

5 Free Art Shows to See in L.A. This Week

BY CATHERINE WAGLEY

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This week, an artist deletes her subject's face, and a longtime L.A. painter animates reproductive organs in the classiest possible way.

Wild West takeback

Lipstick has a chalky smell that's faintly chemical and highly nostalgic, especially if you grew up sneaking into mom's makeup drawer. The smell fills Shoshana Wayne Gallery in a subtly aggressive way, since Rachel Lachowicz has covered the facades of two life-size buildings with melted red lipstick. *The House of Worship* and *The Sheriff/Barbershop*, both buildings modeled after the set of Clint Eastwood's 1973 film *High Plains Drifter*, are flawlessly made up, all of their wooden surfaces evenly covered. Photographs in an adjoining room show the process: cubes of red lipstick on the floor, then melted, dripping like blood over a roof or porch. Lachowicz has used makeup as a material since the 1990s, often revising or mimicking historically masculine modes. This time, she's coated the setting of violence with cosmetics — Eastwood's character rapes a woman early on in *High Plains Drifter*, embodying the stereotype of the lawless Western conqueror. Now, a marker of old-school femininity has taken over.

2525 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica; through April 1. (310) 453-7535, shoshanawayne.com.

Bearded ladies

Linda Stark's painting *Fixed Wave* depicts a woman's crotch, but it's so much more than that. The oscillating thin lines of green that make up the skin are precisely placed, curved just right to suggest volume. The blue bush is in the shape of waves, and 3-D silver teardrops fall down from below the not-shown belly button. The only truly smooth, flat part of the painting is the outline of uterus and ovaries emerging out of the blue. This is the only on-canvas work in "Painted Ladies,"

Stark's current show at Jenny's. The other on-paper works are still just as precise and their perfection makes them funnier than they otherwise would be. Her *Bearded Lady* paintings show gold uteruses against blood red backgrounds. The ovaries are eyes, and pharaoh's beards hang down, perfectly shaped, reproductive organs virtuosically turned into a regal caricature.

4220 Sunset Blvd., Silver Lake; through Feb. 25. (323) 741-8237, jennys.us.

Beautiful Homo Homeboys

When artist Joey Terrill launched his mail-art magazine, *Homeboy Beautiful*, in 1979, he meant to satirize ladies magazines (*Ladies Home Journal*, *House Beautiful*) and pick apart stereotypes. In one issue, a reporter attends a Homo-Homeboys party, to discover the gangsters getting high and listening to Judy Garland. Terrill's magazines appear in "Chapters," the book-arts show just opened at the Craft and Folk Art Museum. So do books by L.A. icons Betye Saar and John Baldessari, as well as by younger artists Melissa Huddleston & Benjamin Lord and Patricia Fernández. The show's range is impressive and its mood inclusive — books by mainstream artists are treated with the same care as those by artists who have spent their careers on the fringes.

5814 Wilshire Blvd., mid-Wilshire; through May 7. (323) 937-4230, cafam.org.

Blank-faced through no fault of her own

Janet Werner's painting *MHMH* depicts a photograph pinned to a beige wall. In the photo, a woman with brunette bangs and braids wears an old-fashioned collared white dress with puffed sleeves. She's Laura Ingalls meets Brigitte Bardot, sweet while playing to the camera, except she has no facial features — there's just a flesh-colored nothingness where her face should be. This absence feels like a mean blow, especially given how evocative other details are. She's a victim, somehow, maybe of the artist, or of something or someone bigger who wanted her identity wiped out. The painting appears in "PDA Lovers," a show loosely about attachment and desire, organized by the Montreal-based gallery Parisian Laundry at Four Six One Nine in Mid-City.

4619 W. Washington Blvd., Mid-City; through Feb. 11. foursixonenine.tumblr.com.

Many famous babies

As a kid, activist Craig Kielburger looked a lot like he does now: eager, fresh-faced, albeit blonder. He met Mother Teresa in the 1990s, and David Ashwell painted him looking the nun in the eyes. Ashwell also painted Halle Berry as an adorable toddler, and Charlie Sheen as an innocent enough-looking boy. British actor Terence Stamp looks moody as a baby. Ashwell's project, "Yesterday's Children," also includes portraits of young Nancy Pelosi, Dr. Oz and Sally Ride. He's interested in all kinds of former children. The show looks sappy at first glance, and it does pull on pretty basic heartstrings (we were all children once, MLK Jr. a cute one). But it's also a gratifying game to guess who's who.

*2525 Michigan Ave. B-4, Santa Monica; through Feb. 25. (310) 828-5070,
skidmorecontemporaryart.com*