KEEPIN’ IT 4HUNNID

YG GIVES DAY SULAN AND D3SZN A LIFT • BY BRETT CALLWOOD
better sleep tonight for a better tomorrow
CHEF SPOTLIGHT — ANGELINI OSTERIA TURNS 20

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

When Gino and Elizabeth Angelini opened their restaurant in West Hollywood 20 years ago, it was just a few weeks after the September 11th attacks. Tourism shut down, Angelenos stayed home out of fear and the tables of their investment sat empty. Catering suffered as business meetings and events were abruptly cancelled.

Even though that date changed our country’s landscape forever, the Angelinis recovered and breathed a sigh of relief, never imagining they’d ever experience something close to that again.

Married 17 years, the couple went on to develop the Angelini Restaurant Group which includes the casual Angelini Osteria and its loyal following, Angelini Alimentari, a catering arm and Gino Angelini Authentic Artisanal sauces.

Some of the city’s most celebrated Los Angeles chefs have blazed their own trails through Gino’s kitchen, including Ori Menashe of Bestia/Bavel and Ezio Pucconi of Amici. Nicola Mastronardi from Vincenti was his sous chef in Italy.

“We were scared but still felt lucky when we opened,” Gino, who first came to Los Angeles in 1995 to open the formal Rex Ristorante, tells L.A. Weekly. “We were so much luckier than the people in those buildings in New York.”

At age 68, Gino was scared once again when the pandemic threatened both his life and his livelihood.

“After 9/11, it was so uncomfortable for anyone to celebrate, you couldn’t even think along those lines,” says Elizabeth in the now reopened and buzzing dining room. “Being a neighborhood spot, people felt comfortable coming in and I think that’s what helped us as well as being casual, which was a newer concept at the time in Los Angeles. Our model was to bring down the atmosphere but keep up the quality. Regulars called and swore they wouldn’t allow anyone to destroy one more thing. And now with the pandemic, the Los Angeles community has gone the extra mile to support restaurants. We are getting so much love and support from our regulars.”

Some of the signature items those dedicated regulars have to come to love are the grilled Colorado lamb chops, fried burrata with chopped tomato “Checca,” and balsamic vinegar as well as the cavatelli pasta with lobster, peas saffron and tomatoes. Another draw is the charm and supreme knowledge of wine pairings that maître Ginetto (Little Gino) brings to the table while managing the dining room and its guests. That and of course, the pizzas, which helped keep the ship afloat during the pandemic as well as the bottled pasta sauces and other projects.

“Necessity is the mother of invention,” says Elizabeth. “After Osteria, we started another business five years ago that focused on casual and takeout, so we were fortunate to have those platforms in place which makes us blessed under these circumstances.”

Another pivot was creating celebration pods which were individually packaged full meals. A pod could be seven or six dinners that could feed socially distanced clusters.

“People had weddings on tennis courts with one family sitting at one table and another spaced safely,” says Elizabeth. “Each family would receive their pod package with only their seven dinners and utensils. We’re still continuing that today. It worked great for holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas.”

So how does a couple manage to stay married after working and living together all day every day?

“It’s much easier when you have this big love,” says Gino, who grew up in the kitchen with his mother and grandmother in San Clemente, a small town in the Emilia Romagna region of Northern Italy. “You’re never free when you’re a chef, so that’s how we stay together.”

Elizabeth concurs. Gino has 100 percent autonomy in the kitchen, Ginetto manages the dining room and the guests and Elizabeth is the back of the house office. “Aside from husband and wife disagreements, we have never had a business disagreement,” she says. “We stay out of each other’s way.”

With indoor dining back and cozy outdoor tables that line Beverly Blvd, the Angelinis keep moving forward and can see the light at the end of the tunnel. On Thursday, April 29, the osteria will contribute meals to the LA Family Housing Home Together virtual fundraiser.

“Our team has been so brave and our clients so supportive,” says Elizabeth. “Now there’s a kind of renaissance going on. We’re busier than ever, it’s like the roaring ’20s. Surviving has only made us stronger and we will keep evolving.”
ENTERTAINMENT

HOLLYWOOD’S BIGGEST NIGHT

The Oscars at Union Station Wasn’t a Hit, but it Wasn’t a Trainwreck Either

BY LINA LECARO

Watching the Academy Awards is a cultural tradition for many householders, but those of us who grew up in L.A. have had a slightly different perspective on the local event. The Hollywood fantasy the show sold was bogus and we knew it because we grew up walking around and driving up and down the boulevard, fighting tourists, clubbers and the occasional drug dealer to get where we needed to go. From a young age, we knew that movie magic happened elsewhere and celeb sightings were more frequent in WeHo. The Hollywood mystique is just that and natives know it.

