

Like A City

Carlos Agredano / Anais Franco / David Horvitz / Amalia Irons / Leona Johnson / Douglas Kirkland / Judee Sill / John Tottenham

Curated by Sophie Appel

September 13 - December 13, 2025

Opening Reception: Saturday, September 13 | 5 to 8pm

Curator remarks at 4:30pm

Slash 1150 25th St, Building B, San Francisco

Open Thursday-Saturday, 11am-6pm



Carlos Agredano, *Parasol*, 2023, *Parasol*, 81 x 71 in. Courtesy of the artist.

"How do you carry yourself?"
"Like a city."

- Joe Pesci (Dream Fragment)

Drawing its title from a dream encounter I had with Joe Pesci, *Like a City* begins not with a map but with an orientation, with a moment in time, a truth in turn of phrase, a facade. The fabric of Los Angeles is designed and upkept by the people inside of it, in the way that Hollywood is a city within the city built on fiction. As a place, it is as real as it is made

up, constructed by casts and sets, those who build them, and those who grow and sell the food on the verdant landscapes that cradle the county. The line between reality and reality in its own image is thin.

Like a City opens within a scene: Liz Taylor's chandelier, a couch, white carpet, fresh pink flowers, Elvis Presley's bowling trophy. Across from the couch, a film, *The Caretaker* by Amalia Irons, plays on loop. The film follows Louis, the caretaker of an old Hollywood Hills mansion, who, after hearing the news of his boss's death, has a nervous breakdown and a house party.

Acknowledging the labor and illusion that scaffold the city's economy of images and imagination, Leona Johnson, a production designer by trade, brings a sculptural installation of utility poles and suspended wires into the main gallery space. Within Johnson's homage to LA's physical landscape and ode to her career working in the film industry, hangs a photograph by Douglas Kirkland of French actress and singer Jeanne Moreau, on the set of the Alex Mazursky film *Alex in Wonderland*; soldiers, smoke, and Musso & Frank's prominently featured in the background. It's a record of Hollywood Boulevard's past in cultural memory and form.

The work presented in *Like a City* continuously extends our attention to re-performance, translation, and Los Angeles' history. Drawing from the imaginary archive of Hollywood Boulevard, David Horvitz engages the legacy of Paul de Longpré, the French painter who traded three canvases for three plots of land in 1899, now Hollywood & Cahuenga. In a reimagined gesture, Horvitz paints California poppies and sells them on the corner, at the site of de Longpré's former estate. The documentation and residue of this act, photographs, postcards, and three paintings, are exhibited together as an ode to the de Longpré and his Hollywood Boulevard transaction.

Carlos Agredano presents a parasol acquired in a roadside exchange, sun-faded and weather-marked, its surface holding the detritus of the city and visually articulating the palimpsest of pollution the street vendors are subjected to daily. Pulling from Carlos' statement about his work, "Historically, Mexican and Chinese immigrants were the first people to begin street vending in California around the mid 1800s. Since as early as 1870, the state of California has tried to restrict vending." This work examines the continued history of structural and physical racial violence against immigrant communities within the city. Anais Franco's ceramic works reference the legacy of Japanese American strawberry farmers who cultivated the majority of California's strawberries, before being forcibly removed during World War II. Her use of organic motifs and porous surfaces evokes the way memory seeps into land and material in absentia.

The exhibition also includes *The Undesirables*, a grid of pencil-drawn portraits of the Manson girls by John Tottenham, presented like a call sheet or forensic study, as well as a rare drawing by Judee Sill, the late psychedelic baroque folk musician—an image of a bird in flight, never before exhibited, pulled from the archive of her collaborator Tommy Peltier.

What emerges across *Like a City* is not a singular view of Los Angeles, but a composite: part fable, part record, part mise-en-scène. The works here hold multi-focal tempos and timelines, leaning on fiction to clarify fact, on infrastructure to frame the monumentally illogical, ahistorical intimacy that ties Los Angeles together.

- Sophie Appel

Like a City, curated by Sophie Appel, is the 18th in a series of exhibitions at Slash, each organized by an independent LA-based curator. The exhibition is generously supported by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

Carlos Agredano (b. 1998) is an artist from Southeast Los Angeles. He uses readymade and process-based artworks to record and reveal environmental racism, such as paintings documenting the cumulative buildup of pollutants and smog on surfaces. In his research practice, Agredano interrogates how policies like redlining and private, racially-restrictive covenants enabled freeway construction and manufactured air pollution disparities in racially diverse, low-income neighborhoods. Agredano has exhibited at Human Resources, François Ghebaly, and SculptureCenter. He holds a BA in History and Literature from Harvard University and an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Anais Franco is a Los Angeles-based artist working in ceramics, sculpture, and drawing. Her practice explores memory, history, and cultural ambivalence through the layered landscapes shaped by Japanese American displacement, labor, and land use. Using clay to reimagine archival and domestic spaces, she investigates themes of documentation, boundaries, and reclamation.

