

11 artists...

Are they any good? Are they far? Are those 11 artists now based in Los Angeles brave enough to become as involved that side of the world? We believe they are. And it can do no harm to soak up a little more light. And to live further West.

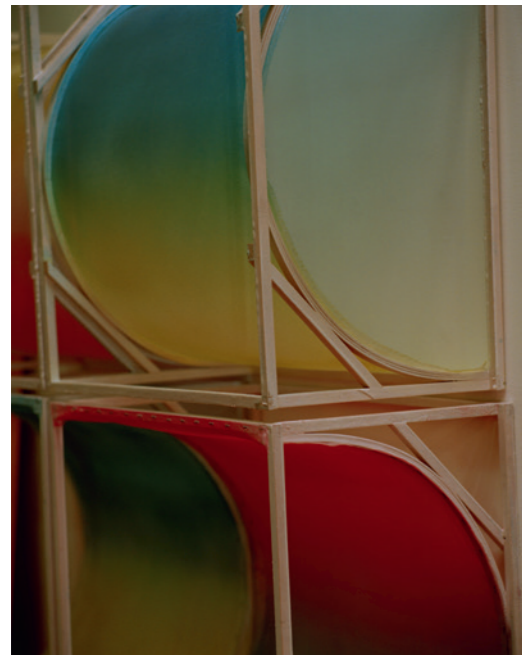
photography by Milan Zrnic, styling by Charlotte Collet

PHOTOGRAPHER'S ASSISTANT SERGIY BARCHUK. STYLIST'S ASSISTANTS MARJORIE CHANUT  
AND LAETITIA LEPORCQ. PRODUCTION BY ROSCO.

01

ARTIST

Thomas Linder



The glasshouse effect. With Thomas Linder, this term should not be understood as climatic harm, but as a reference to his work since the tempered transparency of his installations refers to some extent to his origins: a young man brought up in the family business of glasshouse farming. Wood and fibreglass constitute the main elements of his architecture and colour as well as light play the part of two suitable additives that foster the most unreal lightness. As if Thomas Linder's art only held onto one issue, the appeasement of the gaze, even a tantric dimension of experience. This re-enacted, albeit artificial, natural beauty, visible in sometimes gigantic compositions, finds its origin in everyday life, yellow carnations, oranges, etc... According to Linder, life is simple but grows more complex in installations that strive to duplicate that original emotion. This contemplative dimension of experience falls within a Californian artistic movement hailing back to the 60s.



It's the very work on materials that yield to the demand of the eye, coping with simplicity by harnessing more demanding materials.

There are undetectable light sources in Thomas Linder's work; they seem to originate in the outrageous flow of night lights that Los Angeles produces. It is hard not to see in these the light arborescence of this town made of neon and of LED lights. These lights also define the back scene of *Neon Demon*, the movie by Nicolas Winding Refn. Linder does his utmost to make reflections circulate in his mobile sculptures: the wood is stretched, the pigmented resin, although unfinished, is painted or cast. Bearing the feeling of a general design, perfectionism takes care not to go so far as to emulate life itself. His projects seem to be always in progress. The taste for unfinished reproduction can even be witnessed in a work Linder has downloaded onto his computer screen: the draft of a creation by Claes Oldenburg which he discovered with his own eyes during an exhibition devoted to the artist. In it, he caught sight of the model of a wood and cardboard bath whose shape was outlined by only a few brushstrokes. Enough said.

02

ARTIST

## Milano Chow

Milano Chow's drawings are strange, in that they interfere with the course of things. Frankly speaking, are we in sync with those trompe-l'œil that seem to spring from Schiaparelli's archives? When the latter found it original to order a few drawings and collages from her protégés Marcel Vertès or Jean Cocteau to decorate the walls of her Place Vendôme store?