Even when the Dolby Theater became the home of the show, most locals thought about the mall it’s housed in – Hollywood & Highland – and the traffic treachery that the street closures would cause in the area. Pre-COVID, most people (who don’t want to be famous that is) in L.A. avoided the party scene on “entertainment’s biggest night,” if they could.

This year, the show saw its lowest ratings ever, and that’s no surprise. It was pretty much a snooze. But there were some things to celebrate and be intrigued about, including the move to Downtown’s Union Station. The scaled-down venue was chosen for its outdoor areas and sprawling layout, but its vintage details provided an alluring backdrop. The scaled-down venue was chosen for its outdoor areas and sprawling layout, but its vintage details provided an alluring backdrop. The scaled-down venue was chosen for its outdoor areas and sprawling layout, but its vintage details provided an alluring backdrop. The scaled-down venue was chosen for its outdoor areas and sprawling layout, but its vintage details provided an alluring backdrop. The scaled-down venue was chosen for its outdoor areas and sprawling layout, but its vintage details provided an alluring backdrop.

As for winners and losers themselves, everyone has an opinion and everyone shall share it on social media. It was a great night for older women and women of color and we can only hope this momentum continues. We have our faves and some of them won, but the reality is – it doesn’t matter if the Academy got it right or not. No one remembers the film that should’ve won from last year, but they will remember great performances and great stories all around for years to come. They’ll also remember a really revealing gown, a new “red carpet couple debut” and bad plastic surgery, so take that for what it is.

All this said, Michael Musto over at our sister paper The Village Voice, got a lot of the big awards right. Read his piece on VillageVoice.com and in the brand new print edition of the paper if you’re in New York and on LAWen.com. See the full list of winners below.

BETTER ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – Anthony Hopkins in The Father
BETTER ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – Frances McDormand in Nomadland
BETTER PICTURE – Nomadland
MUSIC (ORIGINAL SONG) – “Fight For You” from Judas and the Black Messiah (H.E.R., Dernst Emile II and Tiara Thomas)
MUSIC (ORIGINAL SCORE) – Soul (Trent Reznor, Atticus Ross and Jon Batiste)

FILM EDITING – Sound Of Metal (Mikkel E. G. Nielson)
CINEMATOGRAPHY – Mank (Erik Messerschmidt)
PRODUCTION DESIGN – Tenet (Donald Graham Burt)
ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – Yuh-Jung Youn in Minari
VISUAL EFFECTS – Tenet (Andrew Jackson, David Lee, Andrew Lockley and Scott Fisher)
DOCUMENTARY (FEATURE) – My Octopus Teacher
DOCUMENTARY (SHORT SUBJECT) – Colette
ANIMATED FEATURE FILM – Soul (Trent Reznor, Atticus Ross and Jon Batiste)

SOUND – Sound Of Metal (Nicolas Becker, Jaime Baksha, Michelle Couttolenc, Carlos Cortés and Phillip Bladh)
BEST DIRECTOR – Chloé Zhao for Nomadland
COSTUME DESIGN – Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom (Ann Roth)
MAKEUP AND HAIRSTYLING – Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom (Sergio Lopez-Rivera, Mia Neal and Jamika Wilson)
SHORT FILM (LIVE ACTION) – Two Distant Strangers
SHORT FILM (ANIMATED) – Promising Young Woman (Emerald Fennell)
We Talked With the Experts in Hopes of Helping You Grow the Best Pot Possible This Year

BY JIMI DEVINE

The April showers have come and gone, the supplemental lighting is being flicked off in some crazy greenhouses, and the pot is ready to grow. It’s time to get your backyard ready to grow your own hype this year and we talked with the experts to help start you down the path to trichrome-soaked glory.

Make no mistake about it, growing your own weed is awesome. The more time you put in, the greater the rewards. And when you are talking about keeping six plants in primo condition for the season, you’re not talking about a lot of time. If it’s time well spent.

