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JULY 28 - AUGUST 3, 2023 / VOL. 45 / NO. 38
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ROLLER DERBY MADNESS

THE DERBY DOLLS ARE LEADING A ROLLER REVIVAL IN L.A.

BY ISAI ROCHA



CALENDAR

GO EDITORS' PICKS

ARTS

THURSDAY, JULY 27

Gallery Weekend Los Angeles, Citywide.

An eclectic cohort of art galleries from across the city band together for a regional exploration of the current scene. This year is extra, with a litany of local expansions and out of town outposts that opened just this year. The Gallery Platform LA site has divided the expanse up into three community days. Thursday, July 27 focuses on the West-side (Santa Monica, Venice, Beverly Hills, WeHo); Friday, July 28 is Central (West Adams, Mid-Wilshire, Highland, Hollywood, Melrose Hill); and Saturday, July 30 it's Koreatown, Downtown, East L.A., and NELA). All galleries are free, and many of them have extended hours on these days, and/or openings, closings, performances, readings, signings, tours, and other special events for their nights. Even or especially for locals, it's the perfect chance to get caught up with the art word bustle. *2023.weekend.galleryplatform.la.*

FRIDAY, JULY 28

The Improvised Shakespeare Company at The Ford.

With nothing more than a title shouted from the audience, The L.A.-based Improvised Shakespeare Company creates an entire play on the spot—comedy, tragedy, or history in the Shakespearean mold, all of it delivered in the “thee” and “thou”-laden English of The Bard. Nothing is planned, nothing is rehearsed, and each play is completely new and starts with one audience suggestion to kick it all off. *2580 Cahuenga Blvd., Hollywood; Friday, July 28, 8pm; \$32-\$38; theford.com.*

SATURDAY, JULY 29

Discussion: Transgressive Materiality, at Roberts Projects.

A panel talk in conjunction with the gallery's current exhibition of mixed-media paintings, tapestries, and soft-sculpture installation by artist Suchitra Mattai. Evoking the artist's Indo-Caribbean heritage, Mattai's work engages with the subject and form of European pastoral landscapes and figuration as well as Indian miniature paintings. Linking craft-based



processes, sumptuous weavings and traditional techniques, the artist portrays resolute brown heroines, replacing heroes and colonizers and reclaiming a patriarchal past. Using the framework of “Transgressive Materiality,” a select group of curators and academics discuss Mattai's practice as well as other contemporary artists and how these aspects intertwine and inform the contemporary art landscape. *442 S. La Brea Ave., Mid-Wilshire; Saturday, July 29, 4-6pm; Exhibition continues through; free; robertsprojectsla.com.*

Andrés Monzón-Aguirre: Égida at Stars Gallery.

Interlocking bodies of work exploring the artist's personal and familial narratives across ruptures and displacements, as Monzón-Aguirre accrues and reimagines culturally-specific images from across time, creating a personal archaeology of the present, a material genealogy of objects and symbols. Referencing historical depictions of male standing figures, their ceramic Jovenes, or Youths, appear as almost archaeological finds. However, instead of finishing them with a standard glaze, Monzón-Aguirre coats them with nail polish, toying with the artifice of gender and the unstable boundaries between the modern and the ancient, the original and the reproduction. *3116 N. El Centro, Hollywood; Opening reception: Saturday, July 29, 6-8pm; On view through September 9; free; stars-gallery.com.*

Felix D'Eon: Love and Marvels, at Arthug Gallery.

Enraptured by various art-historical styles such as Edwardian fashion and children's book illustration, golden-era American comics, and Japanese Edo printmaking, D'Eon attempts to make the illusion of antiquity complete. Using vintage papers and careful research as to costume, set, and style, his goal is perfect verisimilitude, subverted and expanded through queer sensibility.

D'Eon treats vintage illustrative styles as a rhetorical strategy, using their language of romance, economic power, and aesthetic sensibility as a tool with which to tell stories of historically oppressed and marginalized queer communities. *2441 Hunter St., downtown; Opening reception: Saturday, July 29, 5-9pm; On view through August 26; free; arthug.net.*

Humans, Animals, Hungry Ghosts at Le Maximum.

A group exhibition curated by Gwen Hollingsworth exploring the intersections between the sacred and what we see and experience on the material, human plane. While many religions dichotomize the sacred and the profane, other belief systems eschew this binary along with separations of the natural and supernatural. Buddhist cosmology, for instance, identifies six realms of existence within the cycle of reincarnation: gods, demigods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and hells. Each realm is contained in its own karmic level, yet they all engage with one another, and nothing separates the experience of each realm. The sacred is not divorced from mundane human experience, but rather fully intertwined as a hierophanic manifestation. *2525 S. Lincoln Blvd., Venice; Opening Reception: Saturday, July 29, 6-9pm; On view through August 26; free; lemaximumvenice.com.*

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2

Discussion: The Origin of Values, at Villa Aurora.

The result of explorative journeys which Sabine Scho, a poet-turned-photographer and Villa Aurora alumna, and photographer and biologist Matthias Holtmann have undertaken over the past six years. From the island of Vilm near Rügen, to Iceland, to the Pantanal in Brazil and the national parks of South Africa, in places of undisturbed nature they investigated how it is economized by what mankind considers to be of value. After the reading of Sabine's poem, The

Origin of Values and a short presentation, hear about local projects that expand the discussion with guests Bob Ramirez (Kuru-vugna Springs) and Lauren Bon (Metabolic Studio). *520 Paseo Miramar, Paciyç Pali-sades; Wednesday, August 2, 7:30pm; free w/ rsvp; vatmh.org.*

MUSIC

JULY 28 - AUGUST 3

Skold

Whisky A Go Go

Many might know Tim Skold best as a member of Marilyn Manson, or maybe KMFDM. But for us, he'll always be the main guy in Shotgun Messiah. That Swedish glam metal band took an industrial left turn at album number three, and yet the quality didn't dip at all. His transition was seamless, hence his later gigs. Hopefully Skold will play some Shotgun Messiah songs at the Whisky. Clockwork Echo, Grimm, Vanilla Sugar and Adam Zoom also perform. *6 p.m. on Sunday, July 30 at the Whisky A Go-Go, \$20, whiskyagogo.*