Even stranger: how can an artist dedicate herself to executing such delicate graphite drawings when living in Los Angeles, a town that worships the present and large contemporary works? A dichotomy of time? Los Angeles also secretly perfects the art of autonomy. Beyond the appealing idea of a Californian art scene, as if all the artists were gathered in a single room, Los Angeles enjoys solitude. Indeed, Milano hides



behind the curtains she draws, the mysterious domain of a woman lonelier than might seem. Her drawings build a suspended bridge from the sunny American state to Europe, the Old World, to the days of the Surrealists. Is there a hint of jealousy here? Yes, in both senses of the world as illustrated by Alain Robbe-Grillet in his book "Jealousy": a jealous man watches his wife through the window of his house. Later, in "Last Year in Marienbad", Alain Resnais would emphasize this process with jealousies, a window blind that enables people inside a house to look outside without being seen. This polysemic approach suits Milano Chow's drawings in which the veil / unveiled plays out on trompe-l'œil curtains, to linger on engravings cut out from old fashion magazines that seem to gaze back at us. Whereas their original purpose was to be the object of our gaze. Envy and desire are turned around. Introspective drawings?



Dress by [Céline](#) and her own shoes. Opposite page: Shoes by [Lemaire](#).



03

ARTIST

Canyon Castator

In a few years' time, it would be interesting to track all the creations that have been generated with the help of social networks, all those computer- or smartphone-generated relationships, amidst the great racket of contemporary art. Canyon Castator, a former Brooklyn resident, moved to Los Angeles, looking for the special sentimental remoteness that fills his paintings. As if, on the other side of the world, in a jam-packed yet lonely urban environment, hearing about strangers could become a new way of connecting. Thank you Facebook.



The canvases by this young American, who could have taken over his grandparents' ranch and raised cattle, deal with the authenticity of all in all artificial relationships. Those are today's sweet little lies, as if we were closely related all our social network connections. And yet, our Sundays are still sad and lonely. When he was based in Brooklyn, Canyon used to design tattoos. He liked that art that afforded relative proximity, his tattoos being a far cry from the skilled and nearly industrialized drawings that can be found all over town. No, Canyon's tattoos looked like unfinished messages, ugly, as if they'd gone on a bender and suffered a terrible hangover the following day.





Canyon Castator's art is constantly moving back and forth between the intimacy of a circle, the actuality of relationships and virtual acquaintances. The strangers on the other side of the computer screen have already become close. Here, the world depicted in the movie "Her" by Spike Jonze has performed a U-turn. There lies all the ambiguity of his paintings today. Canyon had set himself a rule, namely to ask various photographers to shoot the portrait of people they didn't know, while Canyon depicted them in high spirits in friendly and colourful scenes. Close up, and even from a distance, the approach seems obscene, even naff, well short of the evolution of figuration. It resembles a wild vaudeville. We have so much fun with Canyon. A deceitful era?

04

ARTIST

Kaari Upson

Grasping Kaari Upson's intentions is no easy feat since her work encompasses various contemporary art movements.

Her sculptures for instance are in her mind akin to paintings. Yet with respect to her still youthful work, a certain melancholy, even desolation forces its way through, as with Sophie Calle who is still looking for what she has felt too much courage to find. Kaari, for her part, searches through her mother, even bids her to find never-ending redemption! The path of memories takes strange and twisted turns, yet merely reflects the angst of a consumerist world that alienates, cuts and divides up emotions. With



an almost cheerful title, loaded with the promise of an American Way of life, "MMDP" (My Mother Drinks Pepsi, 2014),



conflicts always occur inside with Kaari. The forms of her creations are undeniably loaded; they convey a sentiment that struggles to escape its own shell and to take shape. In this opus, sculptures resemble fossils, heaps of Pepsi bottles are spread out and over one hundred stuffed dolls are dressed in the workday outfit of the artist's mother. The traditional meaning of the term consumption resounds with all those woes, consumption, consume: spat-out mass digestion that always traps relationships, mother-and-daughter relationships for instance. Inspired by the state of things, Kaari produces a

