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BON À TIRER: 30 YEARS OF GOOD TO GO

El Nopal Press looks back at three decades of printmaking and themes of cross-cultural pollination

BY SHANA NYS DAMBROT
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LA WEEKLY
Luxury® in Riviera Maya and includes government taxes. 4 Rate is per person, land only, based on double occupancy, for check-in on February 3, 2020 in deluxe double room accommodations at Dreams Puerto Aventuras Resort & Spa

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Sunscape Splash Montego Bay

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GO LA...7

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EAT & DRINK...14

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Meet Your Horror Heroes

If all the macabre merch that’s hit the stores wasn’t an indication, the spookiest time of the year is here. And while plastic skeleton decor is great, Son of Monsterpalooza, the autumn event put on by the creators of Monsterpalooza, is the place to kick off the season right. Whether you’re interested in special effects, behind-the-scenes horror movie-making, gory and ghoulish aesthetics, or just weird shit, this convention will have something to get excited about. Collectibles, comics, toys, puppets, dolls, clothing and more will be for sale at this epicenter of evil, but for many it’s all about the appearances. Scheduled to appear this year: Linda Blair (The Exorcist), Edward Furlong and Robert Patrick (Terminator 2: Judgment Day), Billy Zane (Dead Calm), Jenna Elfman (Fear the Walking Dead), Bill Moseley (The Devil’s Rejects), Heather Langenkamp (Nightmare on Elm Street) and many more. Other macabre moments to bring a chill include dark art exhibits, immersive walk-throughs and screenings. Burbank Convention Center, 2500 N. Hollywood Way, Burbank; Fri., Sept. 13, 6-11 p.m. & Sat.-Sun., Sept. 14-15, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; $25-$30/$65 for a three-day pass. monsterpalooza.com. —ANN HASKINS

Bring on the Latex

The title of Octave Mirbeau’s subversive 1899 novel, The Torture Garden, has been appropriated over the years by numerous musicians and artists. Among other things, Torture Garden is the name of a London fetish club, which is returning to Los Angeles for the first time in 17 years. Hosts Dita Von Teese and Amanda Lepore present high-flying aerialist Katrina Lilwall and a DJ set by T.G. co-founder David Wood alongside assorted DJs and burlesque and BDSM fetish performers and a latex fashion show. Globe Theatre, 740 S. Broadway; downtown; Sat., Sept. 14, 9:30 p.m.; $20-$83.50. (213) 489-1667, eventbrite.com/e/torture-garden-in-los-angeles-tickets-59023787738.—FALLING JAMES

Get a Whiff of TarFest

The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County recently announced that the La Brea Tar Pits and George C. Page Museum will be getting a makeover thanks to three architecture firms competing for the redesign. Though you won’t know until the end of the year what the national natural landmark (and world’s only active Ice Age fossil dig site) will look like in the future, you can celebrate today at La Brea Tar Pits’ annual TarFest. KCIRW DJs Raul Campos, Jeremy Sole and Valida will spin tunes to kick off the day, which continues with live painting sessions by Johnny KMNDZ Rodriguez and Mr. B Baby installations by Susan Feldman, Cynthia Minet and Ramiro Gomez, as well as the Second Home Serpentine Pavilion located inside the pits. And no family festival would be complete without kids’ art and dance workshops, food trucks and — for the adults — a beer garden and cocktail lounge. La Brea Tar Pits, 5801 Wilshire Blvd., Mid-Wilshire; Sat., Sept. 14, noon-7 p.m.; free. (213) 763-3499, launchla.org. —JIRAN BABAYAN

Cookouts for Charity

Alex’s Lemonade Stand Foundation (ALSF) feeds the soul with L.A. Loves Alex’s Lemonade, an event that gives you both mixologists and culinarians in yet another moment of triumph for kids with cancer. They’ve raised $7.3 million in 10 years of cookouts, and this year finds hosts Caroline Stye and chefs Suzanne Goin and David Lentz rubbing elbows with generous chefs such as Michael Cimarusti (Providencia), Josiah Citrin (Melisse) and Jeremy Fox (Rustic Canyon), Nancy Silverton (Mozza) and many, many other kind souls who — more than anyone else — know exactly what to do when life gives you lemons. Alex’s Lemonade Stand, Royce Quad at UCLA, Westwood; Sat., Sept. 14, 12:30 p.m.; $225 general ($125 of which is tax-deductible)/$500 VIP ($350 of which is tax-deductible)/$1,200 (all access tickets, no earthly clue how much of which is tax-deductible), (610) 649-3034, alexlemonade.org/campaign/la-loves-alex-lemonade. —DAVID COTNER

Holiday Traditions

A Charles Phoenix event can be likened to your favorite dessert. It’s colorful, it’s tasty, it’s nostalgic and it’s good old fashioned fun. The launch of the beloved L.A. pop culture king’s latest coffee table book is sure to be no exception. His new book Holiday Jubilee celebrates Halloween, Christmas, Easter and more — and only the vibrant Mr. Phoenix can, loaded with his kitchy “test kitchen” recipes and over 500 vintage images, the new tome aims to inspire seasonal entertaining past, present and future to all. While most C.P. fans might expect the past to dominate, these days he’s looking to incorporate some fresh new ideas. As he says in promo for the book, “Holidays are so retro. I’m all about festive traditions. But I’m also a big fan of mixing up by creating new ones!” DJ David Watkins will spin and Wacko promises “life-altering snacks and artificially colored and flavored refreshments.” Wacko, 4633 Hollywood Blvd., Los Feliz; Sun., Sept. 15, 2-4 p.m.; free. charlesphoenix.com/event/holiday-jubilee-book-launch-party. —LINA LECARO

