ICEEXTRACTS STILL THE HASH HARDWARE KING
L.A. GENRE-DEFYERS GROUP THERAPY DIVE DEEP ON NEW ALBUM
MEET THE MANNERIST MONSTERS OF BECK+COL

THE 7/10 LIST
THE YEAR IN GLOBS • BY JIMI DEVINE
La Luz de Jesus
Grace Brooks
1-800-HOT-TALK
2023

Everything But The Kitchen Sink at La Luz de Jesus.
The world-famous annual open-call group exhibition opens a glorious new edition this weekend, featuring new work by 100 artists selected from almost 1000 applications. If you think 230 pieces of vibrant, eclectic, adorably transgressive, material invention, stylistically outrageous, surreal, surreptitious, subversive, sexy-time, politically engaged, stylistically outrageous, surreal, surreptitious, adorable, transgressive, materially inventive, stylistically outrageous, surreal, surreptitious, subversive, sexy-time, politically engaged, artist and performer Romy Nordlinger and director Lorca Peress’ new production, using immersive video and origami, live silent film experience. Late-night screenings of classic Nazimova films celebrate the play, and particularly the 100th anniversary of her revolutionary Salomé. 3333 Cahuenga Blvd. West, Hollywood Hills; Performances July 8-15 following the 8pm performances; $35-$30 includes any screenings, screenings only, $5; tvsplayhouse.org.

MoMA. A screening of The Unburied Sounds of a Troubled Horizon followed by a post-screening conversation between artist Tuan Andrew Nguyen and Evyn Lê Espiritu Gandhi. The film explores the ways in which material contains memory and holds potential for transformation, reincarnation, and healing. It was inspired by the people of Quang Tri, on the North Central Coast of Vietnam, which was one of the most heavily bombed areas in the history of modern warfare and where, for multiple generations, its residents have lived with the physical residue and lingering trauma. 250 S. Grand Ave., downtown; Thursday, July 6, 6pm; free w/ rsvp; moca.org.

Friday, July 7
Garden of Alla: The Alla Nazimova Story at Theater West. The 1920s was the time of flappers, flamboyance, and the face of Alla Nazimova. Now Nazimova—Jewish immigrant from Tsarist Russia, Broadway and silent film superstar, visionary Hollywood director and producer, and LGBTQIA trailblazer—lives again in playwright and performer Romy Nordlinger and director Lorca Peress’ new production, using immersive video and origami, live silent-film experience. Late-night screenings of classic Nazimova films celebrate the play, and particularly the 100th anniversary of her revolutionary Salomé. 3333 Cahuenga Blvd. West, Hollywood Hills; Performances July 8-15 following the 8pm performances; $35-$30 includes any screenings, screenings only, $5; theatrewest.org.

Kenrick McFarlane: META at M+B. At the heart of McFarlane’s work lies a profound exploration of representation, power dynamics, archetypes, and relationships. In META, male and female figures come together in psychologically-charged dreamlike sequences. These enigmatic scenes and figures engage in a complex negotiation with the viewer, erecting barriers that restrict the extent of our voyeuristic gaze, serving as conduits for the ways in which the mind processes the world and how it reconciles with one’s own fantasies, suppressed desires, and unsettling thoughts. 612 N. Almont Dr., West Hollywood; Opening reception: Friday, July 7, 6-9pm; On view through August 12; free; moca.org.

SATURDAY, JULY 8
The Broadcasting Seeds of Resistencia: An evening of live music and performances in support of the Tongva creation story of The Seven Sisters. Pavinokre is a collaboration between Gudiel and Tina Orduno Calderón (Gabriélino Tongva, Chumash, and Yoeme). Bring your non-GMO seeds to trade and share (horticult)ural knowledge. No one will be turned away for lack of seeds. USC Roski Studies Building, 3001 S. Flower St., downtown; Sunday, July 9, 1-3pm; free; welcometolace.org.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 12
Stew at Pasadena Playhouse. Mama’s in the kitchen early preparing her famous stew for the big event, but even as her daughters and granddaughter help, she still feels like time is running out. Soon these three generations of Black women begin to feel their past and present closing in. A film list for the 2021 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, Zora Howard’s hilarious, haunting, and taut 90-minute drama has a lot more cooking underneath the surface. 39 S. El Molino Ave., Pasadena; Performances July 12 - August 6; $35; pasadenaplayhouse.org.

