

# Meet an Artist Monday: Peter Wu

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Peter Wu

Ashley Urban

Shana Nys Dambrot | March 18, 2019 | 6:00am

For this edition of our ongoing series introducing you to some of our favorite Los Angeles artists, we meet Peter Wu, a witty conceptualist and a science fiction-obsessed polymath whose video- and sculpture-based installations interrogate the ways in which mythologies about the future are already fully operational in the present.

**L.A. WEEKLY: *When did you first know you were an artist?***

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**PETER WU:** I grew up in an insular Canadian town of 3,000 people where I frequently escaped to my imagination, but I think I really wanted to become an artist during the first year of undergrad at the University of Windsor, where I was introduced to conceptual art. I remember going to the library one summer and checking out as many books as I could around the subject. This was when I realized art could be an intellectual pursuit.

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### ***What is your short answer to people who ask what your work is about?***

I make sci-fi-based video installations revolving around the ideas of artificial intelligence, future identities, and how technology is altering our perception of reality (or dick sculptures — depending on who I'm talking to).



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Peter Wu, *Or, the Creatures of Prometheus* (2018), glow-in-the-dark PLA 3-D print, wood, translucent fabric, mapped HD video projections with sound (TRT 6:43 loop). 96 x 72 x 72 inches. Installation view at R/SF Projects, San Francisco.

Courtesy of the artist

### ***What would you be doing if you weren't an artist?***

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I always dreamt of being a musician and performing in a band. I guess it's never too late to be the Asian Brian Eno. #bodyrats

### ***Did you go to art school? Why/why not?***

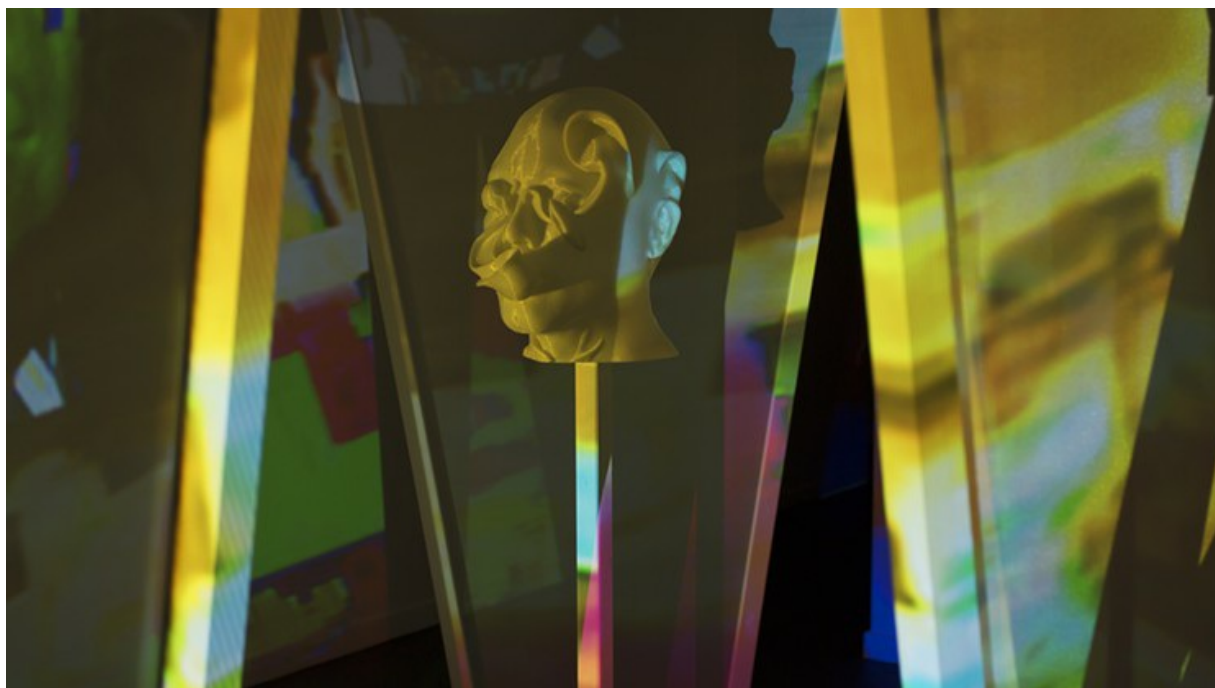
When applying for my MFA, I remember all these schools sending me these huge glossy color catalogs, whereas the San Francisco Art Institute sent me this shitty, 8½-by-11-inch, black-and-white booklet. Without visiting the school, and solely based on their scrappy vibe, I decided to go there. It was my ticket out of my hometown and one of the best decisions I've made.

### ***Why do you live and work in L.A., and not elsewhere?***

I grew up in Canada, so living through another winter was no longer tolerable. When I first moved to sunny Los Angeles, the art scene was much smaller and there was (and still is) a very supportive community. It's a place where you can focus on your work without the guilty



distractions of having to always be “seen” or the pressures of crushing rent. It is a slow-burning fire here (depending on the season).



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Courtesy of the artist

***When was your first show?***

I guess my breakout show was with Patrick Painter Gallery in 2005 but I've had many chapters since then. We are an accumulation of transformations.

***When is/was your current/most recent/next show?***

I was recently awarded the COLA Individual Artist Fellowship from the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, which will culminate in a group show opening on May 19 at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Bardsall Art Park.

***What artist living or dead would you most like to show with?***

I feel like this is similar to the “what’s your favorite movie” question, which I always have a difficult time answering. So I’ll just say Future Me.



EXPAND  
Peter Wu

Courtesy of the artist

***Do you listen to music while you work? If so, what?***

Depending on the project, I'll go through obsessive music phases in the studio. One solid year I only listened to Nick Cave.

