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THE HUMBOLDT DEP
REPORT 2023

The Flamingo Estate

L.A.'S SECRET GARDEN • BY MICHELE STUEVEN

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GO EDITORS' PICKS

ARTS

THURSDAY, JUNE 15

Los Angeles Ballet: Memoryhouse at the Broad Stage. The world premiere of a full-length evening work by Artistic Director Melissa Barak, Los Angeles Ballet's Memoryhouse is an abstract piece composed of vignettes commemorating World War II and in particular, the Holocaust. Set to Max Richter's powerful album of the same name, Memoryhouse will reflect on both the somber as well as more heroic moments that illuminate this period in human history. *1350 11th St., Santa Monica; Performances ~ urnesday-Saturday, June 15-17, 7:30pm; from \$50; broadstage.org.*

Ben Sanders: New Caps at Marta. An exhibition of twelve signature Bottle Cap paintings by multi-disciplinary artist Ben Sanders. Identical in exaggerated size—each twenty-six times the scale of their petite counterparts—these richly-enameled, carefully-shaped steel works represent the most recent incarnation of Sanders' Cap series: a near decade-long exploration of this patently industrial and quotidian form and its varied [often imagined] colloquial adornments. The exhibition coincides with the release of a monograph published by OCHI Gallery. *3021 Rowena Ave., Silver Lake; Opening reception: ~ urnesday, June 15, 6-8pm; On view through July 30 free; marta.la.*

FRIDAY, JUNE 16

We Are They: Glitch Ecology and the Thickness of Now, and at Catalyst at Honor Fraser Gallery. We Are They... features 22 artists who chart the blurry boundaries between human networks, ecological systems, and the technologies that give form to our so-called "man-made" geological era. Catalyst, a group exhibition in collaboration with heretofore web-only EPOCH Gallery, features 7 internationally celebrated artists who have developed artworks situated within a speculative 3D model of LACMA's forthcoming Peter Zumthor building. *2622 La Cienega Blvd., Culver City; Opening reception: Friday, June 16, 6-8pm; On view*



Peter Fetterman
Gallery
Cig Harvey
All The Pink
Flowers In The
Garden

through August 19; free; honorfraser.com.

Wild Up! Julius Eastman Vol. 3 release party at 2220 Arts + Archives. A listening party and celebration for the most recent installment in Wild Up's Julius Eastman Anthology, Vol. 3: If You're So Smart, Why Aren't You Rich? Plus conversations about Eastman's legacy, the symbols in his work, and playing the record in full while everyone lies on the floor with wine and baklava. *2220 Beverly Blvd., Westlake; Friday, June 16, 8pm; \$20; 2220arts.org.*

SATURDAY, JUNE 17

Squash & Biscuit at Craft in America Center. Shuwen Zhao and Brian Griffith create musical atmospheres for moving images, with an experimental sonic approach. Zhao, a pianist, has an ear for detail creating lush soundscapes and intricate melodic lines. Griffith, a bassist, builds deep currents of sound and delicate tonal whispers. Together, they compliment each other's styles, able to build a piece that is expertly crafted and surprising. In conjunction with the current exhibition Couples in Craft. *8415 W. ~ ird St., West Hollywood; Saturday, June 17, 7pm; free; cra° inamerica.org.*

The Flower Show at Peter Fetterman Gallery.

The first half of this collaborative group exhibition opened last week at L.A. Louver in Venice. Now part two—the photography edition—joins in. The Flower Show at L.A. Louver includes over 50 artists who have embraced the floral motif in a range of media including painting, sculpture, drawing, film and digital technology—as well as photographs by Sebastiao Salgado, Cig Harvey, Horst P. Horst, Bruce Davidson, Minor White, and Graciela Iturbide. *Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica; Opening reception: Saturday, June 17, 3-6pm; On view through October 7; free;*

peterfetterman.com.

SUNDAY, JUNE 18

An Evening with Sky Hopinka at the Hammer. Sky Hopinka, a Ho-Chunk Nation member, is a renowned contemporary Indigenous filmmaker whose work explores memory, language and place. His most current film, Sunflower Siege Engine, showcases the woven narrative of resiliency and resistance at the heart of contemporary Indigenous life, offering an essential perspective on Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination struggles. Part of the UCLA Film & Television Archive screening series Imagining Indigenous Cinema: New Voices, New Visions. *10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; Sunday, June 18, 7pm; free w/ rsvp; hammer.ucla.edu.*

TUESDAY, JUNE 20

The Broad presents How Hip Hop Became a Revolution in American Visual Art and Culture, at Colburn School. In this conversation among legendary artist and Public Enemy co-founder Chuck D, Keith Haring Foundation Executive Director Gil Vazquez, Lisane Basquiat, sister of the late artist Jean-Michel Basquiat, and producer, curator and President of Channel Zero Productions Lorrie Boula will discuss hip hop's global impact, including its influence on visual art and culture of 1980s New York and beyond. *200 S. Grand Ave., downtown; Tuesday, June 20, 7:30pm; \$25; thebroad.org.*

