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5 Best Thanksgiving Artworks in L.A.

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Courtesy of the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Library

Unfortunately, my Thanksgiving will not be taking place on a Whittier Blvd. median strip

Judging by artworks on view around town, you'd think L.A. invented Thanksgiving. Or, maybe I'm reading too much into it.

In any case, here are five Thanksgiving-related L.A. artworks (that are probably not inspired by Thanksgiving).





The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

5. *A Turkey at the Getty*

When else do you have an excuse to pay that much for parking and take a tram to visit the beauty and glory of our finely-feathered friend? This bird from the Meissen Porcelain Manufactory was modeled by Johann Joachim Kändler in 1733, commissioned by the king of Poland for his life-size porcelain menagerie. It's good to be king.





Fredrik Nilsen, courtesy David Kordansky Gallery

4. "Cornfabulation" at David Kordansky Gallery

We've all heard that story that the pilgrims really didn't eat turkey at the first Thanksgiving. Well, I'm pretty sure they did eat corn. And now that we're all aware that there's a whole lotta corn in the food we eat these days, maybe it's time to ruminate on what corn actually means. The exhibition "Cornfabulation," an installation of works by artists Aaron Curry and Richard Hawkins up at David Kordansky Gallery, suggests that corn relates to "down-home," with imagery moving away from "high art." I dunno... these days when I think corn I think Monsanto. But the bright colors and enveloping presence of this exhibition gives you something less industrial to think about when you think about corn. And less pilgrim-y.





Museum of Latin American Art, Robert Gumbiner Foundation Collection

3. Leonora Carrington's *Bird Bath/Baño de Pájaros* at the Museum of Latin American Art

Yeah, another turkey. Or something that resembles a turkey. My favorite part about making turkey is giving it a good rinse before rubbing it in oil and herbs. It makes me feel like I'm giving a baby a bath. You may say I'm a creeper, but I'm not the only one.





Collection of Eileen Harris Norton

2. David Hammons' *Bag Lady in Flight* at The Hammer

Made of paper bags and grease and hair, all of which you'll probably find around your Thanksgiving table. Paper bags in excess from all of that grocery shopping. Grease, from the turkey, of course. And hair, which you'll be ripping out because the dinner's not perfect or you'll be brushing out of the way a lot if you drink too much, if you know what I mean. Plus, this work is just cool.



Courtesy of the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Library

1. *First Supper (After a Major Riot)* at LACMA

The communal meal. What Thanksgiving is all about -- sharing with loved ones, sometimes in odd places. Staged on Whittier Boulevard after a conflict between Chicano anti-war protestors and the police, this photograph by Harry Gamboa, Jr. documenting a work by the performance group Asco from 1974 reminds us to consider the things in our lives to be thankful for. (Yeah, I tacked on the cheese there. Just like that platter you'll be serving up as an hors d'oeuvre.)

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