



Jung Shim lifts weights during the seniors' swimming class at the Ketchum-Downtown YMCA on Hope Street.

The SUBTLE HEART of the CITY

Photos
by
**MARISSA
ROTH**

Downtown Los Angeles—home of City Hall, the Lakers, the homeless and, in two weeks, galloping hordes of Democrats—is a mystery even to many of the people who call this city home. It is a neighborhood that many pass through—for work, for entertainment, for court appearances—but that relatively few slow down to learn about or savor.

The beauty of downtown, explains photographer Marissa Roth, 43, is "subtle, not overt like New York or Paris. . . . The visual juxtaposition of pedestrians, automobiles and architecture is purely and uniquely Los Angeles."

Roth, who has freelanced for the L.A. Times and the New York Times, spent five months chronicling downtown for the L.A. Public Library, which is exhibiting the results in the gallery at the

Central Library.

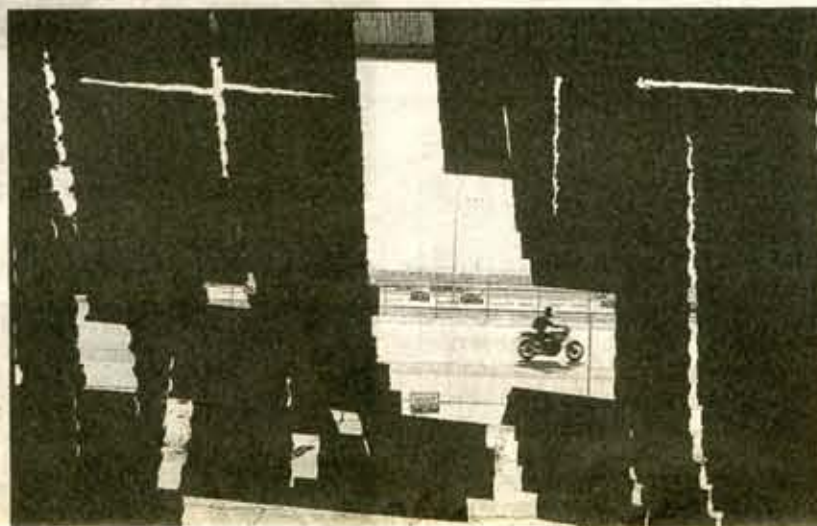
Roth, an L.A. native, spent a lot of time in her father's clothing factory on Los Angeles Street near 9th. But during her project, she found she was both familiar with downtown and a stranger to it: "As an adult I photographed throughout the city . . . yet given our car culture, I had never really experienced downtown as a pedestrian."

These days, downtown is in ferment. The Walt Disney Concert Hall and a new cathedral for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese are on the rise. And City Hall is undergoing a \$273-million renovation. A true Renaissance, or yet another chapter of disappointment?

The photo exhibit runs through Sept. 24.

—PAUL FELDMAN

Information: (213) 228-7000. The photos can be accessed at <http://www.lapl.org/photo>.



A view from abandoned building at Santa Fe and 3rd streets, above. Terry Ellsworth, left, a collector of dolls and film memorabilia, at home in a loft district hotel.



A vendor with her wares at the flower market on Wall Street near 7th. An informal business meeting, below, at Citibank Plaza, 5th and Flower streets.