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21

A Public Thing: Celebrating Keith Haring's ArtCenter Mural at ArtCenter. A film screening, reception, and panel discussion in partnership with The Broad and Keith Haring Foundation. In 1989, Haring was invited to paint a mural at ArtCenter's Hillside Campus in honor of the second annual World AIDS Day, and as part of the

first-ever Day Without Art. Haring agreed, with the stipulation that the mural remain in place until AIDS has been eradicated. He spent two days painting freehand in front of an audience of awe-struck students and the untitled work has become a centerpiece of the campus—Haring's first and only mural in Los Angeles. *1700 Lida St., Pasadena; Wednesday, June 21, 6:30pm; free; artcenter.edu.*

MUSIC

JUNE 16-22

Elvis Costello & the Imposters The Greek Theatre

Tickets are starting at \$25 for this awesome bill, also featuring Nick Lowe and Los Straitjackets. In this crazy era, that's a damned bargain. Costello released his 32nd studio album last year, the quite brilliant The Boy Names If. The man has barely put a footy wrong throughout his stellar career, to be fair. *7:30 p.m. on Friday, June 16 at the Greek ~ eatre, \$25+, lagreektheatre.com.*

Juneteenth: A Global Celebration of Freedom The Greek Theatre

We're highlighting two shows at the Greek Theatre this week, because this Juneteenth event is so vitally important. The bill features Miguel, Charlie Wilson, Adam Blackstone, Kirk Franklin, Nelly, Jodeci, SWV, Davido, Chloe Bailey, Coi Leray, Muni Long, Mike Phillips and More. AND there's an appearance from Vice President Kamala Harris. That's a lot going on. *5 p.m. on Monday, June 19 at the Greek ~ eatre, \$39+, lagreektheatre.com.*

Neko Case Fonda Theatre

We know Neko Case as a member of Canadian indie rock band the New Pornographers (although Case herself is American), but her solo work is and has always been spectacular. Poetic and haunting, rooted in the traditional but with a very contemporary bent, she's a true artist and 2018's Hell-On album is a gem. See for yourself at the Fonda. Nora O'Connor also performs. *8:30 p.m. on ~ urnesday, June 22 at the Fonda ~ eatre, \$45, fondaattheatre.com*

