

‘Current: L.A.’ Brings New Art Projects to the City



An image of Kerry Tribe, right, during the making of her film for “Current: L.A.” Credit Panic Studio L.A./City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs

Lacking an organization like New York’s Creative Time or Public Art Fund, Los Angeles artists have long depended on local museums and scrappy nonprofit galleries to fund of-the-moment public art. Now the city’s Department of Cultural Affairs has a new biennial to help fill the gap: “Current: L.A.”^[1] which runs for a month starting on Saturday.

This year’s theme is water, inspired by the record-setting drought in California as well as city ambitions to transform the Los Angeles River^[2], which for stretches resembles a concrete trench, into a more functional, accessible and even leafy refuge for city-dwellers.

Some biennial projects will take place near the river, such as a new film by Los Angeles artist Kerry Tribe screened nightly at a little-known park sandwiched between Interstate 5 and the water^[3]. She made the film, which runs 51 minutes, by following the 51-mile river to see what it would yield, from a visit with a homeless person who identifies as “Cat Man” to surprising encounters with roosters, sheep and other animals. “I think the idea of traveling a mile a minute is familiar to many of us here,” she said of her movie-as-moving-vehicle framework.