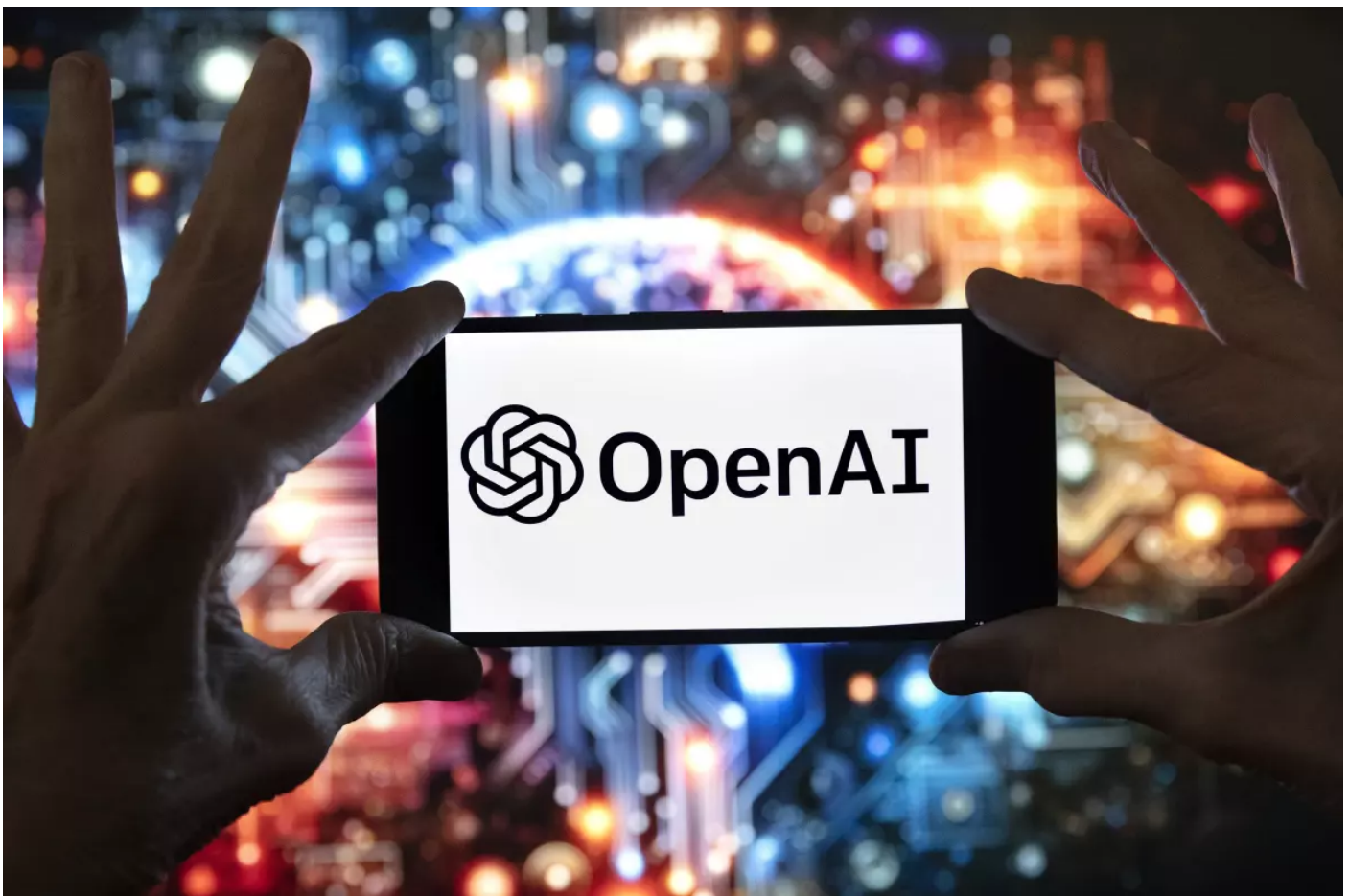




ENTERTAINMENT & ARTS

Visual artists are in an AI crisis, this new survey explains why: L.A. arts and culture this weekend



