Kyle is Still Super Duper

By Brett Callwood
**THURSDAY, JANUARY 6**

**Quaranta at B6 Gallery.** The Quarantine allowed for some artists to delve more deeply into a continuous body or work, such as the human impact upon our ecological environment, while some artists experienced shifts in formal expressions or content in a desire to find hope amidst daily unease. Additional artists found their mode of work in the public sphere completely disrupted, and had to find alternative ways of working. Curated by Susan Lizotte and Jenny Hager, Quaranta presents works created during the pandemic; the artists included reflect a cultural mosaic of how the experience is manifested in the collective experience of a continuously changing world. Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica; Opening reception: Saturday, January 8, 6-8pm; on view through February 5; free; santamonica.bgartdealings.com.

**Out of the Blue at Aero & Los Feliz 3 Theatres.** American Cinematheque presents the 40th Anniversary 4K restoration and re-release of Dennis Hopper's controversial masterpiece of adolescent rebellion. Out of the Blue chronicles the devolution of '60s idealism into the hazy nihilism of the 1980's, through the story of Don Barnes (Dennis Hopper), a truck driver in California who runs away to Vancouver's punk scene after Don's release from prison for drunkenly smashing his rig into a wall. With music by Alexander Lezzi, Berlin-based dancer and choreographer Shade Théret's Throwaway Line is a tragic-romantic-thrill-comedy dance solo composed for a deadbeat actress. The story develops as an open diary. Fragmented narratives from the actress's past reveal both her lust and her disgust, manifesting as a stream of consciousness in which she draws on complex emotions and makes physical the desires of various personas and social relations from these memories. Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica; Opening reception: Friday, January 7, 6-8pm; on view through February 5; free; utaartistspace.com.

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 9**

**Dominique Zeltzman at Winslow Garage.** In her first L.A. exhibition, Baltimore-based video installation and performance artist Dominique Zeltzman presents two videos and a 2D work through which she explores domesticity, impostor syndrome, and the female body. In the video Balance, she contrasts the sexy femme executive with the eccentric domestic. In Memorial Shoes, she takes solace in fashion while reckoning with the death of her mother. And in Continuum, she presents frames from her video installation Radical Home where she explores the container as a social construct among disaster scenes and banal images of her house. 3540 Winslow Dr., Silver Lake; Opening reception: Sunday, January 9, 2-5pm; on view through February 6; free; winslowgarage.com.

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 11**

**Algren comes to VOD (Streaming).** The feature documentary Algren is a journey through the gritty world, brilliant mind, and noble heart of acclaimed author Nelson Algren. Exploding onto the national scene in 1950 after winning the first-ever National Book Award for The Man with the Golden Arm, Algren defined post-war American urban fiction with his gritty, brilliant depiction of working class Chicago. Including never-before-seen archival footage, newly uncovered audio recordings and his own rarely seen, personal photo collages, the film charts the rise and fall of a man whose transgressions, compassion and thirst for justice pushed him to dedicate his life and career to giving a voice to the voiceless. Now streaming; algrenthemovie.com.

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12**

**Film Maudit 2.0 (Live & Streaming).** A show-
case and celebration of new (and some old) outré, unusual and startling films featuring over 100 works of cinema from 23 countries including works addressing socio-political issues and taboo subject matter challenging conventional artistic assumptions and sexual mores. The hybrid festival will present both live & virtual screenings of 12 features, 10 shorts programs, special commissions, and a collection of new scores for iconic Lon Chaney silent films by contemporary Los Angeles artists. Film Maudit 2.0 is inspired by French avant-garde filmmaker and writer Jean Cocteau who created the original Festival du Film Maudit (literally “cursed films”) in 1949 aiming to celebrate overlooked, shocking and experimental cinema. Live at Highways, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica, and streaming online, January 12-23; free; watch.filmmaudit.org.

MUSIC

JANUARY 7-13

TSOL
The Observatory
Long Beach dark punks kick off the new year with an OC show featuring three of the original lineup. 7 p.m. on Friday, January 7 at the Observatory, $20, observatoryoc.com.

Ookay
Academy LA
L.A. DJ and producer Ookay released the “Be OK” single with Elohim and Flux Pavilion last year, so it’ll be interesting to see what 2022 has in store. Starting with this Academy set. 10 p.m. on Friday, January 7 at Academy LA, $10-75; academyla.com.

