JUDY BACA PAINTS HISTORY IN LIVING COLOR

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SHOP LOCAL AT THE ORIGINAL FARMERS MARKET

Beat the Supply Chain Woes

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

In 1880, A.F. Gilmore and a partner bought two dairy farms in Los Angeles. They split their holdings 10 years later and Gilmore took control of the 256-acre ranch, its dairy herd and farmhands at what is now the corner of 3rd & Fairfax, The Original Farmers Market.

When Gilmore wanted to expand his dairy herd, he started drilling new wells for water. Instead, he discovered oil. Soon, the dairy herd was replaced by a field of oil derricks. The rich oil field near the La Brea tar pits was no longer permitted on a large scale within the city.

The Gilmore property remained largely vacant into the 1930s, when at the height of the Great Depression, two entrepreneurs, Fred Beck and Roger Dahlhjelm, approached A.F.'s son, Earl Bell (E.B.) Gilmore, with an idea of building a village at the corner of 3rd & Fairfax where local farmers could sell their produce out of the back of their trucks.

By October 1934, farmers and merchants, including restaurants, grocers and service providers, were moving into permanent stalls. Gilmore Stadium was built that same year before the market opened and was home to the L.A. Bulldogs, the city's first professional football team. The stadium also hosted rodeos, boxing matches, swim exhibitions and motorcycle races. Gilmore Field, opened in 1939, was the home of the Hollywood Stars, one of two professional baseball teams in L.A. before the Dodgers left Brooklyn.

Eighty-seven years and a Grove later, the market still holds that old-world charm for shopping and dining, with some of the same vendors like Patsy D'Amore's Pizza which has been in business for 75 years, and Bob's Coffee and Doughnuts which has been in the same spot for 74 years.

The stadium and baseball field are gone, but despite the surrounding gentrification, a step into the market is still a step back in time. Whether you're looking for holiday gifts, superior meats, produce, candy and nuts or a fun lunch that feels like a vacation, the 87-year-old Original Farmers Market is a local paradise. Here are some of our favorites:

Magee’s House of Nuts. President Dwight Eisenhower was hypnotized by the peanut butter machine upon his visit and a few years later, the Beatles visited the same shop. They have a delicious selection of macadamias, pecans and walnuts. The oldest tenant in the market, they’ve been making their peanut butter since 1934 with peanuts only; no added sugar.

Monsieur Marcel Gourmet Market. A food lover’s dream, this gourmet market is possibly one of the best in Los Angeles. They offer thousands of imported specialty foods, olive oils, charcuterie, cheeses, wines, giftware and baskets as well as demonstrations, a French bistro and seafood market for that New Year’s Eve bouillabaisse.

Kaylin and Kaylin Pickles. One of the newer additions to the market, Scott Kaylin has brought savory and sweet gluten-free and vegan New York-style pickles to the West Coast. Pick up a pouch of jalapeno, kosher dill, half-sour, horseradish, mustard, spicy dill and honey mustard for your next open house host gift.

Huntington Meats, Poultry and Sausages. Another market mainstay, this old-fashioned butcher shop has a premium selection of steaks, chops, poultry, housemade sausages and meatballs as well as classes and is the protein source of a good many of L.A.’s best restaurants.

Rick’s Produce. A great place for local produce. Rick’s organic fruits and vegetables are sourced from the family’s farm in Fallbrook. They also have a snack bar with smoothies, salads, juices, salsas, acai bowls and carry jams.

Anaheim House of Jerky. Looking for a stocking stuffer for one of your favorite carnivores? This wacky stall offers more than 40 different varieties to choose from, ranging from traditional beef to venison, buffalo and elk, as well as vegan versions.

Little John’s English Toffee House. Candy master Michael Graves turns out handmade chocolate, caramel and toffee confections daily at Little John’s which has been a market favorite since the 1940s. There is an ample selection of gift kits including holiday specialties like eggnog fudge and old-fashioned mint bark.

Zia Valentina. This vendor has become a hot topic among coffee lovers for the world-famous edible coffee cup known as the Waffleshot – a chocolate-dipped cone filled with espresso, coffee or granita.

