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Los Angeles Times Review: 'Gallery 32 and Its Circle' at Laband Art Gallery

As a piece of historical scholarship, "Gallery 32 and Its Circle" is first-rate: an informative time capsule that gathers about 50 works by 20 artists who visited or exhibited at the gallery Suzanne Jackson ran out of her modest apartment in the Granada Building near MacArthur Park from March 15, 1969, to Aug. 30, 1970.

As an art exhibition, it's even better. An impressive number of the works installed at Loyola Marymount University's [Laband Art Gallery](#) by director Carolyn Peter and guest curator Damon Willick have not faded with age but are as bold and evocative as they were 40 years ago, when many were first exhibited at the upstart gallery.

Standouts include three haunting body prints by David Hammons, five enchanting pieces by Betye Saar, a solid figurative assemblage by John Outterbridge, a melancholic drawing by Charles White and four crisp prints by Emory Douglas, who was the minister of culture for the Black Panther Party.

Works by less renowned artists are just as compelling. These include Timothy Washington's larger-than-life sculptures, Joe Van Ramp's intense little collage, John Stinson's exquisitely dense abstractions and Senga Nengudi's vinyl sculpture filled with brightly dyed water.



The short-lived gallery gave many African American artists their start. It also provided a forum for discussions about art, life and politics. Jackson ran it while taking drawing classes from White at the nearby Otis Art Institute and making her own works, three of which are displayed. To pay the rent, she danced at a nightclub.

Compared with contemporary venues in the art business Gallery 32" may not sound like much. But its effect cannot be measured by sales or headlines. Instead, it is part of the social fabric of Los Angeles, an essential ingredient to the rich mix of city life, past and present. -- David Pagel

Laband Art Gallery, Loyola Marymount University, 1 LMU Drive, Westchester, (310) 338-2880, through March 22. Closed Mondays and Tuesday.

Above: David Hammons' "The Door (Admissions Office)" (1969), mixed media. Credit: California African American Museum