The OpenAI logo is displayed on a cellphone in front of an image generated by ChatGPT's Dall-E text-to-image model, Dec. 8, 2023, in Boston. (Michael Dwyer / Associated Press)

**By Jessica Gelt**

Arts Editor | Follow

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Professional visual artists hate generative AI. This should come as no surprise, but [a new survey released last month](#) by a trio of researchers at Carnegie Mellon University breaks

down just how much: 99% of respondents out of a pool of 378 verified professional visual artists noted their dislike for the technology, with 92% categorizing it as “strong dislike.”

Even more jarring, the survey found that 80% of respondents believe that they’re in competition with the technology. The artists expressed deep concerns about the impact AI is having on their careers, with 54% saying it has diminished their income, 75% their job and clientele security, and 90% their income opportunities. Another 77% said it had negatively impacted their career growth, 61% the future of their career, and 74% their career sustainability.

The jobs most heavily affected include commercial artists, graphic designers and concept artists in entertainment whose work is sometimes entirely replaced — or largely commandeered — by images generated using tools like Midjourney, Adobe Fireplay or DALL-E; but fine artists working in traditional media are also experiencing a devaluation of their work and a shrinking pool of employers.

“I’m working on getting out of the field and planning to get my PhD in something non-art related because I can’t see my current work as being sustainable when I see them actively replacing me [with] chatGPT,” a costume designer and illustrator said in the survey, which notes, “Demoralization, disempowerment, disrespect, stress, and fear are also commonly expressed, not only regarding individual careers but also extending towards the field at large.”

“It’s been pretty demoralizing at times seeing a lot of younger artists giving up because they don’t see a future in art. That they’re abandoning their creative passions because of AI,” another illustrator said. A comic artist, writer and painter noted that AI underscores that art is not important to the general public. “It has been demoralizing largely because generated AI images look like crap but there is a segment of the population who seem to not care,” the artist said.

Then there is the unnervingly meta task of artists trying to prove they are human, or that they did not generate their work using AI.

“I find users online to be more critical, looking at art less to enjoy it and more so to figure out if it’s AI generated or not. There’s a lot of pressure and anxiety in proving you are a real person now,” one illustrator and designer said. Another artist and sculptor said, “I have seen false accusations for use of AI in work from other artists who do not use AI and I am fearful of being accused of this as well, I now record the creation process of most things so that I have proof AI was not utilized.”

This study affirms the findings of a less formal ongoing survey conducted by [Brian Merchant, a former Times technology columnist who now writes an indispensable newsletter on Substack called “Blood in the Machine,”](#) which keeps razor-sharp track of the ways AI is affecting labor, and the pattern of Big Tech deflecting responsibility for harm. [As part of an ongoing series titled, “AI Killed My Job,”](#) Merchant invited visual artists to write to him about their experiences, and published the most compelling — and crushing — responses.

In that column, Merchant discusses the “good enough” principle of AI-generated art, noting, “Creative workers aren’t typically worried that AI systems are so good they’ll be rendered obsolete as artists, or that AI-generated work will be better than theirs. Their fear is that clients, managers, and even consumers will deem AI art ‘good enough’ as the companies that produce it push down their wages and corrode their ability to earn a living.”

An idea highlighted in the following letter published by Merchant from an anonymous source:

“I’ve been out of work for a while now. I made children’s book illustrations, stock art, and took various art commissions.

Now I have several maxed out credit cards and use a donation bin for food. I haven’t had a steady contract in over a year. two weeks ago, when a client who has switched to AI found out about this he gave me \$50 out of ‘a sense of guilt.’ Basically pity for the fact that Illustrator, as a job, does not exist anymore.”

