

LAW WEEKLY

DECEMBER
16 - 22, 2022
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BY LINA LECARO

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At Wonzimer Gallery
Jean Cocteau's 1947
Beauty and the Beast



CALENDAR

GO EDITORS' PICKS

ARTS

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15

Curated Film Screenings at Wonzimer Gallery. Every two weeks, this indie downtown gallery invites a guest to curate an evening of films, and this month, the current exhibiting artist Gary Brewer has chosen a classic of surrealist cinema and two comedic shorts that all play off of subconscious fear and desire. Jean Cocteau's 1947 surrealist film *Beauty and the Beast*, Buster Keaton's *Sherlock Jr.*, and the Chuck Jones animated masterpiece *Duck Amuck* all relate to Brewer's current show *The Voluptuous Charm of the Monumental Impulse* — itself examining the surrealist and sublime aspects of beauty and seeking. 341 S. Avenue 17, downtown; Thursday, December 15, 7:30pm; free; wonzimer.com.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17

Thrifty at Bermudez Projects. A serious tribute to the quirk of thrift store art, co-curated by Patt Morrison and John Rabe. In two dozen artworks culled from collections across the region, techniques vary. Most are by amateurs who clearly painted purely for pleasure. And they wound up at a thrift store, one imagines, because the next of kin who came across them didn't know what else to do with them. But is that so bad? Rabe and Morrison say not at all... this is not art meant to appreciate; it's art meant to be appreciated. Being at a thrift store ensures it gets into the right hands. 1225 Cypress Ave., Cypress Park; Opens: Saturday, December 17, 6-9pm; On view through January 14; free; bermudezprojects.com.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18

L.A. Master Chorale: Handel's Messiah at Disney Hall. Joyous refrains and exultant arias, including the iconic "Hallelujah" Chorus, will fill the concert hall this holiday season. This Baroque masterwork, expressing the themes of hope, redemption and grace, showcases the magnificent artistry and skill of our celebrated chorus, complemented by four exceptional guest artists. PS: If you don't think you can stop yourself from joining in the good parts, they've got you — consider attending Monday night's official Sing-Along version instead! 111 S. Grand Ave., downtown; Sunday, December 18, 7pm; \$65-\$170; lamasterchorale.org.

Another World: The Transcendental Painting Group at LACMA. In 1938 in New Mexico, a loose configuration of artists came together to form the Transcendental Painting Group. Led by

painters Raymond Jonson and Emil Bisttram, joined by Agnes Pelton and Lawren Harris, the members of the group sought to explore spiritually heightened abstraction by employing free-wheeling symbols and imagery drawn from the collective unconscious. According to their manifesto they strove "to carry painting beyond the appearance of the physical world, through new concepts of space, color, light and design to imaginative realms that are idealistic and spiritual." 5905 Wilshire Blvd., *Miracle Mile*; On view December 18 - June 19; free-\$25; lacma.org.

ONGOING

GARDEN at Ladies Room (Virtual). An exhibition of 139 women and non-binary artists, GARDEN benefits three organizations that help the food insecure — LA Food Policy Council, Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, and World Central Kitchen. Using images derived from Nature and the body, this wide-ranging selection addresses and evokes the myriad ways in which artists communicate with history and the future, grounding narratives in the multiplicity of the mellifluous present. Online through January 31; free; ladiesroomla.org.

MUSIC

DECEMBER 16-22

The Strawberry Alarm Clock
Whisky A Go Go 1960s psychedelic Glendale living legends the Strawberry Alarm Clock love a show at the Whisky, and it's always great

to see Tham on that venue's calendar. It recalls the glory days when the likes of the Doors were regulars. They're on a bill with Manuel the Band, Laurel Canyon, Catatonic Suns, and \$tawb3rry Money. 6 p.m. on Friday, December 16 at the *Whisky A Go Go*, \$25+, whiskyagogo.com.

Amon Amarth Kia Forum

A real treat for fans of extreme metal, as the kings of viking metal Amon Amarth take over the massive Forum. The bill is stacked, with grind pioneers Carcass, death metal vets Obituary, and the wonderfully named Cattle Decapitation also playing. Immense! 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 17 at the *Kia Forum*, \$31.50+, thekiaforum.com

Adolescents Alex's Bar

SoCal punk icons the Adolescents are always a good time live, but this show means more. It's a canned food drive for the Long Beach Rescue Mission, which is a great cause at any time and especially over the holidays. Show up early, and watch Low Sounds, Egg Drop Soup, and R0bber. 8 p.m. on Saturday, December 17 at *Alex's Bar*, \$25.75, alexsbar.com.

G Perico The Observatory

L.A. rapper G Perico put out the *111th East EP* this year, the latest in a remarkably consistent list of mixtapes. He's venturing to the OC for this gig, and maybe we'll get a taste of what he'll be offering next year. 7 p.m. on Thursday, December 22 at the *Observatory*, \$22.50, observatoryoc.com

KAREN BASS SWORN IN AS FIRST FEMALE MAYOR OF L.A.

Mayor Karen Bass was officially sworn in and spoke about prioritizing homelessness in Los Angeles

BY ISAI ROCHA



Kamala Harris swears in Karen Bass as mayor of Los Angeles

Karen Bass was sworn in Sunday as the 43rd mayor of Los Angeles, becoming the first woman to hold the position.

Swearing her in was U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, who served with Bass in congress and said, “I know she will serve the people of this great city with honor.”

After thanking the city, Bass reiterated her commitment to housing the homeless and working with the communities to make Los Angeles safer.

“... tomorrow morning, I will start my first day as mayor at the city’s emergency operation centers, where my first act as mayor will be to declare a state of emergency on homelessness,” Bass said during the ceremony. “My emergency declaration will recognize the severity of our crisis and break new ground to maximize our ability to urgently move people inside and to do so for good.”

During the ceremony, City Council President Paul Krekorian swore in the group of newly elected council members, which included Katy Young-Yaroslavsky, Hugo Soto-Martinez, Tim McOsker, Eunisses Hernandez and Traci Park. Also sworn in were the new city controller and city attorney, Kenneth Mejia and Hydee Feldstein Soto, respectively.

The night before the swearing-in ceremony, Eric Garcetti signed his final law as mayor of Los Angeles, giving way to L.A.’s Green New Deal. The law will bring a slew of changes to the city, including a requirement for new buildings to be built all-electric, as well as a ban on Styrofoam products for food, beverages, shipping and packing materials.

BASS DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY ON HOMELESSNESS

As promised, newly elected mayor of Los Angeles Karen Bass declared a state

of emergency on homelessness as her official first act Monday.

