Joe Hoyt, “Hanford, CA,” 2013, pencil on board, photo collage, is currently on view at Aran Cravey.

been transported from another time and place (Rose Gallery, Santa Monica).

Jody Zellen

Joe Hoyt is a young artist who recently relocated to Los Angeles and immediately began to show his work in group exhibitions around town. His first Los Angeles solo show suggests that he is an artist to watch. The works on view are about Los Angeles and dislocation. Each carefully composed piece illustrates fragments of architecture isolated against a blank ground. Most are sparsely constructed so as to emphasize the relationships between the empty space and the black and white depiction. Deploying a Pointillist style, Hoyt uses black ink and illustrates windows, construction machinery and aspects of the local landscape. Each work asks us to fill in the missing pieces implicit to the expansiveness of Los Angeles, and we are only too willing to comply (Aran Cravey Gallery, Venice).

JZ

Joram Roukes is a Dutch artist whose paintings look like photo collages of melancholy fantasies. They produce intense unease due to his curious and aggressive mix of animals, graffiti, catchphrases, American football players and dissected anatomy. The selection of works here comment on American pop culture, particularly given the over saturation of masculine imagery that floats insistently around in the middle of the canvas, much like they might float around randomly inside the artist’s mind.

Paired with Eduardo “Bayo” Flores from Mexico — a more surrealistic figure painter with obvious street art aspirations — the show as a whole strikes a formal balance in terms of color palette, concept and technical style. Bayo’s canvases are much smaller than Roukes’ are, but his evocative narratives and portraits of gnome-like monsters feel mystical and romantic in a way that Roukes’ cold and clean works lack. Bayo’s use of line and proportion are adventurous and unpredictable. It all has the feel of a personal debate between ego vs. altruism that we are being let in on (C.A.V.E., Venice).

Evan Senn

When I moved to Los Angeles in the late 1970s, I was informed that all the artists who mattered had studios located west of Sepulveda. (I rented a house on the Venice canals to be near the action.) In the following decades, the center of artistic activity moved to Chinatown and then to Culver City. But if “Freeway Studies #1: This Side of the 405” is any indication, many artists remained on the Westside and continue to make significant work there. More than 30 artists represent the area and, like any group show that aims to be inclusive, it is uneven. For this writer, the stand-outs were: Pontus Willfors’ installation of tree forms cut from solid planks of ash that are suspended in the large skylight; Joe Goode’s large photographic triptych “Three Easy Pieces,” with elegant translucent paint shimmering over select areas; Steve Galloway’s “Cave of Three Bats (and
permeates no deeper than surface level, other than to ask oneself with mock-seriousness, “Is nothing sacred??” Meanwhile, the highlights of the show turn out to be Murakami’s bling-iest sculptures, which place him more squarely beside Hirst after all. “Flame of Desire” is a 15 ½-foot high totem of undulating flames made of real gold (you can tell from the glow), anchored at its center by a skull sporting numerous smaller skulls in its eyes. “Fate” expands upon the skulls-within-skulls formula in a smaller wall-mounted piece that’s been coated in platinum leaf. Oddly, through the forthrightness of their over-the-top materialism, these works proclaim their relevance in the challenging format of traditional sculpture, nearly relegating their painting counterpoints to be so much background noise (Blum & Poe, Culver City).

Michael Shaw

“Orange Grid” is a site-specific work by conceptual artist Channa Horwitz. In the cave-like space of the gallery Horwitz paints the walls and floors into a grid of orange lines. Using a three dimensional space as her canvas allows the artist to deepen the levels of abstraction and illusion. Within the space are black objects of varying widths and heights, all sized to fit within the grid. We are permitted to reposition these objects, changing the

Betty Ann Brown

With all of the Instagram-bound smartphone photographs being taken at his opening and likely throughout the show, Takashi Murakami continues to be the embodiment of the crossover artist. While his own factory-like apparatus is in some ways comparable to those of Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst, his oeuvre is in many ways (embrace of fashion, self-iconhood, etc.) far more closely aligned with Warhol, particularly in his series of self-portrait paintings and a sculpture, featuring the artist in his signature round glasses. The show, titled “Arhat,” refers to a fully enlightened Buddhist, and includes both immense and more modestly scaled paintings with what amount to a plethora of Arhat caricatures, ranging from the clichéd older men in robes to outright monsters that are part traditional mythic demon and part “Where the Wild Things Are.” Seen in the context of his classic flower paintings — the latest versions included here are also packed with equally cartoonish skulls — it’s difficult to invest oneself in the Death & Rebirth theme that

Takashi Murakami, “Fate,” 2013, platinum leaf on carbon fiber, 51 7/8 x 32 3/4 x 33”, is currently on view at Blum & Poe.