

# I'M WITH HER

We visit the studios of five  
Los Angeles women who are redefining  
the art world from the Left Coast.

**"Every 10 years** or so becomes another 'year of the woman,' " says feminist art critic and curator Jenni Sorkin, who played a very big part in making 2016 one of those years by co-curating "Revolution in the Making: Abstract Sculpture by Women, 1947-2016" with Paul Schimmel for the March opening of Hauser Wirth & Schimmel in Downtown L.A. In the wake of that show, the gallery gave its fall slots to two other female powerhouses: Maria Lassnig and Isa Genzken. Meanwhile, the Broad's debut special exhibition was filled with 120 works by Cindy Sherman, just as Catherine Opie pulled the rare L.A. trifecta with concurrent shows at LACMA, MOCA and the Hammer Museum. And that's to say nothing of the numerous rising stars making their debuts at a raft of pioneering female-helmed galleries (like Various Small Fires, Shulamit Nazarian, Honor Fraser, ltd los angeles, Harmony Murphy and Night Gallery).

Still, says Sorkin, despite this year's recent flurry of activity—or the possibility of the first female POTUS—we're still far from parity for women artists in museum collections, solo exhibitions and gallery representation at large. "There is still so much work to be done," says Sorkin. "Let me be clear: I am very proud of 'RITM.' It is an important group show that consciously crafts an argument that abstract sculpture by women in the post-war period to the present absolutely changes the terms of historical engagement, as the canon has largely focused on male abstract painters. It offers an alternate historical trajectory. Group shows can initiate new ideas, but they cannot create systemic institutional change."

BY MICHAEL SLENSKE  
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## ANNA SEW HOY

**T**hough Anna Sew Hoy's mother taught art in Auckland—and befriended top Kiwi practitioners like Terry Stringer and Robin White during her daughter's infancy—becoming an artist wasn't really an option for the younger Sew Hoy as a teenager in Santa Monica, California. "I was steered toward classical violin and to be a doctor or something," says Sew Hoy, "that Asian immigrant cliché." Her orthopedic surgeon father did, however, give her some creative license with his stainless steel hip replacements as a child. Years later, he cast her wrist and ankle for *POW!*, Sew Hoy's 2008 installation at LA's <ART that featured the two life-size plaster casts (visitors signed the wrist and tagged it with "Vote Obama" slogans). "It was to show the passing down of manual knowledge and how this cannot happen through reading," she explains. In a subsequent opening at the Art, Design & Architecture Museum at the University of California, Santa Barbara, visitors inked the ankle cast with lines of scripture that were later crossed out (causing a minor controversy).

"It's sort of like a public square for two hours. If you did it today it would all be Black Lives Matter and Trump signs," says Sew Hoy. Her works have certainly skewed more conceptual since she studied with Lynda Benglis and Alice Aycock at New York's School

of Visual Arts: tumbleweeds made of Sapporo beer cans; stoneware dreamcatchers; faceted orbs that contain viewfinder-esque holes that are glazed on the inside, wrapped in cloth, and filled with sunglass lenses and hangers made of extruded clay, dressed in denim. Still, everything for the Chinese-American artist goes back to the body and her early love of Rodin.

"In art school these days we talk about de-skilling, but my sculpture is handmade so it's made to be viewed in the round, and it's definitely made with the person looking at it in mind—it anticipates that," says Sew Hoy, whose recent shows at L.A.'s Various Small Fires and New York's Koenig Clinton feature examples of her *Mirror Blob*, a work fitted with mirrors inspired by those in the rafters of Shinto temples. Meanwhile, the artist's *Psychic Body Grotto*, a new bronze "figurative gazebo," is destined for the Los Angeles State Historic Park this fall.

"There's going to be a multiplicity of surfaces," says Sew Hoy of the flowing, wasabi-like texture of the *Grotto*, which she first mastered with plaster while creating a piece representing the sushi condiment at SVA. "It's a lookout place for unexpected things to happen and it's against the Cartesian," she says, asking, "Why do rooms always need right angles?"

