



**March 20, 2014**  
**Cleared for Take Off: Public Art at LAX**  
**Shana Nys Dambrot**



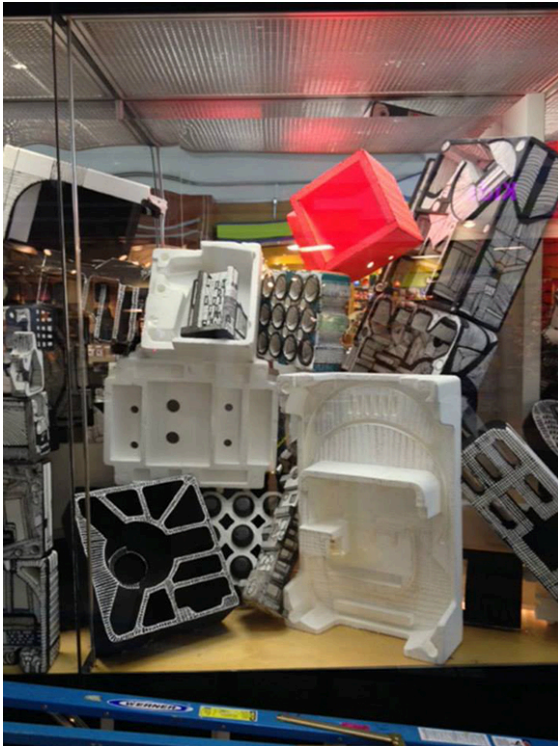
**The People Have Spoken**

The voting is **complete**, and the audience has chosen this article to be made into a short-format documentary. Check back soon for a brand new video that will appear here and on our **Watch** page.



Most of the time when you set out for an afternoon or evening of art viewing, or, say a neighborhood art walk of some kind, no one is going to end up asking you to show ID. And while the same cannot be said for the impressive contemporary art program at LAX Airport, it's definitely worth making a special trip through the terminals even if you aren't flying anywhere. Thanks to the ingenuity of the entity called [Los Angeles World Airports](#), and in partnership with the L.A. Department of Cultural Affairs, there has already been and is about to be a whole lot more art enlivening walls and encased installations throughout all the terminals. Under the moniker INFLUX, a handful of the newest ones are either already on view or are being installed right now. With a given installation open to the traveling public for about six months at a time, the new pieces will be there until about the end of August. Some are longer-term, while a great number of others have been up since Fall of last year and are set to close at the end of March. Conclusion: this month is a great time to travel if you want to see the optimum amount of public art at the airport.

Is it weird that I just said it was a great time to go see art at the airport? Like, go to the airport when you don't even have to, just to see the art there? That certainly is not something you hear everyday, but the truth is, the program directors and the artists and curators they in turn bring in know what they are doing. The results are surprisingly fresh, innovative, and modern, with a diversity of styles and aesthetics from the digital to the pop to the retro-futuristic. Some of it is actually pretty deep conceptually, with artists often designing thematic and even site-specific works for their location. The curators are on board with this narrative as well, looking at visually dynamics like levitation, gravity, and the flow of air and people. So, yes. Leave yourself a couple of extra extra hours to cruise the art before you get in your security line. And what about security? Not all these installations are accessible without a ticket, but many are. Last year they did a self-guided art tour/[mini art festival](#) with dedicated hours and a map and dance performances; and they figured out a way where people could see more from public areas. Let's hope they do something like that again this cycle.



In the Terminal 1 Concourse Display Case -- brand new and now up through summer -- is Jaime Scholnick's "Artifacts Series: Black/White/Flo Red Installation." Working sculpturally using the empty molded styrofoam of



electronics and other packaging, Scholnick uses architectural arrangements and ritualistic color to transform these familiar, yet mysterious shapes into objects resembling totems and other sacred, inscrutable things. Scholnick's sculptures are most often carefully floor or wall-mounted, but the transition into a tumultuous encasement in a giant freestanding vitrine inspired her to think even more dimensionally, constructing a frenetic array reminiscent of a cityscape or skyline viewable from all sides. The objects are rendered in an ultra-chic, red-laced black and white motif that both enhances and obscures the eccentric nature of her repurposed material.