JULY 7-13
70s Soul Jam
YouTube Theater
A night of classic soul, funk and disco at the YouTube Theater will see headliners The Stylistics joined by (William Hart’s) Delfonics, Peaches & Herb, Sonny Bivins Manhattan, and the Legendary Blue Notes. Jimmie JJ Walker hosts a show that will feature timeless hits, all lined up one after the other. 7 p.m. on Friday, July 7 at the YouTube Theater, $27+; youtubetheater.com.

Negative Approach/ Dwarves
The Observatory
Detroit’s hardcore kings Negative Approach have a loyal fanbase here in SoCal, and this show with Dwarves is going to be wild. Like, crushing circle pit-wild. Limbs flying like the opening scene of Saving Private Ryan-wild. Be prepared! No/Mas and Knoll also perform. 7 p.m. on Friday, July 7 at the Observatory, $20; observatory voc.com.

Charlie Wilson/ En Vogue
Hollywood Bowl
Th e is a great double bill. R&B icon Charlie Wilson (affectionately known as Uncle Charlie) will play a bunch of songs from his solo career as well as a lot of those old Gap Band hits. There’s never a bad time to hear “You Dropped a Bomb On Me” or “Party Train.” And En Vogue will come to blaze the trail that they started back in the ‘90s. “Free Your Mind” is one of the all-time R&B classics. 8 p.m. on Wednesday, July 12 at the Hollywood Bowl, $10-$184, hollywoodbowl.com.
SCREEN TO TABLE: INSIDE THE NEW NETFLIX BITES POP-UP

BY MICHIELE STUEVEN

A n all-star chef lineup including Curtis Stone, Ming Tsai, Andrew Zimmern, Rodney Scott, and pizzanista Ann Kim opened the doors to the colorful new Netflix Bites pop-up on Fairfax Avenue on Tuesday. The 106-seat eatery and bar dedicated to the network’s celebrity chefs will open to the public on Friday, June 30, for three months at the new Short Stories Hotel.

Both Stone and Tsai worked the patio passing out signature appetizers like wood fired lamb ribs with leek and ash yogurt as well as hamachi sashimi. Drinkmasters mixologist Kate Gerwin was pouring Everything But The Alley Cat from episode #2 (Mount Gay dark rum, homemade coconut guava elixir, toasted orgeat, milk, and fresh lime juice) alongside a cornbread old fashioned.

Kim worked the pizza oven while pitmaster Rodney Scott supervised the slow smoke of a whole hog, which was served southern style with white bread and collards. Zimmern, who is perhaps more famous for his exotic taste in bizarre foods like bull testicles and crickets, opted for a downhome version of his grandmother’s meatloaf, mashed potatoes, and gravy. The crowning glory of the evening was Nadiya Hussain’s honey cake with salted hazelnuts.

The three-month pop-up will also spotlight acclaimed chefs from popular Netflix series collaborating on menus like Dominique Crenn, Hussain (Nadiya Bakes), Jacques Torres (Nailed It!) and mixologists from Drink Masters like Frankie Solark, Julie Reiner, and LP O’Brien rounding things out at the lively bar with custom craft cocktails.

The restaurant is open daily for dinner and brunch on weekends, featuring options from the chefs including a Viennoiserie trolley with a selection of sweet and savory pastries from The Pie Room by Stone’s Gwen, Kim’s tomato sauce kimchi sakura pork scallion with sesame, as featured on Chef’s Table: Pizza, and Crenn’s tortilla Espanola with pickled jalapeno, smoked creme fraiche and caviar.

Get a sneak peak behind the scenes in our photo gallery.
THE YEAR IN GLOBS 2023

We’re covering our favorite hash companies for the holiday.

BY JIMI DEVINE

As the 7/10 holiday approaches, it’s time to recognize California’s standout hash extractors. This organically formed holiday, distinct from Green Wednesdays or CBD Day, was created by Task Rok and the first-generation globbers to celebrate the rapid progress in the hash space. Not a PR company. Over the past decade, the hash sector has witnessed significant advancements in both technique and hardware and this is when we celebrate it each year.

Solventless hash, produced using ice, water, and screens instead of volatile gas extraction, has become the reigning king. The hash industry has thrived in the pursuit of new flavors, with the hunt for unique terpenes driving the competitiveness of the companies listed below. While this year introduces fresh faces, some well-established players make a comeback due to their continued excellence.

