



Kevin McGarry, "Hedi Slimane Photographs a New Class of Los Angeles Artists," *Garage*, Feb 7, 2018.

# GARAGE

## Hedi Slimane Photographs a New Class of Los Angeles Artists

LA is a mecca for creators seeking solitude, the perfect place to drop out and plug in at the same time. Photographed by Hedi Slimane.

As he was preparing to take the reins at Céline this season, Hedi Slimane worked with GARAGE to develop an eclectic list of thirteen Los Angeles-based artists, each of whom represents, as writer Kevin McGarry argues below, only one facet of LA's kaleidoscopic creative landscape. Slimane visited nearly all of the artists in their studios for the portfolio that runs below.

Isolation, whether due to traffic, canyons or bizarre self-care regimens, is often thought of as the Achilles' heel of life in Los Angeles. For artists, however, it's a secret weapon. The transformation of the city into an artist's mecca may ultimately squelch the dream of LA as a chiller, cheaper haven—the barrier to entry has already become prohibitively high for most—but it has also highlighted what an anomaly the city is. LA offers the freedom to bite into the pulsing art world one week and to retreat into solitude the next. People are refreshingly unconcerned with what others are doing—or making. To declare some abiding theme or singular movement among LA artists—apart from the notion that they are all living in a rapidly evolving conurbation on the edge of the world, perhaps at the end of the world—would simply be fake news.

You can trace LA's evolution from "node" to "hub" on the international art circuit back to 2012. That year, the inaugural Pacific Standard Time initiative traced the mythology of Southern California's art scene across 60 institutions in the region, introducing it to mass culture. A few months later, Shaun Regen reopened her homegrown gallery Regen Projects in a landmark building at the intersection of Santa Monica Boulevard and Highland Avenue, setting off a chain reaction of other openings that has rendered a particular strip of Hollywood something almost unthinkable in LA: it's walkable.

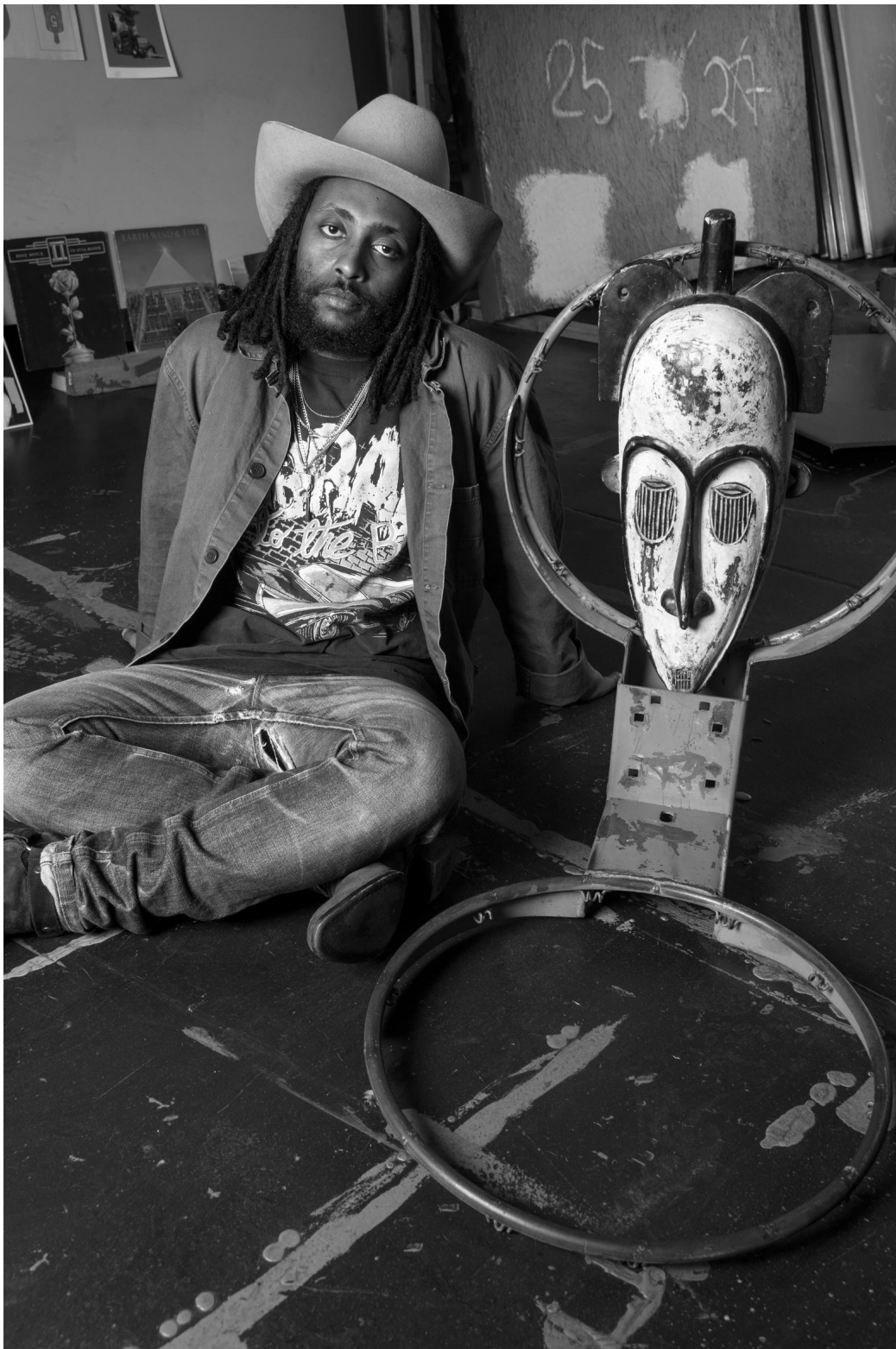
Flash-forward to 2018 and LA feels like a wholly different city. The intervening years have seen lavish openings for a succession of ante-upping private museums and blue-chip galleries. Art became a protagonist of the city's urban development, drawn out of the shadows of erudition and into the limelight of the entertainment world—for better or worse. Artists can no longer afford not to develop themselves as businesses. But at the same time, LA has developed a paradoxical quality uniquely its own: it's a perfect place to drop out and plug in at the same time. Come to think of it, maybe it always was? I wouldn't know, I moved here when Williamsburg got to be too much.



In her striking large-scale collages, Kandis Williams draws on personal experience and reflects on culture at large to investigate issues around nationalism and racism, eroticism, and identity. Building visual structure through repetition, Williams meditates on the reinforcement of social roles, especially as they relate to representations of the female body.

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Born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Awol Erizku's work challenges art history's Eurocentric canon with its focus on portraiture of black subjects and references to African-American history. Best known for shooting Beyoncé's pregnancy portrait, he has also produced virtuoso photographs that recast works by Vermeer, Caravaggio, and Ingres with black protagonists.

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French-born painter Claire Tabouret depicts historically allusive scenes and landscapes in a subdued, earthy palette, punctuated with bright dashes of color, rendered in thick, loose brushstrokes. In her portraits of female subjects, smudges of fuchsia, lavender, and orange float over eyelids and lips, evoking hastily applied makeup.

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J. Patrick Walsh, more often known as JPW3, works in sculpture, printmaking, and sometimes performance, transforming found objects and substances into raw materials for art. His works tend to be densely layered, with colorful and highly textured surfaces that suggest an interest in pop art and its offshoots.

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