One thing Merchant is exceedingly good at is reminding readers that there is a surge of dissent swelling from the proletariat — and that after you're done feeling the necessary despair, you can join the anti-AI resistance. For visual artists that can be as simple as utilizing a growing number of defensive tools when it comes to protecting art, most notably [Glaze](#) and [Nightshade](#). The former adds the smallest pixel-sized changes to your artwork, which serves to confuse AI so it can't train on your style; the latter — as the name implies — acts more like a poison that corrupts AI training data so it can't scrape from a protected image.

I'm Arts editor — and proud Luddite — Jessica Gelt. This is your arts and culture news for the week.

The week ahead: A curated calendar

FRIDAY





Celeste Butler-Clayton as Coretta Scott King in "Experiencing the Dream: The MLK Musical." (Triple T Photography)

Experiencing the Dream: MLK the Musical

The show's 26 songs will be recorded live with an orchestra of 27 musicians under the direction of Leon Lacy, with orchestrations by Felipe Paccagnella, vocal arrangements by Tony Jones and musical direction by arranger/producer William Taylor. The cast includes Eric Dawkins, Bishop Jonathan Mason, Yolanda Gibbons, Patricia Jackson, James Singleton, Melvin Crispell, Pam Blackmon Kendle and Celeste Butler-Clayton. Written by Kesha L. Ealy and Marcus S. Mason. Mason also composed the music.

7 p.m. Greater Emmanuel Temple, 3740 E. Imperial Hwy., Lynwood. MLKthemusical.com

Riverdance 30 — The New Generation

The Irish music and dance phenomenon marks its three decades with a special anniversary tour.

7:30 p.m. Friday; 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday; 1 and 6:30 p.m. Sunday. Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa. scfta.org

SATURDAY



Ryuichi Sakamoto, left; Bang on a Can All-Stars. (The Wallis)

Ryuichi Sakamoto

Contemporary music sextet Bang on a Can All-Stars pay tribute to the Japanese composer with works from his album “1996,” which included pieces from his film scores, including “Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence” (1983), “The Last Emperor” (1987), for which he won an Academy Award, “The Sheltering Sky” (1990) and “Little Buddha” (1993).

7:30 p.m. *The Wallis*, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills. thewallis.org

Vijay Iyer and Wadada Leo Smith

The longtime collaborators perform music from their 2025 album “Defiant Life” which Iyer noted “was shaped by our ongoing sorrow and outrage over the past year’s cruelties, but also by our faith in human possibility.”

8 p.m. *UCLA Nimoy Theater*, 1262 Westwood Blvd. cap.ucla.edu

Radiance + Reverie

Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra music director Jaime Martín leads the group in Mozart’s “Haffner” Symphony, “Selah,” a world premiere of a new Double Concerto by Christopher Cerrone performed by violinist Anthony Marwood and cellist Coleman Itzkoff, and

Tchaikovsky's "Mozartiana."

7:30 p.m. Saturday. Zipper Hall, 200 S. Grand Ave., downtown L.A.; 4 p.m. Sunday. The Wallis, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills. laco.org



Mads Mikkelsen and Zlatko Burić in 'Pusher II: With Blood on My Hands.' (Jens Juncker-Jensen / NWR / Magnolia Pictures)

Pusher trilogy

Danish filmmaker Nicolas Winding Refn's gritty triptych takes us through the violent criminal underworld of Copenhagen in three interconnected films, each with a different protagonist: "Pusher" (1996), starring Kim Bodnia; "Pusher II: With Blood On My Hands" (2004), starring Mads Mikkelsen; "Pusher III: I'm The Angel Of Death," starring Zlatko Burić.

5 p.m. Egyptian Theatre, 6712 Hollywood Blvd. americancinematheque.com

Jodi Siegel

The singer-songwriter and guitarist is joined by guitarist Greg Porée and percussionist Justin Porée for an evening of blues, R&B, soul and jazz.

