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Meet LA’s Art Community: Linda Stark Likes the “Challenge of Resurrecting a Bankrupt Image”

An interview series spotlighting some of the great work coming out of Los Angeles. Hear directly from artists, curators, and art workers about their current projects and personal quirks.

By Elisa Wouk Almino | February 25, 2020



Linda Stark (photo by Elon Schoenholz). Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.

Welcome to the 16th installment of the interview series *Meet LA’s Art Community*. Check out our past interviews [here](#).

This week, we interview the artist Linda Stark, whose paintings explore the female gaze and body, the roles of animals in human lives, as well as dreams and mythology. Her paintings are surprisingly textured and are playful and humorous in their social critique. Her work has been exhibited in *Made in L.A.* (2018) at the Hammer Museum, the Orange County Museum of Art, and the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA). In May, Linda Stark will have an exhibition at David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles and in 2020, her work will be included in the survey exhibition *New Time: Art and Feminism in the 21st Century* at BAMPFA.



Linda Stark, "Self Portrait with Ray" (2017), oil on canvas over panel, 36 x 36 x 2 1/2 inches (photo by Brian Forrest). Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.

Especially striking were his portfolios of drawings that he kept privately to himself, without a thought of ever exhibiting. They are like a thread that ties all of his different bodies of work together.

What's the best book you've read recently?

World Receivers: Georgiana Houghton – Hilma af Klint – Emma Kunz.

Do you prefer to see art alone or with friends?

I prefer to go see art with a friend.

What are you currently working on?

I have an upcoming exhibition at David Kordansky Gallery, and am working on paintings which are interpretations of a popular symbol. I like the challenge of resurrecting a bankrupt image, subverting a cliché, making a happy sign contrary, or bringing in other meanings.

What is one accomplishment that you are particularly proud of?

I particularly enjoyed being chosen by the Artists Acquisition Club (AAC), a nonprofit art collecting group, founded by five amazing women. They raise funds to purchase significant artworks directly from artists that will then be gifted to a major museum. My painting, "Fixed Wave," was the first artwork selected for AAC fundraising. I love that these women appreciated the intrinsic value of the work and am grateful to those who supported the effort, it was so special.

Where do you turn to for inspiration for your projects?

My work is broadly autobiographical and confessional, frequently inspired by everyday objects, images, and archetypes. It's also an organic process, one idea leads to another, one piece begets the next. Often, I get a picture flashing in my mind's eye that lasts for a couple of seconds and I jot it down. It's just a beginning, and the painting takes on a life of its own — like a fool's journey that becomes a source of revelation.

Where were you born?

I was born in San Diego, California.

How long have you been living in Los Angeles?

I moved to LA in 1988 to be an artist in a burgeoning art scene. It was very instinctive. I was skeptical and remember thinking, I'll give it five years, see what happens and then get out, depending. Things started happening and it became home.

What's your first memory of seeing art?

I grew up with my mother's paintings on the walls, which nurtured me. My first memory of seeing art outside of home was on a field trip in grade school to the Balboa Park Art Museum. That's when I had a synesthetic experience with a Gorky painting.

Do you like to photograph the art you see? If so, what device do you use to photograph?

I like to take in art without photographing, then see which pieces return to mind afterward.

What was your favorite exhibition in Los Angeles this year?

My favorite exhibition, so to speak, was while undergoing the inventory process of Don Suggs's studio (my late husband). I was humbled by his prolific output, curiosity, the diversity of media he used, and his overall sheer brilliance.