



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION OF LOS ANGELES AND LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY
PRESENT *NO PRIOR ART: ILLUSTRATIONS OF INVENTION*,
PART OF PST ART: ART & SCIENCE COLLIDE**

No Prior Art celebrates innovation and invention with 14 artists and makers including Pippa Garner, Shervone Neckles, KAOS Network, Mixografia, new commissions by Ellen Harvey and Marc Fischer, and more.

On view September 14, 2024 – May 11, 2025



Left: Pippa Garner, *Shower in a Can* (1980s). 5" x 3" x 15". Aluminum can, plastic shower head. Courtesy of Pippa Garner and STARS on Hollywood. Photo by Josh Schaedel. Center: *BEACON* by Shervone Neckles in collaboration with Beam Center and Lewis Latimer House Museum, (2020- 2021). 6' x 6' x 12' 8 3/8", LED interactive sculpture. Courtesy of Shervone Neckles and Beam Center. Right: Patent Model for an Improvement in Side-Saddles (1866) by Clara A. Bartlett. 3.5" x 3.5" x 7.25". Courtesy of The Hagley Museum and Library.

LOS ANGELES – The Library Foundation of Los Angeles (LFLA) and the Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) present *No Prior Art: Illustrations of Invention*, an ambitious exhibition and program series inspired by and drawing from the LAPL's patent and intellectual property resources and ultimately exploring the broad nature of human creativity. *No Prior Art* delves into creators' unexpected stories and diverse perspectives with the work of more than a dozen artists and makers at the intersection of art, science, and social impact.

"We are thrilled to participate in PST ART: Art & Science Collide with *No Prior Art*, a dynamic initiative that celebrates the universal impulse for creation, shining a spotlight on unique stories of interdisciplinary ingenuity and lesser-known inventors," said Stacy Lieberman, President and CEO of the LFLA. "This landmark exhibition and exciting range of public programs at libraries across the city will help more Angelenos connect with the free access to information, cutting-edge technology, and endless inspiration that the Los Angeles Public Library provides."

On view from September 14, 2024 through May 11, 2025 at LAPL's Central Library, *No Prior Art* features approximately 150 sculptures, photographs, drawings, models, inventions, and new commissions, highlighting the imaginative spirit of creators throughout American history. The exhibition title, *No Prior Art*, is a play on a legal term integral to the patent application process indicating that the claims of the invention must be unique and have no obvious precedent in existing patents.

"From our extensive patent and intellectual property resources to makerspaces in Central Library's Octavia Lab and the Koreatown Media Lab at Pio Pico-Koreatown Branch Library, the Los Angeles Public Library is an essential resource for inventors and entrepreneurs of all ages," said City Librarian John F. Szabo. "*No Prior Art* and the dynamic citywide schedule of public programs will wonderfully showcase how our libraries empower creators and support innovation."

Exhibition Overview

Interdisciplinary artist **Shervone Neckles'** monumental sculpture **BEACON**, created with Beam Center and Lewis Latimer House Museum in 2021, will light the path into the exhibition. The work was inspired by Lewis H. Latimer (1848-1928), the son of an escaped slave. An inventor, engineer, and poet, Latimer obtained patents for carbon filaments that made electric lighting practical and affordable. **BEACON** is a monolithic, black metal sculpture based on Latimer's 1881 patent illustration, and its giant filament lights up in response to visitors' proximity.

As visitors move through the exhibition, they will traverse between distinct, yet related, worlds of invention and innovation. An area dedicated to **Mixografia**—the pioneering Los Angeles-based fine arts printer and publisher—will demonstrate the unique patented process that makes their work of creating 3-D prints possible, taking a recent work by artist **Analia Saban** as a compelling example of the process. A prison cell replica will be displayed as part of the artist collective **Temporary Services'** installation, **Prisoners' Inventions**, exhibiting the inventive ways inmates seek to improve their living situations despite the harsh conditions and limited access to materials. Artist and filmmaker **Ben Caldwell** and his **KAOS Network**, a community-based Afrofuturistic innovation lab in Leimert Park, will be highlighted in a section dedicated to work that directly connects to LA communities.

A series of Long Beach-based artist **Pippa Garner's** original drawings and invention prototypes will be featured, including several pieces specially fabricated in collaboration with the artist and based on materials drawn from her archives at STARS Gallery. Garner rose to prominence in the 1980s after a series of publications featuring whimsical inventions that subtly critiqued American consumerism. In the decades since, she has continued exploring the body, car culture, and the nature of idea generation.

