

DILEXI GALLERY

Multi-Venue Retrospective

Taking place at:

Brian Gross Fine Art / *San Francisco*

Crown Point Press / *San Francisco*

Parker Gallery / *Los Angeles*

Parrasch Heijnen Gallery / *Los Angeles*

The Landing / *Los Angeles*



with a related exhibition at:

Marc Selwyn Fine Art / *Los Angeles*

The Dilexi Multi-Venue Retrospective



The Dilexi Gallery in San Francisco operated in the years 1958-1969 and played a key role in the cultivation and development of contemporary art in the Bay Area and beyond. The Dilexi's young director Jim Newman had an implicit understanding of works that engaged paradigmatic shifts, embraced new philosophical constructs, and served as vessels of sacred reverie for a new era.

Dilexi presented artists who not only became some of the most well-known in California and American art, but also notably distinguished itself by showcasing disparate artists as a cohesive like-minded whole. It functioned much like a laboratory with variant chemical compounds that when combined offered a powerful philosophical formula that actively transmuted the cultural landscape, allowing its artists to find passage through the confining culture of the status quo toward a total liberation and mystical revolution. The work shown at Dilexi in these years reflected the desire to present the dichotomy between organic vitality and formal elegance, engaging the new materials and technology of its day. It served as a pivotal stepping-stone that brought Bay Area art international exposure, providing the framework for its artists to be included in some of the most groundbreaking museum shows and international collections of the 20th century.

From 1962 to 1963, the Dilexi had an outpost in Los Angeles operated by Rolf Nelson, who would start his own Rolf Nelson Gallery shortly afterward. For Newman, who had his start as a curator in Los Angeles in the mid-1950s, this was a natural continuation of an interchange between Northern

and Southern Californian artists that had begun with his friendship and tight relationship with well-known curator Walter Hopps and the Ferus Gallery.

Following the closure of its San Francisco venue, the Dilexi went on to become the Dilexi Foundation commissioning artist films, happenings, publications, and performances which sought to continue its objectives within a broader cultural sphere.

This multi-venue exhibition, taking place in the summer of 2019 at five galleries in both San Francisco and Los Angeles, rekindles the Dilexi's original spirit of alliance. This staging of multiple museum quality shows allows an exploration of the deeper philosophic underpinnings of the gallery's role as a key vehicle in showcasing the breadth of ideas taking place in American art throughout that decade, with overlaps of meaning that can only be clearly seen now, more than fifty years later.

The project also draws attention to a period of time when galleries more readily presented an interconnectivity of mutual support, allying themselves to champion a collective ideology during a dangerous chapter in American history. Accompanied by a richly illustrated book, this exhibition cycle provides a much-needed look back at a gallery's capacity to steer culture into new frontiers.

-Curatorial Director Laura Whitcomb
www.labelcuratorial.com

Dilexi Gallery: The Early Years

June 8 - July 27

John Altoon, Wallace Berman, Joan Brown, Jay DeFeo, Roy De Forest,
Sonia Gechtoff, Wally Hedrick, James Kelly, Robert Morris, Ed Moses,
Manuel Neri, Leo Valledor



Jay DeFeo
Landscape with Figure, 1955
oil on canvas
© The Jay DeFeo Foundation /
Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY



Robert Morris
December, 1959
oil on canvas
© Robert Morris / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY



Roy De Forest
Concerning White Elephants, 1960
oil, acrylic, PVA, wood
© Estate of Roy De Forest /
Licensed by VAGA at Artist Rights Society (ARS), NY

Jim Newman, an ethnomusicologist and musician, and Robert Alexander, an artist and poet, both of whom were jazz aficionados, originally planned to open the Dilexi Gallery together with Walter Hopps. Hopps decided rather to focus on the Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles, which would offer this enterprise a key interchange between Northern and Southern California. Newman, who would remain the Dilexi's enduring director, had extensive experience as a jazz presenter, having staged numerous concerts at Oberlin College (where he majored in music) presenting such artists as Dave Brubeck, Teddy Charles, Count Basie, Chet Baker, Charles Mingus, Terry Gibbs, and Gerry Mulligan. Bob Alexander was a poet, collagist and activist who had been a close friend of Wallace Berman in his youth and like Newman a dedicated jazz aficionado. Together they both worked with Hopps at Syndell Studio, which through its efforts eventually formed the platform of *Action 1* where notably many Bay Area artists first showed in Los Angeles. The close alliances made in Los Angeles and the Bay Area would form the basis of Dilexi's objective in its early years, which sought to represent artists that had an autonomous voice that communed through allegiances to jazz and its non-sequitur language that transmitted from the unconscious. The Dilexi inaugural exhibition included artists who had shown previously

