

**Helen Pashgian: “Golden Ratio”  
Peter Blake Gallery, Laguna Beach**

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***Untitled (GR3) 2016, Helen Pashgian, Formed Acrylic, 90 ½ x 18 x 20 ½”***

At age 82, this Light and Space artist is not only producing an impressive array of luminous, semi-transparent sculptures. She is drawing on her five decades of experience, working with fiberglass, resin and plastics, creating sculptural works that drift in and out of the viewer’s perceptual field. The most recent result of this effort is this series of colorless, 8-foot tall freestanding columns, and smaller discs and spheres, mounted onto the gallery walls. All 14

artworks, created in 2016 and titled *Untitled*, were made from large sheets of acrylic that were heated until they became soft and malleable and then molded; while small pieces of gold-colored acrylic were strategically placed within each sculpture, helping to highlight the elegant shapes. Situated within three rooms of this gallery, the pieces—all carefully lit from above—appear to glow from within.

This exhibition is reminiscent of the artist's 2014 LACMA show of 12 elliptical columns—albeit with each piece representing a different color of the spectrum—and installed in one large black room. Yet the mostly white galleries of this current show are infused with natural sunlight during the day, and with carefully placed lighting in the evening, helping to bring out the inner radiance of the pieces. The overall effect of this exhibition is a celebration of California light, while it also pays homage to the SoCal based Light and Space movement of the 1960s and 70s, of which Pashgian was an essential player.

In fact, the impact of perception, an aspect of the artist's sculptures for a half-century, is as important as the technique employed in the creation of the work. Going back further, Pashgian spent copious time during her childhood in Laguna Beach, looking at the ocean and tide pools; and she has devoted much of her career striving to replicate in her work the fleeting quality of light that one sees underwater. Moreover, the pristine, scratch-free exteriors of her sculptures enable the viewer to see into and through each piece. Walking around these meticulously constructed works, interacting with them, perceiving their evolving organic shapes and forms is akin to experiencing a visual spirituality or even a meditative state. Indeed spending time with this installation is like being embraced by a visual choir, filled with radiant, translucent altar pieces.

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