

## Olga Balema

Hannah Hoffman / Los Angeles

The press release for “On the Brink of My Sexy Apocalypse,” Olga Balema’s sensuous Los Angeles gallery debut, offers little more than an anecdotal excerpt from Jean Genet’s novel *Our Lady of the Flowers* (1943). While this sliver of the author’s gorgeous prose beguilingly portends the artist’s preoccupation with fluidity, the show’s title is more telling. Given the importance of liminal ruminations to Balema’s practice, it is fitting that notions of porousness and entropy fluctuate throughout her environmental installation.

Central to this trifurcated exhibition is a large room, its flooring covered with pale-green linoleum, displaying several low-lying sculptures that include four mattress-like PVC bags filled with water in which sundry items of steel, fabric and paper are hermetically sealed. These works set in motion a course of invisible yet inevitable decay. It’s hard not to consider them as bodies, their internalized systems enacting digestion, absorption and decomposition. Nestled nearby within a larger Day-Glo installation is the uncanny *A thing filled with evil streams* (2016), an oblong wooden block apparently supporting a partial rib cage replete with vertebrae. A battery-operated cell-phone motor vibrates within a niche in the sculpture’s thorax, as if it were on life support.

The accompanying spaces further this current of corporeal allusion through several loose sculptures comprised of fabric, latex and steel. These skeletal works exude a poetic force more sensual than logical, though not without their own intelligences. Like all the other pieces in this materially thrilling installation, these works don’t so much occupy space as invade it, as a parasite might attach to a host. And what has penetrated a surface must ultimately affect its interior.

by Thomas Duncan

## Hippie Modernism

Berkeley Art Museum

First opened at the Walker Art Center in late 2015, “Hippie Modernism” now ends its run in the Bay Area, the cradle of the hippie. Yet the Berkeley Art Museum’s version of the exhibition is substantially different; almost a quarter of the works, of local provenance, did not appear in earlier iterations. There’s blotter acid art, psych rock posters, and rich documentation of the 1970s proliferation of earthy, “hand-made houses” in the woods north of San Francisco — a kind of improvisational vernacular architecture of escape. A telling inclusion is the Community Memory Project, an early computer bulletin board for which a terminal was set up at a Berkeley record store in 1973 (later terminals would be installed at other sites) allowing people to send messages to the mainframe and to search and read others’ stored messages. It’s a fascinating chapter in the history of the personal computer, and yet this terminal, exhibited like a reliquary at the Berkeley Museum, suggests the distension of 1973’s rhetoric of community into today’s tech bromides.

Although the show features some excellent recreated installations, including Neville D’Almeida and Hélio Oiticica’s *CC5 Hendrixwar/Cosmococa Programa-in-Progress* (1973), and videos, such as those by the collective Ant Farm, “Hippie Modernism” is most at home in the fields of architectural, graphic and product design. The curators’ rather expansive understanding of “hippie” — spanning new sensibilities in media, optics and material; technophilia and back-to-the-earth escapism — aligns pretty easily with modernism’s own famous capaciousness, encompassing varieties of futurism and primitivism. Instead, the unifying thread here must be sought in the context of the 1970s — the end of the postwar boom and crisis of capitalism — and a turn to lifestyle politics.

by Eli Diner

## Faivovich & Goldberg

SlyZmud / Buenos Aires

Argentinian artists Guillermo Faivovich and Nicolás Goldberg began their project “A Guide to the Campo del Cielo Meteorites” back in 2006, unaware that it would eventually be featured in several American and European institutions. Their research into the region of Argentina where a rain of meteorites had fallen some four thousand years ago had the look of a hobby, but soon gave way to shows at Portikus in Frankfurt and then at Documenta 13. Now “Decomiso” (Seizure) brings their recent efforts back to a local audience, telling the story of 410 specimens of extraterrestrial rock seized by police in 2014.

A fifty-minute video in the main space documents the legal process of identifying the rocks, while a second venue nearby exhibits photographs of the rocks alongside reproductions of public documentation pertaining to their seizure. The film has a vivid flow and a bucolic tenor: a familial scene colored by country music shows officials sorting the fragments while laughing with one another. This provincial vignette brings intimacy to the peculiar activity of naming and photographing inanimate meteorite fragments — as if they were living individuals and not remnants of a prehuman, extraterrestrial past.

Yet “Decomiso” deals less with the celestial bodies themselves than with the process of classification of such objects. This is evidenced in the room full of shelves, photographs and legal documents that traps the viewer in its own blankness, and instills an administrative aesthetic that produces detachment. The gallery context is, perhaps inevitably, ill-suited to exhibiting an artistic research project surrounding a missing object. Thematically, the show is in keeping with their previous — rather more daring — shows to date. But its construction is very different. “Decomiso” turns Faivovich & Goldberg’s project from research into memorabilia.

by Claudio Iglesias



From top, clockwise:  
**Chicago Women's Graphics Collective**  
*In Celebration of Amazons* (1974),  
 screenprint on paper.  
 Courtesy of Lincoln Cushing/  
 Docs Poluli Archive and  
 Berkeley Art Museum  
 and Pacific Film Archive  
 (BAMPFA), Berkeley

**Faivovich & Goldberg**  
 “Composition #31.  
 Decomiso”  
 Installation view at SlyZmud,  
 Buenos Aires (2017)  
 Courtesy of the Artists and  
 SlyZmud, Buenos Aires

**Olga Balema**  
 become a stranger to  
 yourself (2017)  
 Courtesy of the Artist and  
 Hannah Hoffman Gallery,  
 Los Angeles  
 Photography by  
 Veli-Matti Hoikka