If you choose to sit down and dine in and tip a few, try margaritas or brunch at the airy El Granjero Cantina, perfect for people watching. Gift cards are available. The contemporary British pub Market Tavern is a fun stop for a pint and if you’re lucky, you might just be able to order up a flight from owner Gary Twinn and Honeydipper, and swap punk rock stories. On Sunday afternoons around 5 p.m. you just might catch a little live music from his ex-pat musician friends in the space filled with rock & roll photography over a dish of chicken curry.

For a complete list including more food finds and info on Kip’s Toyland, L.A.’s oldest toy store, go to farmersmarketla.com and check out the slideshow for a taste of market history.
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and technological nexus of film, theater and experience explored here at the aesthetic.

The latest project from Arlekin's Zero Gravity (Virtual). Witness at Arlekin Players Theatre (Virtual). Claudia Rankine and Will Rawls at REDCAT.

What Remains is a collaboration between world-renowned poet and MacArthur Fellow Claudia Rankine and choreographer and Guggenheim Fellow Will Rawls. Through movement and voice, four performers invite us across the threshold of a historical void produced by anti-Blackness and respond to violence and disappearance with a resonant, ghostly chorus. Inspired by Rankine's texts on racial violence—Citizen (2014) and Don't Let Me Be Lonely (2004)—the result is a performance at the edge of dance and poetry that meets and challenges the erasure of Black citizens with its own immersive disturbances. 631 W. 2nd St., downtown; Thursday - Saturday, December 9-11, 8:30pm; $25; redbac.org.

The Lazarus Experience, 224 E. 11th St. #501, downtown; Thursday, December 16, 8pm; $10; hammer.ucla.edu.

Rainbow Power at the Getty Research Institute (Live & Virtual). In the summer of 2021, the Union of European Football Associations rejected a request to light up Munich's Allianz Arena in the colors of the rainbow during a match between Germany and Hungary. UEFA asserted that the gesture was seen as a deliberate critique of Hungary's anti-LGBTQ legislation. Their decision, they concluded, was based on their belief that "the rainbow is not a political symbol." Focusing on an early seventeenth-century emblem designed for a Stuart king and prince, this presentation will demonstrate how, to the contrary, rainbows have always been political. They were and remain signs of hope, justice, mercy, and political power. 1200 Getty Center Dr., Brentwood; also livestreaming on Zoom; Sunday, December 12, 4pm; free; getty.edu.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 13
Stories of Belief: Muslim Prayer Boards of West Africa at the Fowler Museum (Virtual). Muslim prayer boards combine divine arts with practical purposes. Made of wood and inscribed with a reed pen, they help young Muslims commit to memory Words of God. When the boards are washed for reuse, the water bears blessings that— if imbibed or applied to afflicted bodies— can console, heal, and bring hope. Amira Hassnaoui will share her ongoing doctoral research involving people of West African descent in southern Tunisia; and Allen F. Roberts, who will discuss religious practices he and Polly Nooter Roberts (d. 2018) studied for their 2003 Fowler Museum exhibition, A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal. Monday, December 13, noon; free; fowler.ucla.edu.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14
Artist Talk: vanessa german at Transformative Arts (Virtual). In conjunction with her current exhibition of vibrant, performative and ritually operational mixed media sculptures, The Artist Channels 33 Intimate Technologies of Soul, vanessa german and Transformative Arts founder jill moniz pursue a conversation on intimate technologies and other emancipatory instruments of soul. Tuesday, December 14, 3pm; the exhibition is on view at 410 S. Spring St., downtown; instagram.com/transformation_arts_now.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15
Bob Spit - We Do Not Like People, at Laemmle's. A stop-motion animation that mixes documentary, comedy and road-movie to tell the story of Bob Spit, an old punk trying to escape from a post-apocalyptic desert that is actually a purgatory inside the mind of his.
creator, Angeli — a cartoonist going through a creative crisis, and one of the most celebrated Brazilian cartoonists of all times. Angeli became famous in the ’70s by releasing political cartoons in the midst of Brazil’s military dictatorship. In the 80s, he moved to daily strips, showing an acid sense of humor to represent Brazil’s society, day-to-day life and customs. Some of his most famous characters include the bohemian diva Rê Bordosa, the hippie pair Wood & Stock — and the punk Bob Spit, who inspired this homage.

Opens Wednesday, December 15; laemmle.com.

