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## Barbies, Punks, and Astronauts: 7 Must-See Booths as Paris Photo Los Angeles

BY ANNELIESE COOPER | MAY 01, 2015



Clockwise from left: Photos by Diana Thorneycroft, Bruce Conner, Lew Thomas, Kimiko Yoshida, and Hassan Hajjaj.  
(Anneliese Cooper)

LOS ANGELES — If you could distill a photograph's dual nature — that ever-unsteady interplay between documentary and artistry — and turn it into a theme park, it would probably look something like Paramount Pictures' New York Street backlot. Clumps of brownstones face off against a faux Washington Square before dead-ending into bland gray warehouses, while behind the facades, white walls quickly give way to rusty scaffolding, just enough to cover the view from the street. It's clear here that you're in the heart of the illusion business — which makes the whole scene a perfectly uncanny place to host [Paris Photo Los Angeles](#), now in its third edition.

“We’re proud to be based in Los Angeles — and in Hollywood in particular, a city with such a rich history in image-based art,” said fair director Florence Bourgeois, new to her post this year alongside artistic director Christoph Wiesner. “Paris Photo Los Angeles shares its DNA with Paris Photo, the largest fair in the world for photography, but it also has its own specificities in the emerging West Coast art market.”

A smattering of the 79 exhibitors are tucked into the apartment façades, while the majority are set up booth-style in adjacent hangars — one for the “young galleries” that are represented, two for their established peers, and one to host a special presentation of archival prints curated by Anthony Lepore from the R.J. Arnold collection (stunning and fascinating in equal measure). Fan favorites are on view throughout — see: David Benjamin Sherry’s [monochrome landscapes](#) at OHWOW, David Magnusson’s ethereal [“Purity” series](#) at Pictura, and [John Malkovich reliving photographic history](#) once more at Catherine Edelman. But tucked in between are plenty more works not to miss. Here are a few of our top picks:

## **Hassan Hajjaj at Gusford Los Angeles**

One of the first booths you see upon entering the fair, Gusford Los Angeles has decked its space top to toe in Hassan Hajjaj’s signature Technicolor portraiture. And to complement the bright pop images of Marrakech street style, which are lined with real Chicklet packages and canned mackerel, the room is outfitted with paper lanterns, cushions, and stools made from Arabic Coca-Cola crates — a miniature Moroccan salon, all told. (Meanwhile, those who will be in LA through May 13 should save the date for the premiere of Hajjaj’s first-ever feature-length film, “Karima: A Day in the Life of a Henna Girl” at LACMA — and/or, if you’re traveling the fair circuit, you can catch it as part of [Art Basel’s film program](#).)

## **Diana Thorneycroft at Fabien Castanier Gallery**

The “young galleries” section hosts a number of standouts, but Diana Thorneycroft’s sardonic Barbie-laced scenes are especially hard to miss. Titled “Canadians & Americans (best friends forever... it’s complicated),” the series uses dolls to act out (and mesh, with apparent glee) moments in art, film, and American history. For example, in “Nighthawks (What Would Jack Bauer Do?),” a Tippi Hedren stand-in faces off with a gaggle of birds outside Hopper’s iconic diner while plastic Bauer aims a gun at an eagle making off with a mapleleaf-marked briefcase. Another work has the young woman from Wyeth’s “Christina’s World” used as an impromptu shield by a Mountie in the middle of a shootout.

## **Wang Ningde at M97**

Wang Ningde’s works offer a kind of bespoke pixilation — created, as they are, by rows of slides stuck perpendicularly into a canvas, through which a halogen bulb shines down from above. Turn out the lights and it’s all but blank; but once illuminated, you see clouds, water, and abstract colorsapes. It’s a fine line between immaterial and distinctly material-based work — a breakdown of the medium’s key elements. And though the Beijing-based artist had a piece at AIPAD in New York a few weeks ago, Paris Photo marks his first solo exhibition in the United States.

## **Michal Macku at PACI Gallery**

And speaking of stretching photography’s bounds — and of works spotted at AIPAD — PACI Gallery has doubled down on the handful of Macku pieces it brought to New York with an entire booth of the artist’s black and white body-splicing work. Here, collage-like in-frame pieces play off the artist’s eye-catching glass blocks. Macku’s self-made technique, which he calls “gellage,” involves stripping gel emulsion from film and printing it onto individual glass sheets. The result: shadowy human forms, ever-shifting as you move around them.

## **Paule Anglim**

Playing off the theme of “The Wild West,” as reinterpreted through a San Franciscan lens, Paule Anglim has a number of noteworthy pieces in its multi-artist booth, including sculptural works from Tony Oursler and Paul Kos. But what caught our eye was the dual tribute to San Fran punk, as evidenced by a glass case display of paraphernalia from late-’70s performance art band [The Puds](#) and the rock photography of Bruce Conner, who shot acts like Crime and U.X.A mid-thrash. According to Anglim’s Christine Ancalmo, Conner took the gonzo approach, possibly even breaking his foot once in the process — true, as ever, to the manic energy he captured.

## **Lew Thomas at Cherry Martin**

“Lew was probably the first person to bring structuralism into the photo world,” said gallery cofounder Philip Martin — as evidenced, say, by his grid of QWERTY keys set across from a camera-test-like self-portrait and a blown-up shot of typed theory. Thomas founded San Francisco’s “[NFS Press](#)” (that is, “Not for Sale”) with Donna-Lee Phillips in 1976, publishing titles like “Structural(ism) and Photography” and “Photography and Language” in their brief tenure. “The art world doesn’t really know about them, and the photo world doesn’t really know what to do with them,” Martin said.

## **Juliette Mongenet at De Roussan**

Abstraction meets landscape in the works of Juliette Mongenet — angular black and white pieces that, up close, reveal themselves to be unique collaged works, playing off the textures of ripped photo paper versus hard-edged lines. And while you’re in the building, be sure to pop next door to Mariane Ibrahim for Kimiko Yoshida’s

monochrome-painted, neck-up self-portraits, each inspired by a famous historical bride.

## **Cristina de Middel at Dillon Gallery**

We'll never stop loving Cristina de Middel's "[The Afronauts](#)," her series based on Zambia's short-lived mid-'60s attempt at a space program, as evidenced by the blown-up newspaper clippings — a beautifully staged reimagining that retrospectively offers the project the reverence it never received in foreign press. Dillon Gallery also boasts two of Middel's later series: "This Is What Hatred Did," based on the 1964 novel "My Life in the Bush of Ghosts" by Amos Tutola, and "The Party," a tongue-in-cheek spin on spliced Mao Tse Tung quotes, illustrated with images.