

SCENE | STYLE | SPACE

EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT...

STAR TECH!

MEET FIVE L.A. ARTISTS WHO ARE SPARKING AN AVANT-DIGITAL REVOLUTION.

BY REBECCA BLOOM

At the intersection of art and technology, a new generation of contemporary artists is looking towards less traditional mediums to inform and implement its artistic visions. Paint and ink, canvas and clay—they're either being tossed aside or used in combination with blossoming technological tools to invent new and exciting forms of expression. This digital movement, which began with video art pioneers such as Bill Viola, Nam June Paik, and Vito Acconci, is now being pushed, pulled, and reinterpreted by the latest cultural trailblazers. From creating large-scale environments with video installation to using social media as acts of protest and blurring the lines between painting and photography, LA artists Julie Weitz, Brian Bress, Diana Thater, Micol Hebron, and Owen Kydd are innovators to watch in this ever-growing medium.

JULIE WEITZ
The Film Star

Describe your process.

I sketch storyboards, make molds, and design sets and take photographs. These eventually lead me to shooting video. I play almost every role in the filmmaking process: prop master, set designer, performer, >



“TECHNOLOGY IS THE MENU—IT’S JUST A TOOL. ART IS THE MEAL, THE SOURCE OF REAL NOURISHMENT.”

—JULIE WEITZ



“I use technology to create effects my hand is incapable of achieving,” says filmmaker Julie Weitz, one of a number of LA artists at the forefront of tech-savvy fine art. Here, a still from Weitz’s *Goddess NetTrap*, C-print (2017).

photographer, director, producer, editor. I then collaborate with a cinematographer to shoot it, and work with different musicians to score original soundtracks. When the work is ready for exhibition, I map out immersive installations to enhance the viewer experience.

How do you use technology in your art?

The idea of technology is more expansive than we think—I use the simple tools of pencils and markers to jumpstart ideas and the more complex technology

of cameras and software to create effects my hand is incapable of achieving.

How do you walk the line between art and technology?

The Buddhist scholar Alan Watts has a great quote about eating the menu instead of the meal. For me, technology is the menu. However complex and mystifying, it's just a tool. In contrast, art is the actual meal... the source of real nourishment.

What was your a-ha! art moment?

The positive reception to

Touch Museum, the large-scale video installation I premiered at Young Projects in LA in 2015. I realized that the ideas floating in my head for years could actually manifest into an impactful experience for others.

What artists are you looking at?

Despite having had an academic training in art, my deepest affections are for popular culture. I often think about Miranda July and the way she maintains a definitive sensibility between mediums. I look at filmmakers like [Michelangelo]

Antonioni, [Dario] Argento, and [David] Cronenberg, and watch music videos by Madonna, Beyoncé, and Kanye West. I have the highest regard for Frank Ocean, the way he taps into emotional experiences with utter fluency and paints with a refined palate of intelligence and sensuality.

julieweitz.com

BRIAN BRESS

The Old/New Soul



What is your first memory of making art?

I was home sick in the third grade. I started a drawing of a futuristic city. I added another sheet of lined paper with tape to the first sheet and continued the city. I did this over and over until I had a 26-foot long scroll. There were flying cars, hover-buildings, and glass bubbles over parks that sucked the kids in and out of tubes. I still have that

drawing. It's under my bed in a box.

How do you use technology in your art?

I use new technology to address very old issues pertaining to art: form, color, space, and composition. I try to make sure that the ideas and images are the motivation—not the access to the latest tech.

Who inspires you?

Lately, my daughter! She's a little budding artist, and really funny. She keeps me from getting too serious.

How do you unplug?

I take long walks with my dog late at night. I don't always know where I'm going, but I get a chance to just explore and think, with no texts or phone calls.

How do you walk the line between art and technology?

That question reminds me of a Far Side cartoon where two cavemen artists are standing in front of their cave drawings and they look over at another caveman who's painting on a canvas and easel. One cavemen artist says to the other, "Sure, it's cool, but is it art?" There are no lines.

brianbress.com



"I USE TECHNOLOGY TO ADDRESS VERY OLD ISSUES PERTAINING TO ART: FORM, COLOR, SPACE, AND COMPOSITION."—BRIAN BRESS



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Delphine by Diana Thater, which was exhibited in a solo show at LACMA last year. BELOW LEFT: From the series *Keep your laws off my body* (2016), "Instagram-safe" digital self portraits by Micol Hebron.