Music

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10 – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12

Cash Cash
Academy LA
The New Jersey DJ trio are still out there touring this year’s Say it Like You Feel it album with “Ride or Die” (with Phoebe Ryan) the most recent single. Expect all that. Griskout also plays. 10 p.m. on Friday, December 10 at Academy LA, $20-90; academy.la.

Suburban Clampingdown #2
Garden Amp
A superb bill of punk goodness in Garden Grove, as Deviates, Agent Orange, Excel, Bad Cop Bad Cop, Cigar, the Line, Hoist the Colors, Stalag 13, and Dog Party join forces. 6 p.m. on Saturday, December 11 at the Garden Amp, $22, gardenamp.com.

Benefit for Howie Pyro
Alex’s Bar
Punk vet Howie Pyro needs help with medical expenses, so true to form the community is stepping up to help. Performers include the Adolescents, the Bomboras, CH3, NIIS and Vicky Tafaya. 8 p.m. on Saturday, December 11 at Alex’s Bar, $38.40, alexsbar.com.

Siiickbrain
Whisky A Go Go
Recent LA Weekly interviewee Siiickbrain is a musician and model, and in September she told us: “I’ve always listened to music that was more of the punk genre, and I have been getting tattooed ever since I was able to when I turned 18.” It’s gonna be wild. 9 p.m. on Sunday, December 12 at the Whisky A Go Go, $15+; whiskyagogo.com.

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14 ARRESTS MADE IN L.A. ‘SMASH AND GRAB’ ROBBERIES, MANY STILL AT-LARGE

Multiple robbery trends have hit Los Angeles, with the latest being “smash and grabs” where groups target different stores and make out with thousands of dollars worth of merchandise.

BY ISAI ROCHA

After 11 “smash and grab” incidents in L.A. that saw retail stores targeted for group robberies, LAPD has made 14 arrests believed to be in connection.

The four robberies, six burglaries and grand theft took place between Nov. 18 and 28, with about $338,000 worth of merchandise stolen.

“Our officers, with the resources they need, are out there to get the bad guys – to prevent smash and grab robberies from happening in the first place,” Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said in a briefing. “We have extended patrols, we have strategic places we’re at, but we also… need the public’s help.”

LAPD said the robberies appeared coordinated, with caravans parked nearby the targeted stores while people went inside, taking property and assaulting employees.

“They worked to steal from high-end clothing stores, often using weapons and physical force to overwhelm and intimidate store employees and patrons,” LAPD Chief Michel Moore said on Thursday.

All 14 of the arrested suspects were released from custody, meeting bail, zero bail and juvenile release requirements.

Suspects believed to be connected to an incident at the Nordstrom department store located at The Grove L.A. are still at-large. At least $9,000 of property was stolen in that incident.

Law enforcement are also looking for suspects involved in a CVS robbery where more than $10,000 worth of property was taken.

In response to the “flash mob” robberies, LAPD increased its patrols and police presence on Nov. 24, in hopes of curtailing the incidents.

“As of this last weekend… we’ve seen multiple instances in which we believe the actions of the added presence – both store security personnel as well as ourselves – has deterred people from further victimizing stores,” Chief Moore said.

Moore added that it is believed the stolen merchandise is being re-sold, as the found property typically contained original tags in place. It is believed that the intention was to sell the merchandise at swap-meet style markets.

The trend of smash-and-grab robberies began at the start of November in cities across the country such as Chicago, New York and San Francisco.

L.A. COUNTY FINDS FIRST THREE CASES OF OMICRON COVID-19 VARIANT

Days after Los Angeles recorded its first case of the Omicron variant, two more people were found to be infected with the new COVID-19 variant.

The very first case came from an individual

“Throughout the pandemic, we have always known there would be more mutations, resulting in the possibility of a more dangerous variant than the Delta variant,” Director of Public Health Dr. Barbara Ferrer said. “While we can’t know for certain the impact of Omicron at this time, the good news is that we already know how to reduce transmission and slow spread using both pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical interventions. I encourage everyone to take the steps that we know offer protection, including getting vaccinated or boosted, tested if you feel sick or are a close contact, and wearing your mask indoors and at large mega-events.”

Close contacts for all three have been in quarantine and tested for COVID-19. As of this writing, close contacts for the woman in the first known case all tested negative for COVID-19.