Poolside

The Bellwether

San Diego-born, Malibu-based DJ, producer, multi-instrumentalist and songwriter Poolside is about to release new single “Float Away,” with a new album out in October — Blame it All on Love. So one might expect to hear a lot of that new material at this show at the new Bellwether. Classixx and Travis Holcombe (KCRW) also play. *7 p.m. on Wednesday, August 2 at the Bellwether, \$39.50, thebellwetherla.com*

Alexa Villa

Moroccan Lounge

Straddling a line between pop-punk and alt-pop, “bubble rockstress” Alexa Villas has released a string of awesome singles over the past couple of years, building a career that appears to be on the brink of something really quite special. Time will tell, but for now things are looking exciting. SAFTisland and FLASCH also perform. *7 p.m. on Wednesday, August 2 at Moroccan Lounge, \$10, themoroccan.com.*

Tears for Fears

Hollywood Bowl

L.A. has an ongoing love affair with English new wave/new romantic bands; the likes of Depeche Mode, Duran Duran and the Human League are always guaranteed an ecstatic reception here. Tears for Fears are no exception, with songs like “Shout,” “Sowing the Seeds of Love” and “Mad World” certain to start a mega singalong. A bill with the Cold War Kids is intriguing. *7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 2 at the Hollywood Bowl, \$75+, hollywoodbowl.com.*

UPS AVOIDS WORKERS STRIKE, REACHES CONTRACT AGREEMENT

UPS and its workers avoid a work stoppage in a summer that has seen Hollywood writers and actors go on strike, as well as hospitality workers in L.A.

BY ISAI ROCHA



The summer of strikes avoided a major one Tuesday, as the United Parcel Service (UPS) and the Teamsters representing its drivers and factory workers reached a contract agreement.

The Teamsters call the contract “historic,” saying it will lead to wage increases, more full-time job opportunities and workplace improvements for the following five years.

“Teamster labor moves America,” Teamsters General President Sean M. O’Brien said in a statement. “The union went into this fight committed to winning for our members. We demanded the best contract in the history of UPS, and we got it. UPS has put \$30 billion in new money on the table as a direct result of these negotiations. We’ve changed the game, battling it out day and night to make sure our members won an agreement that pays strong wages, rewards their labor, and doesn’t require a single concession. This contract sets a new standard in the labor movement and raises the bar for all workers.”

The wage increases will begin this year, with a \$2.75 per hour raise, a number that will increase to an additional \$7.50 per hour before the contract’s end. Existing part-time workers and new hires will make no less than \$21 per hour.

Full-time employees will now make an average of \$49 per hour, according to the Teamsters, noting that it is the highest wage for delivery drivers in the U.S.

UPS agreed to fill 22,500 open positions through the length of the contract, with 7,500 being full-time.

Workplace changes for UPS drivers will include in-cab air conditioning and cargo ventilation in all large delivery vehicles

and sprinter vans, with new cars being equipped with two fans and air induction vents in the cargo compartments. UPS also will now recognize Martin Luther King Day as a full holiday.

Forced overtime on days off will no longer be allowed.

“I have never seen a national contract that levels the playing field for workers so dramatically as this one,” Teamsters General Secretary-Treasurer Fred Zuckerman said. “The agreement puts more money in our members’ pockets and establishes a full range of new protections for them on the job. We stayed focused on our members and fought like hell to get everything that full-time and part-time UPS Teamsters deserve.”

LEBRON JAMES’ SON HOSPITALIZED AFTER GOING INTO CARDIAC ARREST

LeBron “Bronny” James Jr., USC basketball star and son of the Lakers’ LeBron James, was hospitalized Monday after suffering cardiac arrest at practice.

James, 18, was practicing at the Galen Center in L.A., where USC typically holds its games. Details were not immediately given by USC nor the James family about the incident, but did say Bronny was placed in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). He is now in stable condition and removed from the ICU.

“Yesterday while practicing, Bronny James suffered a cardiac arrest,” a spokesperson for the James family said in a statement. “Medical staff was able to treat Bronny and take him to the hospital. He is now in stable condition and no longer in ICU. We ask for respect and privacy for the James family and we will update media

when there is more information. LeBron and Savannah wish to publicly send their deepest thanks and appreciation to the USC medical and athletic staff for their incredible work and dedication to the safety of their athletes.”

The USC freshman was touted as a top prospect throughout his high school career and was ranked No. 20 among recruits in ESPN’s recruit rankings.

The USC basketball team played its last game of the season on May 17, losing its first-round matchup against Michigan State in the NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament.

L.A. INVESTIGATES SUDDEN TREE TRIMMING WHERE STRIKING WRITERS AND ACTORS PICKETED

The city of Los Angeles is investigating a sudden trimming of trees outside Universal Studios Hollywood where striking actors and writers picketed.

Members of both the Writers Guild of America (WGA) and Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) have picketed in the area and there were suspicions that the tree trimming was done maliciously and without proper city permits.

L.A. City Controller Kenneth Mejia looked into the matter and said there were no permits granted for the trimmed trees. “Our office is investigating the tree trim-

ming that occurred outside Universal Studios where workers, writers, and actors are exercising their right to picket,” Mejia said in a statement. “Trees are essential to providing Angelenos with significant environmental and public health benefits, especially during a heatwave.”

Not only had no permits been granted this week, but permits had been asked for in the area for more than three years, according to the Public Bureau of Street Services (aka StreetsLA), which maintains trees for the city of L.A.

The controller’s office will meet with the Urban Forestry Division (UFD) and StreetsLA Investigation & Enforcement Division (IED) to assess if citations or administrative hearings are necessary.

The recommended cycle for tree trimming in the city was set at five years, according to StreetsLA, although the city had fallen far behind its schedule, according to its most recent audit.

Los Angeles maintains more than 700,000 trees and had a goal to plant 90,000 between 2019 and 2021. The city fell short of its goal by 20,000 trees and continues to set goals to increase its planting by 50% by 2028.

SAG-AFTRA and the WGA have both been on strike, as contract agreements with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers have not been reached. [E]

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ROLLER DERBY MADNESS

The Derby Dolls are Leading a Roller Revival in L.A.