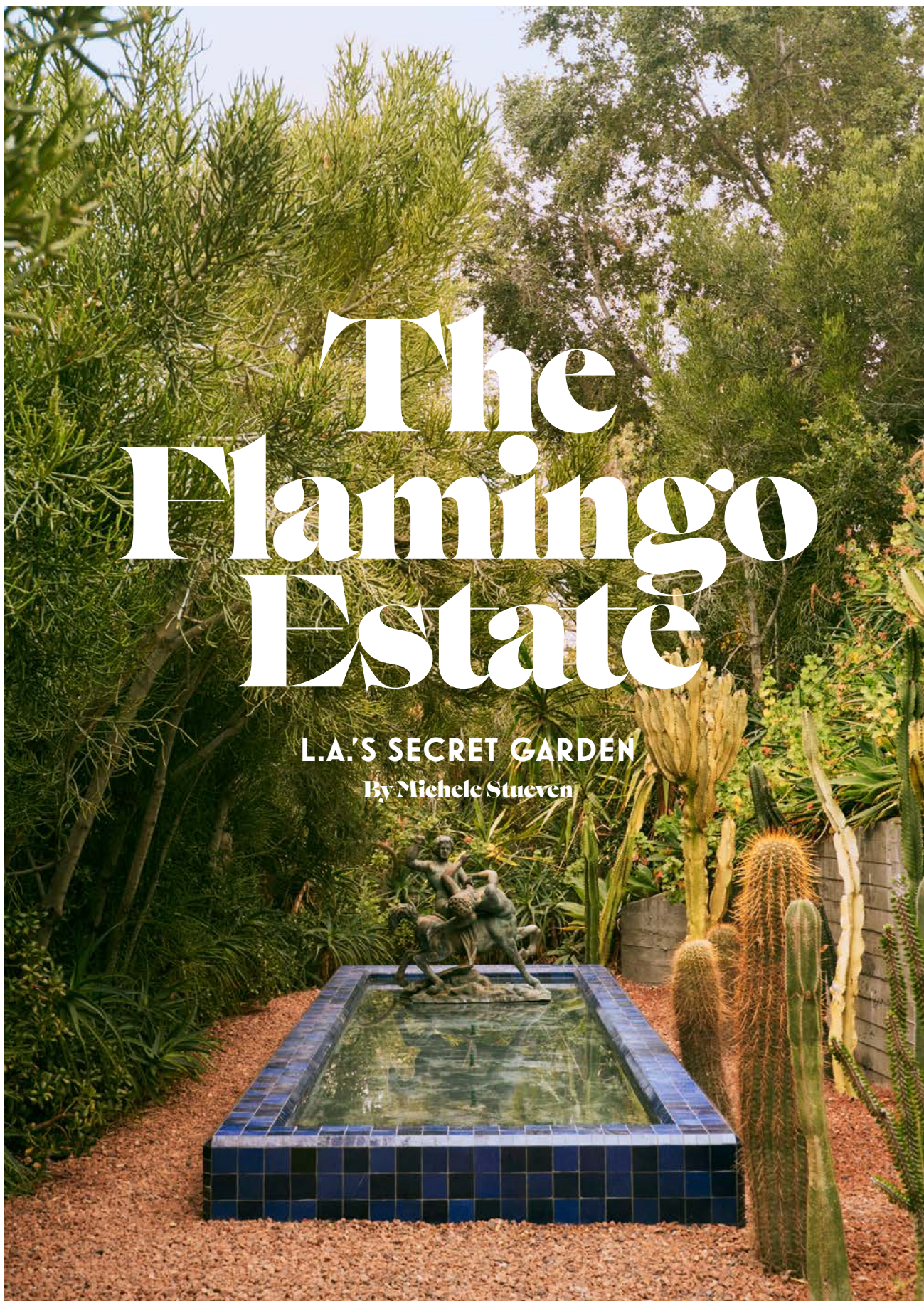
Boldy James Roxy Theater

Detroit rapper Boldy James is back on the West Coast, with a ton of new music to promote. January of this year saw the release of the ADU EP (with Real Bad Man as Boldy Bad Man), AND the Indiana Jones studio album (with RichGains). The man dropped four studio collars in 2022, so he's nothing if not busy. It'll be great to see him back in these parts. *8 p.m. on ~ urnesday, June 22 at the Roxy, \$22.50, theroxy.com. [A]*

The Flamingo Estate

L.A.'S SECRET GARDEN

By Michele Stueven



Hidden up on one of the highest peaks in Highland Park overlooking the rolling hills with views as far as the ocean, the Flamingo Estate has long been shrouded in mystery and secrecy.

The 7-acre terraced garden that once served as a goat farm and spent 65 years as a prolific porn studio and underground hedonistic playground for L.A.'s bohemia, the pleasure garden is now ground zero for a thriving farm-inspired luxury brand that features everything from tomato-scented candles to wildflower honey and infused vinegars and oils.

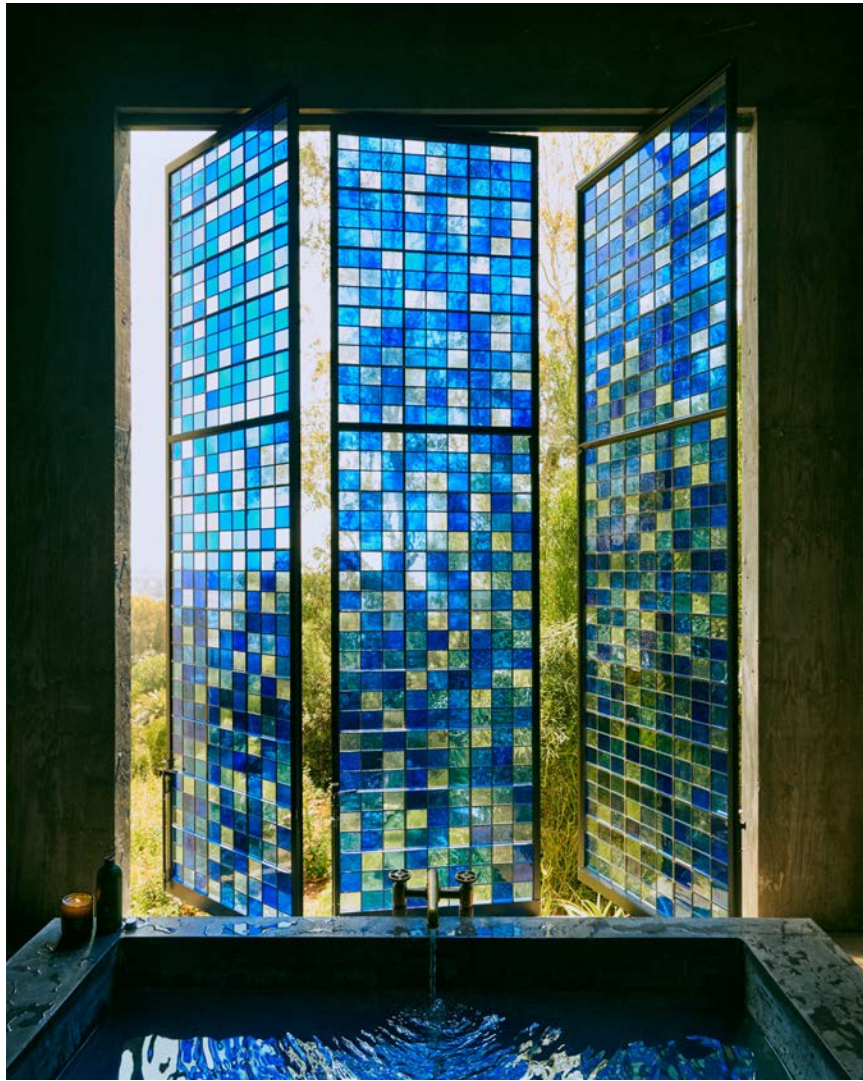
When advertising agency owner Richard Christiansen discovered the gated and overgrown property about seven years ago, he became intrigued and befriended the little 84-year old hunched over owner in the Rick Dalton-style robe. He made a laughable offer on the place and the owner said if Christiansen would restore the property and its crumbling structures, he would accept it. The deal was done and he opened up the Owl Bureau bookstop down the hill on Figueroa Street to help secure the extra funds the promise would cost him.