Shown publicly for the first time, Pasadena artist **Ben Sakoguchi's** *Great American Inventors* series weaves history, humor, and social commentary into a presentation of 33 paintings that depict American inventors, from electric guitar inventor Les Paul to the inventor of Kevlar, Stephanie Kwolek, to Hedy Lamarr, the Hollywood star who famously moonlighted as an inventor. The series continues his *Orange Crate Label* paintings, which he started in the 1970s, inspired by the bold graphics and images of the orange crates stacked behind his parents' grocery store.

Plant patent photographs from the Central Library's collection and 19th-century three-dimensional miniature patent models will demonstrate the artistic element that accompanies the

engineering or scientific discoveries being described in a patent application. **Miniature patent models** on loan from the Hagley Museum and Library in Delaware will highlight early inventions from California, including an oyster-opening machine from 1877. A patent for a side-saddle improvement from 1866, a window cleaning chair from 1878, and other examples will showcase inventions submitted by women at a time when IP was the only form of property women in America could legally own. The plant patents show how even our food is an evolving technology, as grower/inventors seek to devise new strains that are more resistant to pests, disease, and the effects of climate change.

On loan from **Dr. Raymond Hall**, creator of the viral **@physicsfun** Instagram video series, a collection of toys that demonstrate various properties of physics will be included in the exhibition to represent the importance of play to scientific and artistic discovery. From the classic "drinking bird" (patented in 1946) to the mirascope, which creates a striking optical illusion that was discovered inadvertently by Caliste Landry while working as a custodian at UC Santa Barbara in 1969, these unassuming toys can prompt a deeper exploration of physics principles while highlighting the beauty and aesthetic qualities inherent to physics and related sciences.

"*No Prior Art* aims to dispel the myth that only exceptional geniuses can invent, while highlighting the communal and collaborative nature of creation," said Todd Lerew, exhibition curator and LFLA Director of Special Projects. "Through an eclectic range of compelling stories and artworks, the exhibition reveals the experimental and inventive process common to creative advancements in the arts as well as in sciences and beyond."

The exhibition will be on view from September 14, 2024 through May 11, 2025 in the Getty and Annenberg Galleries on the second floor of LAPL's Central Library. The exhibition is free and open to the public during Central Library's standard operating hours.

New Commissions

Ellen Harvey's special commission for *No Prior Art*, *The Utopia Machine*, explores how we all can play a role in positive social impact. Through a unique, crowd-sourced, and ever-evolving fictional patent drawing, Harvey will respond to ideas submitted by patrons, program participants, and exhibition visitors about what they feel would make the world into a utopia. She will use these prompts to create fanciful drawings inspired by the aesthetics of 19th-century patent models that will all combine and interact to create a dramatic salon-style installation, *The Utopia Machine*.

Chicago-based **Marc Fischer's** commissioned work will highlight myriad Los Angeles-based inventions from recent decades through a series of publications exploring subjects ranging from virtual and augmented reality to wearable technology for animals to exercise equipment, providing distinctive perspectives on the inventive spirit.

Public Programs

A citywide series of 50+ free public programs and events coinciding with the exhibition will further explore the nature of creativity and invention, highlighting the related resources that are freely available to all through the Los Angeles Public Library, including hands-on technology in the [Octavia Lab](#) makerspace at Central Library and the [Koreatown Media Lab](#) at the Pio Pico-Koreatown Branch Library. The schedule of programs and events is forthcoming.

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About the Library Foundation of Los Angeles

For more than 30 years, the Library Foundation of Los Angeles has partnered with the Los Angeles Public Library in its effort to provide all 3.8 million Angelenos with equitable access to thousands of free programs, resources, and services. Through fundraising, advocacy, and programming, the Library Foundation strengthens the library's commitment to educate and empower every individual in our city's diverse communities. At the Foundation, we are committed to keeping the library thriving for generations to come and to providing all Angelenos with the tools to enrich and improve their lives. For more information, please visit lfla.org.

About the Los Angeles Public Library

A recipient of the nation's highest honor for library service—the National Medal from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest and most diverse urban population of any library in the nation. Its Central Library, 72 branch libraries, collection of more than eight million books, state-of-the-art technology accessible at lapl.org, and thousands of public programs provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for lifelong learning.

About PST ART: Art & Science Collide

Southern California's landmark arts event, PST ART, returns in September 2024 with more than 60 exhibitions from museums and other institutions across the region, all exploring the intersections of art and science, both past and present. Dozens of cultural, scientific, and community organizations will join the latest edition, PST ART: Art & Science Collide, with exhibitions on subjects ranging from ancient cosmologies to Indigenous sci-fi, and from environmental justice to artificial intelligence. Art & Science Collide will share groundbreaking research, create indelible experiences for the public, and generate new ways of understanding our complex world. PST ART is presented by Getty. For more information about PST ART: Art & Science Collide, please visit pst.art.

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