

Halfway to Sanity — THE PIT

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Halfway to Sanity: Inaugural Group Exhibition
February 24 - April 6, 2024
The Pit Los Angeles
3015 Dolores Street, Los Angeles CA 90065

“I’m just gonna do it...fuck it.”

The press release for The Pit’s inaugural exhibition described Los Angeles as “sprawling, isolated, and connected all at once.” Just a few years earlier, in the 2005 book *LA Artland*, Jan Tumlir pointed out how in contemporary art, the LA school is known to search “farther and wider than most.” It is perhaps the ontology of the city and the breadth of its cultural output that has fertilized its interstices and allowed radical departures from tradition and DIY compulsions to take root and flourish.

Through its programming, The Pit, from its inception, has not only flattened presumed hierarchies between emerging and established artists, but it has also reached outwards to LA’s provinces, culling distinct voices from the high desert and beyond. Artists who may have

been overlooked, or have fallen into obscurity, or who have developed visual languages beyond the influence of galleries and grad schools, as well as those who have earned audiences along those routes, have shared space, manifesting LA's spirit and the ethos of The Pit's founders that was established long before the original Glendale location even opened the doors.

In an interview from 2019 on the occasion of The Pit's five-year anniversary, Adam Miller and Devon Oder reflected on the gallery's origins. Both having attended ArtCenter College of Design's Grad Art program and entering the fray just in time for the 2008 collapse, the exigencies of economic adversity added an unexpected twist. Established galleries were shuttered and prospects shrank. With a long history of doing whatever it takes as a musician and organizer, supplemented by a few years of curation, Miller summed up what he felt when artist Laura Owens launched the celebrated and sorely missed 356 Mission gallery in 2013: Just get rid of these old ideas of what artists should, and shouldn't do, and just be like, "I'm just gonna do it, and fuck it."

The first several exhibitions at the original Glendale space were group shows, laying a fertile field for cross-pollination and new collaborations. These group shows placed the known alongside the unknown. The second show, curated by Roger Herman, exhibited work by his own students at UCLA. Armed with an in-house risograph, exhibitions begat writing, publications, community, craft...all reveling in the spontaneity and compulsion of a DIY, community-oriented ideology. Miller and Oder, restless renovators, expanded the space for new projects, always leaning towards collaboration, always doing something with any available space, eventually expanding into three galleries: two in Glendale, and one in Palm Springs, which opened in 2021. The inaugural group show in the new Atwater space continues in the spirit of The Pit's credo, bringing together dozens of artists who have appeared in the gallery over the past decade as well as introducing new artists who will appear in the gallery's future programming.

The DIY mentality that is embedded in The Pit's origins isn't about rugged individualism. It is a means of subverting the hierarchies of institutionalized modes of artistic production that often only lead to exclusion. Having passed the former Glendale location on to another artist-run gallery, Gattopardo, the new Atwater location offers yet more space to expand into and do something with, to make things visible. This new command center avails space for expansive exhibitions, printed matter, and events, embodying the sprawling, isolated, connective qualities of LA at large.

– Reuben Merringer

Artists List:

Donald Baechler, Chase Barney, Emily Yong Beck, Laura Berger, Amy Bessone, Chase

Biado, Keith Boadwee, Jonathan Casella, Isabella Cuglievan, Aaron Curry, Heather Day, Amir H. Fallah, Howard Fonda, Bella Foster, Viola Frey, Erik Frydenborg, Joel Gaitan, Gabrielle Garland, Daniel Gibson, Tamara Gonzales, James Goss, Julia Haft-Candell, Trulee Hall, Nasim Hantehzadeh, Annie Hémond Hotte, Roger Herman, Raymie Iadevaia, Sam Jablon, Shaun Johnson, Kelly Lynn Jones, Jennifer King, Craig Kucia, Sophie Larrimore, Jennie Jieun Lee, Shana Lutker, Emily Marchand, Liz Markus, Tony Marsh, Anthony Miler, Roscoe Mitchell, Emmett Moore, Richard Nam, Laurie Nye, Laura Owens, Jonathan Pylypchuk, Umar Rashid, Heather Rasmussen, Jennifer Rochlin, Amanda Ross-Ho, Adrienne Rubenstein, Conrad Ruiz, Sterling Ruby, Blair Saxon-Hill, Ryan Schneider, Allison Schulnik, Mindy Shapero, Nora Shields, Andrew Sexton, Magnus Sodamin, Devin Troy Strother, Joani Tremblay, James Ulmer, David "MrStarCity" White, and Maryam Yousif.