8 p.m. Sierra Madre Playhouse, Sierra Madre Playhouse, 87 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.

sierramadreplayhouse.org

SUNDAY

Celebrating Photography

The Getty has a series of events inspired by the exhibition “Photography and the Black Arts Movement, 1955–1985” (which continues through June 14). It begins Sunday with a free, daylong Family Festival featuring live music, dance, storytelling and interactive workshops. On Wednesday evening, moderator Karen Grigsby Bates and authors Dr. Karin L. Stanford and Mark Speltz discuss the new book “Marching West: The Los Angeles Civil Rights Movement in Photographs.” Thursday morning, the panel “Backstage: An Unfurling of the JPC: Black Photography & Visual Culture” examines how the Johnson Publishing Company and its photographers impacted Black visual culture and the larger field of photography. Finally, on June 7, authors Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe (“Viewfinders: Black Women Photographers”) and Deborah Willis (“Black Photographers, 1840 to 1940: An Illustrated Bio-Bibliography”) discuss their work as artists and historians.

Family Festival, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday; “Backstage: An Unfurling of the JPC,” 10 a.m. Thursday (also online); “Marching West,” 7 p.m. Wednesday (also online); “Viewfinders,” 4 p.m. June 7 (also online). Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Drive, L.A. getty.edu

F For Fake

A 35 mm screening of Orson Welles’ 1973 enigmatic docudrama profiles professional art forger Elmyr de Hory as a starting point for examining authenticity and authorship.
6 p.m. Brain-Dead Studios, 611 N. Fairfax Ave. studios.wearebraindead.com

Philip Glass and the Poets

The first major Philip Glass 90th birthday celebration (he was born Jan. 31, 1927) features Timo Andres on piano and spoken word performance by Taylor Mac, with special guest appearances by Lucinda Childs and the San Francisco Girls Chorus and their artistic director Valérie Sainte-Agathe.

7 p.m. UC Santa Barbara, Campbell Hall. artsandlectures.ucsb.edu

TUESDAY



Gustavo Dudamel will lead the L.A. Phil in Wagner's "Die Walküre" in three parts, Tuesday-Sunday at Disney Concert Hall. (Etienne Laurent / For The Times)

Die Walküre

Conductor Gustavo Dudamel and the L.A. Phil, along with director Alberto Arvelo, tackle the second installment in Wagner's epic Ring Cycle in three stand-alone parts with opera stars Jamez McCorkle, Jessica Fasel, Christine Goerke and Ryan Speedo Green, and scenic designs by Frank Gehry.

Act I, 8 p.m. Tuesday and Friday; Act II, 8 p.m. Wednesday and Saturday; Act II, 8 p.m. Thursday and 2 p.m. Sunday. Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., downtown L.A.
laphil.com

WEDNESDAY

Being There

Peter Sellers received an Oscar nomination for his portrayal of a simple gardener catapulted into the media spotlight and presidential politics in Hal Ashby's prescient 1979 satire. Shirley MacLaine, Jack Warden and Melvyn Douglas co-star. Screening in 35 mm with an appearance by cinematographer Caleb Deschanel.

7:30 p.m. Academy Museum, 6067 Wilshire Blvd. academymuseum.org

Life of Mozart

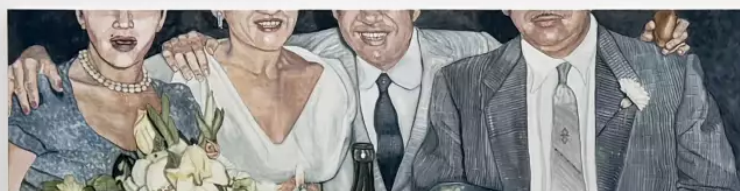
The Pasadena Choral Society presents the composer's unfinished "Requiem" within a dramatic framework using Mozart's own words. Milo Brody plays Mozart, accompanied by pianist Tali Tadmor, with solos by soprano Erika Boychenko, alto Ali Frazzini, tenor Eric Werner and bass Chris Tickner.

