

# Related Programs

Free and open to the public unless otherwise noted. For a complete list of programs, please visit [camstl.org](http://camstl.org).

## Opening Night

Friday, May 24, 7:00–9:00 PM

## Artist Talk: Lari Pittman

Saturday, May 25, 10:00 AM

Lari Pittman is joined by Assistant Curator Kelly Shindler for a conversation about his work.

## Friday Evening Tours

Fridays, May 31–August 9, 6:00 PM

Enjoy a 30-minute guided tour of the exhibitions every Friday this summer.

Presented by Wells Fargo Advisors.



## Concrete Cinema: *Blue* (1993)

Thursday, June 13 8:00 PM

Join CAM and the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts for a collaborative summer series featuring film and discussion by select contemporary artists that activates the courtyard shared between the institutions. On June 13, *Blue* (1993), directed by Derek Jarman, presents a portrait of the filmmaker months before his death from AIDS-related complications and explores the literal and allegorical meanings of the color blue.

## Breakfast with the Curators

Friday, June 14, 8:30 AM

Complimentary coffee and baked goods provided by Companion Bakehouse. Register at [camstl.org/breakfast](http://camstl.org/breakfast). CAM members are invited for breakfast and a private tour of the exhibitions. Learn more about the artwork and talk directly with the curators.

## Curatorial Tours

Saturday, June 15, 11:00 AM

Thursday, July 25, 6:00 PM, with Tom Reed

Saturday, August 10, 11:00 AM

Join Assistant Curator Kelly Shindler for a unique walkthrough of the current exhibitions. On July 25, Shindler will be joined by artist and master printer Tom Reed of Island Press, who will provide an additional perspective on the work of Lari Pittman.

## First Fridays

Friday, June 7, 5:00–9:00 PM

Friday, July 5, 5:00–9:00 PM

Friday, August 2, 5:00–9:00 PM

Enjoy an evening of art, music, and culture the first Friday of every month. In partnership with KDHX, DJs and musicians will present music responding to the exhibitions, Museum staff will lead tours, and the bar and café will be open. Arts organizations throughout Grand Center are free and open the entire evening.

## Panel Discussion: Culture Wars of Yesterday and Today

Thursday, June 27, 7:00 PM

Join us for a panel discussion on the culture wars of the 1990s and how art has played a role in gay rights awareness and advocacy. Moderated by Assistant Curator Kelly Shindler, the panel will include PROMO Executive Director Anton J. Bockelman, Pride St. Louis, Inc. President Staci Stift, and Washington University Assistant Professor of Art History Ila Nicole Sheren.

## Member Book Club: *The Flamethrowers*

Thursday, August 1, 6:00 PM

*Members only. Complimentary refreshments. Register at [camstl.org/bookclub](http://camstl.org/bookclub).* Chosen by exhibiting artist Lari Pittman, *The Flamethrowers* is Rachel Kushner's second novel, called by the *New Yorker*, "scintillatingly alive, and also alive to artifice... [rippling] with stories, anecdotes, set-piece monologues, crafty egotistical tall tales, and hapless adventures."

# Lari Pittman: A Decorated Chronology

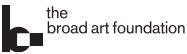
CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM ST. LOUIS / MAY 24–AUGUST 11, 2013

*A Decorated Chronology* is the first solo exhibition of Los Angeles-based artist Lari Pittman in an American museum in nearly twenty years. Over the past three decades, Pittman's work has been internationally celebrated for its visual exuberance, virtuosic skill, and a sophisticated formal logic that resists straightforward interpretation. As multilayered tableaux, Pittman's work reflects a wide range of influences, including feminism, Pop Art, and American consumerism, as well as Latin American and eastern European folk sensibilities. This cultural and temporal mélange reflects what Pittman calls the "bittersweet," or the simultaneous experience of richness and sadness in everyday life.

Primarily comprising paintings and works on paper from the mid-2000s to the present, *A Decorated Chronology* also includes older works essential for understanding Pittman's practice today. The exhibition takes its name from *A Decorated Chronology of Insistence and Resignation* (1992–94), a series in which the artist significantly expanded his approach to address such contentious subjects as sexuality, desire, and violence. In recent years, Pittman's work has evolved, and the paintings here chart an evolution from politically charged, graphic compositions to more introspective works with greater spatial depth. As a whole, *A Decorated Chronology* presents Pittman's inimitable commentary on contemporary life, imbued with both profound visual pleasure and critical reflection.



