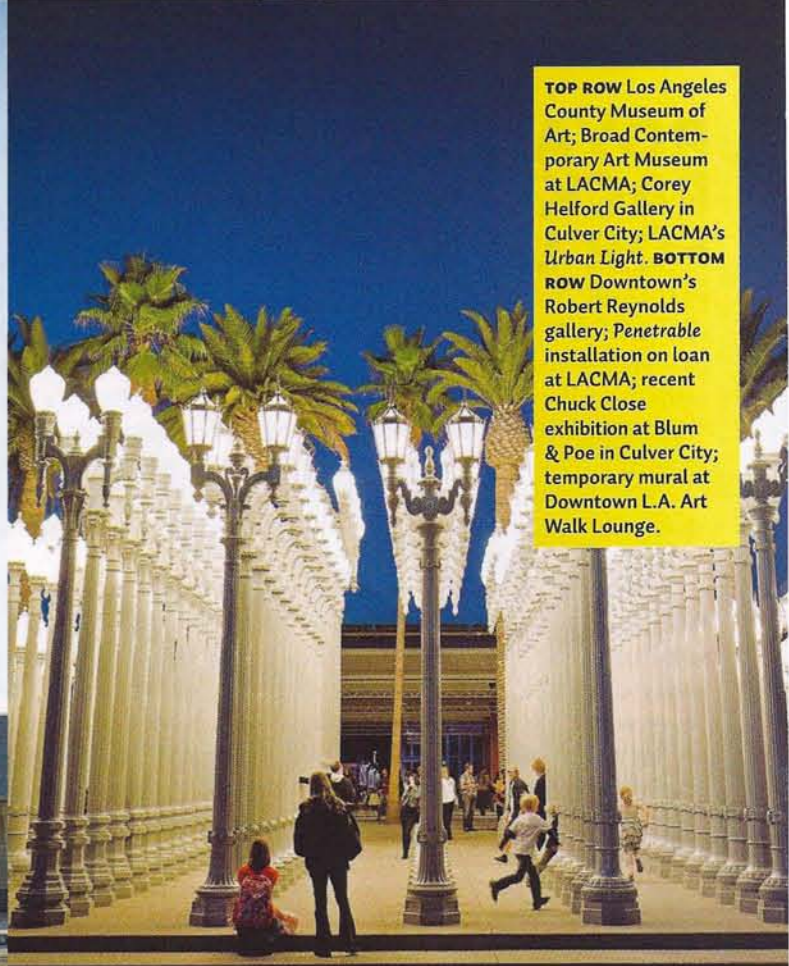


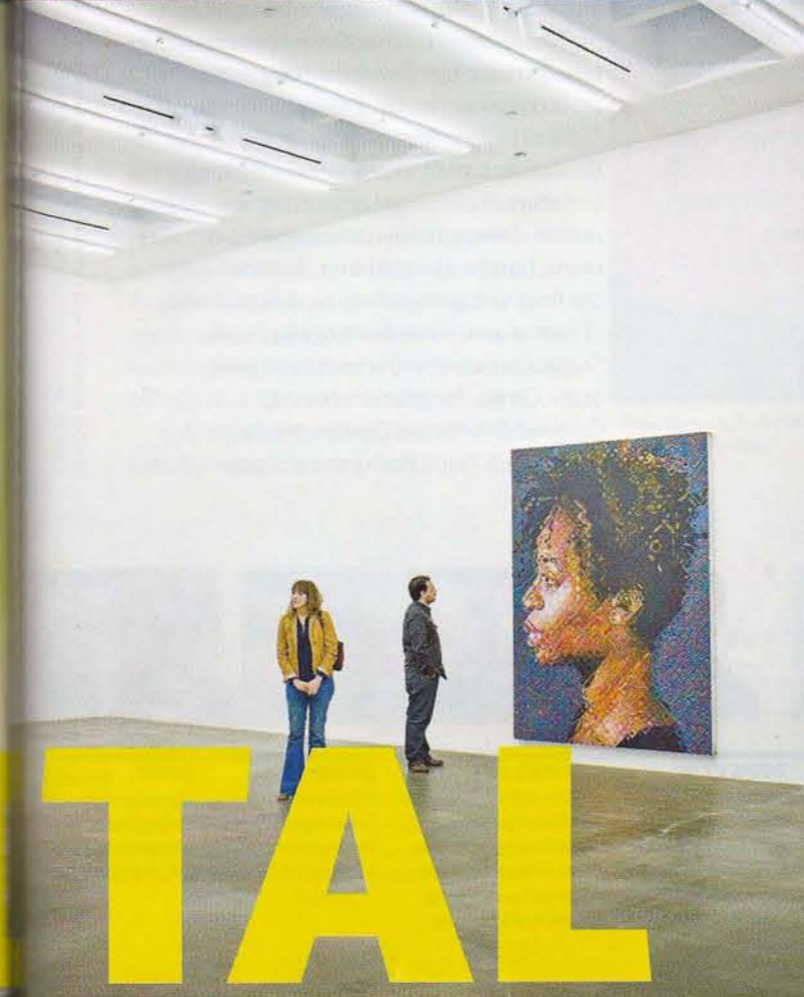
