propose. Or do they? At this point, the playwright inserts an unexpected twist; the overheated melodrama we’ve been watching morphs into another kind of play entirely, one that touches in a significant way on cultural relativism, the subjectivity of human experience and the role of art and artists in transcribing tragic events.

IF I COULD SAY MORE I WOULD, BUT SO MUCH OF THE DRAMATIC IMPACT HERE DEPENDS ON THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE THAT TO DO SO WOULD BE A SPOILER.

Or do they? At this point, the playwright inserts an unexpected twist; the overheated melodrama we’ve been watching morphs into another kind of play entirely, one that touches in a significant way on cultural relativism, the subjectivity of human experience and the role of art and artists in transcribing tragic events.

If I could say more I would, but so much of the dramatic impact here depends on the element of surprise that to do so would be a spoiler. I will note that, although it grows darker, Kiss (almost) never loses its comic edge. Divisible into three scenes, it is strongest in the middle; the last part goes on too long.

As the dominating force in the four-some, Anna stands out for her keen and entertaining performance as a loquacious take-charge gal unafraid to make her feelings known. The other three serve the story capably, but their portrayals could be crisper, and there’s room to expand and deepen their characters.

Designer Katelan Braymer’s lighting helps drive home the play’s ironic point. Videography, by contrast, is striking, and colonial period under French rule. The videography, by contrast, is striking, and helps drive home the play’s ironic point.
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BY JILLIAN SCHEINFELD

There are few people in the world who can say they’ve done acid with a group of hippie clergymen from Milwaukee, but Roger Steffens is one of them.

At the 75-year-old’s home in Echo Park on a Sunday afternoon, surrounded by Jamaican ephemera, a plate of freshly ground weed and a Pan-African color scheme, the reggae archivist, actor and counterculture icon began to re-enact what it was like to watch “Brother Lawrence” on his first acid trip in 1966. Roger slumped in the dining room chair, rolled his eyes back into his head and began moaning in ecstasy while his daughter Kate and I sat in suspense.

Steffens’ fondness for theatrics goes way back to his teen years as a Shakespeare-trained actor and Goldwater conservative who attended Catholic school for 14 years. A Brooklyn-born kid with a squeaky-clean image, his life changed drastically when he was drafted to Vietnam in 1968 and subsequently became radicalized. This counterculture-infused radicalization was buttressed by a multitude of vivid acid trips in places from Saigon to Marrakesh to Big Sur.

Throughout the span of his colorful, idiosyncratic life, the multihyphenate has amassed more than 40,000 photos, which were digitized by Kate and her brother, Devon, and displayed on Instagram. Add their sweet, spirit-guide mother, Mary, into the mix and you have: @TheFamilyAcid.

After two years working in psychological operations, aka propaganda warfare, in Vietnam and a short stint in Marrakesh, Roger settled into life with his wife, Mary, whom he met while tripping on acid in a pygmy forest in Mendocino, and a crew of beatnik writers, poets and counterculture war veterans, from photographer Tim Page to writer Ron Kovic.

Kate was used to seeing her father’s trippy double-exposure pictures during family slideshow hour as a kid but never thought of showing them publicly until 2013, when Devon spent an entire year digitizing approximately 40,000 Kodachrome slides.

That’s taken so many years to share these incredible photographs in any medium at all is more a testament to Roger’s zeal for emphatically living life than anything else. Kate says, “I think he’s so in the moment that he files the pictures away and goes on to the next moment. It’s more like record keeping.”

Roger’s fastidious “record keeping” and Kate’s eye for curating have led to a 50-year-plus Instagram account of slide photography with 42,600 followers along with two photography books, The Family Acid and The Family Acid: Jamaica ($50), which was released in March.

Jamaica chronicles Steffens’ 40-plus trips to the island. On his first jaunt to Kingston in 1976, he and Mary went to buy records — unknowingly during a national state of emergency — and ended up taking refuge at Jimmy Cliff’s house.

Three years later, Steffens co-launched KCRW’s The Reggae Beat, L.A.’s first week-
GUARDIANS OF INANITY

Marvel's latest has laughs but settles for a dispiriting conventionality

BY APRIL WOLFE

fter The Fate of the Furious premiered, talk of that franchise’s ever slicker, more over-thetop future turned to the promise (and hope) of R-rated jumping the shark right into space. But what if … it was already there? And it was named, instead, instead, Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2?

In this follow-up to the tongue-in-cheek Marvel original that put the fun back into comic-book adaptations, the gang — Peter Quill (Chris Pratt), Gamora (Zoe Saldana), Rocket (Bradley Cooper) and Groot (Vin Diesel), now a sapling — battle space villains together like a rock-solid family unit right out of the Fast films. The importance of family was already in the spotlight in the first film, which saw Quinyearning to meet his mystical father and Gamora grappling with her role in turning her sister, Nebula (Karen Gillan), into a homicidal robot (they battled for dad’s attention as kids). In Vol. 2, that fascination slides into overdrive, swallowing the plot line when Kurt Russell shows up as Ego, Quill’s powerful godfather; will Quill give up his new family when his old one shows up?

Just like Fast, Vol. 2 aims to please with breathtaking set pieces that’ll convince you to delete all your old diatribes about CGI ruining the movies. But no matter how funny writer-director James Gunn wants this film to be — the one-liners move at lightspeed — too many of the punch lines are referential; how much comedy can you milk from the mere mention of David Hasselhoff? Gunn’s on a mission to find out.

The opening scene doubles as a spectacular credits sequence. Baby Groot discs oblivious around a space battlefield to “Mr. Blue Sky” while the rest of the team wrassles with a tentacled glob monster that has stolen priceless batteries from a race of genetically perfected golden people. The comedy comes from the Guardians continually interrupting the battle to take turns saving the boogiebaby, who choc, trips and picks the wrong fights with little lizards. The scene hits all the right notes yet still feels derivative; it reminded me immediately of Ally McBeal when she’d dancing baby, an 8-bit animated infant that primly gyrates to Blue Suede’s “Ooga-Chaka” hit “Hooked on a Feeling” to warn Ally of her ticking biological clock. The concept is the same: nostalgic song paired with irresistible cute in a purportedly wired-up entertainment. And Baby Groot is irresistible — if Marvel hasn’t made a dancing Baby Groot doll that plays ELO songs, it’s blowing a major opportunity.

Monster dispatched, the team collects its reward. Nebula. Gamora is hell-bent on turning her vengeful sister in to the space authorities for her crimes, but Rocket’s more interested in stealing those batteries himself. The golden folks don’t take kindly to this and sic a fleet of battleships on the Guardians. These warmongering, self-important glowing narcissists — who are so precious that they all remotely control their battleships to nonchalantly murder people from the comfort of their own homes — are the source of the film’s most inventive and unexplored ideas; we get an unnerving scene of these beings treating the whole battle against the Guardians as if they’re playing an arcade game. The topics of genetic perfection and a ruling class that disposes of its enemies with a merciless technology seem worthy of inspection if only for the sly social criticism of drones, but that would have to come from another film. This one is stiflingly FAMILY ONLY.

Out of nowhere, Russell’s Ego saves the day and entices Quill and Gamora to come to his planet while Rocket repairs the ship and looks after Groot and Nebula. Ego’s more powerful than anything they’ve ever seen, a builder of planets, including his own, which is like a Technicolor Shangri-La, with many-spired castles and luscious flora and waterfalls dripping from every structure. But Ego’s too good to be true. And Russell’s too good for this movie. His easy shifts from humor to Acting (with a capital A) highlight by contrast how little substance Pratt brings to his role (and his reliance on Pac-Man jokes). Even supporting actors like Michael Rook, playing disgraced villain Yondu, show up the young actor. Pratt comes off like the bratty suburban imitation of Russell, a child in a man’s body, which seems indicative of our cultural arrested adolescence — and becomes all the more annoying as Gunn pushes the Quill-Gamora romance. Quill, of course, refers to them as “Sam and Diane.”

God, I wish Gamora were Diane. Because Shelley Long’s Diane was funny and stupid and interesting and flawed. Why in these blockbuster adventures — outside of the new Star Wars — does the woman character always have to be the mother hen: the most talented, the smartest on the team, the one who sacrifices intimacy for her career; the killjoy sold as “strong” but curiously lacking in dimensionality and humor, even as she runs in heels and is treated as “the girl.”

