

SEANKELLY

Abrams, Amah-Rose. "Amid a Booming Art Market, Sean Kelly Is Taking His Gallery Bicoastal With a High-Profile New Los Angeles Outpost Run by His Son." *artnet News*, November 11, 2021.

artnet news



Sean Kelly LA. Courtesy Sean Kelly

For years, as megagalleries like Pace and Hauser & Wirth spread their tentacles around the globe, Sean Kelly seemed committed to remaining a single-city gallery. But times have changed. The dealer, who works with artists including Marina Abramovic, Dawoud Bey, and Alec Soth, will open a major new space in Los Angeles in spring 2022.

After resisting expansion for most of his career, this will mark the dealer's second outpost in four years; in 2019, he launched a project space in Taipei.

"I've been in America for over 30 years, and we have a lot of good clients, friends, and colleagues out there," Kelly told Artnet News of the decision to go west. Many artists who have been priced out of New York in recent years have relocated to Los Angeles, he added, and there is a huge amount of barely tapped potential collectors in San Francisco.

"We looked at our roster of artists, and many of them have associations with L.A., but they're not represented by galleries in L.A. and this an opportunity to really take the core of our program into the city and expand it," he said, adding that L.A. is undoubtedly "booming as a cultural center."

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Kelly's son, Thomas Kelly, 36, will move his family from New York in order to lead the new space, where he has committed to work for the next five years. At a time when many established dealers, from Paula Cooper to Gagosian, are thinking about succession, Kelly—whose daughter, Lauren, also works in the family business—wants to give his children room to find their footing.

“I think that’s one of the most exciting things for Tom and one of the most exciting opportunities for the gallery is to have a younger member of the team out there connected to the pulse of what’s going on in the city,” Kelly said.

The L.A. gallery will function somewhat independently from its New York sibling, showing some new artists and serving as a scout for others to bring to New York. “It’s very much a kind of cultural corridor and for us, it’s going to flow in two directions,” Kelly said.

The 10,000-square-foot space at 1357 N Highland Avenue will be designed by Toshiko Mori, who also designed Kelly’s current New York gallery, in collaboration with the Los Angeles firm Hye-Young Chung Architecture. It will debut with a solo exhibition of new work by British painter Idris Khan.