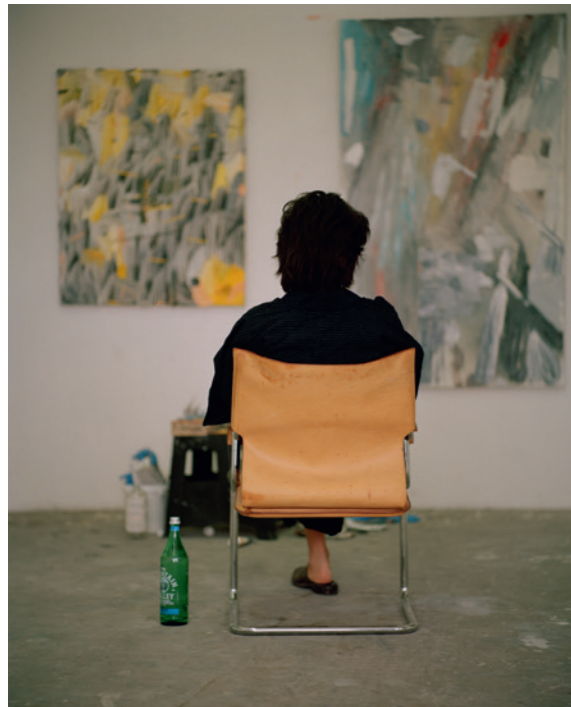
multitude of objects, like a sentimental journey, that may sometimes interact. One could read in them the sentimental

cracks of Cathy de Monchaux's installations. Yet the aesthetic of her works takes on the appearance of almost domestic sculptures, and all seem in a sense inhabited by an interpretation of everyday life, hauling out from their context objects from her home, of her mother's, belonging to strangers, like a vessel of souvenirs. It's like going down to the cellar or up to the attic of a family home. But Kaari has set our minds at ease with one of her latest exhibitions, "Good Thing you are not Alone". Her works aspire to interact with us and thus prove to us that we, our feelings, our suffering etc., are all interchangeable. Although it is hard to spot at first sight, Kaari Upson's creeping melancholy overwhelms us, is contagious. The angst that oscillates between the private and the public, states that we are not alone and that our potential, our past and our future, can be swapped. From then on, a certain fluidity seems to seize her works, that hover between total presence and total absence. We are all unique: that is Kaari's message to us. Nice!



Coat by [A.W.A.K.E](#) and visor model's own. Opposite page: Printed and burned shearling jacket by [Andreas Kronthaler](#) for [Vivienne Westwood](#).





That's what happens when you watch too much news, when you binge on information, unchanging, and when the scale of information goes so far as to saturate your work, as is the case with Dashiell Manley's paintings. Information overload crops up in the canvases: the abundance of social networks has permeated up to the very mind of the artist. We are sponges. Famous for his very abstract work filled with headlines from the New

York Times and with all of today's woes, from Isis to Ebola, Dashiell Manley must have felt swamped. He decided at the time to take a meditative break, to practice a sort of DIY Buddhism and locked himself up in his studio. He then depicted more melancholy moments on canvas, played around with matter to add layers, to the point where the frame chocked on this new beauty. Those creations seem to produce their own painting. He thought he would produce a certain ugliness, yet his canvases transformed of their own volition. They are to be contemplated languorously. The brushstrokes are smooth. As if colour, aided by strokes, fought against the very ugliness of the world. Dashiell's painting stands firm

and transforms raw materials, texts, snippets of today's world, while gaining its own speed. A certain mobility transpires in his signs, scratches, doodles: a gesture. As Dashiell underlines, these paintings are elegiac, they embody today's rage and silence since a certain meditative solitude inhabits them. They pick up on a few successful abstract attempts by the École de Paris. Dashiell claims that his latest works bear the destiny of his former themes and lament their end. But are these paintings even finished? Dashiell is never certain of it. They impose a movement the frame cannot stop: their colours go in several directions and make way for deep blacks that may become stranded in a sea of greys. A movement of the world is present here. Based on sullen news clippings, from the New York Times to Charlie Hebdo, the abstraction found in Dashiell Manley's latest work echoes the tremors of a threatening world that brandishes a certain tragedy. Beauty and disaster together. One cannot but see the power of the hurricane which, a few weeks ago, aroused the interest of the media, although it destroyed everything in its path.



