CINEMATIC DAYDREAM

DIRECTOR BRETT MORGAN TAKES AN IMMERSIVE APPROACH TO
CAPTURING THE LIFE AND ART OF DAVID BOWIE

BY LINA LECARO
KIVA CARES PROJECT LAUNCHES IN CALIFORNIA

One of the biggest edible companies in America created a new program to help patients who can’t afford their meds.

BY JIMI DEVINE

The Kiva Cares Project represents one of America’s premier cannabis edible companies taking a new approach to giving back to the patients that got them into the legal era through a network of organizations.

Kiva is of course one of the state’s premier edible companies. Founded in 2010 the same year as their main early competitor Bhang, the chocolate wars would last for years as they competed to offer the best chocolate possible to patients. And the lead would change every now and then, but then the Terra Bites dropped.

When the Blueberry Terra Bites first dropped, it was like adding nitrous to a racecar that was already basically winning depending what turn they were on. Kiva stormed to the front of the edible pack period once those dropped. They’ve never looked back.

So that’s the energy they’re taking into the program launch, which is fantastic. Why? Because it’s not like they need to bullshit us with compassion, they’re already the biggest dog. Sure some devil’s advocate might argue it’s an imaging thing, but people using the C word (compassion) to push their business is nothing new. Much of the time the claims will come from the middle to bottom of the pack not the top.

And much of the time we see the C word come up in a cannabis business like some are, it will be “30 days till BBD date/COA expiration date to California Medical patients in need of these essential products. Kiva and the Kiva Cares Project aim to establish a new industry standard to prevent cannabis waste,” the announcement noted.

Kivas notes they’re hoping to compel other cannabis brands across the country to follow suit. You can expect them to expand the program to other states in the not too distant future.

The plan was spearheaded by Erika Osueke who serves as the brand’s Quality and Compliance Manager. From her perch within the company it was clear to Osueke how much product was being wasted every year. The waste was coming from things like packaging defects, being under or over potency, or are soon to expire. The actual contents were still perfectly viable medicine for patients that needed it. The team felt these products would be a great mechanism to help people who couldn’t afford it and they kicked off the Cares Project.

“The cannabis industry has the power and potential to serve public health in a way that is both unique and revolutionary,” said Osueke. “We are only scratching the surface of scaling the kind of life-changing impact cannabis can have for those consumers who need it most.”

Kiva has teamed up with a bunch of the state’s biggest cannabis compassion organizations to help facilitate everything. The list includes including Weed for Warriors, Sweetleaf Collective, Americans for Safe Access, Los Angeles NORML, and ReCompass. Those organizations will partner with dispensaries to facilitate the actual distribution in a legal way. SC Labs and Anresco Laboratories will be donating their testing services to the products running through the program.

“Sweetleaf and Team Compassion are excited to be a part of the Kiva Cares Project,” said Joe Sweetleaf, Founder of Sweetleaf Collective. “These collective industry efforts will undoubtedly help thousands of veterans and patients access $1.75 million worth of free medical cannabis products through the Kiva Cares Project. Together we are saving and transforming lives.”

Sean Kiernan of Weed for Warriors pointed to Senate Bill 34 making this all possible.

“SB34 is about legal cannabis access for patients. Very simply, without cannabis access, California veteran and non-veteran patients would be forced to medicate with pharmaceuticals that have FDA stated risk of addiction, overdose, death and suicidal ideation,” Kiernan said. “Cannabis and SB34 is providing a safer alternative and therefore saving lives.”
RECIPE FOR CHANGE: L.A.’S TOP CHEFS MAKE SOME NOISE AT JAPAN HOUSE

An evening of culinary majesty in Hollywood.

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

Recipe For Change brought together some of L.A.’s most revered chefs including Suzanne Tracht, Mary Sue Milliken, Susan Feniger, Nancy Silverton, Vanda Asapahu, Lissa Doumani and Hiro Sone to raise funds and awareness for #MakeNoiseToday on Thursday at Japan House L.A.

