

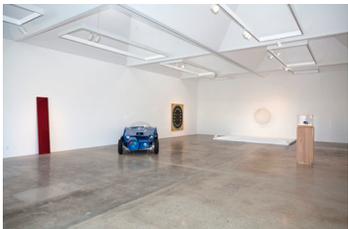
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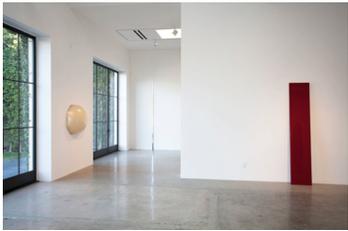
Hot Rods And Surfboards: SoCal Artists Of The '60s



Sun, surf, and the open road with the top down: all these images directly recall the days of 1960s Southern California, and all are captured in the work on display this month at Los Angeles' KAYNE GRIFFIN CORCORAN Gallery. The show's full title spells out its subject: Surface to Air: Los Angeles Artists of the '60s and the Materials That They Used. Sleek vintage surfboards, translucent columns, glossy ceramics, and eye-popping video from some of the era's top names including Robert Irwin, Ken Price, and KENNETH ANGER showcase a distinct moment when artists were focused on how to manifest a vision of the future with the tools of the present.



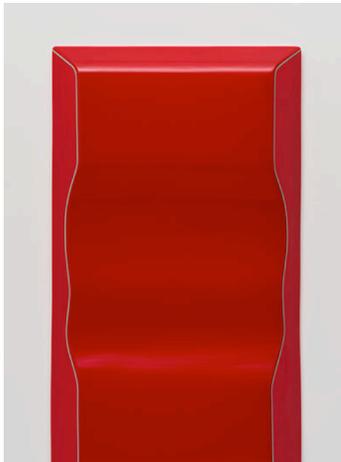
Ed Roth's Orbitron, a futuristic hot rod that could have come straight out of *The Jetsons*, holds court in the center of the space. The legendary bright-blue ride, a homage to the artistry of a budding car culture, is lined with a matching plush interior and features a vintage television behind the wheel. The custom ride was originally constructed by Roth, whose body of work also includes an extensive library of cartoons, in 1964. The Orbitron was feared lost until it was rediscovered in 2007 in Mexico, where a carnival owner had owned it for years. Some of Roth's original design team reunited to help carefully restore the car (watch a video of the rescue and restoration [HERE](#)).

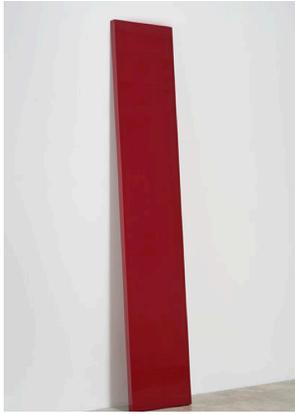


Kayne Griffin Corcoran brought aboard curator Robert Dean, editor of the massive multi-volume *Catalogue Raisonné* of Ed Ruscha, on the seminal mid-century Los Angeles-based artist, to bring this show to life. A 1975 film by Ed Ruscha, *Miracle*, is also exhibited in the show. Director Genevieve Day, who has been with the gallery for ten years, answered some of our questions on the period, the "finish-fetish" moniker, and how the works of the collected artists compare to the equally rich East Coast pop art scene of the same era.

NOAH ADLER: The British photographer John Coplans referred to the work of these artists as a "finish fetish." Did that play into the approach to this show?

GENEVIEVE DAY: In some ways, "finish fetish" is an appropriate term, particularly if we limit the discussion of this distinct use of materials and techniques as a means to an end. However, like most terms applied to groups of artists, the artists themselves have generally rejected it. With this in mind, the exhibition seeks to look beyond just surface quality to





examine the specific environment of Southern California and the role this played in these artists' work at the time. In this way, *Surface to Air*, looks at not only the similarities between these artists' work, but also the differences from one another in the development of their work.

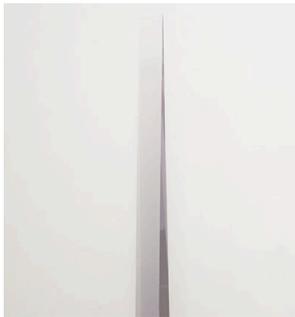
A stand-out in the show is Ed Roth's *Orbitron*. What is the story behind it and how did it make it into the show?

The curator, Robert Dean, believed it was important to include an example of the custom hot rods that were being built at the time, particularly because the spray-booth application of paint and pinstriping were used by artists such as Billy Al Bengston, JUDY CHICAGO, and Craig Kauffman. Beyond that, several of the artists in the exhibition were car enthusiasts, a context which undoubtedly informed their art-making.



The geometry of the pieces in the show struck me—particularly in Robert Irwin's *Column*, PETER ALEXANDER's *Clear Wedge*, and Hobie Alter's vintage surfboard. How were shapes approached for the show?

The reductive forms have similarities to East Coast Minimalism, however, the bold colors, transparent materials, and glossy surfaces were specifically West Coast. These materials were often very closely bound to the environment of surf and car culture of '60s Southern California, often directly employing these same mediums and techniques within the artworks. This contrasted against notions of purity of form that informed East Coast minimalism.



In light of recent shows featuring other hometown heroes (James Turrell at LACMA, MIKE KELLEY at MOCA), why were the '60s specifically chosen?

This was a fertile period for artists who were developing an aesthetic and material point of view based on new technologies developing at the time, and referencing "folk" objects such as cars and surfboards. The culture and environment of Los Angeles was directly evident in their work, and the development of these artists continues to be influential to artists today.



Through July 5, 2014