The very first U.S. case of the Omicron variant was found in San Francisco, with the woman coming in from South Africa, as well.

President Joe Biden said the U.S. will not need to take unusual measures against the Omicron variant and both he and Gov. Gavin Newsom have reiterated that economic lockdowns will not be necessary.

L.A. Public Health said it continues to encourage eligible Angelenos to get vaccinated and get their booster shots, as well as continuing to wear their masks indoors and at mega-events.

LAFD HAS PULLED 113 FIREFIGHTERS FROM DUTY DUE TO VACCINATION MANDATE

The Los Angeles Fire Department has placed 113 of its firefighters on unpaid leave for failure to submit their COVID-19 vaccination status, as of Monday.

The city’s mandate required all city workers, including firefighters, to submit their vaccination status by Dec. 18. There were 222 LAFD personnel that had not submitted their vaccination statuses for a first dose, or requested medical/religious exemptions, leading the department to send those employees notices.

The original deadline for employees to be fully vaccinated was Oct. 5, but was later extended to Dec. 18, allowing more time to get a first dose or request the exemption.

“The city’s employee vaccine mandate is critical to protecting the health and safety of our workforce and the Angelenos we serve,” Garcetti said in an October statement. “Employees must be vaccinated by December 18, and we are putting a rigorous testing program into place in the meantime. Let me be clear: any employee who refuses to be vaccinated by this date should be prepared to lose their job.”

An organization calling itself the “Firefighters 4 Freedom” sought legal representation, stating their rights had been violated by the city’s vaccination orders.

“You threaten to place firefighters on ‘unpaid interim suspension’ violates their constitutionally protected due process rights as guaranteed by the Supreme Court of California and statutory law,” a notice penned by J.W. Howard Attorneys, directed toward LAFD Chief Ralph Terrazas, said. “It is also in violation of the Firefighters Bill of Rights…”

About 83% of LAFD employees have been vaccinated, with 321 unvaccinated employees asking for qualified exemptions, according to CNS.
JUDY BACA PAINTS HISTORY IN LIVING COLOR

MOLAA’s current exhibition is a vibrant and iconic career survey.

BY SHANA NYS DAMBROT

The first clue you’re in for something special with Judy Baca: Memorias de Nuestra Tierra, a Retrospective at the Museum of Latin American Art, is the color. Emanating from the work and radiating from the walls, a supercharged, warm and vibrating palette scheme takes over every bit of wall and space; it truly is like walking into one of the paintings. Glowing yellow and deep crimson, royal blue and sun-kissed teal, fertile green and amber earth, highlights of lavender – across landscapes, historical vignettes, intimate personal portraits, performative and symbolic self-portraits, visionary scenes of spirit and magic, apparitions of ancestors, injustices, folklore, feminism, humor, protest and politics, Judy Baca’s palette is a prismatic experience.

Most people who are aware of Baca’s decades of activity in the Los Angeles art and social justice worlds – and especially at their intersection – know her from The Great Wall project. This half mile long mural, which is still very much in progress, is sited along the Tujunga Wash in the San Fernando Valley, and chronicles the history of California from prehistory until… Well, the goal is to catch up to the present, but right now it’s completed through the 1950s and the ’60s are in the planning stages. The mural pays special attention to the lesser-known histories of the ethnic groups who historically and currently live here. The exhibition gets to the Wall in dramatic, impressive fashion. But first, it asks viewers to start at the beginning – in Baca’s painting studio.

The first of three enormous galleries presents a section on female empowerment, spe-
Judy Baca (USA, b. 1946)

*Josefina: Ofrenda to the Domestic Worker (Homenaje a la Trabajadora Doméstica), 1993*

Judith F. Baca (USA, b. 1946)

*Absolutely Chicana, 2008*

Judy Baca (USA, b. 1946)

*“La Memoria de Nuestra Tierra, California”, 1996*
Judith F. Baca (United States, b. 1946)
Matriarchal Mural: When God Was A Woman, 1980 - 2021

Specifically Baca's involvement with feminism as a political movement, gender as a perspective on the world, and her own family history as a source of inspiration and protective ancestors. In work after work, starting with the multigenerational family portrait Tres Generations (1973), we see the development of Baca's visual language, her intentional balance of beauty and power, and the emergence of her delicate yet visceral earthly surrealism. In figure drawings and landscapes, as well as a series of cheeky performance-based self-portraits, Baca works through both her own issues and moves toward taking on the world's.

