

Desire, Knowledge, and Hope (with Smog)

Nov 18, 2023 — Apr 7, 2024 | The Broad Museum, Los Angeles, California, US

Alex Israel is part of the exhibition 'Desire, Knowledge, and Hope (with Smog)', at The Broad Museum, Los Angeles, California, US.

The Broad is pleased to announce *Desire, Knowledge, and Hope (with Smog)*, a free exhibition drawn entirely from the Broad collection, showcasing works by Los Angeles-based artists. Drawing its title from a piece by John Baldessari, the exhibition often oscillates between local takes on a city in flux and turmoil, and reflections outward to evolving issues of artmaking and global concerns. Running from November 18, 2023 to April 7, 2024, the exhibition will be on view throughout the museum's first floor galleries and includes the work of 21 artists across varying generations who were raised in the Los Angeles area, such as Doug Aitken and Lari Pittman, or relocated to the city, including Catherine Opie and Mike Kelley. *Desire, Knowledge, and Hope (with Smog)* is made possible in part by generous support from East West Bank, Leading Partner of The Broad for six years.

Organized by The Broad's Curator Ed Schad and Curatorial Assistant Jennifer Vanegas Rocha, the exhibition will feature several artists new to The Broad collection, including Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Sayre Gomez, and Joe Ray. It provides visitors the opportunity to discover how the museum's collection continues to evolve, welcoming new voices and supporting some of the most ambitious artists working in Los Angeles.

"The Broad collection works selected for this show span five decades, and reflect Los Angeles' growth as a nexus for artists and as a complex urban landscape to investigate," said Joanne Heyler, Founding Director of The Broad. "The show traces the influence of earlier generations of LA-based artists on later generations and spotlights numerous artists who illuminate deep-seated social inequities and contradictions woven into our city and its myths."

Originally the exhibition was a Spring 2020 show poised to open when the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, leaving the project unrealized. Now re-envisioned, *Desire, Knowledge, and Hope (with Smog)* mines the paradoxes captured in Baldessari's title through a more expansive, post-2020 lens featuring a wider spectrum of LA-based artists and practices in the evolving Broad collection. Including works made from 1969 to 2023 that span the mediums of abstract or photorealistic painting, photography, sculpture, and political signage, the exhibition contains fragments, attitudes, and everyday experiences absorbed and worked through in Los Angeles that reflect back on our collective present moment, and invoke alternate histories, states of mind, and futures.

The presentation highlights over 60 artworks—most of which will be on view at the museum for the first time—exhibiting artists in the Broad collection whose work makes some of the city's integral contributions to contemporary art internationally, and revealing dialogues between local artists of different generations. Even works not explicitly about Los Angeles reveal a gap between the allure and the reality of life in the city, where a sense of phantasmagoric projection contrasts against much harder, concrete realities.

The show's title refers to Baldessari's monumental work *Buildings=Guns=People: Desire, Knowledge, and Hope (with Smog)* (1985), where "smog" nods to the city's notorious air quality, contrasting against familiar depictions of sunshine, beaches, Hollywood, and nature. This play between an idealized expectation of LA and its gritty reality is evident in the large-scale paintings and neons of Ed Ruscha, Mark Bradford, and Patrick Martinez whose intergenerational exchanges consider global and local societal issues through a shared home.

Hung alongside Baldessari's work are two pieces by Mike Kelley, notably including his six-part drawing *Infinite Expansion* (1984), which is connected with one of his earliest performance works exploring psychedelia at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Other featured artists include Barbara Kruger, who will have a gallery dedicated to her work *Untitled (I shop therefore I am)* (1987-2019). On view at The Broad for the first time, this work uses the parlance of political signage to probe commerce and the formation of identity. Toba Khedoori will present large-scale paper works *Untitled (park benches)* (1997) and *Untitled (Black fireplace)* (2006), both of which depict scenes of quietude or isolation, experiences often associated with the sprawling geography of Los Angeles. In two works from 2022, *Diamonds and Pearls* and *The Whole Wide World is a Haunted House*, Sayre Gomez deploys a realist style using airbrushed paint. Both of his works take on the overlooked perspective of the pedestrian, where street-level views of an abandoned strip mall and nail salon signage unambiguously embrace the complex social arrangements of a shared, sweeping metropolis.

Full list of exhibited artists: Doug Aitken, John Baldessari, Mark Bradford, Robbie Conal, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Jack Goldstein, Sayre Gomez, Mark Grotjahn, Elliott Hundley, [Alex Israel](#), Mike Kelley, Toba Khedoori, Barbara Kruger, Sharon Lockhart, Patrick Martinez, Catherine Opie, Lari Pittman, Joe Ray, Ed Ruscha, Diana Thater, and Jonas Wood