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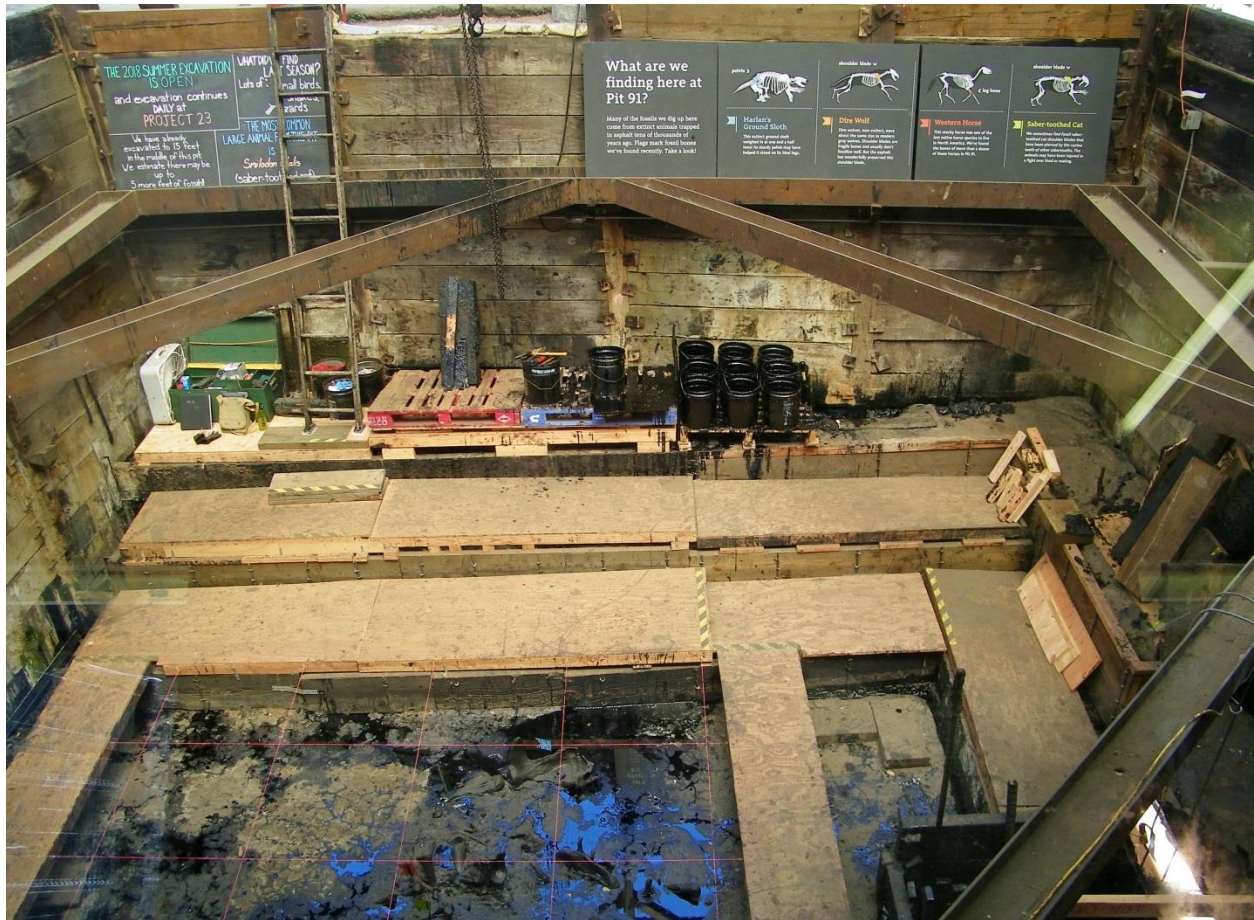
Four Days in Los Angeles (C18A-1)

I first visited Los Angeles 25 years ago and unexpectedly liked it a lot, so I've been back a number of times over the years, always staying in the same well-located hotel on Santa Monica Boulevard in West Hollywood. This was my third trip back in five years, and my second since moving to Las Vegas. Even with a leisurely lunch break I made the drive from Vegas to LA in less than six hours.

