



When you purchase through links on our site, we may earn an affiliate commission. [Here's how it works.](#)

ART

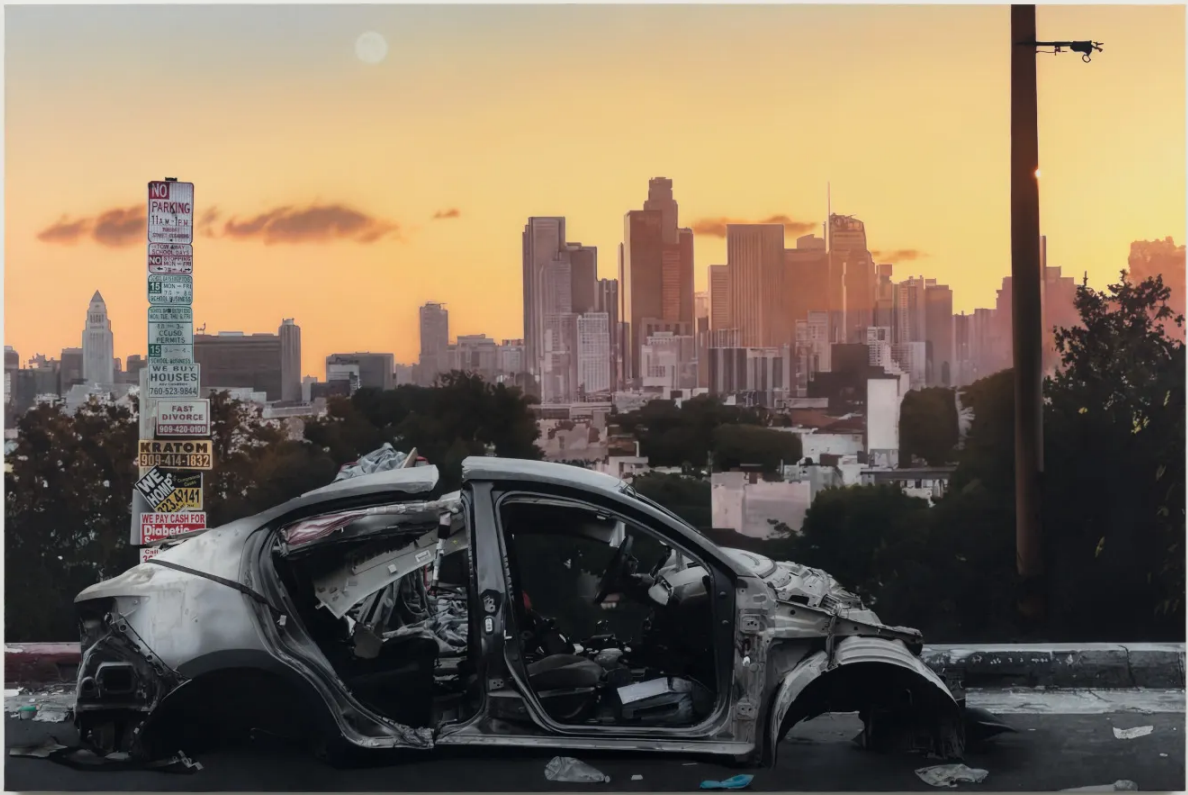
NEWS

'Heaven 'N' Earth': Sayre Gomez blurs the reality and illusion of Los Angeles

Sayre Gomez's 'Heaven 'N' Earth' at Xavier Hufkens in Brussels explores the contrasts between wealth and poverty, reality and illusion in Los Angeles



Sign up to our newsletter



We Pay Cash, 2023, acrylic on canvas

(Image credit: Photo credit: Morgan Waltz/Courtesy the Artist and Xavier Hufkens, Brussels)

BY FINN BLYTHE

PUBLISHED 13 HOURS AGO

'Heaven 'N' Earth', Sayre Gomez's latest exhibition at Xavier Hufkens, begins with the former. Under the celestial glow of the gallery's top-floor skylight, a meticulously crafted model of a ramshackle two-storey clapboard house occupies the floor's centre, surrounded on four walls by photorealistic paintings of perfect Californian sunsets.

Scale Replica of the Past, Present and Future (Peabody Werden House) is a recreation of a historic house built in the Boyle Heights neighbourhood of LA, shortly before the turn of the 20th century. When funds for its restoration dried up in 2016, the house was simply lifted off its foundations and moved across the street to make way for a new apartment block.

'Heaven 'N' Earth' by Sayre Gomez at Xavier Hufkens



Family Room, 2023, acrylic on canvas

(Image credit: Photo credit: Morgan Waltz. Courtesy the Artist and Xavier Hufkens, Brussels)

As an accidental monument to LA's spiralling gentrification and displacement problems, the house symbolises Gomez's key concern with mapping the physical

and spiritual spaces left in the wake of the city's rampant urban development. Fittingly, residents are absent from any of the work and yet traces of their unseen lives are everywhere.

On the floor below, Gomez's simulacral renderings of glass emergency doors evoke the eeriness of a decrepit strip mall. Gomez infuses the surface of each painting with tactile signs of wear and ageing, further evidence of a neglected world and the ephemera of commerce that survives it.



Progress Maker, 2023, acrylic on canvas

(Image credit: Photo credit: Morgan Waltz. Courtesy the Artist and Xavier Hufkens, Brussels)

Gomez revels in this blurring of artifice and reality and in the home of Hollywood perhaps this should be expected. In addition to the trompe-l'œil of his glass doors, Gomez digitally manipulates other paintings by collaging photographs and adding airbrushed details to create symbolically resonant compositions.

