

What's Up in Los Angeles



Mercedes Dorame, *Breath, Spirit, Wind—Hikaayey*, 2017

Made in L.A.

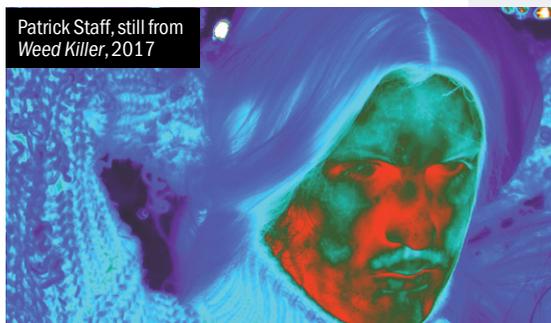
Discover how this city inspires the local artists taking part in the Hammer Museum's biennial. By *Michael Juliano*

EVERY TWO YEARS, Westwood's Hammer Museum dedicates prime gallery space to our city's up-and-coming and under-recognized artists. Of the 32 chosen this year, no two approach their work in the same way. Before the exhibition opens in June, get to know four participating artists and learn how living in L.A. infuses their practice.

Mercedes Dorame Born in Los Angeles

On display: Sculptural objects and photographs that reference the ceremonial practices of Tongva culture and Dorame's connection to Los Angeles

"Telling people I'm Tongva (and having to explain that native people inhabited Los Angeles before the Spanish) and being met with a lot of blank stares has always been eye-opening. [My work examines] sites where my ancestors lived and places that I have family history. The landscape, colors, plants and smells are vital to my art practice. Cresting Topanga Canyon and encountering a coyote during rush hour, seeing dolphins from traffic on the Pacific Coast Highway, locking eyes with a deer while I'm photographing in the hillsides—these things always inspire me. They make me feel like I'm home and also curious at the same time."



Patrick Staff, still from *Weed Killer*, 2017



Rosha Yaghmai, *Cave by Fire (black awning)*, 2016

Rosha Yaghmai Born in Santa Monica

On display: Three sculptures inspired by abstract photos Yaghmai's father shot in the late '60s

"My friends and family help me to persevere. The CalArts network helped me to find my way through the muck, to be around artists that are my heroes. The access to industrial and specialty materials, because of the movie business, is incredible. I love to learn about various craft processes, and I love the endless fake versions of everything. There are so many worlds in Los Angeles—growing up here, I was able to exist in many of them. That elasticity of experience and perspective is central to all of my work."

Ashley Hunt, taisha paggett and Kim Zumpfe with WXPT, *Demonstration Score #3 (duets)*, 2015



Taisha Paggett Born in Fresno

On display: A performance follow-up to *counts orchestrate*, a meadow (or weekly practice with breath), a work inspired by dance rehearsals

"I split my time between Riverside and L.A., so I spend a lot of time being on the outside looking in. The long spans of alone time between seeing people end up feeling like necessary fuel to keep sane in this information-overdose era."

Patrick Staff Born in Bognor Regis, England

On display: *Bathing (Drunkenness)*, a video installation of a soaking-wet dancer working through a series of intoxicated transformations

"Love [attracted me to Los Angeles]. Being part of a community of artists, particularly queer folks, [inspires me, along with] the history here of artists making work with the body [and] the paradoxical feeling of a sense of calm amid environmental extremities."