

REVIEWS SAINT LOUIS

Won Ju Lim

Parapet / Real Humans

By Marie Heilich



View of "Self Annihilation, Act III," 2024. Floor: Won Ju Lim, *Self Annihilation, Act III*, 2024. Reflected in mirror: Eric Wesley, *Theyseeus*, 2024. Photo: Chris Bauer.

To reflect on “Self-Annihilation,” 2024, a three-part series of installations by Won Ju Lim, is to relinquish attachment to coherence, control, and resolution. Demonstrating an investment in a kind of free-form, language-based Conceptualism, the artist’s trilogy resists obvious pictorial representation, examining the relationship between subject and object via utterance, gaze, and void. I had already seen *Acts I* and *II*, which were staged last year, respectively, at the galleries Timeshare and council_st in Los Angeles. *Act III* brought the series to its disquieting finale here, an artist-run space in Saint Louis.

A text that accompanied *Act I* analyzed the mutable figure of the witch, going from ancient occult lore to midcentury pop culture via the campy American sitcom *Bewitched* (1964–72). In the initial two acts, vast wall-mounted mirrors—evoking those found in

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the rehearsal rooms of dance studios—were adumbrated by distorted and intersecting spells cut out of matte-black vinyl, as if the words were frozen mid-cast. The incantations were taken from the humorously bumbling Aunt Clara, a character on *Bewitched*, who rarely executed her magic with success: HARK YE, HARK YE – YE WITCHES WHO LIVE IN LAMPS, YE POWERS OF WATTS, AND OHMS, AND AMPS, read one.

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Every iteration of *Self-Annihilation* was scored by a stammering soundscape, a wayward séance resisting musical cohesion at every turn. Twelve tracks blended field recordings of animal cries in the rainforest and a woman’s gasping “ohs” that quickened to bursts of hysterical laughter before breaking into an onslaught of gagging shrieks and erratic pings that conjured, like a volatile EKG machine pulsing between life and death. The effect was as mesmerizing as it was grotesque; an affective cacophony of malfunction

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that drew from musique concrète as well as from other vanguard noise traditions. From its inception, the series courts collapse: of the self, of meaning, and of the language that tries to contain them. Uttered or written, each invocation carries the potential for agency with the possibility of failure.

In the final act at Parapet / Real Humans, a voyeuristic presence loomed overhead: Eric Wesley's witchy familiar *Theyseeus, 2024*, a crow sculpture with a video camera lens for an eye. The work was affixed to a ceiling fan, which allowed it to spin in endless predatory loops. It felt like the bird was closing in on the audience below—a comically sinister take on the idiom “as the crow flies.” With a Hitchcockian unease, the menacing corvid served as both omen and surveillance device. A monitor displayed the spiraling live footage, conflating the distinctions between viewer and viewed. A mirror work laid out on the floor inverted the gallery's axis. Any illusion of prophetic scrying was now disrupted by mediation—reflection no longer promised self-discovery but entrapment. For her closing scene, Lim turned reflectiveness into an imprisoning snare, plunging the viewer into a recursive loop of observation where identity flickers and fades. What *Act III* offered was not closure but an ever-greater collapse of a visible and stable self. At their heart, Lim's installations use sound and reflection to dismantle language and order; they allow us to savor the erosion of coherence. Each installation is an enchantment, a disembodiment, an incubator of intuition—a place to be a mystery to one's own self. Lim's sites for self-annihilation are escape routes from the strictures of flesh and identity—invitations to slip into stranger, more expansive forms. Lim's witches crack the mirror of selfhood to let something untamed seep through. The process is a ritual of ruin, a sly dare to abandon the familiar and reemerge as a new, porous presence, thrumming with the thrill of never being settled. Lim doesn't offer resolution; she gives us a wink and a shove, challenging us to slip into fecund chaos.

—Marie Heilich

REVIEWS LOS ANGELES

Charlotte Posenenske and Alice Channer

Okey Dokey Konrad Fischer

By Marie Heilich ✉



View of "Charlotte Posenenske and Alice Channer," 2025. From left: Charlotte Posenenske, *Vierkantrohre Serie DW* (Square Tubes, Series DW), 1967–68; Alice Channer, *Soft Sediment Deformation (Metallized Bodies)*, 2024. Photo: Paul Salvesson.