Women on the Verge

Back for its second year, Art Women Art Week is an interdisciplinary serialized conference at which creative women from across entertainment, music, art, publishing, food, fashion, beauty, and independent entrepreneurial systems conversations converge on the multilevel Melrose Rooftop Theater complex for a week of curated programs and intimate conversations. Each evening takes full advantage of the unique location with art installations throughout, as well E.P. Restaurant whose presence can turn an evening talk and screening into a proper dinner and a movie. Each night is dedicated to a topic explored in leadership conversations followed by topical short and featured film screenings. For example, First Wives Club on independent business night, Frida on arts journalism night, Chocolat on chef night, A Star Is Born on music and entertainment night, and The Devil Wears Prada on fashion and beauty night. Melrose Rooftop Theater; 603 N. La Cienega Blvd., West Hollywood; Sun., Sept. 15, 7:30 p.m., through Sept. 21; $15-$55 melroseroofoptheatre.com. —SHANA NYS DAMBROT

Masks Tell the Story

While it’s tempting to believe that putting on a mask isolates you from society, curator Patrick A. Polk is here to say — “face!” when he tells you all about Guatemalan Masks. And on Guatemala Independence Day, no less — oh, you shouldn’t have! It’s a symposium that’s part of the larger Fowler exhibition Guatemalan Masks: Selections from the Jeanne and Jim Pieper Collection, and you’ll see how the collected 80 wood masks — representing everything from animals to folk heroes — are used in dance-dramas that bring the community together through spirituality and shared memory, transmitting acorns of history into pagents of wonders. Fowler Museum, 308 Charles E. Young Drive N., Westwood; Sun., Sept. 15, 1 p.m.; free. (310) 206-4007, Fowler.ucla.edu/events/culture-fix-patricks-a-polk-on-guatemalan-masks. —DAVID COTNER

Every Picture Tells a Story

Sometimes to really get the impact of a story across, you’ve got to put a face on it. Feeling the truth of this axiom, in 2016 the civil liberties and human rights-focused Sikh Coalition partnered with acclaimed U.K. photographer duo Amit and Naroop to found The Sikh Project. This eclectic portraiture portfolio has continued to grow, presenting engaging and expressive photographs in storytelling empowered to spark a positive, optimistic and inspirational discourse regarding the
**Sikh experience in America.** A new installation of the project opens this week at the Museum of Tolerance, celebrated with a reception and panel discussion. All are welcome. Museum of Tolerance, 9786 W. Pico Blvd., Pico-Roberson; opening reception: Sun., Sept. 15, 4-6 p.m.; exhibition: through Nov. 3; free. sikhcoalition.org. —SHANA NY DAMBROT

**MON 9/16**

**BOOKS**

**A Peak into the Creative Process**

Singer-pianist Ben Folds has long been a clever performer who draws his ardent fans into his performances, including arranging his set lists with the help of his audiences, who nail their song suggestions toward the stage via paper airplanes. Folds attempts to draw his followers in further in his new memoir, *A Dream About Lightening Bugs: A Life of Music and Cheap Lessons*, in which he recounts how he fell in love with music at an early age and how it shaped his life. “I was completely lost in my own world, where I remained for most of my childhood,” Folds reveals. At times, the singer’s constant self-awareness overshadow his ability to portray his family and other characters with much depth, but his breezy aides and anecdotes about his career offer glimpses into his precocious beginnings and creative process. *The Regent Theater, 448 S. Main St., downtown; Mon., Sept. 16, 8 p.m.; $35. (323) 284-5727, spacelandpresents.com. —FALLING JAMES*

**TUE 9/17**

**CULTURE**

**Oogie Boogie Takes Over**

Disney is embracing its villains more than ever before at its brand new Oogie Boogie Bash: A Disney Halloween Party, beginning today and running on 20 select nights through Halloween. A new World of Color spectacular called *Halloween Party*, running on 20 select nights through Halloween, beginning today and Disney Halloween Party, Oogie Boogie Takes Over

**WED 9/18**

**FILM**

**Remembering a Literary Icon**

The world lost a major voice when Toni Morrison died last month in New York. With such powerful novels as *Song of Solomon*, *Tar Baby* and the *Beloved* trilogy, she did as much as any African-American writer to dismantle the virtual state of apartheid that was promulgated by the white, male literary establishment, revealing her heart and soul in works that were complex, humanistic and socially inspiring. In director Timothy Greenfield-Sanders’ new documentary, *The Pieces That I Am*, Angela Davis, Walter Mosely, Oprah Winfrey and others testify to the impact that Morrison had with her words and how her stories paralleled and inspired some of the changes in our still-divided society. *Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; Wed., Sept. 18, 7:30 p.m.; free. (310) 443-7000, hammer.ucla.edu. —FALLING JAMES*

**THU 9/19**

**ART**

**Slick Art**

Following August’s photography exhibit on the 50th anniversary of Woodstock, Mr. Musichead Gallery fittingly hosts Grace Slick Original Art. The former Jefferson Airplane singer and counterculture icon, who lives in Malibu, has been painting since the ‘90s. In 2015, the gallery displayed her paintings and prints, also marking the 50th anniversary of her legendary band. The gallery once again exhibits Slick’s canvases and works on paper, whose themes will be familiar to fans, whether it’s portraits of rock-star contemporaries like John Lennon and Keith Richards or characters from *Alice in Wonderland*, both a nod to Lewis Carroll’s story and Slick’s 1967 hallucinogenic classic, “White Rabbit”. *Mr. Musichead Gallery, 7420 W. Sunset Blvd., Hollywood.; Thu., Sept. 19, 7 p.m.; through Oct. 5; free. (323) 876-0042, mrmusichead.com. —JIRAN BABAYAN*

**FILM**

**Historical Venice**

There once was a wonderful, earthy world existing as a boon to freedom that came before the satanic stupidity of the machines transforming Venice into a psychic sewer — but fuck all that! Come see Venice how it really was — not just how you remember it was — in the *History of Venice: A Night of Film*. The third night in the *History of Venice* series (through September 30), it’s a rare chance to watch scarce films shot in and around Venice. Surfers, skaters, Krishas, poetas, Dogtown — they’re all here, sure to blow your mind and/or tear at your heart, depending. *Beyond Baroque, 681 Venice Blvd., Venice; Thu., Sept. 19, 8 p.m; $10 general/free for members. (310) 822-3006, eventbrite.com/e/a-history-of-venice-a-night-of-film-tickets-68758834525. —DAVID COTNER**
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El Nopal Press looks back at three decades of print-making and themes of cross-cultural pollination in the third iteration of its intergenerational survey of female printmakers.