DIANA THATER
The Wild Woman



Describe your process. I do tons of research—reading, watching films, visiting locations—before I plan any shoot. I usually work with conservationists or scientists or activists who are specialists in the field I'm studying. I do all the camerawork and editing. I don't like working with other people or telling anyone what to do. I like to think in quiet and work in peace—maybe that's why I like animals so much! They

don't talk and annoy me. **How do you view the artist's role in society?** Artists can be purveyors of truth and beauty, and society needs those two things to define itself. Art speaks out against oppression—that is necessary in the times in which we find ourselves.

When art is great, it is a revolution. **Location and scale are big in your art. What environments do you favor?** I am obsessed with Kenya, Tanzania, and Botswana right now. The landscape and the variety of animals offer great filming opportunities. I wish North America had the variety of wildlife that Africa has. I find I have to go quite far to film. thaterstudio.com

MICOL HEBRON
The Feminist Fatale



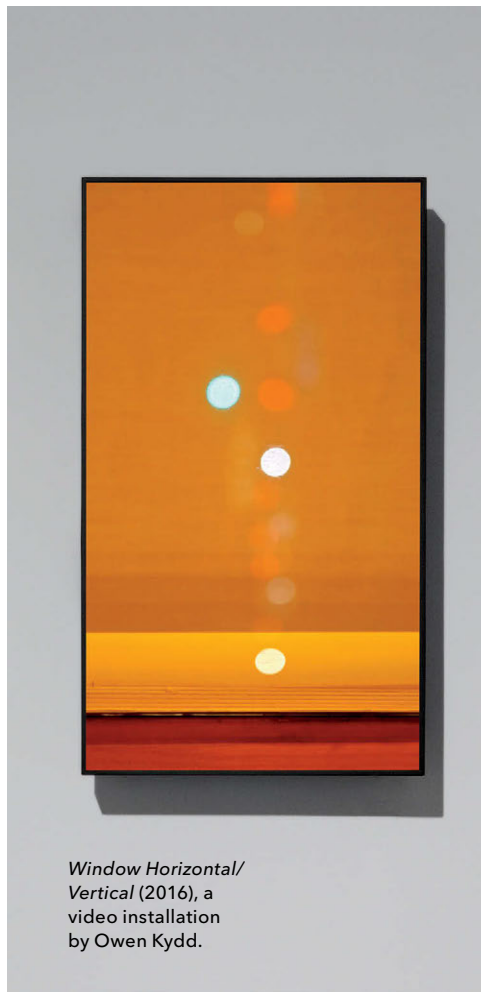
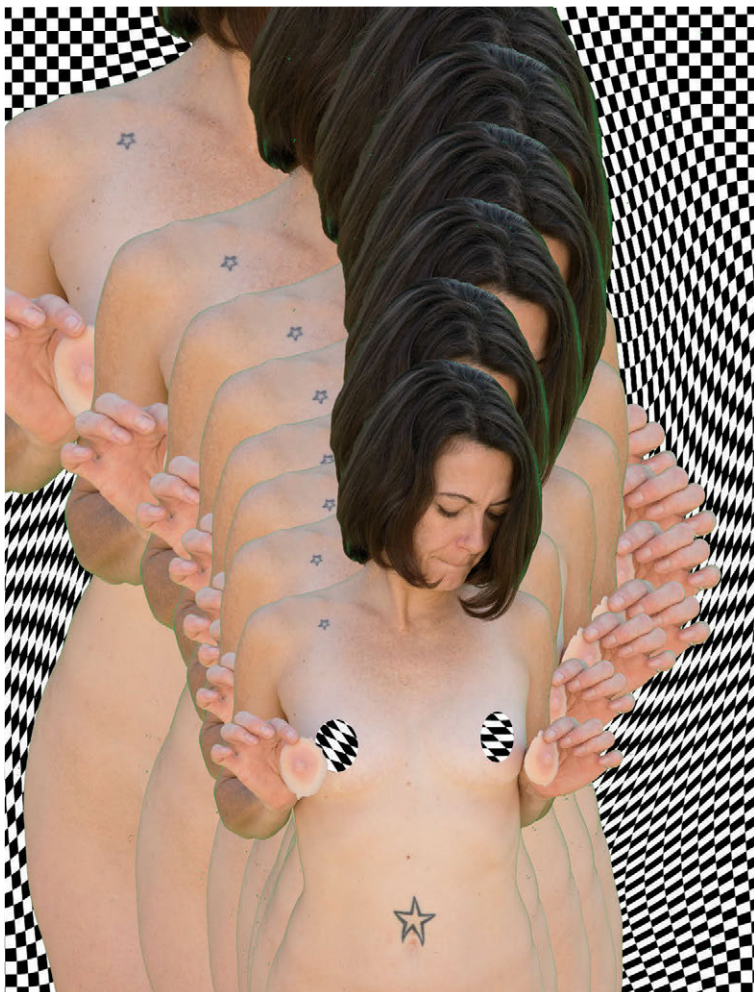
Describe your process. It's encompassed by what I call "Feminism 4D." I try to live feminism in all directions and at all times. I have analog processes and digital processes—IRL and URL. My analog work is often about creating community and dialogue. I spend a lot of time online, navigating and thinking about the spaces, images, language, and algorithms of social media and the internet. I find the internet fascinating and terrifying... and totally intoxicating. It is a barometer for contemporary culture.