Jesse Malin & Friends: A Benefit for Howie Pyro
The Roxy
Punks and rockers come together to help Howie Pyro with his medical bills. Performers included Malin himself, Butch Walker, Jakob Dylan, H2O, Suzi Gardner of L7, and more. 9 p.m. on Saturday, January 8 at the Roxy, $25, theroxy.com.

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Bow Wow Wow
Whisky A Go Go
There seems to be two versions of Brit new wave band Bow Wow Wow on the circuit, and this one appears to be Leigh Gorman’s, minus Annabella Lwin. Dame Madelyn is the vocalist now so that should be interesting. Juliana Hale and If I Fall also play. 6 p.m. on Thursday, January 13 at the Whisky A Go Go, $20+; whiskyagogo.com.

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One person’s waste is another’s compost and the reality is that trash can be beautiful. One of the new year’s new laws taking effect this January will crack down on California’s food waste in hopes of helping reduce the disposal of organic waste in landfills – including edible food – in an effort to redirect 17.7 million tons of waste by 2025.

According to the L.A. County Sanitation Districts, 4,000 tons of food waste are generated in Los Angeles County every day, which includes dinner scraps as well as spoiled fruit and vegetables from grocery stores and restaurants. Decomposition of food waste (organic material) in landfills produces methane, a greenhouse gas that is 23 times more potent than carbon dioxide. In a landfill, this decomposition takes decades, and even in well-controlled landfills some of the methane leaks into the atmosphere. In a wastewater treatment plant’s anaerobic digester, the decomposition takes place in a few weeks and none of the methane leaks. By digesting rather than landfiling food waste, we can reduce greenhouse gasses in our atmosphere that contribute to global climate change.

Senate Bill 1383 will require cities and other jurisdictions to divert organic waste from landfills. The law requires that at least 20% of the edible food that is currently being thrown out be redirected to people in need. The remainder of the organic waste stream can either be diverted to composting or anaerobic digestion. The state plans to begin enforcing those requirements this month.

Senate Bill 1383 mandates that Californians deposit unused food – including coffee grounds, egg shells, potato peels and other food waste – into our green trash cans that hold garden trimmings and leaves as opposed to the landfill waste that ends up in the black trash can.

Tier one starts this year and will monitor wholesale food vendors, food service providers, food distributors, grocery stores and supermarkets. By 2024 it will include proof of recycling programs by restaurants, hotels, health facilities, large venues and event facilities.

“The whole world faces the same problem of food waste,” Maen Mahfoud tells L.A. Weekly. Mahfoud’s company Replate directs businesses with communities in need of food like soup kitchens, shelters, youth programs and senior centers that can utilize the surplus food.

“We do everything around food. Our holidays are about food, we go out and have food and in America we have this culture of abundance. Go big or go home kind of living. It’s great to celebrate abundance, but at the same time let’s try to find ways to mitigate,” he says.

So what are some ways we can help reduce food waste on a grassroots level?

“Something I adhere to religiously is not going food shopping when you’re hungry,” says Mahfoud, who has already been consulted by Calicycle, the government organization overseeing the mandate. “This is something that I really take seriously. When you’re hungry while shopping you always tend to overbuy because you’re thinking of two dinners instead of one.

“Don’t fall victim to those ‘use by’ dates. There’s a lot of confusion here and an area where we can cut down on food waste. We need better labels so consumers know what can be eaten from a safety standpoint or what just isn’t going to taste as good but can still be eaten. In general, things that are “best by” can be eaten after that date, it’s just not going to be as fresh. It doesn’t mean you have to throw it away.

“Eggs and milk can have a ‘best by’ date, but it’s still safe just not as fresh from a flavor standpoint. Find ways of creating recipes with the leftovers like soups. Freeze your half-cut jalapeno or onion and use them later. Freeze your overripe bananas and make ice cream out of them.

“We live in a culture of three fridges, with one in the garage to store all sorts of food, much of which gets forgotten. We tend to go to the big box stores and stock up in big amounts. But at the end of the day, there’s nothing fresher than going to a smaller grocery and getting just enough fresh produce that you need. I encourage people to shop smaller amounts. Then you can gauge how much you actually need instead of just buying a whole bunch at one time. Your food mood might change tomorrow and your decisions may change, so why lock yourself so early into what you’re going to eat later. Current shopping is better than once a week big buys. In two days, you may feel like eating soups. Freeze your half-cut jalapeno or onion and use them later. Freeze your overripe bananas and make ice cream out of them.