BY SHANA NYS DAMBROT

"B.A.T." is a bit of print-making studio lingo; it stands for "Bon à Tirer" which translates as "good to pull" — in the vernacular meaning "good to go" — indicating that a print has been proofed and the satisfied artist is ready to go forward with producing its edition. In Cal State University Long Beach's new exhibition B.A.T. State III: Women Artists In Conversation with El Nopal Press, curators Anita Bunn and Francesco Siqueiros survey the archive of innovative prints (lithographs, reliefs, monoprints and more) produced by 37 women across 30 years of Siqueiros' legendary DTLA print studio, El Nopal Press.

It's the third and by far the largest and most comprehensive of the duo's B.A.T. series, which had its first two iterations at Off-Ramp Gallery and SOLA (South Los Angeles Contemporary) in the past few years. Co-curator Anita Bunn is an artist herself, and was making some prints with El Nopal and noticed that Siquieros was working with Carolyn Castaño, Lisa Adams, Tatyana Fazlalizadeh and Analia Saban, all at the same time. She had known Siquieros for many years, since the beginnings of El Nopal Press, and was aware of the broad spectrum of artists with whom he had worked. "But while the overall list of artists is impressive, " Bunn tells the Weekly, "this moment just struck me. Why not, " she thought, "do an exhibition focused on the women artists of El Nopal?"

"El Nopal's mission is to expand the Chicano aesthetic and be in a cross-border cultural exchange between Los Angeles and Mexico, " says its founder, Francesco Siquieros, and his studio is known as a nexus for transformation and open-minded dialog. "Artists like Judy Baca, Elsa Flores and Analia Saban (El Nopal was the first to publish her) are naturally part of the conversation, " along with influential figures like Yreina Cervantez, Diane Gamboa and Marietta Bernstorff.

"From the beginning, " says Bunn, "the themes in the works of traversing borders, femininity and strength, identity, abstraction, and conceptual and process-based styles have been at the forefront. " The series of B.A.T. shows itself has been about artists existing in conversation with each other, in the studio and now, in the gallery.

The first exhibition "B.A.T.: bon à tirer | good to go" (Bunn credits Jane Cha/f_in of Off-Ramp for the title) opened in December 2013.
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senting on an overall look at the sensibility of El Nopal. The second was “B.A.T. State II,” wherein Bunn and Siquieros expanded the number of artists. The current exhibition, “B.A.T. State III: Women Artists in Conversation with El Nopal Press,” arose through a conversation with Kristina Newhouse, curator of CSLUB’s Kleefeld Contemporary, where the show is on view through mid-November.

“We are thrilled to have the opportunity to mount an expanded version of B.A.T. within a museum space, wherein we are able to show more artists and more work, and hopefully, reach a larger audience within an educational institution,” says Bunn.

Bunn and Siquieros often speak about the democratic nature of printmaking, in terms of accessibility, and further, “the contributions that so many women have made to printmaking in output, originality, and innovation,” says Bunn. As such, the exhibition is expansive, the better to show the breadth of work in a way that brings to the fore what she calls “Francisco’s best trait, which is his willingness to experiment and to allow each artist to achieve their desired results, while still addressing the precision that is necessary in printmaking.”

El Nopal is about to celebrate 30 years in operation, continuously at the Santa Fe Art Colony, and for the past 15 years, in a second location on 5th Street in downtown’s Historic Core, which is where you can almost always find Siquieros at work. It’s an old-school storefront print shop filled with both elaborate, assertively mechanical and intensely hand-operated presses that do different things in different ways and an ocean of pots, jars, and cans, and flat files for days.

In 1990, Siquieros was working at another legendary downtown publisher, Cirrus Editions. He had been working hard in conjunction with the landmark Aqui y Alla exhibition at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, and he founded his own independent shop only about two weeks after the exhibition opened. The artist Ann Throntycroft donated to him what was his first machine, a hand-operated beast that he still uses.

Siquieros views his creative community as a kind of extended family, and is known as a great collaborator and innovator, and as Bunn and many others have expressed, the strength of the work produced at El Nopal Press represents not only the skill of the artists but the unique relationship between them and this low-key master printer. As such, the exhibition in organized as a narrative of El Nopal’s concern with the border as both a physical and metaphorical space, and different generations of artists and their work can be explored. The prints are arranged into decades — 1990s, 2000s, 2010s — but within each grouping, the prints are arranged by theme, process or aesthetic, says Bunn, “as a way to allow room for different connections, questions and conversations to arise. It’s what Siquieros means when he describes the archive as inclusive of “a variety of cultures in a heterogeneous society,” offering enriched responses and an opportunity to connect the dots across the throughline of an archive.

