

## Los Angeles Times

### Wonders of the here and now

"Green April," Sam Gilliam's exhibition at David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles, is a revelation.

The artist's originality is on bare-naked display. So is the shape-shifting mutability of the materials he uses: acrylic paint, canvas and stretcher bars. In Gilliam's hands, these elements come together in ways that make you think differently about what art does in the world and what we mean when we say an artist is a genius.

Gilliam made the five paintings in 1968, 1969 and 1970. All are big. All are tough. All are messy.

In the studio, Gilliam poured buckets of paint onto swaths of canvas and then folded them over and rumbled them up. Working wet-on-wet and wet-on-dry, he used various parts of each canvas to print the mirror image on another part.

The results resemble loosely patterned shapes and spaces that seem to be generating themselves. It's thrilling to witness such creation, especially when it happens in works that are as down-to-earth as a house painter's dropcloths.

At the same time, Gilliam's paintings are inviting, nuanced and graceful.

Unpretentious brilliance enlivens the 82-year-old's second solo show in L.A. His art is all about getting one's hands dirty and discovering the wonders of the here and now. Such grit and humility never get old. Whether that makes his works timeless depends upon your point of view. That is genius — at its user-friendly best.

**David Kordansky Gallery,**  
5130 W. Edgewood Place, Los Angeles. Through July 9. Closed Sundays, Mondays. (323) 935-3030, [www.davidkordanskygallery.com](http://www.davidkordanskygallery.com)