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“While you’re prepping meals, throw the scraps in a recyclable brown paper grocery bag instead of the sink, which can get tossed directly into the green bin.

“You can freeze your food scraps and store them in your freezer until collection day and add them to your garden waste. You can also freeze things like herbs and vegetable scraps and use them later for soups, stocks and stews. Freezing it helps keep odors down and vermin out.”
LAUSD REQUIRING ALL STUDENTS AND STAFF TO TEST FOR COVID

With positive COVID-19 cases increasing throughout L.A. County, LAUSD will reinstate its “baseline” testing for all students and staff on campuses this spring.

BY ISAI ROCHA

I

n the most updated LAUSD policies for the spring semester, all students and staff will be required to take a baseline CO-
VID-19 test, regardless of vaccination status.

In the district’s previous guidelines, vaccinated students and staff were going to be allowed to bypass the baseline COVID-19 testing, as vaccination rates were deemed high enough to do so.

“Keeping our schools safe is a top priority for Los Angeles Unified,” the district said in its update. “We all have a role in keeping our schools safe. Thank you for doing your part. Your feedback and partnership are appreciated. As a united Los Angeles Unified community, we will work together to ensure the safety of our students.”

With the Omicron variant increasing the number of positive COVID-19 cases in L.A. County, the school district is backtracking on its more relaxed testing rules.

All students will also be required to take weekly tests through at least the end of January.

Appointments for the baseline testing began Monday, January 3, with students and staff having until January 9 to upload their test results to their Daily Pass.

Students in K-12 are also eligible for free at-home COVID-19 antigen tests which can be picked up on Friday and Saturday between 8 a.m. and noon.

Masks will still be required in both indoor and outdoor settings, with the district saying student masks should not be made of cloth. Staff will be required to wear surgical-grade masks.

On December 14, LAUSD announced that it would postpone its vaccine require-

ment for students until the fall semester. It was previously required for the opening of spring, which would have required around 30,000 students to opt for remote learning.

All students in the district will be returning to class on January 11.

COVID TESTS CAN NOW BE PROFESSIONALLY ADMINISTERED AT YOUR DOORSTEP

With COVID-19 cases increasing in L.A. County and COVID-19 test site appointments being filled for days in advance, a new testing option has emerged, bringing the lab test to your doorstep.

Sprinter Health has full-time nurses across L.A. County that can come to your home and administer COVID-19 tests, with results available in 15 minutes.

Similar to how appointments are made for L.A. County test sites, Sprinter has time slots throughout the day for people to choose from, giving a one-hour window for one of their medical professionals to arrive at your door.

From there, the antigen test is administered professionally, from either inside your home or outside, depending on one’s comfort level.

“What we do in the rapid antigen space fits a particular need, which is a little bit more for people who want clearance, versus people who are extremely sick, where then the PCR test makes the most sense,” Sprinter Health CEO and co-founder Max Cohen said.

Similar to what you would see when using a food delivery or rideshare app, Sprinter Health will send you text messages to remind you of your appointment, let you know how far the nurse is from you and then a call upon their arrival.

Unlike tests at the start of the pandemic that required a nasal swab to be inserted deep into the nostril, Sprinter Health’s antigen test is a shallow swab and can be done in about 15 minutes using tests from medical technology company Becton Dickinson.

After 15 minutes, the results are recorded and emailed to patients.

Primarily providing home lab work for blood draws, vital checks and urine samples, Cohen said Sprinter Health expanded into COVID-19 testing in November, with patients taking advantage of its convenience before flights, entertainment events that require proof of a negative test and clearance from employers who also require the tests.

“We do in-home blood draws, vital checks, a number of things that are designed to allow a provider/doctor to get the data they need to treat a patient without the patient having to come into the office,” Cohen said. “COVID testing was something that we didn’t set out intending to do, it was just obviously a fairly large need where a lot of people were desiring to have a professionally administered test that goes a step beyond just the at-home testing.”

Cohen added that the Sprinter Health service is more than just convenience, as going to homes for these types of services is helpful for those who need results quickly, as opposed to potential long waits at a hospital and results that take days to reach a patient’s primary physician.

At $99 for the COVID-19 test service, the price is higher than over-the-counter tests, but Cohen said it is an affordable option in comparison to a PCR test, with a medical professional ensuring the test is taken correctly, decreasing the risk of a false reading.