For example, Linda Stark’s early work really spoke to Siquieros’ own love of concrete abstraction, and her pop culture symbolism as well, and she was included in the LAX Benito Juarez Portfolio. Shirley Jaffe and Dominique Lacroix were in the El Nopal Paris Portfolio. Emily Chang produced a four-city suite, and Lisa Adams wanted an edition that worked in serial sequence off a central image for her abstract narratives. Judy Baca took the border as a more literal proposition, and the editions she produced with El Nopal based on the drawings for three sections of her iconic Great Wall of Los Angeles mural are a little-known treasure. Work by Anita Bunn and Analia Saban is more ephemeral, more about temporality and the environment. With 37 artists, in the archive there are truly stylistic expressions and social narratives for everyone.

Furthermore, the show is intergenerational because as it spans 30 years, some of the artists returned periodically over the course of decades, which in turn gives a perspective on the evolution of printmaking itself, from a material and technical point of view as well as the ongoing back and forth between tradition and modernity and the relationships between and among the artists.

So will there be more B.A.T. shows? “I would love that!” says Bunn. “There are so many possibilities for this exhibition. Ideally, there could be a space to show all of the work. Maybe a catalog is the next step.” Siquieros for his part absolutely feels that the history of El Nopal’s archive is reaching a kind of “critical mass,” wherein its output needs to be regarded as a whole. Legendary places like Cirrus, Hamilton Press, Gemini G.E.L., Mixografia, and Modern Multiples all have distinct personalities and presences, even with many artists working with more than one of them. “El Nopal has a small but intellectually curious following,” says Siquieros, “and I’m happy for these shows, giving me a chance to create a kind of archive beyond the meaning I alone could give to it.”

Kleefeld Contemporary Art Museum, Cal State Long Beach, 1250 Bellflower Blvd., Long Beach; through Nov. 14; free. (562) 985-4111, csulb.edu.
he founded his own independent shop only at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, and in different ways and an ocean of pots, jars, hand-operated presses that do different things. The clinic of the Fuller School of Psychology

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FOOD

DINNER IS SERVED

The L.A. Music Center Plaza debuts an innovative and much needed dining option with the ultimate pop-up at Abernethy’s, starring chef Shirley Chung’s custom menu

BY MICHIE STUEVEN

The Los Angeles Music Center has added a new venue for changing acts at the newly renovated Music Center Plaza, and chefs are the main attraction this time. Abernethy’s has opened its doors as chef Shirley Chung inaugurates the new one-of-a-kind, full-service restaurant that will feature a new rising chef and menu every three months spotlighting the diverse cuisines representing L.A.

Together with Music Center boardmember and chair of Abernethy’s culinary advisors, Jill Baldauf — a team that included chefs Govind Armstrong, Susan Feniger, Ray Garcia and everyone’s favorite foodie, producer Phil Rosenthal, of Somebody Feed Phil — tasted their away across L.A. to determine the lineup.

In addition to Chung, who brings a very personal menu to the table representing her Chinese heritage, the winning roster of emerging chefs that will pop up at Abernethy’s includes Pla and Fern Kaewthathip from Noree Thai on Beverly and Luv2eat Thai Bistro, Geter Atienza of Broken Spanish, executive chef Ryan Costanza from Freedman’s and the very talented Jason Fullilov from Barbara Jean. Each chef will take over Abernethy’s kitchen and design a limited-time menu of personalized dishes as well as revolving art that expresses their visions and curate their own playlists to help set the tone.

“I thrive on blending modern with traditional in art, music and food,” Chung tells L.A. Weekly from the warm sunset-drenched dining room overlooking the dancing water fountain in the plaza. “In my playlist I’ve incorporated Chinese pop songs with traditional Chinese opera and Chinese rap songs that are becoming part of the culture there. We’ve mixed in a little from VaVa as well, the hip-hop princess of China.”

An inspirational piece of artwork commissioned by Chung is the centerpiece of the dining room, which represents her story: The Top Chef contestant explains the significance of numbers in Chinese culture, pointing out the number eight in the colorful collage, which suggests prosperity and good luck. Five beautiful silk cranes symbolize migration and Chung’s family history which goes back five generations in Southern California. Her great-grandmother was the first Chinese infant born in Ventura County and Chung herself was born in Beijing.

Chung, who proudly admits to being the daughter of a tiger mom, is not afraid to break tradition while still respecting her heritage which is reflected in her menu. Blending Chinese with Middle Eastern, there’s a cum-in-driven Beijing lamb belly that is braised and pressed into lasagna-like layers with a black vinegar reduction, fermented leek and tahini sauce served with traditional braised Napa cabbage. The entire dish is a three-day process inspired by Beijing street food and the lamb skewers she loved as a child. Her bright radish and citrus salad with assorted shaved radishes, grapefruit and mint is a direct reflection of the cultural artistry that divides the bar from the seating area.

“We knew our first chef out of the gate had to be Shirley,” says Baldauf of the diminutive popeye pot and her infectious energy. “She had so many ideas in the first five minutes of our conversation and immediate solutions to a lot of our challenges, like figuring out how to bring in a menu that everyone can prepare by the proper standards and then disappear after three months. She knows how to make that magic happen and it’s been a perfect marriage so far.”

While Chung brought over some standard favorites, like wontons in chili oil, from her Ms. Chi restaurant in Culver City, she is giddy that her menu at Abernethy has no limits. It’s one of the reasons she included an Italian/Chinese crossover of cecco de pepe made with northern China style noodles, tofu and pecorino cream and Sichuan pepper corns with a hint of lemon.

“It’s a dream come true for future chefs who will pop up and have the freedom to express themselves and their cultures,” she says. “They’re given the staff, the budget and the platform to tell their personal culinary stories for three months.”