7:30 p.m. San Marino Community Church, 1750 Virginia Rd #0412. givebutter.com/lifeofmozart

Primary Trust

Times theater critic Charles McNulty described Eboni Booth's 2024 Pulitzer Prize-winning play as "a quirky, small-scale, quietly reflective work that's as tenderhearted as it is spryly comic and as poignant as it is ultimately uplifting," when it had [its West Coast premiere](#) at La Jolla Playhouse. Once again directed by Knud Adams, it arrives in Los Angeles with a cast that includes Ugo Chukwu, Rebecca S'manga Frank, Petey McGee and James Urbaniak, with music by Luke Wygodny.

Through June 28 Mark Taper Forum, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown L.A.
centertheatregroup.org





Studio installation view from “A Palace in Time” at the Skirball beginning May 20. (Courtesy of Robert Russell and Lisa Edelstein.)

Skirball Spring Exhibitions

The Skirball Cultural Center launches three new exhibitions next week: “Inventing America: The Comic Book Revolution”; “Outsiders, Outcasts, Rebels + Weirdos: Punk Culture 1976–1986”; and “Robert Russell and Lisa Edelstein: A Palace in Time.” *All three open May 20, Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles. skirball.org*

THURSDAY

Ain’t Misbehavin’

Grammy Award-winning artist Ledisi headlines this Ebony Repertory Theatre production, in association with Fig Street Films, of the Tony Award-winning revue, a tribute to the music of Fats Waller. Directed by Wren T. Brown, with choreography by Dominique Kelley and music direction by William Foster McDaniel. Chester Gregory, Connie Jackson, Marty Austin Lamar and Natalie Wachen co-star.

May 21 through June 8. Nate Holden Performing Arts Center, 4718 W. Washington Blvd. L.A. [ebony rep.org](https://ebonyrep.org).

Arts anywhere

New and recent releases of arts-related media.



Shaina Taub, Jenna Bainbridge and the cast of “Suffs” during the 77th Annual Tony Awards in 2024. (Theo Wargo / Getty Images for Tony Awards Productions)

Suffs

When the national tour of Shaina Taub’s musical about the suffragette movement marched through the [Hollywood Pantages last fall](#), Times theater critic Charles McNulty wrote that it “is as informative as it is uplifting. It is above all a moving testament to the power of sisterhood. The struggle for equality continues to face crushing setbacks today, but Taub wants us to remember what can happen when people stand united for a just cause.”

Captured on Broadway in December 2024, “Suffs,” starring Taub, who also wrote the book, music and lyrics for the show, debuted on PBS’ “Great Performances” earlier this month and is streaming online until the end of July. pbs.org

— Kevin Crust

Culture news and the SoCal scene



Johnnie's Coffee Shop in Los Angeles May 8. (Ariana Drehsler / For The Times)

[Artist Gary Baseman staged his first hometown show in more than a decade](#) at the long-shuttered, but still iconic Johnnie's Coffee Shop along Miracle Mile on Wilshire Blvd. The Googie-style structure opened its doors for the exhibit, which featured a variety of Baseman's drawings on menus from L.A.-area restaurants.

The [critic Rex Reed died this week at the age of 87](#) and Times theater critic Charles McNulty wrote [an appreciation of the often acerbic provocateur](#). "He didn't mince words or allow nuance or second thoughts to stand in the way of a zingy phrase or a colorful wisecrack. Unbridled opinion was his stock-in-trade," McNulty wrote.

McNulty also weighed in with a review of a revival of [Eugène Ionesco's "Exit the King," directed by Michael Michetti at A Noise Within](#). Ionesco, a Romanian-born French playwright, is one of the pillars of the Theatre of the Absurd, McNulty writes, adding, "The existential philosophy of Camus and Sartre, self-evident truths for these absurdist writers, is conveyed less through the content than through the style of their plays. Language is no longer a means of communication but a mark of the unbridgeable distance

between human beings.”



