

Ken Price at Parrasch Heijnen Gallery

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Text by Maxwell Williams



Ken Price, *Ken Price: A Career Survey, 1961-2008* (installation view) (2016). Image courtesy of the artist and Parrasch Heijnen Gallery. Photo: Lindsay Comstock.

In the months leading up to his retrospective at LACMA, Ken Price learned his show would travel to the Met. Price, spurned by New York institutions during his career, and struggling at the time with throat and tongue cancer, stopped his treatments to focus on mounting the best retrospective he could. The show, though Price wouldn't live to see it open in L.A., was a resounding success on both coasts and in Dallas. It was a compelling narrative of redemption.

Franklin Parrasch opened his new Boyle Heights venture, Parrasch Heijnen Gallery, with a micro-survey of Price's works from 1961 to 2008. The show, the first in Southern California since LACMA's to focus solely on Price's work, performs like an aftershock of the retrospective: not as ground-shakingly personal, but still able to jostle you.

The works range from the mundane to the extraterrestrial: *Rhodia* (1989) appears rocklike with a geometric optical illusion cut into it; *Orange* (1964) is an orange alien egg bursting from the inside; *Wizard* (2003) and *The Slouch* (2005) represent the intumescent blobs of Price's iconic later works. The works are parked ergonomically on belly-high platforms, approximately four or five objects to a plinth, allowing for crouch-free viewing. The intimacy of a gallery setting allows Price's works to be admired quietly and their cosmic surfaces studied closely, as they were likely meant to be.

It's hard to see why Price wasn't given the respect of Irwin or Turrell until he died. His pieces radiate, glow, and thrum whatever their context. Even in Parrasch Heijnen's pared-down exhibition, Price's works demand attention—reaching beyond the slick baubles of his Finish Fetish colleagues' work into something resembling the sexual artifacts of some undiscovered planet.

Ken Price: A Career Survey 1961-2008 runs January 29-March 8, 2016 at [Parrasch Heijnen Gallery](#) (1326 S Boyle Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90023)



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