# 05

ARTIST

## Dashiell Manley

06

ARTIST

Anna Sew Hoy



With your run-of-the-mill art schools, let's just say that the dematerialisation of hand-made production is still very much topical. Congratulations Warhol! Anna Sew Hoy on the other hand embraced clay a long time ago. Or rather her hand did. Or did her father's occupation as an orthopaedic surgeon bring her to design those sculptures that seem membered or dismembered, although they don't really betray any anthropomorphic feature. It so happens her father gave her a hipbone for one her sculptures. What a gift! As for the clay used by Anna Sew Soy, it is mistreated to say the least: inspired as she is by ancient crafts, her creations don't follow a pragmatic purpose, not yet. A dreamcatcher, those slightly hippy totems, stands next to an oblong sculpture covered in jeans, a local texture, before lycra shorts took over the LA streets and replaced this Americana symbol. Creations that often emanate from everyday objects to end up as strange shapes co-



vered in seemingly inappropriate textures. In her life-size ceramics, velvet covers everything or almost, except a few glazed orifices. A kind of incongruousness, which, as you discover all her creations gathered in an exhibition space, induces other perceptions, different angles. Anna Sew Hoy is also happy for the public to appropriate those exhibition spaces, to stroll around and to interact. Spaces to consider like new galaxies: on the inside, lifeless clay creatures like comets possessed of a strange subjectivity. Some visitors were able to address the public as well as to scribble on the sculptures "Vote Obama" or to paraphrase the Scriptures. In this collection of objects, Anna Sew Hoy, the daughter of Asian immigrants, is looking for a new space, a new vision of forms, an environment which she considers to be the antithesis of the paragons of architecture, in a town made of angles and straight shapes. She recently delivered a public commission to the Los Angeles State Historic Park entitled "Mirror Blob", an intricate piece of cut mirrors inspired by Shinto temples. A sort of belvedere that eludes any rational analysis. It's true, why should works of art always have angles?

07

ARTIST

## Srijon Chowdhury

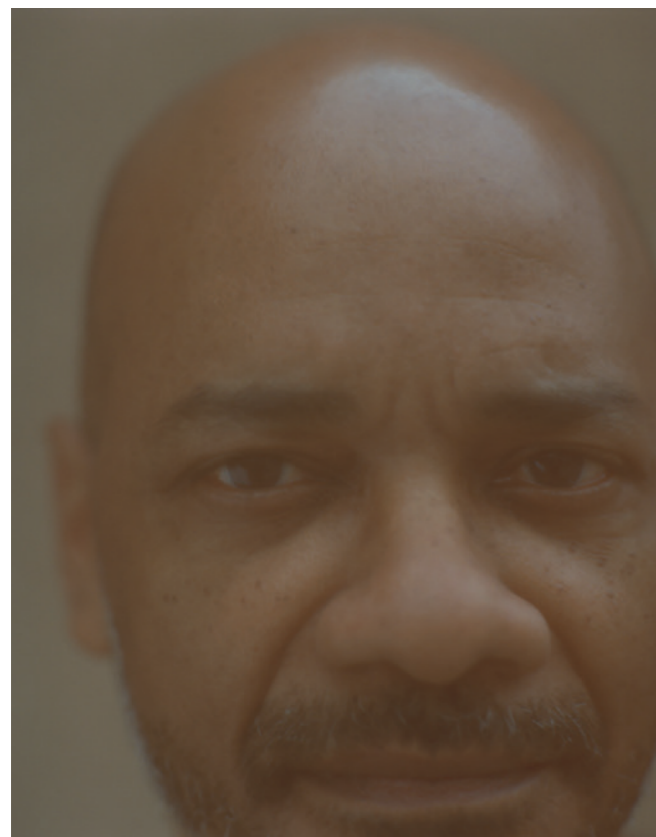


Left: Shirt and pants by [Lemaire](#). Right: Sweater by [CristaSeya](#) and pants by [Lemaire](#). Opposite page: Hat by [A.W.A.K.E](#) and shirt by [Lemaire](#).



