



**LEAST
CONCERN**

Curated by Lorraine Heitzman

Tibbie Dunbar, Ric Heitzman, Brian Mallman,
Richard Turner, Lorraine Heitzman

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MARCH 7 - MAY 2, 2026

FELLOWS OF CONTEMPORARY ART

FOCA Curators Lab Exhibition

970 N. Broadway, Suite 208, Los Angeles, CA 90012



INTRODUCTION

Least Concern, the title of this show, comes from a term used by conservationists to classify birds and plants. It is a polite sounding designation for species that are plentiful, widespread, and not at risk of extinction. Think of sparrows and dandelions. Here, the term used for common species is extended to common materials. There is also the broader implication that all things in our environment are deserving of attention and protection, and that the things considered worthless are often as extraordinary as the things that are presumed valuable.

The five artists in *Least Concern*, Tibbie Dunbar, Ric Heitzman, Brian Mallman, Richard Turner and Lorraine Heitzman find inspiration in natural materials and man-made objects, and see beauty in things that are easily found but frequently overlooked. They elevate ordinary materials through personal artworks, sometimes altering the form and context of the materials in the process. In the end, the objects always remain recognizable. Even when the objects are used in ways that contradict expectations the results can be humorous, while at other times some artworks reflect a more somber attitude. A few sculptures address environmental issues in oblique ways. In each instance, the materials may be of least concern, but they are at the heart of the creative act and they are all imaginative. The kinetic sculptures, puppets, films, photographs and assemblages in this show underscore how any object has the potential to be transformed into something beautiful and curious.

All of these artists share a sensitivity to their environment that is a type of visual intelligence. Their imaginations operate in the language of metaphors and are sparked by their appreciation and awareness of the world around them. They possess unique tactile relationships with the objects they use, and each artist manages to keep the textures and the tangible qualities of their materials at the center of their work. When they look at industrial tools, plastic detritus, organic materials, and elements of past artworks, they see something more: the potential inherent in each material. From their studios, beaches, and neighborhoods they celebrate the stuff of everyday life, demonstrating their delight in the commonplace. If the least valued thing is deemed worthwhile, then it follows that everything has value...an apt ethos for our time.

Lorraine Heitzman
Curator

FERRY DOCK

by Lisa Loop

It looks like foam, the froth the gulls spar over. Not even a nice color, but yellow tinged white, with overlarge bubbles that never pop, just swirl.

Or do they? A sound of air imploding, soft crackling. Not of this plane. What?

Something floats
in the dark, the grainy green pixelated depths
as the white hull moves away,
swirling wake
and all.

Let's say nothing of the attitude,

HORN BLAST.

Yeah, you're there.

We know.

But the story continues

down

into the cold dank

and the word flotsam

turns slippery.

I look.

My face tilts to the striating surface, (threatening to suck down my glasses. Such is curiosity when shine tingles the dark.)

Ah, the sky is never opaque, the water transparent, I remember from long ago summers, the only barrier my own spinning list, blathering on about what comes next, now snapped off, the silence of the bay overbrimming.

Dive. Dive.

Imagine the sting,
the breath caught,
the undulation.

There. There it is.

Tendrils swirl around, a dance of fractals, dense and seeking down the wooden pylon, rusted O-rings and heaving plankton streams, weeds gyrating to reveal a nest of blue shells, orange stars, waving black kelp stems, soft flash of a can now home to someone unseen but skuttling.

My eyes travel down as far
as my dry life will let them
to the knot of bags now sprinkled with green slime pellets
someone's lost lenses
peering up
from a wave edge
where they shift
senseless, endless,
fondled by the mouths of herring
who have no use for them
and silver on,
alive to the treasure
of the vast, moon-pulled mess.

I remember now. I know this world, the pressure on my skin. The hurtling along, flipping hands and feet, looking up at the sky through the wide, watery lens. I belong here, too. But not now. Not yet. I straighten my face, the boat long gone, her line of froth furred and erasing itself into the deepening gray.

Moving always through the long, shining door.

TIBBIE DUNBAR

Tibbie Dunbar constructs small whimsical sculptures from the discarded, misshapened plastic remnants that she collects on her daily walks. She deftly combines components of different colors, textures, and translucencies to create sculptures that make sense in some inscrutable way. The materials are not altered significantly, though, and it is the recognition of these objects, coupled with their transformation, that delights. Dunbar's background in design and jewelry-making are applied ingeniously to the materials she picks up, creating objects of wonder out of trash.