Another main attraction popping up across the plaza in the Mullin Wine Bar is L.A. Weekly’s best bar chef (at least until this year’s Best of L.A.: food issue), Christaan Rollich, who has created a cocktail lineup just for the Music Center Plaza. In time for fall, there’s the El Rayo made with El Silencio mezcal, pumpkin, cloves, cinnamon and orgeat. But you can still enjoy the warm summer wind on the plaza with a Spice Station of tequila, strawberry and harissa syrup or the Orange Nassau, a mix of Jamaican rum, allspice dram, house made carrot juice and rum Martinique that represents Rollich’s Dutch background.

Abernethy’s, 220 N. Hope St., downtown; (213) 972-8084, abernethysla.com;

The Mullin Wine Bar, 205 N. Grand Ave., downtown; (213) 972-8084, themullinla.com
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Hustlers explores dynamics of sex, power, money and female friendship with varying degrees of success

BY LINA LECARO

Hustlers tries for a Sex and the City vibe, which might work as a feel-good set-up if not for the whole drugging and deceit thing.

Wu is supposed to be the moral center, but there's a disconnect in her acting that doesn't quite hit the spot. J-Lo on the other hand brings nuance to her role that, in spite of her character's insensitivity, make her seem real. She's the mastermind behind the whole thing and shows no remorse for her victims, even the “nice” guys (one sad fella loses his job over the credit charges and has an autistic child to support). Like Destiny, Ramona's a parent herself with a daughter, so this seems a bit inconsistent, but her performance suggests she's been through some shit to get to that level of compartmentalization or what some might call, “thinking like a man.”

At 50 years old, Lopez looks utterly amazing, by the way. Storyline conflicts aside, this is a popcorn flick that pretty much has it all — eye candy featuring a diverse cast of women representing all colors, shapes, sizes and ages (would've liked to see more of Lizzo though!); perfect music (Fiona Apple's “Criminal” proves the ultimate stripper number); and a blend of heartfelt and comedic moments. Yes, Cardi B's brief turns on screen are a wacky, wily win, and she utters the most quotable line of the film: “Drain the clock, not the cock!” Despite the explicit chatter, the film take cues from this line, with scant actual sex and nudity and instead more teasing moments.

The finance-obsessed fellows, depicted for the most part as dumb, smarmy and self-en-titled, obviously don't get the same kind of consideration the female characters do here, and that's intentional. As one of the (female) producers said before the screening: nobody asked these questions about how the women in The Wolf of Wall Street were represented. Come to think of it, maybe Hustlers' contextual inconsistencies in terms of right and wrong and lies and truths are intentional too. It's a story about females told by females so the dynamics of sex, power and money are going to be convoluted, because no matter how we earn a living or how luxurious it may be, the luxury of simplicity — like equality itself — still eludes us.
FILM

VICTIM TO FORGER
Adaption of Pulitzer-winner The Goldfinch hits theaters
BY NATHANIEL BELL

Welcome to L.A. Weekly’s Movie Guide, your look at the hottest films in Los Angeles theaters this week — from indie art house gems and classics to popcorn-perfect blockbusters and new movies garnering buzz.

Opening wide
Friday, September 13
The Goldfinch is a painfully earnest drama based on Donna Tartt’s Pulitzer Prize winner about a young man named Theo (Ansel Elgort), whose mother dies in a terrorist bombing at an art museum. In the aftermath, he steals a Dutch painting called “The Goldfinch” by Carel Fabritius, who himself perished in an explosion known as the Delft Thunderclap. Theo processes this tragedy as he descends into the criminal world of art forgery. Nicole Kidman, Oakes Fegley, Aneurin Barnard, Finn Wolfhard, Sarah Paulson, Luke Wilson, and Jeffrey Wright play pieces of the puzzle. Roger Deakins contributed the beautifully muted cinematography.

Limited/art-house
Friday, September 13
3 Days with Dad is a bittersweet comedy about a middle-aged man named Eddie Mills (Larry Clarke) who reluctantly returns home to visit his dying father (Brian Dennehy). The rest of his family, especially his dominating stepmother (Leslie Ann Warren), is a bundle of neuroses. The circumstances allow Eddie to reflect on what his life has become, and come to terms with the choices that led him there. Shot in a loose, deadpan, improvisational style by writer-director-star Clarke, the film is propped up by a strong performance from Dennehy.


Neither Wolf Nor Dog, based on a novel by Kent Nerburn, is an audience-financed, independently produced, and self-distributed film shot in 18 days with a minimal crew and a septuagenarian star. In other words, it’s the kind of film Hollywood wouldn’t have touched with a 10-foot pole. That is its strength. Shot in the starkly beautiful — yet economically impoverished — regions of South Dakota, director Steven Lewis Simpson, relates the story of a 95-year-old Lakota elder (David Bald Eagle) who enlists the aid of a white reporter (Christopher Sweeney) to turn his diaries into a history book.

Haunt, the co-writers and executive producers of The Quiet Place team up with producer Eli Roth for a blood-streaked horror flick about a group of teenage friends running scared through an “extreme” haunted house. The film was shot in Kentucky in an abandoned dairy factory, which production designer Austin Gorg transformed into a functioning haunted house. Depraved is an indie horror that pumps fresh blood into the familiar Frankenstein formula. David Call plays Henry, a doctor suffering from PTSD whose death-haunted stint as an army medic drives him to experiment with bringing forth life from human body parts.

Both films succeed in creating Adam (Alex Breaux), a triumphant that proves fleeting. Desolation Center tells the story of the cultural moment that birthed them, and if the documentary seems a bit fawning, that’s because it was directed by Stuart Swezey, the original organizer. Concert footage of Sonic Youth, Minutemen and Peat Muppets are the primary draw.

Wednesday, September 18
Robert Downey Sr.’s Putney Swope became an instant cult classic in 1969. The pungent satire, shot in inky black-and-white, shows what follows after the only black exec at an advertising firm suddenly gets promoted to chairman. His first order of business is to fire or demote all the white men on the board of directors. He renames the firm “Truth and Soul, Inc.” and launches a series of obscene commercials that prove wildly successful. American Cinematheque will screen a new DCP restored in 4K.

