



Critic's Guide: Los Angeles

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A round-up of the city's best current shows, to coincide with this year's Art Los Angeles Contemporary, which opens today

Linda Stark

Jenny's

14 January – 25 February

The titular 'Painted Ladies' of Linda Stark's show at Jenny's are an odd bunch: cartoonish renderings of the female reproductive system, complete with fallopian tubes arms and frantic little hands. Ovaries are eyes. Vaginas become snouts or tentacles. The two oils on display, both older works created via a long and laborious process of layering, possess mesmerizing textures and near-sculpted surfaces. The first, the meticulously rendered *Fixed Wave* (2011) has a rather Pop sensibility, with a surface you might mistake for moulded plastic. The second, *Coat of Arms* (1991), curdling at the edges, could be taken for a devotional object from some folk religion. Those two evocations – Pop and the tradition of visionary or mystic art – underlie the talismanic repetitions that move as well through Stark's more recent, and often deceptively delicate, works on paper.

Stark's paintings and drawings are hilarious and mischievous, mythic while grounded in biological reality, but they are also timely, to say the least. I saw the show one day before Donald Trump's inauguration, two days before joining some 750,000 others at the Women's March on LA, and three days before our new President signed an executive order barring foreign aid from going to any NGO that provides abortions or even discusses them as a family planning option.