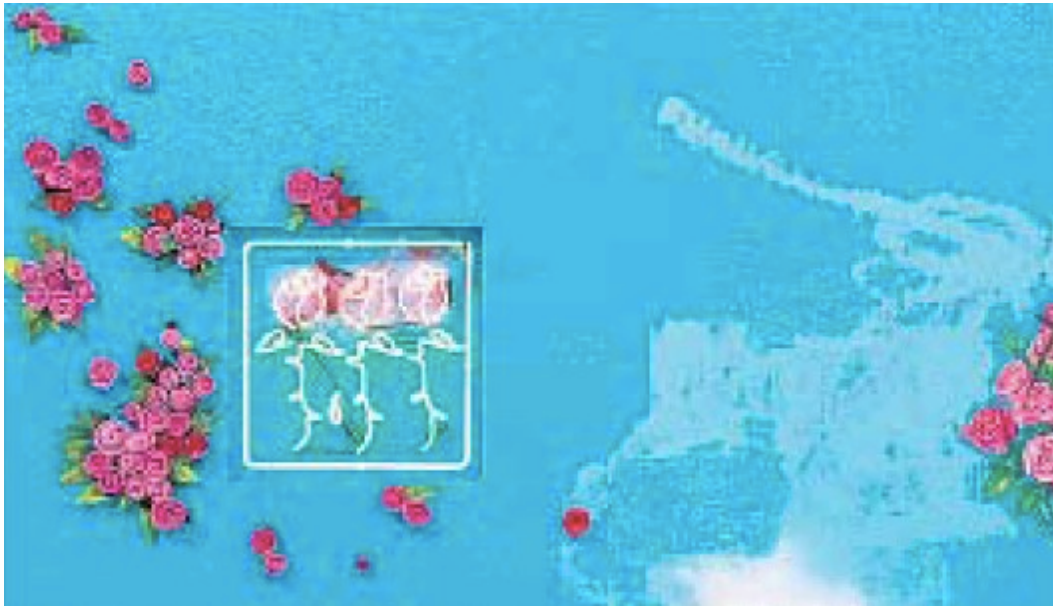


FORT GANSEVOORT

Los Angeles Times

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L.A.'s potent 'Call'
By David Pagel



PA-TRICK
MARTINEZ,
"los angeles
flower still
life."



L.A. ARTIST Gajin Fujita, organizer of the L.A. Louver exhibition "Roll Call," also exhibits his work, including "Cat & Mouse."

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Sometimes artists make the best curators. And some-times galleries can organize exhibitions as well as museums.

Consider “Roll Call: 11 Artists From Los Angeles” at L.A. Louver gallery in Venice through Jan. 14. Organized by Gajin Fujita, the exhibition reprises “Art in the Streets,” a 2011 extravaganza at the Museum of Contemporary Art that some critics saw as a half-baked sprawl. In contrast, “Roll Call” sticks to just 35 works by 11 guys. Their paintings are potent. So are their sculptures. The work strikes an enlightening balance between individual identity and group dynamics.

All but one of its artists live in L.A. Fujita, Jesse Simon and Alex Kizu (who lives in Hawaii and goes by the name Defer) attended junior high at Los Angeles Center for Enriched Studies together. Along with David Cavazos (Big Sleeps), Jose Reza (Prime) and the artist known as Slick, they were members of the graffiti crew K2S. Also featured are Chaz Bojorquez, Fabian Debora, Ricardo Estrada, Patrick Martinez and Retna.

Think of the works in “Roll Call” as friends. They do not look alike. But they get on with one another, often splendidly, always intimately and sometimes contentiously. The texture and resonance of a time and a place are palpable.

Homemade cartoons, coded languages, recycled surfboards, futuristic Realism, cultural mashups, haunting memento mori and loaded abstractions come in all shapes and sizes. Diversity rules. That’s just another way of say-ing that individuality matters. Independence follows, along with the freedom to pursue one’s dreams and ideals. That’s as American as art — and life — can be.