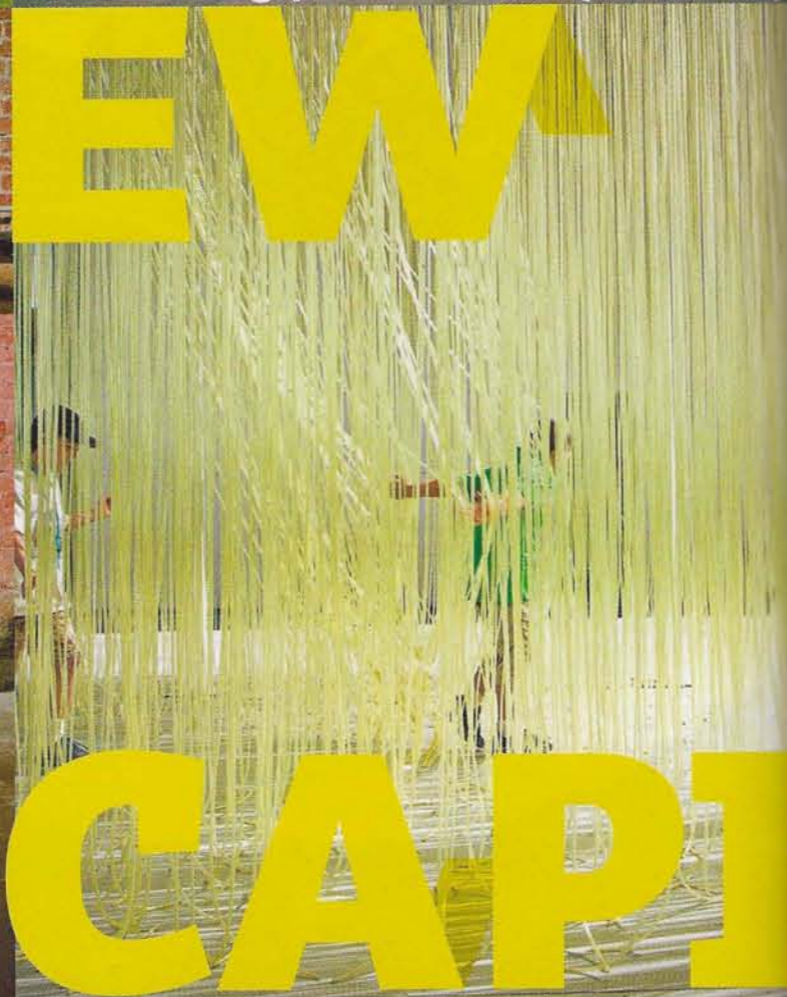
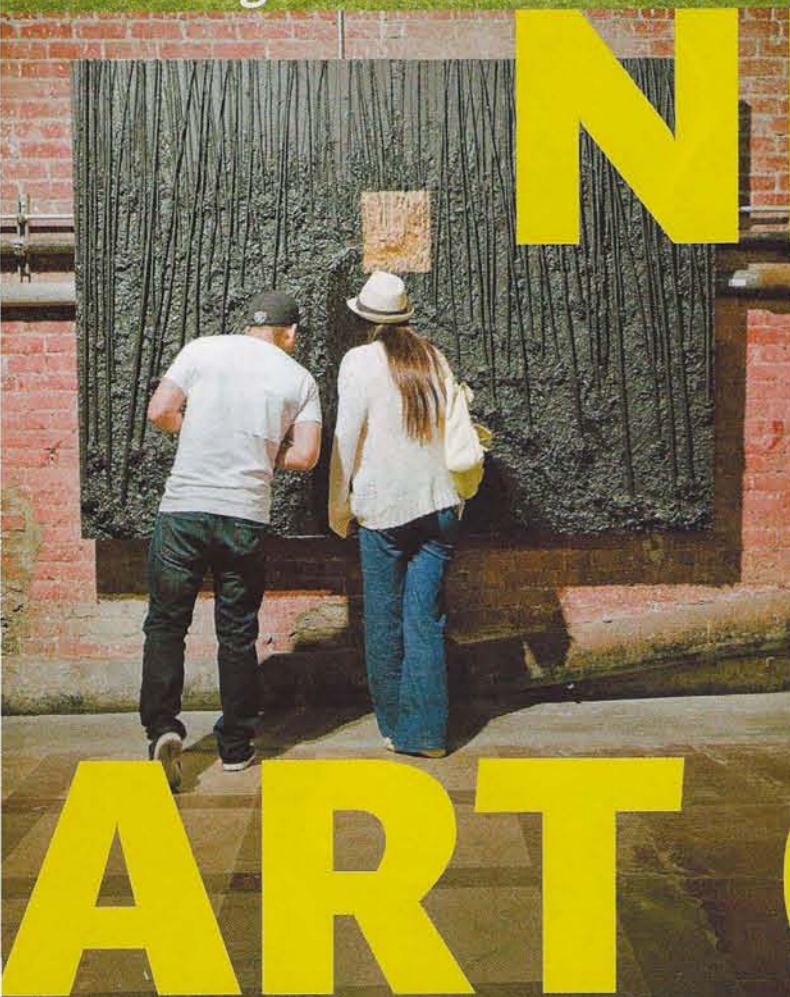
THE



