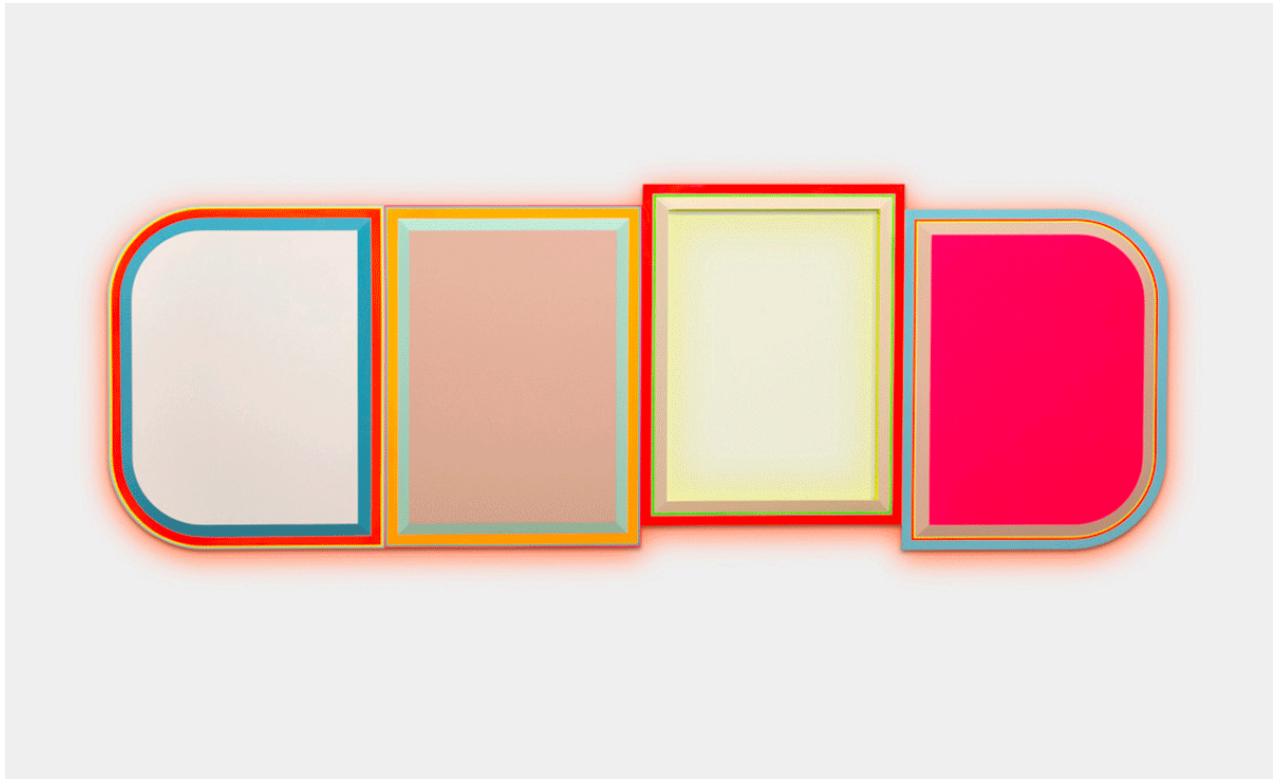


Wallpaper*

"Beverly Fishman's intoxicating artworks are hard pills to swallow"

By Harriet Lloyd-Smith

October 13, 2022



Beverly Fishman, *Untitled (Anxiety, Three Missing Doses)*, 2020, and *Untitled (Anxiety, One Missing Dose)*, 2020. Urethane paint on wood. Courtesy of the artist and GAVLAK Los Angeles | Palm Beach.

