

The Hammer Debuts 'Made in L.A.'

BY MICHAEL HERREN

As institutional goliaths LACMA, MOCA, and the Getty battle for curatorial control of “Art City, USA,” the little [Hammer Museum](#) launches the event of the summer. Showcasing 35 exquisitely curated homegrown artists, who work in a provocative array of media, “Made in L.A. 2014” and the Hammer up the city’s art game once again.



The Video Trans-Former Wu Tsang

“Los Angeles is one of the few places in the Western Hemisphere that offers first-class—for lack of a better term—access to cultural and civic life while still being affordable,” says [Wu Tsang](#), a 32-year-old UCLA MFA grad whose work includes performance, events, installation, film, and video. “You can have cheap rent, space to work, and time—and not feel like you are compromising in any way in terms of participating in an international cultural dialogue.”

Universal dialogue is indeed immediately evident in Tsang’s work, which is often collaborative and focused on questions of perception and experience—questions such as who is speaking for whom; whose voices are heard; whose voices are silenced? As Tsang explains, “I’m someone who experiences the world as a mixed-race transgender person, which also means that I experience the world as a variety of other things that I may not identify as, identities people put on me. I think a lot of people, to varying degrees, have to negotiate the world this way.”

Examples of how this exploration translates to Tsang's work include "Pilot Television"—a large-scale collab Tsang corner-stoned in 2005 following his BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago—which he describes as "a two-day convergence in which more than 200 people came together to collectively produce artist-television shows, videos, and live performances."

More recently, there's *Wildness*, Tsang's 74-minute video inspired by the Silver Platter, a MacArthur Park nightclub that has served LA's Latin/LGBT community for more than 50 years and which was catalyzed by a weekly venue—also called Wildness—for performance art and partying produced by Tsang along with DJs Nguzunguzu and Total Freedom from 2008 through 2010. "As a filmmaker, LA is a great place to live because there are so many amazingly talented people to collaborate with," says the artist, whose work has been shown at the Whitney Museum, the New Museum, and MOCA. "Often people in the movie industry are excited to collaborate with artists and generous with their resources....It's a different experience than they have in their everyday [lives]."

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