The Creative Class Collective initiative focuses on combating racism and bigotry by elevating the voices of Asian Americans and marginalized youth groups by providing platforms for storytelling on diversity, heritage, accomplishments, challenges, grit, inspiration and culture.

Each of the participating chefs was asked to prepare a dish for the fundraiser using Japanese culture or a Japanese product to inspire their creation as part of the evening’s mind-blowing 13-course omakase menu, accompanied by a selection of four sakes and a Suntory Whisky.

The two hot tamales Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger kicked off the evening with oysters on the half shell with tomato, soy granite and Japanese scallops with a yuzu citrus vinaigrette, a refreshing welcome to the stifling heat of the day.

“Whenever Suzanne Tracht calls me to do something, I never can say no,” Milliken told L.A. Weekly in between sharing recipes with Tracht in the kitchen. “I get to hang out with all my favorite chefs like Vonda and her sister. It’s especially important to make noise right now. We had a wake-up call during Covid, especially concerning racism and marginalization and it’s time for a real reckoning. It’s not a cat we can put back in the bag."

Tracht added her carnivorous wizardry to the menu with a juicy Kobe beef topped with just the right amount of uni in a tamarind teriyaki. Chefs Doumani and Sone presented a stunning sculpture of chilled somen noodles in dashi broth with myoga and okra topped with caviar.

The ultimate in east meets west, Yangban Society’s Katianna Hong wowed the crowd with a pot pie with brown butter, crowned with tender roasted baby abalone.

“The violence against Asians in America has sparked a movement,” Ayara Thai’s Vanda Asapahu said while putting the finishing touches on her crispy skin amadai tilefish in gaeng som with hom mali rice. “People target the most vulnerable like the elderly, who don’t want to make waves by speaking up. We’ve been very silent about it in the past. Living in the biggest Thai community outside of Thailand, our house was always filled with the pungent aroma of Asian food. But when I’d bring au pau chop to school next to the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, it wasn’t always welcome. They asked me if I was eating turds. I was an outlier – but now it’s cool to be different.”

Following Silverton’s ingenious deconstructed Caesar with hard-boiled egg, leek and anchovy crostini, two haute dessert options rounded off the evening including Cathy Asapahu’s sophisticated golden yuzu coconut tart with caramelized white chocolate. Celebrated L.A. chocolatier and confectioner Valerie Gordon, who is of Chinese descent, created a densely rich mochi cake with white shoyu, caramel and toasted rice alongside black sesame toffee with soy salt.

The evening was presented by restaurateur Andy Nakano of the storied and since shuttered Imperial Gardens on Sunset Blvd. together with Julia Huang, founder and CEO of Intertrend Communications and founder of the Creative Class Collective.

“The lineup of mostly female chefs was a conscious decision because of the regressive gender dynamics and norms they have all had to deal with at some point in their careers,” Huang said in a statement. “These dynamic chefs understand what it means to feel marginalized. We want to recognize their accomplishments and tell their stories alongside raising awareness for others.”

Check out the photo gallery for a taste of the omakase marathon and for more information on #MakeNoiseToday or to donate, visit https://makenoisetoday.org.
CELEBRATING BOWIE
WITH TODD RUNDGREN
AND FRIENDS

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

PHOTO BY HIROKI KISHIOKA

T
odd Rundgren has seen and
don it all. He’s produced some
of the biggest and best artists in
the world, and he’s released a
string of great solo albums. He’s
just one of those names that is synonymous
with “quality,” and he’s somebody musi-
cians call on when they want a sure thing.
He’s always wanted to keep moving
forward, to evolve as an artist, but he’s
also happy to take a look over his shoul-
der and celebrate the past. He toured
a Beatles celebration with Wings man
Denny Laine (as well as playing with
Ringo’s All-Starr Band), he sang with
the Cars a decade or so ago (well, the
New Cars to be exact), and he’s back on
the road celebrating the music of Da-
vig Bowie with former Bowie guitarist
Adrian Belew (among others).