Bass’ office said the declaration gave her the authority to lift any regulations that prevented permanent and temporary housing from being built. The city also can buy properties and land for housing purposes.

“My mandate is to move Los Angeles in a new direction, with an urgent and strategic approach to solving our city’s toughest challenges and creating a brighter future for every Angeleno,” Mayor Bass said in a statement Monday. “Today, on my first day in office, we hit the ground running, with a sea of change in how the city tackles homelessness.”

During its annual homeless count, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) estimated that 69,144 people in Los Angeles County were experiencing homelessness in 2022, with 41,980 of them residing in the city itself. The number in the city represents an increase of 1.7% since 2020, with a count not being administered in 2021 due to the pandemic.

“While it is too soon to know what this year’s count results will mean long-term, the numbers are suggesting there is a flattening of the curve that is driven by the necessary and effective economic programs that helped keep people in their homes throughout the pandemic,” Kristina Dixon, acting co-executive director at LAHSA said in a statement, after the release of the homelessness count in September.

In response to Bass’ declaration, activists within the community were not impressed, calling it “performative,” and pointing to the city ordinance 41.18, which has given districts authority to make homeless encampments illegal in several key portions of the city.

“Karen Bass still supports the criminalization of poverty with LAMC 41.18,” the Little Tokyo collective known as J-Town Action said in a tweet. “This performative word salad means nothing.”

The Housing Is A Human Right organization was more cautiously optimistic about Bass’ intentions, saying, “We look forward to seeing the declaration backed up by action.”

PHYSICAL ALTERCATION BETWEEN KEVIN DE LEÓN AND ACTIVIST BEING INVESTIGATED

LAPD is investigating a fight that occurred between Los Angeles City Councilman Kevin de León (KDL) and a local activist in Lincoln Heights.

The activist was identified as Jason Reedy who appeared to be walking alongside de León at a Lincoln Heights holiday tree lighting event on Dec. 9.

“The Los Angeles Police Department’s Detective Support and Vice Division

Threat Management Unit is investigating an incident where an altercation occurred involving a Los Angeles city councilmember during a community event,” LAPD said through a press release. “While participating in a local community event, councilmember de León was approached by multiple community members, who blocked his path of travel as he attempted to leave the building.”

The incident was caught on video by Roots Action and J-Town Action and Solidarity, then posted to Twitter.

In the video, Reedy was seen following de León and calling him a racist as the councilman attempted to exit the venue.

While several parts of the video were blocked off by a crowd of people, there were moments where de León staff members pushed Reedy and others away from the exit, but the activist managed to get face-to-face with de León anyway.

De León released a statement, giving his side of the events, and claimed he acted in self-defense.

“I decided to try to exit the event to draw the disrupters away from the attending families and children, and leave without further Incident,” de León said. “Still, we discovered Reedy and others had blocked all available exits. Once we were able to push open a door and try to get out, Reedy launched a pelvic thrust, followed by a headbutt to my forehead. My response, in defense of myself, was to push him.”

Both parties filed battery reports, with Reedy alleging that de León grabbed and threw him without provocation.

“News outlets keep saying stuff like KDL was ‘involved in a fight,’” Councilman Mike Bonin tweeted on Dec. 10. “[de León] straight up assaulted him. And now he’s issuing demonstrably false statements claiming to be the victim.”

Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez made a statement against the activists at the event, going as far as calling them “terrorists.”

“Angelenos have every right to peacefully protest,” Rodriguez said on Twitter. “But when protest devolves into wielding physical intimidation, threats and acts of violence, it’s no longer protest, it’s terrorism.”

The altercation came hours after de León attempted to join a city council meeting for the first time since October, with the councilman being away since the release of the infamously racist and homophobic leaked audio recording between himself, Gil Cedillo, former council president Nury Martinez and former L.A. Fed Union president Ron Herrera.

De León also had a recall campaign launched against him last week, with the L.A. City Clerk approving a petition to begin gathering signatures within the 14th district. [E]

CANNABIS

THE ROAD TO L.A. STARTS: THE EMERALD CUP HARVEST BALL

The second edition of the Harvest Ball marked the start of the competition season that will end in Los Angeles this spring.

BY: JIMI DEVINE



The rain could not stop the heat at the second annual Emerald Cup Harvest Ball in Santa Rosa.

The event serves as the kickoff to cup season with the winners getting crowned in roughly six months in L.A. at the awards show. This weekend had traditionally served as the whole show for years, before the new format. The quests of farmers looking for next year's hottest genetics, the chance to survey the harvest, and the awards show were all crammed into one action-packed weekend over 17 years that continued to get larger and larger.

With the awards show still months out, the weekend now focuses on the cannabis of the moment and seeds. The seed and genetics part can't be overstated. In more recent years we're even seeing tissue cuttings available for farmers terrified of the dreaded Hop Latent Viroid, commonly known as HLVD. Cuttings with HLVD have been the downfall of mega nurseries people were convinced were here to stay. But regardless of the high-tech stuff, the regu-

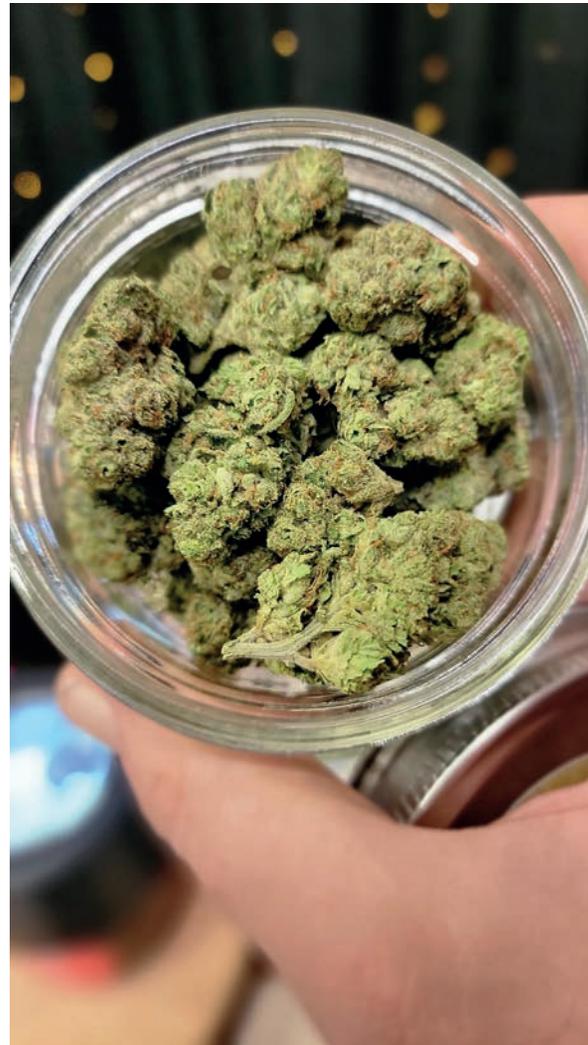
lar seeds and cuttings called clones are a huge part of the show.

