Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Olympic Murals at Hammer

Elisa Leonelli · Sunday, October 5th, 2025

The Hammer Museum recreated the Olympic mural triptych “Eye on ’84” by Alonzo Davis on the walls of its entrance stairway in the context of the “Made in L.A. 2025? exhibit featuring 28 artists.

Eye on ’84 by Alonzo Davis at Hammer

As a photo-journalist, I had documented the actual painting of these murals, which started in December 1983, in preparation for the Los Angeles Olympics of summer 1984, that I covered extensively. In July 2018 I wrote my memories of that amazing experience for Cultural Weekly. In 2009 I edited my Olympic coverage and donated over 1,000 slides to the LA84 Foundation. In 2016 I had a best selection scanned by a lab, in 2018 I scanned myself several more images, before delivering the originals to my archival collection at Claremont Colleges.

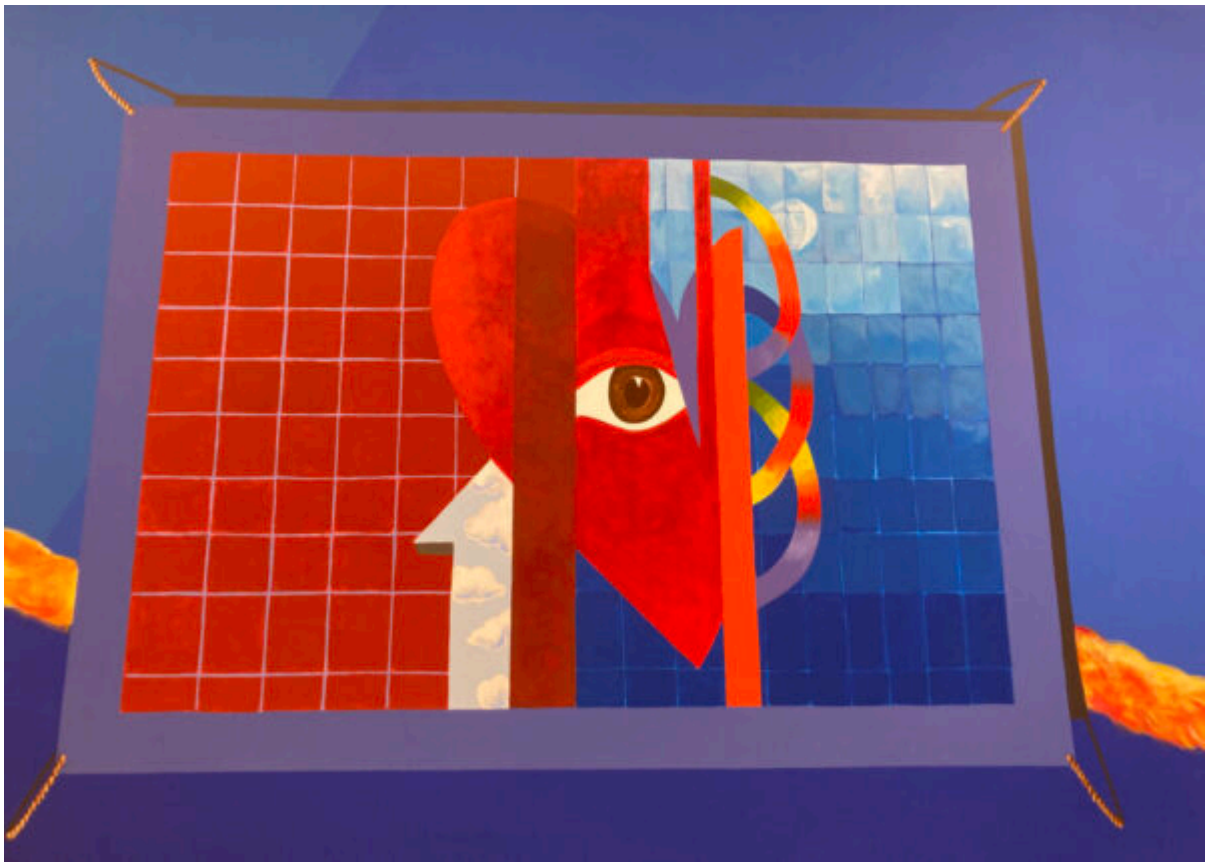
painting of Eye on ’84 at Hammer

High resolution scans of my Kodachrome slides, that I had made available to Juan Silverio of the “Made in LA.” curatorial team, were printed as guidelines for the young muralists hired by exhibition designer Adam Peña to execute this exciting project.

painting of Reflections on LA

Davis had assigned different names to the three murals, the one on the left was titled “Eye on ’84,” the middle one was “Reflections on LA,” on the right was “Eye of Consciousness.”