"Pre-pandemic, I was asked to be in-
volved in this ongoing thing," Rundgren
told us during a phone interview. "It was
a project before I got involved in it, and
they had done some touring and as a
matter of fact had much touring to do,
except I was only there for one gig. That
was an appearance with the Icelandic
National Orchestra over a weekend. We
did two nights and I think the orchestra
was one of the nights. That was it. I just
did two gigs. We did a showcase after re-
hearsals in L.A., and that was the extent
of it. So now, I’m sort of rejoining the
ensemble, and doing an official tour. A
real, multi-city, traveling extravaganza."

It makes sense. The parallels between
the careers of Bowie and Rundgren have
been noted before; Bowie produced the
Stooges and Rundgren the New York
Dolls. Neither wanted to settle into a
musical rut.

"I think in many ways, David Bowie is
more extreme than that," Rundgren says.
"He could actually adopt a persona and
he did not really break character much,
even when he wasn’t on stage. In other
words, if he decided that ‘now I’m an
R&B singer,’ he would fully embrace
that and dress like one — do his hair
like one, and essentially get into charac-
ter. I’m not coming up with characters
for myself, for the benefit of the public.
I’m pretty much me all the time, it’s just
that I dabble in a lot of different musical
genres. Mostly, because I want to learn
more about them and understand them
better, and also because it’s a good way
to express certain kinds of ideas. I’ve
always dabbled in other musical forms,
but it’s not necessarily me moving from
one thing to another thing. It’s me add-
ing stuff to the same thing. I’m just add-
ing more aspects of where I can go to my
overall musical approach."

The singer and guitarist says that early
Bowie, pre-Spiders, is his favorite period
in the legend’s career.

"I kinda enjoyed the Spiders From
Mars thing, and after that he started
working with Eno and pulling lyrics
out of a hat," he says. "It started mak-
ing a little less sense by then. Very early
on, he was more of an eclectic artist.
If you listen to the record, he wasn’t try-
ing to be a particular kind of stylist. He
would imitate Bob Dylan on one song,
and then he’d imitate Anthony Newley
on another song. Or he’d imitate the lead
singer from Sweet [Brian Connolly] on
a song. He’d try all kinds of different
things within the context of one record
like Hunky Dory. I was very much in-
trigued by that. That’s an approach
that I’m very sympathetic to. Trying out dif-
ferent styles to see which one conveys
the message of a song best."

On this tour, Celebrating David Bow-
ie, Rundgren will be performing many
of Bowie’s biggest hits, including “Life
On Mars,” “Space Oddity” and “Young
Americans." And, he’s working alongside
a stellar cast of characters.

“I have known Adrian [Belew] for a
while, but I had never worked with him,
so that was a golden opportunity,” he
says. "[I’ve worked with] almost every-
one except for Adrian, Scrote and An-
gelo from Fishbone, who’s doing a sub-
stantial part of the tour but not all of it,
and I just realized that Royston Langdon
is well-known to me because he toured
with me, and he was also for a time mar-
rried to Liv [Tyler]. So there will be some
familiar faces, and some people I will be
working with for the first time, which is
always fun and interesting."

The dynamic of performing in a
“band” is far from alien to Rundgren,
who worked with the aforementioned
Beatles and Cars outfits.

“I play in so many different things," he
says. "This year, I did a Daryl Hall tour,
then a Beatles tour, then another Daryl
concert tour, and then a tour of my own.
There’s a couple more Daryl tours, then the David
Bowie thing. I’m in all kinds of contexts
all of the time. The biggest problem for
me has been that I’ve spent the entire year
making up for tours that were canceled,
so I’ve been out already for probably five
months out of the year, and then I’ve got
another two and a half months to go. By
the time I get to the end of the year, I’ll
have probably been on the road for nine
months. That’s excessive. I enjoy being
home, so I don’t necessarily look forward
to that grueling routine. That makes it
a little less enjoyable."

The pandemic at least offered Rund-
gren the opportunity to record a new al-
bum of his own, though circumstances
mean that he won’t be touring it.

