



## CULTURE MONSTER

ALL ARTS, ALL THE TIME

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### Review: 'Sensual Mechanical: The Art of Craig Kauffman' by Hunter Drohojowska-Philp

By Christopher Knight, Los Angeles Times Art Critic

"Sensual Mechanical: The Art of Craig Kauffman"

Hunter Drohojowska-Philp

Frank Lloyd Gallery, 212 pages, \$75



Craig Kauffman (1932-2010), "No. 1," 1963 (detail).

Here's a masterpiece recipe. Start with one part "The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even" — the witty, erotic encounter among modern machines, otherwise known as "The Large Glass," by Dada artist Marcel Duchamp. Toss in a cheap but cheerful commercial plastic sign in the shape of a ripe bunch of grapes. Add a stroke of painterly abstract genius. The tasty if unexpected delicacy is Craig Kauffman's vividly colored, vacuum-formed plastic wall-reliefs from the 1960s.

Kauffman saw Duchamp's "The Large Glass" at the French expatriate artist's 1963 retrospective at the old Pasadena Art Museum. The commercially made sign with the bunch of grapes was in a less exalted place, hanging at Grandma's Donut Shop in West Hollywood. And the painterly genius — well, that was Kauffman's own, a gift the Eagle Rock native had been honing for several years in frankly sexual paintings that betray a refined legacy as diverse as Abstract Expressionism and traditional Japanese and Chinese painting.

Now the artist, who died two years ago at 78, is the subject of a gorgeously illustrated and highly informative monograph published by Frank Lloyd Gallery, which represents the artist's estate. Hunter Drohojowska-Philp's 2011 book "Rebels in Paradise: The Los Angeles Art Scene and the 1960s" sketched the city's first flush of artistic maturity. Here she chronicles for the first time and in illuminating depth Kauffman's life and the complete evolution of his luminous art.