

# THE ART NEWSPAPER

## FEBRUARY 15, 2020

### IN PICTURES: ARTISTS PLAY IT UP ON THE BACKLOT AT FRIEZE LA

by José Da Silva



Will Boone, *The Three Fates*, 2020. Photo: David Owens

The usually gritty streets of New York take on a decidedly more playful disposition in the backlot of Paramount Studios, with installations, performances and videos by 16 artists dotted around the set for Frieze Projects. The selection has been curated by Pilar Tompkins Rivas and Rita Gonzalez, with many of the artists making work “responsive to issues of the moment”, Tompkins Rivas says, but also inserting ironic elements that fit with the surreal setting. Examples include Sayre Gomez’s phone tower disguised as a palm tree and Will Boone’s upscaled bronze sculptures based on “toy kits that were very popular in the 1950s and 60s, which may reference Hollywood films like *Creature from the Black Lagoon* or *Frankenstein*”, Tompkins Rivas says.

Another work responding to popular culture is Mario García Torres’s film *Falling Together in Time* (2019), which plays with the intertwined events set in motion by a suicidal man who was about to jump to his death but was saved by the boxer Muhammad Ali, and the subsequent news event that inspired the hit song *Jump* by hair metal rockers Van Halen. The work is “about happenstance and the role of it in one’s life”, Tompkins Rivas says.

And happenstance is something the organisers were aware of as the backlot is “a space that already has its own particular set of parameters”, Tompkins Rivas says. For example, Barbara Kasten’s sculpture *Intervention* (2018), with industrial-looking steel and aluminium rods casting shadows against plexiglass, “makes perfect sense” inside the fake buildings with their complex support systems holding up the façades. Tompkins Rivas adds that although the buildings may look real on the outside, they are not watertight so the selected works had to be robust enough to take the rain. Thankfully, this year’s outlook is as sunny as a painted backdrop.