

# FALL FASHION

7<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary  
Special Issue

## ALL AMERICAN

Supermodel  
Maggie Rizer  
Mehran, the  
Ultimate  
Girl Next  
Door



CALIFORNIA STYLE

## LONG LIVE McQUEEN

Sarah Burton's  
Crowning  
Moment in  
San Francisco

*EXCLUSIVE  
INTERVIEW*

# KATIE HOLMES

REVEALING A  
SEXY NEW LOOK  
AND A FRESH  
LEASE ON LIFE

## SHOPPING GUIDE

Slim Suiting,  
Fantasy Gowns,  
Evergreen  
Baubles and  
Luxe Outerwear



# C culture

A photograph by Craig Costello (Krink) of McGee at the Roseville train yards, 1995.

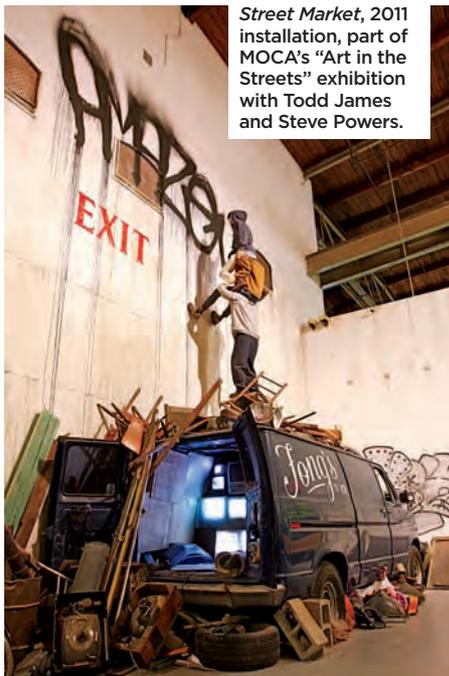
## The Outsider

With Barry McGee's first survey show, the UC Berkeley Art Museum shines light on the prolific street artist turned art-world phenom

Once a graffiti artist, always a renegade. If you ask Barry McGee what the goal of graffiti is, he'll tell you that it's the practice of subversion; it must remain abrasive to qualify. Since the '80s, his exploration has evolved from the streets of San Francisco's Mission District into the white cubes of galleries and museums, but the work remains beautifully rough around the edges. >>

CRAIG COSTELLO: ROSEVILLE TRAINYARDS, 1995; DIGITAL SCAN FROM SILVER GELATIN NEGATIVE; COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

One of McGee's signature cluster pieces. *Untitled*, 1998.



**Street Market**, 2011 installation, part of MOCA's "Art in the Streets" exhibition with Todd James and Steve Powers.

<< At 45, the notoriously press-shy San Franciscan once known by the tagger name Twist—who has placed his scrawl across freeway underpasses and up the sides of government buildings—has been featured at the 2001 Venice Biennale, fêted in Tokyo and Denmark, and commands admiration worldwide. Lawrence Rinder, UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive director and co-curator of the upcoming exhibition, "Barry McGee," calls him a current-day Walt Whitman. "He epitomizes the distinctly American tradition of art and literature; he looks at people out in the street and engages with a subject matter that isn't traditionally associated with art. He captures a democratic spirit."

It's a rare individual who can appeal to both the street community and the clubby inner circle of the art world. Rinder gets positively giddy when he talks about being the first to amass a large-scale show chronicling McGee's output, especially since the curator thinks he "missed the boat" at BAM/PFA in the '90s when he overlooked the loose collective of artists called the Mission School.