TOP ROW Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Broad Contemporary Art Museum at LACMA; Corey Helford Gallery in Culver City; LACMA's *Urban Light*. **BOTTOM ROW** Downtown's Robert Reynolds gallery; Penetrable installation on loan at LACMA; recent Chuck Close exhibition at Blum & Poe in Culver City; temporary mural at Downtown L.A. Art Walk Lounge.

Los Angeles is in full bloom as the next big place to see (and buy) contemporary art BY LAUREL DELP PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVE LAURIDSEN

NEW



ART CAPITAL

ROYAL/T IS PACKED FOR LUNCH,

WITH EVERYONE FROM SONY PICTURES EXECUTIVES TO GALLERY HOPPERS TO CHILDREN WIELDING CRAYONS OVER COLORING BOOKS. A waitress dressed in a short, crinoline-flounced brown dress and white apron in the style of a Tokyo *meido kissa* (maid cafe) is proffering a tray of cupcakes topped with bright fillips of colorful frosting. On the walls of this Culver City spot are fanciful art pieces inspired by anime and graffiti, many by well-known artists.

"All my art friends and fellow art collectors couldn't believe I would leave New York City for L.A.," says Royal/T owner Susan Hancock of her move four years ago. "I think now they're jealous."

That's because Los Angeles, after decades of living in New York's shadow, is having a coming-out party as a legitimate art capital. The celebration began last fall when artists, collectors, and dealers came from all over the world for the opening weekend of *Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945-1980*. The series of exhibitions shows works from the period after World War II when the city's first wave of artists worked in a mostly isolated art environment. Not anymore. Today the scene is an exciting mix of renowned museums, young collectors, great art schools, and galleries concentrated in neighborhoods for easy hopping from exhibit to exhibit.

"The artists who led the way found L.A. to be a place where they could make something new, something different from what was happening on the East Coast," says Michael Govan, CEO and director of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

It took courage for L.A. artists to thumb their noses at the East Coast establishment. But as the city gains a reputation, how long will that rebel spirit survive?

