

Los Angeles, Give Me a Miracle: Benefit Show for Ruby Neri

07.03.2025
17.04.2025

MASSIMODECARLO is delighted to present *Los Angeles, Give Me a Miracle: Benefit Show for Ruby Neri*, a group exhibition bringing together LA artists in a shared gesture of support. Los Angeles is a city of paradox - of dreams and disasters, reinvention and loss. It is a place where the promise of renewal is as present as the risk of devastation. For artist Ruby Neri, the recent wildfires in LA burned her home, studio, and decades worth of work. Yet in the wake of destruction, the strength of the creative community has proved that in this city, solidarity endures.

Alongside Neri's work, the exhibition features Aaron Garber-Maikovska, Karin Gulbran, Spencer Lewis, Brian Rochefort, Ferrari Sheppard, and Lily Stockman. Garber-Maikovska's bold, gestural compositions vibrate with raw energy, while Gulbran's mirrors blur the lines between art and craft, transforming functional objects into elaborate reflections. Lewis's textured canvases capture both chaos and relief, and Rochefort's bulbous sculptures echo the primal forces that shape this land - eruption, destruction, and rebirth. Sheppard's vivid floral compositions evoke domesticity, romance, and quiet contemplation, while Stockman's luminous biomorphic arrangements distill the delicate beauty of nature.

And at the heart of it all, Ruby Neri, whose fearless, expressive figures embody both celebration and catharsis, drawing us into emotionally charged narratives. Her ceramic works, defying conventional function, act as both barriers and gateways, shielding fragile interior worlds while simultaneously inviting us in.

Ultimately, *Los Angeles, Give Me a Miracle: Benefit Show for Ruby Neri* is an act of collective care. Los Angeles is a city built on reinvention, but its true foundation is its people. This exhibition is about more than one artist's loss - it is about a community standing together in the face of hardship. *Los Angeles, Give Me a Miracle* does not wait for divine intervention; it affirms that the miracle is already here, in the hands of those who refuse to let each other fall.

Ruby Neri

Ruby Neri (b. 1970, San Francisco) explores the human body, bridging West Coast artistic traditions with a global array of art historical and anthropological influences. Her work situates the figure as a porous, expressive form, navigating pleasure, vulnerability, and existential complexity.

Neri's practice is rooted in craft, drawing connections to the Bay Area Figurative and Funk movements while also engaging with the visceral, performative approaches of Los Angeles-based artists such as Mike Kelley and Paul McCarthy. Over the past two decades, she has been a central figure in the resurgence of ceramics within contemporary art, creating tactile, anthropomorphic vessels that blur the boundaries between functional form and emotional architecture.

Her use of airbrushed glazes - a nod to her graffiti roots with the San Francisco Mission School - imbues her ceramics with emotional immediacy. Neri's work continues to evolve, crafting a uniquely intimate dialogue between materiality, emotion, and identity.

Neri's work has been featured in numerous exhibitions worldwide. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include *Staircase*, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, USA (2024); *Paintings*, Salon 94, New York, USA (2024); *Weights and Measures*, Kosaku Kanechika, Tokyo, J (2023); *Alicia McCarthy and Ruby Neri / MATRIX 270*, organized by Apsara DiQuinzio, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, University of California, Berkeley, USA (2018).

Recent group exhibitions include *Bowls, Boxes, Plates & Vessels*, Parker Gallery, Los Angeles, USA (2024); *Opening the Mountain*, MarinMOCA Annex, Marin Museum of Contemporary Art, Novato, USA (2024); *15x15: Independent 2010-2024*, Independent New York, USA (2024); *Storage Wars, The Hole*, Los Angeles, USA (2023); *Group Shoe 3*, curated by Mario Ayala, House of Seiko, San Francisco, USA (2023); *The Glover Group: A Los Angeles Story*, MASSIMODECARLO, Milan, I (2023); *20*, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles (2023); *Funk You Too! Humor and Irreverence in Ceramic Sculpture*, Museum of Arts and Design, New York, USA (2023);

5 Artists, Kosaku Kanechika, Tokyo, J (2023); The Drawing Centre Show, Consortium Museum, Dijon, F (2022); Lonesome Crowded West: Works from MOCA's Collection, curated by Rebecca Lowery, The Geffen Contemporary at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; USA (2022); The Flames: The Age of Ceramics, Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, F (2021); Mass Ornament: Pleasure, Play, and What Lies Beneath, curated by Alison M. Gingeras, South Etna Montuak, Montauk, USA (2020).

Aaron Garber-Maikovska

Aaron Garber-Maikovska was born in Washington D.C., in 1978). He lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

Aaron Garber-Maikovska's work pushes the boundaries of traditional painting as his somatic experience heavily informs his creative process. His artistic practice is a reflection of the interdependence between his physical body and the work he produces. The Los Angeles-based artist employs various techniques to produce richly textured and vibrantly coloured abstract compositions. In his paintings, he creates fields of colour that blend and interact with each other, juxtaposed with a single continuous line. He describes this line as a character that he improvises with, bringing the bi-dimensional surface to life in a way that echoes his somatic approach to creating art.

Garber-Maikovska's work is in the permanent collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; Long Museum, Shanghai.

