

## **This is a review about Eve Wood's show on the website "Los Angeles, I'm Yours"**

**Los Angeles, I'm Yours** is a Los Angeles focused art, design, lifestyle, and culture website that seeks to showcase the people and the artistic passion that make the city what it is: a city of artists. Featuring everything from a look at a gallery opening to a restaurant review to mapping a local trend, we will provide a point of view of the city from the creatives that inhabit it. The site is also proud to feature interviews with local artists and tastemakers, showcasing their work and workspaces with their insight on artistic process, career, and relationship with the city. We hope to be the city's biggest champions, to give a voice to the people, places, and things that make Los Angeles the most progressive metropolis in the United States.

**Los Angeles, I'm Yours** is a love letter to the city, from the city. We hope you enjoy it.

Bobby Solomon, Founder

Kyle Fitzpatrick, Editor-In-Chief

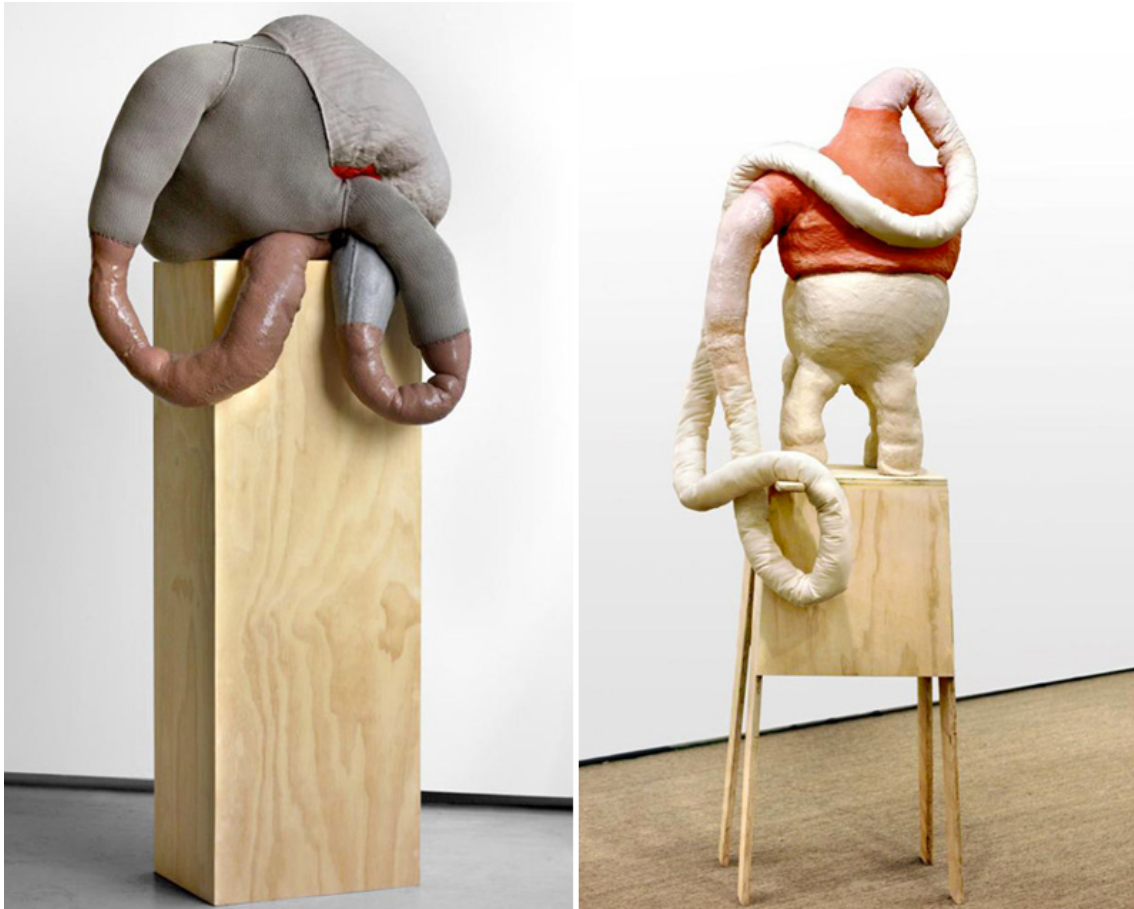
## **Your Mouth, Undone At Garboushian Gallery**



Two person shows scare me a little. Seeing dual bodies of work in a gallery is like going to a car dealership and spying a different make and model on the lot and thinking "Huh? Now which make is better?" Fortunately, upon entering Michelle Carla Handel's and Eve Wood's joint show [Your Mouth, Undone at Garboushian Gallery in Beverly Hills](#), I sighed in relief not only for the artists but for

the dealer as well.