While the tidal wave hasn’t hit the shore yet, there will be a ton of Piattella-style cured water hash this year. It blew up in Spain during the pandemic after Uncle’s Farm put it on the map, a first wave of Americans were exposed in 2022, myself among them. This year there were ten times as many Americans at Spannabis as 2022, so a lot more people got hyped on it. Many Americans are working on perfecting it, including the popular Professor Sift. Here is a shot of his efforts.

Here are some of our favorite California hash companies from the past year:

**Fresh Pressed**
Humboldt’s Fresh Pressed has been impressing consumers in The Emerald Triangle for some time. Although their Zkittelz initially faced controversy at the Emerald Cup, it gained recognition for its incredible terpenes. Alien Labs even used the same pheno that produced the material to claim The Best Thing Smokin at Zalympix a bit over a month after the cup. Every offering from Fresh Pressed is definitely worth exploring.

**Royal Key Organic**
Royal Key Organic successfully transitioned from producing award-winning sauces to crafting exceptional solventless hash in recent years. This is of course in addition to their world-class flower offerings. Their Arcata facility, now expanded, allows more people to experience the wonders of hash made from plants grown in living soil. Their IOS OG 90u Sift, bred in-house, exemplifies the quality and passion behind their products.

“Selection number 24 instantly took us back to our favorite OGs we and our friends grew in the early 2000’s,” Josh Vert, founder of Royal Key Organics, told L.A. Weekly, “Memory can be a funny thing, so we gave it to OG connoisseurs around the state. Everyone who experienced “HHSFV Dog” no.24 said it checked all of their boxes for smell, taste, smokability, high, and bag appeal. They also wanted more, and considered it a fantastic OG in cured flower form. We then named it iOS OG, short for I only smoke OG.”

**Kalya**
Despite facing numerous challenges, Kalya has consistently excelled in producing high-quality hash. Their recent move to Santa Rosa has brought them smoother operations after dealing with the perils of Oakland over the past few years. They continue to impress with their offerings, such as the delightful Dole Whip they had in their possession when I ran into the team a couple of weeks ago. Some of the nicest rosin I’ve seen this year.

**LA Family Farms**
LA Family Farms made headlines last August by securing top honors at The Transbay Challenge, surpassing many renowned names in the industry. Their Cotton Candy Gas, grown and washed in-house, is a highly celebrated new addition. Its the perfect showcasing of
their expertise in creating Los Angeles single-source rosin.

**Cali-X**
Cali-X deserves recognition for its underrated rosin in the recreational market. Each jar of their hash is exceptional and completely made in Los Angeles. As a “single source” entity, Cali-X turns things they grow themselves into unique flavors that add excitement to the rosin market. A lot of Cali-X’s genetics are exclusive to them, so it makes the thoughts of the flavors they may possess in hash form fascinating.

**Rosin Tech**
The 2022 Emerald Cup winners, Rosin Tech, have continued to impress throughout the year with their high-quality products. Their foray into hash holes has been successful, firmly establishing them among the finest in the industry. The hash inside their joints steals the show, thanks to the incredibly loud flavors they deliver. Their collaborations with Luma Farms are some of the most prized jars in the spread.

**Moonshine Melts**
Moonshine Melts, the hash wing of 3rd Gen Family Farms, has earned numerous accolades and remains one of the most awarded cannabis companies. Their Zkittelz, grown by 3rd Gen Family Farms, is renowned for its exceptional quality. Acquiring their single-source hash is akin to hitting the jackpot. Their was a point in the mid 2010s where people had to start with the question of whether they thought it could beat Moonshine Melts before they even entered a contest. Many didn’t risk it.

**Trilogy 710**
The team at Trilogy 710 has mastered terpene preservation like few others. Their jars contain some of the juiciest rosin available. In addition to their impressive techniques, their collaborations with renowned breeders promise to deliver exciting new terps to the market. Keep an eye out for their work with Symbiotic Genetics for potentially mind-blowing results.

**Cryo Labs**
Cryo Labs has gained global influence in recent weeks, with their Gary Payton hash jar making waves at the Mary Jane Berlin festival. They have been pioneers in exploring unique terps, such as Compound Genetics’ Apples & Bananas and Grape Gas. Extractors producing their own material now consider Grape Gas a must-have strain but Cryo Cure was dropping it a year before anyone.

**Have Hash**
Hash Hash has rightfully claimed numerous trophies this year. They triumphed in Europe during Spannabis week by winning The Ego Clash Barcelona and securing second place at Masters of Rosin a few days later. Then when they returned to America they won San Francisco’s highly competitive challenge at Hippie Hill. We eagerly anticipate the release of their new flavors from the latest harvest.

