



Hey LA!

I'm culture writer **Carolina A. Miranda**, here to wish you a **Happy Pride Month** — and to remind you that the pride flag was [born in California](#) in 1978 at the hands of **Gilbert Baker, Lynn Segerblom, and James McNamara**.

In advance of the World Cup, I've got a dispatch from contributor **Paula Mejía** about art and *fútbol*. But I also wanted to give you a heads up on various events:

- A new artist-run gallery called **The Beach** is opening in downtown on Saturday, with a show of paintings by **Isabelle Adams**. Follow [their Instagram](#) for the details.

- **Feia** gallery now has a brand new physical space in **Highland Park**. It's by appointment only; find their information [here](#).
- You've got until June 6th to see **Danie Cansino's** gorgeous paintings at [Charlie James](#) in Chinatown.
- And, on June 7th, I'll be talking about **LACMA's design** with an esteemed panel organized by **Punch List Mag**, **LA Material**, and the **New York Review of Architecture**. [Come join us](#) for a group therapy session.

That, and much more below...

At top: Isabelle Adams's The Green Note Grill (2026) will be on view as part of the artist's solo show at The Beach, a new arts space in downtown. (Isabelle Adams)



THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

by Paula Mejía



A still from Lyndon J. Barrois, Sr.'s stop-motion Fútbollet (2018) shows US goalkeeper Hope Solo diving for the

ball in a decisive save against Australia in 2015. (Lyndon J. Barrois, Sr.)

Astroturf crinkles underneath my shoes as I wend my way around the pitch, the air crackling with anticipation. The lingering drone of vuvuzelas intermingles with the ambient chatter of spectators wedged into the stadium's stands. When both teams emerge onto the playing field, the crowd bellows. The showdown is about to begin.

I find myself not at a soccer game but rather at the **Los Angeles County Museum of Art**. The museum has transformed one of its gallery spaces into an immersive soccer field for artist-animator **Lyndon J. Barrois Sr.**'s exhibition, ***Fútbol is Life***, ensconcing viewers in the multisensory thrills of a live match. Ahead of the [2026 FIFA World Cup](#), which kicks off in mid-June in more than a dozen major cities throughout North America — including LA — Barrois crafted hundreds of tiny figurines out of gum wrappers that he shaped and painted to resemble legendary players like **Pelé**, **Kylian Mbappé**, and **Lionel Messi**.

Barrois has arranged these minuscule “sportraits” to immortalize some of the World Cup’s most recognizable moments in the near-century of its existence; these include heartbreaking defeats, hard-won victories, and charged political moments playing out before the world. Some players are frozen in time on teeny fields, which visitors can peer into via magnifiers scattered throughout the gallery. Other figurines move in balletic stop-motion animation, shot by Barrois in a series of short films.



Barrois, who hails from **New Orleans**, first began tinkering with gum wrappers as a child. While playing with Hot Wheels cars, he became frustrated that the toy vehicles didn't have drivers in them. So he experimented with various mediums — including old telephone wires, as well as desiccated gum dredged from underneath church pews — before realizing that he could manipulate his mother's **Wrigley gum wrappers** into tiny people. Barrois moved to LA in the '90s and worked in the animation and visual effects departments on **Hollywood films**, including *The Matrix Reloaded*, *The Tree of Life*, *Happy Feet*, *Night at the Museum*, and the live-action *Scooby-Doo*. Now he also helms his own production studio dedicated to the art of gum wrapper figurines, [It's a Wrapper](#).

The artist-animator is drawn to the arch drama of athletic competitions as subjects for his wrapper works. “I love sports and dance, I just love the movement,” he told *The New York Times* in [a 2024 interview](#). “To me, they're just pure forms of movement and emotion, you know, winning and losing — everything is wrapped up in that.” Fittingly, Barrois dubbed the pièce de résistance of his exhibit — a 2018 installation featuring dozens of men and women acting out defining moments of the game while twisting their bodies in these improvised dance routines — **Fútballet**.