At times the paired artists' works effortlessly corroborated in some riddle game that you must decipher in order to pass go. Elsewhere they had no visible connection other than being in the same room—like when two strangers in a bar size each other up but never engage. There are no cat and mouse, competitive games between Handel's and Wood's form and figure arrangements. In this gallery setting, it works to the benefit of the artists. Their works come across even more iconoclastic and disparately unique. Trophies in hand, Wood and Handel come out on top together, their creative offspring sharing the space equally—not having to fend for their own in a solo spotlight.



*Michelle Carla Handel's Love Me Anyway and You Left Me This Way*

After spending more time in the multiple gallery spaces you soon feel literally surrounded by the works. Relationships between the paintings and sculptures *do* begin to establish themselves. Glancing at one of Wood's figures, like in the multi-racial panel *Three Blue Shirts*, and then bouncing over to one of Handel's tactile volumes like *I Might Be Tired of this Arrangement*, your sight modulates from points of focus on the isolated figures to the macro and heightened abstraction of the up close and highly personal bodies in three dimensions. My mind gradually catches up to what I am seeing and thoughts bubble up to form scenarios. What I really want to know is what would it look like if Wood's people started *using* Handel's sculptures—especially her double ended *Happiness Takes*

*Up Such a Small Amount of Space.* That suspension of fantasy keeps me hovering. I look back over my shoulder, utterly enthralled with the idea. Transported to a pre-pubescent world where I need not think about sex, money, and finding a job—I just think, “Wow, it would be so fun to handle that soft and slippery shape and hold it up to that picture for a few hours.” Affordable, escape hatches are increasingly difficult to find these days when confronted with dead-heading reality. So call me a cheap escapist.



*Michelle Carla Handel's Drop Curl*

Even as some of Handel's sculptures are sexually implicit, they also point toward an honest desire to understand, tease and exhibit our bodies' power, grossness and difference that is removed from gender wars and political bartering. But, Handel does want the viewer to respond to her works not just accept and admire them. The work titled *Tell Me Something Carnal and Heartfelt* is a call for action but who or what is making the demand? Is the artist or the sculpture? It doesn't matter really but it does bring up another interesting question I ask myself when I confront art; “Am I beheld by the art or am I beholding it? In Handel's call we are being asked to participate *and* to ponder the matter simultaneously. Therefore, the work has a certain power over the viewer that we either acknowledge or ignore.

I'm all for acknowledgement. Thus, while beholding *Tell Me Something Carnal and Heartfelt*, I surrender. I envision myself using the paper white drapery to blot my eyes and nose after telling the artist, or a therapist some heartfelt unrequited love chapter or to wipe my butt or penis after a carnal orgasm while sitting on the perfectly indented, pink and brown pad in a clinical or domestic setting. Deception rules though because the slick material is not absorbent and my fantasy flies out the gallery window. Although I cannot begin to suggest that Handel's sculptures possess intrinsic therapeutic values, I do feel a need to emote desires or supposed wrongs pitted against me when I stand in front of Handel's seductive works. In this age of confessionalism and narcissism found in our mingled online profiles, I would rather reveal my inner most secrets to one of Handel's sculptures than to the addictive, identity violating interwebs. Not that the sculptures resemble altars or confessionals—I just feel like I could talk to them like a grown version

of a stuffed animal. They would probably listen better than most people, too. Handel packs so much handled and potential energy into her works that they seem to vibrate and chatter with giddy excitement or sit contentedly in repose waiting for us to carefully interact. The cushiony forms and blunt protuberances could both comfort and perform surgery on us and we'd be better for it.