**Arcata Fire**
Not everyone can access raw extracts, which is why Arcata Fire’s Rosin Syrup is the perfect alternative. Their pens recently claimed top honors in the tie cely competitive Solventless Cartridge category at The Emerald Cup. Th s achievement is expected to improve the availability of their products across the state in the coming months.

**Swollen Heads**
Another California company making waves abroad is Swollen Heads. When we linked up with Swollen Heads this spring we got the chance to test all of their terps of the moment. Everything was grown by them and then processed. Each flavor held up against most of what we’re seeing in the market with no problem. We highly recommend trying to get your hands on a jar.
ICEEXTRACTS STILL THE HASH HARDWARE KING

We Talked With The Founders Of The World’s Leading Hash Hardware Company In Their First-Ever Interview

BY JIMI DEVINE

There are few people on the planet that love hash as much as Ashley Gaetrig, co-founder of one of the top hardware companies in solventless hash, IceExtract.

I’ve had the pleasure of judging solventless at The Emerald Cup with Gaetrig for the last couple of years. It’s easy to presume she brings the same focus levels to all her work as she does judging the world’s best hash.

Much of the time over the years she made the hash she was smoking alongside her husband Eric. She emphasized it’s a shared journey.

The affection for hash she shares with him proved a major catalyst for where their lives ended up.

The pair started growing in Michigan for personal use 20 years ago. Eventually, the medical laws passed and they decided to take it to the next level as caregivers.

“Then we got some patients and we were growing the weed for them and basically charging them really cheap prices, $100 an ounce,” Ashley told L.A. Weekly. “That was on top of what we gave to them for free. And then they were buying the crap out of it. And then we realized that, like, oh, this is like crazy. So I started growing larger amounts to supply the dispensaries.”

Eventually, the pair would go on a trip to Amsterdam. While they were there, they tried the Sublimator Vaporizer.

“What it did was destroy our taste for flowers,” Eric said. “Because when we came home from Amsterdam, we started rolling joints again and it just tasted like we were smoking ashtrays. So then we started extracting our trim so that we could smoke hash.”

From there they attempted to research as much as they could in 2013. They started to learn more about how to dry the hash. They started microplaning the hash onto parchment paper and drying it in the fridge. Microplaning is just breaking down the hash into a thin sandy looking layer that will release the moisture more efficiently and evenly in the early stages of drying it out, as opposed to the big chunks you get out of the bag.

“And we found out that was one of the best ways you can make hash. We fell in love. We haven’t gone back,” Eric said. “We haven’t smoked flowers since then. We’ve been strictly nonsolvent hash smokers for 10 years.”

In 2015 the pair would head to L.A. for the cannabis cup and enter, despite living in Michigan. They got to L.A., but the package was yet to arrive. The pair started to freak out a little bit. Eventually, it did arrive. The pair would unknowingly jump in the car to their future home Marietta, where ICEExtract is now based from.

When it was time for the awards show, they ended up winning the SoCal cup that year. Development on the bags started immediately.

“Then after that we started making bags basically. My first sale was in 2015 to 3rd Gen at the High Times Cannabis Cup in Michigan in Flint. He bought a set of 20-gallon 8-bag kits,” Ashley said.

In preparation for their next cup in Denver, the entry was caught in the shipment to Denver. They would end up getting raided a couple of weeks later. They already started looking at material sampled earlier that winter after the L.A. win. That’s forced them to put their foot on the gas with the bags. They sold their cars and put their life savings into the company, financing one car so they could drive to and from the manufacturing facility.

They would spend two and a half years in Michigan getting the ball rolling on ICEExtract and finishing probation. Eventually, they made the move to The San Francisco Bay area. That was when they made the jump into producing larger commercial-grade extraction equipment and not just bags.

“We were sentenced to two years probation. But since we were good boys and girls, we got off early,” Ashley said. “It’s so funny because like a month before we got off, we weren’t even supposed to leave the state without permission for business release right? And we went to Chalice for
The pair noted that toward the end of probation, they knew they had made it when Cookies cofounder Jigga hit them up for some lessons on doing proper extractions. The lessons went great; they said they weren't sure who was more nervous, them about the meeting or Jigga because he'd never made hash. It was another example of just how welcoming California was to the then-Michigan company.

Things certainly worked out. But it wasn’t some dice roll, it was effort- and perseverance-based.