Karin Gulbran

Karin Gulbran was born in Seattle, WA, in 1967. She lives and works in Los Angeles.

Gulbran's ceramic sculptures utilize gestural figuration, blending in recurring abstracted motifs inspired by nature, such as leaf and branch shapes, animals and raindrops, resulting in a distinctive painterly, signature imagery. Gulbran developed an unconventional ceramics technique that involves using high-fire glazes to achieve the painterly imagery

that has become a signature aspect of her work. This fusion of expressionistic figure painting and ceramics has become the cornerstone of her artistic practice.

Karin Gulbran received her BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute (1996) and her MFA from University of California, Los Angeles (1999). Over the years, her work has been exhibited from the United States to Europe, in renowned art galleries and institutions. Her work is also part of the Tia Collection in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Spencer Lewis

Spencer Lewis was born in Hartford, CT, in 1979. He lives and works in Los Angeles.

Known for his gestural paintings on cardboard and jute, Spencer Lewis uses flashy bright and colorful notions executed through streaked lines, smears of paint and rough strokes that suggest the impulsive creative process underneath. With chaotic, almost infinite layers, Lewis's canvases conceal and simultaneously unveil a brushstroke, a gesture over the other, stories and moments culminating and accumulating on the painting's densest parts. Despite the apparent unpredictability of Lewis's compositions, they are based on a methodology and structure. Lewis is, in fact, interested in pictorial organization and image-making. Consistently concentrating towards the centre of the canvas, Lewis's brushstrokes frantically tell the different layers of the same narrative. Descriptive marks and eloquent signs build up on the jute to create a history on the verge of legibility.

Lewis' work is in the permanent collection of the National Museum of African American History and Culture at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas.

Brian Rochefort

Brian Rochefort was born in Lincoln, Rhode Island, in 1985. He lives and works in Los Angeles.

Brian Rochefort primarily works with ceramic and glazes as a mixed media sculptor, creating one-of-a-kind vibrant sculptures covered in abstract patterns and fascinating textural features. The process of his

work involves breaking apart unfired clay objects and layering them up with more material, then firing between each layer of glaze to produce volcanic masses and craters overflowing with colour. The surfaces of the sculptures are a blend of rough, uneven clumps and smooth, bubbly drips, all suspended in place by the kiln firing.

Rocheft's work is in the permanent collection of the NMAC Foundation, Cádiz, Spain; the Zabludowicz Collection, London; the Chapman University, Orange and the Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, USA. Rocheft was awarded the Lillian Fellowship from the Archie Bray Foundation for Ceramic Arts in Montana, 2007-2008.

Ferrari Sheppard

Ferrari Sheppard was born in Chicago in 1983. He lives and works in LA.

Blurring the lines between abstraction and figuration, the contemporary artist Ferrari Sheppard creates mid to large-scale paintings celebrating the humanity of Black people in the Americas and within the diaspora. The Los Angeles based artist was born in Chicago and lived in various cities in Africa. His paintings are influenced by memories and lived experience, evoking a sense of nostalgia.

Sheppard's approach to figuration heralds a new visual language, with large acrylic, charcoal, and 24k gold on canvas conveying movement and emotion through his confident brushstrokes and distinctive use of color. His abstract practice brings forth irregularities in each work giving the viewer a sense of activity and excitement. Evocative titles are used in a poetic manner to reflect deeper meanings and cultural references. The abstracted figures are created with an intuitive balance between subtle idiosyncrasies and intentional opacity, holding space for the complexity and expansiveness within each individual being.

Sheppard often incorporates gold leaf adding an iconographical effect throughout his work, catching light and accentuating presence within in his work. As writer Kristina Kay Robinson notes: 'In Bond, we behold a Black Madonna and her golden child. The charcoal and gold work together as earthly material

creating a texture and dimension to the visual universe presented. Again, we are reminded of the fierce power of love to transform and preserve the human soul through the ebb and flow of time and circumstance. Sheppard's paintings are substantial in size, giving room for their subject matter to expand and make a home for the largeness of their narratives and implications. This work reflects profoundly on the emotional and intellectual interiority of the figures portrayed. It grapples with the fates of African and Indigenous peoples all over the world and is a welcome and necessary addition to the galaxy of contemporary art'.

Lily Stockman

Lily Stockman (b. 1982, Providence, Rhode Island) is a painter based in Los Angeles and Yucca Valley, California.

Her paintings reflect a wide range of references and inspirations, from natural phenomena—vernal pools, mineral licks, birdsong, black ice—to historical endeavours of the spirit—Shaker gift drawings, medieval hocketing, portable Renaissance altarpieces, poetry meter. Her essays have appeared in numerous publications, most recently in Joan Mitchell: 1979–1985 (David Zwirner, 2024). Stockman's work is in the permanent collections of the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, DC; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts; and the Orange County Museum of Art, Costa Mesa, California, where she was included in the 2022 California Biennial, Pacific Gold. Recent exhibitions explored Virginia Woolf's modern novel *The Waves* at Massimo De Carlo, London (2023); birds, plants, and weather in Emily Wilson's English translation of Homer's *Odyssey* at Gagosian, Athens (2023); and early modernist architecture at Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris (2024).