The Landmark (also playing at the Arclight Hollywood), 10850 Pico Blvd., Rancho Park; Fri., Sept. 13, various showtimes; $12-$15; (310) 470-0492, landmarktheatres.com.

The Quiet Place
In Haunt, the co-writers and executive producers of The Quiet Place team up with producer Eli Roth for a blood-streaked horror flick about a group of teenage friends running scared through an “extreme” haunted house. The film was shot in Kentucky in an abandoned dairy factory, which production designer Austin Gorg transformed into a functioning haunted house. Depraved is an indie horror that pumps fresh blood into the familiar Frankenstein formula. David Call plays Henry, a doctor suffering from PTSD whose death-haunted stint as an army medic drives him to experiment with bringing forth life from human body parts. He succeeds in creating Adam (Alex Breaux), a triumph that proves fleeting.

Depraved is an indie horror that pumps fresh blood into the familiar Frankenstein formula. David Call plays Henry, a doctor suffering from PTSD whose death-haunted stint as an army medic drives him to experiment with bringing forth life from human body parts.
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Lots of weird sex scenes and dour tone hold back well-acted Carnival Row; Banana Splitz Movie is neither funny or scary enough; BH90210 is cringy nostalgia

BY ERIN MAXWELL

I watch TV. A lot of TV. Like, an ungodly amount of television. Then I let you people know what I think and I try my best not to compare it to Alf. Here’s the binge bunch this week.

Carnival Row | Amazon

With Disney+ on the horizon and Netflix dominating water cooler conversations, Amazon Prime is pulling out the stops with their own fantasy show filled with kooky creatures, complex themes and slightly unnerving sex scenes galore. Carnival Row is set to fill the void left by Game of Thrones, hoping to nab the fans who wrote strongly-worded tweets about the season finale. All of the elements are there: top-notch acting, amazing set pieces, beautiful costumes, a well-known cast, and sex. Lots and lots of freaky, winged sex. Yet despite all that, there is something still lacking.

The premise of Carnival Row mirrors Showtime’s Penny Dreadful and Netflix’s Hemlock Grove by offering a new take on whimsical creatures and big, bad beasts of classic literature. The story centers on police inspector Rycroft “Philo” Philostrate (Orlando Bloom) and his one-time fae lover Vignette Stonemoss (Cara Delevingne) as they attempt to solve a string of ghastly murders in a Victorian-age world where humans share their ‘hood with filthy second-string players from Jim Henson’s workshop.

The world of the Carnival Row would do Jules Verne proud. From every dusty top hat to each filthy corset, Amazon Prime gets the look right, as well as the cast. Everyone is pulling their weight with the material. The real issue here is the tone, which makes Chernobyl look like a laugh riot. The show places a lot of emphasis on the plight of the fairy refugees who are seemingly victimized by everyone with a speaking role. This is an unrelenting theme of the show, in which mercy is rarely given to either the characters or the audience.

Carnival Row is muddled down by the weight of its own seriousness. While the series is rich with conflict — and did I mention weird-ass sex scenes? — it lacks the humor needed to give audiences a chance to catch its breath. The genius of Game of Thrones came from its moments of levity, where the characters got to exhibit charm and give audiences a reason to smile between the moments of violence. In Carnival Row, instead of the occasional wisecrack, we are given lots of nekkid people with wings and horns and scenes of mid-air coitus, and after a while, you start to not give a flying fuck about the flying fucks. It gets tedious pretty quickly, offering no happiness, no joy and no fun. And fairies should be fun, shouldn’t they?

The Banana Splitz Movie | SyFy

As the first R-rated movie adaptation of a Hanna-Barbera property, The Banana Splitz Movie is a confusing jumble of jump scares, murderous furries and tainted Gen-X childhood memories. Based less on the beloved Saturday morning cartoon and more on Five Nights at Freddy’s (but with characters that could be easily optioned), SyFy’s Splitz movie is awash in confusion as it attempts its stabs at horror. There are not enough laughs to be scary and the scares are too feeble to be effective, but a few gory kills save the pic from landing in Dullsville, USA. As a scary movie, it hits all the typical beats: ominous music, cray creatures of some sort, a bunch of jerks primed for the kill.

Though predictable, it is slightly better than the usual SyFy fare. And man, I hope you like that theme song, ‘cause you are going to hear it a lot. Even when you are not watching. It just stays with you. Forever. One of my favorite parts of this mishmash TV movie is the IMDB page, which states: “Loosely based on the show except the show had no killing.” It is my hope that this ushers in more remakes of ’70s family fare with strange little side notes, like “Loosely based on the 1970’s Partridge Family sitcom, except the original show had less of Reuben Kincaid murdering hobos with a hammer.”

And hey, maybe this one will open up opportunities for the horror script I’m working on about a bubblegum pink, anthropomorphic jungle cat who slashes coeds while yelling, “Exit, stab lef!”

BH90210 | Fox

It had all the makings to be great, and if not great, then at least entertaining. Thanks to pop culture’s current love affair with all things ’90s, Fox’s Beverly Hills, 90210 reboot was on the fast track to success. And for the first three minutes, everything seemed right. The gang was at the Peach Pit, Color Me Badd’s “All 4 Love” was playing, and hijinks ensued. Even the throwback intro was a gut punch to the feels.

But then… Turns out the “reboot” is a re-imagining in which the Beverly Hills, 90210 actors play themselves, but “heightened” versions of themselves. Um, OK. Granted, that’s not what fans expected, but even this unexpected turn could find an audience if the show embraced the high camp. Instead, BH90210 trips and falls before it gets a chance to really run. Despite rare bits of amusing dialogue and a tender moment thanks to a Luke Perry tribute in the pilot, most of BH90210 is a confusing, cringe-inducing affair looking to cash in ’90s nostalgia.