“When everyone started going into
lockdown, nobody was going to the stu-
dio anymore, so completing the record
— we were in the final phases of it — but
actually getting it completed was some-
thing of a challenge," he says. "When I
delivered it, that’s when Adele decided
she was going to release a record, and
that’s when there was no vinyl anymore.

So the record was ready to go, but there
was not enough material to actually
manufacture it. That record will be out
in October and by then I’ll be playing
David Bowie. After that, I’ll be doing
Daryl Hall tour. So there obviously won’t be
a tour behind this particular record. On
this one, at least half of the record and
maybe more is actually sung by other
people. I can’t really go out and tour it
because I’m not singing it."

Fear not, chap. We’ll enjoy it anyway.
The event takes place at 8 p.m. on Fri-
day, October 7 at the Saban Theater; then
at 8 p.m. on Sunday, October 9 at the City
National Grove of Anaheim."
It’s been six years since David Bowie left our earthly realm and it is not an exaggeration to say that his music, image and creative output is more mythologized and simply more beloved and treasured than ever before. Brett Morgen’s vividly immersive new documentary-driven opus Moonage Daydream seeks to capture the music genius’ otherworldly essence and bring something new to the cinematic universe in the process. It succeeds and then some.

This is the film hardcore Bowie fans have been waiting for. And it’s the film David Bowie deserves.

A collage of imagery, ideas, music and emotion, Daydream is presented in an intentionally loose, nearly non-linear way, eschewing Behind the Music biography tropes for something experiential, kaleidoscopic and concert-like. Throwing out traditional set-ups like talking heads and rigid chronology yields one of the most insightful portraits we’ve seen about a music artist, maybe ever. Of course, the sole narrator is Bowie himself and that makes all the difference. As your senses are seduced by eclectic edits and alluring imagery (both Bowie-created and pop culture related), your mind is enveloped by the subject’s sensitive and insightful words, which create a decidedly un-hazy cosmic connection spanning two hour plus runtime. It’s a long movie but never feels laborious, and it’s consistently enlightening.

“I don’t go to cinema to learn, I go to experience and to be entertained,” Morgen, who lives in L.A., tells us during a far-reaching Zoom interview after the movie’s initial press screenings. “If my brain gets lit up, that’s great. That’s a bonus. But I’m really there for the sensory experience—this is my first sort of love of cinema.”

The filmmaker initially conceived of something called “the IMAX music experience” which he planned as a slate of 15 films that he would put out once a year (“they would be non biographical, possibly nonlinear, and heavily curated,” he says). He got financing and started to focus on the Beatles, when Bowie passed. He called Bowie’s estate executor, and business manager, Bill Zysblat, who he had met with several years earlier and told him what he was interested in doing, after which he learned that the music legend had literally saved everything, and had even been purchasing footage and things chronicling his career via auction blindly for over 25 years. Suddenly, his idea had a more single-minded focus: an epic celebration of music’s most inimitable rockstar.

“He didn’t know what he was going to do with all this stuff. They told me that David didn’t want to do a sort of traditional documentary. So I called them with my pitch, which was like, ‘Hey, I want to do an experience.’ It was simpatico with their interests,” Morgen shares. “What’s really interesting is, when I acquired the rights, they provided me with final cut and total access to everything in the vault, no restrictions or limitations. That was tremendous. And that’s sort of where the journey began.”

The journey ultimately lasted over five years, during which Morgen — who is best known for the artful Kurt Cobain chronicle Montage of Heck and one of the more interesting Rolling Stones docs, Crossfire Hurricane — had more than a few moments of struggle. “We got inundated with more media than we were...
prepared to work with,” he remembers. “I had built a screening schedule for four months, but it ended up taking two years to work through and screen through the material, and probably two years prior to that to bring all that material into our office. So our budget was gone. By the time I started editing, we had no more resources. It ended up that I was my own producer on it, and my own editor. I had to work myself out of this and find my way. It was strange because films are generally collaborative and this became a very kind of personal endeavor.”