at King Ubu, 6, East & West, and Spatsa galleries, presenting a bond made through music that was a broad outcome in their work. They had also shown at The Place, as well as at the Jazz Cellar where Alexander curated. Many of them including Joan Brown, Manuel Neri, Sonia Gechtoff, James Kelly, Jay DeFeo, and Wally Hedrick lived at the Fillmore apartment building where Jim Newman lived before handing the keys to his friends Craig Kauffman and Ed Moses. Hedrick's Studio 13 Jazz band often played in the building.

Most of the work presented in the Brian Gross Fine Art show is by artists included in the Dilexi inaugural show. The exception is the work of Robert Morris, who had two solo exhibitions of abstract expressionism in the first 18 months of operation which now offer a critical window into his lesser known evolution that led to minimalism. The show presents a close network of friends that studied together at the California School of Fine Art (later SFAI) and lived together with Jim Newman at the renowned Fillmore building now attributed as Painterland, along with artists from Los Angeles. The show presents the inceptive stages of artists in the time they were first seen by the Dilexi founders along with the years they first showed at the gallery. It also includes works made over the course of its years that reflected its collective ideology.

CROWN POINT PRESS

Beulah Land

June 8 - July 27

Fred Martin



Fred Martin

Image from *Beulah Land*, a bound book of 15 etchings and two pages of letter press.
Published by Crown Point Press and printed by Kathan Brown.

Crown Point Press focuses on the 1966 book by artist Fred Martin titled *Beulah Land*, which was the central component of his identically titled solo show at Dilexi. Although his name is less familiar to some audiences, Martin showed a number of times at Dilexi over the years, was a teacher at the San Francisco Art Institute (formerly the California School of Fine Arts) and was notably the exhibiting artist the night Allen Ginsberg first read *Howl* in 1955 at the 6 Gallery. His *Beulah Land* show that took place in January and February of 1967 at Dilexi included the sequence of fifteen eponymous etchings that were printed and turned into a book by Kathan Brown,

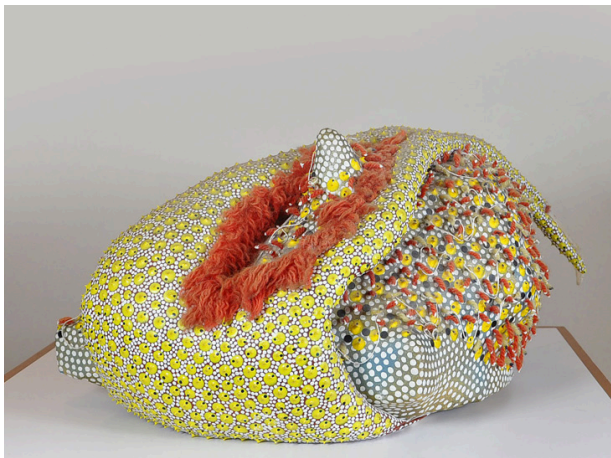
the founder of Crown Point Press. Some of the prints were hand-colored with watercolor by the artist. This body of work amalgamated Martin's mythological constructs and inner cosmogony built from his fascination with hermetic tradition, Jungian archetypes, and Eastern philosophies through the lens of pioneering America. An artist who studied with Jay DeFeo and Sam Francis, he remained pivotal to not only the Bay Area scene but is notable for being one of the most vocal champions of Bay Area art through his eventual role as Dean of SFAI from 1965 to 1975.