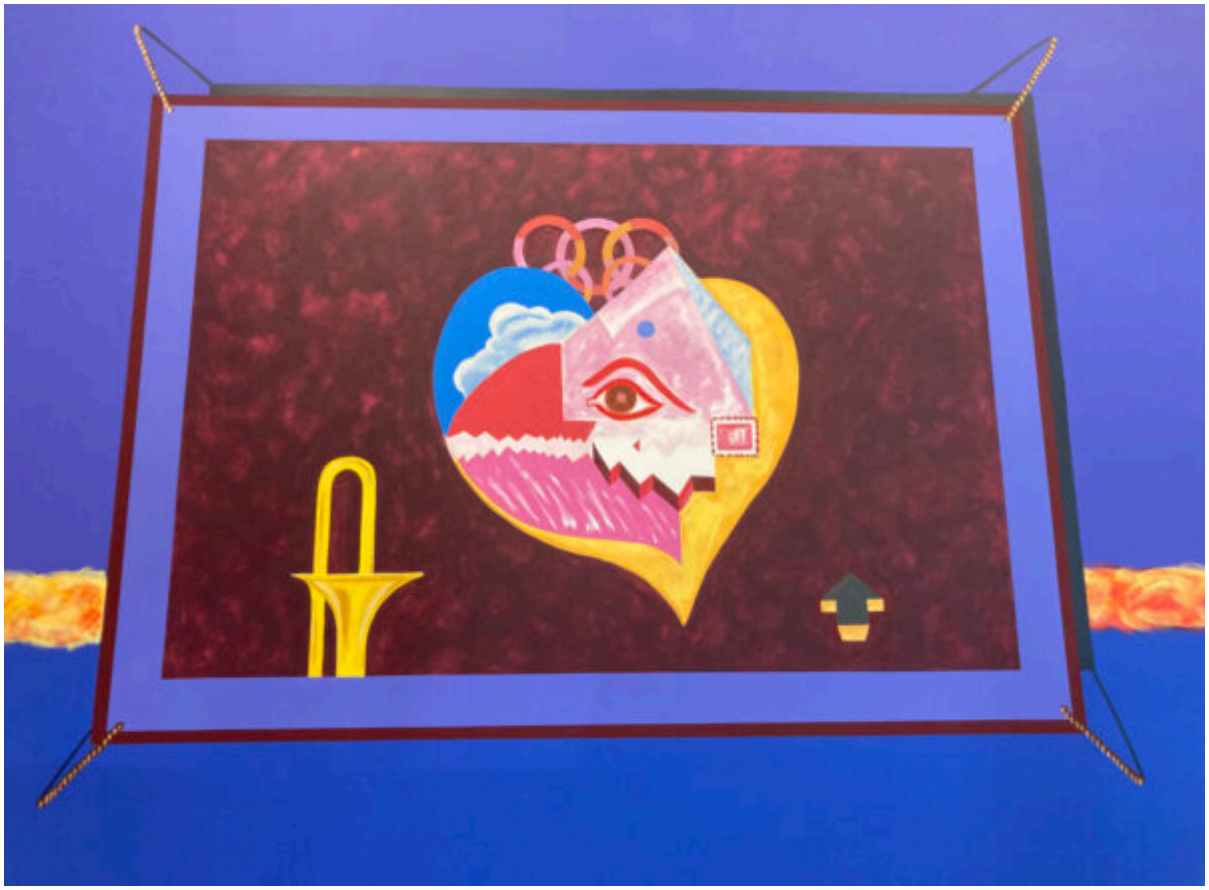
Reflections on LA



Eye on ‘84

For “Eye of Consciousness” see below my photos of the painting in progress, the final result, and the reproduction of a preview canvas.

painting of Eye of Consciousness



Eye of Consciousness

Eye of Consciousness preview

Most of the original murals are no longer visible on the 110 and 101 Freeways, and sadly Alonzo Davis passed away on January 27 of this year, so he won’t be able to rejoice about the recreation of his work in vibrant colors, but new generations of admirers will now get to see it.