Shortly into the production, Morgen suffered a severe heart attack (on January 5, 2017). The married father flat-lined at Cedars Sinai and was in a coma for a week. “It didn’t happen by accident,” he admits. “You know, I was 47. Most people that age generally aren’t having heart attacks, but I had a lot of bad habits – I smoked, I didn’t exercise. More importantly, my entire reality was work. I was a workaholic and stressed out over every little detail of everything. And that’s how I’ve always been wired. My life came to a halt. And when I woke, I was definitely not a changed man – one of the first things out of my mouth to the surgeon was ‘I have to be on set on Monday.’

Eventually though, he realized he needed to settle down. He began to look at Bowie’s media, and says that the Starman’s “philosophical musings and infinite wisdom” struck him on a personal level. “He was the perfect messenger at the perfect time for me to receive these messages in my life,” Morgen says. “I felt through his words, and examples, that he was guiding me and helping me learn how to lead a more balanced life. And that is when I realized that more than a theme park ride, this film would be an opportunity to provide a roadmap for how to lead a successful and fulfilling life during an age of chaos from fragmentation. And if nothing else, that I can leave behind for my kids in the event that I have an early exit. So that I could speak through David to them and hopefully, they would be able to find the same sort of solace and inspiration and guidance that I’ve received.”

“Everything’s rubbish and all rubbish is wonderful.” – David Bowie

As Moonage Daydream begins we are treated to some live footage and thoughtful musings from the man himself about humanity, art, and the “deep and formidable mysteries of life.” These are intercut with vibrant imagery of Bowie’s early guises as Ziggy Stardust, performing songs such as “Wild Eyed Boy from Freecloud,” “All the Young Dudes” and the glam power ballad “Life on Mars?” with alternate footage from the iconic Mick Rock video in which the singer dons a powder blue suit and pigmented blue eyeshadow (a look that was recently immortalized by Mattel as a Barbie doll).

Bowie’s androgynous, pansexual aura and image make up a large part of the voice over that guides the film early on, while archival footage from various interviews he gave at the start of his career provide eyefulls of his style as well as personal wit and openness. To say he was misunderstood and even mocked for his unconventional creative choices when he started out is an understatement. During a conversation with Dick Cavett, the talk show host relays that a viewer wasn’t sure she wanted to meet him because he looked like he practiced black magic. As he often did, Bowie let the mystery hang there, making an impish remark and maintaining a shameless attitude.

In terms of the music, Moonage Daydream is not a greatest hits packed jukebox affair. It’s packed with plenty of his
I met Bret in my recording studio about five years ago in New York,” recalls longtime Bowie producer Tony Visconti, who has a credit on the film and stayed in a Bowie orbit playing tribute concerts and working on music for the “Bowie Is” museum exhibition.

“I became an important source for the audio content of the film. I was there as an advisor to the surround sound mixing engineer. What was astounding is that the film had no grain, it was solid, stunning visuals with smooth hi-frame video. In the close ups you could see the pores on Bowie’s face. I did see more snippets over the past five years that were cleaned up in the same way. Besides myself there was an audio team also making the audio sound much better than the source. There is technical wizardry in all that and when seen and heard, especially in an IMAX theater, you will get the most Bowie ever - sensory overload.”

“My work on this film was a constant reminder that I lost a dear friend of 48 years,” Visconti adds, sending us some follow-up thoughts via Facebook DM. “But I feel he’s always there when I continue to work on his music. I know it sounds weird, but I often think, ‘what would David have me do?’ WWDBD? (What would David Bowie Do?)

Visconti will not be alone after fans see this film. Bowie’s zest for life, search for inner spirituality and quest to expand his art beyond music – he’s shown painting, dancing and acting in various movie roles (The Man Who Fell To Earth, Labyrinth, Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence and more) and on stage (The Elephant Man) – is more than inspiring, it’s exciting. There’s a reason Bowie fandom is so fervent in a deep love kind of way that goes beyond image or even a favorite song. It’s about expression, creation and living life to the fullest. We belong to many fan groups on social media but The Church of David Bowie on Facebook has been one we visit often to connect with likeminded people, people who think about and honor Bowie daily and apply his open-minded zest for life to their own.