BY ISAI ROCHA

Nestled within one of the smallest cities in the country, near a 5-mile stretch of primarily industrial buildings, lies an underground competition like no other. The nightlife in the city of Vernon is all but non-existent, so you'd never simply stumble upon it unless you got lost on your way to downtown L.A., but the Derby Dolls have given Angelenos a reason to descend on the uneven Vernon streets and run-down railroad crossings regularly. One Saturday a

month, hundreds gather in an unassuming sports complex, aptly nicknamed "Dollhalla," to watch 30 athletes whip around and jam each other on one of the few remaining banked-track roller derby leagues in the U.S.

Born from punk rock feminist origins and an early culture of fishnet stockings and rebellious pseudonyms, the Derby Dolls have a 20-year history of not just national championships and raucous home crowds, but creating a unique competitive outlet for women of all ages and

backgrounds. As the pastime of roller skating enjoys a renewed interest in 2023, roller derby offers an exciting spectator experience.

The moment you enter the warehouse-like arena, you can feel the energy with fans anxiously awaiting the start of the bout as dozens of skaters roll around the track, creating a wave of sound similar to an airplane awaiting takeoff. Then you hear the whimsical voice of longtime announcer Else "Evil E" Duff blaring through the speakers as she rattles off the skaters' often-irreverent nicknames, such as "Alpaca Punch," "Vanessa Bludgeons" and "Whorechata."

At any point of a bout, you can watch a

skater slam into the masonite track to a roaring thud and a barrage of oohs from the crowd. Similarly, a skater can get barreled into the side barrier, making you worry they'll fly off the track, as you jump off your seat to check that everyone's OK. It is that controlled violence, along with the speed, athleticism, strength and strategy that keeps fans returning and selling out the bouts month after month.

"Between whistles, you're not my friend," Barabara "Sweetie" Szama says while detailing the in-game experience. "I don't even think about who you are. It's, 'What chest piece are you?' in that one minute."

Texas Roller Derby (TXRD) in Austin



is often credited for founding the current, women-led version of the game that has since gone global. The Dolls took that style and added an L.A. flair, as jammers, distinguished by the giant star on their helmets, attempt to bully (or finesse) their way through a wall of opposing blockers for one minute at a time, getting a point for each blocker they pass in that time. The jammers are the point-getters, and a good one will use every bit of experience and athleticism to maneuver themselves through the blockade of girls in front of them.

“When we started, it was TXRD and we took on their style. It was women’s roller derby and it was unscripted,” says Duff, the skater-turned-announcer who has spent 20 years with the Dolls. “Purely athletic roller derby. Women have never

been second to men.”

Since its peak in the 1970s, roller derby in Los Angeles has always broken gender norms in sports, with coed play at even the professional level. While not coed, the dolls keep with their own gender bylaws that are more accepting to the LGBTQ-IA+ community. Skaters’ gender identities are kept confidential and any person who feels women’s roller derby best fits their identity are welcome to the Dolls’ programs and given a fair shot to compete.

“If women’s roller derby is what you identify with, then you are welcome,” Duff says.

Men are welcomed to the Derby Dolls recreational gameplay, but the league itself has been a source of empowerment for women since its inception in 2003.

“There are women who have completely changed their careers and their lives; they’ve gotten out of abusive relationships, all because they were empowered by roller derby,” Duff says, as she reflects on what she has seen through the decades in derby. “It’s like that all around the world.”

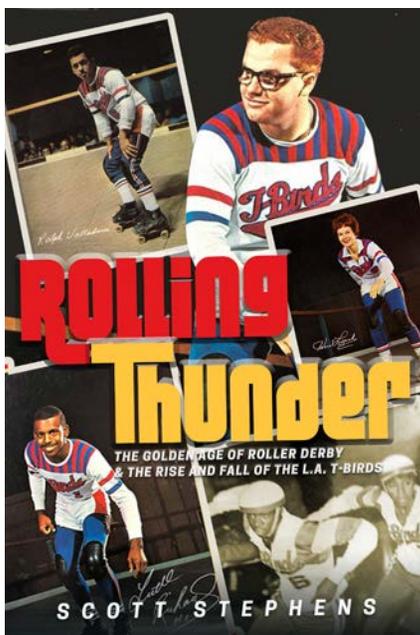
Duff has lived through every transition of the Derby Dolls, from a handful of punk rock girls learning how to skate and putting together fundraisers, to the well-oiled organization it is today.

“We started off on a rooftop in Chinatown and then moved it down into a factory, then we moved it down into what was an abandoned bowling alley in Little Tokyo, then eventually what was a former factory in Historic Filipinotown,” Duff says, reminiscing on the league’s origins. “Most of us were kind of in our 30s... we were also starting to get some younger people in the league who weren’t neces-

sarily familiar with roller skating and some older people who had only skated for a little bit of time. If there’s one thing I’ve learned from roller derby, it’s that there’s a place for everybody.”

The Derby Dolls league currently has four teams consisting of the Scream Queens (previously named the Sirens), Varsity Brawlers, Fight Crew and Tough Cookies. While it is more common to see roller derby leagues such as Angel City Derby and the RebelTown Roller skate on “flat tracks,” due to lower costs, maintenance and accessibility, the Dolls play on the more visually appealing and often more physically demanding “banked track,” which caters to faster gameplay.