Because I've been there so many times now, I don't have many new sightseeing targets remaining on my list, but that's okay as I have some favorites to return to.

I was there for five nights, giving me four sightseeing days. I walked far more than people there expect anyone to walk, which unfortunately adversely affected some of my plans later in the trip.





My first stop was at the La Brea Tar Pits on Wilshire Boulevard. I had made a cursory stop here some years ago, but this time I toured the grounds and museum. The tar (actually natural asphalt) seeps out of the ground here creating pools. Although the pools often weren't particularly deep, they were deep enough and sticky enough that prehistoric animals often got trapped in them and died, their carcasses then luring scavenging carnivores to their own doom. Fossils of countless animals – many now extinct – have been collected from the tar pits.

The tar pits are still being excavated, as you can see above.



Tar continues to seep from the ground in Hancock Park, home of the La Brea Tar Pits.



Depiction of a mastodon trapped in the tar. A sign helpfully points out that the trapped mastodon is mother to the little mastodon calf shown here. Probably not a necessary detail.



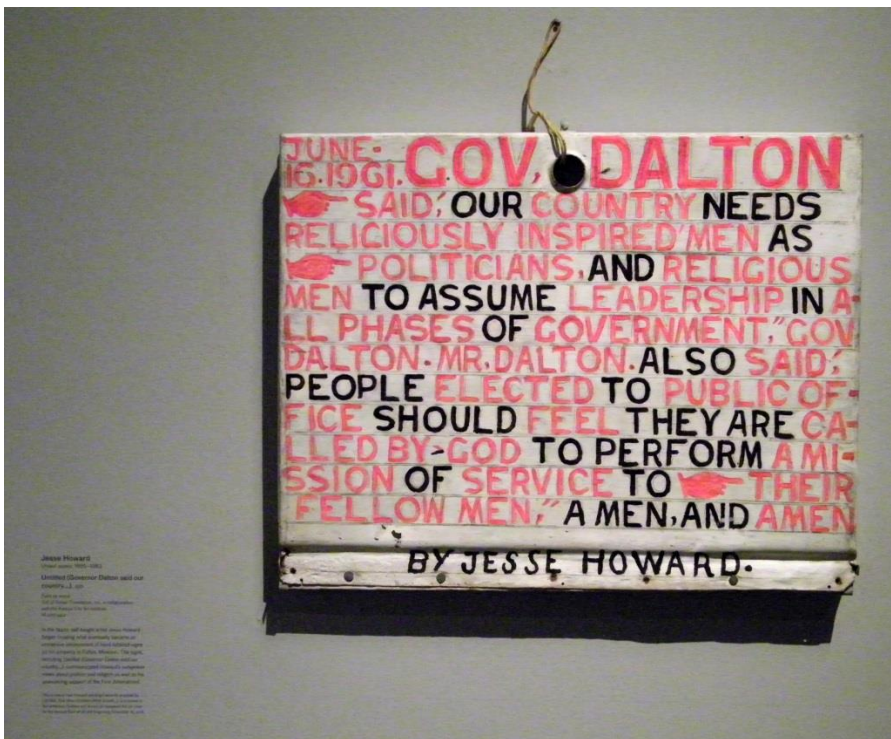
Metal poles dipped in vats of tar for visitors to pull on. This gives visitors an idea of how hard it is to escape from the tar pools. (It's my understanding that they used to have volunteers from tour groups dip into the tar, but they usually proved to be no more match for the tar than the mastodons were.)



Skeleton of an extinct California Sabre-Tooth.



The Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists union offices provide the backdrop for the La Brea *Star* Pit. When you think of some long-forgotten actor whose name could end the sentence “I wonder whatever happened to ...”, there’s a good chance that they ended up here.



I really seemed to feel some connection to this artwork on display next door at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LCMOA).



At LCMOA – This must be one of the world’s smallest balls of twine on display.



You may recall that I visited the world’s largest ball of sisal twine in Cawker City, Kansas some years ago.