The Menlo Park-based company began offering its services in October 2021 throughout the Sacramento area before making its way to L.A. County on December 1.

Over the holiday weekend, L.A. County recorded more than 44,000 positive COVID-19 cases, not including results from at-home test kits.}

HAS YOUR DRINKING GOTTEN OUT OF CONTROL?

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GOING OUT WITH A BANG!

L.A. Weekly's movie critics review the hottest movies released near the end of 2021, a few of which are strong Oscar contenders. Some are available to stream, while others are only in theaters, but worth the wait to watch at home.

BY LA WEEKLY

Nightmare Alley / In theaters

Guillermo Del Toro’s Nightmare Alley is his darkest and most complex film yet, discarding his obsession with monsters and ghouls to explore the ones we keep locked inside. With the Mexican-born director’s signature flair for massive set pieces and lush cinematography, you might expect it to be another flashy homage to film noir, but that would be selling this dark jewel to be another flashy homage to film noir, of course. Instead, it’s a-whirlwind of a film short. Adapted from a novella by the Italian novelist Elena Ferrante, this richly complex film presents a woman who raised two daughters but did not love the job. What does it mean to love your children, the film asks, but also want to run from them toward the other, better self you know you were meant to be? From moment to moment, who are you then?

Colman plays Leda Caruso, a literature professor from Boston who arrives at a Greek island resort with a plan to sit on the beach and work. When a large and boorish family from Queens, New York, whom the cabana boy (Paul Mescal) will describe as “bad people,” lays claim to the beach just in front of her chair, Leda’s face tenses. She refuses to move to another spot on their behalf, a stand that wins her the admiration of Nina (Dakota Johnson), a mother in the group whose increasingly fraught connection to her little girl will ignite Leda’s memories of her own years as a stressed mother to two daughters.

For Leda, it is often language that brings life back into focus and toward that end, The Lost Daughter’s rich with quoted poetry used as a means to reveal or seduce or simply define a given moment. We fail ourselves first, Leda might say, but language rarely does. Neither will this film, which, while also reminding us of what cinema was and hopefully will be again. (Chad Byrnes)

The Lost Daughter / Netflix

With The Lost Daughter, actress Maggie Gyllenhaal makes a brilliant debut as writer-director, and in the process, guides Olivia Colman (best known for The Crown) to her finest – and most subversive – performance to date. Adapted from a novella by the Italian novelist Elena Ferrante, this richly complex film presents a woman who raised two daughters but did not love the job. What does it mean to love your children, the film asks, but also want to run from them toward the other, better self you know you were meant to be? From moment to moment, who are you then?

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Spider-Man: No Way Home / In theaters

The third installment for the Tom Holland-led webslinger saga is more than just the latest chapter in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The highly-anticipated and already high-grossing film is also a heart-breaking tale of loss, an action-adventure sci-fi romp, a homage to previous Peter Parkers and his foes, and a powerful adhe-

sive cementing different aspects of the Marvel Universe together, be it Disney (Doctor Strange), Sony (previous Spidey films), or Netflix (Daredevil). And on every front, it’s successful.

When we last left poor Peter Parker (Tim Holland), it seemed the high school senior just couldn’t seem to catch a break. Already having difficulty trying to juggle his alter ego with his teenage angst, Peter now has to deal with being outed by the muckraking J. Jonah Jameson (who should forever be played by JK Simmons). Peter’s life is in shambles, causing him and his Aunt May (Marisa Tomei) to live on the lam as he becomes the friendly neighborhood scapegoat. There is only one solution: magic. But after a visit to Doctor Strange causes a spell to go awry, Peter now has to deal with a handful of Spider-Man’s greatest foes from previous franchises. Those Spider-Men walked so that MCU’s Spider-Man could run.

The end result is a whole new origin story to a whole new Spider-Man, one steeped in tragedy and loss, but now geared to become a superhero to the likes audiences have never seen. (Erin Maxwell)

The Crown / Netflix

Based on J.R. Moehringer’s 2005 memoir, George Clooney’s The Tender Bar chronicles the childhood of its author in Long Island during the ‘70s and ‘80s. Estranged from his alcoholic father, J.R. is raised by his mother and wise-cracking Uncle Charlie who owns a bar and mentors him on the ways of love, life and masculinity. Conceptually, this sounds like fertile ground for an interesting character study and perhaps a fresh angle on the coming-of-age story. Unfortunately, this movie misses its mark.