We asked the pair what it’s like to see the risks they took before coming to California work out for the best? Ashley quickly replied it was amazing, the way things played out reminds her of all those speeches her mother gave her in her youth about being able to do whatever you want in life, if you apply yourself and work hard.

“And that’s essentially like what Eric and I did, every hurdle that gets in our way, we keep pushing it down and keep moving forward and trying to push the envelope for machinery and equipment,” Ashley said. “That’s essentially why we wanted to start making the bags. Because like, we wanted better equipment.”

The little tweaks included making the bags a little shorter so they didn’t sit on the hash. That gives it the best shot to be as pristine as possible. They also made the bags a bit more durable than they were seeing in the marketplace. Other little touches included upside-down tags that made for easier identification.

Ashley emphasized they just paid attention to detail.

“How can we do this and make these the shit, basically,” she laughed. “When we make and manufacture the equipment. Our goal is to make the best quality out there and it will never change as long as you know, we’re here at the forefront of ICEExtract.”

Eric went on to note even with all the success, it was hard to not be a caregiver anymore. They were giving out a lot and it helped many sick people. Having that right taken away from him was one of the hardest things for him to adjust to through the whole process.

“I had to explain to him now instead of us helping just 12 patients and the people that buy our stuff at the dispensary now are helping the whole world like make clean our product and essentially we’re helping more people,” Ashley said. “So at the end of the day, he’s looked at it as being a win whether or not we were directly interacting with patients or not.”

The world of solventless hash is a much wilder monster than it was in 2015. These days, solventless reigns king. They’ve seen the growth as a whirlwind. It was almost like ICEExtract grew with the changing of the times as Ashley sees it.

With the rise of solventless came the fall of BHO. Even world champs say there is no month in it for them anymore. We asked the pair if they ever expected Butane Hash Oil to fall off this far, especially given there are some terpene profiles that just won’t produce through solventless extraction.

“I bet for sure, 100%,” Ashley replied. “Even though a lot of people in the beginning or a lot of the BHO people are like, oh the yields aren’t there. But the health craze is already coming into effect. Where people are more health conscious and stuff, especially here in California and not as much in Michigan. But I think that’s why respect for hash is a little bit greater out here, too.”
It’s the End of the World as we Know It on TV: Black Mirror, Walking Dead: Dead City and Secret Invasion, Reviewed

BY ERIN MAXWELL

Streaming services, cable TV and Primetime television are hitting for your viewership now more than ever. UNBINGED is here to help you weed through it all, with reviews of the latest shows that highlight what we love, what we hate and what we love to hate-watch, too.

Climate crisis, food insecurity, political corruption and unrest … the end of the world has never seemed closer. And what better way to capitalize on this growing fear than on TV? From global annihilation via the undead and alien invasion to technology’s terrifying and very real take-over of humanity, small screen shows are playing on our fears for entertainment’s sake, and finding big audiences doing so. This week, UNBinged examines apocalyptic TV shows Black Mirror, Walking Dead: Dead City and Secret Invasion, and tells you what’s worthy of your precious time on earth.

Black Mirror—Season 6 (“Streamberry”) 

After a long hiatus in which real life seemed to use previous seasons as a playbook, Black Mirror returns to Netflix with their unique vision of contemporary horror for the modern age. Created by Charlie Brooker, early episodes of Black Mirror explored the corruption of society through unchecked technology, illustrating how advancement can bring out the best in science but the worst of humanity. Black Mirror’s central premise that development and dependency on technology will eventually bring the downfall of society merges Neo-Luddism with the Twilight Zone — it’s always deliciously dark. But in this sixth season, the modern-day thrills and chills are a bit muddied as the episodes seem more concerned with twists than the nightmarish anti-tech messaging that often left viewers in a state of shock.

The best episode of the season is “Loch Henry,” which follows two aspiring filmmakers (Samuel Blenkin and Myha’la Herrold) who focus on a local serial killer in rural Scotland. The sinister surprises and dark turns of the story, which also skewers the public’s interest in true crime, are reminiscent of classic Mirror episodes “Shut Up and Dance” or “White Bear,” in which a person is destroyed by a singular discovery.

Another standout episode is “Beyond the Sea,” in which two astronauts (Josh Hartnett and Aaron Paul) make use of replicas while spending years away from their family. When one astronaut loses everything in a horrific tragedy, his partner attempts to fix a way to comfort him. It’s an episode that pulls on the heartstrings before ripping them out entirely in one ghastly moment of rage.