A suite of beguiling never-exhibited ink drawings speaks to the intimate side of this equation, while a masterpiece called Matriarchal Mural: When God Was A Woman (acrylic on wood panels, 8 x 12 feet, 1980-2021) holds court as a cornerstone that encapsulates the whole journey. Now in the permanent collection of MOLAA, the work was completed just in time for the exhibition to open earlier this year, but Baca started working on it in 1980.

A double-sided triptych is framed in a construction that allows each panel to spin to reveal the flipside composition. Thirteen Women in the Volcanic Eruption (Side 1) depicts a phalanx of female ancestors, with a very deliberate range of skin tones and features, but all nude and standing still among the lava flows, in postures of peace and offering. Schematic, stylized lines and near-symmetry give it an operatic, mythological quality that explores the power of the matrilineal legacy, within families and throughout time.

The Birth of the Vision of the Heart (Side 2) is wildly surreal and holds its power with the strength of an invocation. A woman in a crown of corn and feathers stands astride the ground and water; her legs are rippled with dark veins that branch into tree roots, her feet are roots planted in the earth. Her arms become flowering, leafy branches,
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The new Charles White Art and Design Scholarship honors the life and legacy of artist and instructor Charles White (1918-1979). Celebrated for his visual representation of Black life and important social issues, White was a renowned teacher who influenced the work and practice of prominent students, including Kerry James Marshall, David Hammons, Richard Wyatt Jr., Alonzo Davis, Judithe Hernández, and Kent Twitchell, among others.

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Charles White, Awaken from the Unknowning, 1961, © The Charles White Archives
imagining and executing of so many important public art projects, and the challenges faced by a Latina in leading that charge, undergirds not only her continuing evolution as an artist, but her commitment to collaboration. “We have momentum right now, but nothing has changed,” Baca tells the L.A. Weekly. “I’ve been in public practice since before those words were invented [in the art world]. Community, social practice, all of that language, it’s just what we did. The true level of commitment required is a nightmare! As a social organization there was no money for art, but the art world took a while to understand it as art.” Based on the current popularity, support and attention being paid to her work, it feels like maybe everyone has finally caught up. “We work in the field,” she says. “We plant, we tend, but we never get to harvest – that’ll be for the young people to do.”

Speaking of working with the future, in the exhibition’s climax, visitors will discover the history of Baca’s great life’s work, the Great Wall of Los Angeles. To understand the vast physical scale of this project, MOLAA commissioned an immersive audiovisual version of the monumental piece. A continuous floor-to-ceiling illuminated scroll across four tall walls of a darkened room shows the entirety of the quarter-mile wonder, in perfect high-resolution and saturated technicolor, with a marvelous soundtrack and interspersed with contemporaneous video from local news (there was a rather dramatic helicopter rescue during a flood) and a PBS special from the 1980s. “The Great Wall is an epic recovery of the history of the true American story,” says Baca. “The amount of material missing from the official, taught accounts is... staggering. As far as the relationship of today and history, I’ve always believed, as Diego said, that the definition of a monument is to bring the past into the present to change/inspire the future.” Baca remembers in the 1970s there was an indigenous occupation of Alcatraz. “It was a community, a family gathering entirely unlike a protest. Their message was that [white men] made many promises but they only kept one – to take our land. Now I think about Standing Rock...”

The Great Wall includes scenes from indigenous life, nature, agriculture, migrations, multiple wars, development, politics, sports, social movements, industry, science, popular culture, policing, patriotism, human rights and more. So how does she approach what must be the daunting task of choosing what images, scenes and figures to include, not only in the Wall but in her prolific mural practice in general? “Some are iconic,” she says, “like RFK. But it’s also crucial to include new, uncovered histories, as well as individuals and specific events – like the Fighting 442nd survivor. This was the most decorated group out of all WW2 soldiers, but they were Japanese.” They were treated badly, and for Baca that kind of wrong is worth making right. The next section, which is already well planned and in fact sketches are included in the exhibition, will take on the Civil Rights era, with a scene set at a segregated lunch counter sit-in protest. “We must depict the past with relevance for today,” says Baca. “Otherwise, how will we learn?”

