

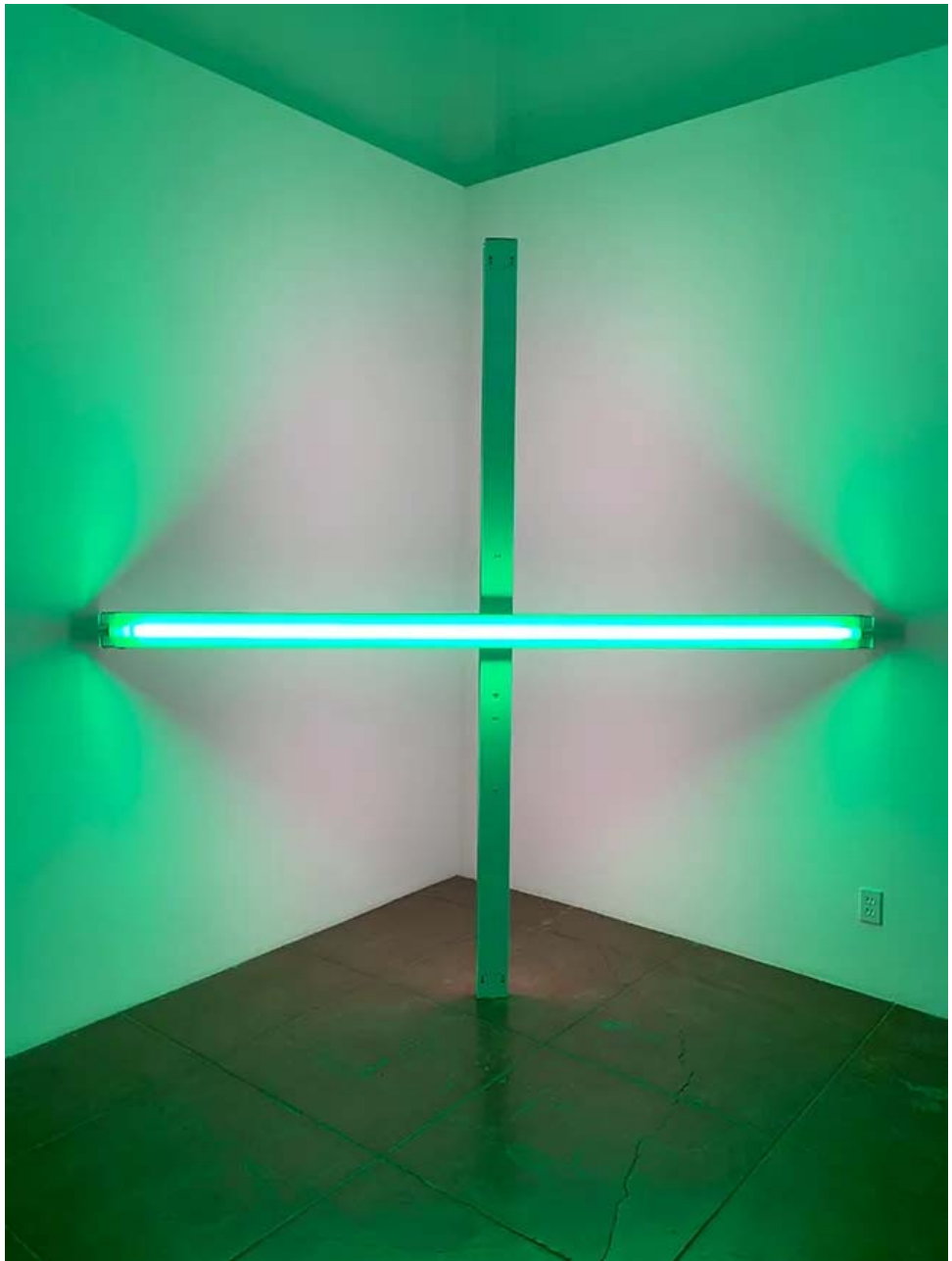
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***Nothing Was  
Forbidden:  
Hal Glicksman  
at Pomona,  
Irvine and Otis  
Art Institute at  
as-is.la***

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**March 31, 2022**  
**Text by Catherine Wagley**

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*Nothing Was Forbidden*  
(installation view) (2022). Image  
courtesy of the artist and as-  
is.la.