The Dolls’ iteration of roller derby is a little different than what you might have seen on TV from the 1960s through the early 1990s with the world-famous Thunderbirds. The T-Birds took the game’s popularity to new heights in that



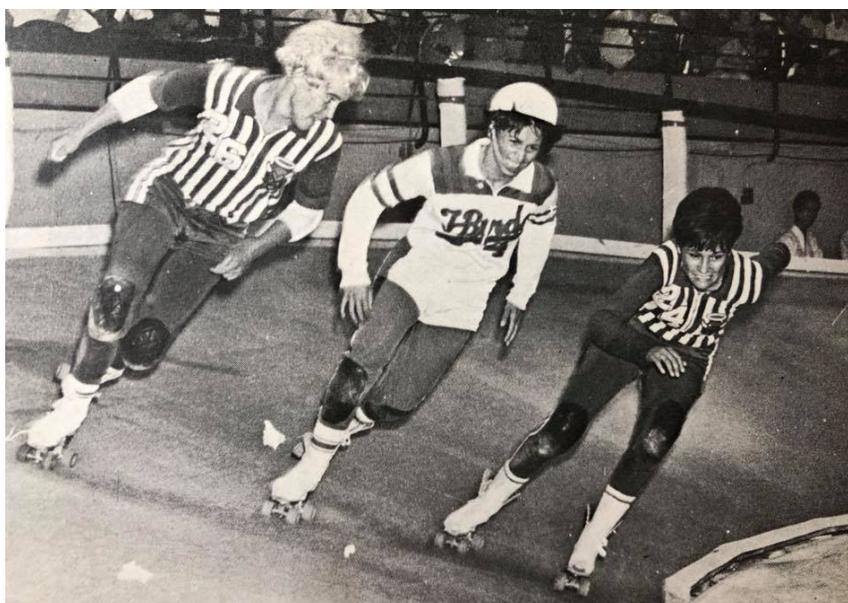
timeline, selling out arenas, traveling the globe and gaining a monumental fanbase for its hard-hitting games on local television. This traditional version of roller derby, which was first called “roller games,” is best remembered for its hockey-like violence, which often led to fist fights, as well as professional wrestling-style promos that gave Ric Flair a run for his money and predetermined outcomes that took the game from sport to scripted entertainment.

Scott Stephens, a former Thunderbirds player and author of “Rolling Thunder: The Golden Age of Roller Derby & The Rise and Fall of the L.A. T-Birds,” has kept the team’s memory lit through his book, and by maintaining its social media accounts and official website. Roller derby has been an integral part of Stephens’ life and he made it his mission to keep a historical record of the game and more specifically, its impact on Los Angeles.

“The original game started out totally legitimate and then they started adding showmanship and theatrics,” Stephens says of the coed games. “Roller derby... took it to an extreme that was more towards wrestling, but they drew huge crowds. The Hispanic skaters in roller derby, as well as the African American skaters, were heroes in the community and they meant so much — skaters like “Skinny Minnie” [Gwen] Miller and Ralpie Valladares and different skaters like that captivated the crowd in a way that’s just hard to describe.”

Stephens, known as James Scott on the track, has fond memories of the T-Birds selling out the Los Angeles Sports Arena before it shut down and the “Fabulous” Forum in Inglewood before it got branded by Great Western and now, Kia. He also recalls traveling to Mexico and play-

L.A. T-Birds – Super Champs



ing in front of crowds of 25,000 people at the peak of the team’s popularity. The T-Birds played their last game on Feb. 6, 1993. Battered and bruised, many left the sport behind, but carried on debilitating injuries, such as the Thunderbirds’ first team captain, “Terrible” Terri Lynch, who notably retired in her prime due to inju-

ries in 1972.

“There was a lot of flexibility in allowing the skaters to do what they do out there and the really confident skaters would dominate on the track, would win fights, would knock the crap out of other skaters, and all of that was as real as it gets,” Stephens says. “I had so many

injuries. I had broken ribs, a broken jaw and everybody I knew had serious injuries. Some skaters are crippled today and don’t have everything functioning.”

The dropkicks, punches and theatrics did not make it to the current iteration of roller derby, but the Derby Dolls are carrying the torch with their own brand of physicality and display of athleticism, using hard “c-blocks” to the chest and countless slams to the floor.

“The L.A. Derby Dolls are kind of the leader, to me, in the L.A. resurgence,” Stephens says of the league that is now carrying the torch to a new generation of rollers.

While the Dolls have operated mostly as a local grassroots secret, their wheel tracks were all over derby’s resurgence in pop culture in the mid-2000s, when Drew Barrymore became a fan and sought to bring it to the big screen, producing and directing the film, Whip It starring Elliot Page. The movie was centered around Texas roller derby, but it was based on screenwriter Shauna “Maggie Mayhem” Cross’s experiences with the Los Angeles Derby Dolls, and the movie’s screenplay was actually an adaptation of her novel Derby Girl.

“[Cross] was my carpool buddy,” Duff says. “She was writing Whip-It as a young



sports, they realize they're strong. They don't necessarily need that man to kill the spiders and open the jars for them. They can do it themselves."

The juniors just played their "Baby Doll Brawl" on July 22, which featured up-and-coming skaters, showcasing themselves and hoping to be drafted to a team.

"Being my age, turning 54, I feel like every wish I ever had as a kid just came true," an emotional Duff says about watching the youthful hopefuls battling in the Baby Doll Brawl and becoming part of the family. "I'm looking at these kids... you think of things you wish for, like happiness, love and friends and anything you ever think of when you're lonely or sad. Everything is right here for these kids to enjoy. It's so awesome."



Right now, the Dolls are fighting through their home season, which runs through December. Their all-star travel team, made up of the top players in the league, typically travels to play other leagues, but bank-tracked leagues in other cities such as San Diego and Phoenix, Arizona are still finding their way back after the pandemic. They will continue to be a safe haven for women, the LGBTQ community and children who will surely obsess over the sport as they come up through the junior league.

"I think Los Angeles should be really proud of the Los Angeles Derby Dolls – that we keep going. Just think of everything that comes and goes – the Derby Dolls keep going," Duff says. "It can be a bit overwhelming and it takes over things. It definitely takes over people's lives, but for me, it's always been worth it." 📺

adult book while we were going to practice. She was a great skater, too. She got drafted to the Sirens. She was a really aggressive skater and she could cover the track with her long legs."

The Derby Dolls took part in training Page for his lead role as Bliss "Babe Ruthless" Cavender, making the trek to Detroit, Michigan, where most of Whip It was filmed.

"I went with 'Mayhem' to Detroit to see what it was like because basically, we're seeing our lives put on screen," Duff recalls. "If you look at the sets... like the display case we used for our merch, the whole warehouse look. So much of our culture was in it. A lot of our skater names were in it."