The inaugural pairing at the Los Angeles satellite of Düsseldorf's Konrad Fischer Galerie staged a dialogue between Charlotte Posenenske and Alice Channer, two artists whose works probe production, circulation, and the afterlives of industrial and institutional systems. Though the two artists worked decades apart, their shared Conceptual register is one of a cross-temporal investment in the protocols of mass production. Their convergence in this exhibition, in turn, highlighted how artworks respond to the pressures of the systems they move through and how they carry the imprint of structures they aim to unmake.

Posenenske's *Vierkantrohre Serie DW* (Square Tubes, Series DW), 1967–68, made of jointed ductwork realized in cardboard, extends from earlier iterations in galvanized steel, produced during her brief and exacting engagement with industrial formalism. Sold at cost, endlessly reproducible, and intended to be arranged by “consumers” (her term for buyers), the series dispersed authorship across fabricators, dealers, and publics, aiming to erode the aura of the singular object and reroute value through use rather than uniqueness. In 1968, however, she abandoned the project. Convinced that art could not intervene meaningfully in the conditions it sought to critique, she trained as a sociologist and redirected her efforts toward improving industrial labor from within the system for the remainder of her career.

Following Posenenske's death in 1985 at the age of fifty-four and the passing of her work's steward, Burkhard Brunn, in 2021, posthumous editions are now produced in limited quantities as authorized reconstructions accompanied by a certificate from the artist's estate. Original prototypes remain in institutional collections. What was on view here, then, was both the proposition of a “fabricated product as art object” and as a reified artifact of preservation: an object with original ambitions that are at once upheld and suspended by legacy and the market. The work's recontextualization mirrored the challenge facing critical platforms today: that of how to maintain radical inquiry within systems that increasingly foreclose it. In her 1968 manifesto, Posenenske wrote, “Though art's formal development has progressed at an interesting tempo, its social function has regressed.” Here, the proximity of her work to Channer's sharpened this tension, revealing how critique, too, is absorbed and redirected by the mechanisms it seeks to outmaneuver.

Channer's contributions encompassed recent works from her "Soft Sediment Deformation" series, 2024–25, including one where pleated, ink-jet-printed silver twill is tucked into the seam between wall and floor, pinned beneath a machined and polished limestone block. These compositions pair digitally distorted scans on metallic fabric, compressed into interlocking scale patterns and anchored by a stone weight. The works take on the texture of industrial packaging, gesturing toward the extractive and circulatory pressures of global manufacturing. Channer engages what she calls a "super-individual scale," where logistics and supply chains exceed perception. The artist's 2024 drawing series "Sharks" and "Wood-worms," included here, feature metallized thorns and twigs pressing out from pleated gold paper and rhymed loosely with Posenenske's early "*Serie B Relief*" from 1967. And while Channer's folding, corrugation, and expansion echo modular logics, they also push into ornamental estrangement, abstracting structures into seductive yet disorienting surfaces.

Where Posenenske's critique emerged from 1960s Marxist-inflected Minimalism oriented toward collectivism and labor politics, Channer, equally attentive to systemic pressures, works through the aesthetics of industrial excess and digital mediation. Less concerned with rerouting value through utility, her work unsettles the assumed alignment between design, production, and legibility, exposing the ways in which forms are shaped, flattened, or encoded by systems that regulate bodily and material flow. Processes drawn from fashion, geology, logistics, and biometrics appear not as thematic citations but as structuring forces folded into the image, surface, and spatial logic. The two artists converge in their effort to unwork the mystique of objects: Posenenske through replication and delegated authorship, Channer through the estrangement of surfaces as she stages slippages between scanning and sculpting, source and output, body and machine.

By animating critique's fragmentary afterlife, the exhibition explored structural disjunctions. Both bodies of work acknowledge the limits of agency as they move through the industrial or institutional infrastructures they interrogate. Yet, rather than sidestepping complicity, each artist articulates, through the registers of her particular era, specific pressures exerted by production, value transfer, and institutional memory. What emerged here was a kind of double exposure: two linked economies responding across time, equally attuned to how material critiques endure, falter, or transform under systemic strain. The fact that these works circulate through the structures they address only intensifies their stakes and contradictions, while implicating our own.

