

# Lari Pittman

*Irrevocable*

Opening reception: April 27, 2012, 6 – 9 pm  
Exhibition duration: April 27 – June 30, 2012

Gerhardsen Gerner is very pleased to announce an exhibition with new works by the American painter Lari Pittman, on occasion of the GALLERY WEEKEND BERLIN 2012.

Lari Pittman pursued painting at CalArts in the 1970s, when virtually everyone else was turning away from the medium. At times his particular brand of painting – which has always borrowed in equal measure from decoration and high art – has appeared positively visionary, it was so far beyond the mainstream. Now, as a younger generation of painters has come under his influence, he appears more an artist ahead of his time.

It is possible to look back through Pittman's output and see general trends. But it is difficult to separate out distinct periods. Just when did his figures start to layer and almost merge, losing the collagelike feel of some earlier work? And when have his paintings, which so openly relate to sex and repression, given way to lush compositions flowing frenzied across the canvas, yet still remaining but a clearly defined part of the visible? Certain motifs, such as the balloonlike heads and disembodied dancing legs, have occurred for decades, while others might develop in a few series, then disappear only to reemerge years later. In Pittman's view, it is all of a piece. "For me, painting is a continuous practice," he says. "It is a language you build up over time."

Rather than a rational narrative, a Pittman painting delivers a heady mix of allusions and chains of references. When preparing for a new show, he begins by thinking of loose themes that both distinguish the new paintings and connect them to previous bodies of work. "I have always used a very formal structuring of the event in a space," says the artist. "In these works it is a sort of proscenium."

For this year's Gallery Weekend in Berlin, Gerhardsen Gerner will be showing four new larger paintings on canvas and ten small paintings by Lari Pittman.

In these new works, the floral, yellow and pink shapes of the earlier series of works for Gerhardsen Gerner are still to be found, albeit now hidden in the background and in deeper layers of the images.

The new canvases are structured by squarish elements of colour. In two of the paintings they have been applied over the layers beneath in grids or diamond-shapes. In "A transcendent mutability produced by camouflage" they are finally combined into rectangles in their own right – a figure almost merging with the background carries one of them under the arms: a nod to the structuring element of this series.

Central focus of the exhibition is the painting "The making of a Boy (1952)". Branching tubes extend across the picture surface and are flowing into colourful jars. On another layer above, four profile views in white oval frames have been placed, which are connected to each other and to the vessel at the centre by clearly defined lines. Two nest-like picture elements are positioned near the two topmost portraits. Like the passage of time bringing forth stories and legends for centuries, the composition is reminiscent of a family tree with its interwoven feather- and thistle-like structures flowing into each other and blurring.

Lari Pittman lives and works in Los Angeles. He can look back on a long and successful artistic carrier and he also teaches drawing and painting at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

In addition to many acclaimed international exhibitions, his work has been shown in Germany at the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg and ZKM in Karlsruhe. Lari Pittman is represented in the renowned Goetz Collection in Munich and his works are also included in the following collections:

Akron Museum of Art, Akron; Eli Broad Family Foundation, Los Angeles; Carnegie Institute of Art, Pittsburgh; Corcoran Museum of Art, Washington; Chapman University, Orange; Fondazione; Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Torino; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Monterrey; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach; Peter Norton Family Foundation, Santa Monica; Phoenix Museum of Art, Phoenix; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Lincoln; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Weatherspoon Art Gallery, The University of North Carolina; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

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