Untitled (Slouching)

Mixed media assemblage

8.25 x 5.5 x 5 inches



Untitled (Pilule)

Mixed media assemblage
6.5 x 4.5 x 4.5 inches



Untitled (Brush)

Mixed media assemblage
14 x 9 x 4 inches

RIC HEITZMAN

Ric Heitzman's stop-motion animated film, *Radicles* (still in production) is a poetic dreamscape inhabited by mysterious anthropomorphic figures. The handmade puppets and props are crafted from organic materials, including pine cones, shells, seed pods, twigs and kelp. His characters are expressive in movement, but are equally arresting as figurative sculptures. The film has a surreal beauty derived from the rustic nature of his materials and enhanced by shimmering lighting, a natural soundtrack, and sets, both analog and digital. In *Radicles* Heitzman has created a rich, imaginative world that is a compelling extraterrestrial experience.



Iggetty Dawg Daddy

Seed pods, burlwood, wire
8 x 4 x 3.5 inches



Shelly and Coco Bongo
Still frame from *Radicles*



Greek Chorus
Still frame from *Radicles*

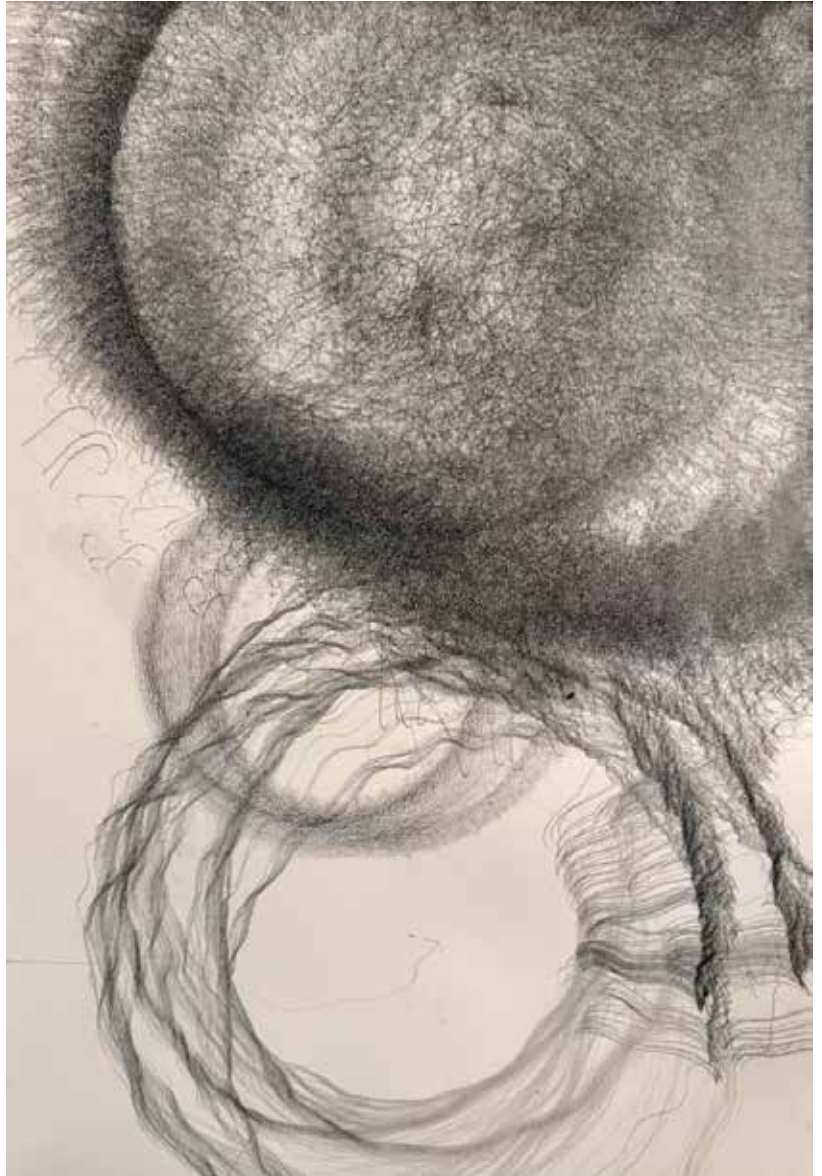
BRIAN MALLMAN

Brian Mallman is an artist who engages in social practices, drawing and installation art. His kinetic sculptures are crude mark-making devices driven by chance and the simple constructions that dictate the range of motions. He uses power tools, gears, and motors to perform tasks such as image making and substituting machines for human hands. What they lack in control, they make up for in random-driven actions. The way that repurposed tools can create beautiful, chaotic drawings, causes the viewer to consider the creative act with a renewed sense of wonder. What else have we overlooked and underestimated? There is humor in Mallman's work in his showmanship and approachable design.

Untitled from Drill Drawing Machine

Graphite on paper

36 x 24 inches





Still from *Leaf Drawing Machine*



Still from *Drill Drawing Machine*

RICHARD TURNER

Richard Turner's quiet, contemplative work of precisely arranged objects are influenced by his many years immersed in Asian studies. He reimagines the traditions of Scholars' Rocks and Viewing Stones, and embraces the pure formality of Ikebana. The photographs in this exhibit are part of a series entitled *No Ideas but in Things*, and were drawn from his collection of paraphernalia used as props in previous installations. Nowadays Turner has a desire to refine and limit his art practice to arranging instead of crafting physical objects. The current photographs capture a moment in the studio when the idiosyncratic elements coalesce into an image that invites our attention and curiosity. The objects are often commonplace, yet they are treated with reverence.