Large-scale works like *We Pay Cash* and *Progress Maker* (both 2023) fuse a foreground of destruction and dinginess with the gleaming glass and steel

backdrop of downtown LA's skyline. In *Progress Maker*, the hulking form of a concrete paving machine recalls the tractors in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, steamrolling communities in the name of profit and fortifying the boundary between rich and poor.



Sayre Gomez

(Image credit: Portrait by Sam Ramirez. Courtesy the Artist and Xavier Hufkens, Brussels)

These contrasts between centre and periphery, wealth and poverty, reality and illusion, underpin the exhibition as a whole, offering a poignant reflection on a city where homelessness has grown by around 80 per cent since 2015. Nowhere does this feel more stark than in the gallery's basement, where the lightwell glass has been tinted orange to infuse the space with an infernal incandescence.

Adding to the sense of catastrophe are two paintings of shopping trolleys, somewhat of a recurring motif for the artist and a ubiquitous sign of LA's nomadic homeless. Here Gomez presents them on fire, and in direct dialogue with a sculpture of a blackened and melted electric car charger. Down in the basement these powerful portents of climate change and petrochemical nihilism are the proverbial Earth to the upper floor's heaven. The reality feels much closer to hell.

Sayre Gomez, 'Heaven 'N' Earth', is on display at Xavier Hufkens, Brussels, Belgium, until 2 March 2024 xavierhufkens.com

Topics

Brussels

Los Angeles

Wallpaper* Newsletter

Receive our daily digest of inspiration, escapism and design stories from around the world direct to your inbox

SIGN ME UP

- Contact me with news and offers from other Future brands
- Receive email from us on behalf of our trusted partners or sponsors

By submitting your information you agree to the [Terms & Conditions](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) and are aged 16 or over.

Latest



Treetops House brings softness to contemporary concrete volumes in Sydney

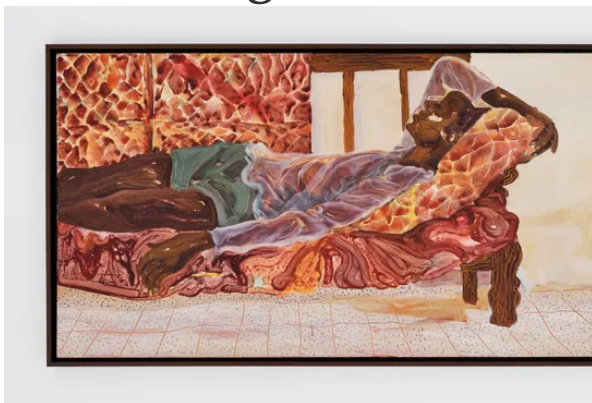


Haute Couture Week S/S 2024: Dior to Chanel



Paris Design Week 2024: the highlights

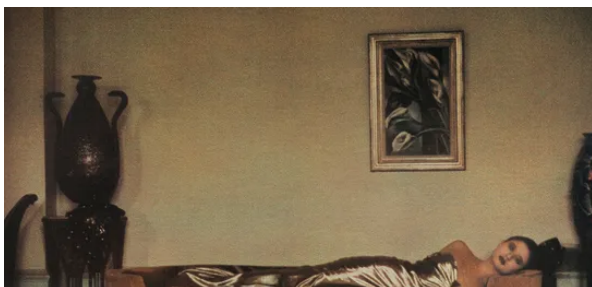
You Might Also Like



Ludovic Nkoth's vibrant paintings reflect on migration



Heads up: art exhibitions to see in January 2024





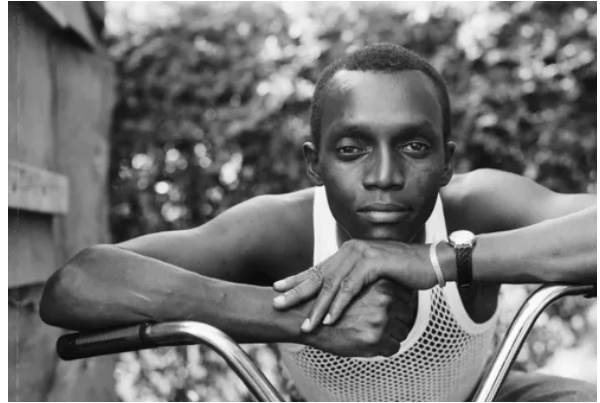
Sheila Metzner's jewel-toned fashion photography goes on show in Los Angeles



Ken Gun Min's mixed-media montages reframe cultural influences and queer identity



Tanya Aguiñiga: the artist weaving new narratives for borderless creativity



Los Angeles exhibitions: the best shows to see right now



As Frieze Los Angeles 2023 opens, here's your ultimate guide to the fair and shows around the city



In LA, Patrick Jackson's subversive sculptures ooze nostalgia and consumer culture

[VIEW MORE ▸](#)

Wallpaper*

[ABOUT US](#)

[CONTACT FUTURE'S EXPERTS](#)

[TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)

[PRIVACY POLICY](#)

[COOKIES POLICY](#)

[DO NOT SELL OR SHARE MY PERSONAL INFORMATION](#)

Wallpaper* is part of Future plc, an international media group and leading digital publisher. [Visit our corporate site.](#)

© Future Publishing Limited Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All rights reserved. England and Wales company registration number 2008885.