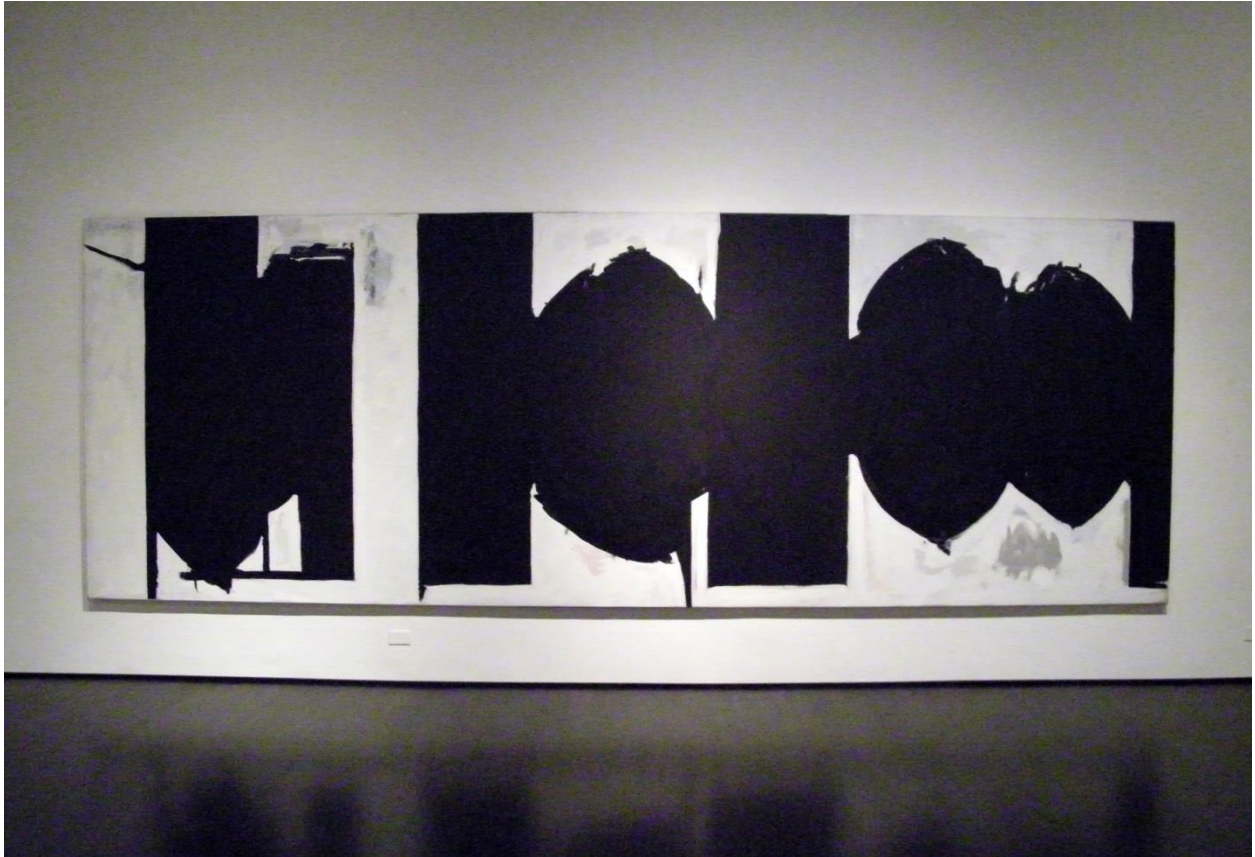
Left: Fred de Milo, Venus de Milo's brother



Right: I was struck by the uncanny resemblance this figure shares with one of my former work colleagues



Band, a large, very cool, room-size wooden ribbon-like sculpture



When I was a kid living in Illinois, we had a school trip to the Art Institute in downtown Chicago. One painting I saw really stuck with me all these years – a few vertical bars with round shapes between them, looking quite sloppy to my young, artistically untrained eye. That it supposedly had something to do with the Spanish Republic/Spanish Civil War didn't help what I thought of it.

I was reminded of it once again when I walked into one of the art museum's rooms and saw this large painting.

No wonder I was reminded of it. This is Robert Motherwell's *Elegy to the Spanish Republic #100* – not the one I saw all those years ago, but one of many variations on this theme that he painted.