We were reminded of this when we walked in the gate on Day One. Emerald Cup Competition Director Victoria Shea grabbed me out of line just before gates opened so I'd make it to the judges' meet-and-greet on time. The public hadn't even been allowed in yet and there were already lines at the Compound Genetics and Purple City Genetics Booths as their peers participating in the Harvest Ball queued up to get the latest and greatest genetics from both. That wave of people on the hunt would increase tenfold once the gates opened up.

And those who weren't looking for cuts were looking for great cannabis or trying to convince people they had it; plenty did.

Higher Heights from Comptche, California, had a lovely spread. The two standouts for us were the Carambola and the Purple Candy Cane. The Purple Candy Cane was a bit more complex on the nose.

Pacific Cultivation was another absolute banger spread for 2022. Everything came



on display. You could certainly smell the sugary goodness some people like to start their mornings with.

Moon Valley Cannabis's Wine Country-grown pot also was pretty awesome. The standout for us was the Grapes and Cream, but the Zlurpy was very competitive, too. We could see people leaning in that direction for sure.

Bigfoot Cannabis Co's rendition of Gelato 41 was stunning. It was one of our favorite versions we have ever seen that wasn't indoor. The only one nicer won the Cannabis Cup in 2018.

Fidel's spread was as top-class as to be expected. It included the KMZ that won the Transbay Challenge I hosted in Los Angeles this past August. The blend of Kush Mints and zkitelz is a flavor profile in its own league.

One of the loudest jars of the day had to be the Garlotti from Good Good. Once you cracked it open, you were hit with an explosion of garlic terps so strong your eyes and sinuses might water up a bit. But don't worry, that's definitely a good

thing. out awesome, but it would be criminal to not highlight the Hippy Crasher. The pairing of Kush Mints and Wedding Crasher was among the finest offerings at the whole harvest ball. The Caked Up Cherries was our second favorite from the Pacific Cultivation lineup.

Humboldt Seed Company had their new Jelly Donutz collaboration with Casa Flor

thing. Sun Roots Farm's Velvet Papaya won the contest for the thing I think we'll have the best show of smoking in a hash format. The terp-loaded strain was said to produce a decent amount of the resin you need to make hash, which essentially is collected plant resin. 🍪

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LA WEEKLY NEW YEAR'S EVE GUIDE

BY LA WEEKLY



So long, 2022; hello 2023! We couldn't be more excited to welcome a new year and want to celebrate all the fresh opportunities and possibilities 2023 will bring by making sure we send 2022 out with a bang this New Year's Eve. Living in Los Angeles, there's no shortage of fabulous events and parties to choose from, especially on holidays like NYE. To help chase

away the FOMO we've created a curated list of the very best, can't-be-missed celebrations happening this year.

Whether you're an introvert, an extrovert, love a party or just want to laugh the night away, LA Weekly's 2022 NYE Guide will help you gain access to your ideal NYE. Check out our list below to ensure you start your new year off right:

Gwen Stefani
Celebrate New Year's Eve Weekend with Gwen Stefani December 30th & 31st at The Venetian Resort Las Vegas! Get your tickets now while they last!
www.ticketmaster.com/artist/952651?venueId=189345

TAO Los Angeles



Ring in 2023 with an all-new New Year's Eve experience at TAO Los Angeles! Join us on Saturday, December 31st for a live DJ performance from DJ Five, tray passed hors d'oeuvres and a special midnight toast to kiss 2022 goodbye! To purchase tickets and tables, please visit Taogroup.com/lanye. #taonye2023 #lanye2023
Taogroup.com/lanye

Dita Von Teese



Dita Von Teese is bringing the world's biggest burlesque show – Glamonatrix – to the magnificent Orpheum Theatre in Los Angeles for a very special New Year's Eve performance! Ring in 2023 in style with an evening full of comedy and sophisticated, modern burlesque. Tickets on sale now at Ticketmaster.com



Prohibition NYE

For its 9th year, Prohibition NYE with KCRW will return to the iconic Union Station and bring back the excitement and glamour of this fabulous decade.

Experience Los Angeles' premier New Year's Eve event with DJ Sets from ascending duo NEIL FRANCES and 2022 GRAMMY nominated TOTALLY ENORMOUS EXTINCT DINOSAURS theatrical burlesque, live jazz ensembles, a premium open bar featuring Johnnie Walker and Don Julio 1942. Don't miss Prohibition NYE's signature 60-foot, midnight ball-drop celebration.

https://found.ee/prohibitionnye_tickets



KATT WILLIAMS

DEC 30 ONTARIO
DEC 31 LOS ANGELES

Katt Williams Live!

See Katt Williams Live! Friday, Dec. 30 at Toyota Arena and Saturday, Dec. 31 at Microsoft Theater. Get your tickets today!

www.axs.com/series/16081/katt-williams-social-shows-tickets



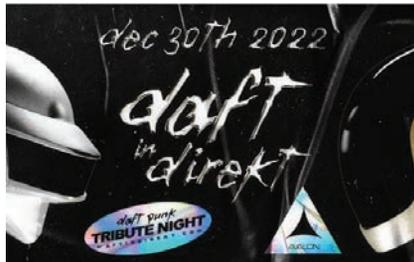
Countdown New Year's Invasion

Countdown New Year's Invasion returns to the NOS Center this month with The Chainsmokers, Deadmau5, DJ Snake, Madeon (DJ Set), Sidepiece, Slander, Yellow Claw, Zedd, ZHU + more!

Party with 1000s of Alienz as we bring in the New Year, prepare for a mass takeover of raveland with 2 days of dance music, with 80+ artists across 4 stages. Grab your spot on board the Mothership now!

Countdownnye.com

Daft in Direkt



Daft in Direkt - Daft Punk Tribute Night! Avalon Hollywood Friday 12/30/22 10:00PM 21+

avalonhollywood.com/event/123022-daft-in-direkt

Orto Santa Monica



With a special thanks to all who supported us through the pandemic, our family at Orto trust to find you all in good health and welcomes you with open arms. Come enjoy authentic Italian food for the Holidays and the New Year. At Orto (Italian for "vegetable garden") we unite local ingredients from farmers markets and organic herbs grown here at the restaurant. You will feel like you are back home with us in Italy eating fine-cooked meals made from traditional family recipes. At the table, enjoy a selection from our extensive cocktail list where we unite premium spirits and herbs. Pick your wine from a fine list of sustainable and organic vintners.

