

HAMMER MUSEUM HONORS DARREN STAR AND BETYE SAAR AT 21ST ANNUAL GALA IN THE GARDEN

Attendees Included Owen Wilson, Rufus Wainwright, Nico Tortorella, and More

*Evening Raised \$2 million to Support the Hammer Museum's Internationally Acclaimed Exhibitions
and Public Programs*



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LOS ANGELES, CA – May 3, 2026 – Last night, the [Hammer Museum](#) at UCLA welcomed cultural leaders, artists, collectors, and patrons of the arts at the 21st annual Gala in the Garden. The evening honored television creator and writer **Darren Star** and trailblazing artist **Betye Saar** for their profound contributions to society through their work. The gala raised \$2 million to benefit the museum's dynamic and internationally acclaimed exhibitions and public programs, which are free for all visitors year-round.

The evening kicked off with remarks by gala co-chair, president of the Andy Warhol Foundation, **Joel Wachs**, who introduced Hammer Museum director **Zoë Ryan**. Netflix co-CEO **Ted Sarandos** then took the stage to pay tribute to Star, and Getty Presidential Scholar **Sandra Jackson-Dumont** later paid tribute to Saar, who will celebrate her centennial birthday later this year.

In her remarks, **Zoë Ryan** reflected on her first year as the museum's director, stating, "I feel every day how cherished the museum is by the Los Angeles community and by each and every one of you here tonight. At the heart of the Hammer is a deep commitment to giving space to artists, bold and experimental ideas, and supporting audiences as a catalyst for change through dialogue and exchange – all much needed in this country right now." Ryan also made a toast to longtime chair of the Hammer Board of Directors, television producer **Marcy Carsey**, who will be stepping down from her role as Chair after 12 years, though will remain on the Hammer board.

Photo: L-R: Ted Sarandos, Sandra Jackson-Dumont, Zoë Ryan, Darren Star, and Betye Saar at the 2026 Gala in the Garden at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. Photo: Stefanie Keenan/Getty Images for the Hammer Museum

Honoring the *Emily in Paris* creator, **Ted Sarandos** said, “Darren is simply one of the most talented showrunners of his generation, with his finger on the pulse of pop culture for more than three decades. He influences the clothes we wear, the way we cut our hair, the music we listen to, and the dreams we dream.”

From the stage, **Darren Star** touched on his experience living in Los Angeles, and expressed his heartfelt gratitude for the honor and support of the museum. He stated, “Thank you to everyone in this wonderful community. We come together because all our hearts love Los Angeles and love this museum.”

Speaking to Betye Saar about her incredible legacy as a pioneering artist, **Sandra Jackson-Dumont** said, “You have given us language where there was silence, beauty where there was erasure, and possibility where there was constraint. You have shown us that art can hold the past and the future in the same moment. You have shown us that the ordinary is never ordinary if you just stretch your mind to see. You have shown us that truth, when spoken through the right hand of an artist like you, can change everything.”

Met with thunderous applause and a standing ovation, **Betye Saar** thanked guests for joining her at the gala, saying, “By you being here, it encourages a lot of other people who are not here to love art, to use art, and to know how important art is in our lives.” She went on to share her secret to living a long life as she approaches her 100th birthday: a good diet, nature, and being a California girl.

Following the dinner, guests entered the after-party, where they were treated to an exclusive DJ set by artist **Landon Ross** and enjoyed a range of Patrón and Grey Goose-infused cocktails.

This year’s Gala in the Garden was co-chaired by **Manuela Herzer**, **Karen Hillenburg**, and **Joel Wachs**. Attendees included **Owen Wilson**, **Rufus Wainwright**, and actor **Nico Tortorella** of Star’s hit show *Younger*. Artists in attendance included **Lauren Halsey**, **Karon Davis**, **Koshin Finley**, **Catherine Opie**, **Shio Kusaka**, **Barry McGee**, **Jonas Wood**, **Nikita Gale**, **Gabriela Ruiz**, **Mariel Eplboim**, **Tala Madani**, **Nathaniel Mellors**, **Edgar Arceneaux**, **Max Hooper Schneider**, and **Ali Eyal**, winner of the \$100,000 Mohn Award as part of the recent Made in L.A. 2025 biennial at the Hammer.

ABOUT THE HAMMER MUSEUM

The Hammer Museum is part of the School of the Arts and Architecture at UCLA, and offers exhibitions and collections that span classic to contemporary art. It holds more than 50,000 works in its collection, including one of the finest collections of works on paper in the nation, the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts. Through a wide-ranging, international exhibition program and the biennial, Made in L.A., the Hammer highlights contemporary art since the 1960s, especially the work of emerging and under-recognized artists. Its exhibitions, permanent collections, and public programs—including films, conversations, readings, concerts, and more—are all free to the public.

HAMMER MUSEUM INFORMATION

Admission to all exhibitions and programs at the Hammer Museum is free. Hours: Tuesday–Thursday, Saturday–Sunday 11 a.m.–6 p.m.; Friday 11 a.m.–8 p.m. Closed Mondays and national holidays. Hammer

Museum, 10899 Wilshire Boulevard at Westwood, Los Angeles. Onsite parking is \$8 for the first 3 hours (maximum \$22), or \$8 flat rate after 5 p.m. Valet parking is available at the Lindbrook Drive entrance for \$15. Visit hammer.ucla.edu for details or call 310-443-7000.

Free Admission at the Hammer Museum is courtesy of Marcy Carsey, the Erika J Glazer Family Foundation, and the Anthony Pritzker Family Foundation.

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