

# Independent

## Restaging the Legendary Dilexi Gallery

Four Los Angeles galleries unite: The Landing, Parker Gallery, parrasch heijnen gallery and Marc Selwyn Fine Art



Installation view, *Dilexi Gallery: Seeking the Unknown*. Courtesy of Parker Gallery, Los Angeles. Works by Roy De Forest © 2019 Estate of Roy De Forest / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY

If you want a crash course in the history of West Coast galleries and the artistic connections between artists in San Francisco and Los Angeles in the 1950s and 1960s, don't miss the last weeks of these eye-opening exhibitions focusing on the unprecedented mission of the Dilexi Gallery.

The Dilexi Gallery (1958-1969) was renowned for championing a diverse stable of artists, many of whom — through autonomous strains— presented their own cosmologies. These are now on view in four locations in Los Angeles, and co-curated with Laura Whitcomb at the Landing, Parker Gallery, parrasch heijnen gallery and Marc Selwyn Fine Art. The exhibiting artists and major works from the period additionally include valuable collections of ephemera and rare publications, bringing to light an overview of the period. Artists include: Arlo Acton, John Altoon, Jeremy Anderson, Joel Barletta, Billy Al Bengston, John Chamberlain, Tony DeLap, Jay deFeo, Roy de Forest, William Dubin, Paul Feeley, Llyn Foulkes, Sidney Geist, Joe Goode,

“Restaging the Legendary Dilexi Gallery.” *independenthq.com* (August 2019), accessed online.

Sidney Gordin, Craig Kauffman, Rodger Jacobsen, Wally Hedrick, Alfred Jensen, Jess, Norman Kanter, Leslie Kerr, Harry Kramer, Frank Lobdell, Alan Lynch, Philip Makanna, Robert Morris, Ed Moses, Ron Nagle, Irving Petlin, Deborah Remington, Charles Ross, Hassel Smith, Sam Tchakalian, Horst Trave, Richard Van Buren, H. C. Westermann, and Neil Williams, among others.

The Dilexi Gallery began out of necessity-- a deep-seated need to have a serious space for counterculture artists in the heart of vibrantly active, beatnik San Francisco. In 1958, Jim Newman and Bob Alexander filled this void with championing, free-spirited and nonconformist artists. Dilexi, which derives from Latin “to select, to value highly, to love” was the necessary conduit for these disparate artists’ experiments. Their use of new materials and non-traditional techniques eventually became their individual styles outside any singular art movement. Pivotal museum exhibitions such as *Primary Structures* (1966: Jewish Museum, New York, NY) as well as the locally founded ArtForum brought Dilexi artists international recognition.

Reverberating in the cultural and emotional displacement of their time, these artists pursued a spiritual pilgrimage that burst forth in dramatically new forms of art; urgent and improvisational “happenings,” experimental media, and the adaptation of cottage industry production reinvented the art scene on the West Coast. The proximity of San Francisco to Los Angeles allowed a free interchange of ideas between artists in the two centers. Contrasting with the echoing density in the Bay area, the lack of infrastructure and slow pace in Los Angeles gave parallel rise to serious exploration, where artists were supported by similarly groundbreaking galleries such as Ferus, Dwan, and Wilder.

Newman, keen on this porous exchange, opened a second Dilexi location in Los Angeles in 1962, which included solo exhibitions by Deborah Remington, Joe Goode, and H.C. Westermann. In 1969, Newman left the gallery and began the Dilexi Foundation with Ralph H. Silver. its mission was to promote artists’ loose avant-garde projects, with a broader reach through a television series aired on KQED. The first of the groundbreaking series was Arlo Acton’s and Terry Riley’s ‘*Music with Balls*,’ a work restaged by Parrisch Heijen Gallery, pictured below.

However counterculture his artists were, Newman wanted to establish a space for them. He proclaimed, upon announcing the foundation: “The art world has become small and irrelevant against the general conditions of things in the world. Art ... should be in the way, not hidden.”

“Restaging the Legendary Dilexi Gallery.” *independenthq.com* (August 2019), accessed online.



Installation view, courtesy of Parrasch Heijnen Gallery.

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