Eye on ’84 by Alonzo Davis (c) Elisa Leonelli 1984

On February 1, 2025 I wrote an article to remember my friend, “Alonzo Davis-Rip.” He was the founder of the Brockman Gallery (1967-1989) with his younger brother Dale. On February 17, 2015 I attended a live talk with the two brothers organized by the Hammer.

Robert Fitzpatrick © Elisa Leonelli 1984

In the fall of 2024 I paid tribute after his passing to Robert Fitzpatrick, director of the Olympic Arts Festival, who approved Alonzo Davis proposal to select ten artists to paint murals along the

freeway walls in Downtown LA. The project was called “Art in the Fast Lane.”

Alonzo Davis © Elisa Leonelli

When I interviewed Davis in 1984 he said that he selected artists who had a history of involvement in their communities and a commitment to public street art, with a level of technical and esthetic excellence.

Alonzo Davis © Elisa Leonelli 1984

Jennifer Buonocore-Nedrelow, who wrote the chapter about Alonzo Davis in the “Made in L.A.” catalogue, mentioned his 1980 mural “Homage to John Outerbridge,” at the Watts Towers that was restored in the fall of 2021. Alonzo (who in 2002 had moved to Maryland, where he continued to create art, see his website) wrote to me then that he might travel to L.A. when the Arts Center would reopen to the public after the COVID closure. But he did not come. The last time I saw my friend in person was in July 2018. His last email communication was in September 2024, announcing the opening of the latest exhibition of his work, “Errantry.”

Alonzo Davis © Elisa Leonelli 1984

Up the Hammer stairs, inside a large light box with scans of my slides enlarged to 5×7 transparencies, visitors can see the other murals painted by the artists chosen by Davis. My favorites are “Cityscape” by Terry Schoonoven and “Going to the Olympics” by Frank Romero.

Cityscape by Terry Schoonoven © Elisa Leonelli 1984

Going to the Olympics by Frank Romero (c) Elisa Leonelli 1984

In 1984 I wasn't able to photograph "Hitting the Wall" by Judy Baca, because it was hidden inside an underpass. This mural was restored in 2021. In November 2021 I wrote about the Judy Baca retrospective at MOLAA, in January 2023 about the "World Wall" series of murals at the Geffen, in October 2023 about the LACMA exhibit where Baca and her team painted on huge canvases sections of her "Great Wall of Los Angeles." She mentioned to me that Alonzo Davis was her friend.

L.A. Freeway Kids by Glenna Boltuch (c) Elisa Leonelli 1984

Curator Essence Harden, who organized “Made in L.A. 2025” with Paulina Pobocha, told me that the mural “L.A. Freeway Kids” by Glenna Boltuch, which was restored by MCLA (Mural Conservancy) in 2012, is still there, barely visible under the graffiti.

Galileo, Jupiter, Apollo by John Wehrle (c) Elisa Leonelli 1984

“Galileo Jupiter Apollo” by John Wehrle, also on the 101 Fwy, was restored by MCLA in 2004, around the same time that “Eye on ’84” was restored, when I had delivered them some of my slides for that effort.

Alonzo Davis © Elisa Leonelli

Hammer Museum director Zoë Ryan said in her introductory remarks at the October 3 press preview: “This has been an incredibly challenging year for Angelenos, with the fires, the ICE raids and the subsequent protests. We’ve also seen such chilling rhetoric and federal actions targeting diversity and inclusion policies and even museums’ presentations of historical narratives. Museums are crucial components of a thriving society and they help communities build empathy for one another, gain visual literacy and critical thinking skills, develop an understanding of the world. So at the Hammer art and ideas for a more just world are at the core of our mission and that will continue to serve as our guiding principle for all exhibitions and programs.

There is work from 27 more artists to explore at “Made in L..A. 2025” on view from October 5, 2025 to March 1, 2026.

In December 2023, I had written an article about this biennial event “Made in L.A.” that highlights the work of Los Angeles based artists.

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