

CULTURE MONSTER

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5 DAYS OUT

Highlights of the week ahead in arts, music and performance

ART

Titian's "Portrait of a Lady in White"

Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena
Opens Wednesday; ends March 25
Free-\$15

MUSIC

"An Evening of New Musical Theatre Songs,"

The Wallis, Beverly Hills
7 p.m. Thursday
\$15-\$35

MUSIC

"Swinging Christmas With the Arturo Sandoval Big Band"

Walt Disney Concert Hall, L.A.
8 p.m. Friday
\$39-\$100

THEATER

"All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914"

Theater Latté Da Broad Stage, Santa Monica
4 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday
\$59-\$99

ART

"New Orleans Second Line Parades: Photographs by Pableaux Johnson"

Fowler Museum at UCLA
Ends April 28
Free



MICHAEL UNDERWOOD Jenny's

"GENESIS" (2018), which is one of four "worlds" created in Max Hooper Schneider's installation, hints not at any sort of beginning but at a final resting place for junk.

ART REVIEW

Macabre microcosms

Max Hooper Schneider's dark visions unfold in 'Tryouts for the Human Race'

BY LEAH OLLMAN

In his engrossing show at the L.A. art gallery Jenny's, Max Hooper Schneider mimics hobbyists mimicking God: Four ornately constructed installations are based on familiar attempts to create a world in miniature — aquarium, model railroad and dollhouse. But these are no saccharine wonderlands, no idealized versions of seascape, landscape or home-scape. These are leisure pursuits gone rogue.

The L.A. artist twists our culture of abundance into a freakish dystopia. Those moved by the dark pageantry of Adrián Villar Rojas'

"The Theater of Disappearance" a year ago at the Museum of Contemporary Art's Geffen Contemporary might also connect with Schneider's show. It too is a marvel of critical cultural anthropology, but writ small — and with a better sense of humor.

Tiny fish dart among heaps of cheap treasure in one aquarium, and little crustaceans skitter across a kelp bed of lingerie in the other.

"Genesis" hints not at any sort of beginning but at a final resting place for junk. Two mountains of costume jewelry rise above the waterline — beads, pearls and pendants, bracelets and watches. This polluting graveyard of per-

sonal adornment reeks of trite optimism and faith; crosses, peace signs and happy faces punctuate the piles. Fake fish, butterflies and turtles, plus leaves and flowers all look ridiculously bereft in this shrine to the unnatural.

In "Lady Marlene," stiffened bra straps and lacy gloves form another sort of consumerist topography, creepy and comical, whiffs of desire scenting the underwater debris.

Schneider calls his model train setup "Utopia," but it's hard to imagine anyone longing for this fictive spot cast in queasy pink resin. Globbs, spires and sea-anemone-like orifices line the track, where a little engine, pulling a few cars

'Tryouts for the Human Race'

Where: Jenny's, 4220 Sunset Blvd., L.A.
When: Through Dec. 29; closed Sundays-Tuesdays
Info: (323) 741-8237, Jennys.us

loaded with more pink goop, makes continuous loops. There's a gully of thorns, a grove of phalluses and a few ears and hands embedded in the surface, which reads at once as prolific and lifeless, an organic desert of skin.

Schneider revels in extremity, but "Mommy & Me," a torched haunted house, tips into the overwrought.

A hoarder's haven, it's stuffed with the paraphernalia of violence and so much more. The attic, encrusted with dark, spiny ooze, is a horror story all its own, a house of despair. The heavy-handedness detracts little from the cumulative power of the show, titled "Tryouts for the Human Race."

Schneider has fashioned each of these microcosms with equal parts precision and abandon, and each reads doubly as fantasy and fate.

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