People play a satirical video game installation titled “Operation Epic Furious Strait to Hell,” created by guerrilla art group Secret Handshake. (Heather Diehl / Getty Images)

You can order a Diet Coke, or bomb Iran in [a new video game about the Iran war called “Operation Epic Furious: Strait to Hell,”](#) which was installed near the National Mall in Washington, D.C. by the anonymous arts activist group Secret Handshake. For the past year and a half the group has secured permits to erect an ongoing series of satirical public sculptures — mostly about President Trump’s alleged ties to convicted sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein — on and around the National Mall. This is the group’s first foray into video games.

Times classical music critic Mark Swed devoted a recent column to the [genius of the American theater director, playwright and performer Robert Wilson](#), who died last year at the age of 83. “So far this year, there have been, or will be through the end of June, major Wilson opera and theater productions in Moscow; Paris; Ljubljana, Slovenia; Düsseldorf, Germany; Adelaide, Australia; Kaunas, Lithuania; Vienna; Rome; Tokyo; Luxembourg

City, Luxembourg; Berlin; Riga, Latvia; and Sophia, Bulgaria. That is to say, pretty much Wilson business as usual,” Swed writes, before examining two new performances of Wilson’s work in Brooklyn and Houston.





Artist Todd Gray stands in front of his work inside the Wilshire/La Cienega Metro Station on May 1 in Los Angeles. (Carlin Stiehl / For The Times)

Iris Kwok marked the opening of L.A. Metro's new D Line extension by profiling [four of the artists behind the public artwork in three new stations](#). Nine artists in total worked on site-specific installations: Mariana Castillo Deball, Eamon Ore-Giron, Ken Gonzales-Day, Todd Gray, Karl Haendel, Soo Kim, Fran Siegel, Susan Silton and Mark Dean Veca.

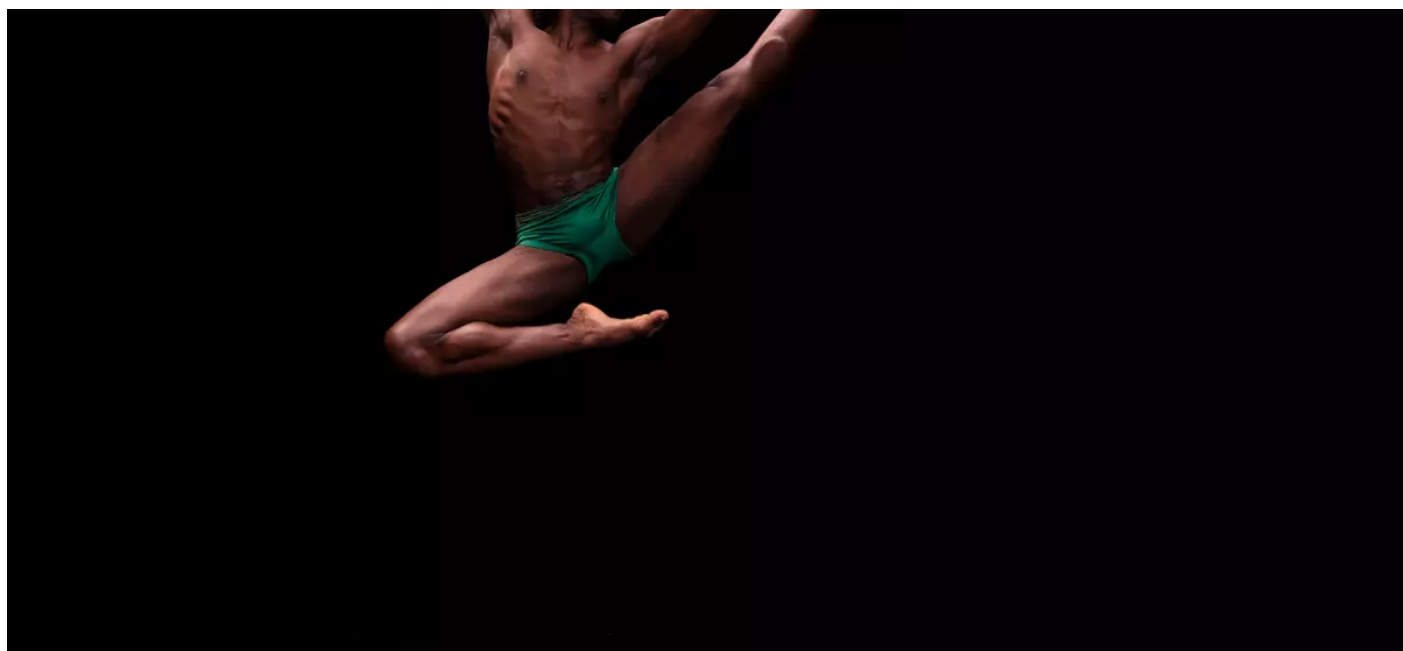
Julius Miller broke the news that a series of [seven digital billboards promoting peace will go up across the city as part of the Broad Museum's upcoming exhibit, "Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind,"](#) which opens May 23. The billboards arrive nearly 57 years after Ono and John Lennon "erected a billboard near the Chateau Marmont emblazoned with the words, "WAR IS OVER! If You Want It."

