

## STEP INSIDE L.A. ART STAR JONAS WOOD'S MAGICAL WORLD

by Sam Cochran



Detail of Jonas Wood's Jungle Kitchen, 2017, 100 x 93 inches.

Jonas Wood tends to stockpile images. The Los Angeles painter finds them on Instagram and the internet; he receives them from friends, who text him pictures they think he'll like; and he creates many of his own, snapping photographs on vacation or just over the course of an average day. "I'm a clipper," he tells me on the phone. "I have a lot of photos on my computer. I have books and magazines I've collected. I get into modes where I'm researching my sources."

For his new solo show, now on view at David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles, Wood delved deep into two favorite genres: landscapes and interiors. Photos of everything from movie scenes to golf courses and personal spaces (among them the studio of his wife, Shio Kusaka) have served as potent source material for large-scale paintings. Rendered in his signature representational style, with pointillist dots, dense patterns, and fauvist palettes, the intricately composed works fill both of the vast exhibition rooms at David Kordansky, creating conversations of color and pattern beneath the gallery's exposed wooden trusses.

"I am pretty much making a variety of paintings all the time," says Wood, reflecting on the show's focus. Coming off his 2016 show of portraits at New York's Anton Kern Gallery, however, he found himself freshly inspired by interiors and landscapes. "This show was born out of a desire to make a bunch of them at the same time, as well as show them at the same time," he says. Those who have carefully followed the art star's booming career may sense a shift in rooms portrayed. "I've always painted interiors, but these feel new, more tightly constructed than when I was younger," says Wood. "I am trying to push the boundaries of how colors work and how things work compositionally."

At the time of our phone call, Wood is coming off a big weekend. Just days before, he was the artist honoree at Two x Two for AIDS and Art, the annual Dallas fundraiser benefitting amFAR and the Dallas Museum of Art. There, actor Armie Hammer wielded an auction hammer, conducting a bidding war over one of Wood's paintings that ultimately fetched a whopping \$1.2 million. Those who lost out, of course, can take solace knowing that there are more beauties to be had in L.A.

Here, the artist walks us through just some of the highlights from his new show at David Kordansky Gallery.

*Vegas*, 2017, 110 x 132 inches

“The photos that I used for this painting were taken at Mandalay Bay ten years ago. I was staying at the hotel for my friend’s bachelor party. It was five in the morning and the sun was coming up, giving off this crazy vibe. I made a collage of the photos soon after that, so it’s been around for a decade. But I finished the painting just before the Las Vegas shooting. If you look at the painting, just at the right is where the shooting took place.”

*Eames House Interior*, 2017, 100 x 93 inches

“My father is an architect, so when he comes to L.A., he likes to look at buildings. I’ve been with him to Schindler houses, Neutra houses. About ten years ago we went to the Eames house and I took this photo.”

*Blackwelder Self Portrait*, 2017, 120 x 97 inches

“This is based on a picture taken by Aubrey Mayer, an amazing photographer who takes portraits of artists—that’s his practice. It was of me wearing white pants and a white T-shirt. A friend of mine sent me a picture of DJ Khaled wearing this insane jacket, and I decided to paint myself in the jacket. So I appropriated Aubrey’s photo; I appropriated DJ Khaled’s jacket. I took all the plants out and put in plants that I had already painted, plants that I had minimalized in other bodies of work.”

*Shio’s Studio on Blackwelder*, 2017, 93 x 100 inches

“Obviously I’m not a photo-realist, but this painting is completely literal. It’s a photo of Shio’s studio that I took four years ago. To store all of her work she makes these cardboard boxes with pictures on the outside. I love that idea, probably more than anything. Just a bunch of boxes—plus the Roe Ethridge photograph on the wall.”

*Jungle Kitchen*, 2017, 100 x 93 inches

“This image was originally from an interior-design magazine. Someone had painted Rousseau leaves all across their ’80s kitchen. I saw it posted on Instagram and did a search to find it. But I’m not beholden to the images I choose. Sometimes they’re very accurately depicted. Sometimes it’s loose. I could easily add or omit something and you would never know. And I’m okay if you think I made it all up. In the end it’s just a painting. That’s the goal—to make a good painting.”

“Jonas Wood: Interiors and Landscapes” is on view at David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles from November 3 through December 16, 2017.