We want to make sure we’re putting Los Angeles in a position to have the best backyard weed possible. The local talent pool is already filled with above-average green thumb talent and there’s plenty of timeless material out there reminding you to pick a spot where your plants get enough sun and to not overwater. This allowed us to dive into the more specific subject matter with our experts.

Soil

We started our chat with the Soil King himself, Patrick King. King’s Cloverdale garden supercenter is the last stop in Wine Country for many heading north to the hills of the Emerald Triangle. For years, countless pros have used King’s products as their medium of choice for the growing season. In addition to that, King now serves as the post-production processing instructor for the Ganjier course, which has the ethos of a weed sommelier program.

“With an annual plant, or cannabis or whatever it is, if you start with the right medium that already has a balanced diet, you’re going to be way better off than having to add a bunch of things all the way through the process,” King told L.A. Weekly.

While a lot of people believe the cultivation process is personally rewarding just in terms of accomplishment, King notes that if you aren’t taking care of the plants properly, then that extra bit of joy may not matter.

“If you’re producing flowers, if you’re producing any type of edible, tomatoes or celery, what you feed your soil, you’re feeding your soul; King said. “So it’s very important to start off with essentials and a healthy product that is tested and doesn’t have contaminants, toxicities, pesticides or heavy metals.”

King emphasized that everything you grow out of that soil is going to absorb any nastiness up through the plant. And in addition to the spiritual damage, things like colonies of bacteria could present problems.

If you want to do it right, it’s never been easier to create your own little horticulture-themed microbial universe to get your plants popping chemical-free.

“You look at the big market, media, chemical fertilizer and all the things that they’ve told us to do 15 years ago to now, you are depleting and killing everything that is good in the soil,” King said. “Meaning your bacteria is just like a slug. You pour salt on a slug what happens? Shrivels up and dies, right? You need that bacteria in your gut, and you need that bacteria in your soil to do the job.”

King argued it’s so much simpler to spend a little bit more on quality inputs and some biology. Then let that do the job and be proud of what you’re cultivating versus having to chase problems because you don’t have that biology and defense system underneath the soil warding off all the diseases.

King also spoke to how many people have soil that is way too compact. Water puddling up on top when you hydrate the plants is a big warning sign your soil is too compact for the plants to maximize their efforts.

“That’s your first clue that you are drowning your roots zone,” explained King. “Those roots, in an annual plant, have six, seven months of growth and they have to do the biggest job they possibly can do in a short amount of time. And just like us, you can have the best diet, you can have the best health bars and water. You can go to Swiss Alps and go hiking but when you run out of oxygen? It doesn’t matter what food source, it doesn’t matter how healthy you are, doesn’t matter how physically fit you are because you’ve just depleted your oxygen level and you are done, same with our plants.”

The Genetics

There are a few people on the planet with more coveted genetics than Brandon Parker of 3rd Gen Family and Dying Breed Seeds. Just ask any of the A-list rappers using genetics that trace back to his seeds.

“I mean, if you got six plants, you really, really got to plan for success from the get-go. Because you’re already at a disadvantage to most large-scale growers,” Parker told L.A. Weekly. 

Parker pointed out that he has seen a lot of people that they don’t need to spend a ton of money on nutrients to maximize their results. “All these nutrients that everyone’s buying – all the supplements – that’s just the same thing that you can buy for anything for 100 years. It’s like the AG salts, you know?” Polley told L.A. Weekly.

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How Hype? How Big?

Preferred Gardens’ David Polley built out some of the nicest indoor cultivation rooms we’ve ever seen – his latest get their first plants later this month. Additionally, Polley’s greenhouse setup looks like what we imagine Elon Musk will be shooting for Mars. Everywhere looks gorgeous and spotless like some kind of final boss for an OSHA Inspector.

Polley also spoke to how many people have soil that is way too compact. Water puddling up on top when you hydrate the plants is a big warning sign your soil is too compact for the plants to maximize their efforts.

“If you really want to get in, and grow in something cool, the first thing is to get something different,” Parker said. “That’s what I always try to do. Grow stuff that not everybody else has got in their bag, with a different name on it.”

Parker noted one of the best ways to ensure a lot of variety in your pack is making sure all the plants don’t have the same parents. Parker also theorized some of the flavors we’re seeing over and over in the marketplace might hit a European royalty-esque genetic bottleneck from continually being bred with cousins.