You have to imagine scenes with us, you and I, as people say. Then sad or happy scenes, albeit elapsed in Srijon's paintings. Certainly, there is a hint of that in Los Angeles, with the sun, when solitude rears its heads and grips the town with a completely different vibe. That's also where movie legends are made; and that's where Srijon Chowdhury of Indian descent was born. Some of his paintings are blue, a monochrome that engulfs when you empirically discover, as the eye grows accustomed, that a surprise is concealed behind each hue that submerges everything. The artist enjoys creating his own myths, renewing with the memory of other paintings and making an impression on the spectator. Significant. Unfathomable. A few canvases share an impressionist feeling, a historical analysis which Srijon likes to conjure up. There is colour for a start, but also a few motives which confine the action. The painted arches for instant, reminiscent of old almost biblical constructions. Between those arches, everyday scenes loom: people are smoking or on the phone etc. One discovers dark figures: it can be a father figure, Srijon's father, burying his grandfather next to a mosque ("Dad Entering my Great-Great-Grandfather Asgar's Mosque").

The idea of another style of painting, more ancient, prevails, as in scenes reminiscent of Poussin, like in his "The Funeral of Phocion" in which the title already contains its interpretation. And then, all the activity seems drowned out, encapsulated like a brief moment in time. These paintings contain both history and stories, they aspire to create a myth in the same way religious painting managed to guzzle down a few truths before turning them into symbols.



08

ARTIST

Rodney McMillian



There are things we tolerate and things we must kiss goodbye to. What does it mean? Rodney McMillian knows better than anyone else. His works speak of absence and of presence, but neither implicate an emotional unbalance. In his own way, Rodney McMillian revives them, challenges them. And all this starting from a seat, a chair or an abandoned armchair. A living room chair for instance. A piece of furniture that alone encapsulates all the attention granted by this black artist to the disused products of our era. To animate in turn with another force. So, a chair. Rodney found one on Sunset Boulevard and loaded it in his car. He decided to refurbish it, and endow it with a legend too. It is now a work of art. It isn't a very expensive piece of furniture, it isn't very well made, abandoned because used, not solid and so old-fashioned. But everyone needs to be able to sit. It's a chair for those classes the artist is familiar with, black Americans who, as we know, did not always enjoy the same equal status than other residents in America. So naturally, for this son of a bus driver and of a mother working for The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, his work suggests the fragile border between the personal and the political domains, on the part of a black American artist of African descent. But reducing McMillian's work to this sole socio-political observation would equate with stepping aside from the emotional field he invests. These are the post-consumption objects he challenges. He strives to give them renewed

meaning, warmth: home, love, body, especially black bodies. This chair could be Duchamp's urinal had he met the American working classes. It is crafted like the chair painted by Van Gogh when he painted the visit of his friend Gauguin when he came to Arles. It was the seat of worship, of respect. One of his videos informs us even more about this recaptured absence. It shows the different reactions to Michael Jackson's death. In this sense, should we worship the chair on which so many souls are seated, whether iconic like Michael Jackson, or anonymous, coloured people, the destitute, alcoholics, forgotten people? And why do we feel this emotion as we look at his other seat, « Couch » (2012)? It is a piece wittingly damaged by a drill, then stuffed and padded. As if the person occupying the seat had always held on to the same furniture, a favourite piece. It was his chair. Rodney offers these objects a new memory, like the trace of a former owner, a patina of absence that is far more sensuous than intellectual. This chair speaks. The melancholy of mass-produced objects is replaced here by the idea of a blaze of glory to honour the deceased. Works like ex-votos of our own condition. A beautiful absence.



