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## Dallas' New Creative Class: Art Difference Makers Prep for Their Major Fair Moment

By Linden Wilson



Just as she gravitates towards labels by women designers (The Row, Rosie Assoulin, and Céline fill her closet), Dallas native **Hannah Hoffman** acquires art works from women such as German artist Raphaela Simon and Canadian sculptor Elaine Cameron-Weir to punctuate her Los Angeles home

In her namesake gallery located in Hollywood — which she opened in 2013 after working as an associate at Gavin Brown's Enterprise in New York City — Hoffman has shown both Simon and Cameron-Weir's work, as well as works by Paul Thek (sketches, paintings, and mixed-media such as *Meat Cable*, 1968-1969, pieces of wax resembling chunks of meat spiked on a suspended steel cable), and an exhibition of work by Brazilian artist Mira Schendel.

This month, Hoffman, the daughter of late Dallas art collector Robert Hoffman, returns to her hometown to present artworks from Hannah Hoffman Gallery at the Dallas Art Fair, including Cameron-Weir's Thunder-Child, 2014.

"There's nothing more important as a gallerist than standing in front of a work by one of my artists with another person and having a dialogue," she says. "Thinking about all the people in Dallas I've known for so long who have supported me, it feels quite nice to be able to come back and deepen that conversation."

### **Undergrounders: Greg Ruppe and Jeff Gibbons**

A tiny space six feet beneath The Power Station, collectors Alden and Janelle Pinnell's contemporary art warehouse in Exposition Park, went virtually unnoticed until last year, when the gallery's director of exhibitions, Greg Ruppe, and good friend Jeff Gibbons transformed it into Culture Hole, an experimental room unlike anything we've seen.

Just eight feet long, five feet wide, and four-and-a-half feet deep, the concrete-walled cellar is accessible via ladder through a metal trap door and showcases one-night-only performances and exhibitions from 10 pm to midnight.

"Every show is different," Gibbons says. "We don't know how people are going to behave or react, and it really challenges the artists." Adds Ruppe, "Culture Hole has a very strong psychological presence. It's subterranean, somewhat challenging to access, and it has this micro scale."

The duo met in grad school at Texas Christian University. They tapped German-American artist Lana Paninchul to sing to a seated nude male for Culture Hole's first show; some three months later, the provocative piece was followed by a second exhibit, Jesse Morgan Barnett's L'Attico, and a handful of other envelope-pushing presentations have occurred since.

German-born, Los Angeles-based artist Mathis Altmann takes over Culture Hole with his sculpture Friday, April 7 — perfectly timed with this month's Dallas Art Fair.

"There's a metaphysicality to the approach of the space," Ruppe says. "It's housed within a larger institution that, when closed, goes completely unseen. When the surrounding building is blacked out, the space becomes negated, and all attention is focused on light and sound emitting from the hole."

### **The Anti-Cowboy: Justin Adian**

Painting and sculpture coalesce in artist Justin Adian's plush foam cushions wrapped in enamel-painted canvas, usually in pastel hues.

"The foam kind of softens everything out," he says. "It's not delicate, but there's less rigidity so it makes it feel safe somehow. It's like a way of seducing comfort out of somebody."

Adian, who hails from Fort Worth, graduated from the University of North Texas and the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University before laying down roots in New York, where he's remained for nearly two decades.

During a post-grad stint working at the Gagosian Gallery, he started collecting leftover materials — plywood, crates, foam — to create his own art, which has since been the subject of solo shows in Paris, London, and New York, and group shows in California, Massachusetts, Canada, and Germany.

Contemporary art gallery Skarstedt, which has exhibited Adian's puffy pillows in both its London and New York outposts, brings several to the Dallas Art Fair this month. Three geometric shapes in white, canary yellow, and pale turquoise are seductively stacked in Coral Gables, 2017, while Balancing Act, 2017, features two tall, thin cushions thrust together — one blue, the other light pink.

Of the pastels he favors, Adian says they are “like mixed pleasure. They don't necessarily jump off the walls and grab your attention.”

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