Allow us to make you feel special and book with us for the holiday season! See you soon.

Open:
Xmas Eve: 5pm to 10:30pm
Xmas Day: 12pm to 10pm
NYE: 5pm to 10:30pm

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Markus Schulz

NYE2023 Markus Schulz Avalon Hollywood [Open to Close]
avalonhollywood.com/event/123122-nye2023-markus-schulz-open-to-close/

Spiegelworld



Ring in 2023 with Spiegelworld! Join us at Absinthe at Caesars Palace for a

riotous cocktail of circus, burlesque and vaudeville followed by a spectacular view of the Strip fireworks. Or if dinner and a show is more your thing, join us at Superfrico + OPM at the Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas for an out-of-this-world, almost all-night, psychedelic New Year's Eve.

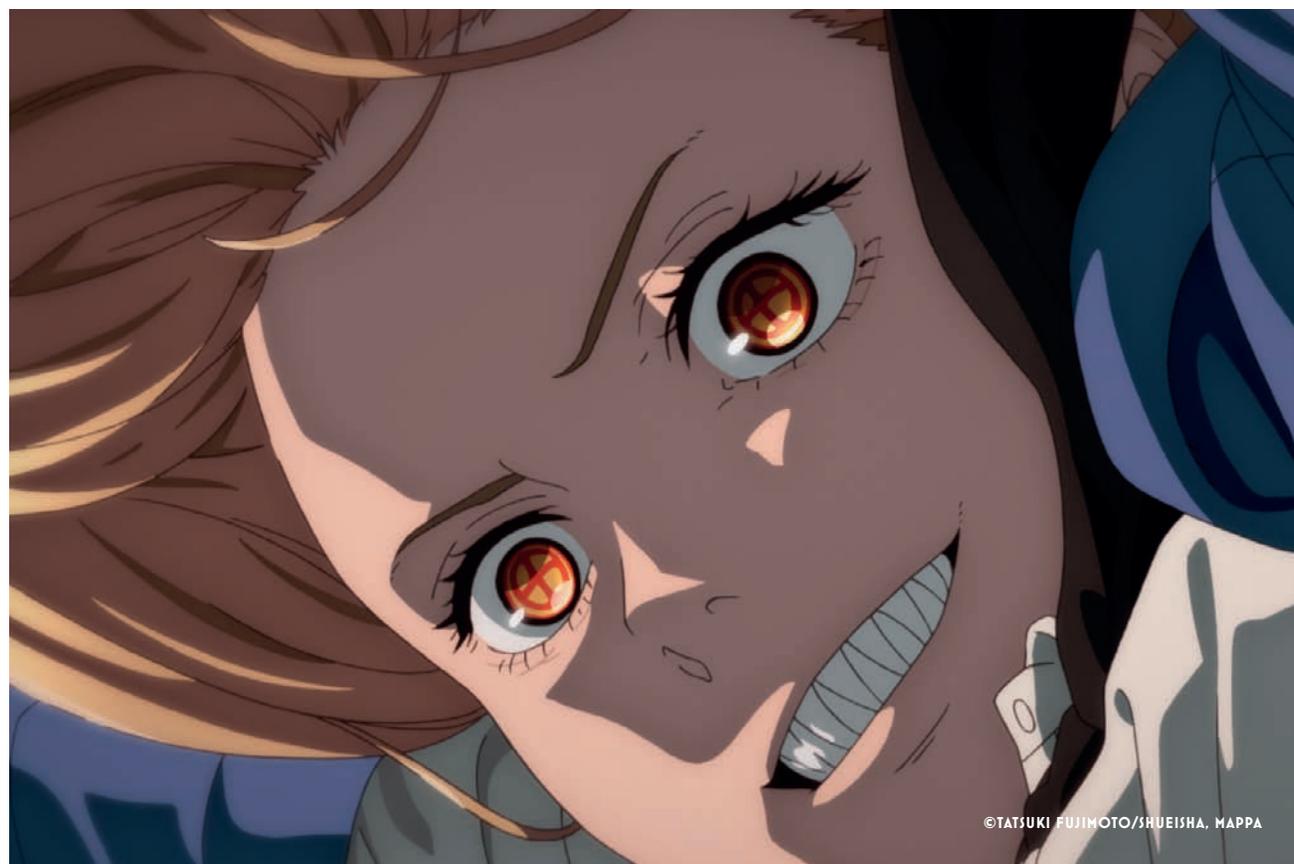
spiegelworld.com



ON A ROLL

Crunchyroll is Taking Anime Fandom Worldwide

BY LINA LECARO



©TATSUKI FUJIMOTO/SHUEISHA, MAPPA

Anime is more popular than ever before, with a market topping over \$25 billion in 2022 globally. That number is expected to double in 10 years, largely due to its U.S. growth, accelerated by merchandising, streaming and events held here. The Japanese animated artform, as seen in films, games, events and collectables, has nearly as many fans in North America as it does in Japan. Los Angeles in particular has played a significant role in this growth thanks to Crunchyroll, the popular anime streaming network based here, which was acquired by Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc., in 2020.

Crunchyroll has been a major player in anime and manga (Japanese comics) culture since it was created back in 2006 by a team of Berkeley graduates who launched

the online channel and helped it expand with over 100 million registered users and 5 million paying subscribers at the time it was purchased. Since the Sony merger, it's nearing 10 million paying subscribers globally, with availability in over 200 countries. Its quarterly seasons have doubled over the last three years, with 40-50 new and returning titles. And the crunch keeps getting louder, especially after the success of this Summer's *Dragon Ball Super: Super Hero*, its first-ever global release (outside of Japan). The film played in 100 countries, with 13 dubbed and 29 subtitled languages, and did extremely well at the U.S. box office, earning \$21 million in its opening weekend alone.

Clearly Japanese animation is no longer a nerdy niche form of entertainment. It's

permeated all facets of pop culture and everything indicates it's only the beginning. LA Weekly caught up with the Crunchyroll crew to learn about its latest phases of promoting, expanding and redefining anime with a focus on satisfying longtime fans and engaging newbies.

