

PAUL KASMIN GALLERY

Art in America

March 2014

Iolas the Great

An exhibition celebrating the legacy of art dealer and cultural gadabout Alexander Iolas (1907-1987) opens this month at New York's Paul Kasmin Gallery. "Alexander the Great: The Iolas Gallery 1955-1987" (Mar. 6-Apr. 26) features work by some of Iolas's friends and many of the artists he represented, including William Copley, Max Ernst, Yves Klein, René Magritte, Dorothea Tanning and Andy Warhol.

Born in Alexandria, Egypt, Iolas was a ballet dancer who toured internationally with Theodora Roosevelt and Marquis de Cuevas before eventually opening a string of galleries in New York, Athens, Madrid, Paris, Milan and Geneva. "He was a bit of a Gagosian figure," Adrian Dannatt, the show's co-organizer, told *A.i.A.* Because Iolas now has a low profile relative to contemporaries like Leo Castelli and Ileana Sonnabend, Dannatt joked that the show could have been titled "The Most Important 20th-Century Art Dealer Who No One Has Ever Heard Of." Yet Iolas's comparative obscurity belies his crucial role in the postwar art world; he was known for financially supporting artists like Magritte and Ernst at times, and he helped form numerous prominent collections, including the Menil Collection in Houston.

According to Dannatt, Iolas is also remembered for his singular personality and restless energy. "He was incredibly funny and flamboyant," Dannatt remarked. "He slept very little and never sat down, and every day he went to his gallery by a different route because he thought walking down the same street twice was boring."



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