

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Hung Up: On Hauser & Wirth's Witty Comeback

James L. Chapman · Wednesday, November 14th, 2018

*The Getty hangs Sally Mann's photographs for her first major international exhibition, Toshio Matsumoto starts a 4 week tenure at Nonaka-Hill, the infamous Invader storms Over The Influence, and Denk proceeds to produce eclecticism at lightning speed with a Tim Ebner, Kasper Kovitz, and Donnie Molls group show... With so much to see, here's the Los Angeles art to get hung up on this week...*

You know those tricky moments when your brain comes up with the perfect comeback to an argument that ended hours ago? Sure you do. You might be in the shower mulling a heated text message exchange with a friend or lying in bed recounting some passive aggressive comment from your ex when suddenly it dawns on you; you should've said... [insert perfectly articulate and witty comeback here]. The French refer to this sensation as *L'esprit de l'escalier* — staircase wit — and besides being a beautiful phrase, it's a fitting moniker for Hauser & Wirth LA's latest, robust combo exhibition of *Calder: Nonspace* and Julian Rosefeldt's *Manifesto*. Shaking off the grogginess of what was a sleepy summer exhibition series marred by incoherent themes, poor spatial utilization, and reliance on quantity over quality, Hauser & Wirth rebounds with a thought-provokingly refined 1-2 punch.



Calder: Nonspace (Photo: James L Chapman)

Boasting the city's best ratio of industrial revitalization to gallery conversion, Hauser & Wirth employs their beautiful courtyard and garden space to showcase several of Alexander Calder's larger sculptures. If there's any downside to H&W's current exhibitions it's an embarrassment of riches. While large-scale Calder sculptures usually command attention as grandiose, lone installations, the cramped nature of so many of them in a single space is overwhelming and detracts from their solitary impressiveness. Despite this, they're an excellent attraction to catch while sipping a cocktail from the patio bar at Manuela — the gallery's in-house restaurant. *Calder: Nonspace* continues in the South Gallery where H&W has assembled a collection of 30 stabiles and mobiles created by the artist. Here visitors can enjoy the juxtaposition of Calder's monumental sculptures and miniature pieces which remain just as impressive. Within a temporal, specially designed gallery layout constructed to offer justice to Calder's work, visitors are obligated to confront his brilliant talent for creating works which organically occupy space without consuming it. (*Hint: How many solar systems can you spot within Calder's mobiles?*)



Calder: Nonspace (Photo: James L Chapman)

While *Calder: Nonspace* offers fitting tribute to a legend, the true spectacle taking place at Hauser & Wirth is Julian Rosefeldt's *Manifesto*; 13 video works projected on floating screens starring Cate Blanchett as she takes on various personas. *Manifesto* bombards the brain with stunning imagery of incredible locations from abandoned factories, scientific labs, classrooms, and more, whilst providing a female voice through Blanchett's stellar performances as an artist (otherwise missing from this dual exhibition where two male creators occupy the galleries). *Manifesto* explores contemporary artists as insurrectionists of the modern world, and visitors are greeted by the spark of revolution upon entrance. From cubicle prison cells to a local news studio, each piece features microcosms of life, subculture, pains, and experiences all happening at once. As Blanchett rather miraculously portrays each character, visitors are treated to a ride on an existentialist roller coaster witnessing the endlessly possible evolutionary course a single life can take. While no two video works are related, they perform in unison symphonically as each piece's monologue blares in the background. While viewers will find themselves plugged into each protagonist's dialogue they can imagine the audio from other pieces as the voices in each character's head— this stimulating theory is both a curatorial win and evident in the fact that you'll see so many visitors sitting on benches constantly twisting to catch glimpses of the simultaneous works around them. Depending on when you enter the gallery space, it's imperative to wait until the videos erupt in coinciding, droning crescendo to enjoy this exhibition in full effect. It's impossible to fully capture the essence of *Manifesto* as the show somehow so accurately accomplishes the gargantuan task of presenting life as an artwork itself and in doing so, invigorates the public with a revolutionary call to arms: to accept the massive responsibility of your role as an artist, no matter who you are. In this regard, *Manifesto* leaves viewers with Blanchett's dialogue ringing in their ears:

*"I am for an art that is as stupid as life itself."*

A witty statement only visitors to Hauser & Wirth's latest show will fully understand. Julian Rosefeldt's *Manifesto* and Alexander Calder's *Calder: Nonspace* are on view until January 6th, 2019. Hauser & Wirth is free to all visitors.



Manifesto by Julian Rosefeldt (Photo: James L Chapman)

This entry was posted on Wednesday, November 14th, 2018 at 6:22 pm and is filed under [Film](#), [Photography](#), [Visual Art](#)

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