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Kayne Griffin Corcoran



An Art Lover's Guide to Los Angeles

Spend a day in L.A.'s arts district for coffee, oysters, and world-class art.



It's not surprising that Los Angeles has seen a major art world boom in the past few years. The city has given rise to artists like John Baldessari, David Salle, and Judy Chicago, fostering creatives from schools like Otis College of Art and Design and California Institute of the Arts. "Artists want their work to be seen by other artists," New York gallerist Matthew Marks told *Art in America* when he opened his gallery's first outpost in West Hollywood in 2012. "In that respect, Los Angeles is an ideal place to open a gallery because there are so many artists and art schools here of a really high level." With more and more blue-chip galleries putting down roots in Southern California (the most popular example being powerhouse Hauser Wirth & Schimmel, which will open its doors in a sprawling former flour mill this March), we have taken note of the top galleries to know now.

Start your day with a pick-me-up at Stumptown Coffee Roasters, which just opened up in the arts district, before heading to the first gallery to open its doors for the day, Maccarone, at 10 a.m. Gallerist Michele Maccarone, who's

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been based in New York's West Village since 2007, established her L.A. outpost in September. She's known for showing artists like Mike Bouchet and Paul McCarthy and was in search of extra space. Her new Boyle Heights gallery has 35,000 feet of exhibition space with an additional 10,000 square feet outside in the sculpture garden.

From Maccarone, make your way down the street to 356 Mission, a project from another New York gallerist Gavin Brown, who represents artists like Alex Katz, Urs Fischer, and Rirkrit Tiravanija. Brown's 356 partners Wendy Yao, owner of concept shop Ooga Booga, and artist Laura Owens help run the 12,000 square foot gallery, which, in addition to exhibitions, also hosts a weekly meditation group, book launches, film screenings, and performance art.

Venus Over Los Angeles is also close by. Gallerist Adam Lindemann, who first opened up his New York Gallery, Venus Over Manhattan, in 2012, put down roots in Los Angeles last April with a separate programming goal for his West Coast space. The New York gallery was founded to show influential historic and contemporary works, while the Los Angeles exhibition space, located in two connected warehouses spanning 14,500 square feet, allows for larger scale and experimental works.

Just a short drive over the Los Angeles River is Urban Radish, a new market and eatery in the arts district with healthy salads, sandwiches, and soups on offer (it's a popular spot for the tech startups and design firms in the area). After lunch, walk down the block to Grice Bench. The under-the-radar exhibition space opened up in the summer of 2014, but already has a sold-out show under its belt: An exhibition featuring figurative weaver Christina Forrer, whose work is now on view as part of the Jewish Museum's Unorthodox exhibit in New York, was a breakout for the gallery.

Next on the list is Smart Objects, which is a brief trip from the arts district to Echo Park. Born of artist and founder Chadwick Gibson's personal project—a showcase of instances from the Google Art Project where the camera was caught in museum mirror reflections—Smart Objects has become one of the most original artist-run galleries since its first exhibition in 2012. The space is dedicated largely to post-Internet art that explores our relationship to technology.

Pick up a snack at hot breakfast and lunch spot Sqirl—they're best known for their toast spread with ricotta and jam—as you're on your way to Kayne Griffin Corcoran. One of L.A.'s first homegrown blue chip galleries, the exhibition space inaugurated their program with a show by Light and Space artist James Turrell in 2011. The gallery's current location, a 10,000 square foot space in a 1940s auto shop that opened in 2013, was also designed by Turrell with a permanent skyspace by the artist, and is a must-see.

Finish out the art tour at Matthew Marks, one of the first New York galleries to set up shop in Los Angeles in 2012. Gallerist Matthew Marks was drawn to the West Coast because his roster of artists, a list that includes Ellsworth Kelly and Brice Marden, were missing a major audience with the many creatives based in L.A. Kelly helped Marks create his permanent space with an architectural intervention (a sculpture integrated with the building's façade) on the gallery's exterior.

End the day with drinks at the lovely new restaurant and bar, Norah, a short walk from Matthew Marks. Try a refreshing continental spritzer or cucumber gin sour paired with cauliflower popcorn or kushi oysters to cap off your culture fix.

- Molly Elizalde