

THE KNOCKTURNAL

UTA Artist Space Crushes Social Constructs of Femininity With Beyond the Looking Glass

by Naomi Pandolfi | June 29, 2021 | 0 comment



Beyond the Looking Glass, presented by the UTA Artist Space in Beverly Hills, California, is a surrealist art exhibit running from June 25 - July 31, 2021.

This ambitious group exhibition features bold works by a cross generational group of fourteen women-identifying artists, including Firelei Báez, Tawny Chatmon, Charlotte Colbert, Kim Dacres, Florine Démosthène, Genevieve Gagnard, Sanam Khatibi, Klara Kristalova, Shannon T. Lewis, Jesse Mockrin, GaHee Park, Hiba Schahbaz, Kiki Smith, and Jessica Stoller. Beyond the Looking Glass fills all three gallery spaces with the surrealistic expressions about women, created by women. SOSUPERSAM provided a special DJ performance to kick off the exhibit's opening reception.

Each piece in the Beyond the Looking Glass exhibit was carefully curated by gallery director Zuzanna Ciolek, one of the first members of the UTA Fine Arts team since its establishment in 2015. Regarding her curation process, Ciolek said,

“While organizing this exhibition, I enjoyed poking holes in traditional standards of beauty in art and pop culture, and within that playful and provocative framework, the show aims to explore contemporary femininity and representation.”



Beyond the Looking Glass took its inspiration from Alice in Wonderland, putting its own twist on Through the Looking Glass in an effort to break away from the outdated ideal where women are seen as purely ornamental. Instead, Beyond the Looking Glass presents a unique spin on female representation through surreal, mystifying pieces that broach the timely and important subjects of race, sexuality, and identity — an extreme stance of defiance against the representation of women as being “ornamental” and nothing more.

This fascinating art exhibition thrusts its attendees into an unpredictable world where they can see varied works — from a woman riding a reptile, to the body of a young woman wearing an elephant head. The core goal of Beyond the Looking Glass is to banish the archaic indicators of femininity, stripping it away to reveal such imaginative depictions that allow the female to break out, expanding beyond the body itself. With such expressionist imagery on display, the hope is to confront stereotypical representations of women, allowing the figures portrayed to transcend these societal constraints forced upon them by traditional works of the Western Canon.

The UTA Artist Space, an exhibition venue designed by Ai Weiwei, continues to fulfill its goal of showcasing art by globally recognized talent. Since its establishment, the space has presented such notable exhibits with interdisciplinary creatives and artists, including Derrick Adams, Myrtis Bedolla of Galerie Myrtis, Jake and Dinos Chapman, Essence Harden, Larry Clark, Petra Cortright, Conrad Egyir, Amanda Hunt, Mariane Ibrahim, Arcmanoro Niles, The Carpenter’s Workshop Gallery, The Haas Brothers, and Ai Weiwei, among others.