With Baby Groot around, the nuclear family structure is further honored: Here’s harpy mom and fun dad. That grates more as the film goes on. Baby Groot only says the words “I am Groot,” yet the writers manage to set up huge laughs for him. The only memorable line Gamora gets is when, frustrated by Quill’s advances, she bellows, “I don’t know who Sam and Diane are!” It might make you wish the director didn’t either, because the next film seems to promise even more will-they-won’t-they sexual pseudo-tension.

WHY IN THESE BLOCKBUSTER ADVENTURES — OUTSIDE OF THE NEW STAR WARS — DOES THE WOMAN CHARACTER ALWAYS HAVE TO BE THE MOTHER HEN?

AZAZEL JACOBS’ THE LOVERS PLUNBS THE MYSTERIES OF MATRIMONY

A comedy, and also a tragedy, of remarriage — without couples counseling or divorce — writer-director Azazel Jacobs’ The Lovers revitalizes its genre with a poignant premise: What happens when long-wedded spouses, each with a romantic partner outside their dormant dyad, find the spark rekindled — a combustion that results in their carrying out an “adulterous” affair, twomiming the same people they’ve been cheating with? There are no grand pronouncements in The Lovers, which smartly communicates its ideas about relationships during its long stretches of silence. Jacobs lets casually observed details and offhand humor advance the story. The Lovers pays close attention to the spatial (and emotional) chasms separating its constellation of couples, evidenced in the softly shattering opening scene. A woman is sobbing on a bed; she is Lucy (Melora Walters), the girlfriend of married Michael (Tracy Letts), who stands several feet away, looking at her with slight contempt. “Please don’t cry, Lucy,” are his only words of consolation, laced with the resentment of a man weary of reassuring a woman whose misery he is at least half-responsible for.

At the home in Santa Clarita that Michael shares with his wife, Mary (Debra Winger), conversation involves little more than errand running. Mary sneaks away to be with Robert (Aidan Gillen), a writer whose bedroom serves as a pitiful shrine to himself, the walls adorned with taped-up newspaper mentions. What matters in The Lovers, and what all of the central cast, especially Letts and Winger, so meticulously inhabit, is the unstable present — and the various fictions that these four dissembling adults are committed to manufacturing.

—Melissa Anderson

THE LOVERS | Directed and written by Azazel Jacobs | A24 | Landmark
Heavyweight almost-champ Chuck Wepner was a character long before he inspired Sylvester Stallone to pen Rocky. But Wepner is no Rocky Balboa. Sure, he comes from a working-class town (Bayonne, New Jersey), and when he boxed, he took a good punch, bled like a hemophiliac and dreamed of taking home that giant gold belt. But Stallone gleaned only what he wanted from the gentle giant — who, at his prefight press conference with Muhammad Ali, read a poem he had written — and left out the messy human bits, such as Wepner’s flagrant philandering and his obstinance.

In Chuck, director Philippe Falardeau attempts to repair that dissonance, stitching up the two competing sides of the real-life boxer into a whole human. The result is a meta-biopic: This is supposed to be the true story behind Rocky, but the reality of Wepner’s life — or how he tells it, at least — is still the stuff of Hollywood movies, though this time it’s a comedy, driven by a knockout lead performance from Liev Schreiber.

The film opens with Chuck getting suited up in the back-room of a bar. His opponent is a literal bear. Schreiber contorts his face, looking past the glaring ring lights into the crowd — Jesus Christ, is this what it’s come to? Through voice-over, we travel back in time — before the bear, before Rocky, before his first wife, Phyllis (Elisabeth Moss), leaves him — to when he was just the “Bleeder From Bayonne,” jogging up the block to a bar, where everyone saw his mashed-potato face and wanted to buy him a drink.

In the beginning, Chuck’s a romantic. He leaves little juve-nile rhyming poems scrawled on bar napkins on the fridge for Phyliss, and the two seem like one of those perfect push-and-pull couples, the guy a lovable cad, the woman rolling her eyes and punching his hulking arm in jest. But after Ali KO’s George Foreman — Chuck’s only real chance at the title would have been fighting that match’s slower loser — Phylliss follows her husband to a cafe, where he’s entertaining a pretty blonde. “You look at him like he’s something special, and he’ll fall in love with you,” she says to the other woman. That’s the first of many jobs into Chuck’s good-guy image, and it’s sometimes difficult to have sympathy for him, but Schreiber’s a convincing enough naif to make it work.

Chuck eventually gets to box Ali (Pooch Hall), going 15 rounds against the champ — which turns out to be his undoing. Stallone (Morgan Spector) catches wind of the story and makes his film, and whatever pipe-dream hopes Chuck had before are now amplified to the nth degree. He used to want to fight, but now he just wants to be famous and snort bumps and disco dance and get cast in Rocky II.

The scene in which Chuck auditions with Sly for a role has disaster written all over it. Chuck is boozed up and high, his frenetic energy flooding the contained space of a Hollywood casting room. They read a line, and Chuck stumbles over every word. Stallone tells him, “You got this. Just be yourself.” But that’s the crux of this film: This is his self. Chuck is a philandering heel on the one hand, and a boxer with a heart of gold on the other; Stallone never saw that. The sensitive soul in Rocky, that was Chuck. But it wasn’t all of him.

The best scene comes later, when Chuck is in prison for being a too-trusting drug dealer, and Stallone happens to be there filming Lock Up. Stallone requests a visit with his old buddy, but Chuck takes one look at the film crew and turns around. “Yeah, no, I’m good,” he says. It’s interesting that the most compelling parts of this film are the ones that convey how a taste of Hollywood can destroy a life, since this is yet another Hollywood film about that life. Let’s hope this one doesn’t do the real Chuck, now 78, more damage.

CHUCK | Directed by Philippe Falardeau
Written by Jeff Feuerzeig, Jerry Stahl, Michael Cristofer and Liev Schreiber
IFC Films | ArcLight Hollywood, Landmark

BY APRIL WOLFE
EXPANSIVE SCHNABEL DOC PAINTS A CLOSEUP VIEW

Julian Schnabel’s gestural paintings are epically scaled, often executed on drapes or boat sails rather than on stretched canvas. In Julian Schnabel: A Private Portrait, director Pappi Corsicato is forced to shoot large panoramas of the artist at work and the huge studios and exhibition spaces his art demands; though visually expansive, however, the film feels emotionally intimate.

Touching briefly on its subject’s childhood as a Jewish kid in Brownsville, Texas, the film surveys Schnabel’s explosive New York art-scene debut, in the mid-1970s, and his 1980s stardom. He was a young gun challenging the orthodoxies of the previous generation in the best possible way – with authenticity, integrity and original style. During a period when painting was out of favor, he made it acceptable again, and his methods became trends that persist today.

By the yardstick of Michael Jordan’s midcareer transition to baseball, Schnabel’s reinvention as a film director in the 1990s should have been a forgettable detour. But his visual sensibility and his familiarity with the art scene imbue Basquiat with authenticity and beauty out of reach for other directors. The 1996 biopic of the painter Jean-Michel Basquiat, a friend of Schnabel’s, was critically acclaimed. The artist followed it with Before Night Falls and, most recently, The Diving Bell and the Butterfly.

