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Co/Lab III at the Torrance Art Museum



Co/LAB III, A Los Angeles - Berlin Collaboration at Torrance Art Museum. Photo Credit: Genie Davis.

Torrance Art Museum: International Exhibition Includes Los Angeles Collectives and More

Through May 18th.

By Genie Davis

Co/Lab III, at the Torrance Art Museum through May 8th offers a stellar pairing of 8 artist-run collectives from Berlin with 8 artist-run gallery spaces from LA. The 16 groups create eight separate curatorial projects; 76 artists in all are represented, and the result are powerful, conjoined, and beautiful images.

These pairings in the main gallery are BBQLA with Berlin's Axel Obiger, Dalton Warehouse with COPYRIGHTberlin, Durden and Ray with HilbertRaum, ESXLA with Scotty e.V., Monte Vista Projects with A+, POST with LAGE EGAL, Elevator Mondays with ZK/U, and Tiger Strikes Asteroid with oMo artspace.

The combined works are nothing short of inspired, but are not the only exhibition that makes TAM a must-see stop this month. On the patio and elsewhere in the museum, are ethereal aluminum, bass, dichroid glass, rubber, and stainless steel sculptures by Jamie Hamilton. His *Active Measures* exhibition dazzles; the colors changing with the angle of perception and the outside light.

In the hall between the main gallery and Gallery Two, a somewhat astonishing site-specific installation is like the art version of a carnival fun house – Darel Carey's *Dimensionalization* swims and vibrates, zig-zagging lines that, like Hamilton's sculptures, also shift with the angle of view. Inside Gallery Two, a lush series of figurative works tackles *Dreams & Fevers*; in one fraught piece, Big Bird watches while a man on a gurney views a nun sobbing and praying, and a voluptuous woman turns her backside toward the viewer. We are in a territory both raw and unfiltered, of psychological states and visual intensity.

It's a wonderful thing to see such fresh work, but even better is to witness the melding of artists from Berlin and LA. There is a subtle difference in aesthetics between the artists from each city; but it is the difference between each paired exhibit space that is the most striking. Each mini-gallery has something fresh and exciting to say, both about the sheer fun of making art and the experience of art's universal nature.

Overall, viewers see works that are primarily more abstract than figurative, that have a futuristic bent, both hopeful and hooked on technology. Sculptural works on the walls and floors are standouts, and help to lead viewers from gallery space to space, serving almost as dividers in some cases, bridges in others.

Daniel Wiesenfeld, a Berlin-based artist in the Durden and Ray/ Hilbertraum collaboration offers a series of small circular works suspended on mechanical arms, a sculptural artwork that reminds the viewer of optometric lenses, offering different views of the world. It makes a neat pairing with LA's Dani Dodge, who uses multi-screen video in a compelling, sculptural assemblage of analog TV screens on a retro-AV cart and Ty Pownall's white on light grey mixed media painting which defies its own precision, creating an image of construction and deconstruction, devoid of color but dazzling none the less.

Harriet Gross of Axel Obiger offers a wall sculpture that feels both intensely futuristic and delicate, a mixed media geometry that speaks of the mechanical and robotic, and offers a glimpse into a world that might just swallow the viewer.

A performance art piece from Tiger Strikes Asteroid worked as a walking red kissing booth of sorts, asking participants to leave their hatred and intolerance at the door; the artist, her mouth strapped shut with a belt, offers mute testimony to the ugliness we must overcome as a society.

In the Dalton Warehouse / COPYRIGHTberlin space, a series of soft blue sculptural forms create an ersatz bridge, the color and pattern of which reminds viewers of blue skies, serene times, an ocean wave.

Laura Parker's images of light in the PØST/Lage Egal space seem to offer hope for the future, a beam in the darkness.

Roman Gysin, in the Monte Vista Projects / Å+ project space created a minute, yet expansive floor sculpture of tiny pointed cylindrical shapes, above which a thin rope sculpture is suspended. Evocative of cities, cemeteries, and toy soldiers, the piece is a compelling series of shapes and textures.

Liz Nurenberg's cushy white floor couch, a kind of inverse of a standard sofa – all fabric and foam – invited viewers to lie down for a rest in the Tiger Strikes Asteroid Los Angeles/ oMo artspace

The ELEVATOR MONDAYS / Z/KU collaboration includes a wonderful arch, a pair shaped of conjoined arms/legs nearly but not quite touching, while a figurative sculpture of a Dalmatian wearing a fuchsia boa looks on, and a female mannequin strides by. This exhibition space seemed to meld the works of each of its artists into one combined, large scale sculptural form.

A full wall of softly defined abstract images on separate canvases shaped one wall of the Tiger Strikes Asteroid Los Angeles/OMO art space – rectangular and square the images remind the viewer of architectural constructs.

If “The Only Way to Walk Forward is to Erase Your Own History” as a truly wonderful floor sand sculpture by Juan Arata allowed, then new history is surely being written here.

There are so many works here worthy of exploration. Take an international journey without boarding a plane, and visit them in Torrance.

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HOURS: TUESDAY – SATURDAY 11AM – 5PM

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