For more information, visit: molaa.org.

**Prophecy exposé shares the truth about the Christmas story**

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BLONDIES HAVE MORE FUN

Blu DeTiger’s funky indie-pop is all NYC.

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

PHOTO BY YANA YATIUK

Blu DeTiger resonates New York cool. She loves her hometown, and it swells out of her. Whether it be her music, her style, her look – DeTiger is walking NYC.

When we ask her to list her influences during our Zoom interview, the first two names out of DeTiger’s mouth are Blondie and the Talking Heads. That makes complete sense. That it was the two CBGB bands who were able to cross the punk divide into mainstream massiveness that had the biggest effect on this young artist tracks when listening to her own music.

The next two names she mentions clear the water further. New York funk band Chic (and bassist Bernard Edwards), and Brooklyn’s own LCD Soundsystem. DeTiger describes her own sound as funky indie-pop, which works but only scratches the surface. DeTiger has a Nico/Velvets/Warhol swagger, a sultry look of deceptive indifference that draws listeners in with a wide web of intrigue. She proudly states that her first ever show was at the sadly deceased CBGB, but she would be just as attractive to the Studio 54 crowd. Like HRH Debbie Harry, she’s drawing inspiration from all corners of New York.

“I’m influenced by it and born and raised in New York, so I guess I always felt that growing up,” she says. “The creative energy here is insane. So I think it definitely influences my sound.”

DeTiger took a dive into music three years ago, picking up the bass guitar first. She was serious about her art right from the get-go.

The release of the debut How Did We Get Here EP last year saw DeTiger earn high praise from all corners, not to mention 80 million streams across the world.

“I’m really happy that people connected with the songs. I didn’t fully realize the magnitude until I started playing shows and then I was like, ‘Oh my god, people actually know the words to these songs – it’s crazy.’ So I think the shows are when I realized it but I’m really happy that people listen.”

Definitely my first tour that I just came back from,” she says. “My first headline shows. Those were shows that I’ll remember forever. Releasing my first EP is a big career highlight. I just signed my record deal a few months ago, which was pretty special. Those are the big ones. That first New York show that I did, in September, it was my first headline show ever that I was playing my own music and I walked out on stage and it was sold out. I was like, ‘This is the best moment ever – it’s crazy.’

Obviously, DeTiger’s entire career has taken off during the global pandemic. She barely has any context to weigh the past two years against. Thankfully, all that is changing now. And besides, she made the best of it.

“Just because it was all from home, I think everything is online and I think that changes the way you market things or just the way you talk about things is different,” she says. “You can’t see the impact, like I was saying before, when it’s just all online numbers. You can only feel so much. So it doesn’t feel surreal until you actually physically see people that the songs have connected with me. But for the pandemic, a lot of online work and trying to utilize social media in the best way that I could to get people to listen.”

People certainly did listen to Blu DeTiger. Incidentally, that really is her real name. It might sound like the perfect stage name for an indie-disco-pop artist – elegantly sassy. But she was born into it.

Looking ahead, DeTiger is focussing on finishing up a bunch more songs.

“I have another song coming out soon,” she says. “Another song ready to go that I’ve been playing on tour and the fans are already like, ‘release it.’ So that’s coming soon. And just writing a bunch more. Then a lot of touring next year as well.

We’ll look forward to it.

Blu DeTiger’s single “Blondes” is out now.
EPISODE

Women in Construction: Building America from the Ground Up

Listen at rebuildsocal.org/podcast
Holiday horror just got a new bulb on the tree with Bruce Campbell’s latest film Black Friday. The movie sees him fighting bloodthirsty aliens on the busiest shopping day of the year, and offers a not-so-subtle satire on the dangers of consumerism. The actor is best known for his role as Ash Williams, the unwittingly cool and wacky hero in the Sam Raimi-created Evil Dead films. But his time on screen has, in fact, been quite varied. From Hercules and Xena: Warrior Princess to voice work in animated films and video games, to host of 2019’s Ripley’s Believe it Not, Campbell has established himself as a unique pop culture fixture. He’ll always be Ash to most, but as he discussed with L.A. Weekly in advance of his new seasonally-appropriate film (and new Christmas flick for the Hallmark channel), he tackles all his roles with humor and relish. That said, as he reveals here, there is more Evil Dead goodness to come too. Happy Holidays!

