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Hammer Museum Names Michael Wellen and José Luis Blondet as Curators for Made in L.A. 2027

Opening Fall 2027



Photo: Gabriel Noguez

(Los Angeles, CA)—The Hammer Museum announced today that the next edition of its critically acclaimed biennial **Made in L.A.** will be co-curated by **Michael Wellen** and **José Luis Blondet**. Wellen is the Chief Curator at the Hammer Museum, a position to which he was appointed in April 2026. He was previously the Senior Curator of International Art at Tate Modern. Blondet is a Senior Curator at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA).

Made in L.A. 2027 will be the eighth iteration of the biennial series that highlights the practices of artists working throughout the greater Los Angeles area, often recognizing the work of emerging and under-represented artists. **Made in L.A. 2027** will open at the Hammer in the fall of 2027.

Zoë Ryan, director of the Hammer Museum, said, “For more than a decade the Made in L.A. biennial has been a convergence point for artists in Los Angeles. I am excited to watch Michael and José Luis develop an exhibition that will draw on the current dynamism and artistic legacies of this city. Both curators have a track record of working closely with artists and creating exhibitions with insightful frameworks that center their ideas.”

ABOUT THE CURATORS

Michael Wellen is the Chief Curator of the Hammer Museum at UCLA. Previously, he was Senior Curator of International Art at Tate Modern where organized numerous exhibitions, working closely with artists

Takis in 2019 and Lubaina Himid in 2021 on major monographic exhibitions of their work. He also curated the critically acclaimed *Philip Guston* exhibition in 2023 and *Ana Mendieta*, which opened this month. Additionally at Tate he was in charge of all aspects of the free collection exhibitions across the museum. This work included projects and performances involving contemporary artists María Magdalena Campos-Pons, Ayoung Kim, Ernesto Salmeron, Cecilia Vicuña, and many others. Before moving to the UK, Wellen was Assistant Curator of Latin American and Latino Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston from 2011–2016.

In 2024 Wellen was awarded a Center for Curatorial Leadership Fellowship. He holds a BA in History and Anthropology from Rutgers University and an MA and PhD in Modern and Contemporary Art with a focus on Latin America, both from the University of Texas at Austin.

José Luis Blondet is Senior Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA), where he has organized *Olafur Eliasson: OPEN* (2024), *MOCA Focus: Ana Segovia* (2024), and *Fictions of Display* (2025), with upcoming exhibitions including *Alexander Apóstol, Regime: Dramatis Personae*, opening in September 2026, and *Quipu of Encounters: The Dream of Water* with Cecilia Vicuña, opening in November 2026. Previously, he spent 13 years at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), where he developed exhibitions, commissions, and performance projects with artists such as Raven Chacon, Guy de Cointent, Liz Glynn, Asher Hartman, Mapa Teatro, Maria Nordman, Naufus Ramirez-Figueroa, and Puppies Puppies (Jade Kuriki Olivo). His last projects at LACMA were *Magdalena Suarez Frimkess: The Finest Disregard* (2025) and *Not I: Throwing Voices (1500 BCE–2020 CE)* (2021), an exhibition examining the museum's encyclopedic collection through the lens of ventriloquism.

As a guest curator, Blondet has organized *Ragnar Kjartansson, The Things You See Before the Curtain Hits the Floor* (Museo Tamayo, Mexico, 2023); the *SITElines* biennial (with Candice Hopkins and Ruba Katrib), SITE Santa Fe, New Mexico (2018); and *[SIC]* at CAPC Musée d'art contemporain, Bordeaux, France (2016). Before moving to Los Angeles, he held positions at the Dia Art Foundation and the Museo de Bellas Artes de Caracas, Venezuela, his hometown.

Blondet studied Literature at the Universidad Central de Venezuela, and completed an MA in Curatorial Studies at Bard College, NY.

ABOUT MADE IN L.A.

The Hammer's biennial exhibition series *Made in L.A.* is a multi-generational exhibition focusing on artists living and working in Los Angeles. It debuts new and recent work as well as commissions that span artistic media and offers insight into the artistic ideas coming out of Los Angeles, one of the most active and energetic art communities in the world. *Made in L.A.* began in 2012 and followed the tradition of the Hammer Invitational exhibitions, which occurred every two years and included *Snapshot* (2001), *International Paper* (2003), *Thing* (2005), *Eden's Edge* (2007), *Nine Lives* (2009), and *All of this and nothing* (2011).

Each edition of *Made in L.A.* pairs two curators—often a Hammer curator in dialogue with another curator with deep ties to L.A.'s arts ecosystem.

Made in L.A. 2012 was organized by a team of curators from the Hammer Museum and LAXART: Hammer senior curator Anne Ellegood, Hammer curator Ali Subotnick, LAXART director and chief

curator Lauri Firstenberg, LAXART associate director and senior curator Cesar Garcia, and LAXART curator-at-large Malik Gaines.

Made in L.A. 2014 was co-curated by Hammer chief curator Connie Butler and Los Angeles-based independent curator Michael Ned Holte.

Made in L.A. 2016: a, the, though, only was cocurated by Hammer curator Aram Moshayedi and Hamza Walker, former director of education and associate curator at the Renaissance Society in Chicago and currently director of LAXART in Los Angeles.

Made in L.A. 2018 was organized by Anne Ellegood, senior curator, and Erin Christovale, assistant curator, with MacKenzie Stevens, curatorial associate. Performances were coordinated by Vanessa Arizmendi, curatorial assistant.

Made in L.A. 2020: a version was organized by independent curators Myriam Ben Salah and Lauren Mackler, with the Hammer's Ikechukwu Onyewuenyi, assistant curator of performance. *Made in L.A. 2020* was organized by the Hammer Museum in partnership with The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens.

Made in L.A. 2023: Acts of Living was organized by independent curator Diana Nawi and Hammer curator Pablo José Ramírez, with Ashton Cooper, Luce Curatorial Fellow.

Made in L.A. 2025 was organized by Essence Harden, independent curator, and Paulina Pobocha, Chair and Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, The Art Institute of Chicago and former Hammer Museum Robert Soros Senior Curator, with Jennifer Buonocore-NedreLOW, curatorial assistant.

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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 Made in L.A. biennial, the Hammer highlights contemporary art since the 1960s, especially the work of emerging and under-recognized artists. The 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–Sunday 11 a.m.–6 p.m. Closed Mondays and national holidays. Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Boulevard at Westwood, Los Angeles. Onsite parking is \$9 for the first 3 hours (maximum \$30), or \$9 flat rate after 5 p.m. 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.