Although director Clooney and screenwriter William Monahan brought the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist’s book to the screen with earnestness, the end result plays out with such an insouciant, muddled style, it’s difficult to get inside of it. Scenes are tossed together like discarded laundry, without a thought to creating any momentum or emotional gravitas for the main character. Although the movie is aesthetically nice to look at, with everything swathed in an orange glow of nostalgia, Clooney’s directing lacks focus and intention. What’s the point of this flick? It’s a
shame because you can feel that the movie has a heartbeat somewhere, even if you can't find a pulse.

Ben Affleck as Charlie is the main reason to see this movie. With a spotty career (recent scathing headlines aside), he's grown into a more confident and nuanced performer in his last few projects. There are times you just want the filmmakers to stop, take a hard left turn, and drop us into Uncle Charlie's grimy, smoke-filled apartment, where we can listen to him wax poetic on manly stuff for the rest of the movie.

(Chad Byrnes)

Being The Ricardos / Amazon Prime Video

More than anything else, Aaron Sorkin's new masquerade-biopic, Being the Ricardos, is a master class in the diminishing returns of what we now call "Sorkinesque." Like the guile in a salesman's spiel, you know it when you hear it. Not even David Mamet has such a distinctive dialogue voice. Everyone embroiled in a Sorkin script is the same kind of sniping wisenheimer, spitting tommy-gun aphorisms in studiously overlapping conversations that zing with sarcastic ricochets. Whether you are a White House official or Abbie Hoffmann or Steve Jobs or Mark Zuckerberg or, here, Lucille Ball, you're a fast-thinking, tirelessly clever Sorkin-ian clone, dishing up a lather regardless of what's being discussed.

Which may or may not be an issue, depending on our various saturation points – taken one dollop at a time, Sorkin's bon mots can often light up like fireworks. How much is too much? Being the Ricardos is, in any case, an odd project for this topical impresario of snark, being a plunge into a particularly tumultuous week in the lives of Lucille Ball (Nicole Kidman) and Desi Arnaz (Javier Bardem), in their heyday as America's most beloved sitcom wife-husband. It was "a scary week," we're told several times by actors (Linda Lavin, Ronny Cox) playing I Love Lucy production vets in their dotage, but we have to take their word for it, since Sorkin combines things that were not simultaneous.

Kidman's mask-like presence only emphasizes Sorkin's distance from factual reality. The repeated correlation between Lucy's Red Scare pickle and Desi's own experience being routed from Cuba in 1933 is a stretch, even for Sorkin, as that coup d' etat was at the hands of a disgruntled military, not Communist revolutionaries. The plot's twin dilemmas – bad publicity and network prudery – turn out to be inconsequential, and so is Sorkin's movie. As you'd expect, Bardem is the saving grace here, his natural charm and gravity (sans prosthetics) energizing the film's best scenes, including a rousingly convincing nightclub version of "Ba-baloo" that overshadows the Arnaz original.

(Michael Atkinson)

West Side Story / In theaters

If you've ever wanted to see the man behind Jaws, E.T. and Indiana Jones tackle a musical, you're in luck. Even if you never knew you wanted that, you're still in luck, because Steven Spielberg's West Side Story is a straight-up blast.

With the help of co-writers Tony Kushner and Stephen Sondheim, Spielberg has dusted off Arthur Laurents' source material, once a Broadway play, and of course, Robert Wise's beloved musical from 1961. He's given it a modern update, addressing themes of racism and gentrification in new ways, but the basic formula remains the same.

Spielberg even made efforts to remove the racist undertones of the '61 version casting Latin actors and adding a more multidimensional take on Puerto Rican life in New York. Despite under-performing at the U.S. box office opening weekend (at $10.5 million), West Side Story is worth a theater visit (and however long the wait to stream). It's a vividly produced collage of performance, cinematography, romance and tragedy that fans of the original movie will love, maybe even more than its predecessor.

(Asher Luberto)
Kyle is Still Super Duper
It’s Not So Bad for Ventura Rapper and Singer

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

Back in 2020 when Kyle (formerly known as SuperDuperKyle and KiD but born Kyle Thomas Harvey) released his See You When I’m Famous album, it felt like a self-fulfilling prophecy. A little cocky in all the right ways. Two years on, and things are going pretty much to plan for the platinum-selling artist. He’s just released the “Perfect” single, and his new album, It’s Not So Bad, drops on January 28. You only have to look at those titles to see that positivity reigns with Kyle right now.