"It's important to recognize that [it] has decades of conventions, culture, influence, and extremely dedicated fans under its belt," says Crunchyroll host Lauren Moore. "But it's definitely more on the mainstream surface in the West than it ever has been. People who never understood my job or the things I worked on are

stories. Anime has officially transcended the cartoon world and become a very real lifestyle. Though the majority of anime fans are millennial men, the consumer profile is changing with more women and more ages getting into the art, fantasy, dress-up and storytelling aspects.

"It's common for hip-hop artists to make anime references, anime art to show up in the latest fashions, or see athletes impersonating their favorite character on the field. One way Crunchyroll has leaned into that is by partnering with icons like Lady Gaga and Megan Thee Stallion on exclusive product collaborations," shares Travis Page, chief financial officer at Crunchyroll. "What we are most excited about is our ability to bring so many things together for the anime fans. We have to deliver a great streaming product, but we also want to be great in commerce, mobile games and theatrical. We think the best way to serve the fan is to tie those all together and create more of a feeling of membership, not just a streaming subscription."

As with most successful subcultures, community is key. "Anime has played a very big part in my life," Moore adds. "Attending conventions led to friendships and great networking opportunities. It was nearly a decade ago when I was working in the gaming industry that I was first approached about applying for a marketing and hosting job in anime. There was no way I was missing that chance. I went from attending my local cons religiously, to hosting panels on some of the biggest stages in the industry and being part of some of the biggest events in the US. And this job keeps getting bigger."

Being based in L.A. keeps Crunchyroll close to the heart of entertainment, which allows them to host anime movie premieres at locales such as The Academy Museum and LA Live, and to cultivate a major presence at conventions. Page says it also keeps them close to their parent company, Sony Pictures, which will become more significant as they expand cinematically in the coming years.

Beyond conventions and social media, "there is nothing like the experience of being in a dark theater, watching your favorite films with friends on the big screen," states Mitchel Berger, SVP of Global Commerce at Crunchyroll. "That's a big part of why Crunchyroll is bringing anime to theaters globally."

Dragon Ball Super: Super Hero became the fourth top grossing anime film of all time in the US and Crunchyroll has distributed 10 of the top 20 anime films in US box office history. Next up, the company is excited to release award-winning director Makoto Shinkai's newest film, *Suzume*, due in April 2023. "Theatrical is just one of the ways we create connection for the anime community," Berger adds. "Anime fans are collectors and want to wear their



fandom on their sleeve as a badge of honor, literally. We're excited to keep meeting fans where they are, and attracting new fans into the colorful world of anime. "

Until the next big theater release, Crunchyroll's focus remains online. The Crunchyroll app is available on over 15 platforms, including all gaming consoles and digital devices, with different pricing and platform options. The free version is ad-supported, and has limited programming (basically a sampler of its most popular anime for a limited time, including the first three episodes of new content, as well as a limited selection of manga titles to read). Crunchyroll's premium plan gets you new episodes one hour after they air in Japan, and offers unlimited ad-free anime content, plus hundreds of manga titles.

Sony's acquisition of another anime company, Funimation Global Group in 2021 and its unification under the Crunchyroll banner, only added to its



volume of anime and manga. The combined catalogs increased its offerings from 30,000 to 40,000 episodes equaling more than 16,000 hours of content. Current stats indicate Crunchyroll now has the largest anime library in the world:



18,000 hours, 44,000 episodes of series and films, and new series being added daily in various languages subtitles and dubbings: including English, Spanish (Latin America and Spain), Portuguese, French, Russian, German, Arabic, Italian, and, of course, Japanese. This year they also launched dubs in Hindi, Italian and Castilian Spanish.

Right now, popular titles include Chainsaw Man, following the adventures of a “devil hunter” named Denji; and SPY X FAMILY, about a spy, a telepath and an assassin who pose as a family to fight evil.

Crunchyroll is also home to faves including My Hero Academia, Demon Slayer, Attack on Titan, and JUJUTSU KAISEN.

Beyond competing with other streaming services, Crunchyroll, which has a social footprint of 150M+ fans worldwide, is incorporating an experiential approach to promotion. Now that society is resigned to living with COVID-19, moving the fandom beyond the computer, phone and TV screens to facilitate in-person interactions is the next step. Theatrical releases are a big part of it, but so is gaming (popular titles include My Hero

Academia: The Strongest Hero and anime RPG Princess Connect Re: Dive!) and events. From musical experiences like the Second Sky festival, which took place in Northern California back in October, to its celebrated annual Anime Awards show, which will take place in March next year in Tokyo, the profile of Crunchyroll and anime continues to expand, evolve and engage.

“It’s been pretty extraordinary seeing the industry blossom in such a massive and fruitful way,” says Ryan Colt Levy, lead voice actor on Chainsaw Man. “For

far too long, it wasn’t the popular or “cool” thing to enjoy or be able to celebrate among friends or peers without getting confused responses or worse. And now, we see anime celebrated everywhere from art to music and clothing culture, and now entire families share these experiences together. It’s truly a beautiful thing. I would love to see it further grow into a place where more people can see themselves in these stories and feel more connected to the real world and people around them.”

MUSIC

IT'S ALIVE!

The Living Tombstone is creating worlds for its fans to play in

BY BRETT CALLWOOD



Living Tombstone

PHOTO BY DAVID SUH

The Living Tombstone isn't likely to be a band that you've heard on the radio, or through the conventional and traditional means of discovering new music. This is a project that we were tipped off about by our 11-year-old son, which makes a lot of sense.

TLT (as they are often known) initially became well-known by writing songs for fandoms of the likes of the Five Nights at Freddy's (FNAF) video game franchise, and even My Little Pony. They would put those songs on YouTube and watch them catch fire. Then, as they realized that they had earned a fan base of their own, they created their own worlds. It's a brilliant, fascinating and fresh approach, and TLT is now wildly popular with a young, online audience.

The Living Tombstone is Yoav Landau, a producer and composer originally from Israel who met musical partner Sam Haft shortly after relocating to the States through a mutual friend.

"We exchanged details, and with Sam it was interesting because after we started to talk, Sam and I started sharing stuff," says Landau. "Sam sent me a really cool cover of a Radiohead song. I remember it was really impressive and cool, and basically we started to know what each other does. I think the first actual gig that we got to do for each other was me doing a remix for a movie project they were involved in."

"At the time, Yoav was doing The Living Tombstone on his own and had been for about five years," adds Haft. "I had been doing a comedy music project called

Sam & Bill. My comedy music band got the opportunity to do music for the end credits of a pulpy horror film called Pool Party Massacre. Yoav and I had just met at this party and he did the production for the Sam & Bill song in the end credits of that film. That was the first time that we worked together on a music project."

