

GLADSTONE GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LARI PITTMAN

November 19 through December 23, 2005

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Lari Pittman. Born in 1952 in Glendale, California, the Los Angeles-based painter has made a reputation with a distinctive and innovative vocabulary, unlike any other painter working today. Marrying the American traditions of AbEx and Pop, his remarkably complex compositions bear a direct lineage to the expressive flatness of Pollock and the everyday appropriations of Warhol. Reassembling visual cues from both historic and banal origins, his works directly tackle issues of art history, interpretation, and selfhood.

Pittman's paintings on canvas and wood panel layer graphic elements of everyday life, creating beguiling and imaginative realms, reflecting the often maze-like qualities of the modern world. Slick and unblemished, these mural-like works are compiled of juxtaposed imagery that seems so familiar to the viewer, largely as they reference stock illustration, signage, and design. However, behind his obsessively detailed and densely packed surfaces, Pittman logically constructs narratives based on part-to-part and part-to-whole formal relationships whose visual order creates its own language. But linguistic order is not the end to his painterly means, as critic Doug Harvey notes, "The literalist $A=1$, $B=2$ ratio implies that the hidden message is the one indispensable component of the artwork, and once it's been teased from its camouflage, the camouflage can be discarded. Nothing could be further from the truth." More than complex rebuses, Pittman strives to evoke subtle and abstract personal statements on selfhood and society, which are often ineffable. In the end, the whole is larger than the sum of its parts, creating an all-over environment in which the captivated viewer can lose himself in the act of the gaze and the enigma of the subject.

In his new body of work, Pittman turns away from the grand landscapes of the contemporary world and focuses instead on individual rooms and the surrounding garden of a fictitious house, in a sense recreating a home within the gallery. Just as psychoanalysis uses domestic spaces as stand-ins for the realms of the subconscious, Pittman's baroque reconfiguration of a typical domestic sphere comments on the interior and exterior self and its conflicts or acquiescence to the surrounding world. Spaces such as the kitchen, bedroom, and parlor possess a poignancy of mood, cluttered as they become with Pittman's numerous graphics. In the end it is the simultaneity of imagery that creates the power to move and enthrall the viewer.

Lari Pittman has been awarded the J. Paul Getty Trust Fund for the Visual Arts Fellowship Grant in Painting, NEA Fellowship Grants in Painting and the Skowhegan Medal for Painting. His recent solo exhibitions include: ICA, London; Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Corcoran Museum, Washington DC; Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; Villa Arson, Nice. Pittman lives and works in Los Angeles.

For further information please contact Miciah Hussey
at 212 206 9300 or mhussey@gladstonegallery.com