Not all of the episodes are great. Some lose their way and feel like second-rate monster-of-the-week endeavors, while others come off as goofy parodies of the series itself. Though entertaining, they just don’t carry the weight we’ve come to expect from the prestige anthology.

The season opener, “Joan is Awful,” pokes fun at streaming services’ reliance on exploitive reality TV and just how far they will go for fresh content. On “Streamberry” (which is eerily similar to Netflix’s in logo and opening audio “ta-dum” sound effect) a sneaky contract agreement gives the producers carte blanche to make content out of the lives of its audiences.

Clever premise, but outside of interesting celebrity turns (Salma Hayek, Annie Murphy) we’ve seen the idea in South Park episodes, and quite frankly, better. It isn’t breaking new ground or shocking, even if it did get some buzz on Twitter and via a website in which viewers can create their own “Awful” promos (by signing a scary f*ck print contract).

The uniquely depraved moments and easter eggs of Black Mirror still exist, but with less frequency and far less impactful. Some episodes still represent the series’ vision, highlighting the malevolent elements of humanity and how they’re heightened by technology, but others are just these days, typical TV.

The Walking Dead: Dead City (AMC) 

Before the corpse of The Walking Dead even had a chance to cool, The Walking Dead: Dead City rose from its grave. Featuring the once-feared Negan (Jeffery Dean Morgan) and his one-time victim and all-around badass Maggie (Lauren Cohan), the former enemies now must play nice if they hope to survive their next big menacing misadventure: New York.

The unlikely duo team up as they head out to the Big Rotten Apple to f*ck Maggie’s kidnapped son Hershel (Logan Kim), who was taken by a man known as The Croat (Zeljko Ivanek), an unhinged former mate of Negan’s who branched out and made Manhattan his own little murderous romping ground. And for bonus funfies, there are also marshals on the hunt for Negan who connects with a small group of survivors who help with the cause.

So, new psychopaths, new enemies, new communities, new cities, and the same old walkers. The problems that plagued the original Walking Dead series — aside from the plague of zombies — was that it became repetitive and formulaic over the years. A small group of survivors creates or finds a new community; internal strife consumes said community; internal strife consumes said community (power struggle, cannibalism, a narcissistic leader with a troubled past); community is torn asunder allowing zombies to ravage; survivors move on to dismantle or destroy a new community — and the cycle continues.

The Walking Dead became a bit of a zombie itself in its later years. And while Dead City seems to break a bit from the litany of its predecessor, it still features many of the same elements. Interest in the series might be revived by the promise of decomposing tourist attractions, but Dead City is obviously a show for die-hard Walking Dead fans only, depending heavily on people knowing the history between the two leads.

If you’re a fan of the franchise who stuck with the show over the years through thick and thin, then a trip to New York might be a fun jaunt. Just don’t expect Dead City to breathe any new life into the undead.

Secret Invasion (Disney+) 

The groundbreaking comic-book story arc that made readers doubt the identity of every character in the Marvel universe has finally made its way to Disney+. Secret Invasion once again asks audiences, “Who do you trust?” But in this case, the question is a bit more far reaching. Do you trust Disney to handle this important storyline? Can Nick Fury defeat the deadly forces battling against him, like the over saturation of the superhero market?

First introduced to the MCU in 2019’s Captain Marvel, the shape-shifting, home-less Skrulls have been waiting patiently for new digs as promised by Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson), but after several decades, they can wait no more. The once-able species is now house hunting on planet Earth, posing a serious risk to mankind. They have infiltrated the ranks of major world powers, forcing Fury to return to Earth and battle the threat.

Fury has seen better days and isn’t the same man he was since “the Blip,” when Thanos erased half the population of the universe, Fury included. He’s older, he’s slower, and he’s without his elite f*cking force. But he’s not alone. Helping in the fight is partner Maria Hill (Colby Smulders) and Skrull BFF Talos (Ben Mendelsohn), while Emilia Clarke pushes her own agenda as a Skrull secret agent G’iah and Oscar-winner Olivia Colman demonstrates a new level of scary as MI6 agent Sonya Falsworth.

The draw here is Jackson as Nick Fury, his f*st time in the driver’s seat in almost two decades in the MCU. He is, without a doubt, the most beloved part of the Marvel universe. But his charisma and charm, of which there is plenty, can’t help Secret Invasion overcome superhero slump, as the project takes itself just a bit too seriously in a day and age when humor is what is needed to overcome both Marvel exhaustion and Disney’s tendency to take a beloved property and beat it into the ground.