At some point during the creation process, Fox failed to realize that the success and charm of the original show hinged on the reliability of the characters despite wealth and privilege. But these folks have turned contemptible and unpleasant with age. The show has no idea what it wants to be. Is it a parody? A drama? Are we supposed to laugh at Jennie Garth’s failed marriages? Show creators overestimated the size of the BH90210 fan base’s mean streak, me thinks. Few people like to laugh at old friends. The premise of the original 90210 was that it was a zip code, a lifestyle, and a group of friends that audiences vied for and wanted to visit. But this? This is not a place to visit. This is a place where you avoid eye contact with the residents in fear of Brandon Walsh needing a place to crash.
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AVRIL LAVIGNE’S HEAD IS FINALLY ABOVE WATER

After grappling with Lyme disease, the songstress embraces vulnerability on her latest album

BY BRETTE CALLWOOD

**Avril Lavigne**

In 2014, a year after the release of her self-titled fifth album, Canadian songstress Avril Lavigne was diagnosed with Lyme disease. Her life was put on hold as she embarked on a terrifying battle for her health. Naturally, so was her career.

There’s no doubt that the momentum she had been building was forced to a stop. After three albums of the quirky, bouncy skater-punk and post-grunge that saw her build a huge international fan base, she began the new decade with the pop-rock Goodbye Lullaby in 2011 and followed that with the ultimately pop Avril Lavigne in 2013. The title suggests a reinvention, or at least an evolution. This was a mature Lavigne, the Hot Topic-esque clothes put away.

Then along came the Lyme disease that sucked it all up. It was a relief, then, when the announcement came that she was releasing a new album, Head Above Water, in February and a tour would follow. She’s at the Greek this week.

“I’m really excited to be getting back up on stage,” Lavigne tells us over the phone. “It’s been about five years because I obviously had to take a few years off with the whole health thing. So it’s very meaningful and I think it will be an emotional and powerful experience for me, getting back out on stage and on tour, having some time away and then stepping back into writing and making music, and now bringing these songs live — it’s been me re-falling in love with music all over again and I’m so grateful on so many levels. To be here today, still making music, and to be powering through, it means a lot.”

She’s not being dramatic either — she genuinely was at a point where she didn’t think she’d ever be able to work again, and there was a harrowing night when she thought she wouldn’t make it.

“Slowly in bed, I started writing these songs,” she says. “Head Above Water” — those lyrics came to me when I was in bed, the night I thought I was going to die. It showed me how music is still alive in me and it lives in my soul. It’s not even something I can control. So this album obviously took three years to make — a really long time. I’m just grateful to be making it.

“I was in a situation where I was being belittled, and spoken down to and called a dumb blonde,” she says. “A guy was intimidated by my independence, and my strength as a woman. I didn’t let that affect me — it wasn’t this big crazy thing I went through. But I decided to turn this into a song that’s an anthem for women to say, ‘It’s OK to be a woman, and be strong and powerful. It’s not OK for somebody to try to put you on the bench and tell you to stop speaking because you’re a girl.’ But I also like to think in general, whether it’s male- or female-related, it’s important for anyone to be able to express themselves, and be strong and powerful, and be who they are.”

Speaking to Lavigne, the gratitude she feels to be doing this stuff again is clear. Many musicians complain about having to do interviews, but Lavigne is nothing but gracious. She’s been through something shitty, and now she’s determined to enjoy her life. Hey, she’s even happy to let that pop-punk princess from the 2000s out to play.

“I have a side of me that still loves to skateboard, dirtbike, get tattooed, drink beer, barbecue,” she says. “There’s a side of me that’s like that, absolutely. I love to play electric guitars. She’s still there, and you’ll still see her during these concerts. Literally a few weeks ago, we were dirtbiking and I was getting the rest of my sleeve done. It’s been a good summer.”

We’ll see Lavigne’s many sides at the Greek this week as she performs a career-spanning set. “I have this fire/water theme and there are powerful moments,” she says. “What I just went through and what I overcame, something that’s very important and now — something I’m very proud of. And then has from the last 17 years. It’s fun, and plays with different emotions. There’s a lot to it. I feel like my audience are music people. That’s what’s amazing about my fans. They’re really music lovers.”

Avril Lavigne plays with Jagwar Twin at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 18 at the Greek Theatre.
**Music**

**Upcoming Events at Amoeba!**

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**Christone “Kingfish” Ingram**
@ EL REY THEATRE

Masterful showman Buddy Guy pulled out all the stops at his August show at the Hollywood Bowl as the legendary blues guitarist turned his guitar inside out... One of the highlights was a star turn by Christone “Kingfish” Ingram, the Mississippi-raised wunderkind who stood out from the rest of the crowd of guest guitarists. The 20-year-old guitarist grew up as a musician, as skilled as confessional and more likely to rock. He definitely rocks hard on his debut album, *Kingfish*, but he also demonstrates his soulful, wiser-than-his-years presence on bluesy tracks like “Been Here Before.” “I was born at the turn of the century/lucky to be born at all,” he muses on the prophetic “Before I’m Old.” “I’ve seen a lot, and I done a lot/Too young to lay down in that hole.” Also at Warner Grand Theatre, Saturday, September 14.