One of Portrait’s strongest threads is Schnabel’s connection to major artistic figures now lost. Good old Laurie Anderson relates his involvement with one of the final performances by her husband, Lou Reed: a series of filmed projections that accompanied the show. The sequence becomes a sweet, unexpected requiem for the late songwriter. —Chris Packham

JULIAN SCHNABEL: A PRIVATE PORTRAIT | Directed by Pappi Corsicato | Cohen Media Group | Monica Film Center

OPENING THIS WEEK

3 GENERATIONS: A committed performance from Elle Fanning as a high school kid born Ramona but identifying as Ray is diced up and short-shifited in this missed opportunity. The title suggests the chief trouble: Director and co-writer Gaby Dellal’s attention is divided among three generations, with Ray’s mother (Naomi Watts) and grandmother (Susan Sarandon) commanding most of the screen time as they worry over Ray’s urgent wish to receive testosterone treatments. It’s not for nothing that generation and generic share a root; the characters scan as vague, of their-age types, despite having each been dressed up with superficial quirks. But in practice, Watts is playing the over-whelmed Gen X parent, eager to honor her child’s choices but broke and living with her own mother, while Sarandon is the boomer liberal who sees gender reassignment as a selfish mistake. Fanning, meanwhile, exhibits gutty longing as Ray, but the actress isn’t given many scenes to flesh out the character. Instead, Ray exists in wearying montage, feeling just one thing at a time, forever over-signifying millennialhood: he skateboards, he steals moony into mirrors, he records and edits confessional-video diary entries. When his grandmother at last comes around and accepts that Ray is a boy rather than a girl, Ray rewards her by slipping headphones over her ears and bumping his latest beats. Sarandon’s Dolly is a sitcom motormouth; Watts is starring in a drama. If you think it’s more interesting to watch warning Sarandon worry about the cleanliness of gas station bathrooms than to watch Ray try to convince the father he never knew to accept that he’s a boy, this is the movie for you. (Alan Scherstuhl)

ANOTHER EVIL: Homeowners get a certainhelpless feeling when they call on an expert. When your plumber or exterminator says you have a problem only he can solve, you’re pretty much at his mercy. Another Evil, the feature debut of Sycamore Valley writer Carson Meltz, capitalizes on that feeling, as abstract painter Dan (Steve Zissis) enlists a sketchy ghost hunter to cleanse his family’s vacation home. The result is a horror-comedy that largely leans away from the horror and downplays its humor so much that, at times, it’s detectable only by gifted psychics. The paranoid, Os (Mark Proksch), is tough-talking but pathetic – it’s easy to imagine that he fights ghosts because he lacks the guts to stand up to something corporeal. As he insinuates himself into Dan’s home, Os conducts seemingly arbitrary rituals to rid the house of spirits. (Many of these involve having a drink together; Os records them.) The central section of the film meanders, as Zissis’ Dan struggles to change his family’s vacation home. The feature debut of Jon Brodsky — here to make friends and taste blood — keeps this self-serious segment from becoming a sweet, unexpected requiem for the late songwriter. —Chris Packham

JULIAN SCHNABEL: A PRIVATE PORTRAIT | Directed by Pappi Corsicato | Cohen Media Group | Monica Film Center

VIEW THE TRAILER AT WWW.NORMAN-MOVIE.COM

"A RIVETING THRILLER DRIVEN BY A QUARTET OF POWERHOUSE PERFORMANCES."
—Owen Gleiberman, VariEty

"TENSE AND PROVOCATIVE. A FIRECRACKER FROM THE START."
—Eric Kohn, IndieWire

"ELECTRIFYING."
—Kenji Fujishima, SLANT Magazine

BASED ON THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLING NOVEL

RICHARD GERE
LAURA LINNEY
STEVE COOGAN
REBECCA HALL
CHLOÉ SEVIGNY

THE DINNER

STARTS FRIDAY, MAY 5

WEST LOS ANGELES
Regency Westlake
(310) 470-5050
landmarktheatres.com

SHERMAN OAKS
ArcLight Cinemas At The Sherman Oaks Galleria (818) 561-0753 arclightcinemas.com

LA WEEKLY // MAY 5-11, 2017 // LA WEEKLY

WWW.LA WEEKLY.COM // MAY 5-11, 2017 // LA WEEKLY
**THE DINNER** Steve Coogan is at a fancy dinn-er, but he’s not doing any Michael Caine impressions. Instead, he’s brooding with resentment of his workaholic congress-man brother, Stan (Richard Gere), and gosp-eling with the realization that his son might be a psychopath. It’s all supposed to be harrowing, and the British comedia-n certainly might have pulled off the seri-ous role of the unreliable narrator in this dark family drama if it weren’t for director Oren Moverman’s apparent insistence that he stay somewhat in character as “Steve Coogan” from *The Trip*. The result is a dis astrous tonal mismatch. Coogan’s characterization isn’t the only thing jar-ring about this adaptation of Herman Koch’s novel of the same name, about two couples meeting over dinner to discuss a horrendous episode involving their kids. The dinner itself is constantly disrupted by long-winded flashbacks. The beauty of a single-location thriller is how the tension escalates in containment, but Moverman fails to seize that built-in advantage. There have been two previous big-screen ver-sions (Dutch and Italian) of Koch’s book, but this is the first American adaptation, and it has the most noteworthy cast: Laura Linney and Rebecca Hall play wives to Coogan and Gere, respectively; Chloe Sevigny makes a brief appearance as Gere’s ex-wife. Third time’s a charm, suppos edly, but Moverman doesn’t know what to do with the page-turner source material. Set up with title cards, from apéritif to digestif, The Dinner should have momentum, but it’s not until the cheese course — after the entrée — that things start to pick up. (Kristen Yoonsoo Kim)

**LADY BLOODFIGHT** It’s been a while since we last heard from French action director Chris Nahon, whose *Kiss of the Dragon* and *Blood: The Last Vampire* may not have been nu-classics of the genre but were fun diversions. This reality to form may lack in originality, it makes up for in-as-kickiness, focusing on an all-female, to-the-death—but-only-sometimes tourna-ment, without much plot to get in the way of the battles. Interestingly, the tournament is never specified as women-only; we hear about prior contestants who were male, which implies that all the best martial-arts fighters in the world this particular year are women. But the film’s quiet progressivism is set back by the white-savior narrative; this is ultimately the tale of an American waitress, a blonde with the hilariously bland name of Jane Jones (Amy Johnston) who goes to the Far East and beats up a bunch of Asians. Star Johnston has stunt-doubled for Scarlett Johansson, an irony in light of Ghost in the Shell, but Lady Bloodfight at least is self-aware enough to have its characters mention the issue. If you can set that aside, as viewers so often have for the likes of Chuck Norris and Jean-Claude Van Damme, you’ll be rewarded with exactly what you come to see. Imagine the original UFC tournaments, the ones that were about which martial art was better, but with more blood, occasional weapons use and an unintentionally hilarious ghost. Johnston’s not necessarily a slam-dunk to be the next big thing, but, as you’d expect from a stunt performer from the likes of Van Damme, you’ll be rewarded with bolts of their writing, they prove to be end-less — and sometimes, to Jonas’ ears, convincingly — about a different end-ways, impressing, if not exactly revealing, interlocu-tors. “We are not friends. We are not ad-vocates,” proclaims Margalit Fox, the great belletrist of the NYT’s dead pool, Obit.” to Weber’s 6 p.m. deadline as he shapes the raw data of Wilson’s life into a vivid documen-tary, making frequent trips to the kitchen and probing her astute subjects to say any-thing, but this is the first American adaptation, and it has the most noteworthy cast: Laura Linney and Rebecca Hall play wives to Coogan and Gere, respectively; Chloe Sevigny makes a brief appearance as Gere’s ex-wife. Third time’s a charm, suppos edly, but Moverman doesn’t know what to do with the page-turner source material. Set up with title cards, from apéritif to digestif, The Dinner should have momentum, but it’s not until the cheese course — after the entrée — that things start to pick up. (Kristen Yoonsoo Kim)

**RISK** However you look at Julian Assange — radical hero, martyr, Trumpist sellout, probable rapist, victim of his cult of personality — there’s something in Laura Poitras’ documentary Risk to confirm your point of view. Poitras began making this film before her much-celebrated Edward Snowden coming-out-to-the-world portrait, *Citizenfour* (2014), and had access to Assange as far back as 2011. Risk at last premiered as a work-in-progress at Cannes last year, in a much different form. According to journalists who saw it then, that version was far less critical of Assange than this final cut, and lacked the probingly self-critical voice-over that Poitras has now added. This is not Citizenfour Part Two, though for both films Poitras gained intimate access to her subjects — especially here, in long stretches of Assange’s house arrest. Citizenfour ran the risk of being written off by skeptics as an apologia for Snowden, but this is a more mediated piece, one weighted with self-doubt. It might also be Poitras’ first feminist film, indirectly devoted as it is to exploring the abusive sexual actions of men like Assange and, to a lesser extent, encryp-tion advocate Jacob Appelbaum. Poitras exposes Assange’s casual contempt for feminists. Oddly enough, the film that Risk most evokes is not a documentary but rather Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s 1979 The Third Generation, a despairing examination of hippie hopes turned into
YOUR WEEKLY MOVIE TO-DO LIST

Czech and Afghani Cinema

Friday, May 5

The death of Abbas Kiarostami last year deprived the world of one of its greatest cinematic artists. Despite this loss, Iran and its immediate neighbors continue to be a center for inventive filmmaking. One voice to recently emerge from the region is Navid Mahmoudi, whose Parting was selected as the official Afghan entry for Best Foreign-Language Film at the 2017 Academy Awards. This account of a young couple attempting to reach Europe in order to escape economic adversity has all the hallmarks of classical humanist storytelling. The film is part of a monthlong series at UCLA called In Transit: Refugees on Film, curated by Jan-Christopher Horak. With the refugee crisis continuing to rage throughout the Middle East and North Africa, this timely story puts a human face on a pressing social issue. UCLA’s Billy Wilder Theater, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; Fri., May 5, 7:30 p.m.; $10. (310) 206-8013, cinema.ucla.edu.