REVIEWS LOS ANGELES

Benjamin Echeverria

Michael Benevento

By Marie Hellich



Benjamin Echeverria, *Salamander*, 2025, ink-jet print on microporous coated polyester film, aluminum face mount, 19 × 16".

Benjamin Echeverria’s exhibition “Nerds Blizzard” at Michael Benevento punctured the conventions that organize art—genres, didactics, mediums—and unsettled their authority to give way to more layered truths. Bound to overdetermined protocols, these systems manufacture certainty by stabilizing works for markets and histories but, in the process, foreclose an instability that might otherwise be leveraged to rethink art’s internal scaffolding and relationship to culture at large. Echeverria leans into such fissures, treating contradiction as method and dissonance as material. The result was a taut conceptual offering in which every element rebounded against itself.

The show opened with *Dose*, 2025, a canvas of two mint-colored acrylic circles holding distance across a chalky ground. Painted-over staples skirt the edges while faint Bubble Wrap impressions echo the pair in spectral refrain. With the gallery lights dimmed, the dots threw off a faint-green cast—part material, part atmosphere—that lent the work a clinical air before shading into hallucinatory aura. Serving as a control, *Dose* established a formal baseline, against which subsequent works deviated and unraveled.

That baseline was immediately tested in *Black Circle*, 2025, in which three white disks the size of paint buckets gather on a purple-blue ground smudged with gray halos, as if limbs had dragged across to the edges. Inside the circles, staples appear unsuccessfully pried, causing tiny losses in the wet white paint. Yet none of this was painted: The work is an aqueous ink-jet print replicating the skin of a painting. What seemed to extend the logic of *Dose* revealed a material feint and disjunction between appearance and fact. Across the room and hung high on the wall, *Salamander*, 2025, pushed deception further. The outline of a neon frog belied the work's title, while the certainty of its acrylic gloss played against *Black Circle*'s manufactured bruising.

This structural unease was carried into the hallway. Where double doors once hung, a cloudy polyethylene veil, *Baffle*, 2025, framed shelves of the gallery's inventory and publications. In the next room, an extension cord stretched diagonally across the floor with a slack loop at its midpoint. Both ends of the wire were cut to reveal the copper innards, and each reached towards paintings hung in the corners of the room. *Pending* and *Fixed Gobo*, both 2025, each layered in oil, acrylic, adhesives, and enamel, faced one another, wedging their sides onto walls that joined behind them. Stripped and mended, their surfaces buzzed like wet live wires while the circuit on the floor remained open.

Reproduction returned in *Kinder*, 2025, an aqueous ink-jet print of an untitled 2022 drawing. Playful and primal, channels of bonds appeared scrawled and soiled, only to return, reformatted as print and in an artist frame bearing studio scuffs characteristic of Echeverria's work. Across the room, *Pending* repeated the reconstructed process of the previous canvases, rehearsing the tropes of Minimalism and zombie formalism, replayed again as exhausted and irreducible.

Within a narrow recess behind a gallery wall, a grease-pencil drawing, *Gum*, 2023, offered bulbous, smeared forms: presyntactic ruptures that register communication at the level of the gurgle. Farther into the now-opened dead space, a scuffed butter-yellow furnace, left untouched, was presented as *AC*, 2025. Pulled into art through the simple and dissonant act of titling, the unit's functions met the exhibition's economy of deception. This reclassification undergirded "Nerds Blizzard," a title borrowed from a discontinued Dairy Queen novelty. A recent Change.org petition to bring the dessert back—fueled by consumer nostalgia, a hunger for the lost object, or a displaced form of political agency—reads as proxy for art's own unfulfilled fantasies.

By pressing against art's administrative guardrails, the exhibition's misnaming and misreferencing opened a charged interval that brings art's current bind into view: the exhausted trope of modernist autonomy, the recursive grind of postmodern reproducibility, and the churn of digital mediation. From here, refusing resolution and treating dissonance as medium, Echeverria enacted the ways in which art might puncture itself to plug into the circuits of culture at large.