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He Sold Us Sharks, Diamonds and Spots. Brooklyn Bridge Next?

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Depending on how you look at it, last week was pure heaven or sheer hell. I've seen a lot of action -- [art action](#), that is, rubbing shoulders with huge, unruly but mostly friendly crowds all over the city. The hell part of it was deciding which things to attend and which to miss, considering that so many events were happening all at once.

Let's start with Thursday night, when the Art L.A. Contemporary fair opened at Barker Hangar at the Santa Monica Airport. It was one of four art fairs descending on L.A. in the last few days. The guests approaching the hangar had to navigate through knee-deep waves of fog spreading from a spectacular installation by the indomitable, one-and-only [Judy Chicago](#). Made out of hundreds of large cubes of dry ice, lit at night to the maximum, dramatic effect one expects from Judy Chicago, this installation -- a recreation of a work she originally did in 1968 -- is called "Disappearing Environments." Truly, you had to see it to believe it.

Friday night I spent at the Getty Center, where a few hundred invited guests watched butoh dancers slowly, very slowly moving through the arrival plaza while striking one contorted pose after another. This performance, titled "[Kalpa](#)," was conceived by L.A.-based, Japanese artist Hirokazu Kosaka. I did my best to capture the magic of this performance with my iPhone, so take a look at our [website](#).

The weekend schedule turned out to be even more crowded with gallery and studio visits, including one with L.A. sculptor Simon Toparovsky, whose life-size bronze crucifix adorns the downtown Cathedral of Our Lady of Angels. Simon shared with me the latest about my native St. Petersburg, where he had just attended the opening of his exhibition, [Column of Infamy](#). Delicious Russian borsch and plenty of alcohol kept us going through the evening.



It was a surprise to wake up Sunday morning without a headache. I guess plenty of art is a good antidote to a hangover. What would I see this afternoon? The choice was easy: one of my favorite L.A. artists, Lita Albuquerque, managed to sweet talk several hundred volunteers into participating in the recreation of her 1980s project [Spine of the Earth](#). Dressed in bright red jumpsuits, these volunteers moved in a tight formation that looked like a gigantic snake, along the trails of Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook in Culver City. It felt as if the artist took a huge brush, dipped it into red, and painted long, swooping strokes down the side of the hill.

*Banner image: Lita Albuquerque's **Spine of the Earth**, performed at Baldwin Hills, Culver City. Photo by Edward Goldman*

Edward Goldman is an art critic and the host of [Art Talk](#), a program on art and culture for KCRW 89.9 FM. To listen to the show and hear Edward's charming Russian accent, visit http://www.kcrw.com/media-player/mediaPlayer2.html?type=audio&id=at120124he_sold_us_sharks_di.