

Stas Orlovski

## MEET AN ARTIST MONDAY: STAS ORLOVSKI

 SHANA NYS DAMBROT \* APRIL 27, 2020



Stas Orlovski explores the malleable intersections of drawing, printmaking, painting, animation, sculpture, projection-mapping and site-specific installation. His evocative works trade in the currencies of memory, art history, curious materialism and labor-intensive invention. By turns romantic, haunting, witty and emotional, Orlovski's drawings and flickering analog cinematic have a certain retro stylization that combines Eastern European and Asian sensibilities.

In vintage found objects and both abstract and poetic iconography, his lexicon favors metaphor-ready imagery like waterfalls, the moon and birds, silhouetted figures, mannequins, flags, flowers. His earthy, inky palette and especially the projection of hand-made stop-motion drawing-based animation onto sculptural and architectural elements create a dreamlike state of mindful fascination in which the viewer's own imagination plays an essential role.



*L.A. WEEKLY: When did you first know you were an artist?*

**STAS ORLOVSKI:** When I was a child my family fled the Soviet Union to Tel Aviv, then Paris and settled in Toronto. I have a memory from Paris making drawings with green pencil crayons on left-over brown paper baguette bags.

*What is your short answer to people who ask what your work is about?*

It's about conjuring images, objects and spaces where disparate histories can intermingle, blend and collide.

*What would you be doing if you weren't an artist?*

Professional tennis player.

*Did you go to art school? Why/Why not?*

Yes. I have a BFA from York University in Toronto, a B.Ed from the University of Toronto, and an MFA from the University of Southern California. Mainly, school provided time and space for me to work through ideas, build a community and develop relationships with artists who continue to play a vital role in my personal and professional life. When I was in school, tuition at Canadian universities was incredibly inexpensive and I was able to attend USC on a full scholarship. After 7 years of art school, I was fortunate to leave without any student debt. I don't envy the choices young artists have to make with regard to pursuing an art education today.



*Stas Orlovski, Waterfall,  
2016 Projected animation  
on bronze with wood shelf.  
2:34 Loop. Post-production  
by Beau Leduc*

*Why do you live and work in L.A., and not elsewhere?*

I moved to L.A. in 1994 to attend graduate school at USC. At the time, I had not given much thought to L.A., let alone visited the city. I arrived shortly after the riots, the earthquake and the recession. L.A. was evolving into a global powerhouse: galleries were opening up all over town, museums were being built, art schools were hiring, and rent was relatively cheap. As a young artist those factors made it difficult to imagine living and working anywhere else. L.A.'s capacity to continually reinvent itself is what's kept me here for the past 27 years.

*When was your first show?*

My first professional one-person L.A. show was in 1997 at Miller/Durazo Gallery in the Pico & Robertson area.