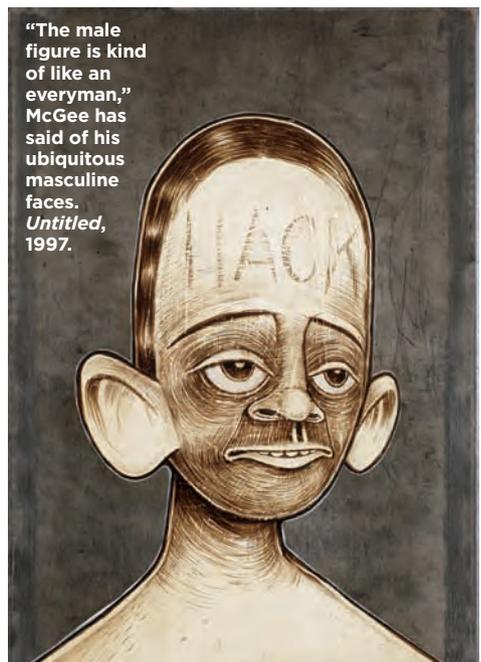
At the time, McGee, his now-deceased wife Margaret Kilgallen, and others were changing history with their scrappy do-it-yourself techniques, interest in the handmade and poignant interpretations of urban life. Using found materials—ballpoint pens, lipstick, house paint—and rejecting the slick '90s dot-com consumerism, their art disseminated the hope and despair of the city streets in a very approachable way. McGee's cartoonish black-and-white faces seem to have the life sucked out of them. Kilgallen's surfers, winsome women and folk lettering reflected a tweaked urban language.

Many of McGee's contributions to the Mission School oeuvre and beyond are addressed in the new show: his famous painted liquor bottles, op-art panels, animatronic taggers, all-encompassing environments and fresh material. I ask Rinder if we can interview the low-key artist and he becomes coy: "When he's in the middle of creating work, he doesn't do press."

The product of a Chinese mother and Irish-American father, McGee grew up in the frisson-filled environment of San Francisco in the late '80s and the early '90s. As the city moiled under protest movements, AIDS activism, a huge homeless population, Reagan-Bush blowback, and experimental performances by pre-Burning Man groups such as the San Francisco Survival Research Laboratories (where machines battled one another to destruction), McGee soaked up a potent atmosphere.



McGee and Clare Rojas' "Leave it Alone/Together at Last," 2010.



"The male figure is kind of like an everyman," McGee has said of his ubiquitous masculine faces. *Untitled*, 1997.

COLLAGE: GLENN HALVORSON/WALKER ART CENTER, MINNEAPOLIS. VAN: SEAN GARRISON/THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES. SURFBOARDS: BOLINAS MUSEUM. HACK: WILFRED J. JONES

“He is one of the most innovative artists to come out of street culture since the Wild Style artists that emerged in the mid-’70s.” —Jeffrey Deitch



Street Market, 2011.



Initially, McGee's works hit eBay long before commercial galleries. In 2003, winning bids were \$1,500 per bottle. *Untitled*, 2005.

These disparate motifs echo throughout his work. A strong draftsman with a traditional art school background from the San Francisco Art Institute, McGee's early street graffiti was often figurative: sad, gloomy faces he claimed were inspired by the city's transient community—"Things the city is trying to get rid of or trying to hide, or pretending doesn't exist," he told Italian art historian and curator Germano Celant in 2002. By the '90s and after a trip to a church teeming with carved wooden figures in Brazil, McGee began creating more sculptural works such as his now-signature bottle sculptures and hallmark cluster pieces, which were part of a seminal Yerba Buena Center for the Arts show in 1994. These clusters of found objects in vintage frames, hand-scrawled messages, hand-painted signs, and other visual tropes are arranged in thoughtful patterns; lately, the clusters have started to pucker away from the wall, adding three-dimensional impact.

In the past, McGee encouraged interaction between thieves and his work. At his solo show at Brandeis University's Rose Art Museum in 2004, 39 bottles were stolen from one of his collection pieces. "But no one figured it out until the end of the show. I thought it was really funny," he told *Art Forum* in 2008. "It's based off of 'racking,'" notes BAM/PFA co-curator Dena Beard. "In the vandalism community, there's a point of pride for a graffiti writer to steal paint from the hardware store."

By the late 1990s, Jeffrey Deitch proved himself influential in McGee's commercial career. After viewing a line of skaters who were queued up around the block to see work by McGee at the Drawing Center ("Wall Drawings," 1996), the then-impresario behind Deitch Projects was impressed. "I'd been looking for a long time for something fresh that emerged from the streets. He is one of the most innovative artists to come out of street culture since the Wild Style artists that emerged in the mid-'70s," says the current MOCA director.

