

## BEST OF L.A. ARTS

equally dematerialized, and involves durational performance, social media, community conversations and even feminist summer camp!” She’s been developing a sort of feminist theory of everything (Feminism 4D), which involves living her philosophy in everything she does, and “doing everything in a feminist way. So, I consider all parts of my life — teaching, family, social, art, online — to be part of my art.” This is true of the global phenomenon of the art-world Gallery Tally gender accounting project she established in 2013, art space the Situation Room that she opened in her converted garage, the hosting of feminist field camps and video art festivals, and even her Instagram account.

Speaking of, Hebron is fresh from an ongoing skirmish with artist Spencer Tunick and the National Coalition Against Censorship, who brazenly appropriated her original male-nipple pasty project and then got super weird about it. In the context of their stated fight against the policing of social media, Tunick and the NCAC basically just took her project off the web and used it as their own. Disappointingly, they’ve worked hard to shut her out after she demanded due credit.

“In 2014 in response to the removal of topless images of myself and friends attending an art exhibition and breast cancer fundraiser, I was warned that I’d violated community guidelines prohibiting the exposure of female nipples.” Genuinely shocked at the blatantly sexist double standard of targeting female nipples specifically, her reaction was the sarcastic and humorous gesture of taking their implications literally and masking her female nipples with digital pasties of male ones. “This act of literalizing was intended to point out how irrational they were, and hopefully get people — and social media enforcers — to think about how their policies might actually be harming the community, rather than protecting it,” Hebron explains. It was the start of a five-year and very much ongoing battle, waged not only on her own behalf but that of other female identifying artists.

In June of this year, artist Spencer Tunick and the National Coalition Against Censorship created a campaign called #wethenipple, using the male nipple pasty in a performative protest at Facebook HQ in New York. Both Tunick and NCAC admitted to not having researched or credited Hebron initially, feeling that if it was “all over the internet,” it was okay. “While I certainly do hope that everyone takes part — and has fun — in fighting against sexist double standards,” says Hebron, “I found it shocking that Tunick and NCAC would claim my art as their own.” It’s not lost on her that in a way they proved many of the points she’s been working on for years.

For further proof, look no further than the still relevant message of the original art posters at Gallerytally.tumblr.com. After tallying and visualizing the gender breakdowns of nearly 600 galleries through contributions of over 5,000 artists since 2013, the statistics embedded in these lively and frequently hilarious images, still reveal that male artists are represented twice as often as females, with an average ratio

of nearly 70 percent male artists in the galleries’ programs.

*Keep up with Hebron when she’s not in posting jail at Facebook at Micol Hebron Artist Page, and Instagram @Unicornkiller1. —SHANA NYS DAMBROT*

## RODRIGO VALENZUELA

Don’t let the imposing sculptural installations and nested layers of in camera spaces and ar-



Rodrigo Valenzuela  
Install views of General Song, 2018  
Klowden Mann, Culver City

ayed objects fool you, Rodrigo Valenzuela is a photographer. While he often generates large-scale, labor-intensive scenes and motifs in the studio — tableaux constructed of mixed media structures of paper, plaster, metal and paint — all of this is done in the ultimate service of photographs. Except when such as at his last show at Culver City’s Klowden Mann Gallery, when he drills a 15-foot plaster screw through the gallery wall and displays it in the powdery avalanche of its own crumble of destruction, which sometimes just needs to happen.

While his work includes images like landscapes, architectural elements, production processes, and construction apparatuses and are thus not abstract, their subject matter is fairly esoteric. A student of philosophy as well as art, Valenzuela sees all his activities as elements in a larger investigation about the nature of reality, the possibility of truth, and the search for meaning. Valenzuela spoke to the *Weekly* by phone from Tampa, where he was installing at the museum — just one of the roughly 40 exhibitions he’s had or been part of in the last two years, including a video-based exhibition at the New Museum in New York which had closed just the week before.

Two years ago is also when he moved to L.A., from Portland, after graduating from nearby Evergreen State where he studied philosophy and became a photographer almost by accident. “I really learned English from television,” says Valenzuela. “So I’m very cognizant of how pop culture is embedded in language, creating

an ideological apparatus that becomes part of you. At Evergreen we were allowed to be sort of free-range,” he says; so for example he could choose to use video and photography as responses to the texts and topics that interested him.

