

LOWELL RYAN PROJECTS

LA WEEKLY

ARTS AT HOME (AND IN THE CAR): MAY 21-25

SHANA NYS DAMBROT × MAY 20, 2020



Rachel Hayes (Lowell Ryan Projects)

This week's arts options continue to proliferate, mostly within the parameters of Safer at Home, with a couple of fresh new additions to the growing "from your vehicle or on the sidewalk" sector. Remote conversations, virtual salons, live streamed content ranging from avant-garde film and futuristic video to feral performance art continue to dominate the arts calendar. However, a new window gallery project and a two-weekend, occasionally theatrical processional event do get you out of doors (wear a mask!) and into the presence of the art itself.

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Speaking of the physical presence of art, there are some galleries who have begun actively offering in-person viewing appointments. A random sampling of my own inbox includes Shoshana Wayne, Lowell Ryan Projects, Praz Delavallade, Anat Ebgı, Art Angels, Bruce Lurie Gallery, and Lancaster MOAH, but doubtless there are already others and more will soon join them. Promising minimal, timed occupancy, no-contact entry, no big public receptions obviously, thorough and frequent cleansing of common areas, and of course, all the masks, this is frankly giving me something to wrestle with.

On one hand, this is good news, and not just for audiences. Galleries are small businesses after all, and their function is to present exhibitions and sell art. Artists want to show, audiences crave essential experiences, the critics need something to critique without compromising, collectors want momentum and something to be a part of — and it's always easier to sell in person than online. In some ways, knowing you'll have the place all to yourself can deepen the viewing experience. Depending on your pre-existing levels of trust and familiarity with a gallery's location and staff, this is probably doable — the weird awkwardness of making a private appointment then having to really keep it notwithstanding.

But at the same time, it's not at all clear how safe this sort of thing is, even with all the best practices and science-based intentions. Those concerns are real. I haven't felt that it was responsible to blithely send folks out into this unknown landscape yet; it feels a bit soon to be in an enclosed space with even a small number of other people. That said, going to galleries is part of my job, and I will surely be among the first to try this out. However you feel about the prospect, it does represent an interesting development for art-world watchers. Think it over, and whatever you decide, do it responsibly. In the meantime, we may as well settle in for another fine weekend of the digital and vehicular cultural programming we're getting used to.