

Cherry and Martin

Vankin, Deborah. "Another Cats Show at 356 Mission is all about fun with felines," *Los Angeles Times*, August 20, 2014, p. D3.

Los Angeles Times

There's the proud cat: A regal, white feline sits erect on a plush, red chaise, its ears pricked and tail swooping below, as depicted in a painting by Anais Lozano.

There's the freaky cat: Peter Shire's "Mew-tant of Echo Park" is a robotic, Frankenstein-like creature with a jagged, upright tail.

And there's the lazy one: "Junkyard Cat" is a fluffy kitty lounging on its side on the hood of an old, wrecked car, as painted by Gracie DeVito.

They are all part of "Another Cats Show," more than 300 works by 300 artists, mostly from L.A., on view at the Boyle Heights contemporary art space 356 Mission, on the edge of downtown L.A. The exhibition includes drawings, paintings, videos, sculptures and even sound pieces by the likes of John Baldessari, William Leavitt, Meg Cranston, Benjamin Weissman and painter Laura Owens, who founded 356 Mission. With works filling the wallspace of the 12,000-square-foot former garment manufacturing warehouse, the show is whimsical, frenetic and more than a little cheeky.

"Our mission is to have fun," says Wendy Yao, a partner at 356 Mission and owner of the Chinatown art bookstore Ooga Booga.

Yao is a self-described "cat obsessive," but the inspiration for "Another Cats Show" came from the broader art world, she says. The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis puts on an annual Internet Cat Video Festival, and the White Columns exhibition space in New York last year held a group show of cat art. Several of the artists from the White Columns show are included in 356 Mission's show.

"The show is a nod to this long lineage of cat shows," Yao says, noting a 2003 cat exhibition at L.A. gallery ACME that was curated by Ross McLain, who has work in the 356 Mission show. "The idea was that it was inclusive and overlapping and acknowledging that continuum."

Familiar feline faces surface in "Another Cats Show" — Garfield, Felix and Catwoman as well as emoji and Internet cats — but not all of the cats are typically cute. Danny McDonald's wire and plastic sculpture depicts a Siamese cat perched atop a steaming pile of poop, and E'wao Kagoshima's one-eyed "See Saw Kitty" is shown plunging a sword into its belly in the Japanese ritual suicide tradition of seppuku.

There's ceramic work by Magdalena Suarez Frimkess and Michael Frimkess, who are featured in the Hammer Museum's current biennial and were named Tuesday as winners of the biennial's Made in L.A. Career Achievement Award. There's also a set of 99 ceramic bowls by Lena Wolek depicting various cat figures — the missing 100th bowl meant to honor her deceased cat.

More than anything, "Another Cats Show" has a healthy sense of humor.

Brian Bress' video short combines sculpture, animation and footage of the artist performing in a cat costume. Cory Arcangel's video stitches together images of piano-playing cats on YouTube; pieced together, the footage replicates Austrian composer Arnold Schoenberg's "Drei Klavierstücke, Op. 11."

And then there's the inside joke: 356 Mission's last exhibition? A solo show by 87-year-old painter Alex Katz.