The Ventura artist says that the sound on the new album has evolved hugely from that last one, mainly because he only knows how to create based on what he’s currently interested in.

“I’m like a kid where my interests will change from one genre to the next, from one tone of voice to the next,” he told us by phone. “On See You When I’m Famous I was speaking on Ventura, my hometown, and it was very surf rock influenced. But on It’s Not So Bad, I kinda got really into R&B and house music, and UK garage started influencing me. So the sound has really just gotten more mature. It feels more sexy and relationship-focused. I realized I want to speak on things that I’m educated on, and I happen to have been in love for a really long time so I know about those topics, rather than reaching till I rap about stuff that I have no clue on.”

The ongoing lockdown naturally had an impact on the recording and release of this forthcoming album. Initially, Kyle says that the entire story came from him being locked up in the house and having nothing but negative things to focus on. At first, he says, he was going to make a lo-fi album that was very sad. But then his mindset changed.

“I have a bunch of songs like that,” he says. “Longing to connect with people in a real way and having that stripped from me confronted me with a bunch of work I need to do on myself to come to the conclusion that life is not so bad and there’s a bunch of things to be grateful for and happy for. I was depressed when I was trying to connect with people over the phone, and my phone doesn’t really love me at all. It’s not real. All Instagram and social media does is give you this false sense of dopamine, but it’s not real life. When I lost that connection with my fans, I had to discover again for myself why life is not so bad, what is there to be happy about, and how to deal with things when I’m by myself. That’s what a lot of the album speaks on. So yes, the pandemic fully helped it along. Through working on these sad songs, I had to go to Miami for a little bit and realize that I need to move and I want to dance and make uptempo music. It’s like one long therapy session. Every album is with me.”

On that theme, the new single is “Perfect,” a song that Kyle describes as self-help music.

“I’m trying to say nice things to myself and I’m doing it over this house music,” he says. “The studio session when I made ‘Perfect’ was inspired by trying to come up with a phrase that people could say either to themselves or to other people that made them feel better about themselves. I feel like so much music nowadays, even if you repeat the hook, is some pretty messed up, negative shit. I wanted to come up with a phrase that simply adds some positivity into somebody’s ethos when they say it. ‘Perfect’ turned out to be that record. It’s like an awesome, body-positive, self-help club song in the club don’t know that secretly we’re doing therapy with them.”

As we’re writing, we’re still coming to terms with the death of Drakeo the Ruler. Kyle was a fan.

“It’s just really sad,” Kyle says. “I feel sorry that a life was cut so short so young, with so much promise ahead of his career. Not just for him but for his family and people depending on him. I feel like festivals and venues, when you’re hosting artists that are maybe dealing with things, you should take extra precautions to make sure everybody is safe.”

Looking ahead, 2022 should be another great year for Kyle. He’s getting ahead of the tech game too, releasing the new album as an S-NFT.

“Essentially, in simple human terms, my fans or anybody else have an opportunity to participate in ownership of this music with me,” Kyle says. “So I’m selling 50 percent of the ownership of this album to the open market. You have the ability to buy a share of the album. If the album blows up and becomes a platinum-selling album and has all this success, your investment is now earning you money. It’s just like being able to put your money into somebody you believe in. You’re putting the ball into their court. They’re the people who love me and see what we can do together? I really think it’s the future of the music industry.”

Beyond It’s Not So Bad, Kyle has much more planned for next year.

“I have multiple albums planned,” he says. “Now that I’m independent, I feel inspired to move at the pace I want to move and I want to give my fans as much music as possible. There’s a short film coming for It’s Not So Bad that I’m excited about. So expect more films, albums, and an entire tour. I’m also working on getting a six pack, so we will accomplish that as well.”

Good for you, sir.

The “Perfect” single is out now. The It’s Not So Bad album is out in January. [1]
CALIFORNIA’S CULTIVATION TAX HIKE HITS POT

The state’s farmers prepare for a tax hike as many still sit on last year’s crop.