When it comes to modern art, I definitely fall more into the I Know What I Like camp rather than someone who really knows art. After all, I recently found out that the version I first saw last sold for about \$1.5 million. I don't think that I would have paid that much for it.

I headed back to Hollywood on Friday only to find that a museum I planned to visit was once again closed when I got there.



When looking at a map to plan my walking route from my hotel to Hollywood, I saw that Cahuenga Boulevard would get me from Santa Monica Boulevard to the heart of Hollywood. Why did that catch my eye? I'm a fan of David Lynch, and my favorite song on his music project Fox Bat Strategy is Lost On Cahuenga (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hgD1ofnD57U>). So I was curious what might have inspired him.

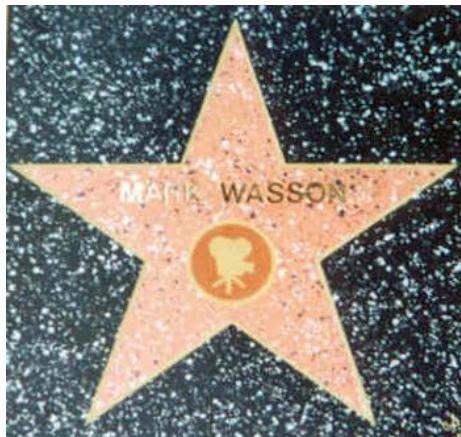
Cahuenga actually connects the more suburban San Fernando Valley to the heart of Hollywood, and I found that Cahuenga Blvd in Hollywood was pretty seedy at one time, frequented by prostitutes, etc. Given Lynch's lyrics, I could speculate on a tie.

I didn't see much seediness late on a sunny Friday morning, although I did pass an adult book store (left).

And I made a bit of a music history discovery. The café pictured on the right is in a building that was once home to Wally Heider's Studio Three. Studio Three was involved with a number of musicians in its day, including Jimi Hendrix, The Beach Boys, Tom Jones, David Bowie, The Doors, Woody Herman, Eric Clapton, REO Speedwagon, Engelbert Humperdink, and The Who to name a few.



Kevin Bacon's star on the famous Hollywood Walk of Fame



Scan of an old print photo of my star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Seeing as how I'm just two degrees from Kevin Bacon (I was in *Man On The Moon* with Courtney Love and Gerry Becker, both of whom were in *Trapped* with Kevin Bacon), I expected to find my star near his. Instead the nearest star to his was for someone named Kyra Sedgwick. Go figure.

Two American presidents have had stars honoring them installed on the Hollywood Walk of Fame: Ronald Reagan and Donald Trump. I looked for President Trump's star, which was easy to find as it is right next to the star for Kevin Spacey. Or at least was. Someone had taken a pick axe to it a few weeks earlier, so its location was temporarily covered. It's since been replaced.



Looking east along Hollywood Blvd through the heart of Hollywood



Apparently the yard art store was out of pink flamingoes.



Whisky-a-Go-Go, a music club on the Sunset Strip in West Hollywood. Several well-known bands got their first big break here, including The Doors, The Byrds, No Doubt, Guns N' Roses and Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention. In addition to its impact on the music industry, the club helped popularize go-go dancing.



Speaking of dancers, here's the sign for the Body Shop, also on the Sunset Strip. Over the years I've noted that these signs usually say Girls Girls Girls. Three Girls. Not two, not four, and certainly not one, prompting me to wonder why it's always three.

More recently I've started watching some of those home improvement shows. During staging when they're displaying knickknacks, they're almost always in groupings of three. Says one stager, "accessories placed in odd-numbered groupings are most aesthetically pleasing, especially in threes."

Perhaps this also applies to what's on display in places like the Body Shop, where patrons would find three Live Nude Girls more aesthetically pleasing than, say, just one or two.



The Wildfox on the Sunset Strip. I'm not sure what the horse has to do with it.



I was happy to find a vegan juicery. I hate finding chunks of meat floating in my juice.



Avon Quilting shares a building with marijuana dispensary The Green Easy. I can only imagine what happens when you combine quilters with pot.