As roller derby in Los Angeles has had its booms over the years, and players come and go, the foundational women in the league have dedicated their lives and bodies for years. A prime example of that dedication can be found with Stephanie "STEFCON 1" Azores, who's played with the Tough Cookies since 2007. Being an athlete her whole life, Azores was fascinated by the Dolls and knew it would scratch a competitive itch she longed for since she played volleyball in college.

"As soon as that first whistle blew and they started hitting each other, I was like 'Oh, hell yes! I want to do this,'" Azores says. "I was excited that I could wear bright red lipstick, look cute and beat the

shit out of somebody."

Azores says roller derby checked off a lot of boxes for her interests in athletic competitions as an adult. She never felt her skills were respected while playing coed sports and combat sports were a bit too violent, but roller derby hit the Goldilocks sweet spot and was just right. With more than 15 years playing for the Dolls, STEFCON fervently works on her skills and continues to work with a trainer, something she said is crucial to keep up with new, young players who enter the league.

"I'm not the biggest girl out there, but I can use physics to make my hits harder," Azores says. "I might not be the fastest, but I can use physics to become faster."

The Derby Dolls are in the midst of their first full home season, post-pandemic. Like the rest of the world, the Dolls shut down and there was uncertainty about the future of the league, as Angelenos were not allowed to gather indoors during COVID's height and in the early stages, could not gather, period.

"We've been through losing facilities, we've been through losing key players, we've been through changes in ownership... I didn't really feel like it was going to go away, but I knew it was going to be hard to get back to where we were," says Sazama, who teaches an introductory eight-week adult skating course for the Dolls called Derby Por Vida. "I had a

lot of faith that we would survive because we had done so before. As the pandemic went on, it was like, 'Oh, it'll just be six months' and then all of a sudden, you look back and it's been freaking years."

Slowly, but surely, the Dolls are returning to normal. Future dolls are also being produced through the Junior Derby Dolls, a league for girls ages 7 to 17. The Junior Dolls were assembled in 2008, originally as an outlet for the adult Dolls' daughters to have another athletic option. Now they're in a league of their own, with junior versions of the Scream Queens, Tough Cookies, Fight Crew and Varsity Brawlers battling their little hearts out a few hours before adults come out to play.

"There's so few opportunities for girls' sports," Duff says, of the junior league she helped develop. "When girls do

MUSIC

WHAT WOULD GIA DO?

Gia Woods talks new EP and Pride

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

Wespoke to L.A.-based Persian popster Gia Woods back in June 2020, right at the start of the pandemic and as she was about to release her Cut Season EP. That record was described as a journal of her coming out as a gay woman and, while the timing proved to be a little weird, it earned her a lot of praise.

“It’s crazy, a lot of people still bring it up to me that they really did love Cut Season,” she says. “I feel like I was so out of it by the time it was out because I was so worried about the world, which is crazy because it was about toxic people and whatever. When it came out I was like, ‘none of it even matters right now – the world is ending.’ But the feedback that I got after that period, a lot of people went back and revisited the project. I got so many positive reactions, like ‘That project was actually so good, it just came out in the worst time possible.’ I have a sense of direction now, and I look back and I’m like, ‘Damn, I’m really proud of myself with that project.’”

Woods released another EP, Heartbreak County, Vol.2, last year, along with the single “Lesbionic.” If Cut Season was about coming out, Heartbreak County was about living life as a gay woman.

“Everything I write is from my own personal experiences,” she says. “Heartbreak County was originally inspired by my life in L.A. Growing up in L.A., and to be from here. The whole project was based on my life here, and ‘Lesbionic’ was a record that speaks to my heart. There are so many songs about women, but I want to hear songs about women embracing women. Sexually, or just in general. So the song is fucking true and honest to my heart.”

Between her debut EP and brand new single “Gia Would,” Woods has seen her sound evolved as she’s dipped into different genres.

“I feel like I’ve been constantly tapping into different genres of music that I grew up listening to,” she says. “I had an older sister and she got me interested in everything. Radiohead, Bjork, Madonna, Prince – anything. A lot of electronic music, as well. Daft Punk. Everything I make is like a nostalgic moment in my life, where I was listening to this kind of

music or this kind of music. Cut Season was definitely pulling from Radiohead, Nirvana and all that stuff. Heartbreak

County was a whole different area of music, like dance. I still feel like I’m in that period right now – dance music. Whether it’s Italo-disco or Euro-dance or French dance. There are so many genres of dance, which is exciting because you make it into different things constantly. I’m in that place right now, heavily tapping into that world. I would definitely say I’m in my dance era.”

Lyricaly, Woods says that “Gia Would,” from her forthcoming Your Engine EP, is about a particularly tumultuous breakup that saw two of her ex-girlfriends get together. Ouch!



“That was a really hard pill to swallow obviously,” she says. “It’s just like, one ex and another ex and you’re just like, ‘What could they possibly be bonding about?’ So I kinda went through a spiral moment where I just lost it and I was acting crazy. I feel like we all have that side to us where we kinda just lose it. But I think it’s important to lose it in a way so that you can have a better perspective moving forward. It’s about embracing that crazier side of yourself. I’m one of these people that, whenever something happens, I need to write about it in the same time period. That’s how I get through things. Some artists need to get away from it for a while and then come back, but I’m one of those creepy b***hes that’s like, let’s get it done, right now. That’s literally how every project starts – one song that has all this emotional feeling that’s intense and it starts the wave for the next songs to come. That’s how I always roll. It’s a blessing and a curse. I didn’t ask for this, but I end up getting a really good song, so I’m happy about it.”

Woods will release a number of singles throughout the summer, building up to the release of Your Engine later in the year. Meanwhile, she celebrated Pride in New York for the first time this year.

“I’d never been to that before, and I went to so many different areas of New York where I was like, ‘Holy shit, there’s so many gay people,’” she says. “So many different types. The lesbian bars are so much fun. I went to a lesbian bar where they were hosing girls with toy guns. It was getting very lesbian and crazy. Honestly this New York trip was a big wake-up call. I was like, why am I in L.A.? This is so much better. There are so many things to do. I had a great Pride month.”

While she had a blast, Woods says that the sheer volume of the anti-LGBTQ+ laws being passed around the country did weigh heavily on Pride this year.

