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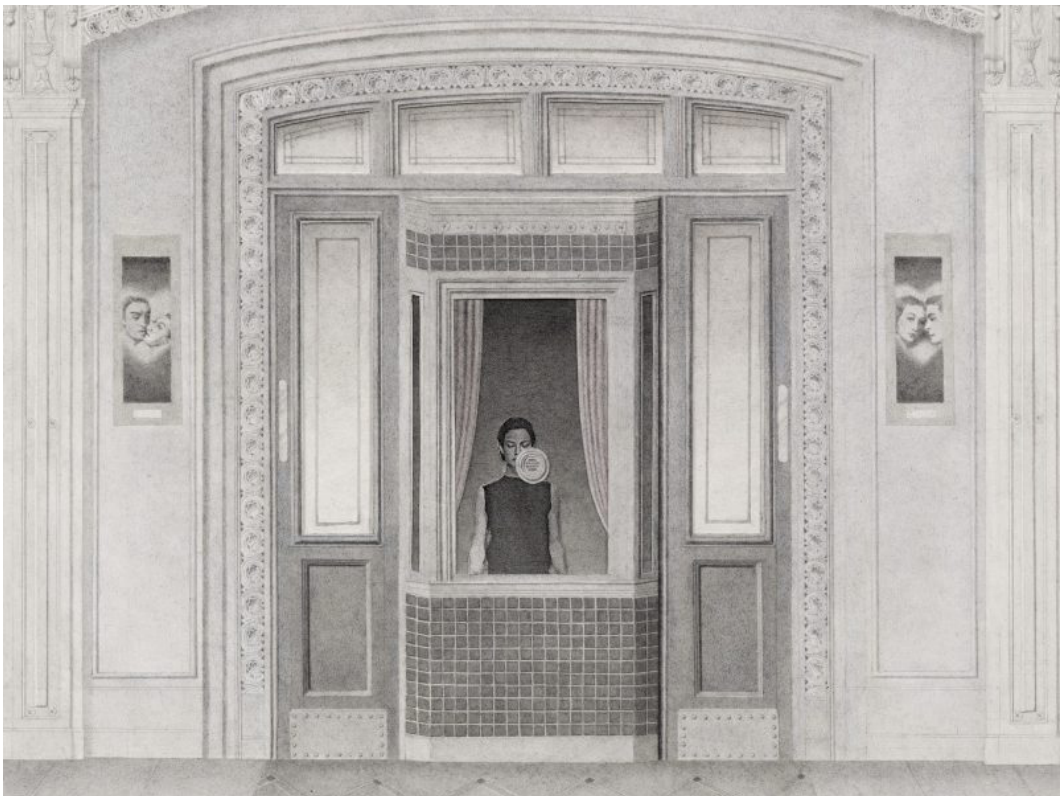
ART IN BRIEF THE CRITICS' TABLE

The LA Dispatch: Milano Chow in a Frank Lloyd Wright Gem, a Group Show in a Secret Location, and More

Our critics write on Milano Chow at Hollyhock House in East Hollywood, a mysterious project behind a pizza joint in Boyle Heights, Glenn Ligon at Hauser & Wirth, and more.

By Keko Jackson, Jasminne Morataya, Brontez Purnell, Eileen Havant Townsend

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Milano Chow, *Box Office (Detail)*, 2026. Photography by Paul Salveson, courtesy of the artist and Bel Ami.

I've been told that the reason many Los Angeles-based galleries—which, in the late 1990s, had largely been clustered in Chinatown—started to move westward was that more and more of their clientele were based in China. These collectors were less than enthusiastic about trekking so far north and east from the airport upon arrival. Dealers decided to meet them halfway, mostly in Culver City, a separate municipality that was then working towards the cultural and economic "revitalization" of its plentiful industrial spaces; The New York Times *dubbed the town a "nascent Chelsea."*

Culver City is long since revitalized, and many of its galleries—most notably, Blum—are no more. Today, several of LA's larger spaces have settled in the tonier mid-Wilshire, Beverly Hills, and West Hollywood neighborhoods, but the majority have chosen the rougher-edged commercial corridors of Hollywood proper, along Western Avenue and Sunset Boulevard. Last month's piece on fall openings in LA mostly focused on shows in these regions; the action felt dense and synchronous, maybe indeed a bit like Chelsea, if Chelsea had taco stands, Chick-fil-A, and four lanes of traffic.

Ever wary of leaving stones unturned, I thought this month's dispatch from the West Coast should foreground spaces located east of Western Ave, proving that there remains much to behold on this side of town. I invited four writers to cover an exhibition of their choosing, within that one parameter. Their respective reviews are as heterogeneous as the shows they selected and the neighborhoods they traveled to, but they all prove that making the journey will be more than worthwhile.
—Juliana Halpert



Installation view of "Milano Chow: Fantasy Street" at Hollyhock House in Los Angeles, 2026.
Photography by Joshua White, courtesy of the artist and Hollyhock House.

Milano Chow

Hollyhock House | 4800 Hollywood Blvd
Through Dec. 20

Hollyhock House, Frank Lloyd Wright's stucco-and-stone masterpiece and Los Angeles's only UNESCO World Heritage Site, crowns a hilltop in East Hollywood. In a far southern corner of the house, in a pink-walled bedroom originally built

for the young daughter of oil heiress Aline Barnsdall, nine works by the LA-based artist Milano Chow rest on mantels and cabinets or hang on freestanding folding screens. (Thumbtacks in Wright's walls are, needless to say, verboten.)

Curated by Cole Akers, "Fantasy Street" features a selection of works on paper by Chow that, like the unfurnished bedroom in which they are displayed, are stately and somewhat desolate. Working in graphite and photo transfer, the artist builds minutely detailed grayscale compositions on layers of thick, cut paper to depict female figures lurking inside elaborate buildings, framed by windows and other interstices. A diptych of horizontal scrolls features lone women standing amid neoclassical colonnades; other drawings show figures loitering in a hotel entryway framed in brickwork or waiting within a ticket booth at an old movie theater.

Chow's hand is precise; it's easy to imagine the artist working in white gloves at a drafting table. Because of their tight formal treatment, these architectural scenes initially appear to reproduce real places. But the longer one looks, the more each turns strange and set-like, a nonsensical amalgamation of scale and era. In fact, they are partially real: Chow mined the photo archives of the Los Angeles Public Library for source material. The resulting works speak to a Los Angeles that famously takes no prisoners when it comes to collapsing time and place, whether through urban renewal schemes or on the silver screen.

Frank Lloyd Wright embraced this city's stylistic lawlessness and used it as inspiration, affectionately terming his mix of Mayan, Roman, and Japanese motifs "California Romanza." But Chow's manner is a bit less brazen and a lot more enigmatic. It's also a mystery whether her stylish heroines are proprietresses of these anachronistic buildings—or prisoners. Aline Barnsdall famously found the house unlivable.

Chow employs a draughtsman's toolkit, iterating and splicing. Rather than creating schematics, however, she uses these methods to construct an atmosphere of mystique that is foundational to "Fantasy Street." In a neighboring gallery, Chow extends her sensibility into curatorial practice with "Deborah Turbeville: The Lifted Veil," an exhibition of the avant-garde fashion photographer's ethereal images of similarly glamorous, alienated women.—*Eileen Havant Townsend*

Eileen Havant Townsend, *Cultured*
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