

'Nine Lives'

**Hammer Museum
Los Angeles**

Two artists here lived up to the promise of the subtitle, "Visionary Artists from L.A.": Jeffrey Vallance and Lynn Foulkes. Both are well known in the city but deserve more attention, both in the wider art world and within the space of this show. The re-creation of Vallance's living-room wall was a stroke of curatorial genius. Since high school Vallance has followed his whims and transformed his experiences traveling to Tonga, Iceland, and even Las Vegas into wonderfully weird drawings, paintings, and artifacts. A coconut skull mask of a Tongan king, a license plate from "Tasmania: A Natural State," and other strange souvenirs were mounted on a facsimile of Vallance's wood-paneled wall.

Paintings and reliefs by Foulkes, spanning the '60s to the present, chronicled a consistent mood of isolation and dread and pointedly reflected the artist's animosity toward the Disney corporation. *The Lost Frontier*, a diorama, incorporates a desert landscape, a distant city, a cross-dressing, rifle-toting Mickey Mouse, a genuine cat skeleton, and a television. It is a strange and extraordinary creation that took the artist eight years to complete, from 1997 to 2005.

Too often curator Ali Subotnick used "visionary" as a vague catchall term to encompass the individuality of Los Angeles's artists and the dark side of the sunny city. But even if they hardly seemed visionary, several of the other artists here showed exceptional talent.

There is something special about Victoria Reynolds's precise, even loving, paintings of raw meat accompanied by elaborate black frames and droll titles, and about Lisa Anne Auerbach's fashions into which astringent aphorisms are woven. Two photographers raised questions of perception and depiction: Charlie White paired photographs of adolescent girls and transsexuals, while Hirsch Perlman presented black-and-white shots of a cat disappearing into a blur of movement. Although the connective thread may have been hard to discern, individual works came back to mind long after the show.

—Hunter Drohojowska-Philp

Holly Andres

**DNJ
Los Angeles**

For this exhibition of digital C-prints, titled "Sparrow Lane," Holly Andres took her cue from Nancy Drew mysteries. The polished images here conjured rich narratives filled with discovery and suspense. The Portland, Oregon-based artist has served as director of photography on several films, and her cinematic instincts were evident here. On view were 15 carefully choreographed photographs (all 2008), plus a tableau of candles, mirrors, and framed por-



Holly Andres, *Behind the Old Painting*, 2008, digital C-print, 40" x 50". DNJ.

traits that resemble family heirlooms.

Four fair-haired adolescent girls appear throughout the series, and Andres has set them in detailed, theatrical scenarios that speak of hidden truths or treasures about to be uncovered. In the opening image, *Behind the Old Painting*, two girls peer behind an old portrait while a third looks off to the right, making sure no one walks in on the investigation. Andres makes effective use of unseen sources of light in *The Glowing Drawer* and *The Red Purse*, as a young girl in each scene makes an illuminated discovery in what is normally a contained, dark space.

Sexual associations abound—milk drips down the front-door steps in *The Spilt Milk*, for example, and two girls insert a secret key into a lock in *Outside the Forbidden Bedroom*. But the suggestions were subtler in other works, and the images were complex enough to allow layered interpretations that go beyond double entendres. While her subjects seem deadly earnest, a sense of play and wonder also prevails in Andres's photography. The artist uses bright pastels and set lights, dressing her subjects in neo-Victorian schoolgirl attire. Their curious antics, and Andres's deft manipulation of perspective, leave enough mystery to lure the viewer in. —Richard Chang

'The Machine in the Garden'

**Glass Garage Fine Art
Los Angeles**

Since the term "steampunk" was coined, in the late 1980s, it has come to refer to a growing subculture of books, comics,



Jeffrey Vallance, *The Brown Wall*, 2009, mixed media with found objects, 96" x 168", installation view. Hammer Museum.