PARKER GALLERY

Cosmologies and Hermetic Forays

June 15 - August 10

Jeremy Anderson, Wallace Berman, Roy De Forest, Wally Hedrick, Alfred Jensen, Jess, Kurt Schwitters, H.C. Westermann, Franklin Williams



Franklin Williams
Untitled, 1966
acrylic, thread and yarn on canvas, stuffed
with cotton batting



Jess
Variations on Durer, 1959
mixed media collage
© the Jess Collins Trust

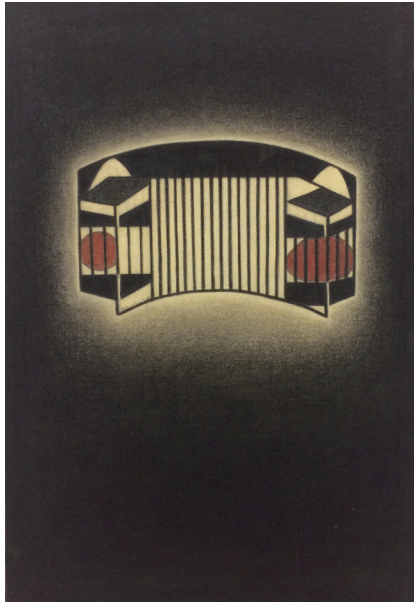
Through the years, Dilexi presented artists who showed implicitly and explicitly their own cosmologies, replete with systems for individuation. Revitalizing the notion that the artist had a proto-shamanic role, their work culled the latent powers of alchemy and Kaballah, totemic thought and diagrammatic systems that presented the capacity to convene with the unknown. The show presents artists who created works from the jetsam of civilization, including Kurt Schwitters, Franklin Williams, H.C. Westermann, Jess, and Roy De Forest. Alfred Jensen and Jeremy Anderson created poignantly modern work based on ancient and timeless systems. Alfred Jensen explored native and indigenous traditions that harbored numerological

systems as the foundation of their metaphysics. Wally Hedrick enveloped all these approaches and philosophies, painting esoteric diagrams and later, painting out his compositions in black. This body of work revitalizes the ancient practice of negation and the Heraclitean concept that the beginning and end are one. Within their autonomous forays, these artists sought shifts of consciousness so as to achieve a collective Utopian goal. Seen as a whole, their works worked towards transmutation and rekindled an atavistic understanding through their own patterns, trajectories, and forms, positioning the viewer to transcend worlds by virtue of their engagement. Their work offered a modern allegory to ancient systems of magic.

Pythagorean Phenomenology

June 22 - August 10

Arlo Acton, Tony DeLap, Deborah Remington, Charles Ross, Richard Van Buren



Deborah Remington
Soot Series 2, 1963
soot and red crayon on muslin
© Deborah Remington



Tony DeLap
Modern Times, 1966
wood, fiberglass, lacquer
© Tony DeLap

With cues from László Moholy Nagy for artists to work with the materials of their time and Marshall McLuhan's prophetic theories which encouraged artists to engage new media, Dilexi and the Dilexi Foundation engaged the future by enlisting the hermetic secrets of the past. Contemporary art, performance and film have continuously utilized ancient Pythagorean laws. Dilexi's staging of its artists offered a modern means to enact ancient systems of reverence and ritual. In the years that western magical practice and Eastern philosophical systems corroborated scientific advance, the Dilexi years offered a counter working to the social and political crises of its day. Parrasch Heijnen presents a modern metaphor to Pythagoras's Temple of Crotona as means to revitalize ancient hermetic laws which were a primary language for the minimalist sculptors and composers central to the Dilexi canon. The exhibition includes the phenomenological prism work of Charles Ross and the sculptures of Tony DeLap and Richard Van Buren, both included in the landmark *Primary Structures* show of 1966 that simulated

hermetic laws into reductionist concrete ideas. A compelling Eastern philosophical approach is presented within the work of Deborah Remington who shared new modalities of reverence through the dystopian enigma of the machine age. The show hosts Charles Ross's re-staging of his Dilexi show *Environment* with Anna Halprin's Dancers' Workshop. The gallery will also present the film *Music with Balls* presenting assemblage artist Arlo Acton's kinetic sound art piece created for Terry Riley's microtonal music. Pythagorean laws will continue with a film by Edwin Schlossberg, collaborating with Buckminster Fuller and an archival cameo of a very young Andy Warhol, which investigates the metaphysical role of McLuhan's prophetic choice medium. A series of sound art performances will also take place at the gallery which seeks to highlight the reciprocity of ancient Pythagorean laws in both the Eastern and Western tradition with an homage to Pandit Pran Nath who James Newman, La Monte Young and Terry Riley worked with when making their documentary *In Between the Notes*.