Parker said one safe bet, if working from seed, is to get your genetics from companies that have been on the market for at least five years. He argues in that timeline any real frauds would have shown themselves as such, and most of the newer companies are just working with genetics from those companies anyway.

“Back in the day, 80%, 90% of all people were farmers, right? And so we all have a green thumb inside of us. And just keep it simple. Keep it organic. That’s it. Have fun with it,” Parker said.
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GOV. NEWSOM TO FACE RECALL ELECTION AS PETITION SIGNATURES WERE VERIFIED

A Campaign to Recall California Gov. Gavin Newsom Met the Threshold Of Signatures And An Election Will Be Held Within 80 Days Of April 26

BY ISAI ROCHA

The California secretary of state's office confirmed that enough signatures have been verified in the recall effort against California Gov. Gavin Newsom.

A campaign to recall Gov. Newsom began on June 10, 2020 and needed to obtain 1,495,709 signatures in order to put it on a ballot. It was announced Monday that 1.6 million of the campaign's 2.1 million signatures were verified, meaning that a recall election will need to take place within 60-80 days.

After the confirmation of the signatures, Gov. Newsom responded on Twitter with a counter campaign video and said the recall threatened "progress.

"This Republican recall threatens our values and seeks to undo the important progress we’ve made – from fighting COVID, to helping struggling families, protecting our environment, and passing common sense gun violence solutions,” Newsom said. "There’s too much at stake.”

When the election occurs, California voters will be asked two questions, the first being if Gov. Newsom should be recalled, and the second asking for a successor.

If the first question receives a majority vote to recall Gov. Newsom, the candidate with the most votes in the second question would win the election.

Multiple candidates for governor have emerged, capped by the most recent candidacy announcement from former Olympic gold medalist and TV personality Caitlyn Jenner.

John Cox, who ran against Newsom in the 2018 election and announced that he would also run in a recall election, said “the people are speaking and they are being heard.”

On February 2, a survey conducted by the University of California, Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies said that among the 10,000 registered voters who they polled, 48% approved of Gov. Newsom’s performance, while 46% disapproved.

About 69% of those polled were displeased with Newsom’s handling of the COVID-19 pan-
San Diego mayor Kevin Faulconer.

run for governor as well, including John Cox,
back in school are simply too important to risk. "
our economy safely reopened, and our kids
much at stake. Getting Californians vaccinated,
in his recall counter-campaign. "There is too
since gone on the offensive since early March.

Jenner, 71, would be running as a Republican
and wrote that she can end current Gov. Gavin
Newsom’s "disastrous time as governor. 
"I’m in," Jenner wrote on her website. "For
the past decade, we have seen the glimmer of
the Golden State reduced by one-party rule
the past decade, we have seen the glimmer of
Newsom's "disastrous time as governor. "

President Joe Biden Recognizes 1915 Killing of Armenians As 'Genocide'

President Joe Biden spoke on the 1915 killing of millions of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire, Saturday, becoming the first U.S. president to acknowledge it as genocide.
The term "genocide" has been avoided by the White House in order not hinder relations with Turkey and Biden noted his statement "was not to cast blame, but to ensure what happened is never repeated."

"Each year on this day, we remember the lives of all those who died in the Ottoman-era Armenian genocide and recommit ourselves to preventing such an atrocity from ever again occurring," President Biden said. "One and a half million Armenians were deported, massacred, or marched to their deaths in a campaign of extermination. We honor the victims of the Meds Yeghern so that the horrors of what happened are never lost to history and we remember so that we remain ever-vigilant against the corrosive influence of hate in all its forms."

Turkey’s Minister of Foreign Affairs denounced the U.S. president’s statement, saying it was not supported by legal or scholarly evidence.

"The nature of the events of 1915 does not change according to the current political motives of the politicians or domestic political considerations," Turkey's Minister of Foreign Affairs said in a statement. "Such an attitude serves only a vulgar distortion of history. This statement of the U.S., which distorts the historical facts, will never be accepted in the conscience of the Turkish people, and will open a deep wound that undermines our mutual trust and friendship."

In Los Angeles County, where the highest population of Armenians reside outside of Armenia, hundreds marched in remembrance of those killed, chanting "never again," waving Armenian flags and holding a rally in Beverly Hills that thanked President Biden.

The L.A. County Board of Supervisors approved two motions introduced by Supervisor Kathryn Barger last week, declaring April as Armenian History Month and April 24 as the day of remembrance.

