

Press Release

## L.A. Story

12 September 2024 – 4 January 2025

Hauser & Wirth West Hollywood

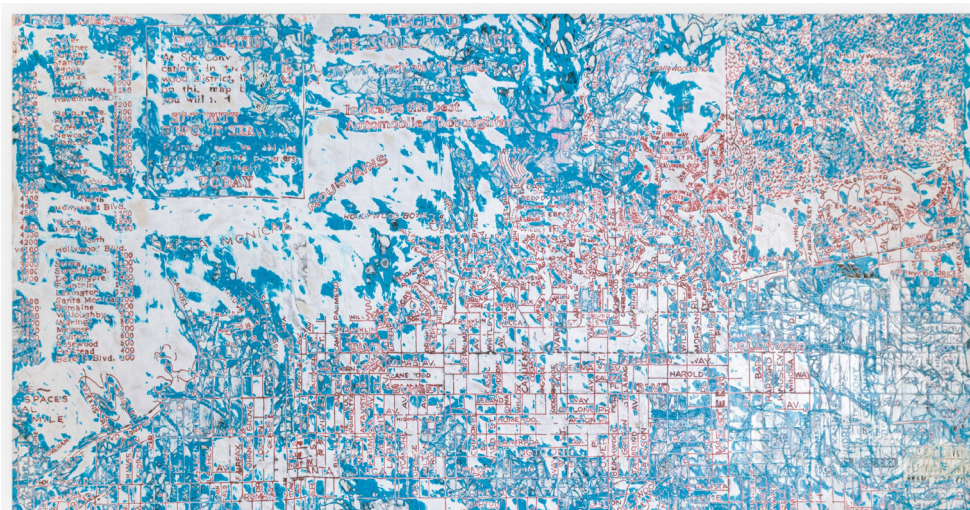


**Los Angeles...** Titled for and inspired by the 1991 film beloved for its playfully satiric and unabashedly romantic foray into the land of Los Angeles swimming pools, Hollywood ‘machers,’ earthquakes, freeways and extravagant sunsets, Hauser & Wirth West Hollywood will present the group exhibition ‘L.A. Story.’ Co-organized by Ingrid Schaffner, senior curatorial director, and Mike Davis, senior director, in dialogue with the film’s writer and star Steve Martin, this exhibition brings together a cross-generational array of works by artists whose depictions of Los Angeles reverberate with the movie’s celebration of a place unlike any other.

The movie ‘L.A. Story’ endures as Martin’s love letter to Los Angeles, where he lived for many years and continues to work on projects today. Fittingly, Hauser & Wirth’s exhibition suggests a loosely cinematic narrative echoing that of the film in which Martin plays ‘wacky weekend weatherman’ Harris K. Telemacher, a TV personality searching for love and the meaning of life amid LA’s continuous sprawl. Famously clichéd as devoid of both culture and even weather itself, the Los Angeles that Harris traverses is nevertheless replete with wonders. These include bona fide art treasures he revels in so that we, the film’s viewers may, too: When Harris roller-skates through the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the petals of painted Van Gogh sunflowers wave as he passes; when he expounds on the sensual figurative elements, he alone detects in a definitively abstract red Color Field painting by Helen Frankenthaler, that we can almost see them ourselves.

‘I’m thrilled that ‘L.A. Story’ is the focus of so many wonderful artists and a wonderful gallery, Hauser & Wirth, which is just across the street from the Troubadour, where I first stepped foot on Santa Monica Blvd., which began my L.A. sojourn.’

—Steve Martin



Far from literal, the relationship between Martin's film and the exhibition is a mutual embrace of special affection for the surreal charms of Los Angeles. The movie opens with a giant hot dog floating across the sky above sunbathers and splashing swimmers at a poolside party. The exhibition likewise opens with a splash via a group of paintings that feature quintessentially Californian backyard swimming pools by **David Hockney**, **Eric Fischl** and **Calida Rawles**. From there, 'L.A. Story' the exhibition unfolds to spotlight the everyday comingling of the banal and the enchanted that is so unique to Los Angeles. **Florian Maier-Aichen's** photograph of the coast of Malibu, taken with infrared film, appears at once toxic and dreamy. A monumental canvas by **Mark Bradford** flickers with abstracted elements that seem to advance and recede from a map of central LA embedded in its painterly structure. In his work on view, **Ed Ruscha** puts landmark Los Angeles street names and majestic snowcapped mountains on a par for the sublime. And **Vija Celmins'** cinematic close-up of a hand firing a gun conjures not only film noir classics and Westerns churned out by the Hollywood studios of yore, but also another scene from Martin's film in which a shootout erupts between aggressive drivers speeding along the Wild West of L.A.'s freeways.

Though often pretending intellectual incuriosity, Harris K. Telemacher secretly longs for the magic he sees in the masterworks of great artists in L.A.'s museums. Steve Martin himself is a noted collector and longtime champion of the arts, particularly in Los Angeles, where he has been a friend to many artists and institutions. Martin played a curatorial role in the Hammer Museum's critically admired 2016 exhibition 'The Idea of North,' the first major survey of paintings by Canadian artist Lawren Harris, and has loaned important paintings from his personal collection to other significant museum exhibitions.

Visitors to the gallery will sense another of the many subplots of the exhibition in the mix of artists whose works are on view. **Kevin Appel**, **Hilary Pecis**, **Jennifer Rochlin**, **Henry Taylor** and **Lesley Vance** and others constitute a cohort creating new L.A. stories today, contributing to the profile of a city that has achieved the reputation of a global contemporary art epicenter since the making of the movie 'L.A. Story' at the dawn of the 1990s.

**HAUSER & WIRTH**

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Gallery hours:  
Tuesday – Saturday, 11 am – 6 pm

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**Caption and courtesy information:**

Florian Maier-Aichen  
Untitled  
2023  
C-print  
119.4 x 153.7 cm / 47 x 60 1/2 in  
© Florian Maier-Aichen  
Courtesy of the artist and BLUM Los Angeles, Tokyo, New York  
Photo: Justin Craun

Mark Bradford  
When the Hilltop Gets Heavy  
2016  
Mixed media on canvas  
199.4 x 381 x 5.7 cm / 78 1/2 x 150 x 2 1/4 in  
© Mark Bradford  
Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth  
Photo: Joshua White