Everyone told him that McGee would never work with a commercial gallery, but Deitch persisted and flew to St. Louis, where McGee was working. The two spent a day together. "All it needed was a personal approach, rather than letters or phone calls. That's how he is. He's very direct."

"Deitch gave Barry a budget, keys to the building [Deitch Projects], access and freedom," adds Beard. "He could basically get his entire crew into the space." In 2000, together with graffiti writers Steve Powers (ESPO) and Todd James (REAS), McGee created an all-encompassing landscape of smashed trucks and beat-up vans, complete with wheeling-and-dealing character Robbie

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## See and Be Seen

At last, L.A.'s online art hub makes space

Bettina Korek started **ForYourArt** (FYA) in 2006 as a weekly email covering L.A.'s percolating scene. Earning an immediate following—collector Rosette Delug and The Hammer Museum director Ann Philbin among its fans—the newsletter quickly expanded with a website, guides, and now, an installation-activity venue—in sight of LACMA—that accommodates temporary shows and various ForYourArt initiatives. This month go "Back To Art School" with an exhibition of "upcycled art," or snack on glazed confections at "24 Hour Doughnut City II," a pop-up event that coincides with LACMA's screening of Christian Marclay's video piece *The Clock*. You'll never be hungry for art again. Sept 22-23; 6020 Wilshire Blvd., L.A.; [foryourart.com](http://foryourart.com).

Founder/director  
Bettina Korek.



## THE OUTSIDER

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Pimple. “He really kind of defaced the entire idea of the gallery,” says Beard. “It was like walking into a junk yard. Women in heels would have to walk around with stuff everywhere. There was smoke and dripping transmission fluid. It was really exciting.”

“I think he has an amazing concept of environments and space, and that comes from being a street artist,” muses S.F. resident Sabrina Buell, a partner in art advising firm Zlot Buell + Associates. “Many artists are used to exhibiting in a white cube or on a wall, but street artists will create an experience on any material.”

As of late, the avid surfer—who lives in S.F. and West Marin with his wife, artist Clare Rojas, and daughter with Kilgallen (Asha)—has delved into op-art abstraction. He sometimes uses surfboards, plays with letters, numbers and fonts, and his colors have become brighter and more cheerful.

Yet, he has never lost his connection to his roots. In 2010, when commissioned by the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego to [spray] paint two murals, a third, unauthorized graffiti work appeared on a side of the building (to the institution’s great consternation). The latter, a swath of repetitive red “tags” which is considered the lowest form of graffiti, was removed for violating McGee’s agreement with the museum—ironic, since the show was called “Viva la Revolución.”

That mix of authenticity with a refined sense of color and line makes McGee appealing to fellow artists and members of the design community, and institutions such as SFMOMA. One of his current dealers, Chris Perez of Ratio 3, sees young collectors fascinated with his work, and older ones who are intrigued by its place in contemporary art history. “They are excited by the youth of it, the haphazardness of it. The detail and the handwork.”

Maybe remaining true to his roots keeps McGee’s work fresh. It’s unusual, but the artist stays in constellation of Bay Area creators by working with and celebrating them. This past year, he asked noted Gallery Paule Anglim if he could curate a show about local artists in its storage space. “The police came,” says Beard. “There was a lot of noise and there were so many people, and it’s a tiny little room. It was scrappy and raw, and it exhibited a lot of work by his peers that hadn’t been seen in a long time.”  
*Aug. 24-Dec. 9; [bampfa.berkeley.edu](http://bampfa.berkeley.edu). •*

## THE KATE UNKNOWN

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a creative outlet for Holmes and one of personal empowerment. The fall lookbook is filled with quotes that embody the sentiment behind each piece. For example, the words next to said navy dress read, “Don’t mistake my sheer sleeves for weakness...there are guns underneath.”