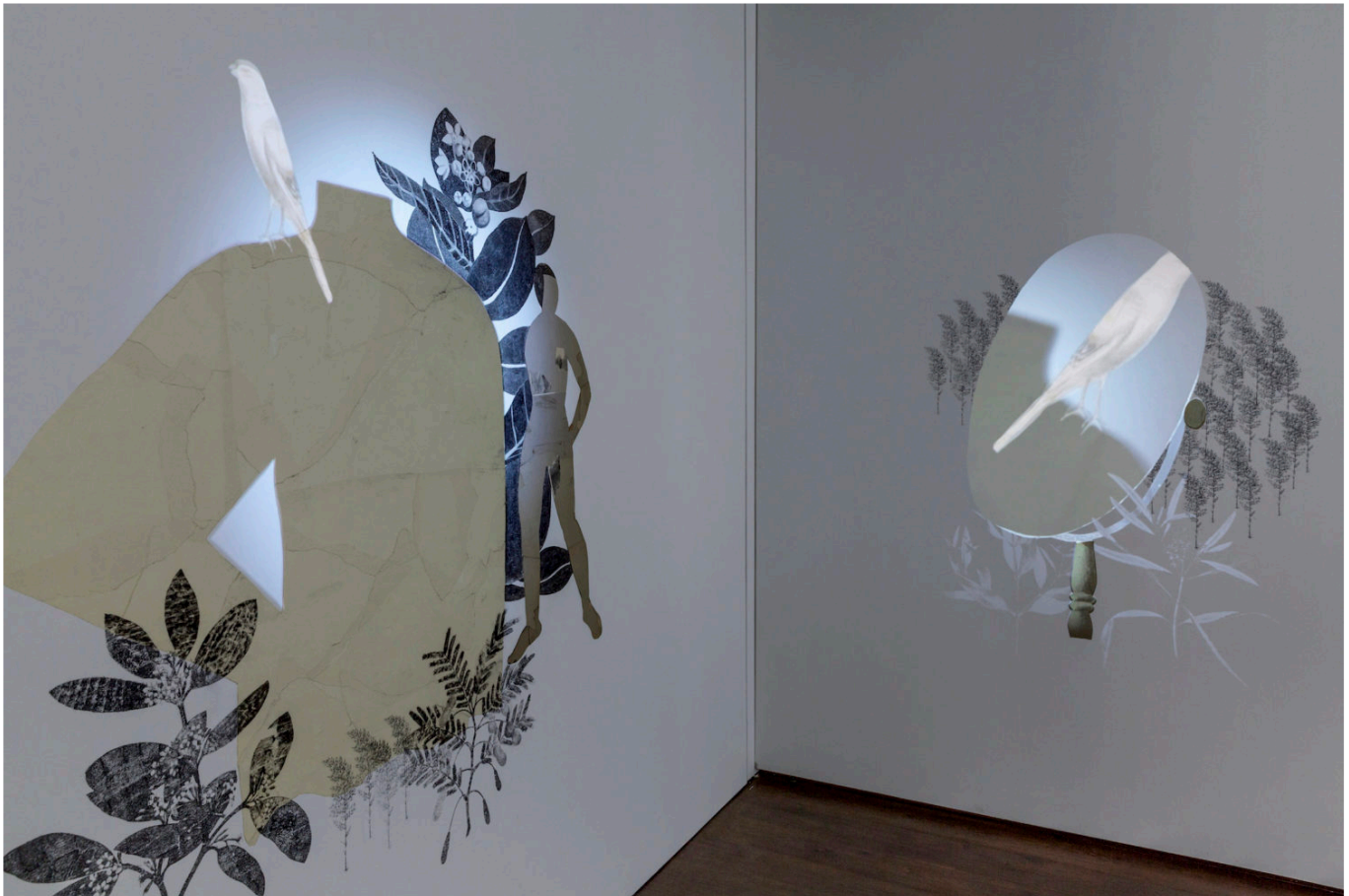


*Stas Orlovski, Running Man, 2019 ADN Guardhouse, The Wende Museum. Projected, stop-motion animation.  
Duration: 14:24. 94.5 x 102.5 x 62 inches. (Photo by Brian Moss)*

When is/was your current/most recent/next show?

[Running Man, Wende Museum](#), Culver City, September 29 – April 5, 2020. This site-specific installation occupied a former East German Guardhouse with three projected, stop-motion animations that explore themes of loss, memory and migration. Drawing on the structure's Cold War past and its current proximity to Sony Picture Studios, the work references Russian children's books, Soviet-era animation, Malevich's Suprematism, Hans Richter's experimental films and Eadweard Muybridge's early motion pictures.

[Chimera, San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art](#), November 16, 2019 – March 22, 2020. Inspired by 19th century phantasmagoria and magic lantern shows, *Chimera* was a multi-media installation consisting of two synchronized, stop-motion animations that are projected onto a series of wall drawings. An original soundtrack composed by Steve Roden accompanied the installation. Originally commissioned by the Pasadena Museum of California Art in 2014, *Chimera* travelled to the 56th Venice Biennale as part of "We Must Risk Delight", a collateral exhibition at the Magazzino del Sale No. 3.



*Stas Orlovski, Chimera, Installation View, We Must Risk Delight: 20 Artists from Los Angeles, curated by Elizabeta Betinski, La Biennale di Venezia, Biennale Arte 2015, Magazzino del Sale No. 3, May 9 – Nov 22, 2015. Charcoal, ink, xerox transfer, collage and projected animation on wall. Sound by Steve Roden. Post-Production Beau Leduc*

[Objekt, Traywick Contemporary](#), Berkeley, March 30 – May 31, 2019. This solo exhibition was centered on a group of sculptural works consisting of found objects paired with projected animations. Collected at various antique shows, flea markets and thrift shops, these objects reference motifs that I have been using in my work for many years — heads, torsos and feet. The figurative fragments are activated by animations that are projected onto and into the items transforming them into dream-objects.

*What artist living or dead would you most like to show with?*

I couldn't pick just one. In no particular order: Danh Võ, Vija Celmins, Philip Guston, Louise Bourgeois, Joseph Cornell, Max Ernst, Kasmir Malevich.



*Stas Orlovski, detail of Running Man, 2019 ADN Guardhouse, The Wendt Museum, Culver City, CA. Projected, stop-motion animation. Duration: 14:24. 94.5 x 102.5 x 62 inches. (Photo by Brian Moss)*

*Do you listen to music while you work? If so what?*

I get too emotionally involved in music, so it often ends up being a distraction in the studio. On most days NPR is on in the background.

*Website and social media handles, please!*

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