"The house was in complete disrepair and was totally redone," Christiansen tells L.A. Weekly over a glass of rose in the goathouse, which served as the brand's original lab where he concocted herbal soaps and stored the garden's bounty.

"The bar was a dildo room. The kitchen was a fucking room with a sling from the ceiling. My bedroom was all black leather with a black leather waterbed," he says. "The porn is easy to joke about, but the truth is that when you really understood what was going on here in the '40s and the '50s - especially the '40s - this was a real hedonistic playground for people. There was good food and wine, and good music. It was a goat farm. People would come up here for a bit of mischief and guilty pleasure. In a way, I'd like to think that we've brought that back a bit."

The completed masterpiece is a small, but detailed compilation of his travels around the world. With the help of architectural firm Studio KO, the two-bedroom house has three distinct custom terrazzo floor patterns, marble from Italy and Greece, textiles from Japan, furniture from Brazil, 600 trees from his native Australia, four goats and 12 chickens. The roof and terrace tiles are from Morocco.

The small, sensual house also has a secluded pool where hundreds of mid-century sex scenes were filmed and a steep staircase of 69 steps leading down to the vegetable garden. There are no digital appliances in the house, like TVs or microwaves, only manual or analog. He describes it as a little Epcot center, where the best of the world just came together in one place.



Inspired by a photo from an Iraqi pleasure garden, Christiansen constructed a bathhouse on the property with blue and white stained glass windows that open up to a panoramic view of Highland Park and beyond. He installed a large concrete bathtub, built to mimic a famous 1963 photo of Steve and Neile McQueen with a bottle of wine soaking in a sulfur bath in Big Sur.

“The architects brought me this picture of a giant concrete building in Iraq, which was said to be a refuge for soldiers,” he says. “They’d smoke some hashish and take a bath with all these beautiful women walking around the garden naked. They’d feed them wonderful food, tell them this is what heaven is like and then send them back into battle. This idea of the hedonistic garden in the mountains was the inspiration point for the bathhouse. It’s a bathing cathedral with room for multiple people and has a bar downstairs. It’s a little naughty, a little fun and super tasteful.”

And then there’s the goathouse, where it all started.

Coming from a family of bee farm-

ers, Christiansen and his team of nature lovers began drying flowers and herbs from the garden, cooking up candles and soaps, along with processing wildflower honey from the farm’s hives during the pandemic. Trying to survive, other small local farmers would hike up the hill and knock on the gates of the Flamingo Estate, hoping to sell their products. They don’t decide to make something and go out and find the ingredients to make it. The farmers come to the estate and say, ‘We’re growing this, what can you do with it?’

“By chance we met a farmer who was about to lose her farm because her vegetables went to restaurants, which were all starting to close,” he says. “That was the first Friday of COVID when we started selling her vegetables and Community Supported Agriculture boxes.

“The honey still comes from the property now and some of the herbs come from here, but the business has doubled and doubled, and doubled again. The demand just surged. Then another farmer came in, and another and another. They just came up to the front door and said, I heard



you’re helping farmers. It was a pandemic and everyone was looking for non-traditional ways of working together. Back then we would just say, sure! We accidentally stumbled across this interconnected group of growers who were coincidentally regenerative or organic farmers and sell-

ing at the farmers markets or a restaurant. They were very small farms. One farmer would tell their neighbor, and one farm became 10 and then 50 and up to the 110 that we have now.

“We started with what we could grow and make here. Now we’re a living labo-



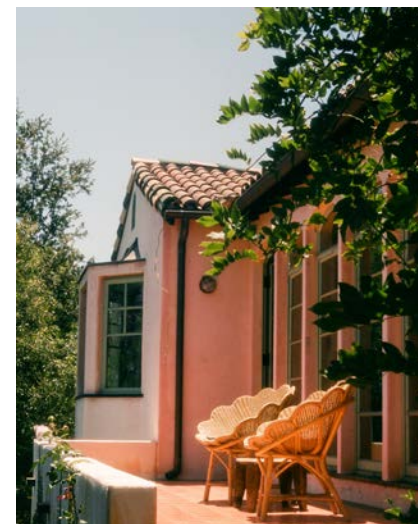
ratory where people come to brainstorm with others who are growing stuff. I look back at those days and I'm shocked that we're still in business."