“I definitely feel, with all the places I was going, there was some sadness everywhere,” she says. “We all felt it. These are the moments where I’m like, it’s so important to be highlighting this month. I definitely saw that. How is this happening still? I never understand why there’s always something new, and why we can’t just have peace and love. Let people live their lives and fuck off. It’s not complicated. It’s really frustrating. Where are we going wrong? Do we need to highlight it for a year, not just Pride month? When people ask, ‘Why are you going so big on Pride?’ That’s why. We have to constantly remind people to give us a space. I hope there’s a time where that’s not the case, because I just don’t get it. I think everyone needs therapy.”

Now that’s not a bad idea at all.

Gia Woods’ “Gia Would” single is out now. [L](#)

BEAT THE HEAT WITH THESE SUMMER COCKTAILS

BY MICHELE STUEVEN



This summer is a scorcher and we've got six sexy tips to help you cool down, whether it's a block from the beach in the only green zone on the weather map at *The Victorian* or by getting a brain freeze at *Piccalilli*.

In the 1970s, two of Santa Monica's most iconic and historic Victorian homes on Ocean Avenue were lifted off their foundations and trucked down to the corner of Main Street and Ocean Park Boulevard, saving them from demolition due to development.

One was the home built in 1894 for Roy Jones, son of longtime U.S. Sen. John Percival Jones, co-founder of Santa Monica. The other was the lesser-known and somewhat mysterious Kyte House, built around the same time and inhabited by the Southern California Masonic Lodges leader, Dr. George I. Kyte, and his family.

They found their forever homes in what is now Heritage Square and were reborn as, respectively, the California Heritage Museum and a restaurant, the Victorian.

The summer cocktail menu on the breezy patio includes a dramatically cool

Tits Out And Sunny, complete with an orangesicle, a crisp *Miss GIndependent* with Hendricks, honey lemonade and strawberry. The *Transfusion* offers Titos, ginger ale, grape and lime relief from the heat. Bites include a cool tartine trio of ricotta, hemp seed and strawberry, hot honey-cold smoked salmon with fried capers and whipped cream cheese and a deviled egg salad with cornichon. There's also a crisp pork belly bao with grilled pineapple and slaw. The Italian chopped salad crostini with pepperoni, salami, pepperoncini, and smoked mozzarella in a red wine vinaigrette pair well with a Calamigos Rose.

Even if you don't make it to Italy this summer and are getting pretty sick and tired of everybody else's vacation pictures, North Italia locations have brought back its annual Summer Sips campaign through Labor Day, Sept. 4, including Los Angeles and Orange County at Del Amo Fashion Center, El Segundo, Santa Monica, Fashion Valley, Irvine and Del Mar.

The selection of limited-edition cocktails includes the *Capri Gimlet* with Hendrick's Gin, cucumber, Italian elderflower



and fresh lime, the *Dolce Fiore* with rose-infused Aviation Gin, Fiorente, Starlino Rosé and lemon, a *Amarena Sour* with Yellowstone Bourbon, Disaronno, Grand Marnier, Luxardo Cherry and pressed lemon, as well as the *Il Cielo* with Vulcanica Sicilian Vodka, Fiorente, Blue Curaçao and lemon.

Helmed by Executive Chef Rigoverto Salas and curated by new Food and Beverage Director Daniel Sabo, the newly reopened Rosy Café is a palm-shaded oasis by the pool at The Hollywood Roosevelt. It is open all day for breakfast, lunch, weekend brunch, and dinner. Special summer cocktails include the Rosy Negroni, The Garden Cosmonaut, and Ferrari Shakerato, as well as all your champagne fantasies, delivered via a roving vintage bubbles cart, featuring vintages of Veuve Clicquot, Dom Pérignon, Moët & Chandon, rosé by the glass and large format bottles for any summer patio brunch needs.

The upcoming edition of 'Meet Your Makers' from SALT Restaurant and Bar at Marina Del Rey Hotel will be hosted by SelvaRey Rum on Thursday, July 20. Get into the spirit of summer during an evening with the makers behind the brand and special guests, with a dinner and cocktail pairing.

SelvaRey's lineup of four Single Estate Cuban Style Rums, handcrafted by the renowned Maestro Ronero, Francisco "Don Pancho" Fernandez, holds two records in the prestigious Tasting Panel — highest rated white rum and flavored spirit. Most recently, they've added coconut and an aged 15–25-year-old blend in its *Owners Reserve* collection.

General Admission Ticket Includes:

Three Cocktails featuring SelvaRey Rum — White Rum Daiquiri, Coconut Jungle Bird & Iced Rum Mocha

Three Course Dinner — Assorted snacks for the table, Hiramasa Crudo, Korean Braised BBQ Beef & Pot de Creme

Take-Home Gift Bag

Tickets are \$55 per person + tax and can be purchased at [EventBrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com).

And speaking of Rum, Wednesday, July 19, is the 125th birthday of the Daiquiri. Created in the 1890s in Cuba, the Daiquiri was developed by mining engineer Jennings S. Cox using three local ingredients — lime juice, sugar and rum — to cool down from the sweltering summer heat. He used BACARDÍ Superior Rum in the original recipe. Here's the original recipe for the company's frozen daiquiri:

BACARDÍ Frozen Strawberry Daiquiri

1 1/2 oz. BACARDÍ Superior Rum
3/4 oz. lime juice
3/4 oz. simple syrup
3-4 sliced strawberries
1 cup(s) crushed Ice

Directions: Combine all ingredients in a blender. Add 1 cup of crushed ice and blend until a slushy consistency forms. Serve in individual highball glasses. Garnish with a strawberry slice.

Downtown Culver City's Piccalilli has a new specialty Slushie Cocktail program that includes:

It's Elemen-Cherry My Dear — Angelisco Blanco Tequila, lemon, lime, sour cherry, candied cherry syrup, Dry Curacao

Freeze the Pain Away — Plantation three Stars Rum, orange juice, pineapple, coconut cream, Diplomatico Reserva Aged Rum, nutmeg

Phuket Phreeze — Blue Ice potato vodka, sweetened Thai iced tea, coconut cream

Hummingbird Nectar — Yuu Baal Mezcal, apricot and elderflower liqueur, Apérol, Brandy, lemon and ginger

CANNABIS

DIGITAL DABS MAKE HASH ACCESSIBLE

We're Looking At The Companies That Normalized Elite Hash Consumption Over The Last 10 Years

BY JIMI DEVINE



As July's end approaches, we're celebrating the state of the electronic dab and how much easier it is to smoke the world's best hash than a decade ago.

