

## BLURRED LINES

L.A. ARCHITECTS GET CREATIVE FOR *ALMOST ANYTHING GOES*

**W**e should probably thank Frank Gehry. In the 20-some-odd years since the architect designed his famously innovative—and gloriously dazzling—Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, it seems the architectural rulebook has been all but abandoned. Nowadays, top architects are also graphic designers, tech wizards, and fashion innovators—and the impact it's having on the visual art world is both notable and game changing.

And that's precisely where *Almost Anything Goes* fits in. The Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara's newest group show, which opens this Sunday, January 5, is subtitled "Architecture and Inclusivity," and it's bringing together some of the most forward-thinking minds on the West Coast for an architecture show that's anything but typical.

Curated and co-conceptualized by Miki Garcia, Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara executive director, and longtime friend, colleague, and architect Brigitte Kouo, *Almost Anything Goes* features six rising stars of the Los Angeles architecture world, including Ramiro Diaz Granados

of Amorphis L.A., Elena Manfredini of Atelier Manfredini, Benjamin Ball and Gaston Nogues of Ball-Nogues Studio, Catherine Johnson and Rebecca Rudolph of Design Bitches, Doris Sung of DO/SU Studio Architecture, and Miles Kemp of Variate Labs.

"We're very much billing this as an architecture show," said Garcia, on the phone last week from the museum's Paseo Nuevo headquarters. "But the works will challenge people's understanding of what that means. Don't expect to see any building models."

What you will find in *Almost Anything Goes* is a wide swath of pieces inspired by and rooted in building design. Almost all of the artists are contributing new, site-specific work for the show, including Kemp's interactive virtual tour of Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye and Ball and Nogues's collection of papier-mâché lamps. Johnson and Rudolph have created a whimsical installation piece involving concrete and clouds, and Sung is building a sculpture inspired by her study of materials and how they react to their environment.

"The sculpture in itself is a gorgeous shape and form," said Garcia of the Sung piece, "but it's really rooted in Doris's investigation of how materials react and how that can inform future building projects. This particular material expands and contracts with heat."

Ultimately, says Garcia, *Almost Anything Goes* aims to swing the doors wide open on the current state of the architecture industry and create a dialogue among designers, appreciators, and the community at large about art and functionality.

"We're really encouraging people

who come to interact with the space and with each other," said Kouo. "We want to show that we don't have to be so limiting in our preconceived notions of what art is and what architecture is." I doubt Frank could have said it better himself.

The Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara will host an opening reception for *Almost Anything Goes: Architecture and Inclusivity* on Saturday, January 4, 6-8 p.m. The show runs January 5-April 13.

For info, call 966-5373 or visit [mcasanta-barbara.org](http://mcasanta-barbara.org).

—Aly Comingore



IF YOU BUILD IT: (top) Atelier Manfredini's "Eye Candy Table" (2012) is printed stainless steel. (bottom) Ball-Nogues Studio's "Music Legs Glob Lamp" is pulped paper and a lightbulb on a wooden base.

BEYONCÉ  
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To say it simply, Beyoncé's self-titled fifth album is a complex beast. Released mid-week in a digital-only format with zero promotion, *Beyoncé* is hard not to see as a kiss-off to the music industry at large. It's an album whose maker chose to ignore all the rules. And as of press time, it had sold more than one million digital copies. But sonically speaking, B's latest stands on its own as a glorious testament to artistic growth. In place of Sasha Fierce's hook-driven dub bangers, *Beyoncé* aims to humanize B's larger-than-life persona. "Sometimes I want to walk in your shoes," she sings on "Jealous," before exasperating the line "I'm just human" with a single, chest-rattling breath. "Drunk in Love" and "Partition" find the singer wrestling with her own sexuality with a refreshing frankness. And in between it all, audio snippets of Star Search losses and Grammy wins point to a life lived in the spotlight and all the baggage that comes along with it. Beyoncé's calling-card torch songs show up here, too, but they're an elevated version of their predecessors. Take "XO," a bold, anthemic love song so hard-hitting it's almost gratuitous, yet delivered with such blind conviction that you can't help but wish it were directed at you. Sure, B's latest may be emblematic of an industry tipping point. It may even signal the beginning of the end for the major labels. But if it isn't, *Beyoncé* still serves as a testament to the poise and power of pop music's biggest star.

—AC

SING IT: Macklemore collaborator Mary Lambert performs at UCSB on January 9.

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT  
MARY

Last year brought all kinds of surprises to the pop-music world, from JT's big comeback to Kanye's even bigger marriage proposal. Still, looking back, we're inclined to give the "Most Unexpected Moment of the Year" award to Mary Lambert. The Seattle spoken-word artist took 2013 by storm by way of Macklemore and Ryan Lewis's chart-topping hit "Some Love."

For the unacquainted, Macklemore's poignant rap about society and hip-hop's take on same-sex marriage has been more or less inescapable since early this year. It's also arguably gone on to become the gay rights anthem of the decade. For Lambert, an openly lesbian young woman who was called on to write and sing the chorus for "Some Love," the reaction has been startling. "I was shocked and still continue to be shocked at the reaction to 'Some Love,'" she told a reporter for *AfterEllen* in July. "I was shocked that a gay rights song could go platinum and is still climbing the Billboard charts... there's so many people behind it."

This Thursday, January 9, Lambert makes her Santa Barbara debut on campus at UCSB, where she'll perform songs from her solo album, *Letters Don't Talk*, as well as her take on the "Some Love" chorus, "She Keeps Me Warm." In solo mode, Lambert's music highlights the honesty of Macklemore's hit: she writes vulnerable songs that promote emotional release, and she isn't afraid to make audiences cry.

"I think human connection is one of the most beautiful things we have on this Earth," Lambert says. "As much as I can, I want to foster that and encourage that for my listeners—and have that for myself, as well."

Mary Lambert performs a free concert for UCSB students at The Hub on Thursday, January 9, at 8 p.m. Attendees must present a valid UCSB ID to be admitted. Call 893-2064.

—AC