L.A. WEEKLY: You’re known for all of your iconic horror roles, but Black Friday is a little different. So what attracted you to this one?

BRUCE CAMPBELL: First and foremost, not playing the hero. The character Jonathan is a loser, idiot manager. I grew an “idiot manager mustache” especially for the part. You know, he’s not a former Navy SEAL. None of that. Which to me, that’s the fun of it. That’s who I want to see attacked by aliens – average citizens who don’t have a clue. I like seeing them try and survive. I’ve known Bob, who did the special effects for Evil Dead 2, for 35 years now. So you know, it’s nice to run into some old familiar faces.

It’s definitely a timely film capturing the crazy frenzy of people waiting in lines and fighting each other in the stores, something we’ve all seen during holiday time. What do you have to say about that aspect?

It has social commentary. I liken it to The Breakfast Club with carnage and mayhem. There’s a lot of angst about jobs, about overtime, employee working conditions. That was very amusing to me because it’s not just the standard everyday man. He’s like you or me. He doesn’t know anything special, he has no skills. So I think the audience can relate to that. He has to earn his stripes like the average American from the beginning up to Ash vs. Evil Dead. We did one movie in the ‘70s, then one in the ‘80s and the ‘90s. It was very fun to go back and finally, kind of have a whack at the character Ash after 25 years. I’ve retired the character because we just finished producing another Evil Dead called Evil Dead Rise, directed by an Irish director Lee Cronin. We just wrapped that in Auckland, New Zealand. That’s coming out through New Line Cinema in 2022.

Oh, that’s exciting. So a full-length feature film for the theaters?

I’m not sure about the streaming versus the theatrical thing yet. We’re gonna find out. Modern-day distribution, you know, you gotta decide where to go. Also, the Evil Dead game is coming out. I did the voice for that. That’s coming out in February 2022. That’s the real deal. That’s going to be something any fan or kind of hardcore gamer will be very happy with.

I feel like everyone loves horror more than ever, especially in L.A. It’s a dedicated sub-culture.

Thankfully, because of shows like Walking Dead, it’s become much more mainstream. When we started out with Evil Dead, horror was about one rung above porno. As far as how people perceived it. And now it’s just another genre, you know, and it’s a cool genre. You can do a lot of stuff stylistically – actors can have fun with playing creepy bad guys that are possessed or whatever. So it’s a perfectly viable genre. That’s how I look at it too – there’s good horror, there’s lousy horror, there’s funny horror. You know, there’s a lot of shades to it, which is kind of nice. I like when filmmakers explore different ways to be horrific.

Obviously, you’re known most for horror films, but you do other things too. You have another holiday film coming up for the Hallmark Channel right?

Yeah Baby, Hallmark all the way.

Not a drop of blood in sight. So what are we getting in that movie? I read you play a musician.

Peter Gallagher is my co-star and we are aging folk singers. We don’t get along anymore. We had a disagreement over a concert kind of deal from years ago. And we have to decide whether we’re gonna play one last concert to sort of save the family home. I’m having some health issues.

Beyond acting, you do a lot of the Comic Cons. Do you like doing them?

I go to about 10 of them a year. They’re all sort of stealing each other’s names. I just came from an Evil Dead Film Festival in Park City [and] the Bruce Fest at the Stanley Hotel where Stephen King got the inspiration for The Shining. It’s the best way to interact with the fans. I do my own market research, I kind of see like, which photos am I signing? What memorabilia do they buy? And why? So it’s just kind of fascinating, like, what percentage does non-Evil Dead movies factor in, and how much has crept in?

What do you think about the convention culture and how it’s grown?

I’m very glad for the fan now because if you really want to see somebody, if you really want to see Bruce Campbell, and if anybody’s like, where can I get your autograph? It’s not that hard. You just got to do some research.
As legal cannabis operators hang on in the most brutal marketplace to date, taxes go up on January 1st.

BY JIMI DEVINE

The cannabis industry and its farmers currently face a brutal market. With many holding on by a thread, some wonder if the taxman could prove grim reaper come the new year.

