

# WILDING CRAN GALLERY



## *Water & Flower*

Curated by Michael Slenske

June 29 - July 27, 2024

Alex Becerra, Billy Al Bengston, Theodore Boyer, Virginia Broersma, Lily Clark, AJ Collins, Chris Cran, Gerald Davis, Francesca Gabbiani, Edward Givis, Robert Gunderman, Olivia Hill, Salomon Huerta, Jasmine Little, Matthew Nichols, Jackie Rines, Ben Sakoguchi, Moral Turgeman, Liz Walsh and Sterling Wells

*Either you bring the water to L.A. or you bring L.A. to the water.*

Noah Cross, Chinatown

Summertime in Los Angeles invites us to explore that perpetual dialogue between the mundane and the majestic, the essential utilities. Or, as Angelenos know them: Water & Power. Summer is the season we are most reliant on the utility companies and the time when they are most prone to failure, sometimes leading to man-made/natural disasters. Drawing inspiration from active water systems, land art, the tradition of Southern California pool painting, and the Dutch Golden Age, where artists like Jan van Huysum and Rachel Ruysch transformed floral still lifes into allegorical tapestries of life's

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fleeting nature, the passage of time, sensuality, the afterlife, and the dance of light and shadow, *Water & Flower* at Wilding Cran Gallery revisits these themes through a modern prism.

Curated by Michael Slenske, *Water & Flower* underscores the transient beauty of our constructed environments amidst an era of decline. Through narrative watercolors, the reckless allure of floral constructions and deteriorating waterways are unveiled, portraying them as spaces of folly and failure. Oil paintings and ceramics envision fantastical flora and fauna emerging from utopian, dystopian, and Pop landscapes. The exhibition also captures the essence of SoCal pool culture, reflecting on how these repositories of leisure and introspection simultaneously embody desolation and decadence in a period of drought and fire.

The exhibition also features totemic and kinetic sculptures with open and closed water and sound systems that serve as mediums to contemplate alternative realities for these vital resources. As Mike Davis astutely observed, "The best place to view Los Angeles of the next millennium is from the ruins of its alternative future." Between the spaces of those future ruins, *Water & Flower* is a vantage point to re-examine our life-sustaining utilities, contemplating LA's abundant yet scarce resources so intricately linked with the overburdened systems that support us. In doing so, it beckons us to look at the delicate balance between human ingenuity and the natural world, the sacred and the sublime, urging us to find harmony in the chaos of our post-modern existence.

\* Image: Virginia Broersma, *Turn On, Tune In, and Drop Out*, 2023, oil and acrylic on canvas, 84 x 66 in.