09

ARTIST

## Becky Kolsrud



Where are the women? For Becky Kolsrud, a Los Angeles native and UCLA graduate, they are in an undefined location, unnamed, and the framework of her portraits confines or frees them.

One or the other. It's a vision that removes them to a place untouched by the present, and remote from their initial reason of being. They are charming, elegant, yet seem entrapped in a gilded jail, like in Douglas Sirk or Todd Haynes movies, filmmakers who like to constrain their female victims in a pretty straightjacket that might burst. As we view these women's portraits, *Feud*, the latest TV series comes to mind, with its actresses, its celebrities from a bygone era, Faye Dunaway and Bette Davis, forced to put on a brave face, the face of their gender, feminine and cheerful, while their private lives were going down the drain.

Here lies the decorative ambiguity of the positive vibes that Becky Kolsrud's paintings exude. Since they have been eroticizing the world since the dawn of time, women, those women do not shy from pleasing viewers, even if it means ending up together on a shelf in one of Becky's exhibitions. If they wish to, they may strip, eat or pose in the nude. Here's a whole army of women who in Becky Kolsrud's pictures raise the question of the object: how we grasp it, how we desire it.



Above: Jumpsuit by [Gucci](#). Right: Gloves by [Kenzo](#), printed suit by [Andreas Kronthaler for Vivienne Westwood](#) and shoes by [Timberland](#) model's own.

These women are also archetypes. But where does Becky unearth all these female characters: "Inspiration comes to me as I stroll, as I drive through Los Angeles." One day, we will have to address the issue of the creative power we feel as we drive through Los Angeles. A topic in its own right.



# 10

ARTIST

## Stanya Kahn



Stanya Kahn's post-modernist audacity takes on the form of videos and strange performances that may initially throw viewers off balance. Should they watch everything and how should they watch? Indeed, those films (is the term even appropriate?) depict a fall from grace that spans a lifetime, in which the protagonists aren't always pictured in the best light. A sense of the meaningless that one should experience first-hand. Since when should one rack one's brains to make sense of the images that file past? But there is a humour, that even becomes the nearly dandy prose of those strange images that challenge us. Showcased this year at New York MoMA's PS1, she broaches life, death and personal feelings intimately linked to the political

field. Whether the heroes in the video like it or not. Indeed, the urgent need to take action emerges from this mayhem of scenes; a mother gives birth to a child although she is demented; several cameras capture scenes of people in chat rooms, in the streets. Filmed over the course of six years, a project duration not allowed by movies that go too fast today, "Stand in the Stream" is an ode to politics in a poetic vision of genres, the dismemberment of senses, of the course of things when everything collides with the awful yet colourful reality.



