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A West Coast Spotlight on Latino Artists Leads the Fall Art Season

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Sandra Eleta's photograph "Edita (the one with the duster)," from "Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985" at the Hammer Museum.
GALERIA ARTECONSULT S.A., PANAMA

Size-wise, the biggest deal of the new art season comes right at the start with ["Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA,"](#) a roundup of some 70 museum exhibitions in Los Angeles and throughout Southern California devoted to Latin American and Latino art. The chronological arc is wide, from pre-Columbian gold to contemporary performance. So is the ethnic spectrum, with surveys of Afro-Brazilian and Chinese Caribbean art, and work by artists of Japanese descent living in Lima, Peru, and Mexico City.

The influence of Mexico in Southern California, as cultural underpinning and overlay, gets close attention. Shows like ["The U.S.-Mexican Border: Place, Imagination, and Possibility"](#) tackle pressing current issues; others, like a career retrospective of the magnificent Chicana muralist [Judith F. Baca](#), write histories long overdue. If I could see just one show, it would be ["Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985"](#) at the Hammer Museum, in which each of 116 genius artists, each in a distinctive way, dismantles the kind of social and spiritual walls the government in Washington is trying to build. (From mid-September through January.)



Gabriel Metsu's "Man Visiting a Woman Washing Her Hands" (circa 1663-66), part of "Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Painting."

WADDESDON MANOR, THE ROTHSCHILD COLLECTION

Old Masters

On the East Coast, the major attractions are basically self-sellers. ["Michelangelo: Divine Draftsman and Designer"](#) unites 150 drawings by the High Renaissance titan at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Nov. 13-Feb.12), and adds some sculpture as a chaser. Admission lines are probably already forming on Fifth Avenue.

A bankable master will rule in Washington, too, when ["Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Painting: Inspiration and Rivalry"](#) arrives, from the Louvre, at the National Gallery of Art in Washington on Oct. 22. Ten pictures by Vermeer are in a package with dozens of paintings by 17th-century Dutch colleagues and frenemies like Pieter de Hooch, Gerrit Dou and Gerard ter Borch.

At New York's Morgan Library & Museum, you'll find work by European virtuosos from before and after that time in ["Drawn to Greatness: Master Drawings from the Thaw Collection"](#) (Sept. 29-Jan. 7). With 150 works — Mantegna to Matisse — from a spectacular ensemble (I mean, really, truly) assembled by Eugene V. and Clare Eddy Thaw over some 70 years, this is sure to be the old master sleeper of this season.

Group Shows

In 1998, the Asia Society brought the [first](#) major shipment of Chinese contemporary art to New York City. Some of the artists came, too: They had no money, were exhibiting in one another's Beijing apartments and dodging post-Tiananmen censors. A few years later, China's art market exploded; artists (a few) were living like emperors; and a wily government was veering between cracking down on art and promoting it. ["Art and China After 1989: Theater of the World"](#) at the Guggenheim Museum will tell the tale. (Oct. 6-Jan. 7)

A group show I'm especially looking forward to is ["Trigger: Gender as a Tool and a Weapon"](#) at the New Museum (Sept. 27-Jan. 21). Queer — sexual identity beyond body parts and bed partners — is here, and here to stay, and has made ambiguous the new logical. The show will be in the estimable hands of the New Museum curator Johanna Burton, and the 40 artists are a hot crew.

I'm also putting money on a smaller show, "Speech/Acts," at the [Institute of Contemporary Art](#) in Philadelphia (Sept. 13-Dec. 23), which takes contemporary black poetry as both its theme and its material. That's dynamite matter to work with, and there will be six terrific artists — Jibade-Khalil Huffman, Steffani Jemison, Tony Lewis, Tiona Nekkia McClodden, Kameelah Janan Rasheed and Martine Syms — on the job.

Finally, in the group-show department, Los Angeles has some competition from "[Prospect.4: The Lotus in Spite of the Swamp](#)," the fourth iteration of an exhibition that stretches over all of New Orleans, and this year dovetails with the city's 300th [anniversary](#) celebrations. The director, Trevor Schoonmaker, collaborating with seven artist-curators, has assembled an international roster to infiltrate a city that is already an extraordinary work of environmental art. (Nov. 18–Feb. 25)



Tarsila Do Amaral's "A Cuca" (1924).
MUSÉE GRENOBLE / CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS PLASTIQUES, PARIS

Solos

The season is particularly rich in contemporary solo shows, starting with. "[Tarsila Do Amaral: Inventing Modern Art in Brazil](#)" at the Art Institute of Chicago. Born in 1886, Tarsila (as everyone called her) was a Brazilian painter of impressive gifts. She regularly traveled a São Paulo-Paris axis, claimed Fernand Léger and the poet Oswald de Andrade as friends, and, by mixing European modernism and Brazilian indigenous culture, made a new kind of art. Her North America reputation until now has been scant. This is about to change. (Oct. 8-Jan. 7)

Among other overdue museum solos I'm looking forward to: "[Carolee Schneemann: Kinetic Painting](#)" at MoMA PS1 (Oct. 22-March 11). Ms. Schneemann's career has been long and influential, and is still very much in progress. She began as a gestural painter and became a performer painting with her body in space. And she has always kept the work personal, which has been a problem for academic critics, with their notorious fear of intimacy. Yet intimacy is what makes her art feel vital now.

Howardena Pindell, born in 1943, has been a painter from the start but one of exceptional stylistic variety. Her early abstract pictures, their surfaces sprinkled with glitter and caked with punched-out, confetti-like paper dots, were some of the most beautiful paintings of the 1970s. After a traumatizing auto accident in 1979, the work turned figurative, intensely focused on autobiography and African-American politics. For followers of her career, the changes have been fascinating, as should be evident in her first major retrospective, "[Howardena Pindell: What Remains to Be Seen.](#)" at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. (Feb. 24-May 20)

This fall will offer the last chance to catch "[Kay WalkingStick: An American Artist.](#)" the superb touring retrospective of the painter who has put her Cherokee identity at the center of her art, and made that identity specific and capacious. The last stop on its tour is the Montclair Art Museum (Feb. 3-June 17). And it will be the first chance to see "[Patty Chang: The Wandering Lake, 2009-2017](#)" at the Queens Museum, a multipart, multimedia project by one of the most daring American performance artists, now a filmmaker, around. (Sept. 17-Feb. 18)

It so happens that the most of the interesting solo museums shows of the season are by women, with one exception, the [David Wojnarowicz](#) retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art next summer. Gay, and working-class by upbringing, Wojnarowicz was caught up in the culture wars of the 1980s. He died of AIDS-related causes in 1992 and went down fighting. An inventive self-taught artist and a ferocious writer, his political anger was unsleeping. You know what he would have thought of the present American moment. His retrospective couldn't be better timed, nor could it be better named: "David Wojnarowicz: History Keeps Me Awake at Night."