

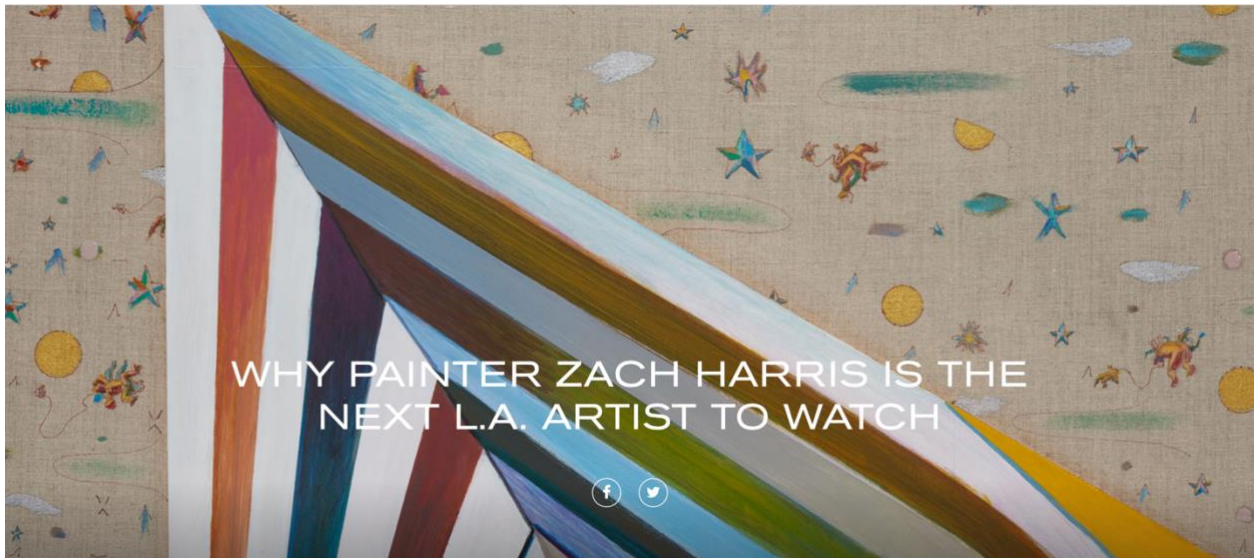


Zach HARRIS

C Magazine,

Why Painter Zach Harris is the Next L.A. Artist to Watch

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The Highland Park-based artist debuts his first hometown solo show in six years at David Kordansky Gallery

Words by JESSICA RITZ

“Each one is like an experiment. Some more than others, but I’m doing new things all the time,” says artist Zach Harris as he applies subtle touch-ups to his paintings in his Highland Park studio. The art handlers will arrive at any minute to transport them to the [David Kordansky Gallery](#), designed by Kulapat Yantrasast of wHY Architecture, in Mid-City for the opening of “[Studies for 20/20](#)” on May 11. After an intensive and productive period, it won’t be easy to see the work off.



From left: ZACH HARRIS “Zodiac Bench (6 Days / 7 Nights),” 2018-2019. Water-based paint, ink, graphite, conte crayon on carved wood 34 3/4 x 47 1/8 x 1 inches. Photo by Lee Thompson. Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles. The artist ZACH HARRIS. Photo by Lee Thompson. Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.

And yet Harris is relatively relaxed, his lean frame continuously moving around the skylight-lit room located on a quiet, commercially zoned street in the Northeast L.A. neighborhood that’s near where he lives with his wife and toddler son. A painter by training, he’s eager to talk about his conceptually and technically complex paintings and sculptures that incorporate laser-cutting and intricate woodworking.

For his first solo show in L.A. in six years, Harris considers themes of materiality. The deep dive into exploring tensions among materials and disciplines is a culmination of a two-year-long effort. During that time, the fourth-generation Angeleno and former New York City resident has also shown at Perrotin Gallery locations in both Paris and Seoul. He’s been included in group shows at

institutions such as the Hammer Museum and Jewish Museum in Manhattan during his career, too.

In this particular body of work, architecture and interior spaces figure prominently. He worked on the paintings and five architecturally inspired sculptures for “Studies for 20/20” simultaneously, but he says he began with this architectural-renderings-meet-the-zodiac-calendar idea.

Harris’ longtime studies of spirituality and his own practice are hallmarks across his work. His extensive travels to places like Tibet and India, coupled with the year he spent at University of California Santa Cruz, are reflected in addition to quasi-psychedelic elements, such as his use of saturated colors and even a tooled Grateful Dead patch that’s integrated into a painting.



ZACH HARRIS “2020 Calendar / Chair,” 2018-2019. Water-based paint, ink, graphite, conte crayon, and aluminum on carved wood 73 x 42 3/8 x 1 7/8. Photograph by Lee Thompson.
Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.

His approach questions the boundaries between fine art and craft, as well as the relationships between art and whatever adjacent decorative and functional objects might set the context once a piece finds its home. One painting looks at the structure of a drawer, another a grand piano. In one case, he borrowed the pattern printed into Bounty paper towels to inform a background motif that resembles wallpaper. It's something of an understatement when Harris steps back and says, "There's a lot going on in the work."

Then there are the sculptural pieces, which are over 9 feet tall and are constructed of wood and various metals. "I wanted to create something that wasn't just a plain painting show," Harris notes.

Exhibiting in his hometown with a gallerist whom Harris has known personally many years comes with some local pride. But the Bard College alum points to his 11 years immersed in the New York art world, where he earned an MFA at Hunter College, as essential to his own education and creative evolution. That said, Los Angeles is an ideal place to make art now, even if he doesn't have as much time as he'd like these days to be an active viewer.

"I'm just so absorbed with work that I don't see other people's work as much," he says, citing the added demands of family life. "There's plenty to see. I'm sure I'll change, but this is where I'm at now."

*Zach Harris' "Studies for 20/20" is on view through June 15. Also on view: large-scale vessels by artist **Ruby Neri**. David Kordansky Gallery, 5130 W. Edgewood Pl., L.A., 323-935-3030.*

Feature image: ZACH HARRIS *Astral Projectors With Wallpaper*, 2018-2019. Water-based paint, ink, and linen on carved wood 66 x 45 x 1 1/4 inches. Photo by Lee Thompson. Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.

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