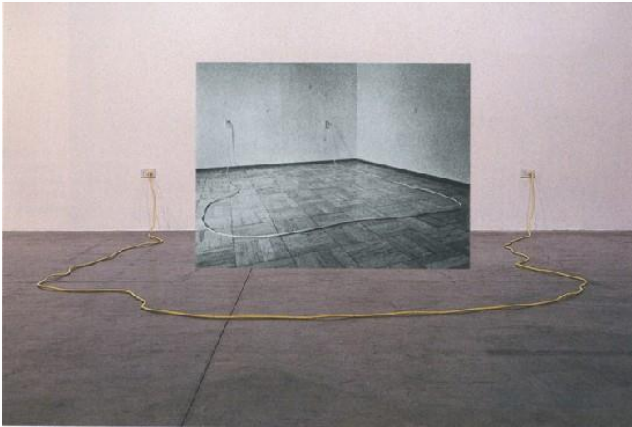


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Five Artsy Things to Do This Week, Including John Elway as a Cowboy and an Apology From Claire Danes

By Catherine Wagley



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Eugenia Bulter Jr. showed *Electric Cord Piece* (1967) at her mother's gallery

The best art this week is all in Hollywood, where major-leaguers look like superheroes and an eccentric 1960s gallerist makes a thrilling comeback.

5. Sunglass art

Artist Alex Israel, who makes surreal installations out of Hollywood props, also designs sunglasses for his L.A.-centric brand Freeways Eyewear (John Baldessari's quote "I will not look at any more boring art" is on a new pair). Israel's new Abbot Kinney mural isn't a sunglass ad but, intentionally, it has that crisp, seductive feeling of a beachside advertisement minus a brand name. Will you be able to spot it as art? And does it matter if you can't? *1212-C Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice; up indefinitely. (310) 426-8040, vsf.la.*

4. Sunshiny plastics never get old in SoCal

Peter Alexander, one of L.A.'s original resin artists, often infused his resin blocks with water vapors in a way that made it look like he'd captured L.A. smog and put it in a box. Smog is gone from his new works at Nye+Brown gallery, though. To make these, the artist poured urethane into one side of a rectangle-shaped mold, then slowly tilted it so the liquid dripped downward as it dried. The finished pieces, translucent and colored in sunny yellows, greens and blues, are perfectly straight and thick along the top but thin, beveled and uneven closer to the bottom. *2685 S. La Cienega Blvd.; through Feb. 11. (310) 559-5215, nyepplusbrown.com.*

3. Words have consequences, and other life lessons

When Claire Danes shot scenes for the 1999 film *Brokedown Palace* in the Philippines, she told *Premiere* magazine that Manila "just f--king smelled of cockroaches." By the time the actress publicly apologized, Oprah and Bruce Willis had threatened to boycott her. Artist Miljohn Ruperto is from Manila and, in her 44-second video *Level* (2000), she tells Danes that. Danes says, "OK." Ruperto's video and 14 others explore that knotty, endlessly fascinating problem -- what happens when things get taken out of context -- at Michael Benevento. 7578 Sunset Blvd.; through Feb. 25. (323) 874-6400, beneventolosangeles.com.

2. Sports star cowboys

In the late 1980s, the Costacos brothers dressed up John Elway like John Wayne and posed the Seattle Seahawks' Kenny Easley in leather in an alley. Curator Adam Shopkorn had Costacos posters like those on his bedroom walls growing up; it occurred to him that if they were pristine, framed and hung in a gallery, they'd be all about celebrity, masculinity, fandom and whether there's a difference between sports star and pop star. They'd also just be fantastic to look at. Convincing the Costacos a "retrospective" of sport posters was a good idea took some work, but now, at Country Club Gallery and at the Mondrian Hotel, you can see more than 50 of them. 7561 Sunset Blvd. and 8440 Sunset Blvd.; through March 4. (323) 851-8522, countryclubprojects.com.

1. The gallerist who came back to life

L.A. health inspectors came to gallerist Eugenia Butler's space in 1970, weeks into German artist Dieter Roth's debut U.S. exhibition. Roth had installed 37 suitcases full of unpackaged cheese (Brie, cheddar, etc.) in the gallery. One was to be opened daily until the show ended, but it took less than a week for the gallery to reek -- and only a little longer for city officials to catch wind. Such disasterous experiments weren't unusual for Butler, who wanted art to be insane and spectacular. "Perpetual Conceptual: Echoes of Eugenia Butler," just opened in a West Hollywood strip mall, doesn't include any cheese but does include Joseph Kosuth's Nothing painting, a mushroom-cloud chair by Doug Edge and other wittily, seductively iconoclastic work Butler exhibited in the '60s and '70s. 8126-8132 Santa Monica Blvd.; through April 21. (646) 620-8289, nomadicdivision.org.

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