Haft would then provide backing vocals to a track for Landau called "Jump Up Superstar," and that led to them writing their first song together, "My Ordinary Life." To this day, that latter song is their most popular online.

"We worked together so well and understood each other's creative intentions in a very instinctual way, and from then on we couldn't stop writing together," says Haft.

TLT effectively operate as a DIY entity, with the pair basically working full-time office hours on this.

"We treat this as a very structured full-time job, and in spite of the fact that now we have moved into the music industry formally instead of just being on YouTube, we still operate in that DIY fashion," Haft says. "Other artists get very surprised at how much we do ourselves. We almost act like our own creative agency. It's been a DIY operation since Day One, and that's how we're most comfortable working."

It's not easy to describe the TLT sound, by design. Landau is essentially an electronic music producer, but he's bringing Middle Eastern folk music influences with him, plus pop and rock. The last thing they want is to be pigeon-holed, restricting what they can do later.

"Yoav's influences are different to anyone else I've worked with," says Haft. "That wide musical palette, and listening to a lot of folk music and reggae growing up, and interpreting that into electronic rock music in a way that I hadn't heard it before we started working together. A lot of people that I'm used to writing with have the same influences that I do. They vary of course, but we've all been exposed to the same music. Even though our specific influences may be different, we've been swimming in the same lake and Yoav has not. That's part of what makes your melodies really stand out."

"I need to not ignore what people like nowadays," adds Landau. "It's more my job to notice the similarities of things that are odd, and see where that fits into what people listen to nowadays. Surprise them that way."

The TLT song "Five Nights at Freddy's," about the game of the same name, saw them earn a massive amount of cool points from the online gaming community.

"The culture of the internet is about being there first, being the first one to make a meme about a thing," says Landau. "In the case of FNAF, when I started to see people talking about it, it was easy to make a post with a song and lyrics about the game, see

this thing catch fire, and then it goes on YouTube. It's weird because it's not mine, it's someone else's intellectual property, but Scott Cawthon [creator of FNAF] was super nice. He said, as long as you give some of the money to charity that should be OK. That's what I did."

Their experience with Hasbro after making music about My Little Pony wasn't so pleasant, such is the giant, corporate nature of that toy company. After playing with other people's worlds for a while, they created their own via the zero_one comic book and the In Sound Mind horror video game.

"A big question was, now that we have fans, what does fandom of us look like?" says Haft. "The way that we historically engaged in fandom has been engaging with story and characters, lore, the world, that kind of thing. We realized early on that we needed to have our own characters and our own world that were not just us. The Tombsonas, which is what we call those characters, arose out of that. They are a manifestation of screen names. They are aliases, they are masks, they are their own entities and identities."

From the beginning, TLT has been an audio-visual project, not just audio. So their creations make complete sense. The In Sound Mind video game sees players journey through the damaged psyches of characters, and the psyches sing. That allows TLT to insert their zany music into a horror game. There are simply no limits here.

"The Living Tombstone is music first, even if we're doing other kinds of content," says Haft. "People are here for the music, and we're just trying to create as big a universe or playground as possible where they can play with our music and engage with it."

By god, that's what they've done. And The Living Tombstone universe is only going to expand.

"We're currently working with an incredible production designer and costume designer to create these AV-enabled LED-enhanced costumes for the Tombsonas, so we can actually perform live embodying this full set of characters. Going into the new year, one of the things we're going to try and launch is this live concert experience and try to make it more than just us dancing around on stage to our music. There's nothing wrong with that, but again it's that idea of, we know what our fan base likes and we really just want to give them as much as we possibly can give them. That means costumes, full light show."

"We want to make something just as involved, expressive and expansive from the stuff we make songs of," adds Landau. "Otherwise it wouldn't feel right."

For more information, go to [instagram.com/livingtombstone](https://www.instagram.com/livingtombstone). [A]

A SWEET AND VISUAL DELIGHT

75 Desserts Based On Your Favorite Animes

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

Inspired by the design, characters and storylines behind the world of Japanese animation, Emily Buschman's new cookbook, *Bake Anime*, is a fun and unique compilation of 75 recipes that is a feast for the eyes.

The book is packed with colorful photography and is divided into three sections - Japanese desserts, western desserts and character desserts.

Recipes include Nerikiri from Cardcaptor Sakura; Clear Card, Ohagi from Demon Slayer, Pocket Monster Swiss Roll from Pokémon, and mini Hello Kitty Cakes, with detailed stories behind each character like history, culture and tips like what belongs in a sugar lover's pantry. The ingredients are exotic, but the results are dramatic.

The Japanese section includes classics like ichigo daifuku, monaka, nerikiri and matcha warabi mochi. The western chapter is an inventive and playful mix of countries and culture, like four layer semifreddo, chocolate gingerbread checkerboard cake, orange and cinnamon gâteau mille crepes, mini Sacher tortes and baumkuchen cake rolls - each recipe inspired by a different anime episode.

Bushman is a self-taught cook and baker who started her blog targeting food in anime, called *Penguin Snacks*, in 2015. The blog has since evolved into a career working on video creation for the anime streaming platform Crunchyroll, and for franchises like *Naruto*, *One Piece*, *Food Wars!*, *Shokugeki no Soma*, *Jujutsu Kaisen*, and more. She currently lives, works and bakes in a small apartment in Tokyo, Japan and shared her recipe for Mini Kitty Cakes with *L.A. Weekly*.

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Mini Kitty Tarts

Hello Kitty, also affectionately known as Kitty-chan, is one of the most iconic Japanese

characters. Her image has spread to anime, manga, games, theme parks and more.

Beloved for her cute appearance, she's meant to be a friend for the people - there to support you no matter what.

To depict this beloved and trendy kitty, I opted for a Japanese treat with matching characteristics: the Hokkaido cheese tart. This treat is a mild, creamy cheese tart en-

cased in a crunchy outer shell. These have become very popular in Japan and for good reason - they're addictive. Plus, the white cheese filling is the perfect backdrop for Hello Kitty's face.

3 TO 4 HOURS MAKES EIGHT 2-INCH TARTS SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: EIGHT 2-INCH EGG TART MOLDS, INFRARED THERMOMETER, PASTRY BAG NUT-FREE

For the Tart Shell:

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting, if needed
Pinch of kosher salt
1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
3/4 cup confectioners' sugar
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

For the Cheese Filling:

5 ounces cream cheese
2 ounces mascarpone cheese
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1/3 cup whole milk
2 Tablespoons unsalted butter
1/3 cup confectioners' sugar
1 1/2 Tablespoons cornstarch
1 large egg, at room temperature
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
Pinch of kosher salt

For the Decoration:

Black, red, and yellow fondant, or an assortment of black and yellow sprinkles

A red chewy candy or fondant, for the bow

Recipe Tip:

Don't feel like making tart shells? You can find them online or in baking stores.

