

GAGOSIAN GALLERY



["Yayoi Kusama: Flowers That Bloom at Midnight" at Gagosian Gallery](#)



[For Your Art director Bettina Korek](#)

ENDLESS SUMMER

by Lara Taubman

Summer began for real in Los Angeles on a bright, warm day in early July with a community art festival inspired by **Yayoi Kusama** -- despite the artist's intense and not a little neurotic backstory, her new polychromed sculptures are very *Alice in Wonderland*. Thus, plenty of kids, face-painting, cupcakes and box lunches, all under the auspices of **For Your Art**, the four-year-old event website founded by 30-year-old former museum curator and all-around ball-of-fire **Bettina Korek**.

The **Yayoi Kusama Public Art Party**, as it was dubbed, featured a short artwalk through Beverly Hills, starting at **Gagosian Gallery**, where "Yayoi Kusama: Flowers That Bloom at Midnight" was on view, and ending at *Hymn of Life*, Kusama's hallucinogenic sculpture of three giant polka-dotted tulips that sits in a park at the corner of Santa Monica and Beverly Boulevards. Along the way visitors could stop at the **Paley Center for Media**, which had two



[Polka-dot Kusama cupcakes from Crumbs Bakery](#)



[Lawrence Weiner
Placed on the Tip of a Wave
2009
Regen Projects](#)



[Lawrence Weiner
Something Someway Forever & A Day, Sometime Somewhere Forever & a Day
2008
Regen Projects](#)



Kusama vids, *Flower Obsession Gerbera* (1999) and *Flower Obsession Sunflower* (2000), on view in its glass-walled lobby.

Also available were polka-dot cupcakes courtesy of the **Crumbs Bakery**, which I sampled, purely for the purpose of journalistic research. I can report, under sugar hypnosis, that it was the best cupcake I have ever had.

While recovering from the sugar crash, I found my way to the airy Santa Monica space of **Regen Projects**, where **Lawrence Weiner** was on hand for a show of new works titled "Placed on the Tip of a Wave." New York intellectual though he may be, surfing was clearly on his mind, with phrases stenciled in seaside blue and green (and red, but never mind), things like "beneath the sand" and "above the horizon."

The title phrase, gloriously painted on an outside wall overlooking the gallery courtyard, is bisected by a black curved line, all the better to suggest sun, surf and the meeting of Conceptual Art with the *Endless Summer*.

Weiner himself seemed quite pleased. He was especially psyched about the one-day screening in Los Angeles of *Water in Milk Exists*, his 2008 porn film featuring assorted sex scenes with the non-professional actors speaking Weiner texts to each

[Krysten Cunningham](#)

[*Burnt Wheel*](#)

[2009](#)

["Bitch Is the New Black"](#)

[Honor Fraser](#)



[Amanda Ross-Ho](#)

[*Skies the Limit \(Leave Me Alone\)*](#)

[2009](#)

["Bitch Is the New Black"](#)

[Honor Fraser](#)



[Ruby Neri, "This Is Me, Is That You," installation view, David Kordansky Gallery](#)

other (it was shot at the **Swiss Institute** in New York, and apparently reprised a now-lost film Weiner made in the '70s).

L.A. critic and curator **Andrew Berardini** arranged the showing, which took place at **Cottage Home Gallery** in Chinatown. Weiner was passionate in his insistence that the movie demonstrates that porn itself is harmless but danger does arise from restrictions on sexual freedom. Cool.

One July highlight in Culver City was the opening of "Bitch Is the New Black," a show at **Honor Fraser** of 14 women artists from L.A., organized by **Emma Gray**. "It's a recession and the title of this show should be a bitch slap," said Gray at the opening, which was wall-to-wall people. The line-up includes some pretty aggressive artists, feminist and post-feminist, including fetish photog **Catherine Opie**, bar-room painter **Rosson Crow** and **Cathy Akers**, whose photographs include a series chronicling her own *Pee Performances*.

Sculptor **Krysten Cunningham**, known for her oversized "Godseye" yarn sculptures, here presents *Burnt Wheel*, a full-sized western wagon wheel with its hub burnt out and looking rather vagina dentata, with its phallic center pin, also charred, lying puny on the floor. **Amanda Ross-Ho's** *Skies the Limit (Leave Me Alone)* is a gigantic t-shirt, tie-dyed in bright



[**Ruby Neri**](#)
[*Sad Pot*](#)
[2009](#)
[David Kordansky Gallery](#)

rainbow colors, whose printed message ("leave me alone") contradicts the mellow tie-dye hippie attitude. Skies is \$12,000.

The figurative sculptor **Ruby Neri** seems to be a comer this summer, with a work in "Bitch is the New Black" as well as solo exhibition down the street at the **David Kordansky Gallery**. Titled "This Is Me, Is That You?" her show seems exotic in its dedication to traditional sculptural processes, notably painted plaster and stoneware, of which she is a master. But then, growing up in the Bay Area, she was inspired and influenced by her father, the artist **Manuel Neri**.