Here in America, July is the biggest month for hash smokers. That legacy has been built up over the last 12 years of celebrating 7/10. But if you were one of those early revelers, your consumption apparatus options were limited.

Those earliest 7/10 enthusiasts were mostly smoking off quartz because they were too smart to hit titanium. We started to see the first electronic dab rigs in the early 2010s. People wanted to take advantage of all those people that wanted to smoke hash without a blowtorch. Many of the models back then were from the same factories in Asia and just rebranded for whatever company was buying them in bulk. Those earliest electronic dab rigs were absolute garbage. Everything about them was questionable from the quality

of materials to whether the atomizer was even reaching an appropriate temperature.

Dab pens would be refined a bit faster than those old dry e-rigs. But about a decade ago, we started to see the companies that would change everything about the digital dab launch. And with healthy competition in the air ever since, the pace of progress has been fast for digital dabs.

Here are a few of those companies that helped change everything:

Dr. Dabber

Ten years in, Dr. Dabber continues its efforts to innovate. Back in the day, Dr. Dabber had these ridiculous dab pens held together by magnets; we're glad you guys moved on from that! But they continued to innovate. In 2014, they brought the first thing to market we would consider a reputable electronic rig with the Boost. It was a totally different ballgame from that weird stuff from Guangzhou



that predated it. That was when Dr. Dabber coined the term e-rig, short for an electronic dab rig. The Boost has been updated for the times and is still a worthy entry onto the list. Other flagship



cus V's website, they've added a lot of bells and whistles over the years, like cool minute LCD screens and aesthetically pleasing light effects. focusv.com

Puffco

Still the biggest name in digital dabs globally, chances are if you're anywhere in the world and get offered a rip of hash, 99% of the time it'll be on quartz, in a spliff, or inside a Puffco product. Originally founded in New York City before making the move to California, Puffco originally blew up on the scene because all the best hash extractors in the world were using the Puffco Plus dab pen when they traveled. A few years later the peak



products now include the Switch and XS. A new version of the XS was recently released in collaboration with Wiz Khalifa in honor of the 7/10 holiday. DrDabber.com

Focus V

The Carta from Focus V hit the market hard when it launched. While now there is a lot more parity between the big dog's atomizers, when the first Carta dropped, its atomizer felt like a tank compared to the competition in that moment. This built a following with some of the heavier dabbers that were burning through atomizers that's lasted until this day — just look at their involvement with Legends of Hash, a top-of-the-food chain event for America's headiest hash enthusiasts here in L.A. every December. On top of the sturdiness and longtime following, there is no denying the things are absolute clear-your-sinuses rippers. While you can still get an awesome deal on the original Carta on Fo-

would drop, essentially becoming the Ipod of digital dabs in the years since. With the release of the Puffco Peak Pro, all the flaws of the original were addressed. Not long after, the still-fresh Pro atomizers would get a massive upgrade with the 3D Chamber. It made major contributing factors to the experience like battery life, flavor, and vapor quality that much better. Dropping just after 7/10 this month, the new XL 3D chamber feels like more of a novelty than a necessity, but boy does it make your eyes water. Puffco.com 

ART

VIDEO ART BY WOMEN OF COLOR: AMERICAN GURL WAKES UP FROM THE AMERICAN DREAM

BY SHANA NYS DAMBROT



Across a prismatically eclectic selection of eight new and historical works of video art by women of color, *American Gurl* takes an unflinching, multidimensional look at Black feminine experience within the hierarchies of the American Dream. Through stylistically diverse works from long-form interview to cognitive manifesto, digital collage, performance-based short film, and starkly conceptual music video, the exhibition departs from a paradox at the heart of our society — how the perspectives of women of color are both central to and marginalized within American culture.

Organized at Hauser & Wirth's downtown location, the exhibition is presented by Womxn in Windows — an ongoing cross-platform curatorial project whose mission is to support global video art, film, and performance by women of color, and whose efforts you may have seen in storefronts and other unconventional settings in Los Angeles over the past several years. This iteration of the project is co-curated by its founder Zehra Zehra and music/video artist Kilo Kish, who has previously exhibited with Womxn in Windows and whose musical

work included in the show inspired its overall curation.

This exhibition includes artists Lorna Simpson, Martine Syms, Carrie Mae Weems, Ayanna Dozier, Ja'Tovia Gary, Kilo Kish, Savannah Leaf, and LaJuné McMillian in collaboration with Marguerite Angelica Monique Hemmings — an intergenerational group whose diversity in scope demonstrates that the Black female experience is itself not a monolithic construct, but rather a nuanced ecosystem of its own. Such perspectives are essential to any true understanding of how American society views the ideas of, “beauty, success, freedom, and power” that are under scrutiny in their frames.

Give yourself time, as it takes about 80 minutes to see the entire line-up, in an experience whose differences in length and mood create both irregular rhythms in pacing and fascinating juxtapositions in emotion. Depending on where in the loop you arrive, you might be kicking off with Kish's keystone selection, *Death Fantasy*, 2022 (2:10 min), a simple but affecting music video whose symbolism and lyrics are a pretty straightforward indictment of the violence and confusion sowed by late-stage capitalism against the Black (female) body — but it's also a



memorable song.

Or maybe you'll land on Martine Syms' *Meditation*, 2021 (4:20 minutes), a send-up of mindfulness so perfect it soars beyond parody to a place of deep knowledge impartation. A chic cartoon yogini avatar guides a thought experiment on deep attention and embodied presence, rich coming from a short, fast-edit digital video collage, and yet also full of earnest appeals to the viewer/listener to redirect their energies toward places of more enduring inner and natural serenity.