No Ideas but in Things 3

Digital photograph
32 x 24 inches



No Ideas but in Things 4

Digital photograph
25 x 23 inches



No Ideas but in Things 5

Digital photograph
25 x 23 inches

LORRAINE HEITZMAN

Lorraine Heitzman uses plant materials in unconventional tableaux and assemblages that emphasize the inherent beauty of common natural materials. Her minimalist sculptures isolate essential forms, while more complex arrangements juxtapose dissimilar objects for contrast. She manipulates both the layers of Melaleuca bark and the sea-worn forms of driftwood to focus attention on the undulating shapes and textures of these organic materials. The immersive visceral experience is meant to cultivate wonder and an appreciation of nature that is often overlooked in daily life.



A Tree, A Tide Pool, A Memory

Melaleuca bark, kelp, Kentile,
and misc. found objects
72 x 48 x 8 inches



The Seaweed Museum

Kelp, wood, steel
9 x 16 x 6 inches



Shillelagh

Driftwood, gold leaf
3 x 22 x 4 inches

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Tibbie Dunbar, Hon. AIA/LA

Born and raised in Montreal, Canada, Tibbie attended Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, NY where she studied jewelry design with Earl Pardon. Upon graduation from Skidmore, Tibbie studied for two years at the 92nd Street Y in New York with jewelry artists Bob Ebendorf, Lisa Gralnick and Rebekah Laskin, preparing for an MFA in metal at State University of New York New Paltz with Jamie Bennett and Fred Woell. After moving to Los Angeles, Tibbie's work changed in scale and left the realm of the wearable. Large suspended sculptural works in wire and fabric, abstractly referencing the human figure gradually transformed into figurative wall drawings, made of rice paper, acetate, and sequin pins. A working mother of two, availability of time and space ultimately prescribed the nature of her work. Collages, created in a small home studio, translated into Tibbie's current work in assemblage. View more of her art at tibbiedunbar.com

Ric Heitzman

Ric Heitzman is a Los Angeles based artist and Professor Emeritus of Woodbury University where he taught animation and filmmaking. In daily studio practice Ric draws, paints, and builds sculpture as well as making animated short films. He has exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Houston, and Dallas, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, The Art Institute of Chicago and the Museum of Contemporary Art of Houston. Before teaching, Ric directed and designed animated and live-action series for Cartoon Network, Children's Television Workshop and CBS-TV. More of Ric's art can be viewed at richeitzman.com

Brian Mallman

Brian Mallman is a Milwaukee-born artist based in Los Angeles whose work moves between drawing, sculpture, and social practice. He studied drawing at the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design. Brian's art is an investigation of line and process and reflects his curiosity about mark making. He is known for graphite works, narrative figurative drawings, and large experimental pieces that explore tension, machine movement, and chaos. His creative process extends beyond the studio into community activism. He founded the arts organization NELAart and 50NYORK Gallery in Highland Park, and he is the creator of Play Music on Porch Day, a worldwide music-sharing event that has brought porch concerts to tens of thousands of people in more than 70 countries. Brian has also given a Tedx talk about art and connection. His website is bmallman.com

Richard Turner

Artist/curator Richard Turner is a Professor Emeritus at Chapman University where he taught contemporary Asian art history and studio art. He lived in Saigon, Vietnam from 1959 -1961. He studied Chinese painting and language in Taipei in 1963-1964 and Indian miniature painting in Jaipur, Rajasthan in 1967 -1968 while on a Fulbright scholarship. As Director of Chapman University's Guggenheim Gallery, he curated over seventy exhibitions. He has worked as a public artist for over three decades. His studio work, public art and curatorial projects can be viewed on his website turnerprojects.com

Lorraine Heitzman

Lorraine Heitzman is an artist, writer and curator who lives in Los Angeles. She received her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago where she studied with many of the Chicago Imagists, including Karl Wirsum and Ray Yoshida. She was represented by the Nancy Lurie Gallery, and her sculptures and installations were shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art, The Chicago Cultural Center, and Navy Pier. She first curated a show for the Randolph Street Gallery and has since organized shows at Keystone Gallery and Launch LA. In addition to numerous group shows in Los Angeles, she has had solo shows at Alto Beta, Pierce College Art Gallery, Shoebox Projects, Winslow Garage and Curve, Line, Space. She was an art reviewer for Art and Cake for over five years and has written for Riot Material as well for select catalogs. More of her work is on view at lorraineheitzman.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Cover art by Lorraine Heitzman. All other photographs provided by the artists.

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