“I didn’t think it was possible to love David Bowie even more,” enthuses Sonia Wike – a Church member and one of the organizers of the annual gathering at his Hollywood Walk of Fame star – after a fan screening of Daydream. “I’m not sure I even took a breath during the whole movie. One of the messages I took away from the film and Bowie’s message is that life is chaos and once we stop fighting it and just move with the chaos, the more content we’ll be.”

Morgen concurs. “The way that David talks about the creative process is, I believe, applicable to anyone, whether they’re day laborers or artists or teachers... whatever your vocation,” the filmmaker explains. “It transcends art. These are ways to live your life. To make each day exciting and adventurous and to take opportunities and view them as chances for an exchange. Not something laborious, but something that we can all grow from. You and me. Not because we’re trying to reach Nirvana, but simply because we’re trying to make this day as rewarding as it could possibly be.”

*Moonage Daydream* is in IMAX theaters now. Screening info at moonagedaydreamfilm.com.
CALIFORNIA AVOIDS BLACKOUTS AMID RECORD-HIGH POWER USAGE

In what ended up being a historic 11-day heatwave, California spent several days trying to decrease stress on the power grid, despite a record-high in power usage.

BY ISAI ROCHA

The California Independent System Operator (ISO) ordered a Level 3 Energy Emergency Alert Tuesday, September 6, as a historic heatwave led to an all-time high in power consumption.

With the threat of rolling blackouts looming, the state managed to avert the power shutoffs, despite a peak power usage recorded at 52,061 megawatts. The previous peak megawatt record came on July 24, 2006, with 50,270 megawatts used at 2:44 p.m.

“California ISO power grid peak demand hit 52,061 MW, a new all-time record,” California ISO wrote in a tweet. “Conservation is making a difference.”

At 8 p.m., the grid operator ended the Energy Emergency Alert 3, saying “consumer conservation played a big part in protecting electric grid reliability.”

The last time state-ordered blackouts occurred was August 2020, when California ISO called for two days of rolling blackouts, affecting roughly 800,000 residential homes and businesses. Before 2020, the state had gone close to 20 years without ordering utility blackouts.

“Out and about the world, we've already seen significant inconvenience to those affected, but it's preferable to manage emergencies in a controlled manner rather than let it cause a wider spread, longer lasting disruption,” California ISO wrote in a Tuesday update. “Power interruptions are kept as brief as possible and utilities rotate them through their customer base so that no one area has prolonged outages.”

Areas of Los Angeles County experienced its 11-straight days with temperatures upward of 100 degrees, with temperatures dipping into the high-to-mid 80s and low 90s during the weekend.

Despite the gradual decrease in temperatures, the remnants of Hurricane Kay, which made its way through Mexico last week, led to thunderstorms and flooding in L.A. County.

“During this period of mourning and change, my family and I will be comforted and sustained by our knowledge of the respect and deep affection in which the Queen was so widely held.”

Elizabeth became queen at 25, succeeding her father King George VI after his death on Feb. 6, 1952. She was formally crowned on June 2, 1953, in Westminster Abbey on her way to a 50-year reign.

In the U.S., President Joe Biden ordered the White House flag and flags across federal buildings to be lowered at half-staff in her honor.

“Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was more than a monarch. She defined an era,” Biden said. “Her legacy will loom large in the pages of British history, and in the story of our world.”

In Los Angeles, Mayor Eric Garcetti said, "The Queen's spirit of adventure, discovery, and devotion to her people will live on," while at the British Consulate General in downtown L.A. put out a "condolence book" and set down flowers in her memory.

L.A. MAYORAL CANDIDATE KAREN BASS SAYS HOME WAS BURGLARIZED

City of Los Angeles mayoral candidate Karen Bass said two firearms were stolen from her Baldwin Vista home after a break-in on Friday, September 10.