Subsequent work uses analog “set-building” to question the upside down way in which we signify truth and reality. As he layers objects and images, several realities are layered and

a counterfactualism is created that subverts confirmation bias about the truthiness of images. “We think photographs are true but they are fleeting, chosen moments. Building things is true. Why do we think that pictures are more real than objects?” he wants to know.

In his next shows at Portland’s Upfor and at Klowden Mann, he dismantles tropes of L.A. modernism through an architecture of civil disobedience. “I’m from Chile, where labor unions are strong and artists are considered middle class and working class,” he says, explaining why he’s attracted to construction materials like chalk and rebar. “I’m more likely to shop at Home Depot than an art supply store!” But he is ultimately a photographer, and although he doesn’t walk around with a camera, it comes naturally to him to use film to slow down and describe the world. “There are valuable life lessons there,” he says. “Thinking and making are parallel activities.” [rodrigovalenzuela.com/](http://rodrigovalenzuela.com/); [klowdenmann.com/artist/rodrigo-valenzuela](http://klowdenmann.com/artist/rodrigo-valenzuela). —SHANA NYS DAMBROT

## TERRY CREWS

In the entertainment industry, Terry Crews has been an anomaly. Maybe you know him from his 130 episodes of *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*. Or as an action hero from *The Expendables*. Or as a host on *America’s Got Talent*. There’s a lot of multi-hyphenates in showbiz, but it’s unusual for one man to have so many. Terry Crews has evolved into a veritable brand — one that might be more recognizable now

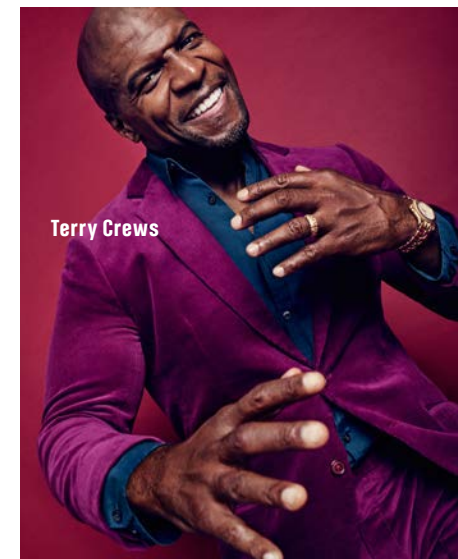
than Old Spice, the one that really put him on the map.

Long before Terry Crews became recognized as Terry Crews, he was a young artist honing his craft as an illustrator and painter. Hailing from a religious household, he wasn’t allowed to do much except hang out at home. No movies. No playing. Just solitude with nothing but his imagination. At some point, he learned to play the flute.

“I used to spend hours just on my own, drawing,” Crews explains to *L.A. Weekly*. “I would draw the movies that I wasn’t allowed to see. I learned to go into this creative space in my head. I’m left handed but right-brained, so art just took.”

He carried the craft into adulthood, where the only time he didn’t draw was in game season during his career as an NFL player (add it to the list of hyphens), because he was always nursing broken fingers. After he was cut from his team, he kept his family afloat by painting commissioned portraits of other players, which looked so realistic that people wouldn’t even compliment his craft — they thought they were looking at photos.

Since blowing up as an actor, Crews has only continued to invest in himself as an artist, upgrading the range and quality of his supplies and massively expanding his offerings as a creative. There’s his furniture line for Bernhardt Design. There’s the *Come Find Me* children’s book he illustrated (and



Terry Crews

turned into an AR experience). There’s the cover he illustrated for *Ad Age*. There’s the Bob Ross-style Christmas painting special he did for NBC. Currently, he’s working on his first graphic novel.

There are full-time artists who don’t accomplish half of what Terry does as a creative, and he attributes his success to the discipline and regimentation he learned from sports training and time in the gym. Without a doubt, Terry Crews is a modern day Renaissance man (Google it), but mostly, he’s just Terry Crews. [twitter.com/terrycrews](https://twitter.com/terrycrews). —DUSTIN CLENDENEN