[**John Williams**](#)
[*In Bed*](#)
[2008](#)
[Cottage Home](#)

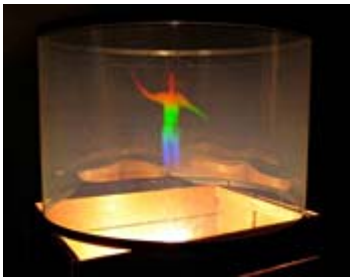
Paintings and plaster figures, painted in bright folk-art hues, include a couple of pink Adam & Eves. Her ceramics are more brusquely comic. With a nod to **Peter Voulkos**, *Sad Pot* (2009) is a 29-inch-tall figure made of several turned stoneware forms, mashed together and topped with head whose hair is formed by another fragment of a clay vessel. A slapdash glaze is slathered over the entire sculpture, which has a cutely pathetic mien. The works range in price from \$7,000 for the ceramic heads to \$10,000-15,000 for the painted plaster sculptures, with her paintings going for \$12,000.



[**Michael Rashkow**](#)
[*Quadrangle* \(detail\)](#)
[2009](#)

Down in Chinatown, things seem dynamic, as usual. The aforementioned Cottage Home is celebrating its first anniversary with an untitled "Summer Group Show." One standout is *In Bed* (2008) by L.A. artist

[China Art Objects](#)



[Simone Forti](#)

[Angel](#)

[1978](#)

[The Box](#)



[Dealer Michael Solway with William T. Wiley's 2008 *Wall Harp* at Solway Jones](#)



[Claire Rojas](#)

[Untitled](#)

[2007](#)

[Solway Jones](#)

John Williams, a high-resolution photograph of a grid of color prints thumb-tacked into a kind of neo-Futurist image of a couple of customers at an Apple store. Employing an exhaustive working process (that included putting his own tape into a store camera, pressing "play" and leaving for a time), Williams' pieces are an excavation of incidental portraiture. The price is \$8,000.

Michael Rashkow's solo show "Quadrangles" at **China Art Objects** takes over the small two-roomed gallery with a raw and restrained material energy. *Gauge* is a four-foot-square polished aluminum panel that is built into the wall, and absorbs and reflects light at the same time. Nearby is *Stanchion*, a simple-but-complex construction that includes a thin, tall rebar embedded into a round concrete base, topped by a short piece of ebony set at an angle so that it reaches over and touches the wall; directly below is a hole in the floor the same circumference as the piece of wood.

Across the room is *Penticore*, a 16-inch-square sheet of lightweight honeycomb polypropylene that is creased on the diagonal and set lopsidedly into an open square cut into the sheetrock of the wall. In China Art Objects second gallery is *Quadrangle*, a multipart sculpture of several stanchions connected by strips of ebony to a large flat element of foam and plastic, cut with an egg-shape, standing in front of the



[Didier Fiuza Faustino](#)
[\(G\)host in the \(S\)hell](#)
 2009
[LAX Art](#)



[Didier Fiuza Faustino's](#)
[demonstrating his III](#)
[Communication \(2009\)](#)
[LAX Art](#)

gallery door like a placard.

The sleeper exhibit in Chinatown this summer is the retrospective at **The Box** devoted to modern dance pioneer **Simone Forti** (b. 1935). Ambitious and impressive in its range, the show traces the fascinating career and life (marriages to **Robert Morris** and **Robert Whitman**) of the artist, dancer and performance artist. Exhibited are her documented dance and performances as well as art ephemera, drawings, objects and paintings as well as some video performances.

Forti's ranging explorations of dance and art over 40 years have been meticulous and prolific. *Angel*, a charming and intimate hologram work from 1976, shows Forti moving elusively through a series of upper body movements that flicker around a three dimensional circular form that is lit below. A group of performers, including gallery director **Mara McCarthy**, recreated Forti's signature *Huddle* performance outside the gallery on Chung King Road, where they slowly climbed all over each other for 15 minutes, while Forti looked on with fond approval.

Solway Jones' summer exhibition is called "Instruments," and boasts handmade musical instruments by nine artists, of both local and international renown. The show features **Nam June Paik's** *I Wrote This in Tokyo in 1954*, a vintage 1940s

television cabinet that contains a video camera that films a music box inside the TV, which when manually wound from the outside plays an original score composed by Paik in 1954.

During my visit to the gallery, dealer **Michael Solway** enthusiastically demonstrated every other work, from **William T. Wiley's** blown-glass cellos (made at **Dale Chihuly's Pilchuk Glass School** in Seattle) to **Claire Rojas'** hand-painted latex and gouache versions of vintage banjos (2007). The prices of these all objects remain largely within the \$8,000-\$15,000 range, but the historical pieces are priced upon request.

The four-year-old nonprofit **LAX Art** has proven itself to be consistently dedicated to street esthetics. For its new A+D architecture and design program, the gallery has inspired a dramatic street-art gesture by the French-Portuguese architect, designer and artist **Didier Fiuza Faustino**. Faustino's *(G)host in the (S)hell* (2009) is a chain link fence, complete with three layers of barbed wire, that torques dramatically through the gallery space, from one end to the other, suspended just above the viewer's head. Somehow this installation is inviting instead of intimidating.

An accompanying object, *III Communication* (2009), named after the high-octane **Beastie Boys** album, is a megaphone fitted with a silencer, designed to speak with a whisper to a single listener rather than broadcasting commands in a loud voice to a crowd. A

scream is thus silenced to a whisper -- a definite must-have for dealing with traffic in Los Angeles.

LARA TAUBMAN writes on art from Los Angeles.