

The 10 Best Booths at Art Basel in Basel Online

ALINA COHEN | JUNE 18, 2020



Installation view of works by Franklin Williams in Parker Gallery's booth installed in Los Angeles. Photo by Paul Salvesson. Courtesy of Parker Gallery.

More than four decades after their making, the Franklin Williams paintings (priced between \$35,000 and \$100,000) and sculptures (priced between \$40,000 and \$45,000) on view here still feel funky and fresh—perfectly in dialogue with contemporary art's current craft obsession. Parker Gallery is showcasing mixed media works the artist made between 1965 and 1975, which zing with lemon yellows, fire-engine reds, and cobalt blues. Williams's selection of materials is as exciting as his hues: An untitled sculpture from 1965 that resembles a small, potted cactus drooping over the side of a tissue box is comprised of acrylic, graphite, beads, glitter, gesso, crochet thread, yarn, fabric, canvas, cotton batting, and a wooden support. Williams didn't shy away from sex, and bodily references abound throughout the presentation.

Viewers may find resonance in Lari Pittman's paintings and Max Colby's sculptures, which arrived decades later. So why isn't Williams better known? Although he's maintained a studio practice since 1960, said gallery founder Sam Parker, "he never sought a 'career' as an artist. While he allowed his work to be included in exhibitions, he did not perform the 'role' of an artist: [he] rarely attended his own openings and hardly ever socialized with his peers." If you're in Los Angeles, you can check out the works in person. The gallery has a booth installed in its backyard and is welcoming in-person visits.