

ARTILLERY

ARTILLERY BEST IN SHOW 2017

Staff Writer Ezrha Jean Black Picks the Top 10 Highlights from a spectacular year of gallery and museum shows

by Ezrha Jean Black ·

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The experience of art in Los Angeles is always both very specific to its localized encounter and acutely conscious of its engagement with the world. As political forces outside California moved to further isolate us in 2017, that dialogue and artists' sensitivity to the global implications of their work have only intensified. To move through the many memorable art shows this past year in Los Angeles was to feel positioned simultaneously atop a desiccated California riverbed and the cracking Antarctic ice shelf. While many of us reeled into this year in commingled disbelief, dislocation and dejection, the best of these shows looked to a point of consciousness both informed by and well past these dislocations and disruptions. It was a year of both revelatory confrontation and rediscovery, frequently in the same show. Much of the work in these highlighted shows was in preparation long before this past year or even the entire 2016 political year. Nevertheless, each, on one or multiple levels, responded trenchantly to the contemporary moment—even those that looked back to a historical moment long past.



Forrest Bess, *Untitled No. 6*, 1957, Courtesy Parrasch Heijnen Gallery.



Joan Snyder, 2 Blue Boxes, 1968, courtesy Parrasch Heijnen Gallery.

5. Forrest Bess/Joan Snyder Parrasch Heijnen / May 13–June 24

An existential conversation of two master painters across time and sensibility on that shared terrain that registers place, with its delicate counterpoint of correspondences and contradictions—this was one of the most enigmatic and quietly compelling of 2017's shows.