

SIGHTLINES



Kerry James Marshall: *The Lost Boys*, 1993, acrylic and collage on canvas, 100 by 120 inches.

A MOVEABLE FEAST

It's important for me to see a show more than once and sometimes in different spaces to understand the key choices that curators make. I saw the Kerry James Marshall survey, for instance, in Chicago at the MCA and three times at MOCA, Los Angeles. As a former Chicagoan, I'm thrilled to see the painter finally get his due. He's mastered portraiture in a way that's revealing, well humored, and always on point.

THE DEVILS YOU KNOW

Ken Russell's *The Devils*, based on Aldous Huxley's nonfiction novel *The Devils of Loudun*, is a horror movie in the same way that Jordan Peele's *Get Out* has been classified as a horror movie, even though both films function primarily as social commentary. Made in 1971, the full version of *The Devils* was never released because of its searing critique of religion and government. It's difficult to watch. It's damaging. But it deserves critical reevaluation and a proper theatrical release, especially considering the current state of affairs in the United States.

Poster for Ken Russell's *The Devils*, 1971.



MAN OF THE MOMENT

I felt lucky to see "Merce Cunningham: Common Time" at the Walker Art Center. I was especially drawn to the Charles Atlas installation *MC-9* (2012), nine channels of footage documenting Cunningham's career. There are clips of solo and group dances, as well as videos of Cunningham at various points in his life. It was wonderful to witness viewers enraptured and delighted by this wealth of material, which was expertly edited and stitched together by Atlas.



Rainer Werner Fassbinder: *World on a Wire*, 1973, film transferred to video, 2 hours, 32 minutes.

REALITY CHECK

Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *World on a Wire* is one of his many films first conceived as a television show. Set in the early '70s, it entails a conversation about the potential problematics of virtual reality. The film is a powerful cautionary story about how technology can affect our everyday interactions.

STAGES OF LAUGHTER

I want to tip my hat to the writers of television comedy. We turn to late-night TV as a way to decompress from the horrendous news we hear every day. "Saturday Night Live" and talk shows hosted by Stephen Colbert, Trevor Noah, Samantha Bee, and others have been doing a fine job of keeping things critical while highlighting the absurdity of our situation.



Jamillah James

The Los Angeles-based curator shares five recent insights with Ross Simonini.

Jamillah James is responsible for some of the most exciting exhibitions in Los Angeles in recent history. At the Hammer Museum, where she was an assistant curator from 2014 to 2016, James organized presentations of work by Simone Leigh and Njideka Akunyili Crosby, and at the nonprofit Art + Practice—in a partnership with the Hammer—she curated shows by Alex Da Corte and Charles Gaines. Now, James is curator of the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles—the reincarnation of the Santa Monica Museum of Art as a non-collecting institution—which opens this month in downtown LA. The ICA LA's inaugural program features works by Martin Ramirez, Abigail DeVille, and Sarah Cain. Appropriately for an LA curator, James cites film as a major point of departure for her projects. "I find myself thinking in cinematic terms," she says. "I conceive objects in a space as 'actors' in a narrative and exhibition design as mise-en-scène, with each show serving as a 'take' contributing to or challenging a larger history."