Secret Invasion has serious star power and the story will probably have lasting effects on the MCU, but for some, it might prove to be a middling aff’ir. It’s worth a watch for action Jackson in his f*st MCU starring role, but it’s probably best to wait until all the episodes are available for one straight binge.
MUSIC

FRIENDS UNITED!

L.A. Genre-Defyers Grouptherapy Dive Deep On New Album

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

When Los Angeles-based genre-defying troupe grouptherapy (all one word, all lower case), composed of Jadagrace, SWIM and TJOnline, released new album I Was Mature for My Age, but I Was Still a Child on June 27, it marked another significant milestone on their ever-accelerating road to success.

According to a press release accompanying news of the album’s release, the trio “have been close friends and peers for over 15 years and united during tumultuous periods of their young lives. They found solace and friendship with one another while navigating the all too often murky terrain of the entertainment realm. Individually they are vast and distinct and collectively they beautifully amplify the talents of one another, resulting in an art that surpasses the confines of genre and exists unlike anything else out right now.”

The camaraderie, that unified spirit, fits its way into their music, highlighted by the new video for “HOT!” Hip-hop, electronic music, pop and R&B collide in thrilling fashion as they demand to be heard. “I’m hot, I’m hot, I’m hot, never stop.” BOOM!

The group says that they all started off as passionate music fans. “We all grew up pretty isolated and sheltered,” they say, collectively. “Jadagrace has been doing music for her whole life essentially, but completely on other people’s terms. TJ and SWIM grew up steeped in online music subcultures as escapism from working as kid actors. We all got into making music the way we do it because we needed an outlet. A place to actually be ourselves, or maybe even discover ourselves, without the input of the adults around us. Around a while we would start to collaborate to compensate for something the other was weaker on. Before we knew it we were operating like a writing/producing team and we were growing more than we’d ever been able to before.”

The trio have been friends since they were kids, and they found in each other a safe space to discuss the things that felt uncomfortable talking about elsewhere.

“We were already making music as a way to process our own issues alone so it only felt right to be there for each other musically,” they say. “It didn’t exactly register to us that we were forming a group until we had to come up with a name and everything. We’d already made an album with over 100 songs at that point with no plan to release them. They were our therapy songs.”

Their songs, they say, have a lot to do with living in L.A. This city has a way of making its way into the art created here, and grouptherapy is no different.

“Beyond the obvious acting/film connection, the culture of being an LA native is very specific,” they say. “It’s one of the few places in the country where, no matter how much money you have, you’re guaranteed to see super-cars and celebrities. There’s this beautiful pipeline to superstardom sewn into the experience of living here. Unfortunately that ends up being a magnet for grifters and swindlers offering shortcuts to success. The stakes feel higher and the possibility of fame, positive and negative, looms in the background constantly. It’s a very surreal place. It requires you to be extremely adaptable and crafty. There’s this cliche New York saying ‘if you can make it here, you can make it anywhere.’ L.A.’s version would probably be ‘if you can make it here, you’ll be comfortable anywhere.’”

The group describes their current sound as adventurous. They clearly don’t like to box themselves in, and they allow the production to be as vulnerable as they are.

“Because of that, this album sounds less like a specific genre and more like a collage of all the things that have left an impact on us,” they say. “There’s traditional boom-bap on this album, there’s trap, there’s pop – all things we’ve covered before. But there’s also punk, drum and bass, shoegaze, deep house, nu-metal. We’re shedding our inhibitions and making the honest production choices.”

The new album was recorded at their home in North Hollywood with an engineer and a few friends. The intimacy allows for a more personal, artistic body of work.

“We went out of our way to make it feel like we weren’t making an album,” they say. “Just going in and taking risks. We started mess ing around with some ideas and sounds in November of 2022. At the end of the month we made FUNKFEST. From then on, songs just started pouring out of us until we turned around in March and said ‘wait a minute... I think we finshed the album’.”

It’s not a concept album, but the overriding theme is one of accepting that your childhood wasn’t perfect.

“We learned a lot of hard things these past few years,” they say. “The world has been a hostile place to young adults lately. We’re a very stressed generation. Having been through a harrowing political landscape, a global pandemic, a constantly heating planet... We’re all living with a general sense of anxiety and dread. Quite a few of us and our friends learned they’ve been undiagnosed neuro-atypical in some way. We started learning the truth about our childhoods, our parents, our families. We’ve started moving into caretaker roles for our parents. Th’s album is walking through the way we processed all of that. We had to go dig through our memories and pick out the things we wanted to take with us and leave the rest behind. Our hope is that us sharing our ups, downs, mistakes and little victories, will make it easier for someone else to do the same. Or at least, feel less alone while they do it.”