Susan Hancock, for one, isn't worried. As a novice art collector in New York, she found it challenging to establish a foothold. In L.A., she points out, the stars are in the entertainment business, not the art world, which is much more accessible than it is in New York. Witness her oddball gallery-shop-cafe, which would have received a cooler reception on the East Coast but is wildly popular here. "In this day and age," she says, "it's no longer necessary that you move to New York to 'make it.'"

A quick trip around L.A.'s most invigorated gallery areas is enough to confirm not only the vitality of L.A.'s art scene, but also its damn-the-torpedoes spirit.



Royal/T

THE CULVER CITY SCENE

In 2003, when the gallery Blum & Poe opened on a sun-blasted, dingy block of industrial storefronts in Culver City, the epicenter of L.A.'s art scene was Bergamot Station Arts Center, a collection of 35 galleries in an old station in Santa Monica. But it wasn't long before Culver City's large spaces and cheap rents attracted others: Last year's Artwalk Culver City included 38 galleries and exhibition spaces.

The galleries tend to show more established artists, but that doesn't mean the art is conservative. On a recent Saturday, Richard Jackson's installation at David Kordansky Gallery centered on a rotating sculpture of a little girl embracing an upside-down pink unicorn spattered in manic bursts of bright paint. So were the floor and walls, where representations of formal geometric paintings by Frank Stella alternated with clouds and gold stars. On Washington Boulevard, Cardwell Jimmerson Contemporary Art had *Sub-Pop*, a flashy show of pop

RECENT RISE OF L.A. ART



1997
The Getty Center opens



2003
Blum & Poe opens in Culver City



2004
Gallery owner Bert Green founds the Downtown L.A. Art Walk; 15 people show up



2006
L.A. art at Paris's Centre Pompidou draws one of the world's largest museum turnouts



2006
Michael Govan leaves the prestigious Dia Art Foundation in New York to become director of LACMA



2008
The biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York features 28 L.A. artists—a third of the show



2008
The Broad Contemporary Art Museum opens at LACMA



2009
10,000 people attend the Downtown L.A. Art Walk

artists who didn't quite become art stars.

