

## CALENDAR

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## AROUND THE GALLERIES

## A collision of opposites makes for weighty art

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ART CRITIC

The recent uptick of interest in 1960s L.A. art — encompassing exhibitions, books and documentaries — has been gratifying to see, and there's every reason to think it will continue. The city's conventional profile as "a place with no history" is in the process of being definitively erased and replaced. There's no turning back from that.

At Frank Lloyd Gallery, a show of recent, painted wall-reliefs by **Craig Kauffman** continues to explore a trajectory begun by the artist more than 40 years ago. The show does include a rather tepid pair of scroll-like paintings on sheets of clear plastic, which intersect techniques of commercial advertising and erotic fetishes (in the form of stylized women's shoes) with traditional Japanese or Chinese forms. Also, three vacuum-formed plastic "bubbles," each swelling suggestively from an octagonal base, recall the great lozenge-shaped works of the late-1960s that represent Kauffman at his best.



Frank Lloyd Gallery

**CRAIG KAUFFMAN:** The artist's "wall flower" paintings are a highlight at Frank Lloyd Gallery.

But it's the group of four, strangely glamorous "wall flowers" that captivate. Hung high on the wall, centered at about six feet, just over head, they're like toxic blossoms that quietly demand curious perusal from your upturned eye.

Each untitled relief was made by draping a sheet of heated clear-acrylic over a wooden form, allowing it to droop and then cool. Kauffman spray painted the six-sided form from behind with acrylic lacquer, while the flat interior shape (also a regular hexagon) is thickly coated with a mixture of acrylic paint and glitter.

When hung on the wall, the bowl-like relief performs as a subtle light-catcher, while complex shadow-patterns cascade down the wall. Various transparent, translucent and reflective, the acrylics refract and shatter ambient illumination. Kauffman's colors vary from pale pink, silver and yellow to bright purple and turquoise; but throughout, the emphasis is on synthetic artifice.

Think overgrown morning glories as brought to you by Monsanto. Or, flesh brushed with satin and spangles. Or perhaps a sunset enlivened by smog. The strangely poignant collision of sumptuousness and vulgarity, elegance and tawdriness gives these works a surprising heft.

**Frank Lloyd Gallery,** Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica, (310) 264-3866, through May 1. Closed Sundays and Mondays. [www.franklloyd.com](http://www.franklloyd.com)