BY JIMI DEVINE

Regardless of whether or not the cannabis will actually be sold, California’s cultivation tax hike hit on January 1. Now four years into the implementation of Prop. 64, one of the most hot-button topics remains the level of taxation faced by small farmers we thought we were voting in favor of. Specifically, the idea of creating an industry that would bring them into the light. But in the process of merging medical marijuana regulations and the will of the voters, protections for those small farmers against mega producers were lost.

What does that have to do with taxes? As the giant farms flooded the marketplace the price of a pound of marijuana crashed. When you’re getting $1,500 a pound for your weed, it’s not as crazy to pay $161.28 in cultivation tax a piece, up from $154.40 last year. But what if the price of the pound drops to a few hundred dollars as we saw in 2021?

Unfortunately for farmers, that means half the value of their crop is going to the state as cultivation tax alone. Never mind all the other aspects of compliance like testing, banking fees, excise tax, and a weird permitting structure that requires annual authorization. So after the state has taken over half of the value already the rest is divided amongst the other compliance and payroll costs leaving pennies for the farmer.

Different styles of production will feel the increase less. I talked with one medium-sized indoor producer with a facility just under 600 lights that does a lot of white labeling for other brands expecting to see an additional tax hit of about $40,000 in 2022 from the hike.

But their pricing situation is much different from small outdoor farmers talking in hundreds per pound.

“December was rough. Max was $1,800, and most went out closer to $1,600,” the grower told L.A. Weekly. The prices he was getting for top-shelf indoor. “Some I’m still sitting on waiting for a deal but we harvest every 7 days all year so there’s always a new batch, which means I’ll probably have to fire sale some of last month’s stuff that hasn’t moved yet in the $1,200 range.”

Up north, the team at Ladybug Farms has been proactive in dealing with their tax burden. In October they put together a presentation outlining local taxation in Monterey, “which we were able to reduce to $3/Sqft of flowering canopy,” Jake Brookes, director of operations, told L.A. Weekly.

But the hike in the cultivation tax is still going to cost them a pretty penny. Ladybug Farms is expecting to get hit with an increase of just over a quarter-million dollars, $255,712 more than last year.

“Our combined cultivation tax liability across dry flower, leaf, and fresh flower cultivation tax that would be paid between ourselves, our manufacturing and wholesale partners would be $5.96 million,” Brookes noted. That’s assuming Ladybug Farms cultivates the same total bio-mass with post-processing ratios and sales allocations also holding steady.

One of the state’s OGs also broke it down for us. As a neighbor of Lawrence Ringo and one of his test subjects, Harry Rose is one of the original players when it comes to CBD whether Sanjay Gupta visited his farm or not. Rose continues his patient-first approach these days through a wide range of products at Rosette Wellness.

“Most cultivators don’t pay the cult tax. It gets passed on to final distro who theoretically pays it. Just eliminating cultivation tax will not help save small farmers as they aren’t paying it anyway, most of the time,” Rose told L.A. Weekly.

But he also believes the increase in pound price by $150 also isn’t enough given the market.

“License fees are very expensive at the state and local levels and are due before any product is sold as well as the fact that any other license of this type would be 10 years or permanent, such as in alcohol,” Rose said. “It is complex and people are simplifying without knowledge.”

Rose also argues the big corporate cannabis players are pushing for just cultivation and excise tax relief as that will make their profits higher while other needs of the small farmer, in addition to tax relief, get lost in the noise.

“In reality, we need to allow small farmers and producers to do their own COA testing, processing, transportation, distribution and sales,” Rose said before calling for license fee relief in addition to tax relief to help save the industry.
IAN INGRAM’S ROBOT MENAGERIE INHABITS THE BEALL CENTER

A new exhibition explores how art facilitates interspecies communication.

BY LIZ GOLDNER

The Beall Center’s Ian Ingram exhibition explores what the eponymous artist refers to as “animal morph, robotic avatars, interspecies communication and technology in natural environments.” The 21 pieces in the exhibition involve 14 robots — all appropriating animal forms and behavior — that Ingram built and filmed over 20 years in the high, desolate landscapes of arctic fells, in city streets, parks and ponds, and in back-country lakes and mountains.

Ingram, who created several pieces in this show during his recent residency at the Beall Center, has a Bachelor’s degree in Ocean Engineering and an Master’s in Ocean Acoustics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, plus an M.F.A. in Visual Art from Carnegie Mellon University. He has exhibited his work nationally and in Halifax, Copenhagen and Amsterdam, among several other foreign cities.