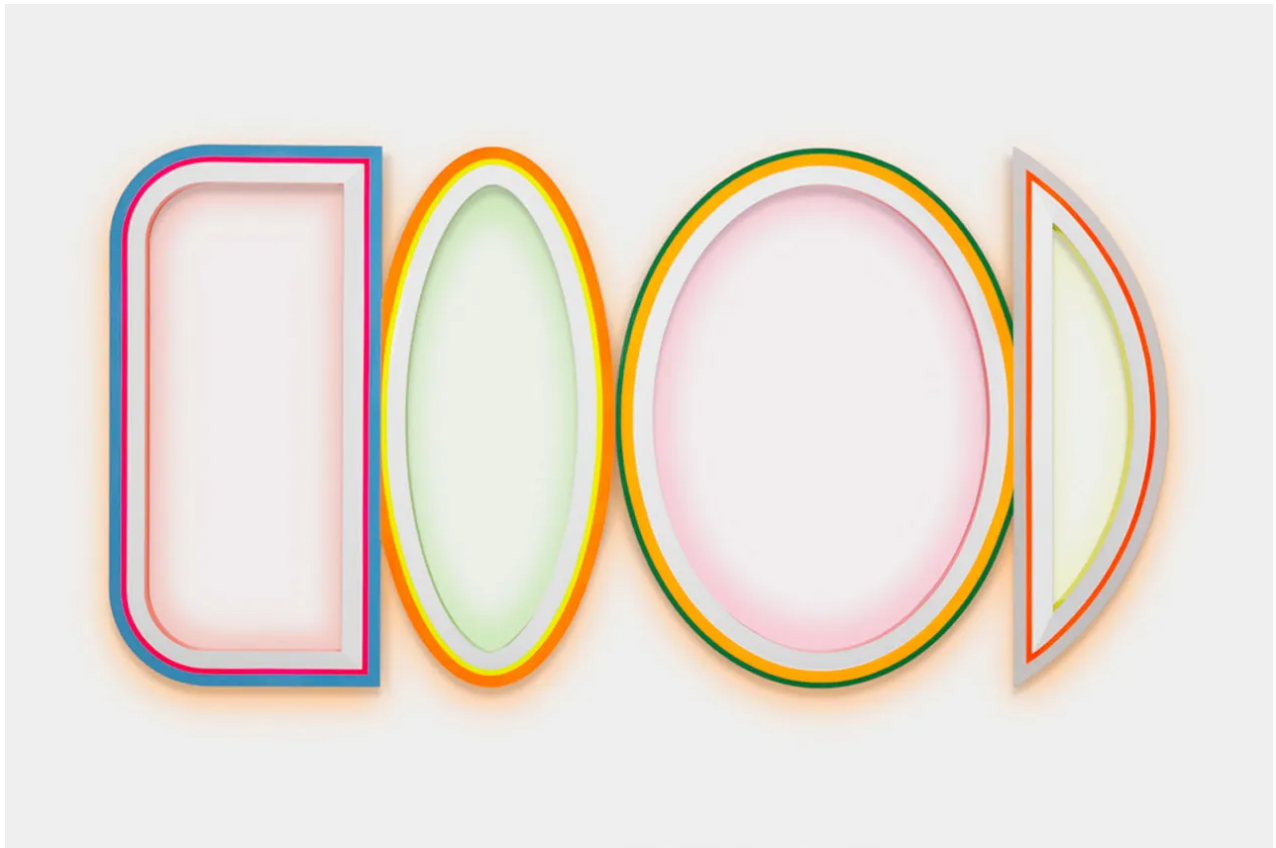
In Los Angeles, American artist Beverly Fishman's provocative, electric-hued objects square up to the pharmaceutical industry, confront physical and mental health, and nod to California's modern art roots

Beverly Fishman's work might appear enticing and harmless, but one need only scratch the surface before something more murky comes bubbling up.

At Gavlak gallery, Fishman's show, 'Love Letter to LA', explores the marketing of pharmaceuticals to an increasingly medicated public. These alluring, ultra-polished wall reliefs rendered in urethane paint seek to make tangible the physical and mental states of pain, anxiety and wellness. They also critique the pharmaceutical industry in an era of increasing agitation, addiction and mental health issues.

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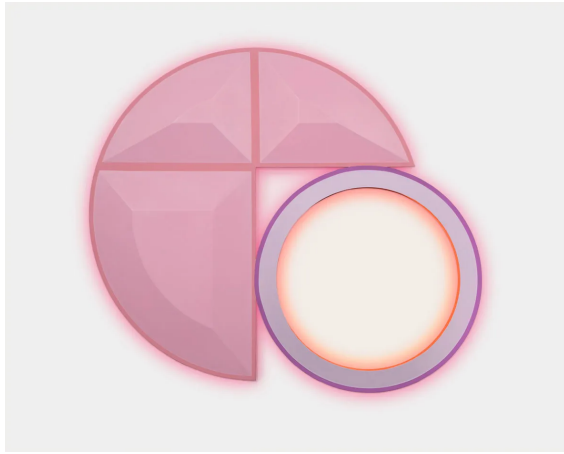
Beverly Fishman, *Untitled (Pain, ADHD, Pain, Pain)*, 2021. Urethane paint on wood.
Courtesy of the artist and GAVLAK Los Angeles | Palm Beach. *Image credit: Ed Mumford.*

Visually, it's a hard-edged minimalism indebted to mid-1960s California modern art, including the Finish Fetish movement and the vibrant palette of early-career Eva Hesse, before she deserted colour entirely.

Fishman is best known for multidisciplinary work exploring technological, scientific and biological systems of perception and representation. She seeks to provoke constructive conversations about the complexities in the medical industry, and how individuals perceive their physical and mental health, and fashion their identities.

