



Meteor over Mount Whitney, December 14, 2011, 3:35 a.m. Photograph by Tony Rowell from *Sierra Starlight*.

BOOM STAFF

The *Boom* List

What to do, see, hear, and read this summer in California

Visit *The Mojave Project*. Artist Kim Stringfellow is creating what she calls a “transmedia documentary” to explore the physical and cultural landscape of the Mojave Desert. Focusing on themes such as the desert as a wasteland, geological time versus human time, and transformation and reinvention, Stringfellow is bringing together photographs, text, audio, and video to give her

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audience a much deeper understanding of the desert, its people and places. As the project comes together, Stringfellow and her fellow contributors post regular dispatches to mojaveproject.org. Follow along as a full picture of the desert materializes.

Picture California as it was, as it is, and as it might be. Ecologist and artist Laura Cunningham’s wonderful book *A State of Change* (Heyday, 2010) and its companion website illustrate through words, sketches, and paintings what California might have looked like 500 years ago. The book works as a sort of naturalist’s journal as Cunningham uses her decades of research to explore centuries of change in California and what those changes might tell us about the future. In *The West Without Water* (University of California Press, 2013), B. Lynn Ingram and Frances Malamud-Roam take a much longer view, documenting the climate of California and the west over twenty millennia. The authors chronicle cycles of drought and flood to discern what is “normal” for our climate, and whether we are prepared for whatever the new normal will be. And then there is *Sierra Starlight* (Heyday, 2015) by astrophotographer Tony Rowell, which is pure pleasure: a look at quintessential California landscapes on either side of the Sierra Nevada, illuminated by spectacularly starlit night skies.

Consider how you will make your mark on the landscape around you. California is home to scenes of soul-stirring wildness and heart-stopping beauty that have been shaped by climate, tectonic plates colliding, and tens of millions of Californians. To them—or to us, we should say—California is not just a thing to protect and admire, it’s a place to call home, to draw nourishment from, and to make a life in. How we weigh these needs when they come into conflict could alter the look of every corner of the state, just as it always has. But with drought and a crisis of unaffordable housing, it’s our urban landscapes that are perhaps most susceptible to change. How will we encourage or forestall change in our own neighborhoods? How will you?

Check out Noah Purifoy: Junk Dada at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Noah Purifoy’s Outdoor Desert Art Museum in Joshua Tree is a fascinating collection of assembled sculpture created by Purifoy in the fifteen years before his death in 2004. Part of the magic of the experience comes from the pieces themselves—by turns political, funny, and powerful—but part is also the way they play off the desert and the weather, and the way those same elements have worked away at the assembled components over time. (Ruben Martinez wrote about Purifoy’s transformative art for *Boom* in our Summer 2012 issue.) So it will be interesting to see eight of those works in the entirely different context during LACMA’s retrospective of Purifoy’s long career as a master of assemblage sculpture. The show includes pieces by Purifoy and other artists that were shown as part of the 1966 exhibition *66 Signs of Neon*, which he helped to organize in the aftermath of the Watts riots.

Find a park! California has close to 12,000 parks, recreation areas, and open spaces, and each one offers much more than a place to stretch your legs. If you’re feeling overwhelmed by the choices, or just don’t know where to begin, visit CaliParks.org, a new browser-based app that works on phones, tablets, and computers. There, you can explore parks around the state, find ones closest to you, and discover nearby places to hike, bike, picnic, rock climb, or run with your dog. By integrating photographs from social media into CaliParks, the site shows the enormous diversity of California’s thousands of parks—not just diversity of landscapes, but diversity of people who visit them.

Visit the Fresno Art Museum and see Bob Kolbrenner: In Real Time. A prolific photographer of classic, rugged California landscapes, Kolbrenner’s fifty years of work are being celebrated with this show in Fresno. Kolbrenner was a friend and student of Ansel Adams, has no love of digital tools, and works exclusively on film and silver gelatin. The lush black-and-white photographs of rocky coasts, snowy peaks, and fog-draped forests are just the thing to cool you down on a hot summer afternoon in the Central Valley. **B**



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Toilet Bowl Sculpture by Noah Purifoy. © Noah Purifoy Foundation. COURTESY NOAH PURIFOY FOUNDATION.