

L.A. ON FIRE

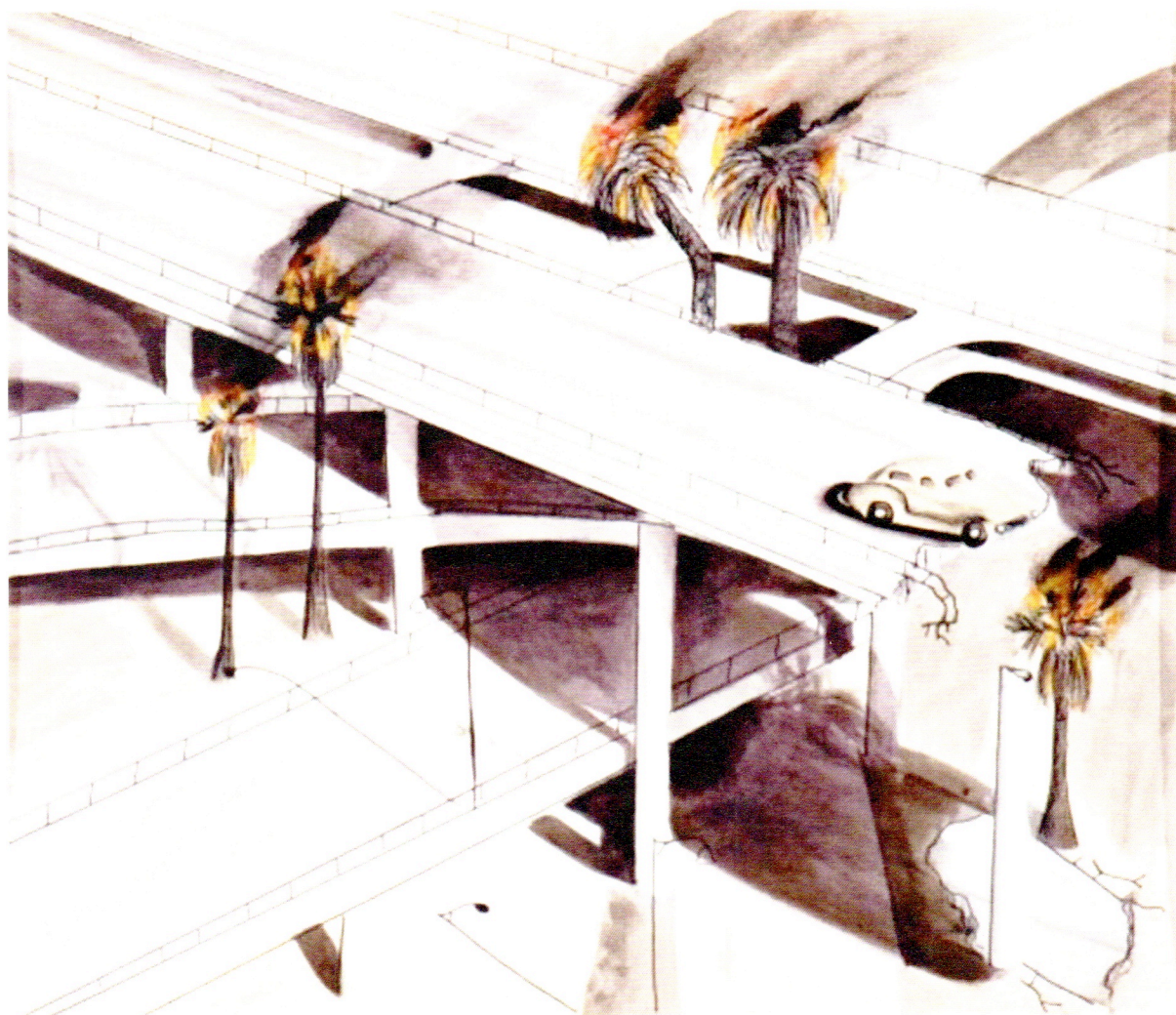
Curated by Michael Slenske

WILDING CRAN GALLERY

L.A. ON FIRE

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Joe Goode	Nick Stewart
Robert Gunderman	Jess Valice
Salomón Huerta	Henry Vincent
February James	Pae White
Michael John Kelly	Andy Woll
Mathias Kessler	Robert Yarber
Seffa Klein	and
John Knuth	John Zane Zappas



Highway Disaster, 1978
Acrylic on board
12.5 x 14.5 in

KENNY SCHARF

I was a sophomore at UC Santa Barbara—an aspiring New Waver—when I painted this. The city just seemed very fragile to me, It was so dependent on cars. That just seemed like a dead end. It still does. It's part of my apocalyptic fun time vision. Growing up in the Valley when I was a kid the smog was really, really bad. It was worse then than it is now in some ways. Everything just felt like the end: there were always fires and earthquakes and California was always about to fall into the ocean. It's nothing like on the scale we have today, but LA has always been burning.

I hadn't really found my signature back then, but this painting is not really out of the ordinary for how I work today. I clearly had the same kinds of obsessions and humor. In this painting the freeway is collapsing from an earthquake and the palm trees were on fire. It think it's prophetic, that kind of nihilistic view. I think anything of lasting value is going to have meaning at different times, not only when it was made. Artists are always looking into the future. I'm an optimist, but at the same time I'm a realist. All the writing was on the wall back then, but nobody was ever hesitating or slowing down.

When I moved to New York everyone thought the world was going to end so we just partied harder until it really was over, until you couldn't party at all. I feel differently now because of my grandkids. I hope they will have the chance to party hard, but I have these horrible visions. I'm not thinking our grandkids are not going to be alive as adults, but are they going to be walking in forests or swimming in oceans like we did? I hope they are not going to be living off proteins in a bubble.

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