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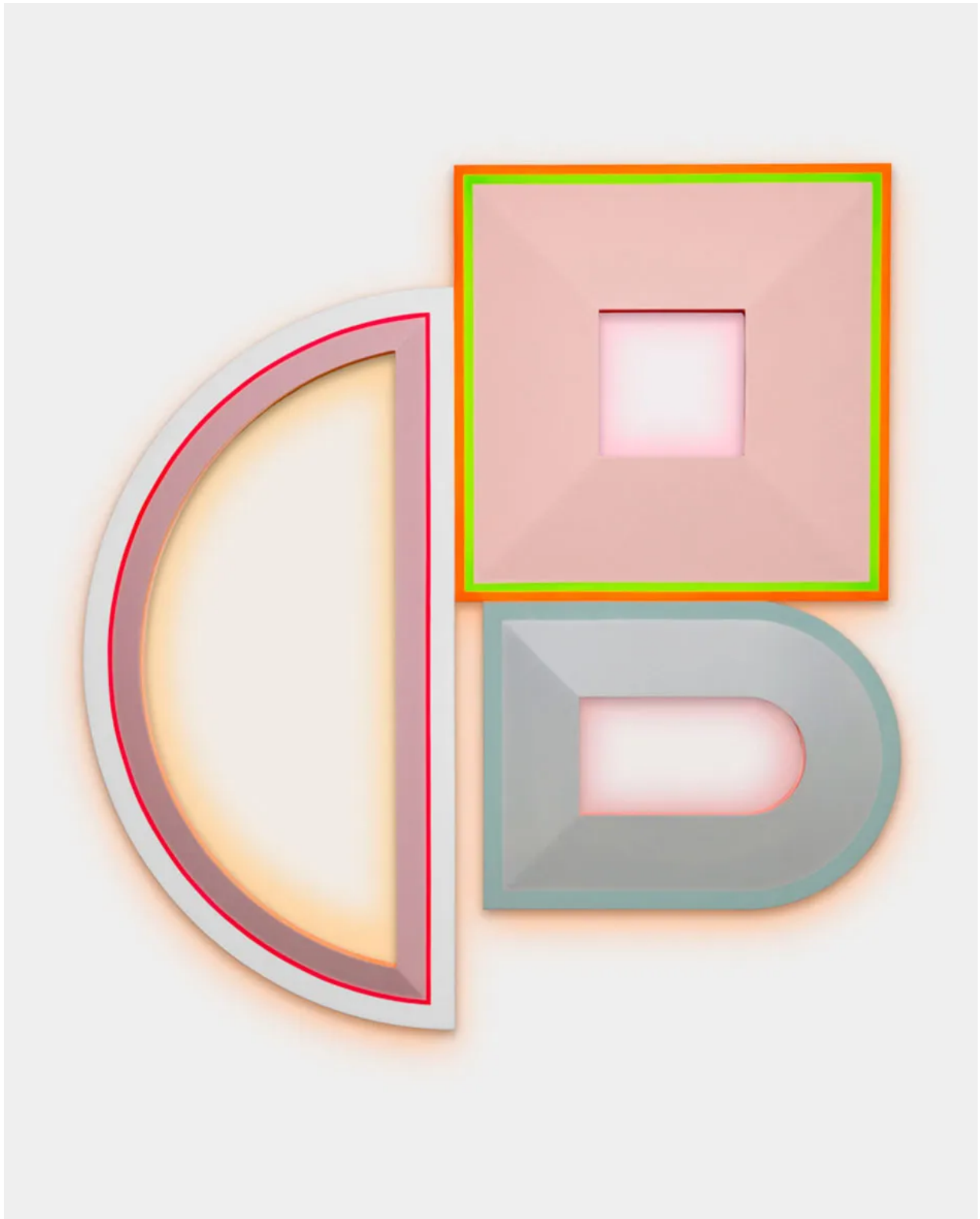


(Left): Beverly Fishman, *Untitled (Depression, Pain)*, 2021. Urethane paint on wood. (Right): Installation view of Beverly Fishman: 'Love Letter to LA' at Gavlak, Los Angeles. Courtesy of GAVLAK Los Angeles | Palm Beach.

The polymer sheen and ovoid shapes of the artist's new work appear to reference tablets and capsules, divided and dosed; their alluring forms demonstrate how both sickness and health can be marketed via seduction. The rosy hues reference how women are particularly vulnerable to gendered pharmaceutical campaigns that have the potential to misdiagnose their targets; for example, the documented phenomenon of heart attacks in women misidentified as anxiety.

In paintings with hard-hitting titles like *Untitled (Pain, Anxiety, Anxiety)* (2020) and *Untitled (Pain, Asthma, Anxiety)* (2021), the artist's slick handling of matte and satin finishes prompts optical uncertainty as to whether forms are convex or concave, two- or three-dimensional. This jumble of positive and negative effects reflects on the increasingly common practice of polypharmacy, in which an individual patient is prescribed simultaneous courses of medication with potentially harmful combined effects.

Aesthetically, Fishman's new pieces glow with exuberance and optimism, yet they imply the very opposite. Beneath lurks something sinister, obscured by their glossy, beguiling, pseudo-neon gleam.



Beverly Fishman, *Untitled (Pain, Anxiety, Anxiety)*, 2020. Urethane paint on wood. Courtesy of the artist and GAVLAK Los Angeles | Palm Beach. Image credit: Ed Mumford.

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Installation view of 'Love Letter to LA' at Gavlak, Los Angeles.
Courtesy of GAVLAK Los Angeles | Palm Beach. Image credit: Ed Mumford.

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