**FRI 9/13**

**Cold Waves Fest**
@ BAND OF AMERICA STADIUM

A traveling celebration of Chicago industrial music, as well as an ongoing tribute to beloved sound engineer Jamie Duffy, Cold Waves could quite easily become a one-dimensional dirge-fest if the organizers weren’t smart when putting the bills together. But they are, and the bands on this L.A. lineup, while all playing with the industrial genre, come at it from a variety of angles. London innovators Test Dept. headline, with Australian post-punk/synthpop band Severed Heads next on the bill. Then it gets really interesting; indie band Pop Will Eat Sealed and get your book signed! Should be quite the party. —BRETT CALLWOOD

**FRI 9/13**

**Iron Maiden**
@ THE OBSERVATORY

Simply put, there are few better live bands than Iron Maiden anywhere in the world today, in any genre. A bold statement, sure. But ever since frontman Bruce Dickinson rejoined the band in 1999, they’ve been simply unstoppable, putting out a string of well-received albums and amping up the live show year on year. “Serious” music fans might scoff, not just at Maiden but at all power-metal bands with their oh-so-silly wizards and warlords-themed lyrics and widdly riffs. But fuck that — nobody knows how to pen an epic tune better than Steve Harris, and there are few greater sights than mascot Eddie lumbering across a stage. Maiden give us pyro and escapism-fueled fun, and in 2019 that’s a priceless trait. —BRETT CALLWOOD

**MON 9/16**

**Savannah Pope**
@ GOLD DIGGERS

Savannah Pope belts out a dramatic, theatrical form of hard rock that’s suffused with surreal lyrics about vivisected animal mutations and apocalyptic tidal waves sweeping the Hollywood rock scene under the waves. The singer’s flamboyant and brassy persona and
colorful costumes are made for stadium concert stages, but she brings her larger-than-life sound and presence to the intimate bar Gold Diggers. While Pope can wail operatically with her powerful pipes, she also switches gears occasionally for stranger songs such as the arty and mysterious “Mrs. Moreau” and the morbidly effusive power ballad “Rock n Roll No More.” She’s too weird to be labeled as a mere hard rocker, but she’s also too overtly glamorous to be lost among the crowd of meek, modern indie-rock singers. —FALLING JAMES

Above Ground: Presented By Dave Navarro & Billy Morrison
@ THE FONDAL

The Cult’s Billy Morrison and Jane’s Addiction man Dave Navarro are putting on this Above Ground benefit for the second year, in the process raising funds and awareness for causes that help those suffering with mental health issues. “Suicide, depression, mental illness obviously affects people that aren’t in the music business, but we obviously were affected by Scott [Weiland], Chester [Bennington], Chris [Cornell] and others,” Morrison told us last year. The theme seems to be performing classic albums in their entirety — last year we got Adam & the Ants’ Kings of the Wild Frontier and the Velvet Underground’s debut. This time, we get The Stooges’ debut, and Bowie’s Ziggy Stardust… Guests include Billy Idol, Perry Farrell, Juliette Lewis, Wayne Kramer and more. But it’s all about the cause. —BRETT CALLWOOD

TUE 9/17

Nas, Mary J Blige
@ HOLLYWOOD BOWL

Mary J. Blige and Nas on tour together? Sign us up. With Nas being one of the greatest MCs of all time and Blige holding that same weight in the R&B game, this show at the famous Hollywood Bowl will be an evening to remember. The Royalty Tour has been on the road all summer, ensuing instant nostalgia and a pure love for music in each and every city they hit. While Nas has a never-ending catalog of smash hits, from “I Can” to “One Mic,” the Queen of Hip-Hop Soul brings her A-game with “I Can Love You” and “Love Is All We Need.” The two will undoubtedly conjoin on stage for their collaborative hits “Thriving” and “Reach Out.” One time for hip-hop! —SHIRLEY JU

Billie Eilish
@ GRAMMY MUSEUM

Billie Eilish is the most interesting voice working in popular music today. Unequivocally. Inescapably. She is that rarest of all possible stars in that she is at once immensely populist and intensely insular in her songcraft. Yes, she does write the hits — pulling into her voice everything from ASMR whispers to sound poetry — but they are hits that are so intimate that you can look out upon any of her audiences and watch them imbue those hits with their own deeply personal meaning in real time. Tonight she joins Scott Goldman and her producer/singer brother Finneas in conversation about private life, her new video for “all the girls go to hell,” her September 28 debut on Saturday Night Live, and the creative impulses that have sculpted this singular voice into the work of art spazzing before you tonight. —DAVID COTHER

WED 9/18

Smile Empty Soul, September Mourning
@ THE WHISKY A GO GO

Santa Clarita post-grunge band Smile Empty Soul have been kicking it since ’98 and now have seven studio albums (plus three EPs and a compilation album) under their belt. They’ve remained firmly in the underground, but that doesn’t mean they don’t have an impressive legacy and a loyal fanbase. Only singer and guitarist Sean Danielsen remains from the original lineup, but last year’s Oblivion proves that there’s still gas in the tank. Meanwhile, comic book-themed metal band September Mourning is a band very much on the up. “September” is a character portrayed by singer Emily Lazar — a reaper/human hybrid trying to give human souls a second chance of life. I mean, if that doesn’t entice you we don’t know what will. Anthea also play. —BRETT CALLWOOD

THU 9/19

Pinky Pinky
@ THE ECHO

Pinky Pinky continue to expand their musical range. Their debut self-titled EP and their 2018 release Hot Tears segued from bluesy, harder moods into more effusively poppy songs. Their new album, Turkey Dinner, encompasses that same dichotomy while filtering in a few new stylistic variations, such as the sinuous, funky pop of “If It Didn’t Hurt.” Lightweight pop songs like “Sticking Around” are juxtaposed with harder-rocking tracks such as “Loose Change.” For all the usual charm of poppy tunes like “My Friend Sean” and the airy “Mr. Sunday,” Pinky Pinky’s best moments on the new record tend to be fuzzier, stomping songs like “All the Birds,” in which the sugary melodies are given more of a rhythmic drive. —FALLING JAMES
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