

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Luna Luna

Elisa Leonelli · Saturday, February 3rd, 2024



Carousel by Keith Haring

Luna Luna: Forgotten Fantasy, housed inside two large warehouses in Downtown Los Angeles since December 15, is an experience you don't want to miss. Conceived and executed by Austrian artist **André Heller** as the first art amusement park, it was briefly enjoyed by the public in Hamburg, Germany in the summer of 1987.



Tarp by Keith Haring

It was meant to travel around the world, including an 18-month installation at San Diego's Balboa Park, when litigation caused it to be packed away in storage containers where it remained unseen for 35 years. It has now been amazingly restored and preserved in museum form. You cannot ride the attractions, but you may admire their imaginative and colorful art accompanied by music.



Tarp by Keith Haring

Heller convinced major artists like Roy Lichtenstein, David Hockney, Salvador Dalí, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Harding and many others to create artwork, for which they were only paid \$10,000, by inviting them to take a trip back to their own childhood.

This is what I did and I encourage you to do as well asap, while it lasts.



Tarp by Keith Haring

Click on artists' names below for more info.



Carousel by Keith Haring

[Keith Haring](#), whose artwork was presented at The Broad last year ([watch here](#) the documentary by Rick Meghiddo), built a carousel with tridimensional versions of his trademark figures. He also painted several large tarps that were displayed around the park.



Carousel by Arik Brauer

Arik Brauer envisioned a fantastical carousel with fairytale characters such as a Pferdehand (horse hand).



Swing ride by Kenny Scharf

[Kenny Scharf](#) built a painted chair swing ride, with five comic statues on top that are displayed on the floor because the ceiling was not high enough, and six free-standing sculptures.



Ferris wheel by Jean-Michel Basquiat

Jean-Michel Basquiat designed a white Ferris wheel with figures like a baboon's ass painted on it.



Pavillion by Roy Lichtenstein

Roy Lichtenstein painted the exterior panels of a structure housing a glass labyrinth.



Enchanted Tree by David Hockney

David Hockney built a cylindrical forest pavilion painted with geometric trees that change color with the music of Viennese waltzes by Johann and Josef Strauss.



Palace of the Winds by Manfred Deix

Cartoonist [Manfred Deix](#) designed the Palace of the Winds façade. Inside, performers farted into microphones accompanied by classical music.



Archway by Sonia Delaunay

[Sonia Delaunay](#), who died in 1979, left designs for the entrance archway to Luna Luna, that were executed by her artisans.



Dream Station by André Heller

[André Heller](#) created Dream Station, an inflatable spiky balloon sculpture that served as a café, and is now installed outside Luna Luna.



Face-in-hole by Hubert Aratym

While you wait to be let inside, you may have your picture taken with your face in the hole of cutouts designed by [Hubert Aratym](#).



Statues on Swing ride by Kenny Scharf

Don't miss watching the documentary to see how children and adults enjoyed the rides and the live performers in 1987, see artists like Haring and Hockney talk about their pieces, laugh at the hilarious repetitive movements of animatronic mannequins by [Jim Whiting](#).



Sculptures by Kenny Scharf

One of the few attractions you are able to enter, if you are willing to pay extra for a Moon Pass, is the mirrored Dalídom by [Salvador Dalí](#). As a journalist I was also allowed in.



Elisa Leonelli in Dalídom

During my visit to Luna Luna I was reminded of my own childhood, when the traveling Luna Park, that we called baracconi, came to my home town of Modena for a few weeks every year in April. The most exciting ride was the [calcinculo](#) (kick in the ass), where you were pushing the swing chair of your friend sitting in front of you to make them fly higher.

Text and photos by Elisa Leonelli

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