Saturday, May 6

Controversial U.K. director Peter Watkins followed up his Oscar-winning The War Game with Privilege, one of the most deliriously inventive films of 1967. This oddly compelling time capsule imagines a near future wherein the youth are in thrall to a charismatic pop star (Paul Jones of British group Manfred Mann), who in turn is controlled by a nefarious super-state. Diving into the emerging youth culture with Marxist glee, Watkins comes up with a scathingly surreal satire of capitalism, religion and rock & roll. Cinematheque/Silent Movie Theatre, 611 N. Fairfax Ave., Fairfax; Sat., May 6, 10:30 p.m.; $12. (323) 655-2510, cinemafamily.org.

Sunday, May 7

A big fat beach read of a movie, Giant more than lives up to its title. Released in 1956, George Stevens’ multigenerational saga of a Texas oil family still impresses with its awesome widescreen vistas, and its racial politics have aged surprisingly well. Featuring Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor and James Dean (in his final role), in which a successful con man (Pat Healy, who also debuts as director) agrees to abduct her for the whole weekend. It sounds like one of the most sees of the American Cinematheque’s fourth annual Starring Europe: New Films From the EU 2017 series. A discussion with the director will follow the screening. Aero Theatre, 1328 Montana Ave., Santa Monica; Wed., May 10, 7:30 p.m.; $12. (323) 466-3456, americancinematheque.com.

Tuesday, May 9

LACMA’s Tuesday Matinees series disinters a 16mm print of Madame Du Barry, a lavish 1934 retelling of the life of the infamous courtesan (played by Mexican-born Hollywood star Dolores del Rio) who became Louis XV’s last mistress. Ernst Lubitsch elegantly traversed this territory in a landmark silent film, but this impecably coiffed comedy, made in the year the Motion Picture Production Code kicked in, remains well worth seeing. LACMA, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Mid-Wilshire; Tue., May 9, 1 p.m.; $4. (323) 855-6000, lacma.org.

Wednesday, May 10

Czech cinema was a force to be reckoned with in the 1960s, when the counterculture spread throughout Europe and inspired some of the most delightfully anarchic comedies of its era. Today, the European Union continues to turn out plenty of social critique, as Jan Hrebejk’s The Teacher demonstrates. Opening in 1983, the film follows a teacher in a suburban middle school who bullies her students and blackmails their parents. It sounds like one of the most sees of the American Cinematheque’s fourth annual Starring Europe: New Films From the EU 2017 series. A discussion with the director will follow the screening. Aero Theatre, 1328 Montana Ave., Santa Monica; Wed., May 10, 7:30 p.m.; $12. (323) 466-3456, americancinematheque.com.

Three of the Most Acclaimed Actors of Their Generations in a Human Comedy for Today.

NAOMI WATTS SHINES BRIGHTLY.

“THE FILM STAGES”

Jared Meibans

ELLE FANNING SHOWS WHY SHE’S ONE OF THE BEST OFF HER GENERATION.

BYSTANDER.

Susan G. Cole

SUSAN SARANDON IS SUPERB.

“THE LIGHTS SHINE BRIGHTLY.”

Kevin Jagernauth

“TUMOR TOMORROW EVER AFTER”

Computer scientist and futurist Ray Kurzweil, who has a pretty amazing track record of predicting technological innovations, believes that the 2040s will usher in the “technological singularity,” that time when humans will transcend all biological limitations and squishy cellular substrates to merge with artificial intelligence. In her comedy Tomorow Ever After, writer-director Ela Thier predicts a distant future when humans are still awkward, mortal and cybernetically unaugmented but have transcended economics and created an egalitarian culture involving cyberterrorist violence designed to serve the state. Applebaum and Assange now seem like the kind of fake revolutionaries Fassbinder depicts. Yet for all of that, Risk might have been better if Poitras had gone all the way and made a personal essay of a film about her ambivalent relationship with Assange. (Steve Erickson)

TAKE ME First, you have to swallow that a kidnapping-simulation business would thrive in Atlantic City but somehow dwindle when relocated to Southern California, where bizarre alternative—therapy methods and kinkiness run rampant. Then, you need to believe that the person behind such an enterprise is a kind, vulnerable soul; he may feed a dozen hamburgers to a tied-up, terrified obese client, but his only aim is to help this poor sap lose weight. And — in Fifty Shades of Grey style — he always assures even the most masochistic thrill seekers that he won’t perpetrate any mock-torture tactics without their full consent. Finally, you need to will yourself to remain, at all times, two steps behind the plot (written by first-timer Mike Makowsky), in which a successful consultant pays this man a boatload of cash to abduct her for the whole weekend. She tells him she “doesn’t scare easily” and even allows for slapping. Will Ray (Pat Healy, who also debuts as director) get more than he bargained for from Anna (Taylor Schilling)? What follows is a stagy, tired, slapstick-heavy game of one-upmanship between bewigged, bumbling Ray and the considerably slyer, possibly schizophrenic Anna. Sight gags involving crowbars, ball gags and car trunks are what pass for dark comedy. Both stars overact frantically, particularly Schilling, who draws out Anna’s every sarcastic rejoinder and lip-biting tic to their broadest extent. And while the film, to its credit, doesn’t become a tit of morality play, the ending is thin and contrived nonetheless. (Sam Weisberg)

EXCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENTS START FRIDAY, MAY 5

HOLLYWOOD ArcLight Cinemas at Sunset & Vine

Pasadena Laemmle’s Playhouse 7

Santa Ana/Costa Mesa Regency

South Coast Village

SHOP TUESDAY

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### TCL CHINESE THEATRE IMAX 6925
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**Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2: An IMAX 3D Experience**
Fri., 7:30 p.m.; Sat., 10:30 p.m.; Sun., 1:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m., 6 p.m.  
Mon.-Thurs., 7:30 p.m.; Fri., 10:30 p.m.; Sat., 1:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m., 6 p.m.; Sun., 1:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m., 6 p.m.

**A Quiet Passion**
Fri., 1:45 p.m., 4:45 p.m., 7:30 p.m., 10:15 p.m.; Sat., 1:45 p.m., 4:45 p.m., 7:30 p.m., 10:15 p.m.; Sun., 1:45 p.m., 4:45 p.m., 7:30 p.m.

**Landmark's NuArt Theater**
1127 Santa Monica Blvd. (310) 473-8530; No Texting Allowed  
Oft., Sat., 12:15, 2:15, 4:15, 6:45, 8, 10:15 p.m.; Sun., 12:15, 2:15, 4:15, 6:45, 8, 10:15 p.m.

**The Circle**
Fri., 10:30 a.m., 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8, 9:30 p.m.; Sat., 10:30 a.m., 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8, 9:30 p.m.

**Landmark West L.A.**
10850 W. Pico Blvd. (310) 470-0492; No Texting Allowed  
Chuck Fri., Sat., 1:15, 3:15, 5:15, 7:15 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m., 1:15, 3:15, 5:15, 7:15 p.m.

**Landmark's Regent 1045 Broxton Ave.**
(310) 208-3252; No Texting Allowed  
Your Name. (Kimi no na wa) Fri., 3, 1:50, 4:50, 7, 9:50 p.m.; Sat., 6:15, 9:15 a.m., 3:15, 6:15, 9:15 a.m.; Sun., 12:15, 3:15, 6:15, 9:15 a.m.

**The People Under the Stairs**
Fri., 7:30, 10 p.m.; Sat., 7 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m., 6 p.m.

**Panique**
Fri., 1, 3:20, 5:40, 8, 10:15 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 9:55 p.m.

**The Rocky Horror Picture Show**
Fri., 12 noon, 1:30, 2, 4, 5, 7:10, 8, 9:50, 10:55 p.m.; Sun., 10, 11 a.m., 1, 2, 4, 5, 7:10, 8, 9:50, 10:55 p.m.; Tues.-Thurs., 4:30, 7:10 p.m.; Wed.-Thurs., 1:50, 4:30, 7:10 p.m.

