From Main News:

Art LA: An Evolution

Art LA took off at the Santa Monica Airport, Baker Hanger, with a new look, as people came from all over LA to relish the various galleries. Pictured above (l-r) "The Clown Head Rescue", by Marnie Weber, and the prestigious L.A. Louver in nearby Venice was also on display called "Rouge Wave Projects". There are 60 galleries in total on display from across America and 11 foreign countries. photos by Bev Cohn & Dave Quick

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If this year's Art LA show at Barker Hangar suggested a trend in contemporary art, it seemed to be that ordinary paintings, framed and hung on a wall, are old-school. The most eye-catching works were those that were either three-dimensional, multi-media, made from recycled materials, or were challenging in concept.

For starters, Susan Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects featured sculptures by Alice Konitz, including a small triangular wooden object with painted stripes (like seats in a stadium) and photographs of human figures that appeared to be perched in the "seats." This tiny, untitled piece had a dollhouse-like charm.

At Peres Projects, Houston artist Mark Flood's send-ups of advertisements used stereotyped "macho" figures to humorous effect. At the Patrick Painter Gallery, Mike Kelley's "Timeless/Authorless" featured framed front pages of real newspapers-the Los Angeles Times, Detroit Free Press-with Kelley's own photographs inserted into the stories, creating wacky non sequiturs.

The Ooga Booga Store displayed pieces by Josh Blackwell, on behalf of the Rachel Uffner Gallery in New York. Blackwell's creations would never have passed muster with that other Mr. Blackwell-they were colorful garments made from plastic bags.

LA's own Ace Gallery featured sculptures by Tim Hawkinson, who uses found objects and other materials to create bizarre and surreal works. "Gin" was a Slinky-like sculpture wrought from chrome wire, described as "Configured into the frame, gears, verge, spring, etc. of an escapement or a windup motor clock." "Sweet Tweet" was a statue of a small nude girl with five birds perched on her very long tongue. "Ear Propeller" was, you guessed it, a propeller with ears for paddles, encased in a drum (like an eardrum). Hawkinson seems to be an imaginative and funny person. Another funny artist was Kenny Scharf (Honor Fraser Gallery) who must have been frightened by classic cartoons, as his works included a pink one-eyed cat sculpture and paintings of cartoon-like creatures. Bert Rodriguez's "Mold-A-Rama (Frederick Snitzer Gallery) was a big jukebox-like recreation of the wax-molding machines formerly found at amusement parks. The machine didn't work, but one could buy a wax mold of
Rodriguez’ s nose, in a box, signed and numbered, for $50.

Eduardo Sarabia’s “History of the World,” presented by Rogue Wave Projects (and shown last summer at LA Louvre) was an impressive collection of ceramic plates, painted with blue enamel images of everything from flowers to animals to a guy smoking a joint.

Hewing closer to traditional wall art, Kirsten Stoltman’s “Warrior Nation” (Sister Gallery) was a huge sepia-toned collage of Native American faces, surrounding, for no apparent reason, a picture of singer Kate Bush. And Haunch of Venison Gallery displayed Ian Monroe’s glittering vinyl on aluminum painting “The Miracle of Ineffable Space,” a shiny geometric composition in silver, gray, black, and white.

If one was looking for a nice painting of flowers in a vase, or a tranquil landscape, Art LA was hardly the place. But as a glimpse of the imaginations at work in the art world, it was a wild tour.

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