

# in other words

## LA's Best Shows Were Found Beyond the Museums The real action was found in the commercial galleries



Franklin Williams, *Untitled* (1967). From “Dilexi Gallery: Seeking the Unknown”.

The museum landscape in Los Angeles is set to look very different over the next couple of years. Already, LACMA has shuttered its collection galleries as construction continues on its new building, scheduled to open in 2024. Admission fees will be a thing of the past at LA MoCA by January, which should have a marked impact on attendance. And two major openings are in the works: the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures is scheduled to open its doors next year while the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, founded by the film-maker George Lucas, is anticipated to open in 2021.

But this year, the real action was found in the commercial galleries. Aside from a few noble

exceptions, including the retrospective of Lari Pittman’s work at the Hammer (“Declaration of Independence”, until 5 January 2020) and “With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art 1972-1985” at MoCA, the most exciting exhibitions were not in the museums.

Major, multi-city galleries including Matthew Marks and Hauser & Wirth have refused to patronize LA with second-tier shows (as cynics expected they might), while hometown players like Parker Gallery and Nonaka-Hill have contributed to the ongoing education of the city’s art lovers. Here are my picks of the best shows of 2019—any of which would have been a credit to the institutions. J.G.

A project coordinated across six different galleries in two different cities, Los Angeles and San Francisco, deserves admiration if only for its logistical and diplomatic achievement. Organizing curator Laura Whitcomb managed to divvy up work shown at the Dilexi Gallery—which was co-founded and run by jazz aficionado Jim Newman in San Francisco between 1958 and 1969 and briefly in Los Angeles in the early 1960s. Highlights included the phantasmagoria of Roy De Forest and Franklin Williams at Parker, and carved wooden sculptures by Jeremy Anderson at the Landing. **J.G.**

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