Soccer, as a sport with global visibility, is a high-profile barometer of world culture. It also has a way of bringing tense geopolitical issues to the forefront. Barrois depicts jaw-dropping moves — like a teenage Pelé's stunning hat trick (three goals in a single game) that helped Brazil defeat France at the [1958 World Cup semifinal](#). But he also captures the mixed emotions of **Argentina's 1978 World Cup championship**, which came at a time when the country was in the throes of a military dictatorship that, by some estimates, [disappeared up to 30,000 people](#). Another sees activists from **Pussy Riot** [charging the field](#) during the **2018 World Cup Final in Moscow**, in a demonstration against the country's political suppression. Nearby, a separate piece shows **Germany's** national team donning kits that come together to read [“human rights”](#) in protest of **Qatar's** transgressions against women, LGBTQ+ people, and migrant construction workers as the emirate prepared to host the games in 2022.



Barrois depicts the moment the German team critiqued human rights in Qatar in advance of the 2022 World Cup. (Lyndon J. Barrois, Sr.)

The show doesn't eschew criticism of **FIFA** itself. The global soccer governing body has been repeatedly criticized for saddling its **World Cup host cities** with the staggering costs of infrastructure, transportation, and stadium improvements — while sticking fans with preposterously expensive tickets for matches and the public transportation to reach them — all as it reaps 100% of the tournament revenue for itself, as *The Atlantic* [reported last month](#). One of Barrois's installations shows demonstrators protesting the Brazilian government spending billions ahead of the 2014 World Cup amid soaring prices. (A similar fight has been playing out recently in **New Jersey**, where **New York City-based soccer fans** must pay [\\$105 roundtrip](#), versus the usual \$13, to commute to **MetLife Stadium**.)

Yet soccer is ultimately fertile terrain for delicate studies of kinetic motion; Barrois excels here, too. To put together a single piece, the artist rewatches specific games, taking note of athletes' injuries and how they move after recovering, so he can craft these feats of athleticism as accurately as possible. Peering into these little worlds Barrois forges by hand, one can practically hear the crowd rising to its feet as announcers cry: "Gooooooooooal!"



Fútbol is Life: Animated Sportraits By Lyndon J. Barrois, Sr. is on view at LACMA through July 26th; lacma.org.

[Paula Mejia](#) is a culture writer and editor based in LA. Her work has appeared in The New Yorker, Texas Monthly, The Atlantic, and GQ.



AROUND THE INTERNET

It's **Carolina** again. I'll take it from here...

- As a court demands that **Trump** [remove his name](#) from the **Kennedy Center**, the institution's future is [in doubt](#).
- An unsanctioned **Iraqi pavilion** by artist **Ali Eyal** [popped up in Venice](#) (California).
- **The Getty** [released its renovation renderings](#), and these include a revamped Welcome Hall by **WHY Architecture** (looks warm yet elegant) and a new glass canopy by **Gehry Partners** at the tram entrance (pompously *blergh*).
- The **Wende Museum** is at work on [a research center and storage facility](#) in Hawthorne.
- [A video piece](#) by **Diana Thater** will grace one of **LACMA**'s concrete pods after dark.
- Plus, [an influencer](#) thinks **LACMA** could use better wall labels. She's right!
- [The artist](#) making **anti-ICE parking signs**.
- **David** and **Paul Botello** have created iconic LA murals, now they're trying to preserve them from a [graffiti onslaught](#).
- **Catherine Wagley** on what we can learn from [the retiring generation of critics](#).
- **Hilde Lynn Helphenstein**, founder of LA's now-defunct [HILDE Gallery](#), known for maintaining the satirical social media account **Jerry Gogosian**, was [found dead in Sao Paulo](#).
- **Daniel Harding** has been [named director](#) of the LA Phil as **Elim Chan** [takes over](#) the **SF Symphony**.
- **Palantir** sells data management; it now also [sells fashion](#).
- California's last surviving **Bubble House** is [up for grabs](#).
- Signing off with [the wonderful photos](#) of **Jerry McMillan**, featuring a ripped

Ed Ruscha.

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