**The Lovers**
Fri., 10, 11 p.m.

**3-D Experience**
Fri., 10, 11 p.m.

**The Mason Brothers**
DOWNTOWN INDEPENDENT  
251 Spring St. (323) 664-2699  
Call theater for schedule.

**The Rocky Horror Picture Show**
Fri., 12 noon, 1:30, 2, 4, 5, 7:10, 8, 9:50, 10:55 p.m.; Sun., 10, 11 a.m., 1, 2, 4, 5, 7:10, 8, 9:50, 10:55 p.m.; Tues.-Thurs., 4:30, 7:10 p.m.; Wed.-Thurs., 1:50, 4:30, 7:10 p.m.

**Fourteen (14)**
The Grove Dr. (323) 660-6639  
Call theater for schedule.

**The Circle**
Fri., 10:30 a.m., 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8, 9:30 p.m.; Sat., 10:30 a.m., 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8, 9:30 p.m.

**Landmark West L.A.**
10850 W. Pico Blvd. (310) 470-0492; No Texting Allowed  
Chuck Fri., Sat., 1:15, 3:15, 5:15, 7:15 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m., 1:15, 3:15, 5:15, 7:15 p.m.

**Landmark's Regent 1045 Broxton Ave.**
(310) 208-3252; No Texting Allowed  
Your Name. (Kimi no na wa) Fri., 3, 1:50, 4:50, 7, 9:50 p.m.; Sat., 6:15, 9:15 a.m., 3:15, 6:15, 9:15 a.m.; Sun., 12:15, 3:15, 6:15, 9:15 a.m.

**The People Under the Stairs**
Fri., 7:30, 10 p.m.; Sat., 7 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m., 6 p.m.

**Panique**
Fri., 1, 3:20, 5:40, 8, 10:15 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 9:55 p.m.

**The Rocky Horror Picture Show**
Fri., 12 noon, 1:30, 2, 4, 5, 7:10, 8, 9:50, 10:55 p.m.; Sun., 10, 11 a.m., 1, 2, 4, 5, 7:10, 8, 9:50, 10:55 p.m.; Tues.-Thurs., 4:30, 7:10 p.m.; Wed.-Thurs., 1:50, 4:30, 7:10 p.m.

**The Lovers**
Fri., 10, 11 p.m.

**3-D Experience**
Fri., 10, 11 p.m.

**The Mason Brothers**
DOWNTOWN INDEPENDENT  
251 Spring St. (323) 664-2699  
Call theater for schedule.

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Fri., 12 noon, 1:30, 2, 4, 5, 7:10, 8, 9:50, 10:55 p.m.; Sun., 10, 11 a.m., 1, 2, 4, 5, 7:10, 8, 9:50, 10:55 p.m.; Tues.-Thurs., 4:30, 7:10 p.m.; Wed.-Thurs., 1:50, 4:30, 7:10 p.m.

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5/16 JESUS PIECE
5/18 DJ OMNID
5/19 DESPISE YOU AND COKE BUST SPLIT 7" RECORD RELEASE
5/19 CLUB HOUSE
5/20 DMC FREESTYLE TOURNAMENT WITH LIVE PERFORMANCE BY DANGER
5/20 XCELLERATED PRESENTS DEEPER & DARKER VOL. 1 FEAT. ANNIX, DLR, SIGNAL (USA DEBUT), XTRAH (USA DEBUT), & ZERO T (3 ROOMS OF BASS)
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5/21 RAMASTAY 18 FOREVER - AN EMO THEMED YOGA CLASS
5/21 SEKTACORE
5/22 BLAZE
5/25 THE NEW DIVISION
5/27 URBAN STYLES
5/27 SAVAGE SOCIETY 3 YEAR ANNIVERSARY
5/28 KILLAHURTZ PRESENTS:
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6/8 SOUND AND FURY KICK OFF PARTY
6/9 BOHEMIA SUBURBANA
6/15 SADISTIC INTENT
6/16 RAEKWON
6/16 CONFLICT
6/29 RAVEN FELIX

5/9 EL SERENO RECORDS
5/11 THAT 70S DANCE PARTY
5/12 CLUB 90s
5/12 OH!
5/13 WAREHOUSE LA W/ MIKE DUNN, WAYNE WILLIAMS, SUN J MICHAEL FAM & LAWS OF SOUND EXPERIENCE
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5/13 WAREHOUSE LA W/ MIKE DUNN, WAYNE WILLIAMS, SUN J MICHAEL FAM & LAWS OF SOUND EXPERIENCE
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5/18 BASS FOR BREASTS
5/19 CLUB 90s
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**WHIG PARTY**

**WHIG PARTY REUNITED BY AN UNLIKELY CATALYST, THE AFGHAN WHIGS CONTINUE TO REINVENT THEIR SOULFUL ALT-ROCK SOUND**

BY JEFF WEISS

When The Afghan Whigs dissolved in 2001, no one would have guessed that Usher would be the catalyst for their reunion — Usher being the Atlanta R&B lothario behind “U Remind Me,” Afghan Whigs being the alt-rock, soul and punk fusionists behind some of the ‘90s best and most carnally fueled guitar records.

But in hindsight, it all makes sense. The Whigs mastered sordid confessions when Usher was still doing Star Search. The band’s lead singer and songwriter, Greg Dulli, artfully appropriated historically African-American genres with more style, intelligence and humor than almost any of his peers — and gave Kamasi Washington one of his first professional breaks.

“I was in Australia and my manager called and said, ‘Hey, do you wanna play South by Southwest?’” Dulli recalls. “I was like, ‘Absolutely not.’ And then he was like, ‘Do you want to play with Usher?’ And I said, ‘Go on.’”

Given two days’ notice to play a headlining show at SXSW’s infamous Fader Fort in 2013, with Usher as the surprise cameo, Dulli, 51, was transported to the urgency of his years as a teenager in Cincinnati, frantically assembling all the parts for a last-minute gig.

In the wake of the well-received performance, the Whigs returned to the studio and bashed out their first album in 14 years, Do the Beast. Its successor, this week’s In Spades, manages to pair the adolescent intensity of the band’s early work with the virtuosity of master songwriters, players and arrangers.

Released on Sub Pop, it’s arguably the Whigs’ best since 1996’s Black Love. It manages the rare feat of indulging in past memories without acquiescing to musical stasis.

“If you stop letting new things turn you on, you’re creatively dead, or you’re working in a vacuum, which is summarily uninteresting,” Dulli says.

We’re talking in the gorgeous, two-story Silver Lake home that Dulli has owned for more than a dozen years. The self-destructive mania of his 20s and 30s has softened into the more meditative tones of middle age. There’s a garden with blackberries, strawberries and an avocado tree. Pop art and voodoo talismans. He practices yoga, has survived bouts of depression, and co-owns the Short Stop bar — a stone’s throw from Dodger Stadium, where Dulli has season tickets (despite remaining the most dedicated Red Sox fan this side of YG).

If there’s a secret to his continued sonic relevance, it’s not hard to find. After 30 years of professionally making music, Dulli retains the omnivorous sense of discovery of someone a third his age. He’s more up on rap than most rap critics. He’s continually listening and Shazaming obscurities unearthed via Dublab, French radio station FIP, Montreal outlet CKUT and Memphis’ WEVL.

In Spades weaves themes of mortality and loss, sex and salvation, violence and memory with flashbacks of his childhood partially spent in Birdland, a Cincinnati suburb, which Dulli describes as the place “where all the things you wanted to do were happening.” It’s frequently melancholic but triumphant — perhaps testament to Dulli’s own life, which has weathered bouts of turmoil that would have left most on the permanent disabled list. Instead, he’s achieved an Ichiro-like longevity (or maybe Pete Rose without the gambling ignominy).

“He was like, ‘Do you want to play with Usher?’ And I said, ‘Go on.’”

“I really believe that you can constantly reinvent yourself,” Dulli says. “If you put this record up next to [1992’s] Congregation, you’d be like, ‘How is that the same band?’ I even think I sing differently than I used to. I feel like we made a vital, modern, absolutely compelling record.”

To add a final postscript from Usher Raymond IV: “Yeah.”

