

parrasch heijnen

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## Forrest Bess | Joan Snyder at Parrasch Heijnen

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Text by [Aaron Horst](#)



**Joan Snyder, *Red Puff Above Line* (1968). Ink, pastel, glitter, and paint on paper, 11.5 x 14.5 inches. Image courtesy of Parrasch Heijnen Gallery.**

Parrasch Heijnen has staged their current exhibition, *Forrest Bess | Joan Snyder*, as a Kieslowskian conversation across time, and space. The exhibition is staged in a pared-down manner, quietly courting the delicate pleasure of looking—a method of display and curation that L.A.'s more recent blockbuster spaces would do well to imitate.

Both Bess and Snyder traffic in shapes and impressions long unanchored from their sources—images lacking in scale as much as in readily identifiable content. Human figuration enters the frame only occasionally in Bess's work here (and, arguably, not at all in Snyder's), and then as something of a distraction. The figures in an untitled work from 1946, as well as the chimerical symbolism of *The Noble Carbunkle* (c. 1960) suggest a temporality and element of narrative absent the mysterious formality of the bulk of Bess's works on display.

Bess is totemic where Snyder is phenomenological. Both render reverently, and fleetingly, foregrounding the work of the hand and the time it takes to manifest. Snyder in particular conjures hypnotic near-associations which overlap and settle into one another, as in the flow of water over a horizontal canopy in *Waterfall/Gold Band* (1967). Bess's *Untitled No. 6* (1957) and *Untitled No. 18* (1952) are coy with suggested scale (peach or sun in the former, mountains or dung heaps in the latter), mining a formal ambiguity that paves the way for formal contemplation.

The conceit behind Snyder and Bess' pairing at Parrasch Heijnen centers on the ostensible speaking of each artist's work to the other's across time, space, and the gallery's two rooms. The mere suggestion of the uncanny is often enough to call it into being, and Snyder and Bess' tender work is suggestive above all—the uncanny complement, or ordinary coincidence, of a shared formal language of abstraction.

*Forrest Bess | Joan Snyder* runs May 13-June 24, 2017 at [Parrasch Heijnen](#) (1326 S Boyle Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90023).

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**Forrest Bess | Joan Snyder (Installation view). Image courtesy of Parrasch Heijnen Gallery.**

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**Forrest Bess, *Untitled (Rainbow with Arc)*. Oil on canvas, 10 x 11.9 inches. Image courtesy of Parrasch Heijnen Gallery.**

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**Forrest Bess | Joan Snyder (Installation view). Image courtesy of Parrasch Heijnen Gallery.**

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**Forrest Bess, *Untitled No. 6* (1957). Oil on canvas in artist's frame, 11.5 x 11.75 inches. Image courtesy of Parrasch Heijnen Gallery.**

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**Joan Snyder, *2 Blue Boxes* (1968). Pencil, pastel, and marker on paper, 11.5 x 14.5 inches. Image courtesy of Parrasch Heijnen Gallery.**

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***Forrest Bess | Joan Snyder (Installation view). Image courtesy of Parrasch Heijnen Gallery.***