

REGEN PROJECTS

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SHE AND HYMN

ARTIST THEASTER GATES
DECONSTRUCTS "MY COUNTRY,
'TIS OF THEE" IN HOLLYWOOD

BY CATHERINE WAGLEY

This week, an artist remembers the time a rock star tried to kill him, and pregnant women present their work.

Let freedom ring

Two performers from the Black Monks of Mississippi are sitting at tables in front of a church altar in the only video in Theaster Gates' Regen Projects show, "But to Be a Poor Race." One has a keyboard in front of him, another a drum, cymbal and array of percussive instruments. They're in an intoxicating groove by the time artist Gates comes in, walks past them, nods, then goes up to the altar and starts to sing "My Country, 'Tis of Thee." His voice is a little raw and overly enthusiastic, which makes the song sound slightly comical. Then he's done. The musicians sit back, turn on a prerecording of their playing and Gates comes back, stands right between them and starts again. This time, his version of the patriotic anthem is especially melodramatic. He turns from side to side, inserts sultry-sounding "yeahs" and repeats words so he sounds like a virtuosic skipping record. The sound from this performance bleeds into the other galleries, where Gates has installed concise sculptures and paintings, including two wall-hanging assemblages of used fire hoses and gorgeously bound back issues of *Jet* magazine on customized black shelves. 6750 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood; through Feb. 25. (310) 276-5424, regenprojects.com.

Public with a baby bump

When comedian Ali Wong shot a Netflix special while pregnant, not mentioning her growing belly until the end, the pregnant part is what seemed to make the biggest splash. She "did what no pregnant woman had done before," wrote *Elle* (no other pregnant woman, apparently, has shot a special). In her book *The Argonauts*, Maggie Nelson talks about book touring while pregnant, and being asked by a "patrician white guy" about writing while pregnant; to point out "that wild oxymoron, the pregnant woman who thinks." At the Women's Center for Creative Work, five performers who are currently pregnant will present new work and then discuss it. Rachel Kauder Nalebuff, who wrote a play called *Bump*, co-curated the event, which includes work by Rebecca Aranda, Deana Barone, Cristina Fernandez, Kanya Iwana and Deborah Rosen. Childcare provided

with RSVP. 2425 Glover Place, Elysian Valley; Mon., Jan. 30, 7 p.m. womenscenterforcreativework.com.

Punk star roommate

Todd Gray, an artist who makes sculptural photographs and wears costumes, has circulated in many of Los Angeles' strange creative spheres. In the 1980s, he worked as Michael Jackson's personal photographer. During the recent Hammer Biennial, he performed in the clothes of his friend, Doors keyboardist Ray Manzarek. His performance this week, *Iggy Pop Tried to Kill Me*, is about the time Gray spent as Pop's roommate in Laurel Canyon in the 1970s. He'll be telling the story in the style of a West African griot. This could be effective, uncomfortable or both, given that Gray's performance happens in the context of Art Los Angeles Contemporary, an art fair where class and cultural-appropriation issues can be glaring. 3021 Airport Ave., Santa Monica; Fri., Jan. 27, 1:30 p.m. (323) 851-7530, artlosangelesfair.com.



Theaster Gates'
My Country, 'Tis of Thee (2016)

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND REGEN PROJECTS

Time makes no sense

"Will Have Been," Angus McCullough's exhibition at AA|LA, examines standardized time in a sprawling way that's haphazard and methodical at once. There are stopped clocks, drawings of train routes and videos of maps obscured beneath tinted glass. Water from overturned plastic bottles slowly drips onto rocks. In a darkened, makeshift room, a male voice explains on film the illogical nature of standardized time. Towns used to all have their own high noon, he says, so that the local experience of light changing and time passing would be in sync. Not so anymore. The show's strength is probably its chaos. It's high-tech and low-tech, well-researched, literary, and still looks a lot like a mad science project. 7313 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood; through Feb. 18. (323) 592-3795, aala-gallery.com.

Mad psychiatrist out of context

Chris Christion's film installation *Axis of Ego: When and Where I Enter* riffs on religious architecture, incorporating confessionals, among other things. Dr. Mabuse, a fictional hypnotist who manipulates others to commit crimes for him, appeared in a series of filmmaker Fritz Lang's movies in the 1920s and '30s. He appears in Christion's *Axis of Ego*, too, as do the voice of James Baldwin and samples from *A Soldier's Story*, the 1984 film about WWII soldiers trained in the Jim Crow South. The installation is part of Far Bazaar, the two-day alternative art fair held at Cerritos College. 11110 Alondra Blvd., Norwalk; Sat.-Sun., Jan. 28-29, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. cms.cerritos.edu/farbazaar.