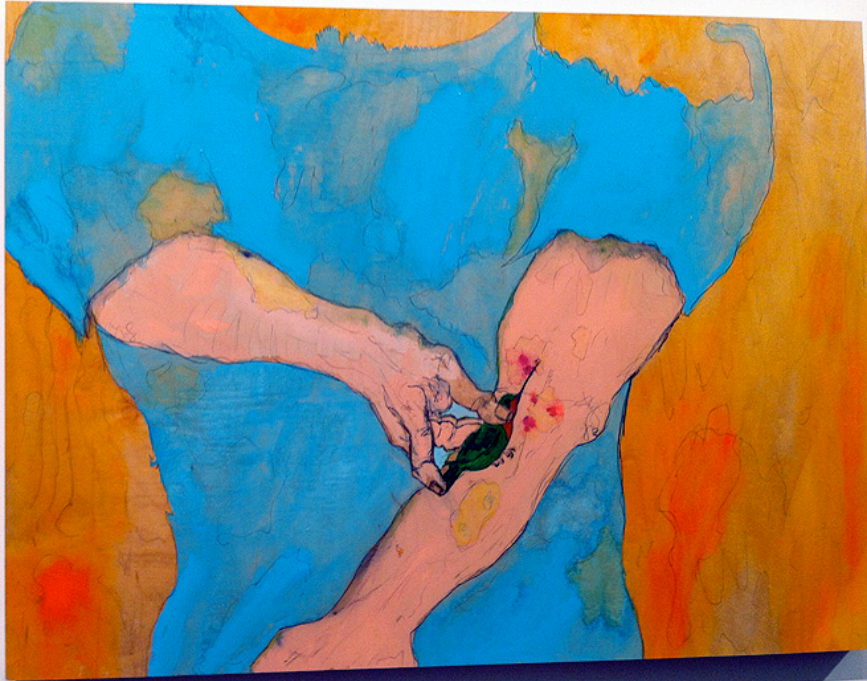


*Eve Wood's Sam and Sophia*

There is a sense of danger and excessive sadness that I cannot shake after seeing Eve Wood's paintings. Since I had never approached the artist's paintings in person, I felt I could achieve some objective supremacy—a goal that is virtually impossible when viewing art. Almost immediately, we start associating one artist's works for another's; attempting to justify the present with the past or emerging with established. I won't go there. In almost every painting on wood panel, there is a conflict or action going on between man and birds, manmade and animals and vice versa. As I peered into the glassy eyes and violently open mouths I did not want to slip into metaphor land and anthropomorphic symbologies. It was especially hard to resist, however, when looking at *Sam and Sophia*. A human (Sam?) and an enormous bird (Sophia?) are fighting over or exchanging some tenuous strip of flesh-like band. Formally, Wood is exceptionally adept at composing her representations to bring the viewer closer into the disquieting, perspectival scenes.

I don't know what it is lately but I want to morph into a painting or become a sculpture. (Escapist!) When I saw *User* I wanted to be in the painting in order to know what it would feel like to press a bird beak onto my inner arm vein. Not in a druggy way but more of a "This could hurt," and "What would the bird want out of this? I am sure nothing." Maybe I am seeing good work and that's what good work does to me—makes me ask questions. Now, I must ask Ms. Wood, "What is that baby painting *about*?" The existential title *Every Beginning is an End* is the crux of our human condition but, I wonder if is necessary to be included here. Perhaps it is a shout

out to Van Gogh's hideous *Mama Roulin*? Oops, I associated. I am more attracted to the striking likenesses of the youthful and elderly figures than the floating baby. But, doubling back I realize that the painting's essential purpose may be to expose a lineage of human psychology in relation to the other panels in the show. Perhaps as in a fable we are visually learning the lesson that baby *Beginning* has yet to acknowledge it's own nature through consciousness while the other neighboring humans on the walls have already become good and evil through culture whether they know it or even care. This exposure may also tie into the repetitive appearances of animals in Wood's *mise en scenes*. Most educated artists read Nietzsche's *On the Advantage & Disadvantage of History for Life* where the author applauds the animal kingdom for having no sense of history (duh) and that artists should invent their own or borrow selectively from History to create some original, dramaturgical mash up. Wood does this to mesmerizing effect. The artist forces animals and humans in the same ring and we concomitantly revel in the ennui and violence that ensues. You could bet on the humans or the animals but the score is not settled on the spare but lush surfaces—only in your winning imagination.



*Eve Wood's User*

The titles for both artists' works function as defining humorous licks, apocryphal glyphs or stand offish, non-determinate identifiers. Don't get me wrong, titles are like keys to the grail of knowing the artists' *intentions*. That is if you desire that oft-vacant bounty. Sometimes language gets in the way of the visual and becomes obtusely didactic. But, for these young artists, their word revelations are vital. And I *do* want to know their exuberant intentions. But, I think I got it figured out. Go see *Your Mouth, Undone* before it closes and let Wood's and Handel's provocative worlds get under your skin too.

*Garboushian Gallery is located at 427 North Camden Drive in Beverly Hills. The show closes September 6<sup>th</sup>.*

*Some photos via. At top: Michelle Carla Handel's Conundrum and Eve Wood's Avian Configuration I*