

# Monica Marks □ Abandoned Opens Oct 25 at Gallery 825 in Los Angeles

*In Abandoned, Monica Marks transforms desert ruins into an immersive meditation on memory, loss, and resilience.*

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On October 25, 2025, [Los Angeles-based artist Monica Marks](#) will unveil *Abandoned* at [Gallery 825](#), at 825 N. La Cienega Blvd, Los Angeles. an immersive solo exhibition that transforms the gallery into a haunting reconstruction of a Mojave Desert homestead. Through installation, photography, painting, and found-object assemblage, Marks invites viewers into a tactile meditation on memory, impermanence, and resilience. An opening reception will take place on October 25, from 10 AM to 5 PM and an artist talk is scheduled for November 1 at 2 PM. The exhibition runs through November 21, 2025.



We Shall Always Be You and I

“

I've always been interested in abandoned people, abandoned structures, and abandoned dreams. These empty houses mirror our own fragility—what we build, what we lose, what remains.”

*Monica Marks*

At the heart of *Abandoned* is a partially rebuilt “Jackrabbit Homestead,” modeled after the modest cabins scattered across the California desert—remnants of the Small Tract Act of the 1950s and 60s, a federal homesteading initiative that offered five-acre parcels to anyone willing to build. For many, the dream of desert independence collapsed under harsh conditions, leaving behind empty shells of promise. Marks reconstructs one of these structures inside the gallery: graffiti-marked exterior walls, discarded furniture, and fragments of domestic life weathered by sun and time.

With projected desert sunsets, recorded soundscapes, and weathered artifacts, Marks invites viewers into a multi-sensory environment where memory, impermanence, and survival collide.

The installation is flanked by photographs of abandoned Jackrabbit cabins and mixed-media panels that combine painted imagery of derelict vehicles with objects Marks gathered near these sites. Together, they capture the stark beauty and quiet sorrow of the desert's fragile monuments. Rusted hinges, scorched metal, and fragments of glass and cloth become contemporary reliquaries of the Mojave's discarded narratives. For Marks, Abandoned is both personal and universal. The exhibition expands her longstanding interest in psychological landscapes and the human tendency to leave traces—whether physical, emotional, or societal. With a master's degree in Marital and Family Therapy and a specialization in Clinical Art Therapy, Marks brings a nuanced understanding of the emotional underpinnings of neglect, loss, and transformation.

Her perspective bridges art and empathy, linking the desert's derelict homesteads to contemporary issues such as displacement, housing insecurity, and the criminalization of unhoused communities. "The way we treat abandoned spaces often parallels how we treat abandoned people," Marks notes. "Both are viewed as dangerous or inconvenient, rather than as sites of potential renewal."

Within the lineage of California art, Abandoned follows in the footsteps of artists such as Edward Kienholz, Betye Saar, and Michael C. McMillen, who transformed found materials and built environments into immersive commentaries on American life. Marks cites McMillen's Central Meridian (The Garage)—a legendary installation now at LACMA—as a formative influence. Like McMillen, she builds spaces that blur boundaries between reality and memory, inviting the viewer not merely to look but to enter.



Abandoned Shack Among Yellow Flowers



Graffiti Fireplace



Her use of weathered materials and domestic relics echoes Kienholz's socially charged assemblages while grounding them in a contemporary psychological framework. In the stark light of the desert, rust and decay become metaphors for endurance. Marks's reconstruction of a Jackrabbit Homestead—part ruin, part altar—extends this California tradition into the 21st century, connecting personal history to collective experience.

Abandoned also continues Marks's exploration of the self through spatial metaphor. Her 2021 solo project *What We Hide: An Exploration of Hidden Disabilities and Identity* examined invisibility, stigma, and the inner architecture of the psyche. *Abandoned* expands that dialogue outward, translating the inner room into a literal structure—a home left behind, its walls speaking of those who once tried to belong.

In a city defined by impermanence, *Abandoned* offers a meditation on what remains when ambition fades and structures collapse. The exhibition feels especially resonant in a time of environmental crisis and mass displacement—when fires, floods, and economic forces continue to uproot communities across California. Marks's installation reminds viewers that the ruins we leave behind are not empty but charged with memory and possibility.

By transforming refuse into reverie, Marks reframes abandonment as an opening rather than an ending. "To rebuild something that was left behind," she says, "is to insist that meaning still exists in the fragments." Her work challenges the cultural impulse to erase decay, suggesting instead that brokenness can be a site of profound beauty and truth.

Monica Marks is a multidisciplinary artist living and working in Los Angeles. She earned her BA in Art from California State University, Northridge, and her MA in Marital and Family Therapy with a specialization in Clinical Art Therapy from Loyola Marymount University. Her training in the mental health field deeply informs her creative process, emphasizing the expressive arts as a path toward healing and emotional growth.

Marks has exhibited at the Lancaster Museum of Art and History, Torrance Art Museum, and Bristol Art Museum in Rhode Island, as well as in *The Los Angeles Open* (2021) and *Made in the USA* (2022) at TAG Gallery. She is represented by Bird Dog Arts in Tejon Ranch, CA, and her work is held in collections across the United States.

Gallery 825 is the exhibition arm of the Los Angeles Art Association. Purchased in 1958, the gallery, which is located in the heart of Los Angeles at 825 North La Cienega Boulevard, provides LAAA artists with a professional venue in which to show their work

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