In just about three years, the brand has outgrown the goathouse and opened up a facility nearby with about 25 employees who process those ingredients into about 40 different items like winter harvest ambrosia fuyu hachiya persimmon vinegar, heritage extra virgin olive oil from 150-year-old California trees and a strawberry rose dark chocolate bar.

Hives from the garden were loaned out to various celebrities like Will Ferrell, Tiffany Haddish, Savannah and LeBron James, and the limited-edition honey collected by Christiansen from those prop-

erties are part of the Flamingo Estate collection. A line of beauty and perfume products is in the works.

The latest vendor to come knocking at the gate is Hendrick's Gin. They've partnered with the garden on Botanical Pleasures, an exclusive limited edition gift box designed for a DIY pleasure party. It comes with Hendrick's Flora Adora, the newest limited release gin, a strawberry fruit snack made with rose water and honey, body oil containing flowers and fruit to activate natural pheromones and leave traces of Scottish wildflower meadows on the skin, a vinyl jazz record arranged to transport you through a year in the garden from the hum of spring to the quiet of winter, highball glasses and bee stir sticks



to create a botanical garden cocktail like the Wild Garden Cup (recipe below.)

"Old French and English pleasure gardens were not just gardens," says the former ad exec. "It was entertainment for the senses - touch and smell and taste. They were erotic places you went to gossip and flirt. That idea of how to ignite your senses was what was interesting about the Hendrick's partnership. We created the strawberries and body oil to combine with their botanicals. And if there's anything that inspires the Flora Adora, it's a cocktail sitting on that wide ledge of the tub in the bathhouse, the nicest place on the whole property and my favorite room. It's super indulgent and selfish to have a long hot bath in a big bathtub and look out the windows onto the rose garden.

"My training had always been in luxury goods and my parents were farmers, so I understood that we had to start treating

the farms like a luxury good, the same way we would sell an Hermes scarf or Cartier watch, we should sell produce. Mother Nature is the last great luxury house."

Hendrick's FLORA ADORA Wildgarden Cup

Ingredients:

- 2 Parts Flora Adora
- 1 Part Lemon Juice
- 1 Part Simple Syrup
- Top with Premium Sparkling Water
- 4 Raspberries
- 6 Mint Leaves
- 3 Cucumber Wheels

Method: Combine all ingredients in a highball glass filled with cubed ice. Top with sparkling water and stir gently. Garnish with cucumber wheels, mint leaves and raspberries. 🍷

HOT DAMN!

The Very Real Evolution Of A Gblynnne

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

Photo caption



ART CREDIT

Goblynne, says indie art-pop artist Molly Kirschenbaum, is a project name that comes from feelings of being a “creature” (their words), when others would try to force them into traditional gender normative boxes. That might have sucked during their formative years, but they’re reclaiming it now.

“The project is a lot about femininity and being told I was a woman, and then realizing that I’m nonbinary later on in my life,” they say. “I often had this feeling growing up, especially when I’d be in ‘girls night’ or whatever, that I was different but I could never describe it. And whenever I’d be asked to look really feminine and this particular sort of girly way, I often just had this feeling of, I’m a creature, I’m a monster. It was this intrusive, at the time very negative self-talk. As I got older and was birthing this project, I had this desire to reclaim or re-explore that feeling as something empowering. Like, if I am something different, how do I lean into that completely? What can my identity be outside

of gender and womanhood, and leaning more into the creature sphere of things.”

You simply have to admire that level of strength and self-awareness. And, as is so often the case with musicians, their art helped them with that exploration. The music was therapeutic. Kirschenbaum says that they started “doing music” when they were in high school.

“I moved to Newark when I was 18, I went to college over there and started gigging a lot there as a bassist,” they say. “I had a duo project with a friend of mine from home that we kind of kept going. In 2020, right before I graduated school, I got an offer to go on tour as a bassist for the first time, with the artist Claud. I got that job right before I graduated and I was like, ‘Oh my god, I’m set.’ And then the pandemic happened. Perfect! Then I spent the greater part of lockdown working on my own music and that’s how my solo project Gblynnne started. That was my pandemic magnum opus. This one album that I was fixated on and obsessed with. I’ve been producing my own stuff for a while, so I started

producing that myself.”

Kirschenbaum moved back to their hometown of Los Angeles in 2021 while the pandemic was still raging. But during the move, their external hard drive fell off of their desk, destroying a fully recorded album in the process (no backups!).

“Two years of total insanity where I was wondering if the gods were telling me to just stop,” they say. “As soon as that happened, I had the amazing fortune of meeting this producer and artist named

a really dark year making that alone in my apartment and doing it with someone else who brought this whole new life to the project,” they say. “It was a million times better.”

Kirschenbaum describes the Gblynnne sound as art-pop, but concedes that genre names aren’t really their thing.

“I have an immediate aversion to genre names, just because I feel like they never really cover the sound,” they say. “I feel like the best way to describe this album is ‘maximalist.’ It’s just a ton of sound.”