Much of his work focuses on “synanthropic animals,” or on those “most closely tied to ourselves and our places.” He explains that the robots function similarly to the animals they communicate with when the subject of their focus (whether raven, lizard or worm) appears on the scene. He adds that the robots have detailed flashbulb memories of the times when the subjects of their intent (the real animals) are perceived to be nearby.

Indeed, the animal universe that Ingram replicates robotically and in films is fraught with challenges and danger, along with delights including liaisons with flowers and mating. Beyond the scientific and artistic aspects of his robotic experiments, Ingram is engaging in a deeper understanding of the animal world. If all of this sounds fantastical and futuristic — and a little hard to wrap your mind around — you’re not alone. The L.A. Weekly asked the artist to introduce us to his ecosystem of avatars, creature by creature.

L.A. WEEKLY: When did you first begin creating robots?
IAN INGRAM: I made my first real robot when I was 10. It gathered chalk from our schoolroom’s chalkboard tray, and then signaled success when it reached the end of the tray by doing a kind of dance. In 1995, I started to build a robot that would inhabit and somehow belong in the tiny habitat formed by islands off the New Hampshire coast. I am still working toward finishing that project.

Please describe Lizardless Legs.
It is one of a series of robots that attempts to enter the border disputes of Western fence lizards by watching for the lizards’ territorial push-up signals and responding with its own push-ups. The push-up gesture dominates (as it is the robot’s main function) and is also a mating display. So to a degree, Lizardless Legs is a lizard sexbot (or a robot designed for sex).

And Nevermore-A-Matic?
This piece tries to tell our stories about the end of the world to ravens using coded hawk wipes. The birds likely don’t really understand, but from the biosemiotics (signs and codes) of excessive beak-wiping, they might gather that the robot is deeply worried about something.

Love this name — Danger, Squirrel Nutkin.
Prey animals alert each other to danger using alarm signals. Danger, Squirrel Nutkin — a robot looking for squirrel predators like dogs, foxes, cats, hawks and people — alerts the local squirrels using their own alarm signals, which is tail flagging. The robot has three tails, so its message could amount to a supernormal stimulus.

Now tell us about Marvelous Meat.
Marvelous Meat is a short film, akin to a nature documentary of Nevermore-A-Matic in arctic Finland, where it broadcasts its message of doom into a supposedly pristine landscape full of crows, magpies, foxes, flies, and molting reindeer. It oversees a carcass made of pig, cow, sheep, and reindeer parts, bought shrink-wrapped in plastic at the supermarket.

Please describe the On Beyond series — On Beyond Duckling, On Beyond Pond, and On Beyond Mother Goose at the Lake.
In the early 2000s, I was trying to create artificial symbiosis. When I failed at that (symbioses are really million-year projects), I tried to create what I called sculptural symbiosis. This led to a series of robots engaging in their own mating rituals in wild places while cohabiting with the animals and plants there. On Beyond Duckling never had a mate, making its overtures plaintive and forlorn. To make up for that, I made On Beyond Mother Goose who did have a mate, On Beyond Father Gander. They executed their synchronized mating ritual of twists and spins aligned with the Earth’s magnetic fields while miles apart because they had a linked sense of time’s passage.

Last but not least, tell us about your rat-related installations.
There are quite a few rat projects. Two are new bodies for rats: Rat King, the robot when I was 10. In 1995, I started to build a robot that would inhabit and somehow belong in the tiny habitat formed by islands off the New Hampshire coast. I am still working toward finishing that project.

And Elongate Evans?
My residency at the Beall and collaboration with neuroscientist Steve Mahler there led me to a deliberate turning towards synanthropic animals. Steve keeps as pets a breed of rat called Long Evans. I spent time with them at night in the dark in his garage. I became interested in how synanthropic animals’ bodies fit into the built environment, and how they find facsimiles there of the places where they evolved. And because of the rat’s proclivity for chewing, I armored and enclosed my robot’s vitals in ways that I have rarely done.

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about the rats I saw during the night. In working with Mahler and talking with his colleagues about efforts to under-
stand how the brain encodes memo-
ries during flashbulb memory, I became interested in engaging with my robot’s memories. With a prey animal like a rat, life is a risky business with an associated need for vigilance and crystallizing les-
s from traumatic and near-traumatic

The exhibition is on view through March 5 at UC Irvine’s Beall Center for Art + Technology, 712 Arts Plaza, Ir-
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