

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings by Los Angeles-based artist Lari Pittman. Known for densely worked compositions that marry bold graphic design with historical modes of figuration, his distinctive mix of cultural signs range from the social to the domestic. In a completely unique style, Pittman re-imagines everyday life in a divergent range of styles, and yet the multifaceted nature of both his formal style and selection of imagery remain intensely personal, even as they pull from the realms of politics, philosophy, and design

In his new body of work, Pittman explores the tradition of vanitas painting, which came to fruition in Northern Europe, particularly the Dutch and Flemish regions, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Taken from the Latin meaning emptiness, these still life paintings usually incorporated skulls, burning candles, cut flowers and other objects that mark the passage of time and the transience of life. Pittman structures his modern-day nature morte around diaphanous bubbles, frying eggs, vegetables, splashing kettles, and strings of light bulbs. His day-glo cornucopias, equally warm portraits of domestic life, take on a more thoughtful aspect when seen as arrangements made for a fleeting life.

Pittman's painting techniques eschew the somber tones and realistic volumes of his Dutch and Flemish predecessors. These new paintings have an almost batik-like tone, as if dyes have stained the surface or stamps have printed a pattern onto the surface of the painting. Reached through layers of paint bleeding through more translucent applications on the surface, the very structure of the painting itself, the hues and consistencies of the paint, become as transient as his imagery. In exposing the pentimenti, he allows the early life of the painting to rise to the surface, marking the passage of time and space. Pittman's flares of color and exuberant patterns imbue these still lifes with a sense of saudade, a hopeful sense of nostalgia for the return of what has gone.

Born in 1952 in Glendale, California, Lari Pittman has been awarded the J. Paul Getty Trust Fund for the Visual Arts Fellowship Grant in Painting, NEA Fellowship Grants in Painting and the Skowhegan Medal for Painting. His recent solo exhibitions include: ICA, London; Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Corcoran Museum, Washington DC; Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; Villa Arson, Nice. Pittman lives and works in Los Angeles where he is a professor of art at UCLA.

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