

The Pit

Llyn Foulkes: Time's Witness June 28 - August 9, 2025

The Pit is pleased to present Llyn Foulkes: Time's Witness, a sweeping exhibition tracing over seventy-five years of work by one of Los Angeles' most iconoclastic and uncompromising artists. Spanning from 1949 to 2025, with five new works completed in the past year, this survey charts Foulkes' lifelong interrogation of American mythologies, his relentless pursuit of the unvarnished image, and his singular ability to collapse nostalgia, rage, humor, and melancholy into one object. The exhibition will open to the public with a reception on Saturday, June 28, 2025 from 5-7pm.

Working across painting, assemblage, drawing, sculpture, and the in-between, Foulkes has never allowed medium to dictate message. From early ink drawings infused with absurdist tension to the raw layered surfaces of his later constructions incorporating found materials, photographs, and cast-off Americana, his work maintains a visceral directness that feels at once handmade and hardwired to the cultural unconscious.

While his career has spanned numerous movements and contexts, Foulkes has consistently operated outside the lines, mistrustful of categories, and insistent on emotional truth over art world fads. He is an artist who has built his own instruments, painted his own face into cautionary tales, and dared to point a finger at the Disneyfication of history long before critique became trend.

Anchored by touchstones from his Bloody Head series and the mixed-media constructions of the 2010s and beyond, Time's Witness takes a longitudinal view of Foulkes's evolving relationship to both the self and society. His early works glance outward through the lens of caricature and satire, while the later ones look inward with increasing vulnerability, skepticism, and spiritual weight.

This exhibition reveals how persistently Foulkes has asked the same essential question: what does it mean to see: through culture, through media, and through memory. With the benefit of time, this body of work reveals itself not as the product of a contrarian but of a committed witness. What Foulkes has offered us, year after year, is not critique for critique's sake, but a raw, stubbornly layered record of defiance. Consisting of more than 40 works of sculpture, drawing, painting, assemblage, and collage, this exhibition has been installed in The Pit's expansive third gallery space, allowing the audience ample space for focused attention.

Llyn Foulkes (b. 1934, Yakima, Washington) has lived and worked in Los Angeles since the late 1950s. A graduate of the Chouinard Art Institute, he emerged with early acclaim for his surreal landscapes and later gained recognition for his rebellious, multimedia works that critique American politics, celebrity culture, and the art world itself. Foulkes has exhibited internationally, including major exhibitions at the Hammer Museum, New Museum, and Centre Pompidou, and was the subject of a widely acclaimed retrospective organized by the Hammer in 2013. A lifelong musician and performer, Foulkes also developed and plays a one-man-band instrument of his own invention, called the Machine, merging music and art in ways as singular as his visual practice.