the Landing

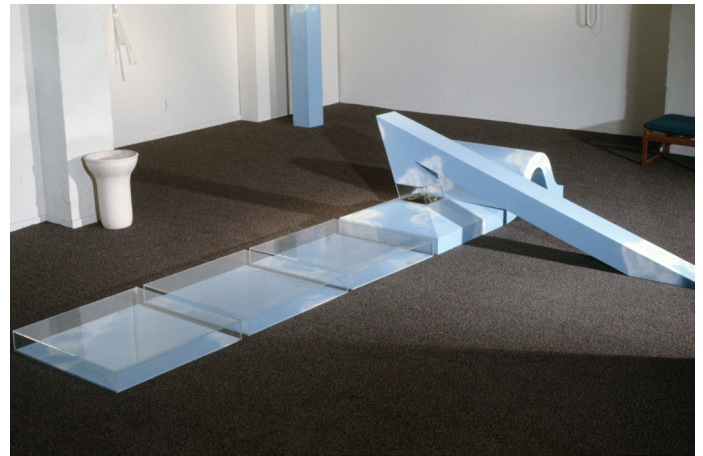
Disparate Ontologies

June 22 - August 24

John Altoon, Jeremy Anderson, Joel Barletta, William Dubin, Paul Feeley, Sidney Geist, Joe Goode, Sidney Gordin, Rodger Jacobsen, Norman Kanter, Leslie Kerr, Harry Kramer, Frank Lobdell, Alan Lynch, Phil Makanna, Fred Martin, Gary Molitor, Ron Nagle, Irving Petlin, Raymond Rocklin, Richard Shaw, Hassel Smith, Sam Tchakalian, Horst Trave, Milton Resnick, H.C. Westermann, Neil Williams, Wilfrid Zogbaum



Jeremy Anderson
Memories in View, 1962
redwood, bronze, and fruitwood
© Estate of Jeremy Anderson



Gary Molitor
Anti Plastic Here and Now Icon, 1967
fiberglass and Plexiglas on Masonite
© Gary Molitor / in the collection of Portland Art Museum



Leslie Kerr
Untitled, 1964

The Dilexi, Northern California's equivalent to the early years at the Ferus and the Dwan galleries was unique in that it presented a heterogeneity of highly clashing styles presented in a rhythmic organic dialogue. The Landing re-stages the Dilexi's radical approach to curating so as to collectively confer a new realm of meaning through these heterogeneous pairings. The Landing show presents two generations that had survived war and saw their work as a vehicle for both catharsis and protestation.

In addition this presentation will include Dilexi director Jim Newman's films for KQED presenting Anna Halprin and Yvonne Rainer as well as his film by the artist Phil Makanna *Shoot the Whale* (1971), Warhol's *Paul Swan*, and Sun Ra's *Space is the Place* which featured the work of the Ant Farm collective.

The Landing will examine the broader identity of the Dilexi presenting ephemera cases and the most concentrated viewing of the Dilexi films. It will also present a rare book of an elaborate proposal created by Dilexi and Lawrence Halprin which staged the entire city of San Francisco as the site of a large happening. The Landing will present a series of sound art performances and dance performances in dialogue with historical work by Halprin and Rainer. This exhibition shows that a gallery has the potential to become a laboratory of ideas which facilitates radical change. Dilexi ultimately played a pivotal role in the shift of both consciousness and culture seen in the years of the gallery and its aftermath.

M A R C
S E L W Y N
F I N E
A R T

July 13 - September 14

Jay DeFeo, Craig Kauffman

Marc Selwyn Fine Art presents two critical artists shown at the Dilexi Gallery, Jay DeFeo and Craig Kauffman. Both lived in the legendary 2322 Fillmore Street flats and participated in the renowned *Action / Merry-Go-Round* show in Santa Monica. The gallery will exhibit paintings on paper from the 1950's by Jay DeFeo and drawings from the same period by Craig Kauffman.