Jorge Oswaldo, "#LAXPOPIES"

Terminal 1, Gate 1 hosts the group show "A Look at COLA Individual Artist Fellowships." On display through March, this selection of paintings, photographs, and new media works includes 28 grant recipients spanning 17 years of the award. Curated by Scott Canty, Director and Curator of the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, the installation is not only far more diverse in style and media than an airport space might conjure, but is an important exhibition looking at a pillar of its contemporary art history. Over at

Terminal 1, Gate 2 is Deborah Aschheim's "My Life in Airports." On display through March, this single-artist installation strikes a very different mood. Aschheim, who is used to working architecturally, instead works here in the idiom of drawing. Presenting a series of drawings comprising a "visual travel diary," the drawings of people (bored and frantic) and architecture (heroic and industrial) are gorgeously rendering, almost classical, and languidly narrative in a dreamlike, nostalgic sense. In Terminal 1, Baggage Claim through the end of March, is the effusive, graphically confectionary "#LAXPOPPIES" by Jorge Oswaldo, which the artist describes, accurately, as "a playful twist on the tradition of greeting a loved one at the airport with flowers." Eight giant, super-bright paintings of flowers invite all travelers and greeters to share some selfie-love with the hashtag #laxpoppies, adding their own archetypal airport lobby moment to the photo- and memory-stream.



Barbara Strasen, "Flow and Glimpse"

Moving on to Terminal 2, the Departures Atrium is animated by "Flow and Glimpse" by Barbara Strasen, which actually is up all the way through 2015. On the publicly accessible side of security, 90 lenticular panels are arranged across six walls of the space. Each panel has two images, which interchange as the viewer moves around -- one a photograph and the other an abstract pattern or chromatic texture. From there it's on to Terminal 3, where the Departures Atrium hosts Joyce Dallal's "Elevate" through Fall 2014. A dramatic

and poetic sculptural installation, Elevate is built of sweeping suspended arrangements of hundreds of origami airplanes in mid-flight, imprinted with excerpts from the Geneva Conventions and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In the Terminal 3 Ticketing area, Luciana Abait is installing "Aquarium and Underwater Series," a group of lightboxes and large-scale photographs that transform the environment with an illusion of being underwater. And from underwater, check out the atmosphere, as the expansive group exhibition "Levitational" "defies gravity" across the walls of the Terminal 3 Arrivals Hallway. On display through March, and curated by John David O'Brien, Levitational is a group show of drawing, painting, mixed-media, video, and sculpture centered on the theme of floating. The artists are: Wendy Adest, Kimber Berry, Daniel Brodo, Margaret Griffith, Mary Addison Hackett, Rebecca Ripple, Steve Roden, Joe Santarromana, and Erika Suderburg.

The Tom Bradley International Terminal, Arrivals/Customs is the site of "Meeson Pae Yang: Encoding and Exponentia" through June 2014. This is another sculptural installation inside one of those huge glass boxes, but instead of filling the space with objects per se, Encoding and Exponential uses mirrors and LED lights to create micro/macrocosmic fractal patterns that are part DNA and part digital future. Moving along to Terminal 6, Ticketing/Departures, ETMCA (a.k.a. the Code Artist)'s "Why Are You Here / No Thing To Declare / Declare Experience" is also on display through June. Large paintings that seem abstract, in fact use a code to read : "Why are you here?" "Nothing to declare." and "Declare experience." It's arrayed in one of the busiest stairwells at the airport as travelers approach Customs, and is not only inspired but activated by the flow of people. Fittingly, the Terminal 7-Terminal 8 Connector Hallway will house the new group exhibition "Welcome to L.A./Please Come Again," curated by Milo+McLean will present a group exhibition of 15 Southern California artists (Jennifer Celio, Zoe Crosher, Roni Feldman, J. Bennett Fitts, Yvette Gellis, Yolanda Gonzalez, Jill Greenberg, Susan Holcomb, Christine Nguyen, Elizabeth Patterson, Richard Ross, Lana Shuttleworth, Mark Stock, David Strick, and Lacey Terrell) responding directly to the look and feel of life in L.A.