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5 Free Art Shows to See in L.A. This Week

By Catherine Wagley

Laughing rats



In 1957, within months of moving from L.A. to San Francisco, artist Bruce Conner formed a collective. He called it the Rat Bastard Protective Association, taking inspiration from an organization of local trash collectors called the Scavengers' Protective Association. He sent out invitations to some of the city's most exciting, and devotedly experimental, young artists: Jay DeFeo, Wally Hedrick, Joan Brown, Fred Martin. The work of the Rat Bastard artists features in the Landing's current exhibition, curated by scholar Anastasia Aukeman with the help of gallery director Sam Parker, who was interested in the Bastards even before he met Aukeman. It's an appropriately expressive and gritty treasure trove, held together by mutual admiration. A loose drawing by Brown called *Rat Laughing at Manuel's Sculpture* shows a nimble rat doubled over in front of a sculpture, presumably made by Manuel Neri, another of the Bastards. 5118 W. Jefferson Blvd., West Adams; through Jan. 7. (323) 272-3194, thelandinggalleries.com.