

## "I Want to Add Something Different to the Equation": Pilar Ordovas on Leaving Gagosian to Open a New London Gallery for "Classic Contemporary" Art



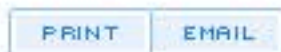
©Romas Foord

Ordovas Gallery in Mayfair



By **Coline Milliard, ARTINFO UK**

Published: July 26, 2011



CLICK TO ENLARGE PHOTO



©www.annamccarthy.com

Art dealer Pilar Ordovas

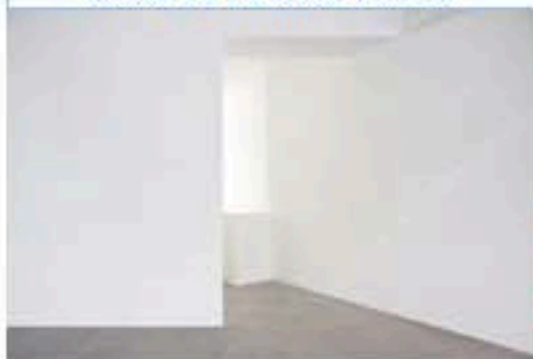
LONDON—**Pilar Ordovas** is the new kid on London's most exclusive block, in the heart of Mayfair. A former director of postwar and contemporary art at **Christie's** — best known for breaking sales records for art by **Lucian Freud** and **Francis Bacon** — she hopes to create a new, more scholarly model for modern and contemporary art galleries. After a short stint as director of **Gagosian Gallery** in London, she is now launching her own venture. In the office of her pristine gallery on Savile Row, right across the street from behemoth **Hauser & Wirth**, Ordovas talked to **ARTINFO UK** about her ambitions, her extensive track record, and the shifting geography of London's art world.

### What do you want to achieve with your gallery?

The starting point is what drives me, and what drives me is the art. I want to offer a different point of view, and my gallery to be a different type of gallery from the model that more readily exists in London. I will focus on 20th-century and contemporary art, and stage a program of historical exhibitions. The exhibition program will be accompanied by lectures and conferences making art more accessible. When I was working in an auction house, I had the feeling of being on a treadmill, going from deadline to deadline. I always felt very involved, but remained very much on the surface of things. With the gallery, I intend to be much more thorough. I wanted a gallery because putting the exhibitions together, the research, the catalogues, the interaction with the public, all of that is very important to me. This is what I love doing. It's not just a question of selling — for that you don't need a gallery, you can operate from a little room.

**Like what you see? Sign up for ARTINFO's daily newsletter to get the latest on the market, emerging artists, auctions, galleries, museums, and more.**

CLICK TO ENLARGE PHOTO



©Sinead Madden

The interior of Ordovas gallery in Mayfair

**If you had to explain in one sentence what is going to set your gallery apart from the rest, what would you say?**

---

## Your Views

You'll be able to come here and see a program that is very different to the program that already exist.

---

## Send a letter to the Editor

### How?

---

## Share

 [Save to Del.icio.us](#)

 [Digg this](#)

The majority of galleries that you have in London at the moment are representing living artists and building up their careers. What I will be doing is showing historical exhibitions. I might also ask a contemporary artist to curate an exhibition about the past, but I won't be represent living artists per say.

## Why not?

Because there are lots of things to be done in my area of expertise, which is much more classic contemporary art. I want to stage museum quality exhibitions. A private gallery has the resources and the ability to do really incredible projects that unfortunately many institutions cannot do for a number of reasons, one of them being the lack of funds. So many artists have been overlooked and need to be reconsidered with fresh eyes. That's what I really enjoy doing.

## Are you inspired by Gagosian's tradition of staging historical exhibitions?

While I was there, I did an historical exhibition myself, "Crossing the Channel," which explored the friendship between Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud, and Alberto Giacometti. I was particularly trying to reveal the relationship between the works of Giacometti and Freud. As opposed to a museum, things can happen much quicker in the gallery world, in much more dynamic way and I find this incredibly satisfying. During my time at Gagosian, I worked on the Monet exhibition, on the Picasso exhibition in London, and on a lot of great historical shows, so there's definitely a link.

## You've made a name for yourself breaking auction records for both Freud and Bacon. Why did you leave Christie's and the auction world? You were at the top of your game.

It was a fantastic journey. I started working at Christie's straight from my post-graduate course and went from interning, researching, and spending time in the warehouse, to running the department in Europe. But it's really important for me to feel that I'm learning something and that I have new things to do, and at Christie's I got to a stage where there was nothing new for me to do unless I wanted to run the company. When what you do starts to be repetitive you know that it's time to go for a new challenge. That's what happened to me, paired with the fact that the market slowed down and there was a much bigger emphasis on doing private sales. Auction houses are auction houses. They are brilliant at being auctioneers, but sometimes they are not the best at handling private sales so I thought that if this was the way to go, perhaps I should take the opportunity Gagosian had been tempting me with for some time. And I wouldn't be where I am now if I hadn't had this experience at Gagosian for two years.