

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

ARTFORUM

Best of 2013

Andrew Berardini



*View of Chalet Hollywood, 2013*

A YEAR OF STRANGE ROOMS, STORIED INTERIORS. A city of secret gardens and hidden beauties, Los Angeles, dappled and palm-treed in the midday sun, always hides more than she gives. Too many tourists cheap thrill-it at shitty nightclubs and then bag on the traffic to peer behind that blank storefront vitrine or notice the quietly marked doors on shady backstreets.

Tucked behind the storefronts along Hollywood Boulevard, a valet's jog from Musso and Frank's, Piero Golia stood above a Pierre Huyghe aquarium, feeding a silver-shelled crab a shivering live meal amidst a forest of angled white oak. He thus inaugurated his latest venture in social sculpture, the Chalet Hollywood, carved out of the dingy back rooms of a historic movie theater. Golia collaborated with Huyghe, Mark Grotjahn, Jeff Wall, and Christopher Williams as well as architect Edwin Chan (formerly of Gehry Partners) to outfit this late-night salon, which is open by invitation and appointment. Through the dark parking lot, beneath an aged and flickering beauty-school neon, a night ranger might witness ballerino Stephen Galloway dancing in the blue room or catch a five-minute Thomas Lawson exhibition hung with care in the back of a hurriedly parked truck.

Richard Hawkins's show at Richard Telles Gallery (May 18–June 22, 2013) advertised all the pleasures of a head shop—an adult arcade, oils, lubes, and a massage parlor. To-ing and fro-ing throughout his wholly literate and lusty oeuvre, Hawkins—just two years past a wandering retrospective—is quietly building new bodies of work that will doubtlessly require another one.

Here the artist curates a gallery of portraits invented by him in his paintings of sultry galleries, but other curatorial projects beckon: for the Bob Meiser and Tom of Finland exhibition with Bennett Simpson at LA MoCA and for Tony Greene at next year's Whitney Biennial with Catherine Opie. Along with some beautiful writing that peeks out here and there, Hawkins continues to collect my admiration.

All those warehouses east of the river: Night Gallery's day gallery debut in all its thousands of feet and François Ghebaly, its newest neighbor that, though inaugurated with a Neil Beloufa show, is slated for a more proper opening this January. Spearheaded by Ghebaly, this new complex includes exhibition spaces run by Brian Kennon and Martha Kirszenbaum along with publication and archive projects by Dorothée Perret, Eric Kim, and Hailey Loman. And of course up the street, Laura Owens's epochal paintings opened 356 Mission. Including art bookstore Ooga Booga and some help from Gavin Brown, the artist's community space has hosted everything from Wasted Breath of Jean Eustache, screened by the editor and artist Hedi El Kholi for his occasional journal Animal Shelter, to Sturtevant's first Los Angeles exhibition in ages, which opened this last September. Assuredly, the territory for art in Los Angeles has shifted, pulling gravity eastward out of an increasingly resolved (and ever resolutely commercial) Culver City and markedly closer to where artists and writers actually live and work.