With the record out, grouptherapy is planning to take it to as many cities as they can, as they look towards a productive and successful second half of 2023.

“Th’s is the first time we’ve taken this much time on making a project so we want to put it in front of as many people as possible,” they say. “It feels like a celebration of the effort we put in. Th’s album made us better people. So we want to honor that by bringing the songs to life on stage as many times as we can. When it comes to new music, we’ve started joking that we’re living the next album right now. So we’re going to live. And let the next era roll in at its own pace.”

Fair enough!

grouptherapy’s album I Was Mature for My Age, but I Was Still a Child is out now.

PHOTO BY JUMELLES STUDIO
Beck+Col are an artist duo whose intertwined imaginations spawn marvelous, mannerist monsters. They then build worlds for these queer and regal surrealist beings to inhabit—only to shake it all up with stylish gore. Influenced by everything from gaming to cognitive science and chromatic theory, for Beck+Col the exaggerations and violence operate both as compelling spectacle and as a meta-critique of the extreme decadence of late-stage capitalism. Though ultimately works of performance and filmmaking, along the way, disciplines from couture to music, cinematography, choreography, and special effects come into play—as does a profound ethos of collaboration. Often the films are full of works of mixed media art made by their extended community of adventurous colleagues—and in service of their new work Red Night, the artists have staged an architectural installation at the art room in whose animated, aggressive color story they show clips from the movie among art and artifacts from the films and new work made in response to it.

L.A. WEEKLY: When did you first know you were an artist?
COL: When I was 5-6 I saw my grandmother drawing an amazingly realistic acorn, I was hooked on drawing instantly!
BECK: It clicked for me when we got to perform on the REDCAT stage. Coming down those stairs to fight each other in a pool noodle wrestling ring made it feel real.

What is your short answer to people who ask what your work is about?
BECK+COL: We dress up in elaborate costumes and beat each other up, get in pillow fights with the audience and then spray blood on them from the walls. Sprinkle in some opera and death metal, traditional art stuff. We’re really interested in horror as a guide to understanding and surviving the world we live in.

What would you be doing if you weren’t an artist?
BECK: I always wanted to be a marine biologist when I was a kid; the ocean is still my happy place.
COL: I’ve always liked chemistry, it has some magical creative aspects to it that overlap with the art process.

Did you go to art school? Why/Why not?
COL: I got my MFA from CSULA because I had no idea what was going on in contemporary art.
BECK: I went to CalArts for my MFA to meet other artists who were as weird as we are, and build the network of collaborators we continue to work with today.

Why do you live and work in L.A., and not elsewhere?
COL: Because there’s nowhere better to be.
BECK: I mentioned the ocean already! But we’ve met some incredible people in the L.A. performing arts scene that have solidified this as the place for us.

When was your first show?
BECK+COL: Our friend from Col’s grad program, Lisa Diane Wedgeworth, gave us a chance to perform at her studio/gallery space in 2015. We made 5 simple monster costumes and danced around with our friends.

When is/was your current/most recent/next show or project?
BECK+COL: Red Night presented by Lauren Powell Projects is currently open at the art room in DTLA is on view through July 28. The exhibition is a collection of works from 10 amazing artists.
along with costumes, objects, and clips from our forthcoming film Red Night. A catalog launch in tandem with the exhibition and film will take place on Saturday, July 15 (4-7pm) within the exhibition. And at Angel’s Gate Cultural Center we are performing Part Two of our death metal opera, a shadow out of the noise, on July 8. The exhibition installation remains on view through September 11.

What artist living or dead would you most like to show or work with?

— BECK+COL: The 10 amazing artists in Red Night: Alicia Piller, Amia Yoza, Chingari, Hea-Mi Kim, Jenny Eom, Minga Opazo, Ofelia Marquez, Sapira Cheuk, Tanya Brodsky, Vanessa Holoay. And also our dear friend who paved the way for what we do—Marnie Weber!

Do you listen to music while you work? If so, what?

— BECK+COL: We like to listen to the podcast The Horror Vanguard or throw on some old Italian horror movies in the background. When we really need to get pumped up, it’s definitely the 30-minute remix of the entrance theme for the wrestler Jamie Hayter, Hayter Hits Hard by Mikey Rukus.