An L.A. native, Jeff Weiss edits Passion of the Weiss and hosts the Bizarre Ride show on RBMA Radio. Follow him on Twitter @ passionweiss.

In honor of the festival’s 31st anniversary, Jazz Reggae Fest is celebrating three decades of good vibes, jammin’ music, and cultural enrichment with a one-day festival under the Los Angeles sun. From the festival’s humble beginnings in 1986, it has continued to grow and develop while forging connections between UCLA and the broader Los Angeles community. In keeping with the successful model set last year, Jazz Reggae Fest is sticking to its roots, presenting headliners from the genres of jazz and reggae accompanied by a curated selection of talented student bands.

This year’s festival will take place on Memorial Day, May 29th at the Sunset Recreation Center on UCLA’s campus, from noon to 6pm. Tickets are now available at: www.jazzreggaefest.com/tickets
One of the most fascinating aspects of humankind is our idea of crime and punishment. No one is without an opinion on this. The idea of right and wrong, of America being a nation of laws, is such a knotted ball of string, there isn’t a single part of it that isn’t hotly debated. How can it not be? When sentencing from state to state is often so different, punishment can seem not to be? When sentencing from state to state is often so different, punishment can seem almost arbitrary.

Nothing built by humans won’t be vandalized by humans. The only reason Tutankhamun’s tomb was discovered intact is because the grave-robbing bastards couldn’t find it. Otherwise, there wouldn’t have been anything left. As long as there are people living, there will be what we call crime. As long as there is crime, there will be justice. The very idea of what is “just,” what is the appropriate punishment — it’s a mind-blowing concept. Over the centuries, the courtroom has become theater, brought to a spectator-sport climax by the O.J. Simpson trial.

The ultimate punishment for the ultimate crime is the death penalty. The rational, sanctioned killing of another human being is such a strong measure, even the legal system is afraid of it. It takes years to actually bring the condemned to whatever means is being employed to dispatch them, and even then, lawyers are working until the end trying to stop it.

No matter where you come down on the idea of killing someone for killing someone, it is an incredibly messy ordeal. Lethal injection, which never should have gotten further than the name of a heavy metal band, requires that the condemned be strapped down and dosed with three drugs, in an almost Rube Goldberg–from-hell way of making the homicide ethical and morally alright. They even swab the condemned’s arm with alcohol to prevent infection when applying the needle. It would be funny if it wasn’t so fucked up.

Arkansas’ recent rush to hurtle eight men into the great beyond in 11 days didn’t come about because Lady Justice had a full bladder and had to go right now. Apparently, the use-by date on the state’s supply of midazolam, one of the three drugs to be injected, will be up at the end of the month. After this, the state will no longer be able to use midazolam for execution as the manufacturers now prohibit it.

It’s like trying to have one last go before the Viagra wears off. I guess you can’t go to another state and knock on the door to borrow a cup of midazolam, so now it’s a full-court press to kill off these men. Gov. Asa Hutchinson can always blame the Food and Drug Administration.

When you think about it, USA is deeply invested in death. Months ago, comrade Trump claimed that the American military was depleted. He made it sound like there was just one bumbled-out soldier with a straw and some wadded-up paper, tasked with winning the war on terror. It’s going to take a lot of money to get supplies and capability up to the comrade’s puerile standards. Your life and relative well-being don’t seem to be nearly as much a priority.

When we’re not killing abroad, we’re keeping county morgues full and stuffing prisons from coast to coast. Too bad it’s not an overstock of mattresses that have to go to cut-rate prices, but in many ways, it is. Prisoners are human inventory and every day of life or death for anyone in America’s prison system is expensive for the taxpayer and a profit-loaded payday for those in the punishment business.

It’s time for the prison-industrial complex to admit that there is really no ethical way to end a human life and, that being the case, either stop all executions or put the condemned in front of a firing squad and get it over with. It would be ghastly, but you’re killing someone — there is no nice way to go about it.

I am willing to bet that those charged with the job of extinguishing these lives take no joy in a malfunction and want nothing less than a fail-proof method and consistent results. It’s not as if they haven’t tried. There is a film that addresses one method of termination and the issues that come with it, Pierrepoint: The Last Hangman. It’s based on the life of Albert Pierrepoint, an Englishman who hanged at least 400 people, stopping in 1956. It was interesting to see the angry posts underneath articles about why Arkansas set the schedule to the expiration of its midazolam supply. I understand why people would be sickened by both the methodical killing of someone, no matter what their deed, and the state’s “get while the getting’s good” approach, but that’s the system. It’s profit-incentivized and there is a bottom line. American Justice is a business.

Every once in a while, there is a moment, like what’s been happening in Arkansas, when the entire country is afforded an opportunity to take stock and consider if this is really the way they want to go.

We are very good at killing and the world knows it. I wonder if the reason why so many countries spend so much on weapons is because they’re afraid of USA. How ironic that we often supply the demand that we potentially created.

In a lot of countries, for better or worse, life is cheap. In America, you get a twoffer. Life is expensive and so is death.

You can’t be surprised that Arkansas, the state that gave you the Little Rock Nine and the West Memphis Three, would be trying to save a few bucks.
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Various Artists
Sonic backdrop for the new film, including “Mr. Blue Sky” by ELO, “Flash Light” by Parliament, & “The Chain” by Fleetwood Mac.

Joe Goddard
Electric Lines
Brilliantly unites the broad-ranging strands of producer, songwriter, DJ, remixer Joe Goddard’s unique career.

L.A. Takedown II
A guitar-driven take on synth-pop; aligns the moody grandeur of a film score with the pure melodicism of pop. Out 5/12!

Lillie Mae
Forever and Then Some
Weaves country, bluegrass, and blues to create a breathtaking song cycle of romance and adventure. Produced by Jack White.

Judith Owen
Somebody’s Child
Follow-up to her critically-acclaimed 2014 release, Ebb & Flow. On tour this summer with Bryan Ferry.

Nick Cave
Lovely Creatures
The band was hands on for all aspects of this retrospective; selecting the audio & DVD content, photo content and essays.

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Dweezil Zappa
@ THE FONDA THEATRE
If there's anyone who has a right to perform the music of Frank Zappa and continue his legacy, it would seem to be his guitarist son, Dweezil. But as Brett Callwood noted in a recent L.A. Weekly interview with Dweezil, he's in a bizarre legal conflict with two of his three siblings over how he should title his ongoing tributes to his prolific father's music. So, with more than a hint of his dad's laconic sarcasm, Dweezil is calling his latest run of shows “50 Years of Frank: Dweezil Zappa Plays Whatever the F**k He Wants — The Cease & Desist Tour.” In other words, he's going to continue performing the music of Frank through a TV set; the instrument — he previously brought to Stephen and Jameel's older brother, Ronald Bruner Jr. The Grammy-winning composer-producer-singer-drummer cut his teeth in heavy-duty stints with Kendrick Lamar, Flying Lotus, Wayne Shorter, Prince, Chaka Khan and Stevie Wonder, and he's got something of his own to say on his recent debut album, Triumph. “Progressive soul,” he calls it, an apt term for these super-elevating, genre-skewing tunes, which put a high-flying, jazz-fusion broadside than early Feist pop songs like “1234,” — and the track fills up with chanted harmonies and foot-stomping percussion. The strangeness continues on “Century,” a song about loneliness and time, which features whispery spoken-word from Pulp's Jarvis Cocker, who divides the titular century into a billion individual seconds as Feist wails enigmatically above him. It's the Canadian singer's first record in six years, expanding on the adventurousness of her 2011 Metals. Also Saturday and Sunday, May 6-7. —Falling James

Peter Manning Robinson
@ L.A. CENTER STUDIOS
You may have heard Peter Manning Robinson’s music through a TV set; the composer-pianist has worked heavily in that medium, notably on police procedural drama Without a Trace. But Robinson and filmmaker-musician Klaus Hoch have spent the past seven years working on an invention called the Refractor Piano. It’s a Steinway that has been modified so that the sound bends, curves and takes otherwise strange turns across the room. It sounds bizarre and beautiful and will leave you wondering, “How the hell did they make this?” Saturday's event is only Robinson’s third public concert with the instrument — he previously brought the show to Bergamot Station and MOCA — and will feature 360-degree projections by Hana Kim to augment the performances inside L.A. Center Studios’ Vortex Immersion Dome. —Liz Ohanesian