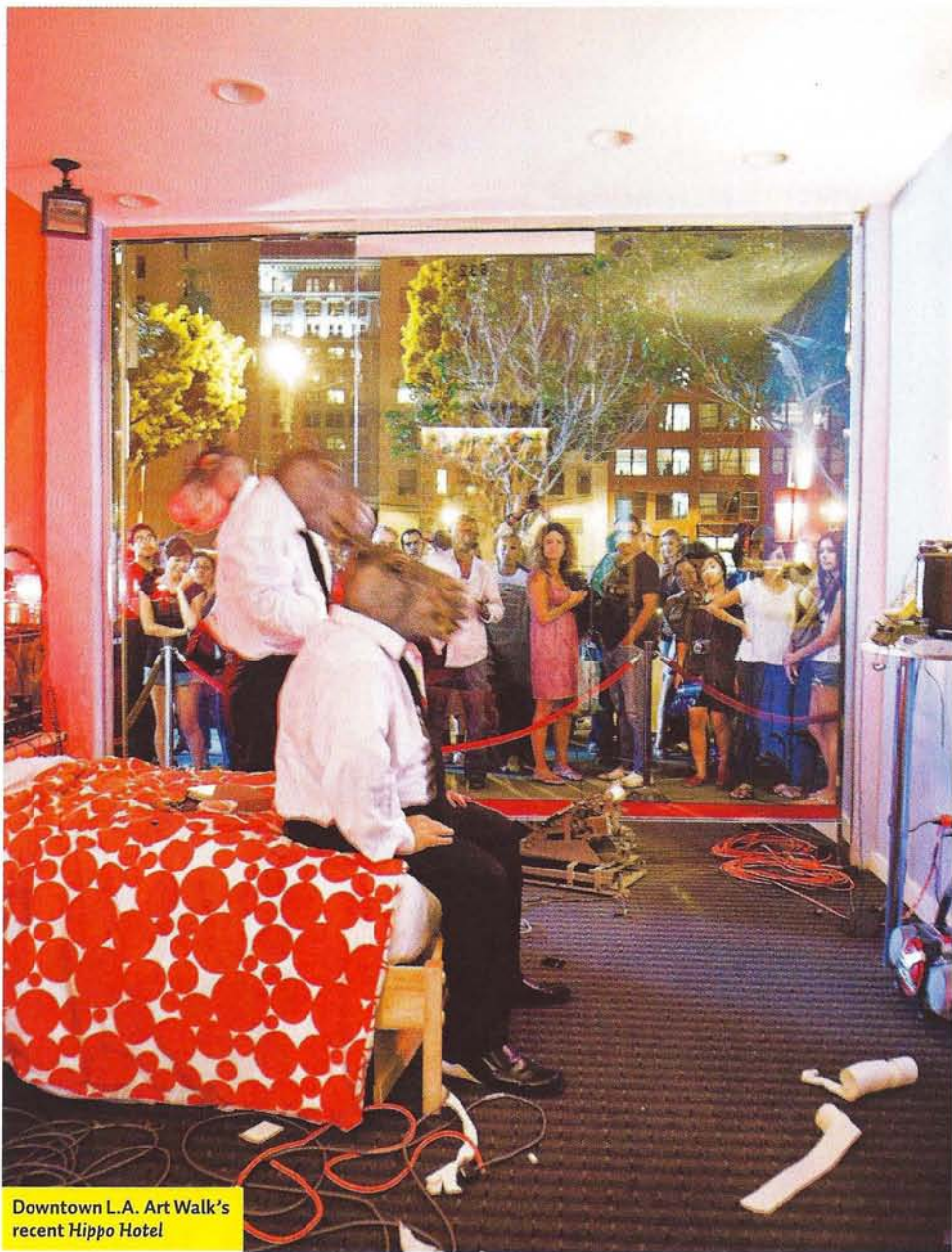
"We're plowing different fields than the other galleries here," says co-owner Damon Cardwell—such as overlooked L.A. artists from the 1950s through '70s. "We're proud to have brought attention to Tom Eather-ton, Jim Eller, Ron Miyashiro ..." He stops in a panic, aware he can't name everyone he admires. He and Tom Jimmerson set up here five years ago. "It was a practical thing at first, since we lived on the West-side; then the art scene burgeoned."

DOWNTOWN ON THE EDGE

The downtown art scene is a free-for-all of the established and newly minted, augmented by pop-up galleries, co-ops, and open studios. Gallery Row neighbors skid row, lending a permanent edginess. During a recent art walk, tens of thousands jammed the sidewalks, taking in art covering the whole panoply of mediums and quality. Long lines formed at trendy food trucks, and the area's bars and restaurants filled with everyone from parents pushing strollers to men with pink hair.

The contrast is less formidable in Chinatown, where galleries have been drawing visitors to Chung King Road for more than a decade with exhibits that push the boundaries: Jancar Gallery's recent Charles Karubian show, for example, included a female nude squatting none too prettily over a portrait of Speaker of the House John Boehner. Saturday night openings bring even more crowds to the district, where the walk between galleries is made magical by strings of lanterns and vivid neon signs.

L.A. may have arrived, but it'll be a long time before it becomes staid.



Downtown L.A. Art Walk's recent Hippo Hotel

TIMELINE: DAVID CLAPP/GETTY IMAGES, WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART 2007, DAVE LAURIDSEN (2), MIKE WALLY, DORLING KINDERSLEY/GETTY IMAGES, STEPHANIE KEENAN/ART PLATFORM, PAGE 70; PENETRABLE, 1990, JESUS RAFAEL SOTO/FUNDACIÓN SOTO



2010
Mega-successful dealer Jeffrey Deitch leaves the center of New York's art world to head MOCA



2010
Resnick pavilion opens at LACMA; New York gallery L&M Arts opens branch



2011
A MOCA exhibit dedicated to graffiti draws record-breaking crowds



2011
The Getty sponsors Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945-1980



2011
The first Art Platform—Los Angeles art fair opens



2012
New York's Matthew Marks Gallery to open branch



2013
L.A. collectors and philanthropists Eli and Edythe Broad to open museum downtown