"I commend President Biden for recognizing the Armenian Genocide today on the Day of Remembrance," Barger said of Biden’s statement. "This has been a long-awaited and hard-fought effort for Armenians to have their voices heard and for the memory of those who lost their lives to be properly honored."

California Gov. Gavin Newsom also acknowledged the historical event as “genocide,” saying:

"As we remember the victims and survivors of the Armenian Genocide, we also honor the strength and resilience of the Armenian people. Forced to build new lives in all corners of the globe, Armenians bravely forged ahead in the face of unimaginable tragedy. Thousands made their homes in California, and we are greater for their contributions.”

Dodgers Introduce ‘Fully Vaccinated’ Section At Dodger Stadium

Dodger Stadium debuted a “fully vaccinated” section on Saturday, April 24, where fans sat next to each other without social distancing measures.

The “vaccination zone” was located in the stadium’s “Loge” sections 166LG and 168LG and fans needed to provide “proof” at the gate of either being fully vaccinated, or testing negative for COVID-19 within 72 hours of the game.

The Dodger Stadium guide defined “fully vaccinated” by the CDC’s standard of two weeks or more since receiving the second Pfizer or Moderna dose, or two weeks after the Johnson & Johnson single-dose shot.

With children under the age of 16 not qualifying for vaccinations, proof of a negative COVID-19 test needed to be shown for them to enter. Children younger than 2 years old did not need proof of either a vaccination or a negative test.

Coupled with the proof was a valid, government-issued photo ID where the name matched the name on either the vaccination card or negative test.

Fans were only allowed to enter the stadium through the right field Loge entrance and were not allowed in without the proof stated above.

Even with the section being for fully vaccinated individuals, mask mandates were in place in accordance with California’s health regulations. The stadium also set a standard for what is considered a valid face covering, restricting neck gaiters, bandanas, and masks with ventilation valves.

With L.A. County being in the orange tier of California’s Blueprint for a Safer Economy, outdoor stadiums are currently permitted to sell tickets at 33% of its usual capacity, which would be about 18,000 seats at Dodger Stadium. The allowed capacity for California sporting or entertainment venues could go up as much as 67% if they require all guests to show proof of full vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test.

The Dodgers have not announced further dates for the “fully vaccinated” sections, outside of Saturday, April 24.
A decade into what has already been an illustrious career, Los Angeles rapper YG is keeping as many irons in his white-hot fire as possible. The man born Keenon Dequan Ray Jackson released his fifth studio album, My Life 4Hunnid, last year. He has his YG OG cannabis brand and he’s just released his first sneaker, the Classic LX, via K-Swiss.

These are heady days for YG, and on top of all that he’s releasing music on his 4Hunnid label as he attempts to harness his secrets of success and pass them on.

“I really never had an older person giving me guidance,” YG told us by phone. “I had my homies and shit. We were all learning the game and the business at the same time. That was that. But as far as somebody older, I never had that. I had Jeezy in like 2013. He became that person, a big bro giving me advice and all that.”

Back in 2013, YG signed to Young Jeezy’s CTE World imprint, in time for the release of the debut My Krazy Life album. The rest is history, and it’s that sort of guidance he wants to offer the likes of Day Sulan and D3szn – two local rappers signed to 4Hunnid.

“I like trying to help people and get people where they’re going,” YG says. “I feel like the energy and the culture – we’ve got that – but we haven’t had any crazy success yet. That’s the goal. We’re working towards that every day.”

Both Day Sulan and D3 are in the early stages of promising careers. They’re both dropping tracks as fast as humanly possible (especially given the current locked-down state of the world), as they seek to get a foothold. YG met D3 after being introduced to the freestyle videos he was posting on Instagram.

“One of my close friends discovered D3 on Instagram,” YG says. “He was posting videos and all of this. He took a liking to him, and sent it to me. I started listening to him and following him. We had a conversation like, ‘Yeah bro, we’ve got to sign him.’ We took the next step to do that.”

Meanwhile, he knew Sulan through her previous life as a dancer.

“Me and G were actually friends before I even started doing music,” Sulan says. “We ended up linking through my old manager. He ended up pulling the strings, connecting the dots, and saying this is a really dope west coast artist. G was into it and from there it’s history.”