After that, things get a little darker. Savannah Leaf's run, 2023 (9:06 minutes) and Lorna Simpson's *The Institute*, 2007 (5:13 minutes) frame discourses about the Black female body within the lexicon of anatomical and neurological science. In Leaf's work, an athletic woman is fitted with diodes and sensors and instructed to run in place. Its slow-motion scan lends a sinister quality that one cannot quite place; it presents as clinical, but at a certain point a shift to real discomfort in the viewer becomes unavoidable. Similarly, Simpson's work presents vintage footage of what was probably meant to be feel-good education efforts for students with special needs; in this case, extreme unease with the racial dynamics on screen and the systems in which it exist(ed) sets in from the start.

Ja'Tovia Gary's *Quiet As It's Kept*, 2023 (26:00 minutes) juxtaposes historical footage, interview elements with the elevated tone of a PBS special, and online cullings to create a fascinating montage bringing the meanings and motivations of *The Bluest Eye* into unexpectedly close contact with the contemporary conversation around Black hair and skin, all balancing on the fulcrum of academic discourse on identity and empowerment

of individuals in community. It's a lot, but that's the point. Equally unafraid of the metaverse of muchness is the visually surreal treatise *Antidote*, 2020 (21:38 minutes) in which LaJuné McMillian and Marguerite Hemmings co-create an entire alternative cosmology that posits honoring the ancestors by relentlessly pursuing both personal happiness and universal liberation.

Carrie Mae Weems' *Afro-Chic*, 2009-10 (5:00 minutes) and Ayanna Dozier's *Forever Your Girl*, 2022 (7:35 minutes) each in their way explore constructs, projections, and appropriations of BI-POC female beauty, deploying visually grabby tropes of exaggerated sex appeal to create unnerving and unstable dialectic critiques in the poppiest of pop culture spaces. A retro-fabulous catwalk fashion show motif that includes both Black femmes absolutely owning their physicality and power — right alongside white models rocking Black hairstyles. It starts out jazzy but ends with questioning everything. Dozier's leggy woman in a shiny, slinky nightlife outfit and light-up lucite heels plays with a sidewalk children's carousel ride. It's cheeky and subversive at first, great fun to imagine right-wing heads exploding all over the place, but it soon grows unexpectedly unsettling, as it becomes harder for her to balance and hang on to the ride. As the tiny horses go round and round, we all get dizzy together. In the end, our own nostalgia for “simpler times,” or the “wonder of childhood,” has taken a turn. As with everything in this powerful show, everything is first itself, and then a metaphor.

American Gurl is on view at 901 E. 7th St., downtown, through Aug. 20; free; hauserwirth.com.

LA WEEKLY CLASSIFIEDS

EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

Creative Composer (Culver City, CA): Combine live-action and computer-generated elements to create final images that meet the creative direction of the Director, Client, and VFX Supervisor. Telecommuting permitted. Salary: \$140,000/yr. Resumes: HR, House of Parliament, LLC, 9950 Jefferson Blvd., BLDG #1, Culver City, CA, 90232.

Software Developer (Los Angeles, CA): Develop and design the creation of the next generation of imaging software. Salary: \$102,544/yr. Resumes: HR, Cyber Medical Imaging, Inc. dba XDR Radiology, 11300 W. Olympic Blvd., Ste. 710, Los Angeles, CA, 90064.

AXS Group LLC seeks **Sr. Data Scientist** in Los Angeles, CA to contribute to the full data science lifecycle. Reqs. Master's degree or foreign equiv in Analytics, Econometrics or rel. quantitative

field & 1 yr post-baccalau eate exp. as Data Scientist or rel. role. Experience must include design, development and implementation of a data science tool, Python, SQL, IBM DB2, & Microsoft SQL. Salary fr. \$112K to \$119K/yr. Email resume: HumanresourcesUS@axs.com.

Religious Music Director. Req'd: AA in Music, Music Performance, or rel. \$41,517/year. Mail resume: Graceway Church, 431 Madrid Ave., Torrance, CA 90501

Farmers Group (Woodland Hills, CA) seeks Data Scientist to contribute to development & implementation of predictive analytics through app. of advanced statistical & analytical techniques to deliver data driven insights supporting business objectives. Remote work option. Salary: \$139,351/y. Apply at Farmers.com/Careers, Job ID: 19742

Associate Attorney. CA licensed attorney w/ min. of Master's deg. in law. Represent clients in real estate matters; engage

in due diligence & liquidation.; file immigration petitions provide legal advice & draft legal docs. Send resume to: Tsou and Associates, 108 N Ynez Ave. Ste 118, Monterey Park, CA 91754

Highland, Inc. dba Tiny Hero in Burbank, CA seeks a **Maintenance & Repair worker** to manage their facility, incl'g keeping machines & mech'l eq running, while also being responsible for the general upkeep of the property. No trvl req'd. No telecom or WFH benefit avail. \$56,971/y. Send resumes to: hr@tinyhero.com

Spotter, Inc. has a F/T Data Scientist role in Los Angeles, CA. Duties: Build scible mchn learning & quantify ptlml impact; Devlp auto dshbrds & rptgng tools; Rvw pricing & imprv stat model; Devlp tchnqs of archv & diagntcs; Eval target & infirm strtgies thru insights; Anlyz data w/ SQL, Python, & R. Req. BS in Comp. Sci., Stats., Math., Phys., Ops. Rsrch. or rtd + 4 yrs exp. \$120K-170K/yr. Hybrid work. Telecommute 3x/wk. Must

reside w/i commutable distance to LA office. Email resume to resumes@spotter.la & incl. job code LW0723.

Margarian Law Firm seeks a Paralegal to work out of its Glendale, CA office to summarize and draft legal documents for attorney review. Salary \$80,891/yr. Qualified applicants should MAI (no calls/emails/walk-ins) resume to Hovanes Margarian, 462 W Colorado St, Glendale, CA 91204

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LA WEEKLY Bulletin

Injured at work? Workers Comp Law Firm READY TO HELP!

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Thank you Saint Jude, Saint of the Impossible, &c

SECURITY GUARDS NEEDED

Rio Gentlemen's Club - 13124 S Figueroa St, Los Angeles, CA 90061 \$18 to \$20 an hour. Outside security needed for patdowns, ID checks and monitoring parking lot of the club. Please contact Dave Carlson at Rmckinney@jjmfirm.com

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