Two weeks ago, the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration noted that since January 2018, total cannabis tax revenue to date is $3.12 billion. That number includes $1.58 billion in excise tax, $393.44 million in cultivation tax, and $1.15 billion in sales tax. That number also includes the $322.34 million that the state made in the third quarter of 2021. These numbers come despite the majority of the state’s municipalities still denying their residents access to the marketplace.

But at what cost?

The flip side, some would argue, is those numbers are in fact the backbone of the illicit market and additionally knee-cap small farmers trying to be competitive. After the initial high bar to enter the legal market and the bottlenecks of the supply chain making pot worse compared to the freshness of the streets, many point to taxes as the main driver of underground sales.

Worse, due to the overhead of the legal market, many farmers have been forced to play both sides of the market after initially hoping to go on the straight and narrow of a crime-free cannabis life following election night 2016. The burden of taxes and fees made that difficult for most as the pound price crept down over the last few years. Then in 2021, the floor really fell out from the market.

Now, as 2022 hits, those farmers and the wider industry and consumers will be hit with even higher taxes. The cultivation tax will be raised from $9.65 to $10.08 per dry-weight ounce of flower, from $2.87 to $3 for leaf, and from $1.35 to $1.41 for fresh material starting on January 1, 2022.

“The legal industry is already so burdened by excessive taxes and regulation that it cannot compete with unlicensed marketers,” says California NORML Director Dale Gieringer. “California needs to be reducing, not increasing cannabis taxes to make the legal market more competitive.”
Gieringer went on to explain the tax structure was essentially designed so in the event the market crashed, the state wouldn’t take the same hit the farmers would. That dry ounce tax is the same price whether your pounds go for $300 or $3,000.

The cultivation tax was designed to bolster prices against a possible collapse in the legalized market,” said Gieringer, while noting he didn’t offer the state support. “The idea was that if cannabis became as cheap as comparable herbal products like tea, the price could drop to a few dollars per pound, or just pennies per joint. In actuality, however, Californians costs and regulations have raised the price for legal cannabis substantially above what it was prior to legalization.

As Tim Blake prepares to get the tribe back together at The Emerald Cup next week, it’s tough to find what’s happening in his community.

“I got guys that have mixed feelings that $500,000 in a just sold out and they’ve sold 10. The trimmers want to get paid, everybody is trying to get their money,” Blake told L.A. Weekly.

Blake added it’s the point that people are now selling farms, having nervous breakdowns, and committing suicide. “And really the worst of it’s going to come over the next 90 to 120 days as people really go over the cliff. So it’s hard to want to talk about too much because it’s not a very optimistic version of reality, but you’ve also got to talk about what reality is, too.”

Blake says the main target of farmer advocates organizing their peers at this year’s cup and beyond is the tax issue.

“First and foremost, the reduction or removal of those taxes, and the states that they’re trying to raise that and it’s like, are they just clueless?” Blake said puzzled. “People aren’t going to be able to pay those taxes as it is. And they’re trying to raise them. I mean, I’m not sure what the disconnect is with the state.”

For his part in assisting the community, Blake will be providing 27 booths to small farms free of charge with the support of Cookies. The program will begin next week in Santa Rosa on The Emerald Cup’s traditional weekend now named The Emerald Cup Harvest Ball, and will then run again at the cup’s inaugural L.A. awards show in the spring. Many argue giving small farmers the direct access to the world’s largest cannabis marketplace in L.A. is one of the best ways to get survivability rates up. There is a lot of money flying around Santa Rosa come weekend and Blake is hoping as many small farmers as possible get their piece.

“You know, we did $17 million in an economic impact report for them on a rainy weekend, a few years back,” Blake noted. “So every hotel filled up. Lots of money in the restaurants, the fairgrounds made money, so they’re very happy to see us back.”

Blake argues it’s not just about celebration but being together to recognize what is happening to the industry as a group after surviving the challenges that have come down on the community following adult-use, and now 21 months into a pandemic that saw big winners and losers in the cannabis space.

“It’s very critical to hold on to the culture, to hold on to who we are, to evangelize as much as we can for small farmers and legacy brands and whatnot,” Blake said. “At the same time, we’ve got to acknowledge the reality that these large players are coming in. We’ve got to be inclusive.”

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