Don't want to decorate the tarts? Refrain from smoothing the cheese filling out and instead simply brush the tops with egg wash (whisk an egg with a tablespoon of water) before they go in the oven, to give them an attractive browned appearance when they come out.

1. Make the tart shells: Whisk together the flour and salt in a small bowl to combine. Be sure to remove any lumps.

2. Combine the butter and sugar in a large bowl and beat with an electric mixer until smooth and light. Scrape down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula, then add the egg and vanilla. Mix again to incorporate, scraping down the sides as you go. Add the flour all at once and mix on low speed until just combined.

3. Turn the dough out onto a sheet of plastic wrap and press it into a disc shape. Wrap the dough in the plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least an hour and up to three days.

4. Make the cheese filling: Fill a pot with 3 inches of water and bring to a boil over high heat. Combine the cream cheese, mascarpone, Parmesan, milk, and butter in a tempered glass or metal bowl. Place the bowl over the pot to make a bain-marie (make sure the bottom of the bowl does not touch the water), reduce the heat to medium-high, and allow the cheeses to melt, stirring occasionally. While you wait, whisk together the confectioners' sugar and cornstarch in a small bowl. Prepare the other filling ingredients while you wait for the cheese to melt.

5. When the cheese has melted, add the confectioners sugar and cornstarch a little at a time, whisking to bring everything together, then cook, whisking continuously, until the mixture has thickened to a puddinglike consistency. Add the egg and lemon juice and whisk briskly to incorporate, then cook, stirring the cheese as it thickens, until it reaches 150°F. Remove the bowl from the pot and whisk in the vanilla, then taste and add salt if needed. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl to remove lingering lumps. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing it directly against the surface of the cheese mixture to prevent a skin from forming, and refrigerate until

cool, at least an hour.

6. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

7. Roll out the tart dough between two sheets of parchment paper to a thickness of 1/8 inch, dusting with flour as necessary to stop sticking. Cut rounds of dough that are about 1/2 inch bigger than the tart molds. Press the dough into each mold and prick the bottoms with a fork to prevent bubbling. Place the tart shells on a baking sheet so they're easy to maneuver into and out of the oven. Bake for 10 minutes, or until the tart shell is golden brown all over. Remove from the oven and allow to cool before filling. Raise the oven temperature to 450°F.

8. Transfer the cheese mixture to a pastry bag. Cut the tip of the bag, then pipe a generous amount of filling into each tart shell. Use a small palette knife (or the back of a butter knife) to smooth and flatten the tops. Bake for 6 minutes, then remove and allow to cool completely.

9. Decorate the tarts: I used fondant, but sprinkles can work. Use two large round black sprinkles for the eyes, a small yellow sprinkle for the nose, and black sprinkles for the whiskers. For the bow, use red fondant or a moldable red candy: Roll it into a pill shape and use the pointy end of a chopstick to press a dot into the candy at either end, then use the pointy end of two chopsticks to pinch in the middle of the bow. Finally, roll a little ball of red fondant or candy into a circle and place it over the pinched middle of the bow. Serve and enjoy. 🍪

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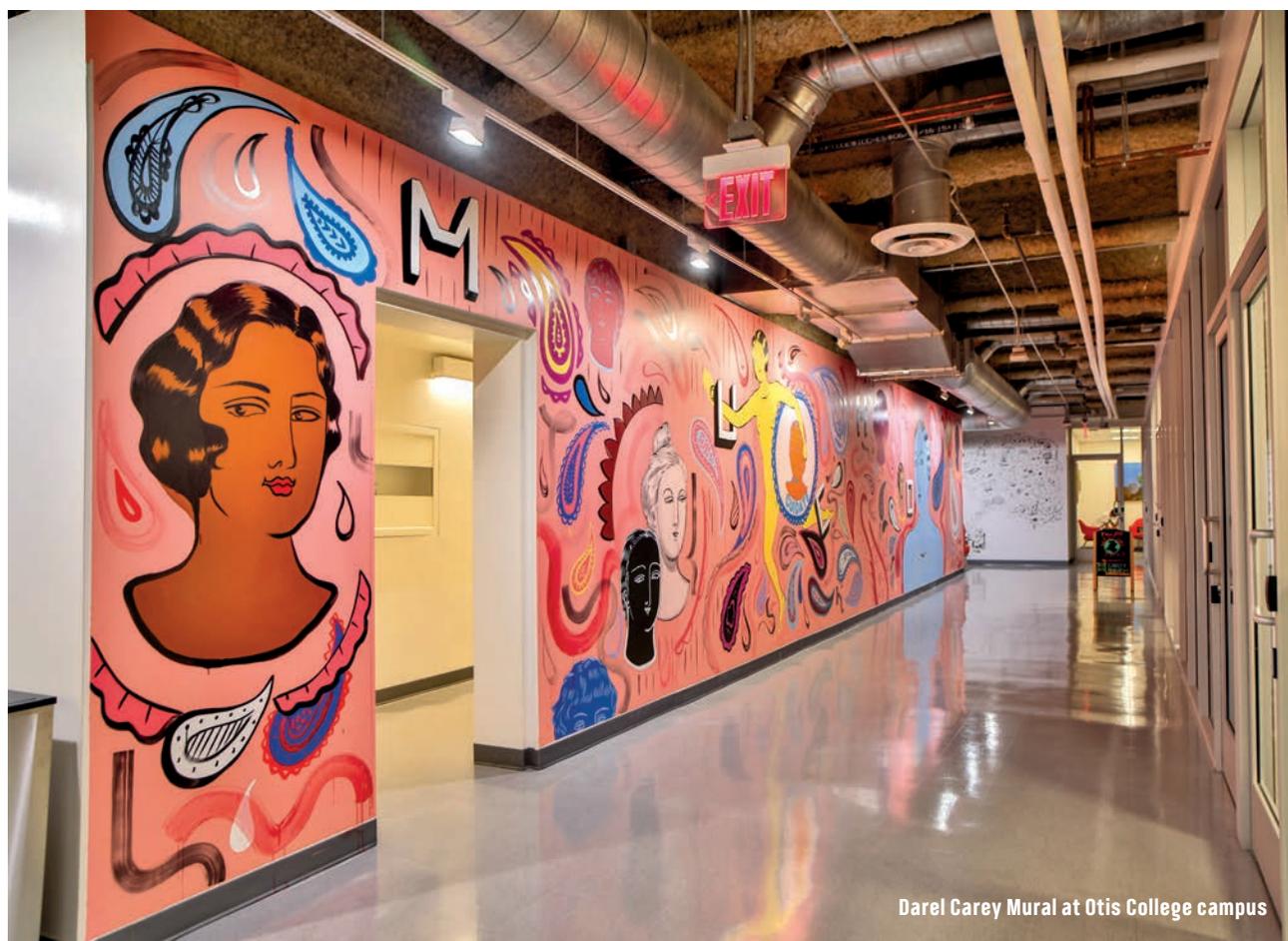
ANIMATION, GAMING, AND THE FUTURE OF ART AND DESIGN AT OTIS COLLEGE

