



Carolos Rolón/Dzine and Enoc Perez's *Mariogla Cagus, Puerto Rico* (2016)

Photo by Ruben Diaz

## 5 Art Shows to See in L.A. This Week

**CATHERINE WAGLEY** | NOVEMBER 30, 2016 | 6:34AM

This week, an artist collects clips of black women singing about the future or joking about their sexual agency (or lack thereof), and another artist collages images of relatively well-known white women, and photographs of pretty, white smiles.

### Dream house

Artists Enoc Perez and Carlos Rolón, both of whom have roots in Puerto Rico, made each object in their current show at Chimento Contemporary together, although not while in the same place. Perez would make small, loose oil paintings of homes in lands that immigrants to the United States have left behind. He would send them to Rolón,

who would make their frames, rugged and glitzy enough to convey all the aspiration and angling associated with pursuing the American Dream. He attached a crest from the Chevrolet Bel-Air to a simple wood frame around the painting of a small red house in Guaynabo, a city in Puerto Rico. Gold chains and costume jewelry embellish a painting of a white, red and blue one-story house with an overgrown yard and an all-blue fence around it. *622 S. Anderson St., Space 105, downtown; through Dec. 17. (323) 685-2520, [chimentocontemporary.com](http://chimentocontemporary.com).*

### **Not for grabbing**

The flaming-vagina piñata that hangs above the doorway into Deborah Brown's exhibition at Jason Vass is broken. Boxes of Red Hots candy are scattered across the concrete floor and a smooth, penis-shaped bat hangs on the wall nearby – presumably, this is the tool that did the deed. Brown, who studied in SoCal and lives in the UK, titled her show "Careful What You Wish For." Vaginal imagery reigns supreme. Nipples make frequent appearances. There's the piece you see right when you walk in: *Wanna Ride*, an exhaust pipe next to a truck door with a flaming vagina painted on it. *Still Interested?* is a photography of a furry though still pretty nipple. Everything in the show is "still pretty," brazenly flashy in the way militantly pro-empowerment showgirls might be. *1452 E. Sixth St., downtown; through Dec. 17. (213) 228-3334, [jasonvass.com](http://jasonvass.com).*

### **Doing it his way**

Sit in a multi-colored, patchwork armchair next to a pile of readable, sometimes-radical books (Toni Morrison, Alice Walker and a guide to being beautiful) while you watch Mickalene Thomas' new, two-channel film at MOCA. Glimmering silkscreens of gorgeous women hang on the walls around you and lights are dim as the 12-minute pastiche plays out, female comedians on one side, singing divas on the other. Comedian Jackie "Moms" Mabley sings Frank Sinatra's "My Way" in her own satirical style. "But more, much more than that, I wanted to do it his way. For what is a woman, what is she got, if not herself, then she has not ... Let the record show, I wanted to do it hiiiiissss way." Of course, empowerment is in question; doing it his way was the way to get ahead, Mabley implies. Thomas titled her show "Do I Look Like a Lady?" and the work portrays a group of powerful women still struggling against the status quo. *250 S. Grand Ave., downtown; through Feb. 6. (213) 621-2766, [moca.org](http://moca.org).*

### **White as a sheet**

In Kandis Williams' current show at Night Gallery, the faces of women – some recognizable as onscreen stars, all of them white and relatively attractive – appear in collages that are purposefully imperfect. One collage on a sheet of white fabric appears hastily assembled. The images are rectangular, as if they were pulled right from magazines or printer trays. This sheet could easily be a ritual object, made for use in

magazines or printer trays. This sheet could easily be a ritual object, made for use in some kind séance or ceremony, meant perhaps to access whatever darkness or depth lies beneath these women's camera-ready veneers. 2276 E. 16th St., downtown; through Dec. 22. (323) 589-1135, [nightgallery.ca](http://nightgallery.ca).

### **Nobody ever told me**

A friend asks Martine Syms, via text, if she'll ever find love in Syms' video *A Pilot for a Show About Nowhere*. Syms replies that she's getting on a train. Clips from television and shots of computer screens intersperse the languorous narrative. There is more than one medium in use at any one time in Syms' work. Family footage of the artist as a toddler appears in her *Lessons* series, as does footage from daytime TV: "Nobody ever told me what the history of African people were. Nobody ever told me that America is business and without business you will have nothing and be nothing," says a woman in a leather jacket, in front of a live audience. Syms' videos play out like essays that have a theme and a thread, but no precise thesis or conclusion. A collection of them will screen this weekend at the Echo Park Film Center. 1200 N. Alvarado St., Echo Park; Fri., Dec. 2, 8 p.m. (213) 484-8846, [echoparkfilmcenter.org](http://echoparkfilmcenter.org).

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