## 11

ARTIST

## Peter Shire

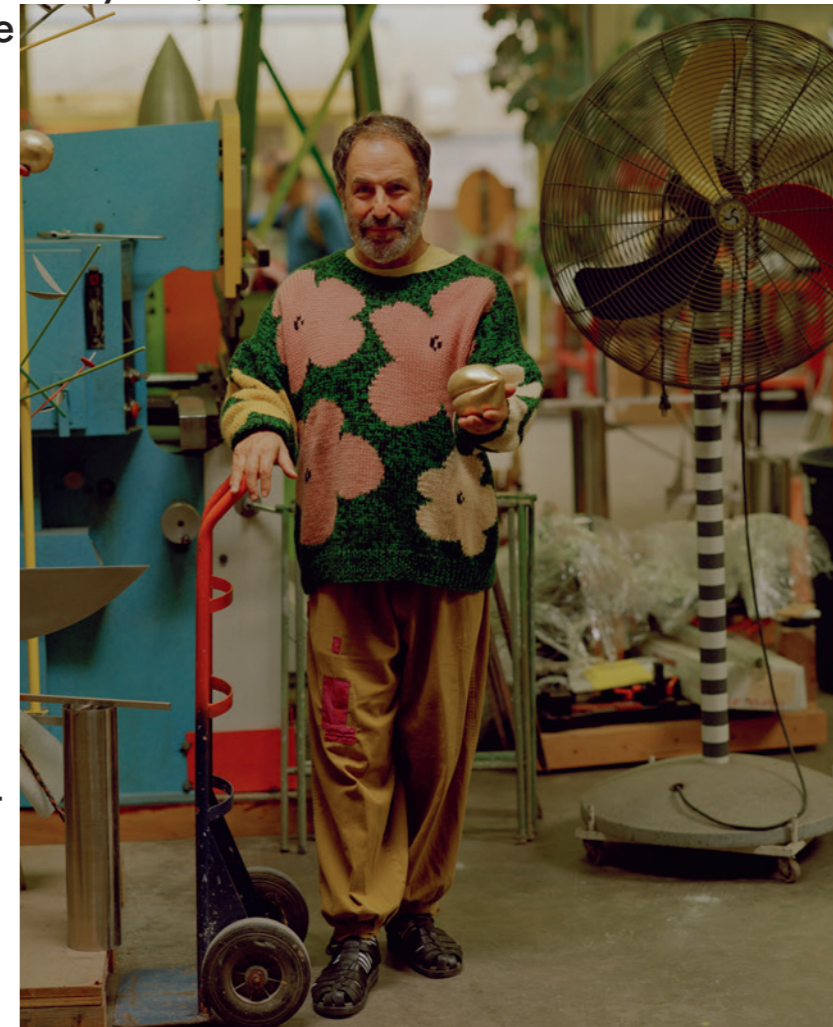


Where are Peter Shire's objects heading to? A colour centre? As if driven by a centrifugal force that folds them into angles or vibrant skirting boards. It's the eclecticism of a temporary madness that has been going on for a while, as if the classical foundations of high-brow and

