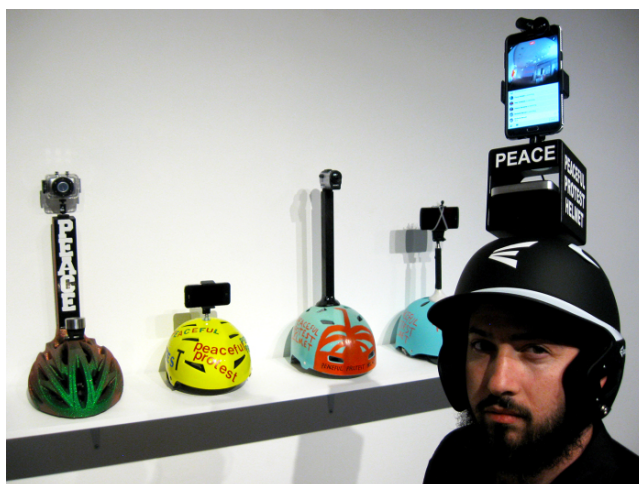


# ART AND CAKE

## S/ELECTION – DEMOCRACY, CITIZENSHIP, FREEDOM AT THE LA MUNICIPAL ART GALLERY

By Patrick Quinn

<https://artandcakela.com/2016/12/28/selection-democracy-citizenship-freedom-at-the-la-municipal-art-gallery/>



James Berson "Peaceful Protest Helmet"

December 28, 2016

Set up on a hill above East Hollywood, Barnsdall Park is a serene island of art, architecture, and oak trees. A winding road takes you leisurely to the top allowing plenty of time to enjoy the view. Was it only moments ago you were stuck on Vermont cursing the Los Feliz hipsters or jamming your horn as you inched up Western Avenue? Though well known as the home of Hollyhock House, built for heiress Aline Barnsdall by Frank Lloyd Wright, the park also features creative workshops, a theater, and one of the best art galleries in the city. Run by the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, the gallery features juried shows as well as hosting the C.O.L.A. Fellowship exhibition.

Currently on display is *S/Election: Democracy, Citizenship, and Freedom*. This timely group show addresses issues that have been the focus of the 2016 presidential election. The stated goals of the show are ambitious. "*S/Election responds to various inquiries around citizenship such as, what does it mean to be an active citizen or exercise your rights, what does the status of "citizen" imply to those that are disenfranchised, displaced, immigrants, or refugees, and how does identity play into the privileges and/or duties of citizenship.*"

The gallery recently appointed Erin Christovale as curator and this is her debut show. It's provocative and engaging and a great start for the former New Yorker. In fact, she was just named one of the country's 20 most influential young curators by the esteemed website Artsy.net.



This is a show that invites interaction and the sharing of opinions. This democratic tone is quickly established when you first enter the gallery. Visitors are invited to interpret certain pieces in the show and share their thoughts on small labels. The labels are then hung on hooks by the piece for other visitors to read.



Olga Lah "Blessings All Around"

Andy Robert's piece is based on the time he spent in the "Little Haiti" neighborhood in Miami. Narsiso Martinez illustrates farm workers on used cardboard grocery boxes. The text in Privacy Burnout was pulled from a standard waiver form. To the Population consists of political buttons with provocative slogans.



Jane Szabo uses flags to examine issues of identity while in the same room Stephanie Sabo probes the red, white, and blue line dividing art from design. In another part of the gallery, Ramiro Gomez sees things from an outsider's point of view. His subjects are the invisible laborers behind the backdrop of upper-class luxury.



Ramiro Gomez "Cut-Outs"





Jennifer Moon “Prison Relics From Phoenix Rising, Part 1 This Is Where I Learned Of Love”  
 Prison Relics documents the artist’s nine-month incarceration at Valley State Prison for Women in Chowchilla, California. Index of Fear is an interactive filing cabinet containing sound, text, and image-based triggers.



Las Gran Marchas commemorates two of the largest marches in U.S. history, the March 25th and May 1st 2006 marches in Los Angeles for immigrant rights. Charles Gaines’ piece marries the score of a tragic opera with a 1967 speech given by Black Panther Party member Stokely Carmichael. Matt Sheridan’s video installation was designed to make the American flag a kind of barred cage of reflection in a time of war.



Matt Sheridan “I Want To Break Free”

In some ways, James Berson’s series of Peaceful Protest Helmets may be the timeliest pieces in the show. They are designed to act as deterrents to the abuse of power by either the police or protesters. Not only by recording their actions, but by showing the abusers how these actions will be seen by the world. Not as an article in the newspaper or a segment on the 6:00 o’clock news, but as a clip on social media shared around the world, seconds after it happens.



James Berson "Peaceful Protest Helmet"

S/Election – Democracy, Citizenship, Freedom runs through till January 8th  
The Municipal Art Gallery is located at 4800 Hollywood Blvd. L.A. CA 90027 (323) 644-6269. The  
gallery is open Thursday – Sunday, Noon to 5:00pm.