“Day Sulan worked at a strip club,” adds YG. “One of the most popular strip clubs out here – Crazy Girls in Hollywood. We’re from the same city and shit, so I knew who she was. One day she told me she did music. She ended up playing me some of her music, and it was cool. A month later, she sent me some new music, and it sounded like the shit. I was like, you’ve got potential. We were having conversations, and I basically told her, ‘Look, fuck with me.’ She was ready and that was that.”

D3 has had a storied life, falling into the gang life early on.

“I was in the hood,” he says. “I was a gang banger. I did my first song and everybody was messing with it, so I kept going and I kept doing little freestyles. I’ve been doing it ever since.”

As previously mentioned, Sulan was a dancer. She was also homeless for a period and, using her own word, lost.

“I didn’t start making music until I was 21,” she says. “I was really just young and trying to figure it out. Shortly after, I got put in a studio and that’s when I realized what I really wanted to do. From there, everything fell into place. The connection with G happened super quick, and not even a year later, maybe a year and a half later, I ended up getting signed because G was pulling strings. Everything just happened. Music came out of nowhere for me. I got in the studio and realized I could write, realized I was talented in some shit. So ok, this is what I’m going to pursue.”

Not every artist signed to 4Hunnid is from Los Angeles, though Sulan and D3 are. When it comes to signing artists to the label, YG is just looking for that ingredient X.

“I’m looking for somebody that’s got superstar potential as far as the swag, the look, and you should be able to work and your music has to be good,” he says. “You’ve got to have style and passion about what you’re trying to do and where you’re trying to get.”

Both Sulan and D3 describe their styles as versatile, with Sulan going a step further.

“I’m really an artist,” she says. “I make a lot of music, and I make enough music that eventually people will see that they can’t really put me in a box, even when it comes to straight rapping. I want everything to sound different, or have some kind of edge to it. I’m a real life artist.

Homelessness, stripping, gang life – they are lifestyles that can leave scars. Sulan says that music is her therapy.

“If I go a long time without going to the studio, I literally start losing my mind because I need it,” Sulan says. “That’s how I get out my emotions. I don’t know how to do it any other way. It’s my sanity.”

So now both are under YG’s wing, and Sulan says that he’s a very hands-on label boss. He’s no silent executive, sitting in the background waiting for product to release.

“Basically, it’s like a blueprint,” adds D3. “He’s been through messed up deals, so for us to have that guidance is a great thing. I couldn’t ask for anything better.”

With that in mind, YG helped by collaborating with both of them on the “Hit Em Up” single. A bona fide banger, the song utilizes all three individual talents effectively.

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D3 says it was a “dope experience.”

Similarly, YG and Sulan worked together again on the single “Bailar.”

“I made the song hella long ago, and then we finally decided to drop it,” Sulan says. “It’s really about finding that one person that know makes things – be up front and be real blunt. Come and dance with me, don’t be shy.”

The video is appropriately provocative too. Sulan was happy to let the creative directors take over with that.

“I know I’m speaking Spanish in the song, so I really wanted it to pay homage to the Hispanic community, without it being any kind of culture appropriating or anything like that,” she says. “I am Black-Vietnamese, but I’m also Cuban. I wanted to make sure it
YG himself is still enjoying some of the glow from the My Life 4Hunnid album, though he was left frustrated when the pandemic meant that he couldn’t tour it. “Life was shut down so we really couldn’t do nothing,” he says. “I was mad about that. I can’t promote the album, I can’t go on tour, we can’t do shows. My music is my lifestyle, so I put an album out and there was no lifestyle around it. I wasn’t happy about that.”

Still, it’s a solid body of work. In the eight years since his debut, he’s grown up but he’s still the same dude. “I’m a little bit different and smarter,” he says. “Wiser. I’m more business savvy. Now I’m getting into different things – investments, and stock. All that type of shit. Everything else, me as a person and what I like to do, that’s the same since day one.”

We don’t know what the future holds, for any of us. But the 4Hunnid team has all of the pieces in place to make a good stab at further success in 2021 and beyond. They have the talent, and the drive. A bit of luck wouldn’t be sniffed at.

“Shit’s going to be slow as far as opening up on the west coast, but we’re going to continue working and putting together the dopest projects,” says YG. “We’re going to start in these clubs as soon as they open up, and then for me, I’m in the studio working. I’m working on music. I’ve got my brand shit – I just dropped my first sneaker through my 4Hunnid brand. I’ve got my cannabis line. We have the record label of course, and I’ve got some TV and film stuff I’m working on. I’m always working. When the world opens up, we’re going on tour for two years straight.”

