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"THE BEST ART IN THE WORLD"

Cindy Craig and Leigh Salgado at Launch LA Gallery: Wickedly Funny Perspectives on Femininity and Female Stereotypes

By Lita Barrie, *Los Angeles, November 11, 2026*

Two concurrent solo exhibitions by Cindy Craig and Leigh Salgado at Launch LA use irreverent humor as a tactical tool for feminist art, demonstrating that the subversive potential of women's laughter is more effective than polemics. Craig explores the systemic absurdity of outdated gender roles and Salgado creates her own unique female language of girly lingerie to show that femininity is empowering. Paired together, these dual exhibitions are a new chapter in the conversation about feminist art—that is fun to behold

and sparks immediate joy, rather than solemn contemplation.



Leigh Salgado, Marguerite , 2026, Hand- cut paper with acrylic on wood, Hexagon, 6 x 6 7/8 inches

Salgado's *Small Eruptions* celebrates girliness as self-expression, pleasure and female power. Over four decades she has unabashedly explored imagery of lingerie to reclaim lacy panties and bras as signifiers of the power of femininity which are also beautiful objects in themselves that cannot be trivialized as merely frivolous. Salgado addresses the voyeuristic pleasure men derive from lingerie and dismantles the power of the male gaze by shifting the perspective towards a woman's unapologetic enjoyment of girly underwear. Salgado shows that female sexuality is empowerment rather than disempowerment by shifting the perspective from the male gaze to female tactile pleasure.

For Salgado, meaning resides in the making—in her choice of materials and methods.

Her labor-intensive artwork combines precision and obsession. Salgado's innovative work process evolved naturally when she pulled out a huge piece of paper for doodling—just to free herself—and after she attacked it with a utility knife she felt an enormous emotional release. She says her work is "fueled by rage." Salgado channels her rage in her laborious paper-cutting process by using a lethal utility knife—even though she has cut herself. Interestingly, she listens to baseball

while she is working because she likes the aspect of not knowing where her actions might lead her. Salgado has created a unique signature style from intricate hand-cut paper, painted with paint markers and tiny brushes. She also draws on the Mexican *papel picado* and Chinese *jianzi*.



Leigh Salgado, Wall Boxes

In this exhibition Salgado uses small wall boxes fronted with acrylic which recall Joseph Cornell and

Betye Saar's glass-fronted shadow boxes. But instead of displaying mementos and found objects, Salgado uses meticulously painted wall boxes that encase lingerie imagery and lace-like patterns as a metaphor for psychological confinement and eruption. She attaches organic sculptural forms to the top of these ornate boxes that erupt like a Jack-in-the-box—as a witty sexual metaphor for feminine energy that cannot be contained. The small boxes are hung in a row which emphasizes the continuous juxtaposition of female fragility and dormant female power.

Salgado also explores small hexagonal shapes. Unlike the large shaped canvases that were the dominant form of abstract painting in the 1960s (used by Frank Stella, Ellsworth Kelly, Kenneth Noland and Jasper Johns) and grew out of the desire to move into real space, Salgado is interested in what she can do within the small scale with evocative fragile patterns and floral motifs—that allow viewers' projections. This series of jewel-like canvases is also hung in a row for close viewing. The repetition creates a personal awareness of the artist's hands—unlike the impersonal facade of monolithic male paintings.

Both Craig and Salgado make innovative art that has a radical authenticity because they have the courage to pursue what comes naturally to them.

Launch LA Gallery: *Weeping Women / Small Eruptions*

170 S. La Brea Ave, Ste. 202

Los Angeles, CA 90036

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LITA BARRIE

Lita Barrie is a freelance art critic based in Los Angeles. Her writing appears in *Hyperallergic*, *Riot Material, Apricota Journal*, *Painter's Table, ArtnowLA, HuffPost*, *Painter's Table*, *Artweek.L.A*, *art ltd and Art Agenda*. In the 90s Barrie wrote for *Artspace*, *Art Issues*, *Artweek*, *Visions* and*Vernacular*. She was born in New Zealand where she wrote a weekly newspaper art column for the *New Zealand National Business Review* and contributed to *The Listener*, *Art New Zealand*, *AGMANZ*, *ANTIC*, *Sites and Landfall*. She also conducted live interviews with artists for Radio New Zealand's Access Radio. Barrie has written numerous essays for art gallery and museum catalogs including: Barbara Kruger (National Art Gallery New Zealand) and Roland Reiss (Cal State University Fullerton). Barrie taught aesthetic philosophy at Claremont Graduate University, Art Center and Otis School of Art and Design. In New Zealand, Barrie was awarded three Queen Elizabeth 11 Arts Council grants and a Harkness grant for art criticism. Her feminist interventions are discussed in T*he Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* and an archive of her writing is held in The New Zealand National Library, Te Puna Matauranga Aotearoa.