



Home » Arts & Culture, Featured, Interviews, LA Noir

Night Gallery: Where art and revolution happen while you're sleeping

12 APRIL 2012 1,584 VIEWS COMMENTS (1) BY: LAURA SHUMATE



Night Gallery Marquis // Sara Clendening's "Saturn and Jupiter"

Nighttime sets up conditions where freedom feels more fun. As if Freedom is sneaking out after its parents Daylight and Sunshine have gone to bed. It's the id kind of freedom, exploratory and unbridled. Lincoln Heights' [Night Gallery](#), open from 10PM to 2AM, thrives on this "freedomnistic" element of the night. Night is the undeclared God of this gallery, making Night Gallery part scene, part hangout and part revolution.

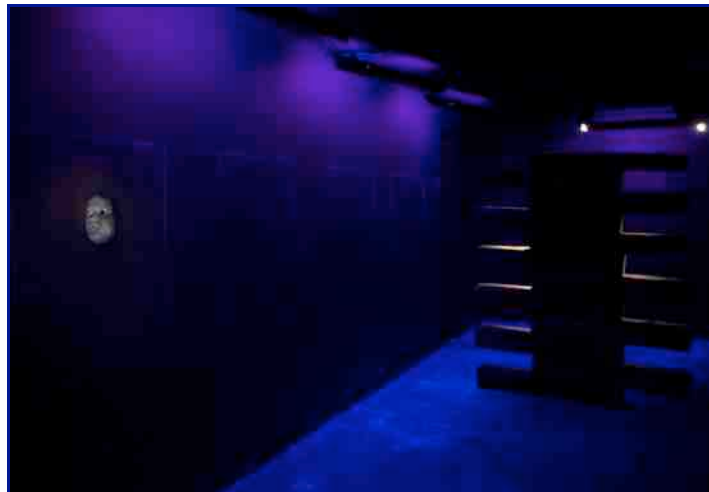
Gallery owner Davida Nemeroff is an artist herself, a Columbia graduate by way of Montreal, most recently creating image-based works out of photography and video. Her long, wavy black hair matches the tone of her voice; her languid thoughts are wholly dedicated to art. Gallery partner Mieke Marple is a California native, a Fine Arts undergrad from UCLA with a fashion style that defines that quarter of the creative Los Angeles world – sophisticated, sharp and very DIY. They are both intelligent women who have become notable participants in L.A., establishing a must-see destination point on the map of the Los Angeles art scene. Night Gallery openings are always packed events where art enthusiasts from Riverside to Santa Barbara teem through the door, smoking cigarettes in the gallery's strip-mall parking lot location, beneath a plastic marquis – a public art piece from artist Eve Fowler created also to remain as their gallery sign – which displays the Gertrude Stein text, "in the evening there is feeling". Next door on the left is the delicious Maya's with the legendary carnitas. To the right lies the rest of sleeping Lincoln Heights, descending into dimly lit blocks of dilapidated Victorian houses, chain-link fences and wrought iron gates.



Night Gallery's infamous Lounge 2011

Nemeroff opened Night Gallery in 2010, a year after she arrived in Los Angeles. She didn't come to open a gallery but after observing a city so supportive to the arts, she wanted to participate but on her own terms. She envisioned Night Gallery to bring the reactionary to the discussion and combat with what she sees as an unfortunate neutrality in the art market. To Nemeroff there is a quirk in the arts, where people call out for "the different" but when the different arrives, they retreat, returning to what's familiar. "Art is so finicky because it has the art world, the art market... the sort of rules. People want the neutrality, people want all those things. I don't know how much people want the art world to change," she said. "People don't want a revolution." A gallery at night with painted black walls, in an underdeveloped neighborhood, that opens operations when people are just falling asleep was the perfect combination for Nemeroff to exercise her solution, "[Night] is a real enabler and what it enables you to do, is really experience the art. We really do try and not pressure people into bad behavior. It's about enabling people to let go and experience the art and hang out with the art for a long enough period so that they're looking at it... they're listening to it." Marple adds, "Most galleries are open during the day, and they have white walls and their presentation of absolute *unbiasedness* captured in their timeless neutral space and it's *de-subjectivized*. Night Gallery is the opposite of that. It's a highly subjective space. No one here pretends to be neutral or ageless or anything like that, but somehow adding that to the piece, using that as a selling point."

In the art world, galleries practicing a philosophy to lead with creative intent over publicity-documented popularity can be rare. Night Gallery is risk-taking. Leading with gut to show in a gallery over what is promised and demonstrated to sell is a commitment to the product (to be crass), or rather a commitment to the art (to be accurate). It is unbridled faith. It is explorative and honorable to the experience of art and the medium has proven itself a saleable and possible project as documented with the resulting successful publicity, its longevity and its sales. From Marple on sales, "It's good, but tough. We are not in the most accessible location for people who collect art... but now if they want to have the first pass at work, they have to make the trek."



Chris Lipomi's "Fathom"

Artist [Chris Lipomi](#) has been a part of Night Gallery from the beginning. Part of his exhibition philosophy integrates gallery space to assist his work's expression through the show's physical construction, "I basically see all art as time based... The experience of viewing an exhibition is also time based; information is presented, it compounds upon itself, some works inform others, threads develop, the story unfolds. The way works are presented in a space is no different from plot points in a movie or nouns in a sentence... Their placement establishes pacing, rhythm, and flow as well as meaning... Art has

enough trouble being understood... you owe it to a work to position it in such a way for it to be most effective.”

Lipomi’s recent “M.Night” group show at Night Gallery plays with these details. As visitors enter the gallery, a shadowy silhouette of something akin to a massive Jenga display glows under specially installed black lights. This overtakes the foreground of the gallery space. Approaching the stacked blocks, realized to be giant railroad ties, a left turn brings the visitor through a terribly narrow doorway where the repeated figures are laid out on two card-tables in the adjacent room. The first table is a miniature city of actual Jenga blocks, rhythmically and attractively constructed in the darkness. The second card-table is an exact image reproduction, a tabletop linoleum photograph of the mini-Jenga land that sits a foot away on the room’s partner card-table. Viewers feel absolutely guided through the tour, as if pulling apart traditional Russian tea dolls till they discover the smallest wooden egg-body of the pretty painted craft artifacts. Emotionally, the effect of an internal staircase winding down to the tiniest element plays out for visitors. It’s delightful and in the strange gallery rooms, slightly uncanny with the descending visual echoes.

Lipomi continues about Nemeroff, “Davida has done a great job at creating an open and inviting forum for artists to realize their projects. The relaxed atmosphere and familiar faces remind me of something like a clubhouse, or to put it better... A space that’s akin to the European (German) *Kunstverein* model – an artist run space, for artists, by artists.”

Night Gallery is located at 204 S. Ave 19 in Lincoln Heights, Tuesday through Thursday from 10pm – 2am. Mira Dancy’s, “No Eyes for Irma,” is currently on view at Night Gallery through May 10.