

ART • WEEKEND

The Contemporary Oddities of the Los Angeles Contemporary Archive

LACA's non-circulating collection is an ever-expanding project, encompassing documents and ephemera from contemporary artists, researchers, and writers working in and around Los Angeles.



Michael Valinsky January 6, 2018

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John Hulsey, *The Land Under Iron (DTLA)* (2017), HD video still (courtesy of the artist)

Invested in documenting and preserving contemporary creative processes, the [Los Angeles Contemporary Archive \(LACA\)](#) is not a place in which documents pile and gather dust. LACA opened its doors in 2013 to catalog artistic activity in Los Angeles. While the purpose of an archive is ostensibly to preserve the material culture of the past, LACA's focus is on collecting and historicizing the present. Its non-circulating collection is an ever-expanding project, encompassing documents and ephemera from contemporary artists, researchers, and writers working in and around Los Angeles. While it might be difficult to decipher today, tomorrow it will shed light on the past.

"I wanted you to have a space that you could walk into and immediately know it was for research. Not a white cube. You might have missed a performance or exhibition but the ephemera is still accessible. You can access it knowing that you missed the show," explains LACA Co-Founder and Executive Director Hailey Loman.

LACA also doubles as an exhibition space that coexists with the workspace designed for archive-users and offers programming in which presentations emerge from archival projects. As a nonprofit, its doors are open to the public, free of charge, and its stacks are open to artists wishing to contribute to the collection. The collection refuses categorization, including quotidian objects that could easily be regarded as superfluous. Such items can be difficult to archive and preserve and haven't necessarily acquired archival value. This makes the collection personal and unique. Although it is unclear if the donated materials are worth preserving, they provide deep insight into an artist's practice. Since LACA started collecting actively in 2014, it

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