Bass said the firearms were "securely stored," and added that no other valuables were taken from her home.

“Last night, I came home and discovered that my house had been broken into and burglarized,” Bass said in a statement. “At this time, it appears that only two firearms, despite being safely and securely stored, were stolen. Cash, electronics and other valuables were not. It's unnerving and, unfortunately, it's something that far too many Angelenos have faced.”

In a press release, LAPD gave details on the suspect, along with a photo taken from surveillance footage, saying the suspect was a Hispanic male, around 5-foot-9 and 200 pounds.

The man was also wearing a surgical mask, a Dodger-style blue and white cap and black Asics sneakers.

“Los Angeles Police Department, Southwest Division Detectives are seeking the public's assistance in identifying a person who is suspected of a burglary in the Baldwin Vista community,” the LAPD bulletin read. “...a suspect entered an unoccupied residence and removed property from the location. According to the victim, there were several valuables, electronics and U.S. currency in view that were not taken.”

Rep. Bass will face local businessman Rick Caruso in the race for Los Angeles mayor on November 8, after receiving more than 43% of the vote in June primaries, to Caruso’s 36%.
Sometimes an idea is too big for one medium. Such is the case with Rabi’s first major show after his time in street art collective Cyrcle, as _gen+esc inaugurates Nomad Gallery – Los Angeles’ newest contemporary art house and itself a hybrid form. As the artist (as well as the gallery’s formerly crypto-based program) remixes realities, materials, narratives, and forms of attention, he also explores the expressive power of filmmaking alongside images and objects to tell a story about identity and creativity in an increasingly confusing world.

In the early months of the pandemic, Rabi noticed, as we all did, that it was more than external circumstances and the familiar rhythms of life that were changing – artists especially, but truthfully all humans, found themselves questioning the very foundations of their identity, inspirations and purpose. And he decided to make some films about it. Episodic and infinitely expandable, the shorts in _gen+esc (generation+escape) are based on interviews with a range of cultural figures – mostly artists, but also chefs, prize-fighters, and others – in which the subjects speak candidly about the real-time wrestling with big questions like who am I and what am I doing.
here, and the various ways in which they doggedly pursue the answers.

Like the prompts, the films themselves are formed through a deceptively simple premise — the subjects donned green-screen suits so that in the final, their faces and figures are replaced by bodies built of fast-paced spliced editing that tracks and augments the emotion in their voices and speeches, yet they are seen moving in their private home and studio spaces. The flickering surreality embodies how our identities are literally built of the innumerable pieces of information we take in every day, seeming to offer a glimpse of the rapid-fire neurology that makes consciousness possible and its existing, overloaded modernity. By contrast, their words are often meditative and intimate — in films between 4-7 minutes, encapsulating what was happening with them at that time in ways that speak to universal reckonings.

At the moment there are 11 of these films though there will likely be more. And just as hinted, the exhibition goes far beyond their presentations. Much of the gallery is covered in the same green-screen paint, transforming the space both inside and out into a broadly interactive experience, allowing the viewer to position oneself in a disembodied realm and offering another point of entry into the creation of the films. Less expected is the presence of a series of unique fired clay sculptures of objects culled from the films – an axe, a skull, a flip phone, a crown, a sex toy — which are also green-screened in an unexpected amalgamation of ancient artifact and post-digital energies that merge physical and cognitive textures with wit and whimsy and gets at the hybrid heart of the project. This is the same energy behind the web3 to brick and mortar journey that sees the Nomad BFD collection transform into the Nomad Gallery in WeHo.

Featuring interviews with artists Lauren YS, Drew Merritt, Audrey Kawasaki, Faith XLVII, Devin Liston (Rabi’s former Cyrcle partner), Rabi himself, and many others, Generation Escape isn’t really about a new generation. It’s about all of us, the ones that are already here, and how we plan to reinvent ourselves for the newly arrived future – and it’s crucial about what art-making mediums and our disposal can be tasked with expressing that reinvention.

...