D3 and Sulan, too, will continue working, and releasing music. “We’re not stopping, we’re gonna keep going,” says Sulan. “Pandemic, COVID, regardless. We’re still moving.”

And that’s music to our ears.
EPISODE

The State of Our State w/ Lieutenant Governor Kounalakis

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Yoshitomo Nara's hyperstylized portraits of wide-eyed girls with cosmos in their irises, quirky bangs and an aura of menace and of secrets kept have become wildly popular around the world in the last three decades. Their particular infusion of Japanese aesthetic flair with color-blocked quasi-abstraction and an off-kilter sense of eternal youth has generated a veritable army of figures. Nara has painted into being an entire population that shares an iconic format but expresses distinct personae through prolific variations on the theme and the occasional incursion of punk rock, animal spirits and lately, politics.

Surveying Nara's practice from 1987 to 2020, LACMA's newly opened exhibition offers not only an impressive assembly of the large-scale paintings, but also drawings, intimate monumental sculptures, eccentric ceramics, exten-
sive process materials and heretofore unexhibited preparatory sketches, and an eminently instigrammable environmental installation that recreates his drawing studio. But the pressure of this curation is articulated at the outset by none of these -- but rather, by a mural made from album covers in his decades-deep record collection.

Throughout the exhibition, the focus on Nara’s inspiration in music recurs in works both sketched and drawn in and of the featured and famous recordings. There’s even an Exhibition Standbook, created by the artist himself to accompany the sculpture studio cabin, My Drawing Room (2008). Nara selected songs that reflect his love of 1960s and ’70s singer-songwriters. (Tip: Though it’s intended to be enjoyed with that particular work, if you’ve got your ears bud it makes a great accompaniment to the entire exhibition, and actually it’s just a great mixtape in general.)

As for the paintings themselves, it’s a strange, almost uncanny phenomenon to see so many of them gathered in one place. It’s sublime to contemplate each one of them, so frequently and ubiquitously reproduced in magazines and merchandise, in the fullness of their large regal scale, the depth and texture of their bespoke color fields, the wavy expressivity of their lines, the world of detail embedded in each girl’s eyes. But even as the proximity of this gathering has a power -- a kind of gravitational pull -- it also in a way takes the drama, the sense of strange surprise, out of each encounter. It reinforces the armature, what could almost be called a formula, behind the best-known embodiment of the artist’s vision.

A series of sculptural works punctuate the galleries -- a giant bone-white set of stacked tea cups which is also a fountain fed by its figures’ tears; a 26-foot confectionate painted bronze sculpture installed outside of BCAM facing Wilshire Boulevard, next to Urban Light; a metallic, aged head with a distressed surface that still gleams like an unearthed remnant of an ancient ritual colossus; and of course the charming playhouse-size recreation of the artist’s exuberant undisturbed drawing studio. Festooned with scattered source materials, untold hundreds of carefully collected tchotchkes and talismans, and mark-making materials, its storeroom aura is also a bit chaotic. Beguiling and delightful, hectic and jam-packed, one gets the distinctive sense that it is actually a model of the inside of the artist’s head.

This work’s highlighting of the primary role of sketching in the artist’s creative process speaks directly to the most unexpected aspect of the overall exhibition -- drawing. An enormous amount of square footage throughout the entire exhibition is dedicated to the presentation of drawings, stretching across thirty years of working out ideas, perfecting characters, and conceptual, encoded notetaking. It is in these drawings that the DNA of Nara’s muscology can be seen taking root from an early age, even from his adolescence. They are quick and urgent, childlike and sophisticated.

There are seemingly thousands all told, and together they reveal the thoughts, stylistic evolution, and most importantly the active, present hand of the artist to an even greater degree than the finely finished works in the leading roles. In their fierce and quiet portmanteau of memories, you can just about hear the faint Bowie blasting in the background.

Yoshitomo Nara is on view by timed ticket reservations through July 5 at LACMA. For more information visit lacma.org. And while you’re there, do not miss the stunning Cauden Smith exhibition also in the BCAM building, nor the majestic Art of Fiji installation in the adjacent Resnick Pavilion.
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