Has the political climate taken your art in a new direction?

The things that I was doing before the election—making posts about equity and legislation, organizing feminist events, building space and opportunity for participatory dialogues and projects—[have] become amplified [since]!

What is your first memory of making art?

My parents were very creative. We dyed our milk or mashed potatoes blue, green, or purple, for fun. My mother encouraged all kinds of crafty things that involved innovation and recycling... I remember making a Jackson Pollock-style painting in fourth grade, and the teacher was effective in getting me to >



Window Horizontal/Vertical (2016), a video installation by Owen Kydd.

“L.A. HAS A LOT OF SPACE IN BETWEEN THINGS. THERE ARE A LOT OF UNFIXED MOMENTS, WHICH CAN MAKE [FOR] GOOD PICTURES.”

—OWEN KYDD



understand that it wasn't about the finished painting, but rather about the *act* of making it.

How do you walk the line between art and technology?

Is there even is a line? Art, life, technology, nature—it's all integrated all the time for me.

What's next?

I'd like to learn how to code, and how to be a hacker. [laughs] I think coding and hacking hold the most potential for activism, institutional critique, dissent, and intervention in the digital age. In all reality, it's unlikely I'll ever be a

hacker—but maybe I can team up with one!
micolhebron.com

OWEN KYDD

The Image Maker



Describe your process.

I make durational photographs, either on video screens or as printed images. My work is about looking, and how looking often takes place in time, in duration.

What is your first memory of making art?

As a kid, I remember lying in bed watching the shadows and flickers of light from passing cars on the walls and ceiling of my room. This seemed like projection of the unknown and something that was worth trying to capture.

How does Los Angeles inform your work?

This city has a lot of space in between things. As a result, there are a lot of unfixed moments. Things can get caught in these eddies and form their own logic, which also can make [for] good pictures.

What was your *a-ha!* art

moment?

Watching Steve Jobs's 2004 keynote introduction of the “one more thing” Apple cinema display with 4 million pixels. This screen let me put video that looked like a photograph on the wall of my gallery. That completely changed my life.

What's next?

I'm going to try and make a film. I started off as a filmmaker and rejected it to make durational photographs. Now I'm ready to take what I've learned from recording near-still moments and apply it back to the narrative of cinema.

owenkydd.com ■

“I'm ready to take what I've learned from recording near-still moments and apply it back to the narrative of cinema,” says artist Owen Kydd about how he feels his video installation work, such as *Additive* (2016), has prepped him for filmmaking.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHARLIE VILLYARD (ADDITIVE), ANDREW RICHMOND (KYDD)