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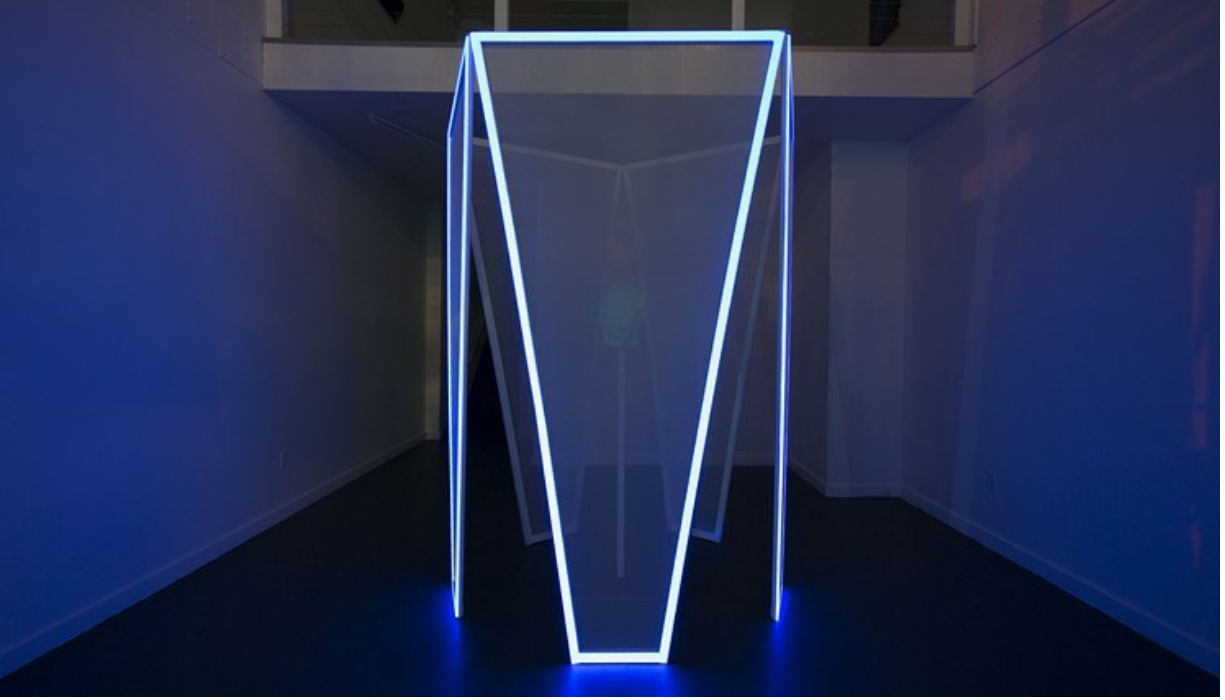
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Peter Wu, *Or, the Creatures of Prometheus* (2018), glow-in-the-dark PLA 3-D print, wood, translucent fabric, mapped HD video projections with sound (TRT 6:43 loop). 96 x 72 x 72 inches. Installation view at R/SF Projects, San Francisco.

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EXPAND

Forrest Kirk

Claudia Fuentes

## Meet an Artist Monday: Forrest Kirk

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Shana Nys Dambrot | March 25, 2019 | 6:00am

This week we meet painter Forrest Kirk, whose anomalous style merges a storytelling impulse with gestural abstraction and an old-school studio painting education in Paris. Moving fluidly between realism, figuration and pure color and texture, Kirk also incorporates elements of found objects, mixed media and collaged segments culled from his own original images. The result is an optical and spatial push-and-pull that keeps the eye from resting, in a poignant corollary to the unsettling narratives in the sociopolitically fraught scenes from literature, history and experience that he depicts, from James Baldwin to modern-day Los Angeles.





Forrest Kirk, *Body Count* (2018), installation view

Courtesy E.C. Lina Gallery

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Forrest Kirk, *Audubon Ballroom* (2019)

Courtesy E.C. Lina Gallery

### **L.A. WEEKLY: When did you first know you were an artist?**

**FORREST KIRK:** Since as early as I can remember, I always drew. I still remember those days sitting in my room drawing and creating worlds on the paper. I didn't consider myself an artist until high school. I went to an art and graphics magnet high school, which is where it all came together for me as an artist.

### ***What is your short answer to people who ask what your work is about?***

Mainly, I tell people my work is about current social narratives, but it's also about creating beautiful work. My work has to be visually appealing, before I drop the narrative into the work. It's the whole "attract more with honey than vinegar" approach.

### ***What would you be doing if you weren't an artist?***

I love to create and build things, so if I weren't an artist I'd be an engineer. I've always been good at math, so engineering and building would also fulfill my desire to create.

**When is/was your current/most recent/next show?**

I most recently exhibited in the "Protest: Noun" show at the Torrance Art Museum. Currently, I am in a group show, "Behind Face" at Roberts Projects in Culver City that's up until April 27; and I'm also in a fun group show at Serious Topics in Inglewood with tons of other artists. We all made 4-by-4-inch paintings that are arranged on the walls of several doll houses. Next up, I'm planning another show at E.C. Lina Gallery here in L.A., plus a show in New York, and two shows abroad.



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Forrest Kirk in  
"Cathouse/Dreamhouse/Punkhouse" at Serious  
Topics

Shana Nys Dambrot

**What artist(s) living or dead would you most like to show with?**

Kerry James Marshall or Gerhard Richter.



**Do you listen to music while you work? If so what?**

Most of the time I listen to movies. I could probably recite the lines to each of the Jason Bourne movies, *Atomic Blonde*, or *Beverly Hills Cop* verbatim.

**Website and social media handles, please!**

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