*Untitled #8, 2010. Acrylic, Cel-Vinyl, and aerosol lacquer on gessoed canvas over panel, 54 x 48 inches. Private collection. © Lari Pittman*



3750 Washington Blvd / St. Louis, MO 63108  
314.535.4660 / [info@camstl.org](mailto:info@camstl.org)



**Website:** [CAMSTL.ORG](http://CAMSTL.ORG)



**Twitter:** [@CONTEMPORARYSTL](https://twitter.com/CONTEMPORARYSTL)



**Facebook:** [/CONTEMPORARYARTMUSEUMSTL](https://www.facebook.com/CONTEMPORARYARTMUSEUMSTL)



**E-News Sign-Up:** [CAMSTL.ORG/NEWS](http://CAMSTL.ORG/NEWS)



**Download the CAM App:** [CAMSTL.ORG/APP](http://CAMSTL.ORG/APP)



**Audio Tour:** Download the CAM app at [camstl.org/app](http://camstl.org/app) or ask for an iPod at the front desk to hear directly from the artist and curator as well as critics on the audio tour.



# GUIDE TO SELECTED WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

## *Thanksgiving, 1985* 🔊

Oil and acrylic on panel  
The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York  
Purchase, with funds from The Lauder Foundation, Leonard and Evelyn Lauder Fund

*Thanksgiving* is the earliest painting in the exhibition and one of a series of works from 1985–86 that marked the first major shift in Pittman’s practice from opaque abstraction to figuration and overtly socio-political subject matter. The series’ meditation on the founding of America is evoked by emblazoning the democratic ideals of “Life,” “Liberty,” and “Pursuit of Happiness” on the left side of the painting. Pittman’s quotation of what Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) described as “certain unalienable rights,” that “all men are created equal,” takes on added significance, as the work was made during the intensifying AIDS crisis in 1980s America. *Thanksgiving* poignantly yet urgently insists that these rights apply to all Americans regardless of race, creed, or sexual orientation.



Untitled #17 (*A Decorated Chronology of Insistence and Resignation*), 1993

## *Untitled #17 (A Decorated Chronology of Insistence and Resignation), 1993* 🔊

Acrylic, enamel, and glitter on panel  
Collection of Ellen and Jimmy Isenson

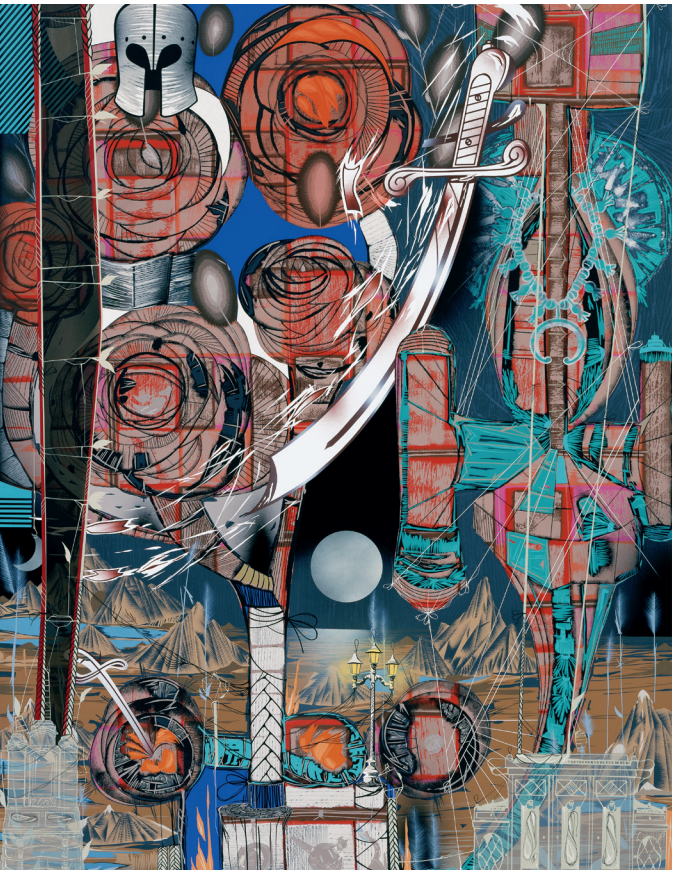
*Untitled #17* presents various images from Pittman’s larger series *A Decorated Chronology of Insistence and Resignation* (1992–94), including the pharmaceutical “Rx” symbol, scissors, shoes, silhouetted figures, and fragmented puppet-like bodies, several of which are overlaid with gold glitter. The compression of background and foreground suggests a greater affinity with the glossy, flat surface of commercial signage than with the

illusion of depth created in figurative painting. Pittman’s use of lurid colors and decorative designs asserts a dramatic and unapologetic artificiality. The central starburst arrangement with the words “2 LIVE,” “2 LOVE,” and “2 WORK” recalls *Thanksgiving* (1985) and its expression of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” The demand for basic human rights in *Untitled #17* emphasizes the political role of art in the “Culture Wars” of late-1980s and early-1990s America. Despite the painting’s sociopolitical commitment, and in contrast to other works in the *Decorated Chronology* series, it sustains a sense of levity and playfulness in its pursuit of visual pleasure.

