

## GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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# Culture Monster

ALL THE ARTS, ALL THE TIME

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## Art review: Jorge Pardo at Gagosian Gallery

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Jorge Pardo's love of home décor is celebrated the world over. His lamps, tables, pots, wallpaper, rooms and buildings regularly appear on the international exhibition circuit. The fanfare and adulation that have accompanied the Cuba-born, L.A.-based artist's career also have glossed over the flip side of Pardo's love of décor: his disdain for complacency.

That side of his wildly successful *oeuvre* comes roaring into focus in a beautifully barbed

installation at the Beverly Hills branch of [Gagosian Gallery](#). Titled "Bulgogi," Pardo's show delivers an abundance of the casual tastefulness that has become his signature while spicing things up with uncomfortable questions about access, privilege and power. Such social issues have always been a part of his art, even when overlooked by fans distracted by Pardo's skills as a decorator.

In the main gallery, a handsome, dumpling-shaped pavilion houses a custom rug, a fabulous plastic chandelier, a tinted window in the ceiling, some finely designed furniture, seven cheap planters and a couple of high-end vases. The six-sided structure's curved wood walls are adorned with graceful lines, abstract patterns that have been cut into them with a router. The atmosphere is lovely.



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But it's difficult to relax in the otherwise hospitable cocoon. That's because dozens of framed black-and-white pictures of anonymous Angelinos cover the walls. Most appear to be Korean or of Korean ancestry. Even though the family portraits focus on events common across cultures -- weddings, birthdays and graduations -- their overall impact is to let you know that you are an intruder, and that this room is not yours.

It's not Pardo's either, and that's part of its point. When it is purchased and installed in a collector's home, whoever ends up with it will be giving over part of his house, inviting strangers into the most beautiful room in his home, where they will outnumber everyone sitting in it. Us-them anxiety enters the picture with a vengeance.

The other works in the exhibition are similarly double-edged: stylish and sneaky, attractive and unsettling. Three sculptural diptychs present

Pardo's custom-designed jewelry as an ornament to be worn or a treasure to be hoarded. Six triptychs, each a color-coordinated set of stripe paintings, have small electric fans implanted in their surfaces. The silence of buffered lives is replaced by the din of the fans, which recalls freeways, construction sites and other parts of the city people pay to stay away from.

-- David Pagel

**Gagosian Gallery**, 456 N. Camden Drive, Beverly Hills, (310) 271-9400, through Sept. 11. Closed Sundays and Mondays. [www.gagosian.com](http://www.gagosian.com)

*Images: "Bulgogi" (top) and Untitled. Credit: Douglas M. Parker Studio.*