“Maximalist” is a great word to use for Gblynnne’s full, lush music. Phil Spector isn’t a cool reference anymore for non-musical reasons, but the Wall of Sound is alive, updated and non-problematic. Those themes are carried into the live environment, where Gblynnne takes a very theatrical approach. On an indie musician’s budget, of course.

“I take huge, major inspiration from my friends that do drag when it comes to live performance,” they say. “I feel like drag is the original artform that’s doing the most on a budget. It’s basically a crash course. You go to see young drag artists, and they look like they have a million dollars and you look closer and you’re like, ‘That’s made of paper towel.’ That’s my number one inspiration. I have a lot of wigs. I have Party City blonde wigs, and I wear a ton of makeup. A lot of bright colors. We have this audio intro playing affirmations for me, that’s comedic and fun. For me, it’s just a matter of how you stretch Party City and Michaels as far as they’ll go.”

Gblynnne’s latest release is the “Where This Goes” single, a love song which journals Kirschenbaum’s first trans relationship with a fellow nonbinary partner.

“It was this experience of falling in love as yourself,” they say. “Allowing yourself to be actually who you are in that space. That was pretty much the inspiration for it. Exploring the softness and sweetness that I think the rest of the album very purposefully lacks.”

Kirschenbaum is still playing bass with Claud, and that project has a couple of tour dates with boygenius coming up. Besides that though, Kirschenbaum will be concentrating on ensuring that Gblynnne continues to grow. Perhaps in some unexpected ways.

“I’m a big theater person – I really love, not exactly musical theater but theater that incorporates sound and vice versa,” they say. “So I’m working on constructing a live show, but it will be sort of an immersive theater piece that will be set in a 1950’s kitchen and it’s all about this creature trying to escape this kitchen with this album and finding their inner demon, in a good way.”

Obviously in a good way.

Gblynnne’s album Hot! :(is available from June 23. 📀

ENTERTAINMENT

RAY ROMANO AND BRAD GARRETT TALK PETE DAVIDSON'S *BUPKIS*

BY LINA LECARO



Emmy FYC season is here, which means “For Your Consideration” events and billboards have popped up all over town, once again touting TV shows to L.A. based Emmy voters (despite the writers strike and what looks like an impending SAG strike). Not all shows are worthy, of course. It remains to be seen what will actually score a nod this year, but Peacock has some well-deserved confidence about its slate and one show in particular tops the list: Pete Davidson and Lorne Michaels’ *BUPKIS*.

The show, loosely based on Davidson’s life, is quite brilliant, effortlessly walking the line between *Curb Your Enthusiasm* cringe comedy and heartfelt family drama. If you don’t have Peacock, and haven’t seen it yet, you’re in luck. The network just did a surprise drop of the critically acclaimed second episode on YouTube last week. They also broadcasted it on NBC this past Saturday after Saturday Night Live.

“Do as I Say, Not as I Do,” sees young Pete (Preston Brodrick) attending his uncle’s wedding after losing his father on 9/11 (as he did in real life). The performances are top-notch, especially Bobby Cannavale as the uncle and Edie Falco as his newly widowed mother. Joe Pesci also brings his curmudgeonly crude magnetism to the fold in the episode – and truly, he does so in the entire show. It’ll be a crime if all three are not nominated for gold statues for *Bupkis*.

Brad Garrett is another standout on the show, especially in the first episode when he awkwardly asks his nephew Pete to help him have sex with a prostitute (you have to watch it to understand what this actually means). Beyond the core cast, the list of cameos and guest actors on the show is equally stellar. We got to talk to one in particular – Ray Romano – who joined his old *Everybody Loves Raymond* co-star Garrett for a lively Zoom with *LA Weekly* about the show.

“I make a little quick cameo and I play myself, but it’s a very warped version of myself,” Romano tells us. “And that’s what was appealing about it. It was fun to go off the rails with it.”

Romano makes appearances near the end of the series, and it isn’t exactly clear what’s real and what is a figment of Davidson’s imagination, but he is a sort of guru to the young comic and seemingly, a bad influence, telling him how to handle his fame. “It’s the worst advice someone could give... we would just riff off camera and we had fun coming up with the most bizarre stuff for me to say,” Romano says.

By all accounts Romano is one of the nicest, realest guys in showbiz, so to see him as an arrogant, foul-mouthed quasi-villain leading our anti-hero down the wrong path is unnerving, but the show’s unpredictability is part of its appeal and it’s what makes it so fresh. You don’t quite know what you’re going to get from episode to episode. To that end, his old co-

worker Garrett finds himself in some of the most surprising situations on the show, including the aforementioned sex scene.

“Pete sent me the script and you know, it was on the pages very off the wall, very different,” Garrett shares. “In the episodes that I had read, I just loved how he was playing himself and showing his life. With his successes, with his art, and also with his challenges, and I loved how it was just very transparent. And it was very funny writing. After speaking with him, you know, how do you say no to him? And the cast with Pesci and Falco... I was honored and elated.”