New department chairs Ron Bernard and Joffery Black prepare a new generation for careers in visual culture

BY SHANA NYS DAMBROT



Darel Carey Mural at Otis College campus



Darel Carey Mural at Otis College campus

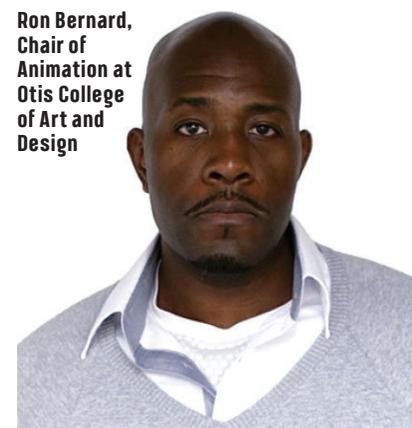
Has anyone ever tried to question your dream with critiques like: What are you going to do with an art degree? Or, playing video games is not a job! Or, drawing cartoons is just a kids' hobby, isn't it? Well, Otis College of

Art & Design has some answers for them — and maybe, for you. In January 2022, Provost Jiseon Lee Isbara announced that after 25 years, their Digital Media program was moving with the times, instituting separate, newly created Game & Entertainment Design and Animation

undergraduate degrees. In August, they announced the new departments' chairs — industry veterans Joffery Black and Ron Bernard, respectively.

While the school remains adamant in its dedication to core programs in art and design, including such indelibly

Ron Bernard,
Chair of
Animation at
Otis College
of Art and
Design



analog, physical arts as ceramics, Otis College President Charles Hirschhorn makes clear that they are becoming just as committed to the digital realms. In one particularly interesting example of how expansive and interconnected this cluster of new media fields are becoming, Otis partnered with Activision, the game design company behind the Call of Duty, Tony Hawk, and Skylanders, for a project that also involved the Fashion Design and Digital Media programs. Taking inspiration from three Call of Duty games — Cold War, Modern Warfare, and Infinite Warfare — Fashion Design students developed a digital fashion collection and related visual environments for a high-fashion digital runway collection.

“It’s not just digital media, or video game design or animation — it’s also digital fashion, environmental, product and toy design,” Hirschhorn says, keenly aware that the Otis mission to prepare its students for practical, career-oriented jobs in the creative economy must, by definition, include the Metaverse — and equally aware of the fact that gaming is a



Joffery Black, Chair of Game Design Program at Otis College of Art and Design.

multibillion dollar global industry, and that animation not only goes far beyond children's entertainment at this point, but beyond the entertainment sector itself.

"Animation is a field that is always evolving with new techniques and software, so our program needs to prepare students to be innovative, flexible and adaptive with changing tides," says Chair of Animation Ron Bernard. "I'd like to explore some of the newer, paradigm-shifting fields of virtual production, social media and augmented reality," he says, touting careers in character and technical animation, motion capture, visual effects, games and advertising — in fields from entertainment to education, medical, military, and social media.

"I've always been in love with animation," Bernard tells L.A. Weekly. "I have very fond memories of spending my childhood watching all the behind-the-scenes and making-of movies of early Disney animation, Fleischer Studios,

Will Vinton's Claymation, and many more. I remember watching films like 1945's *Anchors Aweigh* and 1988's *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* and being enamored by the integration of live action and animation." Bernard later studied traditional 2D animation from longtime Disney animator Larry Lauria, who encouraged him to further explore VFX. "This was a natural fit for me," Bernard recalls, "as I have a background in computer programming, physics, and engineering. The blend of animation and science became a thrilling theme for me as I've dedicated my career to animation, VFX, and motion graphics."

Things came full circle for Bernard when he was able to work closely with Phil Nibbelink, who was a supervising animator on the *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, in his animation studio in Beijing. "Life has an interesting way of boomeranging," says Bernard. "I just hope that I'm able to spark an interest in students like Phil's work was able to inspire me."

Joffery Black, Chair of Game and Entertainment Design, hails from a long tenure at Heavy Iron Studios, working on games based on *SpongeBob Square Pants* and *The Incredibles*. Black previously helped build and lead the Animation and VFX programs at the Los Angeles Film School. His experience as a modeler, texture artist, lighter and illustrator in games, features and animation, as well as in AR and VR gives. All of this gives him a unique perspective on the "What will you do with an art degree?" conversation. "The obvious careers are game studio jobs," Black says, "but it doesn't stop there."

Black tells the L.A. Weekly how he came up at a time when games visually started to improve with the PlayStation 2 console, and superhero movies finally had the most realistic-looking effects of that time, such as 2002's *Spider-Man* that starred Tobey Maguire. *SpongeBob*



SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottoms was the very first game he created. "The impression I felt after that experience was," says Black, "This is only going to get better, and I can't wait to be a part of this!" After 20 years, it still feels exciting and fresh as it originally did when I started!"

Black further agrees with Bernard and Hirschhorn that the skill sets in these new majors absolutely expand into multiple sectors of the industry. "The new BFA program in Game Design will give students an opportunity to learn practices and techniques that have become part of the game industry," Black says. "The plus side of these skills is that they translate into careers for the next frontier of real-time development jobs, such as mobile and console games, virtual re-

ality and augmented reality, virtual production, Web 3.0 and the metaverse," plus AI and other hybrid experiences and interfaces.

"It's exciting to know that Otis, a historical institution in art and design, has embraced a vision of Game and Entertainment Design," Black tells L.A. Weekly. "The upcoming program will usher in an exciting education that is currently happening, not only in the industry, but specifically in the industry here in Los Angeles. With games, virtual production, VR/AR [virtual reality/augmented reality], XR [extended reality], and continued emerging tech having tremendous growth over the next few years, I am truly excited to see Otis be a part of the education and foundation for our students!" 📺



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