

IN A WHITE ROOM

Top architects design five new galleries in Los Angeles.



REGEN PROJECTS.
JOSHUA WHITE

"Today, Los Angeles is to New York what New York was to Paris in the 1950s," said Perry Rubenstein, the latest Manhattan art dealer to recognize LA's concentration of creativity and open a satellite there.

Like [Matthew Marks Gallery](#) and L&M Arts when they opened LA outposts, Rubenstein invited a local architect, Kulapat Yantrasast, principal of wHY Architecture, to fashion inventive variations on the white cube, giving it a strong sense of place within a gritty location. Los Angeles-only galleries like Blum & Poe, Regen Projects, and Samuel Freeman Gallery have taken a similar design approach.

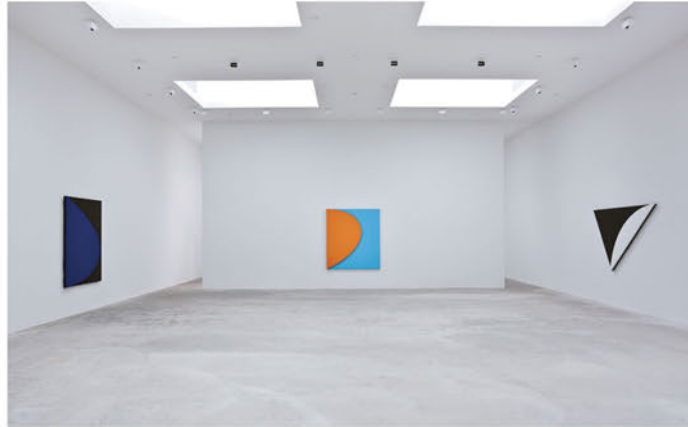
Meanwhile, in recent years the LA art scene has branched out from affluent Santa Monica and West Hollywood, with clusters of galleries filtering into Chinatown, Culver City, and now the studio district of Hollywood. Their migration in search of affordable space has mimicked the march of galleries in New York City, from Madison Avenue to Soho and then to Chelsea and the Lower East Side.



SAMUEL FREEMAN GALLERY.
AMY STONER



What makes this urban experimentation so exciting for architects as well as the art world is clients' passion for collaboration and excellence—rare qualities in a city where much new construction opts for expediency. Regen Projects owner Shaun Regen spent years searching for the ideal space in which to consolidate her activities. "When I first met Michael Maltzan about this project, the criteria were very simple: great proportions, beautiful light, and flexible space," Regen recalled. She settled on Hollywood for its urbanity, history, and the opportunity to have a roof terrace overlooking the hills and city. Maltzan shared her enthusiasm. [He designed an irregularly massed, white stucco block](#) that plays off the form of a soaring Bekins storage facility a block away. The layered interior features a sweeping top-lit gallery flanked by a narrow street in front, with intimate rooms to the rear.

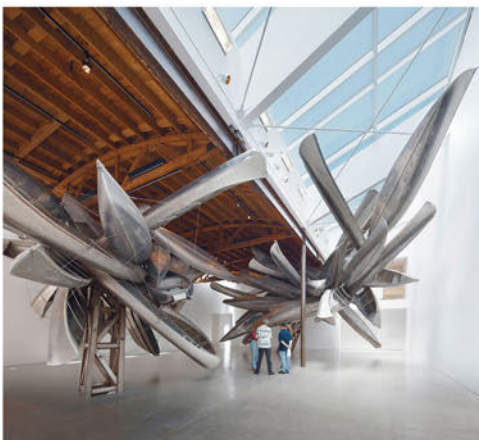


MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY.

JOSHUA WHITE

Yantrasast pursued a similar course in [remodeling a film storage facility for Perry Rubenstein](#) a few blocks away. Rubenstein wanted something different from the generic big boxes of New York's Chelsea district—a space that was "grand, but gracious and human in scale; visually dynamic and quietly poetic."

Matthew Marks found a former upholstery shop on a residential street a mile to the west of Perry Rubenstein's gallery and hired Venice architect Peter Zellner to design the freestanding building. He then invited Ellsworth Kelly to add a wall sculpture. The artist superimposed a black bar atop the blank white facade. This powerful artwork complements Zellner's gallery, a serene white volume lit from a grid of six deep-set skylights.



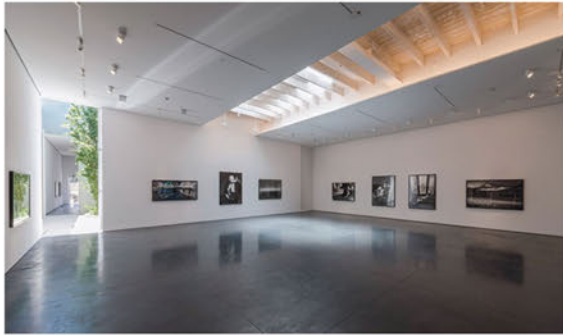
GAGOLIAN GALLERY.

JOSHUA WHITE

Young LA gallerist Samuel Freeman recently relocated from Santa Monica's Bergamot Station Arts Center to Culver City, two blocks from Blum & Poe. (After first moving to the neighborhood in 2003, Blum & Poe assumed new quarters in 2009, designed by California-based Escher GuneWardena Architecture.) Warren Wagner of W3 Architects exploited the trapezoidal corner site to create exhibition spaces of varied sizes, each with glass sliders that open to an inner courtyard. He clad the exterior in white stucco and cold-rolled steel. Each gallery is ideally proportioned, and clerestories and skylights pull in natural light from different directions, giving the rooms a residential quality.

Meanwhile, the world's most successful gallerist has returned to his roots. Larry [Gagosian](#), who went from selling posters in Los Angeles' Westwood neighborhood to running a global empire, recently commissioned Michael Palladino, a Los Angeles design partner of Richard Meier + Partners, [to extend the Beverly Hills gallery](#) his firm designed in 1995. With the addition seamlessly joined on the street facade, the building bears a new interior incorporating a bow-truss ceiling vault flanked by skylights. These forms, in turn, play off the upturned curve of the original structure, complementing its ethereal precision with simpler, earthier forms.

Michael Webb



PERRY RUBENSTEIN GALLERY.

CHRISTOPHER NORMAN