While putting the finishing touches on the collection (available at well-edited designer stores such as Barneys New York and Just One Eye), Holmes remained in the Big Apple this summer to film an as-of-yet-untitled project with her friend writer/director Christian Camargo (with whom she collaborated on 2008’s Broadway run of *All My Sons*). Set in Kent, Connecticut (she did, in fact, ride the train to get there), the film is a retelling of Anton Chekhov’s play *The Seagull*. Of the role, she says, “My character is a mother, and she’s at an important time in her marriage. The way that she and her husband interact is very blunt. It’s not something that is an obvious love story, but in the end they’re happy together.”

During her downtime, Holmes says she has been co-writing her first feature film, *Molly*, a mother-daughter tale in which she also plans to star and produce. The single mom, an ex-dancer (like Holmes, who still takes ballet lessons with Suri and has her dance charity Dizzy Feet), struggles to raise a 10-year-old in Astoria. Haven’t we just been talking about this? “Oh, no, this is a story on its own,” she assures me. So will Suri be playing the daughter? “Yeah, we’re going to age her up,” she jokes. “No no no no no.”

She can’t stay in N.Y. forever and has plans to return to L.A. this fall for some face time (in the divorce settlement, she also reportedly retained the Montecito spread she shared with Cruise). “It’s important to be there. You have to be around the business. There’s stuff you’ve got to do.” New York may be closer to her family in Ohio, but she’ll always have a life in California, and time here is never without visits to the Brentwood Country Mart and Gjelina in Venice. “I like to go there with my girlfriends and really eat. Like, a whole pizza.”

L.A. is where it all began, when Holmes arrived on the scene and into our hearts as the bright-eyed, bubbly Joey Potter on “Dawson’s Creek.” “I’m ready to take on some more challenging roles. I feel like I worked so much at such a young age that I really wanted to have life experiences,” she says, as if checking off a list. She adds, “So, now I feel more balanced, like I have more to bring to the table.” •

## AMERICAN GIRL

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a great-grandson of IBM founder Thomas Watson Sr. and scion of the San Francisco real-estate development family, that fragility now rests upon a stable foundation. And she has momentarily stepped out of the spotlight to savor her turn as wife and mother.

In 1998, the dashing couple met in Manhattan through her sister-in-law, photographer Annabel Mehran, who was pals with Rizer Mehran’s roommates (models Karen Elson and Erin O’Connor).

Still wrapped in the peripatetic life, Rizer Mehran was in no rush to date. Her future husband—an inveterate organizer whose attention to detail serves his passion for competitive sport sailing—never gave up.

A year ago, the couple moved 35 miles east of San Francisco, to Contra Costa County’s bucolic hamlet of Diablo, near Sunset Development, where Mehran serves as Vice President and General Manager. Boasting a population of 1,158, this former seasonal resort town is so small that Rizer Mehran picks up her daily mail at the 1900s-era Diablo Post Office.

“I love it. It’s perfect for me,” she enthuses. “We hang out with the dogs and barbecue. I don’t feel like I’m missing a thing. We’re re-landscaping our yard from an English garden to a Vermont meadow. And I love to cook so we’re redoing our kitchen, too.”

Rizer Mehran keeps at least one tootsie in the work world, however. With Trump Models, she recently shot for *Red Magazine* and is contemplating some fashion gigs this autumn.

“I haven’t done shows in a billion years, so I’m a little scared. It’s like a 50-year-old going back to college. And these new girls are, like, 18-feet-tall,” she laughs. “I miss it, but modeling is harder than people realize. Now with a husband, baby and the dogs, I’m trying to figure out how to make it all work.”

She dedicates her free time as an Operation Smile ambassador, ASPCA supporter and amFAR AIDS activist. During her pregnancy, she created a blog ([beamakes three.com](http://beamakesthree.com)) about her beloved Golden Retrievers and their new west coast world. Even in the transition to California, a part of Rizer Mehran’s heart remains in the far reaches of northern New York, near Lake Ontario. In Sackets Harbor, a small village where her family has summered for more than 100 years, she refurbished an old cottage where she loves to visit with friends.

“I finally feel stable and secure. I have a wonderful husband and baby. It may look like I’ve led a charmed life. But I’ve experienced many low-lows, and that keeps me in touch with reality,” she says. “Because of Alex and my family, I know really clearly that it’s not what’s in your life, it’s about who’s in your life.” •