

DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY

David Kordansky Gallery is pleased to present 20, a group exhibition celebrating the gallery's twentieth anniversary, on view in Los Angeles at 5130 W. Edgewood Pl. from July 8 to August 19, 2023. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, July 8 from 6 to 8 PM.

Since 2003, when it first opened in the Chinatown neighborhood of Los Angeles, David Kordansky Gallery has grown into one of the defining galleries of its generation, as well as one that comprehensively embodies concurrent transformations in the Los Angeles art world and beyond. 20 provides an up-to-the-moment snapshot of the gallery's program, highlighting the dialogues, correspondences, and distinctions between the members of its diverse community of artists. Featuring many works created especially for this occasion, the exhibition provides windows into the minds of artists who interact with the world, their chosen materials, and their ideas and impressions in singular ways; it also provides a window into a collective experience of artmaking at this particular time, when the world of art has undergone profound structural, geographic, economic, and social changes.

Because David Kordansky Gallery's evolution directly informed the evolution of Los Angeles as a global hub for contemporary art, 20 tells the story of transformations that are larger and more profound than those contained in any one institution. It also shows how each iteration of the gallery remains present and alive in its current—and still-changing—state. The gallery's ability to represent the tight-knit, community-based ethos of its first years of activity in Chinatown at international art fairs, for instance, was instrumental in fostering dialogues between young artists in Los Angeles, London, and continental Europe—conversations that are very much ongoing among the artists included in this exhibition.

As the gallery expanded in the period between 2008 to 2014, establishing itself in a larger space in the Culver City neighborhood and constellating a growing concentration

DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY

of artistic activity there, it expanded both its reach and its impact, producing ambitious shows, and encouraging artists to realize complex, large-scale, genre-defying projects. With the 2014 move to its new Los Angeles home in Mid-City and subsequent expansion to New York in 2022, this artist-centered mission continued, as did its propensity for engaging with the cultural world more broadly through its publication and programming initiatives. A selection of books and ephemera, curated by David Kordansky, offers visitors the opportunity to learn about the gallery's print history and important influences that have shaped its growth, attesting to the gallery's ongoing commitment to fostering communication and questioning the foundational values that drive commercial and non-commercial activity in the arts.

Given the many generational and intergenerational forces that move through the gallery's activities, reflections about intergenerational cross-pollination and artistic discourse at a geographical distance become living, observable facts. In 20, works by Los Angeles-based artists born in the 1990s, like Mario Ayala and Lucy Bull, can be seen alongside major works by internationally recognized icons like Sam Gilliam and Betty Woodman, who were born in the 1930s and have impacted the trajectory of twentieth- and twenty-first century art in influential and documented ways.

Showcasing such juxtapositions has long been one of the gallery's primary aims, even from its beginning twenty years ago when a local group of young artists constituted the core of its program. One of its first shows in 2003 featured the Los Angeles-based filmmaker, photographer, and writer William E. Jones, who is represented in 20 with the debut of a new series of paintings—a move that captures both the historical spirit and present-centered experimentation that animate the exhibition and underscore the gallery's openness to regeneration.

David Kordansky Gallery has long been concerned with providing space for artists to look both inward, toward the development of their mediums and the personal

DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY

motivations that drive them to make art, and outward, toward the environments in which their artmaking arises and evolves. Regional, global, intimate, expansive: any given work can be a contradiction that provokes the rearticulation of pre-existing categories. A new painting by Raul Guerrero, for instance, wryly depicts conquistadors trudging through a flora- and fauna-filled jungle scene where futility, exasperation, loss, and the fecund humor of the natural world co-exist uneasily, requiring second, third, and fourth glances to make sense of their complex relationships. An expansive neon painting by Mary Weatherford, meanwhile, suggests that experiences of the ocean are not only expressions of visual or tactical sensory perception, but also internal reflections in which poetic association, historical musing, and emotional responses all play important roles.

During decades in which internet-based communication and social media have become dominant forces, the gallery has steadfastly advocated for the importance of physically embodied encounters with art, even when exhibiting artists like Guan Xiao and Shahryar Nashat whose work directly addresses digital conditions. As artists like Huma Bhabha, Evan Holloway, Ruby Neri, and Ricky Swallow make plain, however, technology does not always have to do with what is new. It is also present in handmade things and processes that are as old as civilization, in materials like wood, clay, and bronze whose use requires cutting, casting, glazing, and changes in temperature. Regardless of medium and position relative to historicity, art offers opportunities for real-time interaction with the products of human creativity. The gallery has long held that this interaction is itself a creative act that cannot be replicated virtually, despite the important ways new modes of communication have made dialogues around art more expansive and democratic.

Communication, and the symbols of which it is built, gives people access to each other's dreams and memories. For the entirety of its twenty-year history, David Kordansky Gallery has sought to provide a container whose clarity, care, and heart enable artists to engage in such communication as openly and as fearlessly as

DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY

possible. 20 is, in this respect, no more and no less than another show. Inasmuch as it commemorates the past and posits new directions for the future, the exhibition is primarily oriented toward making space for what its four dozen artists have to say today, about today. It is, in other words, a celebration of the current moment. Like the work of artists as distinct from one another as Lauren Halsey, Chris Martin, and Tom of Finland, 20 is also a paean to the power of community.