Friction, Metrik
@ BELASCO BASEMENT
It's a rare treat to experience drum 'n' bass superstar Friction DJing at an intimate venue like the Belasco Basement as part of Bassrush’s Funkton night. In addition to heading up his Shogun Audio label, Friction is also the drum ‘n’ bass emissary on his native U.K.’s influential BBC Radio 1 with a weekly program. From his elite stable of Shogun artists, Friction picked the remixers for the newly minted Moby Drum & Bass Remixes, a four-track EP of DNB interpretations of some of that electronic-music icon’s memorable songs. Friction presents his sets on four decks, a hectic setup he handles with more than two decades’ worth of skillful finesse. Hospital Records’ Metrik may have only half as much experience, but his enjoyable sounds are just as accomplished, both as sharp producer and instinctive selector. —Lily Moayeri

Ronald Bruner Jr.
@ THE ROXY
L.A.’s formidable Bruner family includes the mighty Stephen “Thundercat” Bruner, Jameel “Kintaro” Bruner of The Internet and paterfamilias Ronald Bruner Sr. (Diana Ross, The Temptations, Gladys Knight). Now let us tip a hat to Stephen and Jameel’s older brother, Ronald Bruner Jr. The Grammy-winning composer-producer-singer-drummer cut his teeth in heavy-duty stints with Kendrick Lamar, Flying Lotus, Wayne Shorter, Prince, Chaka Khan and Stevie Wonder, and he's got something of his own to say on his recent debut album, Triumph. “Progressive soul,” he calls it, an apt term for these super-elevating, genre-skewing tunes, which put a high-flying, jazz-fusion spin on deep-feeling soul, R&B, funk and pop. It’s superbly adventurous stuff, which by the way was laid down during the same sessions that produced Kamasi Washington’s The Epic. —John Payne

The Dramatics, Millie Jackson, Latimore
@ THE WILTERN
Veteran singer Millie Jackson is one of soul/R&B’s true rugged individualists. A powerhouse vocalist able to stop a listener cold with her deeply evocative pipes, Jackson is also one of the most deliberately forthright, blunt and earmeltingly foul-mouthed entertainers ever to rolllick an audience (just listen to her immortal “Pluck U Symphony”). Jackson’s been recording since 1970, and it’s a fabulous trove of shadowy, wah-wah–limned stuff like “It Hurts So Good” (featured on the Cleopatra Jones soundtrack) and her groundbreaking 1974 proto-rap set, Caught Up. Featured here alongside steamy Tennessee soul man Latimore and (some ghostly version of) The Dramatics, this wild bill of old-school songsters rates as a sensational triple whammy. —Jonny Whiteside

Save Music in Chinatown
@ GRAND STAR JAZZ CLUB
This is the 12th round in an ongoing series of benefits to raise funds for music education at Castelar Elementary School.
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It’s headed by The Alley Cats, one of the earliest and most savage of all the South Bay punk bands, who haven’t played much in Chinatown since Madame Wong banned them from her venue in the early ’80s, when she decided that groups with female musicians cause too much violence. The Alley Cats’ mix of wicked guitar riffs, world-weary vocals and sordidly bohemian lyrics has only grown in stature since Wong’s shortsighted analysis. They’ll be joined by a fellow class of ‘77 alum, The Zeros’ Hector Penalosa, who bashes things out with his hard-rocking new combo, My Revenge. The bill also includes San Diego punks The Schizophonics and Stephen Perkins’ power trio Tabitha.

—Falling James

Barrows
@ THE ECHOPLEX
Beginning a monthlong residency at the Echoplex, L.A. group Barrows churn out extended, propulsive slabs of sound that are simultaneously hypnotic yet also very heavy. Call them post-rock or post-punk, but it doesn’t really matter, as the quartet craft darkly engrossing instrumental passages on their upcoming album, Obsidian. The bass-heavy tracks have curt, one-word titles, such as “Zenith” and “Entrada,” that belie their sprawling lengths. As with Barrows’ previous releases, the new record is a kind of concept album, in this case about a man who is “abducted from Earth and brought to Obsidian, a place where dimension is indefinable.” That vague storyline is merely an excuse to launch spacey, metallic forays into distortion and volume, which are occasionally broken up with more melodic interludes. —Falling James

Frank Iero and the Patience
@ THE TROUBADOUR
Last October, Frank Iero wasn’t sure if he’d be playing music anymore. The former My Chemical Romance guitarist was on tour in Australia when he and bandmates, while unloading their van, were struck by a public bus. Iero, guitarist Evan Nestor and manager Paul Clegg suffered severe injuries and were fortunate to survive. Now, after canceling last year’s remaining tour dates, they’re back and picking up the pieces from the accident. Iero’s second solo album, Parachutes — released just two weeks after the crash — is a blend of alt-rock, punk and emo that shows his versatility as a songwriter and how much he’s matured since his days in MCR. Despite residual hardships from the accident, Iero and his bandmates are on the mend, as each passing show gives them more opportunity to shift focus back to their music. —Daniel Kohn

Magic Wands, Geneva Jacuzzi
@ THE HI HAT
Magic Wands live up to their name with an enchanting dream-pop sound that buries Dexy Valentine’s vocals in a blurry haze of Chris Valentine’s loud guitars. Relocated to L.A. after being based in Nashville, the duo have increased their already considerable magic powers with bassist Tommy Alexander and drummer Keith Crutchfield, a rhythm section who have added an exhilarating drive to the Valentines’ gauzy melodies. It’s unusual for a dream-pop band to have such rhythmic force, which anchors even the airiest tunes with a solid base on the group’s 2016 album, Jupiter. When the two Valentines add their interlocking guitars, Dexy’s singing becomes tightly wrapped up in a spidery web of majestic riffs. The musical contrast deepens with glittery dance-floor diva Geneva Jacuzzi, who chants such freaky and provocative workouts as “Squid Hunter” and “Aerosol Can.” —Falling James
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Airplanes, Fri., May 5, 8 p.m., $10. Arcopalypse Now, Idol X, King’s Revenge, Sat., May 6, 8:30 p.m., $10. Lucky Otis, Mondays, 8 p.m., TBA.

**PAPPY & HARRIET’S PIONEERTOWN PALACE:** 53688 Pioneertown Road, Pioneertown, Ty Segall, Sat., May 6, 8 p.m., $27. The Sunday Band, Sundays, 7:30 p.m., free. Open Mic, Mondays, 7 p.m., free. Le Butcherettes, Thurs., May 11, 9:30 p.m., $15.

**THE PICO UNION PROJECT:** 1153 Valencia St., L.A. Vox, Bosco, Band(s), Sat., May 6, 8 p.m., $15.

**POP OBSCURE RECORDS:** 735 S. Los Angeles St., L.A. The Blessing(s), plus a reception for rock photographer Heather Harris’ exhibit, Sat., May 6, 5-7 p.m., free. Open Mic, Tues., May 9, 9-11 p.m., free.

**THE REDWOOD BAR & GRILL:** 316 W. Second St., Los Angeles. The Loons, The Moonsaults, Hayley & the Crushers, Sat., May 6, 8 p.m., TBA. Blair Sinta, Cheridomongo, Tue., May 9, 9 p.m. Two Smokin’ Barrels, Thu., May 11, 9 p.m.

**RESIDENT:** 428 S. Hewitt St., Los Angeles. DJ Francesca Harding, Fri., May 5, 9 p.m., free. Racquet Club, Gentlemen Prefer Blood, Sat., May 6, 6:30 p.m., $10; DJ Mister Sushi, Sat., May 6, 10 p.m., free. SuVi, Grove Martini, Mon., May 8, 8 p.m., $10. Shallows, Riot Child, Tue., May 9, 8 p.m., free; Katelyn Tarver, Tuesdays, 8 p.m. Thru May 30, free. Cataldo, Wed., May 10, 8 p.m., $7.

**ROCK CITY STUDIOS:** 2258 Pickwick Drive, Camarillo. Balance & Composure, From Indian Lakes, Queen of Jeans, Tue., May 9, 7 p.m.

**THE ROSE:** 245 E. Green St., Pasadena. Groove Kitty, Fri., May 5, 9 p.m., $19.50. The Sweeney, Sat., May 6, 9 p.m., TBA. The Ramones, Fri., May 5, 9 p.m., $28. Fuel, Marcy Playground, Thu., May 11, 9 p.m., $28.48.