Culver City's [Wende Museum of the Cold War announced it will build a \\$16-million expansion in Hawthorne](#). It plans to transform a newly purchased Midcentury Modern building into a research institute and interactive storage facility for its collections — "a 'living archive,' as it's calling the facility," writes Deborah Vankin. The opening is currently set for 2028.

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Alvin Ailey's American Dance Theatre's Chalvar Monte leaps for the stars. The troupe will perform as part of the Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at the Music Center. (Dario Calmese / Courtesy La Jolla Music Society)

[The Music Center](#) announced its lineup this week for the 2026–27 season of [Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at the Music Center](#). Highlights include the Joffrey Ballet's West Coast premiere of "The Sleeping Beauty," Compañía Nacional de Danza's North American premiere of "Don Quixote," and the Los Angeles premiere of a Jerome Robbins ballet festival curated by Tiler Peck. Alvin Ailey Dance Theater is also part of the lineup, and choreographer Sonya Tayeh will unveil an L.A. premiere set to the music of Sinéad O'Connor.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic has announced the [2026 summer season at the Ford](#). The open-air venue across from the Hollywood Bowl is now in its seventh season under LA Phil leadership, and shows are set to run through Oct. 31. Grab your picnic basket and select a date from a wide variety of shows including dance, music and film. Stand-out acts include Bilal and DJ Rashida, Matteo Bocelli, Jacob Collier, Judy Collins and Bruce Cockburn, Ani DiFranco and Valerie June, Helado Negro and Reyna Tropical, Joe Hisaishi, Iron & Wine, the L.A. Phil, and Punch Brothers.

[The Institute of Latino Art has opened in Pomona](#), with a grand opening reception scheduled for June 13. Occupying the former Latino Art Museum space, the new gallery was founded by artist Oscar Magallanes. A news release notes, "ILA represents a new artist-led institution in the Inland Empire, working to connect regional communities with

contemporary Latin American and Chicano art. The inaugural exhibition, ‘Reclamation: Art in Contested Spaces,’ features NSRGNTS, Lapiztola, and Rubén Ortiz-Torres.”

— Jessica Gelt

And last but not least

[Times columnist Mary McNamara went to Yorkshire](#) and wrote that it was the bucket-list literary trip of her dreams. Mine too!



Jessica Gelt

Jessica Gelt is the arts editor for the Los Angeles Times.