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Who Says Art Can't Be Fun? Blood and Paint: Essays on Art in Los Angeles

Phantom Street Artist · Wednesday, November 23rd, 2016

Blood and Paint: Essays on Art in Los Angeles looks at the art world in a way in which we are unaccustomed. Author Gordy Grundy is a long time Los Angeles artist and arts writer. *Blood and Paint* is his second volume of such work. Almost exclusively, the art world is presented in a formalized and academic manner. Not here. The language is colloquial, emotional, insightful and generally very funny. As respected art critic Shana Nys Dambrot writes, “His writing accomplishes exactly that to which serious fine art aspires yet rarely achieves: it makes us see the art world in a different way.”

Clearly, a love of the city of Los Angeles is the thread between essays. History is a loving focus. In 1963, an early Ed Ruscha masterpiece was stolen and irreparably mauled; Grundy solves the mystery and recounts the confession of the perpetrator. It is a sweet story told with great affection. In “Time For A Pacific Standard,” Grundy imagines a wild day in the life of the Ferus Gallery. The book is illustrated with iconic images of the city, reminding us that LA cannot be singularly defined.

There are many pieces in the book that will force even the most dour to laugh out loud. His version of Marina Abramovic’s MOCA Gala is wildly mad and gruesomely funny. One essay, “The Christmas Cottage,” is a surreal, slapstick laugh-fest. Hollywood film industry legend Nicki Finke commissioned the work and a sequel for her Hollywood fiction platform Hollywood Dementia. [Read the piece here.](#)

The author asks, “What is truly important in art and history?” Some may not understand the subject of “Deitch Or Die,” for the man has now been forgotten from LA history. The piece was written when New York art dealer Jeffery Deitch was to begin his curatorship at MOCA and nothing was more worrisome or controversial in our art world. Who was that again?

Conversely, Grundy highlights art shows that document a more thorough and complete art history. Marxist Glue is a street art show that presents the talent outside the glossy magazine headlines; it contradicts the establishment of MOCA’s street art show “Art in the Streets,” which sought and failed to define the form. The author accurately predicted the amusement park that LACMA has become in his essay, “Chris Burden’s Roadside Attraction.”



The author has his heroes and he advocates for them. Painter James Hayward’s book *Indiscretion* is reviewed and adored. Two pieces introduce us to Jack Brogan, the unknown man behind the curtain, the chief fabricator of LA’s contemporary art history. Grundy sings the high praises of dour poet John Tottenham and demands that we seek him out. These essays are recommendations, hence their inclusion.

Blood and Paint: Essays on Art in Los Angeles is the newest book to enter the Los Angeles art history canon. Much like Hunter Drohojowska-Philp and her *Rebels in Paradise* or Chris Kraus and her literary academic art series, Gordy Grundy celebrates Los Angeles, the city's creatives of all stripes, and his life as an artist.

You have never read about art in this way before.

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