



COURTESY FRANÇOIS GHEBALY, LOS ANGELES

## 3 Los Angeles Exhibitions Exploring the Nature of Things

Summer is traditionally a time for thematic group exhibitions, which provide galleries the opportunity to introduce new artists to their collectors, and three Los Angeles dealers are currently presenting some notable shows.

In this selection of L.A. group exhibitions, we discuss *Materia Medica* at François Ghebaly, *Did I Ever Have a Chance?* at Marc Selwyn Fine Art, and *Riders of the Red Horse* at The Pit. There are scores of fascinating artists and artworks to discover—so sit back, take a look, and let your imagination make the rounds.

### **Materia Medica**

François Ghebaly

July 22 – September 4, 2020

Presenting artworks that are about nature and also derived from it, *Materia Medica* offers a combination of pseudo-scientific and surreal pieces to illustrate the perils of our exploitation of the environment. Curated by multidisciplinary artist Kelly Akashi, who poses the questions “What does nature own?” and “What will be inherited when humans are gone?” in her esoteric exhibition statement, the show focuses on materials and working methods that address our fragile relationship with the natural world.

Hugh Hayden (<https://www.artandobject.com/press-release/creation-myths-examines-history-slavery-and-american-identity>) contributes a white, flocked Adirondack chair with giant wooden thorns protruding from it that’s titled *NIMBY*, which is a name for a person who opposes unsightly urban projects in his neighborhood but not elsewhere. Janis Miltenberger presents a giant glass hand with a smaller silvered blown-glass hand inside that sits on a base defined by symbolic keys in her remarkable 2012 sculpture *A Room For Our Wonder*. And Ann Craven displays three dark, small-scale paintings from a 2006 series of canvases depicting the moon bewitchingly reflected in a body of water at night.



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Installation view of *Materia Medica* at François Ghebaly.

The surrealist influence is inescapable in the extraordinary sculptures of Kay Hoffman and Nancy Youdelman. Hoffman shares a selection of figurative alabaster pieces, in which female bodies are caught canoodling with and cuddled by abstract, organic forms, while Youdelman presents a fanciful plant-like structure in her 2019 assemblage *Silent Tower*, which incorporates kitchen utensils and pearl necklaces. Likewise, Catalina Ouyang's 2020 sculpture *font III* offers a curious combination of soapstone, kombucha mother, horse hair, raw egg, and glue to fabricate a bizarre form of birth on the gallery's floor.

Although Akashi's own artwork is not on view, her poetic sensibility and love of materials is evident throughout the show, particularly in its dynamic display, which coaxes new meaning from the juxtaposition of the pieces. In the marvelous mixture of Hayden's thorny chair and a Craven moon painting with a Miltenberger sculpture of a figure composed of glass branches and leaves, Akashi stages a scenario straight out of a dreamlike Dalí or Magritte painting.