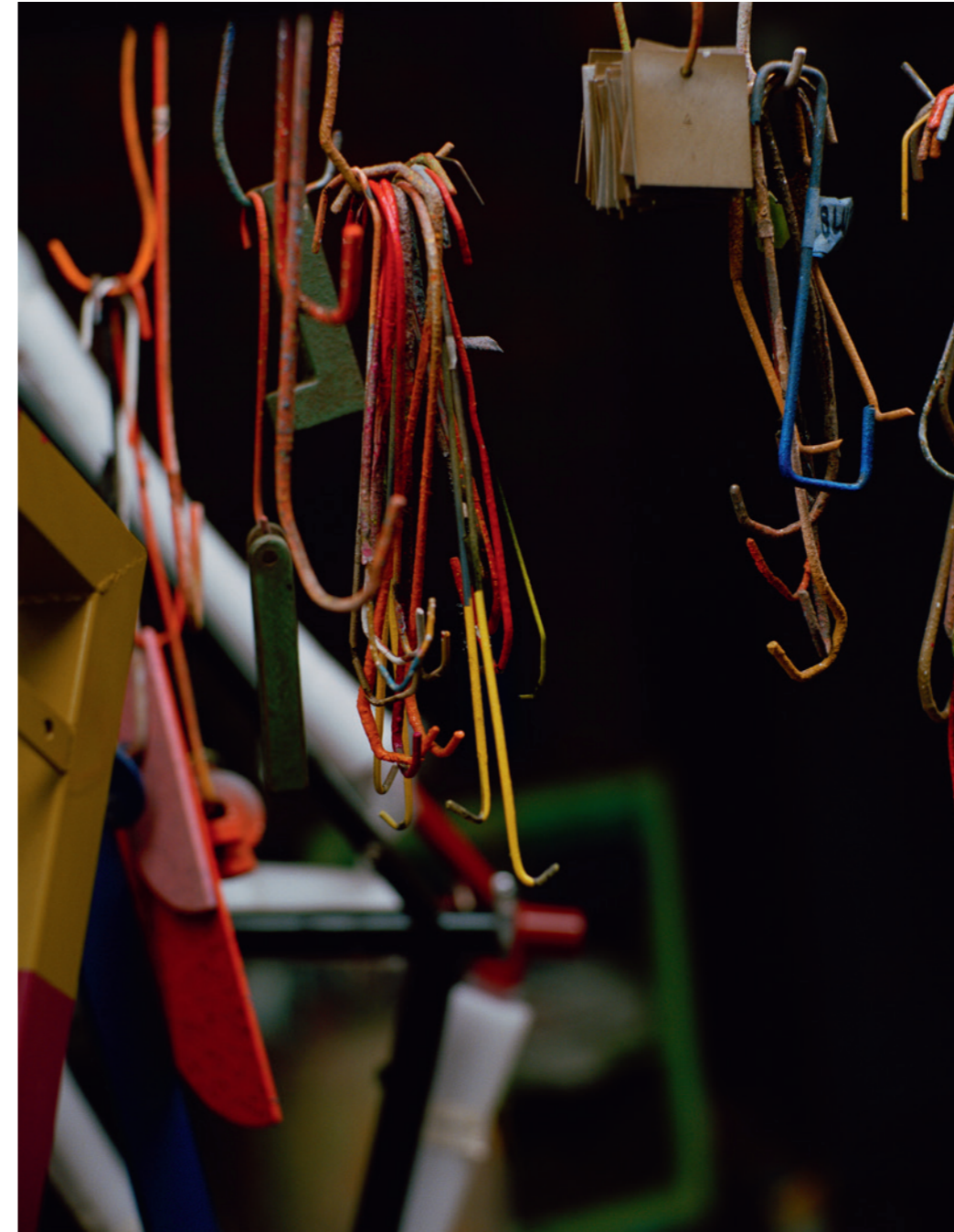
low-brow art had changed the destination of those creations. Peter Shire always feels inspired by the brilliance of his neighbourhood, namely Echo Park and its Latino vibe... Certain objects hover between industrialization, since they are mass manufactured - his mugs sell like hotcakes - and the artefacts of a mind guided by the hand of a craftsman. His studio begins like a garage and ends like a long museum storage space. To the point where you're almost dying to get out. You could compare Peter Shire's career to David Hockney's, notwithstanding a taste for swimming



pools that got to someone's head, but his path took him the opposite way, from the USA to Europe. In the racket of his small architectural objects, Peter Shire's small Pisa towers don't collapse. The man can't be pigeonholed, isn't part of the great family of contemporary art, which he steers clear of. Peter Shire carries on, marches on and doesn't challenge the course of things. His creations complement one another and interact, like the books of Borges' great library. There is a frenzied repetition in Shire's work, teapots pile up as if one has given birth to the next. Should it be viewed as the digest of today's neuroses? Teapots are the perfect opportunity for a rehab of domestic life, to overcome the previous day's binge drinking. Frenzy and respite. Then, there is the notion of pastiche, of pantomime. All of Shire's creations are almost clownish, showcasing the surface, teasing our good taste while leaving the original and precious material that is clay unchallenged. They are pimped with garish colours. The ceramics boast mischievous references to design institutions: they interact with the De Stijl era, the Bauhaus and the more recent Memphis movement. According to Shire, the material can broach anything, move closer and closer:



the iconic and kitsch shapes of the cookies in Fortune Teapot (1974) or the very erotic Stacked Peaches Teapot and Fruit Basket (2005). Based on this assemblage that exudes raw matter, made-up and disguised, Shire's creations have crashed the field of design as much as contemporary art, always with a coloured, absurd, redeeming vibration.



Jacquard robe by [The Elder Statesman](#) and T-shirt model's own.