**THE ROXY:** 9009 W. Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood. The Expanders, Boogaloo Assassins, Fri., May 5, 8:30 p.m., $18; Grand Tapestry, Amp, Scalab, Sat., May 6, 9 p.m., $18; Ronald Bruner Jr., Sun., May 7, 8 p.m., $15. (See Music Pick.) Mod Sun, Mon., May 8, 8 p.m., $20. The Weeks, Lauren Ruth Ward, The Lonely Biscuits, Tue., May 9, 8 p.m., $15. Tape Face, Wed., May 10, 7:30 p.m., $25. Zealyn, The 100 Year War, Tyler Hilton, Greg Holden, Zane Carney, Thu., May 11, 9 p.m., $25.

**THE SATELLITE:** 1717 Silver Lake Blvd., Los Angeles. Funk Trump, a disco dance benefit for the National Immigration Law Center, Fri., May 5, 9 p.m., $5. The Diamond Light, Down & Outlaws, Easy Friend, Mon., May 8, 9 p.m., free. John Early, Chase Bernstein, Bruce Bundy, Naomi Experigan, Isaac Oliver, Reggie Watts, Tue., May 9, 9 p.m., $25. Greyhounds, Thu., May 11, 9 p.m., $15.


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THE LIGHTHOUSE CAFE: Jade, Kira Alexi, Thu., May 11, 8:30 p.m., free.

HARVELLE'S LONG BEACH: Burlesque, Wednesdays, 10 p.m., $5.

CATALINA BAR & GRILL: Triptease Band, Sun., May 7, 8 p.m., free.


THE VIPER ROOM: Monday Night Jammz, Mondays, 9:30 p.m., $10.


TRIP: Affiance, Convictions, Thu., May 11, 7 p.m., TBA.

TRIBAL CAFE: Delain, Hammerfall, Tue., May 9, 7 p.m., $25. Scott Wilkie, Sun., May 7, 9:30 p.m., $15.

TORRANCE CULTURAL ARTS CENTER: Zime, Fri., May 5, 9:30 p.m., $20. The Thom Euman Trio, Fri., May 5, 9 p.m., $15.

THE TERAGRAM BALLROOM: Lightin' Willie, Mon., May 8, 8 p.m., free.

THE SMELL: The Daniel Rosenboom Quintet, Sun., May 7, 12-8 p.m., $35.

BOWLING MUSIC: 4316 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City, Lady Lewis & the Right Hands, Sat., May 6, 8 p.m., $20.

THE CINEMA BAR: 3967 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City, The Deltaz, Tue., May 9, 9 p.m., free.

THE COFFEE GALLERY BACKSTAGE: 2029 N. Lake Ave., Altadena. Joe Hall & the Canecutters, Fri., May 5, 8 p.m., $20. Stephen Kallinch, Paul Zollo, Rob Borbigan, Neil Rosengard, Nick Guzman, Pam Loe, Chad Watson, in a tribute to George Harrison, Sat., May 6, 2:30 p.m.; $20; Ellen Stapeshorst & Steve Staphensthorst, Sat., May 6, 7 p.m., $18; Vadaluna, Sun., May 7, 7 p.m., $18; John York, Sun., May 7, 7 p.m., $20.

E.B.’S BEER & WINE BAR, FARMERS MARKET: Atwater, Fri., May 5, 7 p.m., free. Sterling Syver, Sun., May 7, 6 p.m., free.

JOE'S GREAT AMERICAN BAR & GRILL: 1324 N. Highland Ave., Altadena. Joe Hall & the Canecutters, Fri., May 5, 9 p.m., free.


JAZZ & BLUES


AU LAC: 710 W. First St., Los Angeles. Mark Christopher Miller, Sat., May 6, 7:30 p.m., $20. Sista Jean & the Blues Machine, Viva Vinson’s Blues All-Stars, Thu., May 11, 7:30 p.m., TBA.


THE BEEHIVE: 247 S. Main St., Los Angeles. Jet Elfman, Fri., May 5, 7:30 p.m., $10. The Anne Walsh Quartet, Inner Vox, Sat., May 6, 8 p.m., $10. Depeche Mode Night, with DJs Alex & Ray, Sun., May 7, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., $10.


THE ELK: 5364 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles. Cinco de Mayo Block Party, with DJs TBA, Fri., May 5, 8 p.m., free.

THE BURLINGTON: 714 W. Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles. DJ Tony F. & the OMG, Garden All-Stars, Sun., May 7, 7:30 p.m., TBA.

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THURSDAY MAY 11
The Fornicators Sweden, Schadenfreuders, Neverland Ranch Daughters, Kidney, Death On The Radio
SATURDAY MAY 13
The Rockets, ToCall Rocket Dynamics, Hard Falls

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THEATRE, 3503 S. HARBOR BLVD., SANTA ANA.
NEW WEST SYMPHONY: Pianist Garrick Ohlsson hands down Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 5 (“Emperor”), and Fawzi Haimor conducts Rossini’s Overture to La scala di seta and Haydn’s Symphony No. 104, Thu., May 11, 7:30 p.m., $34. The Broad Stage, Santa Monica College Performing Arts Center, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica.

NOAH’S FLOOD: L.A. Opera presents a family-friendly version of Benjamin Britten’s biblical opera, Sat., May 6, 4 & 7:30 p.m., free. Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, 555 W. Temple St., Los Angeles.

THE NOW ENSEMBLE: Sat., May 6, 8 p.m., $15. Schoenberg Hall, UCLA, 445 Charles E. Young Drive E., Room 1100, Los Angeles.

GO PETER MANNING ROBINSON: The composer-pianist demonstrates his newly invented Refractor Piano, Sat., May 6, 7:30 & 10 p.m., $10-$20. Los Angeles Center Studios, 450 S. Bixel St., Los Angeles. See Music Pick.

SALASTINA MUSIC SOCIETY: Pianist Hyelin Kim performs Beethoven’s complete piano trios over the course of two nights, May 5-6, 8 p.m., $32. Barnett Hall, Pasadena Conservatory of Music, 100 N. Hill Ave., Pasadena. Sun., May 7, 3 & 7 p.m., $32. Contrapuntal Performances Recital Hall, 655 N. Bundy Drive, Brentwood.

TOSCA: Soprano Sondra Radvanovsky wields her voice like a weapon as the titular heroine who tries to save her lover, Mario Cavaradossi (portrayed by the similarly powerful tenor Russell Thomas), in L.A. Opera’s dramatic revival of Giacomo Puccini’s eternally tempestuous opera, Fri., May 5, 7:30 p.m.; Sun., May 7, 2 p.m.; Sat., May 13, 7:30 p.m., $29-$539. The Music Center, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., Los Angeles.

THE YMF DEBUT CHAMBER ORCHESTRA: Yuga Cohler conducts Maurice Ravel’s Introduction and Allegro for Harp, Flute, Clarinet & String Quartet; Toru Takemitsu’s Rain Coming; and Franz Schubert’s Eighth Symphony ("Unfinished"), Sun., May 7, 6 p.m., free. LACMA, Bing Theater, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles.

For more listings, please go to laweekly.com.
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ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME
Case No. PS019405
Superior Court of California NORTH VALLEY DISTRICT
Chatsworth Courthouse located at 9435 Penfield Avenue, Room 1260, Chatsworth, CA 91311
Filed On April 5, 2017
In the matter of petitioner DANIEL SCOTT POWERS, JR.
It is hereby ordered that all persons interested in the above-entitled matter of change of name appear before the above-entitled court as follows to show cause why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Court Date 6/28/17, at 9:30 am, located at Chatsworth Courthouse located at 9435 Penfield Avenue, Room 1260, Chatsworth, CA 91311
And a petition for change of name having been duly filed with the clerk of this Court, it is, and it appearing from said petition that said petitioner desires to have his name changed from DANIEL SCOTT POWERS, JR. to DANIEL SCOTT ROBINSON. Now therefore, it is hereby ordered that all persons interested in the said matter of change of name appear as indicated herein above and there to show cause why the petition for change of name should not be granted.
It is further ordered that a copy of the order be published in the LA Weekly, a newspaper of general circulation for the County of Los Angeles, once a week for four (4) successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing of said petition. Set to publish 4/27/17, 5/4/17, 5/11/17, 5/18/17
Dated April 10th, 2017

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