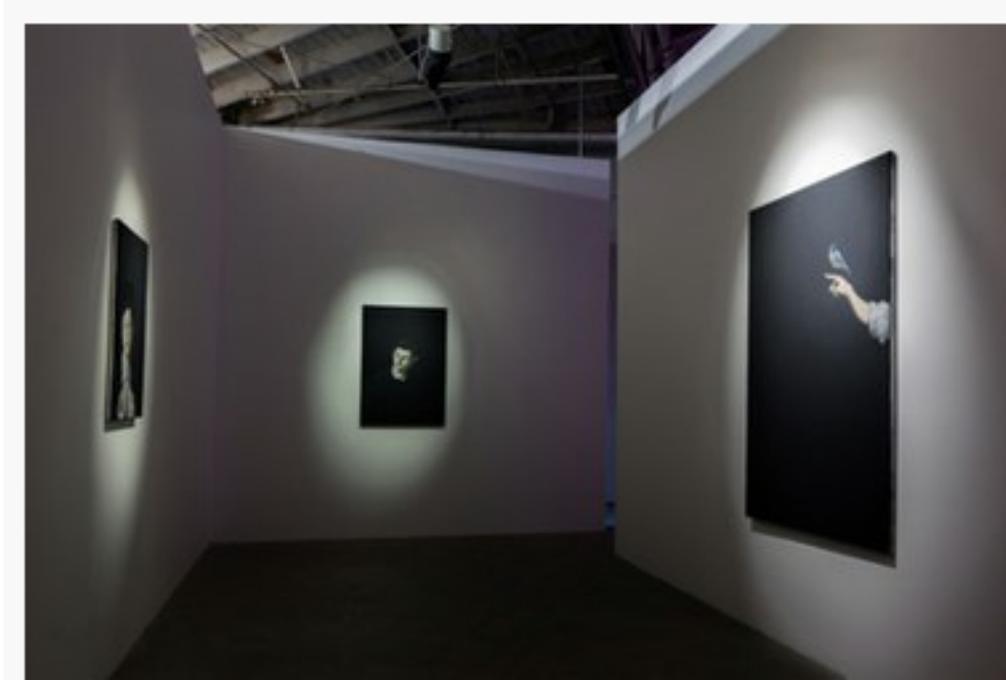




The newest addition to LA's downtown art scene is a nonprofit exhibition space, The Mistake Room, established by curator Cesar Garcia. The smart renovation of the industrial space was by Alfonso Medina of T38 Studio. And the first show is a triumph, *Distribution Center*, an installation by Oscar Murillo, born in Columbia, raised in London, that draws poignant comparisons between the labor done by Hispanic workers in a candy factory and his own art. His videos show workers making and packing sweets while stacks of carefully arranged fabrics are on tables and the floor and marked by him with distinctive lines and circles, children's motifs and letters and numbers. A few stretched canvases, finished works, lean against the walls and they are powerful in their quiet, serious manner. The space does not offer them for sale, and Murillo's work now commands high prices, but The Mistake Room offers fifty \$1000 lottery tickets for the chance to win one of his painted t-shirts. The drawing takes place at the end of the exhibition, April 12. For more information, go to info@tmr.la.

A few blocks away is the Night Gallery, a huge industrial space, and Samara Golden has occupied all of it with a wild, immersive environment telling the indistinct tale of Mass Murder. While much installation art has veered toward the purposely indecipherable, whether too arcane or too cluttered, Golden offers enough visual delight and narrative suggestion to seize the imagination. The gallery is dark apart from dim red lights so it takes a moment for the eyes to adjust and see a red BMW convertible, top down to reveal fat black stuffed pieces of what? Amputated legs? You walk around the corner and into the first room. Cozy as a kitchen with the counters lined by stuffed animals made of fabrics printed with toasted cheese sandwiches or bottles of beer. Wallpaper is printed with radishes, asparagus, mushrooms. But the table is set with two place mats and an ashtray, wine glass and many knives are stabbed into the top. Clock radios chatter endlessly with a speedy loop of traffic reports about LA freeways.

Around the corner, into the living room, the red light intensifies. It is radiating off a projection of sunset at the beach, where a lone figure walks. A grand piano, a guitar, and a synthesizer, all coated in a pearlescent polymer or tiny tiles that makes them glimmer in the reduced light. Sofas and chairs, lights, tables, candlesticks, ashtrays, tissue boxes, all are covered with the reflective surfaces. It is like being inside the dream of a Malibu beach house, surrounded by a rock star decadence. The eerie electronic music constantly playing is from *Apocalypse Now*, reversed, and sounds like something you might listen to for a long time if you were really loaded. She has created other sound tracks as well for this simulation of a stage set for a movie reminiscent of *Inside Daisy Clover* or *The Doors*. At MOCA, Golden's installation *The Fireplace* is on view and it caught my attention when I went to see Bennett Simpson's curated view of the permanent collection *Room to Live*. Here, however, she has taken her ideas and abilities to exceptional level. As she wrote about it, "It's a big mess, seriously. It's like a place to think about it."



*Jesse Mockrin "Midnight Sun" installation view, 2014
Photo by Max Schwartz, courtesy of Night Gallery and the artist*

A gallery space adjacent to the installation features *Midnight Sun*, the moody paintings of Jesse Mockrin, pale-faced androgynous beauties against dark backgrounds, dressed in dark coats and shirts with floppy white ties in the mode of 19th century portraiture. Apparently, the faces are drawn from Korean Pop stars but that is no reason not to like them, especially as they are painted with a carefree competence rarely seen these days. Although it is a separate show, it almost seems a part of the *Golden* installation, as though you've wandered into the library of the glitzy house. Both continue though February 22.

For more information, go to nightgallery.ca.

Night Gallery is one of the LA galleries participating in Art Los Angeles Contemporary opening at Barker Hanger tonight and continuing through Sunday but the show offers a good chance to view the wares of galleries from New York, Europe and elsewhere. To me, one highlight is the appearance of the irrepressible Dave Hickey, author of *Air Guitar* and other wondrous, influential writings. He will talk with LA Times critic David Pagel about the essays in his new book, *Pirates and Farmers: Essays on Taste*: Saturday, February 1, at 1 p.m. For more information, go to artlosangelesfair.com.

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