## *Like You, 1995*

Oil and enamel on five mahogany panels  
The Broad Art Foundation, Santa Monica

In this large, mural-like painting, Pittman orchestrates a carnivalesque network of interacting signs to create a riotous and celebratory landscape. Against the backdrop of an urban environment reminiscent of Los Angeles, images of communication and technology such as computers, cameras, and clocks are interspersed with secularized religious iconography. Clapsed hands applaud instead of pray, open books contain everyday language instead of scripture, and small, medieval altarpieces quote fashion magazines rather than the lives of saints. Hermaphroditic figures pose in expressive states, their smiling red lips planted over the surface like kisses. Across five wooden panels, the work proclaims, “Like you, I despair / Sometimes an overwhelming sadness / A deep funky-funk / But go girl! Grab it by the tail!” Illustrating what he has referred to as the “aria” or “climax” of representation, in which senses and expressions reach their most fully realized state, Pittman creates his own ecstatic moment of contemporary life.



Untitled #16, 2003

## *Untitled #16, 2003*

Matte oil, aerosol lacquer, and Cel-Vinyl on gessoed canvas over wood panel  
Phillip Schrager Collection of Contemporary Art

*Untitled #16* is one in a series of works from 2003 in which Pittman moved further away from his signature use of flat, commercial imagery toward tableaux that present darker subject matter with a stronger sense of pictorial depth and texture. The images in this nighttime scene set against a backdrop of mountain-rimmed lakes—including a white sword slicing through the canvas, an arrangement of roses that resemble wounds, and a disembodied medieval helmet—suggest a setting that is both mystical and violent. This evocation of war recalls the aestheticization of violence in western European religious paintings and exudes a sense of anxiety and alienation brought about by more recent events, such as the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Great Recession of 2008–09, and the U.S.-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

## *Untitled #8 (The Dining Room), 2005*

Cel-Vinyl, acrylic, and alkyd on gessoed canvas over panel  
The Rachofsky Collection

*Untitled #8 (The Dining Room)* extends the imagery and mood of Pittman’s preceding weapons paintings while also addressing the psychological implications and politics of domesticity. He explains that “the titles of these paintings indicate on a political level the importance of residential space that is different from public space in terms of aesthetics and safety,” further noting that, “public space is intrinsically male and heterosexual. And residential space, which is the armature that I chose to make the paintings about and through, is a more polymorphous space that allows, historically, for a more polymorphous identity. That’s why residential space becomes amplified, for me, with ideological resonance and then worthy of some sort of representation and depiction in the paintings. So, it was important to make a painting about a dining room, a living room, the garden, and infuse that with as much power as the banking world or law.”

## *Grand Tour, 2011* 🔊

Acrylic, Cel-Vinyl, and aerosol lacquer on gessoed canvas over panel  
Courtesy the artist; Gladstone Gallery, New York; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

*Grand Tour* depicts a series of individually framed paintings set against a backdrop of various connecting structures. The smaller inset paintings, themselves titled “Montserrat” (1757), “Marrakech” (1842), “Yellowstone” (1878), “Central Park” (1884), “Avec Moi” (1903), and “La Crescenta” (2011), all represent works the artist envisioned making in another life. A series of numbers on the left side of the canvas appear both arbitrary (13, 93, 1579) and significant, including 1776, the year the Declaration of Independence was signed; 1970, the year Pittman initiated his undergraduate studies at the University of California Los Angeles; and 58, his age at the time he made the painting. Pittman frames both the individual tableaux as well as the larger canvas with drawings of drapery or curtains to reinforce his interest in the notion of the proscenium, or the theatrical backdrop against which action and movement occur.

## *Orangerie, 2011*

Matte oil, aerosol lacquer, colored pencil, and Cel-Vinyl on gessoed paper  
Work in 24 parts  
Courtesy the artist; Gladstone Gallery, New York; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Pittman studied the history of the orangery, a classically designed building that was popular in Europe between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, to create this multipart suite of paintings on paper. Often situated on the grounds of large palaces and other estates, orangeries protected citrus fruit and other plants during the cold winter months. The diagonal lattice bisects and links the individual works hung in a grid formation, suggesting a sense of entrapment as the viewer meets the gaze of the figures behind the building’s windows. This composition not only structures the work but also serves as a cinematic screen within which the action in the painting unfolds.



“thought-form of the waning and of the waxing of the self,” 2012

## *“thought-form of the waning and of the waxing of the self,” 2012*

Cel-Vinyl and spray enamel on canvas over wood panel  
Private Collection

This painting is part of a larger series of “thought-form” works that Pittman created in 2012. The thought-form is a concept drawn from both Tibetan mysticism and early twentieth-century theosophy that considers the question of how to visualize one’s interior thoughts. Pittman once again “maps” the picture plane into various architectural elements, here, to frame a grouping of spherical shapes. Each sphere contains a small portrait of either a human figure or a bird, save for the central one, which features a grouping of smaller orbs and red forms resembling primordial insects. These nine spheres—as well as title’s reference to “waning” and “waxing”—evoke the nine lunar phases of the moon. Pittman explores the notion of the thought-form in his presentation of the birth of the self as it enters a purely visual world without the aid of language.