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New arrival at LAX: an art festival

By [Bekah Wright](#)

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Jorge Oswaldo's #LAXPoppies exhibit. (Photo: PanicStudio LA)

Poignant. Whimsical. Peaceful. Not words one usually associates with an airport. Here's another – art festival. Yet, these are words [Los Angeles](#) International Airport is adding to its vocabulary with Influx: Art at LAX, its first public art festival. Two more firsts – this weekend LAX hosts an Art Walk, as well as *Everywhere Nowhere*, an original, live performance.

LAX's Art Program, a partnership between the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs and Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA), began in 1990. LAX's recent [\\$4.1 billion modernization project](#) has stepped up the program. "Our Executive Director, Gina Marie Lindsey, tapped the Art Program to be part of the airport's transformation," says Sarah Cifarelli, art manager for LAWA. "With her support, we were able to nearly double the number of exhibition sites at LAX, transforming our underused public spaces into art spaces."

Featured in Influx are 11 original, temporary art installations, which include the work of 45 Los Angeles-based artists in mediums ranging from video and large-scale sculptures to mixed-media, ink drawings and murals.

Semi-permanent installations, which include regional artists, are also part of the mix. All are located within Terminals 1, 2, 3, the New Tom Bradley International Terminal, 6, 7, and 8. Though the current art festival runs through the end of 2013, new exhibitions will be installed approximately every six months.

This weekend's events are centered around Sarah Elgart's performance piece, *Everywhere Nowhere*. Open to the public, the free, 60-minute performances are scheduled Saturday and Sunday at 7:30 p.m. in an outdoor courtyard between Terminals 1 and 2.

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This isn't Elgart's initiation into the program. In 2011, LAX commissioned her to choreograph another performance piece, *Flyaway Home*. This time around, Elgart says her aim is about "creating an arena that allows the viewer, designated or passerby, to experience an old place with new eyes – it's about making magic in the mundane."



(Photo: Elgart Images)

Everywhere Nowhere also explores the notion of transition. "At LAX, people are on their way to everywhere else," Elgart told Yahoo! Travel. She hopes the piece will bring viewers' focus to what's mesmerizing in their midst. In the case of *Everywhere Nowhere*, that's the airport. "LAX is a fascinating place in and of itself, where there's an amazing barrage of languages, cultures and people."

Something else *Everywhere Nowhere* will draw attention to will be Influx. Hosted concurrently will be a self-guided Art Walk of sites accessible to the general public. Luring for travelers – a rich collection of art exhibitions beyond security viewable by ticketed passengers only. Maps will be available at a welcome table at Terminal 1 arrivals. Audio will be provided via cell phones with a call-in number accessing interviews with the artists.

Where the Art Walk begins? Terminal 1, with Jorge Oswaldo's *#LAXPoppies*. Oswaldo describes the exhibit's eight pieces as "an interactive art experiment of crowdsourced "timeless memories." The poppies themselves represent the bouquets of flowers often given to loved ones arriving off flights. Oswaldo's goal with *#LAXPoppies*: "To catch the attention of a traveler in motion, make them stop, take a picture, and share within their network."

Next on the route in Terminal 2's departures is Barbara Strasen's lenticular mural, *Flow and Glimpse*. The 90-paneled mural transforms as viewers move past it, going from a top-layer textured image to an underlying visual of Los Angeles.

Terminal 3 has three exhibitions on view to the public. Up first in the arrivals hallway is *Levitational*, a group exhibition curated by John David O'Brien. Nine artists contributed to *Levitational* in forms ranging from paintings and mixed-media to sculpture. Its theme is "gravity defied," a constant occurrence at airports.

Flanking Terminal 3's departure atrium is Joyce Dallal's *Elevate*, two formations of paper airplanes flying toward area windows. Dallal imprinted the airplanes with excerpts from the Geneva Conventions and Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Her impetus: "I thought their subject matter



(Photo: PanicStudio LA)

was particularly relevant to the location near security and the feeling one gets when waiting in those long lines of being trapped and just wanting to get out." While

installing the work, Dallal's vision for *Elevate* shifted. "I realized *Elevate*'s location was the last place people could say goodbye to their loved ones." *Elevate*'s new goal became to create a sense of peace for those goodbyes.

A "must-see" on the route is *See Change* in the international terminal. The permanent video installation features 17 site-specific media artworks viewable on two large-scale displays in the arrivals hall.

The final stop on the Art Walk is Terminal 6's departures area, featuring *Why Are You Here/No Thing To Declare/Declare Experience* by ETMCA (aka the Code Artist). Each large-scale, urban painting is embedded with Morse code, asking questions pertaining to travel. Something to spy – a red circle on one of the canvases; a mistake made, and claimed, by ETMCA.

As for the other installations only on view behind security gates – they're just one more excuse to travel.

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