

Five female artists on how Los Angeles influences their work

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY - FEATURE

As the art world descends on the city for Frieze, we speak to the local artists making a home, and pursuing careers, in LA

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LA artists

17 IMAGES



While Los Angeles has long had a strong affiliation with the contemporary art world, it is often cited as being outside the industry's mainstream – secondary to places such as New York and London. But this hasn't stopped artists writing their own histories, as reflected in the [Hammer Museum's *Made in L.A.*](#) biannual surveys of the city's emerging and mid-career artists which illuminates the diverse and creative landscape of Los Angeles today.

LENA DALY

Is the live image actually stimulated in the optical cortex or elsewhere? Is sound also able to be stimulated inside the head, exempt from external input? These are questions Lena Daly constantly seeks through her research and work. Using various types of light and sound sources to test and expand ways around their behavioural and physical limits, Daly is intrigued to discover what exactly a body can hear. Her sculptures and videos are made using ultrasonic sound recordings and various ultraviolet light sources, celebrating ambiguity, and unanswered questions. The 3D works respond to a range of light sources from fluorescent to phosphorescent. When the lights are off, or the sun has set, the phosphorus pigments maintain their glow.

Daly explains the importance of LA's light source for her practice: "It means living with light sources from all directions. Plus, the ocean is very close most of the time. For example, bioluminescent dinoflagellates (a type of electric blue phosphorescent algae) hit the beaches last spring, lighting up the waves for a few nights. I stayed up all night watching this phenomenon from the shore and the beauty still washes over my mind. The light from the sun stays so bright all year round, which can eliminate some of the confusion of the time-space mundane. Full of light and without a chance of rain one must chase one's own water sources. It's a nice way to wake up and make work in LA."

Celebrating the resourcefulness of female artists living in the city, Daly explains: "I am constantly surprised and excited by some of the unique ways materials are worked with here by other female artists. One thing that seems endemic to LA is the way the objects become their own audience as if struck by a lightning source. And conversations with artists have led me to agree that it's good to do something with your hands to soothe your mind if it travels too fast."



Lena Daly, Image courtesy Various Small Fires Gallery