

REGEN PROJECTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



Lari Pittman: *From A Late Western Impaerium*

November 9 – December 21, 2013

Gallery Hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 10:00 – 6:00 pm

Press preview with the artist: Friday, November 8, 11:00 – 12:00 pm

Opening reception: November 9, 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Regen Projects is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings and works on paper by Los Angeles-based artist **Lari Pittman**. On view will be three monumental paintings, two large canvases, and multiple series of drawings. **Pittman** has exhibited at Regen Projects since 1995, and this will be his seventh show at the gallery.

Pittman's *From A Late Western Impaerium* constructs a loose narrative of nationhood that travels between our present time and the distant past. The compositionally dense works play with the social and current realities of today, with an interest in ornamentation and surface, and draw on the legacy of history as told through the Western canon of painting and the applied arts. **Pittman** poses the question of what a contemporary “history painting” might be today.

The centerpiece of the exhibition features three mural-sized paintings. Entitled *Flying Carpet with a Waning Moon Over a Violent Nation*; *Flying Carpet with Magic Mirrors for a Distorted Nation*; and *Flying Carpet with Petri Dishes for a Disturbed Nation*; the works combine meticulously detailed and multi-layered imagery that is at once heavily abstracted and referential. Tropes of violence and devastation are ‘woven’ through the canvases, in the manner of a tapestry or elaborately constructed rug. **Pittman** interlaces weapons, architectural schematics, and skewed portraits within this web. These three propositions encourage a navigation of varying perspectives—whether through the telescopic crosshairs of a rifle lens, or in the blank reflections of hand-held mirrors, or among molecular cultures in a petri dish—that resist facile readings or easy identifications.

To accompany the epic “Flying Carpets,” **Pittman** will include two large paintings, *Needlepoint Sampler (with Patches) Depicting Daily Life of a Late Western Impaerium #1* and *#2*, which represent the applied (and generally female identified) art of imagery within needlepoint hoops. Abstract figures resembling dolls and caged birds in these two works are both hemmed in and given visibility by the circumference of the additional framing device.

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Taking a cue from the titles of the large “Flying Carpet” paintings, the various sets of works on paper ask us to contemplate the current moment, with historical precedents in mind. Every nation needs an anthem, and the suite of drawings, *New National Anthem and Lamentation Duet with Birds (After Puccini)* is comprised of eight brightly-hued portraits overlaid with the renowned aria from Puccini’s *Tosca*, “Vissi d’arte, vissi d’amore.” As a highly pitched and arch lament, this series of drawings rails against fate, loss, betrayal, and injustice. Other series of drawings in the exhibition demonstrate **Pittman’s** dexterity and range, his ability to glean images from across centuries and cultures and then re-present them as works on paper with a distinct bravura. *Twelve Fayum From A Late Western Impaerium (After Hermenegildo Bustos)* references Coptic mummy masks (Fayum), and 19th century Mexican portrait paintings of the middle-class. *Set Arrangements of Ballet Mécanique for a Fossilized Nation (After Léger)* evokes Dada, chaos, sound, and film. Other series of drawings in the exhibition take up contemporary elements, simultaneously suggesting an almost nostalgic nod to the past. What unites all of these works, however, is something more timeless: **Pittman’s** singular agility as an artist and draftsman.

Lari Pittman was born in Los Angeles, where he currently lives and works. **Pittman** also spent part of his childhood in his mother’s native Colombia, and maintains a second home in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. Solo museum exhibitions include Spacex Gallery, Exeter (1998) [traveled to: Cornerhouse, Manchester; Institute of Contemporary Art, London; Centre d’Art Contemporain, Geneva]; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles (1996) [traveled to: Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.]; Le Consortium, Dijon (2013); and Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis (2013). He participated in Documenta X (1997); and four Whitney Biennial exhibitions (1985, 1993, 1995, 1997). **Pittman** has received many awards, including the Skowhegan Medal (2002); three fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts (1987, 1989, 1993); and was presented with the AICA award for Best Show in a Commercial Gallery Nationally (2010). Rizzoli published a comprehensive monograph of Pittman’s works in 2011, and forthcoming catalogues from Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, and Le Consortium, Dijon will be released in late 2013 and 2014, respectively.

An opening reception for the artist will be held on Saturday, November 9, from 6:00 – 8:00 pm.

Event: Lari Pittman Artist Lecture

Wednesday, November 6, 7:30 pm

Hammer Museum

For more information, please visit (http://hammer.ucla.edu/programs/detail/program_id/1946)

For all press inquiries, please contact Ben Thornborough at 310 276 5424 or benthornborough@regenprojects.com.

For all other inquiries, please contact Jennifer Loh, Jane McCarthy, Lindsay Charlwood, or Mathew Sova at Regen Projects.

Pictured above: **Lari Pittman**, *Flying Carpet with Petri Dishes for a Disturbed Nation*, 2013. Cel-vinyl, spray enamel on canvas over wood panel. 108 x 360 1/4 inches (274.3 x 915 cm).