

Hammer Museum at UCLA

Made in L.A. 2023: Acts of Living

OCT 1 – DEC 31, 2023

Made in L.A. 2023: Acts of Living is the sixth iteration of the Hammer's biennial exhibition highlighting the practices of artists working throughout the greater Los Angeles area.

These practices embrace the value of craft, materiality, performance, and collectivity. The biennial situates art as an expanded field of culture that is entangled with everyday life; community networks; queer affect; and indigenous and diasporic histories.

Made in L.A. 2023: Acts of Living takes its title from a quote by the renowned Los Angeles artist Noah Purifoy, which is inscribed on a plaque at the Watts Towers: "One does not have to be a visual artist to utilize creative potential. Creativity can be an act of living, a way of life, and a formula for doing the right thing." The history of Watts Towers—built by Simon Rodia over the course of 33 years and then preserved by the local South L.A. community, including Purifoy, to become a hub for arts education—embodies this ethos and offers a salient metaphor for this biennial.

Made in L.A. 2023: Acts of Living is organized by Diana Nawi and Pablo José Ramírez, with Ashton Cooper, Luce Curatorial Fellow.

Erica Mahinay

Erica Mahinay works between painting and sculpture, creating gestural works that relate to the body even as they rely on a vocabulary of abstraction. The artist paints on traditional support materials like canvas and linen but also on other fabrics, such as silk parachute fabric. Mahinay applies paint with both a paintbrush and her hands, creating opaque and see-through areas, and she also uses dyeing techniques that saturate fabric with color. She draws our attention to the way a painting is made, emphasizing the substrate and infrastructure of the object and giving materiality to color and gesture.

Mahinay's sculptures have a relationship to domestic objects and the body, and she uses unexpected materials and organic shapes to destabilize our recognition of familiar forms. These works often reference the mirror as a form and also as a larger metaphor for how artworks can provide a space of self-reflection. The mirror-like objects in these works are made from semitranslucent swirling colored glass, offering not reflections of ourselves but instead images that are chaotic and creative, suggesting portals to the larger world.