A sign promoting Lolli-poops, lollipops in the shape of poop emojis.

I can't resist asking, How many licks does it take till you get to the center of the poop?

(Old timers will remember Tootsie Pop commercials asked how many licks did it take to reach the Tootsie Roll center of their pops. Purdue University students actually investigated this using a licking machine that they created. The machine averaged 364 licks. But 20 of those students also took the challenge; they averaged just 252 licks.)



This upscale business puts the "chic" in "psychic".



On Saturday I headed for the beach as I enjoy the walk between Santa Monica Pier and Venice Beach. The pier marks the western terminus of historic Route 66.

I wasn't surprised to find a cool, marine layer of clouds when I got there in the morning. Unfortunately, this day it never burned off.



There are restaurants, arcades and an amusement park on the Santa Monica Pier. For those of you who've seen the music video, you'll understand why I smiled when Katy Perry's Chained To The Rhythm song started playing on loudspeakers as I walked through the amusement park.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Um7pMggPnug>



Bumper cars – an innocent amusement park ride or training for commuting on the 405?



I decided to skip this ride.



As I walked south along the Ocean Front Walk towards Venice Beach, I stopped to watch a soccer game featuring players wearing Zorb balls. I have to say that Zorb balls would have made last summer's World Cup matches a lot more fun to watch.



A giant squid soars over some beach volleyball courts.



The Venice Beach Boardwalk



Political posters for sale along Venice Beach

Not really in the mood for my original plans, on Sunday I instead decided to take a city walk through Beverly Hills, located just to the west of West Hollywood.



Beverly Hills City Hall



Rodeo Drive is lined with stores featuring luxury brands including Rolex, Ralph Lauren, Giorgio Armani, Vera Wang, BVLGARI, Cartier, Gucci, Dior and Louis Vuitton. I'd hate to be so rich that I'd have to pretend that these brands mean anything to me.



The Beverly Hills neighborhood between Santa Monica Blvd and Sunset Blvd has been home to numerous celebrities, especially during the Golden Age of Hollywood (I think today's celebrities are more likely to live north of Sunset in the canyons, up in the Hollywood Hills or out in Malibu).

These houses are among many in the neighborhood that have been home to Hollywood's elite, including (clockwise starting from upper left) George Burns and Gracie Allen, Milton Berle, Stan Laurel, and Boris Karloff (I wonder what Karloff handed out to neighborhood Trick-or-Treaters on Halloween?).



The Beverly Hills Hotel and Bungalows, in Beverly Hills on Sunset Blvd. You may recall that this hotel has been in the news recently because of its connection to Donald Trump. Trump often stayed in Bungalow 22 when he traveled to Los Angeles. Former Apprentice contestant Summer Zervos launched a lawsuit against Trump and her attorneys have subpoenaed the hotel for its Trump-related records. Another Trump accuser, Karen McDougal, claimed that her first date with Trump occurred at the hotel.



Not to be outdone is Will Rogers Memorial Park across the street, and in particular its bathroom. Singer George Michael was arrested here by a plain clothes police officer for committing a “lewd act”. Michael used the incident as inspiration for his song and music video Outside.



Greystone Mansion, the largest home ever built in Beverly Hills (55 rooms, 46,000 square feet), was a gift from oil magnate Edward Doheny to his son Ned. The mansion has a famous/notorious history, but it eventually purchased by the city of Beverly Hills, and the property is now a city park.

The mansion has been featured in numerous movies and TV shows, including the following movies: Batman & Robin, The Bodyguard, Eraserhead, Ghostbusters II, The Muppets, Picture Mommy Dead, The Social Network, Spider-Man, Star Trek Into Darkness, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, The Witches of Eastwick and X-Men. TV show episodes of Alias, Arrow, The Bold and the Beautiful, Dark Shadows (reboot), Entourage, ER, Falcon Crest, Gilmore Girls, Knight Rider, Murder She Wrote, and Remington Steele are among those that have featured the mansion.

For soap opera fans, Luke & Laura's wedding on General Hospital was filmed in the Greystone Mansion gardens.

This was my last sight seen during the Los Angeles portion of my trip.