David Horvitz was born in Los Angeles, where he currently lives and works. His multidisciplinary practice explores systems of language, time, and networks, often questioning the distances—geographical, temporal, and interpersonal—that separate people and places. Horvitz's work has been exhibited at institutions including MoMA, New York, SFMoMA, San Francisco, and Palais de Tokyo, Paris, among others and is included in numerous public and private collections, such as LACMA, Los Angeles, Fonds d'art contemporain, Paris, and the Nomos Foundation, Rome. He holds an MFA from the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College.

Amalia Irons is a filmmaker based in Los Angeles. Her work has been described as visual comedy in the twilight zone. Amalia is currently in post production on her debut feature film. She works as a music video director.

Leona Johnson is a Los Angeles-based artist working at the intersection of set design, fabrication, and photography. Her photography and sculpture practice investigates the relationship between physical space and its influence on mood, memory, and the body. Deeply rooted in her native Los Angeles, her work often reflects the textures, contradictions, and atmospheres of the city. Johnson began her career assisting and archiving for artist David LaChapelle. Since then, her set design work has caught the attention of artists such as Rihanna, Vampire Weekend, and Janelle Monáe.

Douglas Kirkland (1934–2022) joined *Look Magazine* in his early twenties and went on to work for *Life Magazine* during the golden age of 1960s and 70s photojournalism. Among his assignments were writing essays on Greece, Lebanon, and Japan and photographing fashion and celebrity figures, including photographing Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor, and Marlene Dietrich. Through the years, Kirkland worked as a special photographer on more than 100 motion pictures, including *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Sound of Music*, *Out of Africa*, *Titanic*, *Moulin Rouge!*, *Australia*, and *The Great Gatsby*.

Judee Sill (1944-79) was an American singer-songwriter and composer who pioneered a style of music that she self described as "occult-holy-western-Baroque-gospel." She was the first musician signed to David Geffen and Elliot Robert's record company, Asylum Records. She put out two critically acclaimed records during her short but prolific and poetic songwriting career.

John Tottenham is a prolific writer, artist, and performer, whose work has been described as "magnanimous misanthropy" and "magical cynicism." He is the author of four volumes of poetry. His first novel, *Service*, was published this May by Semiotext(e). His paintings and drawings have been exhibited in solo shows at galleries in Los Angeles: Las Cienegas Projects (2010), Rosamund Felsen Gallery (2012), Maloney Fine Art (2014), Lora Schlesinger Gallery (2019). He is not married and doesn't own a dog. He lives in Los Angeles.

Sophie Appel is a poet, curator, and historical map archivist based in Los Angeles. She co-founded and directed Delaplane from 2019-2021 and now tends to Melrose Botanical Garden in its various forms and iterations of exhibitions, readings, and collaborations.

Thank you to the team at Slash, Tommy Peltier, Françoise Kirkland, Raphael Villet, Art in Hand, David Horvitz, Zara Schuster, Maxim Ludwig, Dana Fineman, Luke Appel, Rick Appel, Shelly Appel, Angelyne, Taylor Stein, Legends Honored, Moritz Weber, Ry McGowan, & Johnny MacMillan. Thank you Hannah Tishkoff for intertwining your mind with mine to write this and rel robinson for your edits. Thank you Amalia Irons for helping me conceive of this exhibition. Thank you to Ana Saygi, Maxine Schoefer-Wulf, Efe Özmen, Tuğçe Evirgen Özmen, Dylan Sherman, Tommy Peltier, Françoise Kirkland, Raphael Villet, Art in Hand, David Horvitz, Zara Schuster, Maxim Ludwig, Dana Fineman, Luke Appel, Rick Appel, Shelly Appel, Angelyne, Taylor Stein, Legends Honored, Moritz Weber, Ry McGowan, Jasmine Zhang, RJ Wilks & David Wilson.

Slash is a nonprofit exhibition space founded in 2018 to advance and promote the expanding field of contemporary art in San Francisco through exhibitions, publications, and public programming.