

THE Hollywood REPORTER

CULTURE

Frieze L.A. Artist Sarah Cain Talks Art World's "Small Bubble" and Her Chocolate Habit

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Sarah Cain's "Now I'm going to tell you everything" was the inaugural project for ICA LA's courtyard wall on 7th Street.

Known for public-facing paintings across L.A., Cain will create a site-specific work for the February artfair, which will make use of multiple spaces on Paramount Studios' New York backlot

As plans for the inaugural Frieze L.A. take shape, organizers of the fair — whose iterations in its London home and New York draw collectors from around the world — have selected several artists to participate in site-specific Frieze Projects on and around its Paramount Studios' New York backlot, where the fair will open Feb. 14 (through Feb. 17). Among the dozen artists invited to create works and installations for the fair — which is partly owned by Endeavor, with CEO Ariel Emanuel leading the L.A. host committee — are Barbara Kruger, inflatable-sculpture provocateur Paul McCarthy and Sarah Cain, known for her public-facing, site-specific paintings (please don't call them murals). Cain, who's been in a relationship with actor-comedian Marc Maron for several years, spoke with *THR* about intersections — between fine art and popular culture, between New York and L.A. — and what's going to be quite sweet about her Frieze L.A. Project when it debuts on Valentine's Day. Concurrent to the fair, where she'll create a floor-to-ceiling painting and stained-glass installation in a brownstone-look building, Cain will have a solo show of painting and installations on view at her Los Angeles gallery, [Honor Fraser](#) (Jan. 12-Mar. 9).

In L.A., people know you best for what they think of as these murals they drive by...

I don't call them murals — that word makes my skin crawl. I think of them as site-specific paintings. I did the one on the exterior of the ICA L.A. when it opened and then the [headquarters for LAND](#) [the nonprofit Los Angeles Nomadic Division]. That one is kind of in decay, which is kind of interesting and kind of embarrassing.

How much of an Angeleno are you?

I moved here in 2007 and lived in the [San Francisco] Bay Area 10 years before that. So I'm pretty California but I did grow up on the East Coast.

And, for Frieze Projects L.A., you're working on what is essentially Paramount's fake New York set — have you lived in New York?

I was actually moving to New York on Sept. 11, 2001, and ended up at a Red Cross camp in Canada. I made my way back to Williamsburg and was living as an artist in a squat someone had the key to. I was really poor. California kept taking me back! I actually feel like New York is where I really belong. I always felt as a kid that I'd end up in NYC and every time I go I feel I should be there.

When I travel with my partner we always stay in nice hotels in Manhattan. So my New York dreams are fancy and big and that's just not possible [living] in Manhattan. I can't imagine having the kind of setup with a studio and a house where I can walk back and forth like I do in L.A. Also, he lived in New York City for like 15 years and he's not going back. And I don't like the subway.

How much time have you spent on studio lots? And did you find the Paramount backlot convincing as New York?

Not too much. To actually make art inside of it is really special. I am making work in an old brownstone on the lot and it really reminded me of the buildings I was making work in, the abandoned buildings, 20 years ago when I was in New York. The brownstone I'm painting is very rundown...and I like it. Maybe it was used to look like a homeless encampment because it's really dirty, so I am asking them not to touch it up. It will be a really unique, cool experience for people to see.

What was your experience of the Hollywood studio, and being on a set before you were dating Marc Maron, and before this Frieze Project?

I met my partner when one of my friends set us up and before we dated I'd never really interacted with the entertainment world — maybe sometimes collectors but I never really knew who they were. He was doing *Maron* when we met and that was the first time I'd been on set. We've been together for four years. And now today's the first day back on the set of *Glow* [for its third season].

If Marc has exposed you to Hollywood, have you exposed him to the art world in return?

It's been interesting to share my life with someone who is part of popular culture; it's expanded me as a person a lot. He educates me on comedy and the larger world. I knew the art world was a bubble, but I never realized how small a bubble it was in the grander scheme of culture. I don't like the word "elite" but it is such a specific, small world. And yes, we like seeing art together, too. We just went to see the [Swedish artist] [Hilma af Klint show at the Guggenheim](#) in New York and some of her work when we were in Stockholm, too.

I heard there will be chocolate as part of your Frieze Projects installation. Where does the chocolate come in?

I've always wanted to do a show where I give out tea and chocolate for free to people who come because those are my vices, especially when I am painting. I feel like you can look at art when you are indulging your body in that way. So I am working with the L.A. shop calle [AndSons Chocolatiers](#) to design a dark chocolate with an Earl Grey flavor. We will give them out here and there but because the first day of Frieze L.A. is Valentine's Day — that day we will be giving them out all day.