Garrett says that Davidson encouraged everybody to go with the flow and play around with improvisation. “The writing is so good, so we do a few passes as written, but Pete likes to improv, as does Pesci, and I love it, too. So we were just trying different ways to keep it loose. Whatever happened, the direction everything went was wide open. So that’s a treat when you have a set like that.”

The show is set in the present, with Davidson living below his mom (Falco)’s home in Long Island, New York. It’s not some sad stinky basement, though – more like a tricked-out loft, with an impressive sneaker collection on display, and widescreen TV and comfy couches for friends to hang for frequent video game play. It’s basically every young guy’s dream palace/man cave.

As most everybody knows, the former SNL cast member is known for dating famous women (Kim Kardashian most recently) and he’s become a frequent meme and Twitter topic whenever a starlet becomes single. But that aspect of his persona is only briefly addressed. His current real life girlfriend, Chase Sui Wonders, is portrayed as his maybe true love but it’s mostly just a complicated friendship this season. Navigating fame is addressed, however, and in an inventive yet self-aware

way. Still, the show is about family first and foremost.

“Family is huge to Pete,” Garrett says. “It’s always been one of the main focal points in his real life – how does he balance this crazy life and still have his personal life with his family? So I think that’s just a great dynamic to see because it humanizes him. It also makes you care about him and it gives him a lot of latitude to do the outlandish stuff.”

Speaking of family, Romano and Garrett were arguably in one of the best familial sitcoms of all time, but sadly, we don’t get to see them together on screen in *Bupkis*, at least not this season. “I mean, the fun part for me was that he (Garrett) was on the show, and the even more fun part was that we weren’t going to interact. That was comedic in its own right,” Romano says with a chuckle. “Maybe if we’re back next season, maybe we’ll have a scene together.”

“But I don’t want to see you naked!” Romano tells Garrett.

We asked if the pair have stayed in touch over the years. “Yes!” Garrett answers. “We hung out the other night and Ray surprised me. I was working at my club in Vegas. He was working at The Mirage. It was my birthday so he hopped on my stage to announce it.”

Garrett has a popular comedy club at MGM Grand in Sin City, where you can see him often. Fans can also catch him in the drama *High Desert* with Patricia Arquette on Apple TV+. Romano has a new film he wrote and directed called *Somewhere in Queens*, which opened in theaters in April and just became available on VOD.

We’ll be hoping to see them together in Season 2 of *Bupkis*, which we’re sure will be back, even if it hasn’t been announced yet. It’s one of the best new comedies to contend for an Emmy this year. See for yourself on YouTube, this Saturday on NBC or streaming on Peacock. [A]

CANNABIS

THE HUMBOLDT DEP REPORT 2023

We Chatted With Some Of The World's Top Mixed-Light Cannabis Farmers As They Prep For The Annual Early Summer Harvest

BY JIMI DEVINE



PHOTO BY ESTEBAN LÓPEZ ON UNISPLASH

For many cannabis enthusiasts, the first real wave of the year's harvest starts with the light-deprivation-style grown cannabis that comes down each June.

The resulting cannabis is often shortened to deps by industry folks. They're

produced by farmers using various means to control the light cycle to force plants to flower. They started to become prevalent in the mid-2000s. For many years a lot of people just used the early dep harvests to pay their trimmers in the fall when their full-term har-

vest came down. But the quality of the product saw the prevalence of the cultivation style continues to grow to this day, where many expect solid deps to be a big part of the forthcoming national marketplace.

When it comes to deps, Humboldt County is one of the best places in the world to find the best representations of various strains grown that way. In the years The Emerald Triangle's farms weren't decimated by fire and smoke, it basically seemed impossible to grow better deps than the cream of the crop coming out of Humboldt's hills annually.

But as opposed to smoke, this year's early season saw farmers dealing with

with them.

"We're only about 10 days behind in Honeydew, and in Whitehorn we're pretty much on schedule," Vesuvio's founder Joe Jacovini told L.A. Weekly. He went on to note the early runs don't do so well in Humboldt's valleys, as opposed to the hilltops where they can get a lot of light.

One of Humboldt's most prominent dep cultivators is Jason Gellman of Ridgeline Farms. Ridgeline returned to the top of The Emerald Cup podium this year after previously winning back-to-back editions of one of the most coveted prizes in cannabis. With the exception of a few full-sun plants he does for personal use, Gellman is exclusively growing sun-grown deps. He does partner at another light-assisted facility in the winter.

We asked Gellman how the scene up north was looking, as he preps for the 2023 harvest to begin.

"We know we hear the prices are going up, I hear that a lot, but nobody has herb," Gellman told L.A. Weekly. "Does that mean it's going to really go up? Because usually when you get the herb, then where are all the buyers, but I feel like right now, this should be a good year. I know there's a pretty big drought of good-quality weed right now."

We asked Gellman if the trophy shelf makes it easier for him to get top dollar against the rest of the harvest.

