

**ANGELENO Profile:** 'The impressionists', by Marina Gluck, Franklin Melendez and Elisabeth Varnell, December, 2012

# The Impressionists

It's been a buzz-worthy year in the art world, and not just because of a certain museum director. As its inaugural biennial, *Made in L.A. 2012*, made amply clear, the Southland's art scene is no longer on the make. It has arrived.

*By Marina Gluck, Franklin Melendez and Elisabeth Varnell*



For Morrison, show here at Gagosian Gallery in Beverly Hills beside his 2011 sculpture, "Alic," found objects have greater meaning combined than as individual pieces. "I like to make monuments with real problems," he says.

## ARTIST OF THE YEAR

### Metalmorphosis

Growing up in what he calls the "gloom and doom" of the Pacific Northwest, punk rebellion and creative expression were one and the same for Joel Morrison. "It was all about killing pop," he says. "The idea of commodity was sacrilegious, so coming to L.A. to study art at Claremont Graduate University was the complete opposite. It was liberating." Now the Seattle native's sculptures—beautiful assemblages of urban detritus recast in high-polish stainless steel or fiberglass—are a hot ticket for international powerhouse Gagosian Gallery and he regularly makes the international circuits (he returned from a recent touring solo show at the gallery's Hong Kong outpost just as his new work was unveiled at the relaunched Dior boutique on Rodeo Drive). But don't be fooled by the gloss: Morrison remains an outsider (though his studio has been in the West Adams district for 10 years) and his practice taps into the shifting landscape of the city, its unstable history and the ever-changing aesthetic of the urban experience.