

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Mayer Rus, "Lari Pittman", *Architectural Digest*, November 15, 2013

The word "kaleidoscopic" tends to get trotted out frequently in the shelter press (as in "a kaleidoscopic array of *objets de vertu*," rather than "a boatload of tchotchkes"), but Los Angeles-based artist Lari Pittman has given us a master class in the true meaning of the term. His latest exhibition at Regen Projects—called "From a Late Western Impaerium"—is a dizzying, psychedelic meditation on power, violence, imperialism, and social ferment. It's something to see.



Twelve Fayum From a Late Western Impaerium (After Hermenegildo Bustos), 2013.

Densely layered with imagery of weapons, architectural schematics, historical portraiture, birds, and molecular biology, Pittman's new paintings merrily skip across the centuries, connecting the realities of contemporary culture and global upheaval with those of the distant past. The artist's enduring fascination with surface and ornamentation again comes to life with piercing eloquence in paintings that blend deeply personal iconography with shamanistic insight.



Flying Carpet of Petri Dishes for a Disturbed Nation, 2013.

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

The centerpiece of the show is a suite of three mesmerizing, mural-size paintings: *Flying Carpet of a Waning Moon Over a Violent Nation*, *Flying Carpet of Magic Mirrors for a Distorted Nation*, and *Flying Carpet of Petri Dishes for a Disturbed Nation*. Regen Projects' year-old Santa Monica Boulevard gallery, designed by L.A. architect Michael Maltzan, seems to have been tailor-made for this exhibition, providing sufficient space for Pittman's monumental paintings to breathe and pulse.



Eight Encampments as Civic Centers (From a Late Western Imperium), 2013.

The murals are accompanied by multiple series of works on paper that ruminate on themes of fate, loss, betrayal, and injustice. Indeed, the general thrust of Pittman's obsessions—political and personal trauma, with an incisive eye on the lamentable state of current world affairs—is a welcome tonic to the glittery, Koons-and-Hirst-variety theatrics that often dominate contemporary art discourse.