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WHAT'S NEWS.

DOUBLE VISION

Two of L.A.'s forward-looking creative forces—art dealer David Kordansky and architect Kulapat Yantrasast—continue their dynamic collaboration with a major gallery expansion.

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IN PAIR FORM
Kulapat Yantrasast
(left) and David
Kordansky on site
at Kordansky's Los
Angeles gallery.



ON VIEW
From far left:
Huma Bhabha's
Third Voice,
from 2019; Linda
Stark's 2018
painting *Purple
Heart*. Both
artists have shows
this spring at
David Kordansky
Gallery in L.A.

SIX YEARS AGO, the Mississippi-born, Los Angeles-based art dealer David Kordansky, 42, moved his young gallery from Culver City to an unlikely venue in the pokey Mid-Wilshire district: a pair of buildings that had once housed a martial-arts palace and practice arena for stunt doubles. As big-gun international dealers like Hauser & Wirth and Jeffrey Deitch colonized parts of downtown, Kordansky settled in and built a roster of L.A.-area talent, from up-and-comers like Will Boone and Lauren Halsey to veterans Fred Eversley, Sam Gilliam and the late Betty Woodman. Now he's doubling down: This spring, David Kordansky Gallery is expanding its footprint by almost 13,000 square feet, annexing adjacent storefronts and adding an outdoor courtyard for sculpture, music, poetry, film—and the raucous, family-friendly gatherings for which the gallery has become known.

Architect Kulapat Yantrasast, 51, has attended more than a few of these blowouts. The creative director of WHY Architecture, with studios in L.A. and New York, met the dealer nine years ago at an art-world dinner, and the two clicked almost immediately. "I liked Kulapat's energy and his sensitivity," Kordansky says. "And his interest in collaboration. That's his thing. It's not so common among architects."

Perpetually curious and almost clinically gregarious, the Bangkok-born Yantrasast has become a go-to on the art circuit since moving to L.A. in 2004, designing museums, galleries, private homes for collectors and artists' studios. He's currently working on a youth music and arts center in East Palo Alto, California, and a reconception of the 40,000-square-foot galleries for the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Kordansky, who moved to L.A. in 2000 for graduate studies at the California Institute of the Arts, is a shrewd observer of the cultural scene in his adopted city; he admired Yantrasast's work, including a building for L&M Arts (now shuttered) and the architect's own house in L.A.'s Venice neighborhood.

In 2014, Yantrasast partnered with Kordansky to convert the former martial-arts center into a gallery with two open-plan exhibition spaces of equal size. For

Kordansky, the bow-truss ceiling they uncovered carried romantic associations. "The whole thing started to have a Sea Ranch vibe for me," he says, referring to the Northern Californian back-to-nature retreat established in the '60s. "I love all that, the architecture of Joseph Esherick, that idea of a community with strict architectural definition. This will be something similar, in a way."

The current expansion renovates two structures (a former shoe-repair shop and a framer) and adds a new third building to the gallery, composing a campus around a central quad. Along with plentiful storage facilities and office space, there are two new exhibition rooms, totaling 2,000 square feet, whose coved ceilings and skylights lend them a chapel-like refinement, Yantrasast says. While the storefronts were still in escrow, he and Kordansky began discussing how they might function. "It was easier the second time around," Yantrasast admits. "After the first building we became closer friends, and I knew what was important to him."

In advance of the reconceived space's debut this spring, Kordansky is currently showing work by two recent gallery additions, Pakistani-American sculptor Huma Bhabha, who joined Kordansky in 2018, and Lauren Halsey, a young installation artist and collagist from South Central L.A. Linda Stark, whose thickly rendered oil paintings often measure a foot square and are alive with surface detail, is slated to inaugurate the newest exhibition space in late March. Each reflects Kordansky's concerted effort to build a roster of artists as diverse as the city itself.

Kordansky's comparison of his operation to Sea Ranch is telling. Fostering a sense of community among artists is a priority for him, a model that dates back to his time at CalArts, where he tiptoed into dealing by showing the work of friends, some of whom—Lesley Vance, William E. Jones—are still with him today. "I'm one of his artists as well," says Yantrasast buoyantly. "I don't have paintings to sell, but I am a part of the gallery. He's very keen to take care of me, too." That might require yet another expansion—something Kordansky hints is never completely out of mind. "What else am I going to do with my time?" he says with a sly smile.