*Nothing was Forbidden*, the current exhibition at [as-is.la](http://as-is.la) of art and ephemera from curator Hal Glicksman's personal collection, has an infectious, seductive title. It's exciting to think about what can happen when rules get thrown out. And indeed, the show feels a bit like it is getting away with something, an energy that engulfs even the more iconic artists in the show. Anchoring two corners of the intimate gallery, the two cross-shaped Dan Flavin sculptures, which together comprise *Untitled (For Mary Ann and Hal with fondest regards)* (1976), look more familiar and friendly than they would in another context, especially given how

often Flavin's work is installed in large, austere galleries. Their glow washes gently over the artworks and objects hanging opposite. One of the nearby frames contains a brown napkin signed by Flavin, indicating that the artist gave these two sculptures to Glicksman and his wife Mary Ann after Flavin's 1976–77 exhibition at Otis Art Institute, when Glicksman ran the gallery there. The napkin is a reminder that all of this work was created in relationship, and the whole exhibition highlights how these relationships can offer a different, looser perspective on the way history gets made. What happens when the story is told not from the vantage of someone in the limelight, but the vantage of the one directing, or often jury-rigging, said limelight?

Glicksman started his art career as a preparator at the Pasadena Art Museum (then largely run by Ferus gallery co-founder Walter Hopps), then went on to spend two years as a gallery director at Pomona College, two years at the Corcoran Gallery in D.C. (also under Hopps), and three years running the gallery at UC Irvine before becoming the director at the Otis gallery in 1975, back when the school was across from MacArthur Park. Wandering through the small show, it becomes clear that Glicksman immersed himself in the processes of the artists he worked with. A wall of frames opposite the Flavin sculptures combines studies with floor plans, prints, and notes. Two frames contain mock-ups for a deck of cards Alexis Smith made for an Otis show in 1976—a portrait of the artist in a “made in the U.S.A.”, Uncle-Sam-style top hat stands in for the Joker. Another frame contains a drawing Richard Tuttle made directly on the drywall during his 1976 Otis installation. Glicksman cut it out of the wall to keep. Strips of imperfect paper appear to weave together in a mischievous drawing by the lesser-known minimalist Rosemarie Castoro, who was included in an Otis group show. The work, *Untitled (To Hal on your birthday...)* (1976) was a gift to the curator. A 1974 lithograph by Sam Francis depicts a lattice interrupted by a glistening, expressive splatter. As gallerist Tom Jimmerson explained, Francis meant for it to be an editioned artwork in support of Otis' gallery, but when the dean said that all money raised would go into the general fund rather than specifically to the gallery program, Francis made only this one.

It is easy to imagine Glicksman's program ruffling the higher-ups. Some of what he permitted bordered on destructive. Upstairs, in the gallery's office, there is a postcard from a 1976 show at Otis by the artist Jane

Reynolds. Reynolds removed a square of the gallery's concrete floor, revealing the mechanical basement and inviting the sounds of the institution's inner workings (from the furnace, cooling equipment) into the gallery. The image—of this gaping, perfectly angular hole—is more affecting because I did not know Reynolds' work (she has exhibited sparingly since the 1970s), and her iconoclastic precision was a discovery. When the cast changes, the story of an era changes too—communing so easily with Rosemarie Castoro and Jane Reynolds, artists like Dan Flavin, Sam Francis, and Sol LeWitt feel less fixed in their canonical positions. The permissiveness Glicksman embraced decades ago seeps forward, causing the clean lines of recent narratives (about minimalism, Light and Space, this city's ascent to art world prominence) to blur.

*Nothing Was Forbidden: Hal Glicksman at Pomona, Irvine and Otis Art Institute* runs from February 26–April 16, 2022 at as-is.la (1133 Venice Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90015).



*Nothing Was Forbidden*  
(installation view) (2022). Image  
courtesy of the artists and as-  
is.la.



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**is.la.**



**Bruce Nauman, *Untitled***  
(camera-ready art for *Floating Room* poster) (2022). Paper collage and pencil on paper, 32 x 27 inches framed. Image courtesy of the artist and as-is.la.



Catherine Wagley writes about art and visual culture in Los Angeles.

[More by Catherine Wagley](#)