"I always hear that a lot of the time and everyone thinks because I got a name and a brand, they think I can get more than X guy and it's really not the case," Gellman replied. "I mean you spend so much money packaging and prerolls and everything like that, it's really hard. The people who wholesale their weed probably make more money than I do at the end of day."

Despite the perils of packaging as he listens to the numbers start to fly around the bulk product, he's excited for the weeks ahead.

"I think it's going to be decent. It really depends on the weather. We've had unstable weather so far. For this first round. We didn't have sun for three days straight. And so if we don't get heat, we got small bud and that's going to really affect the quality of the whole dep harvest around here on round one. So we're playing with the weather, and we're hoping that it's shifting, it's a little more scalable, and I think it's gonna be a good year."

After going through the struggles of the past few years, 2023 is looking daily upbeat for Ridgeline.

"I think for the people that have hung in there are gonna get rewarded, be able to make a living and I mean that's what it's all about right now. Just trying to stay alive, make a living and keep our jobs," Gellman said. 🍀

ART

MARTINE SYMS SURVEYS WHAT REMAINS AT SPRUTH MAGERS

BY SHANA NYS DAMBROT



Can you make a portrait of a person by examining their belongings? Their old clothes perhaps? Their video search history, a forgotten photo album or stash of old cassette tapes? News clippings, saved shopping bags? Can you do the same for a whole city, a neighborhood, or a family? In *Loser Back Home*, Los Angeles-based artist and filmmaker Martine Syms works across video, sculpture, painting, installation, design, and photography in a multivalent interpretation of her life as it is, was, never was, and might be — and gives same evocative, abstracted treatment to the places she remembers, as well as the ephemera of the events that imprinted them, and often, the clothing she wore when it all went down.

In fact textiles, and specifically garments — both newly designed, often by Syms, as well as found — appear throughout her work. A pair of large abstract “paintings,” which are actually clothing and other fabrics stretched and mounted on aluminum, highlight sewn collage as a way for a story to exist within abstraction. Nearby, *Exercises for the Lone Actor*

embeds a small video screen in a hanging garment bag. The video depicts a police action, the bag remains zipped and its contents unknown to the viewer—a fancy-dress uniform, a suit for a funeral, anything or nothing at all. Worn as intended in film and performance-based video; deployed as physical components, imagery, and story signifiers; or deconstructed for use as raw material in wall

and sculpture works, clothing in Syms’ work performs as a stand-in for the body, a presence of the figure’s absence, and a trail of personal and collective relics and touchstones for past experiences.

In the much larger scale video *i am wise enough to die things go*, the actor speaks in the first person about her frustrations, obstacles, innately volatile nature due to her Californian nature and astrological chart. At one point she wears a shirt with the statement *To Hell With My Suffering* — a piece of clothing that appears elsewhere in Syms’ work in both photography and video, as well as in the upstairs gallery as part of a monumental photocollage. Facing the screens is a low-slung couch made of moving blankets. Also present in the video *i am wise enough to die things go* is a sequence featuring the large-scale, black-and-white line painting of a cartoonish cityscape, *Belief Strategy XVI*, which also hangs nearby. Its clean, bouncy lines have a certain coloring book quality, while at the same time, its large scale is perfect for its role as setting in the video work. In an exhibition about the loss of place and the preservation of memory as a part of selfhood, its starkly schematic openness and

Martine Syms
Loser Back Home
 Installation view, Sprüth Magers, Los Angeles, June 2–August 26, 2023
 Photo: Robert Wedemeyer






activation in the context of the video offers itself a site for creating new actions, places and memories.

If that painting feels minimal, the upstairs gallery installation *Dream about the forrest fingering me from both ends* is superlatively maximal. The panoramic photocollage borders on an immersive aesthetic. A full-surround of floor-to-ceiling pictures filled with highlighted and obscured details, juxta positional but with a settled dream logic, proceeds in all directions with a gritty, diaristic fragmentation of seemingly casual snapshots and important moments writ large. In its architectural scale and scope it contains multitudes in itself, but Syms augments it with carefully, and sometimes roughly, crafted sculptural objects, as well as bricolage cardboard boxes containing short videos — one a menacing and absurd extended visit from police to her studio, where it eventually emerges an alarm had gone off, the other a bifurcated tale of romance and ridicu-

lous adventure, with bits of art history and iconic landmarks for historical scale, and realist non sequiturs for levity.

The room thus surrounded by a multimedia pageant of everything all at once hosts a suite of chair-based stacked sculptures, furthering Syms' material language of schmatte, power, and commerce with text-based messaging enhancing her reclamation of easily discarded packaging and portable furniture as effective channels of more permanent kinds of communication. Her reuse and salvage constitutes a material action with implications for establishing true value under capitalism — but all the while, these works never stop keeping track of life's rhythm of inflection points, constructions of identity, intrusions of loss, and strategies of remembering.

Loser Back Home is on view at Sprüth Magers, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., through Aug. 26. Visit spruethmagers.com for details. 

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