

## CULTURED

ART

# Los Angeles Art Today Is Dexterous, Incisive and Unafraid

WORDS

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Los Angeles is known for its stars and cinema. But beneath the California city's picture-perfect surface lies a thriving art scene, unafraid to delve into the underbellies of consciousness and history. Here are four shows you should see now.

## “Beyond the Looking Glass” at UTA Artist Space

### Through July 31

On June 25, UTA Artist Space kicked off the summer art season with “Beyond the Looking Glass,” a gorgeous group exhibition curated by gallery director Zuzanna Ciolek, featuring the work of 14 women-identifying artists who explore ideas of feminism, gaze, beauty, power, rest, nostalgia and growth, poignantly pushes back against stereotypes and expectations. Walking into the show, my eyes were immediately drawn to [Genevieve Gagnard’s](#) *I See You*, 2021 installation of 52 mirrors also known as looking glasses, which remixes the Alice in Wonderland tale *Through the Looking Glass*. The artist’s work orients viewers in a time and space of yesteryear with symbols of objects that signify the polarizing Black and white history in the US and her place in it as a biracial woman. Like most visitors, I could not resist stealing a quick glance at myself from every angle. I’m sure many women share my love-hate relationship with mirrors, which represent the microscope to which women are often subjected.

In conversation, Hiba Schahbaz’s painting *Dreaming* is a beautiful display of femininity and serenity that many of us desire to achieve through self-care. And, too, [Jessica Stoller’s](#) *Bloom*—an installation composed of several ceramic petals, pistils and other plant matter resembling the female body parts that surround a pair of open women’s legs, all delicately placed on a table like a buffet of beauty and bounty—depicts the nurturing and care women often give but don’t always receive. Other works by Kim Dacres and [Kiki Smith](#) play with textures both hard and soft, signifying the nuances in female identity while Gahee Park’s work delights with hints of sexuality and playfulness and a refreshing perspective. [Firelei Baez’s](#) *Threshold* is stunning in its texture and composition, and its use of the female gaze is both thought-provoking and powerful. —**Dominique Clayton**