

Man of the moment: the appointment of Jeffrey Deitch in 2010 as director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, ignited a debate that sent shock waves

ignited a debate that sent shock waves through the art world. How would a dealer with a penchant for underground culture tackle the demands of running a world-class museum? Apollo caught up with him at his L.A. home to discover what might be in store

Citation metadata

Author: Vincent Katz
Date: Jan. 2011
From: Apollo(Vol. 173, Issue 583)
Publisher: Apollo Magazine Ltd.
Document Type: Article
Length: 2,441 words

Main content

Article Preview :

Little more than a year ago, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA), was in danger of closing. For 10 years it had operated at a deficit, running down its \$38-million endowment in order to keep operating. When the market crashed in 2007, there was nothing to fall back on: it seemed likely that the museum, a Los Angeles institution, would have to close. At the end of 2008, Eli Broad, the collector and philanthropist who had been MOCA's founding chairman in 1979, promised \$30 million to the board, which was then able to raise the additional \$34 million necessary for the museum's survival. MOCA may have been saved, but clearly a different business model would be needed.

Still, the decision of the MOCA board to offer the directorship to art dealer Jeffrey Deitch--his appointment was confirmed in January 2010--sent ripples of shock through the art world and beyond. It would be the first time that a dealer had gone directly from running a gallery to running a major museum. Selma Holo, the director of USC Fisher Museum of Art, articulated a traditional point of view when she stated, 'We would be remiss not to ask ourselves how [Mr Deitch] and MOCA are planning to make the transition from the world of commerce and its values to another universe. One understands that these worlds blend, but there are still or should be some lines that are not crossed.' Jerry Saltz, on the other hand, writing for *New York* magazine before the appointment had been made public, believed it could prove a new model for troubled institutions: 'Deitch is ... a high-flying impresario who can meet with artists, handle pesky millionaires, raise money, and run a business. He knows what curators are up against and values museums. Deitch is used to getting things done quickly, with pizzazz, efficiency, and on-budget. It would be interesting to see if he has the stomach, the patience, and gravitas to be a museum director.'

Now, a year later, people are still wondering exactly who Jeffrey Deitch is and how he came to be where he is today. Even those familiar with the big-time profile of Deitch Projects on the New York art scene--the gallery closed only recently, in June of last year--often do not know much about its founder, who remains a mystery in goggle-eyed glasses and flashy suits (Figs. 1 & 8). The achievements of this ambitious curator and book publisher, top-level art consultant to mega-collectors like Dakis Joannou and broker of multi-million-dollar deals to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) are often cited; yet how much do we really know about Jeffrey Deitch? When I meet with him at his elegant Los Feliz home, he is generous with both his time and opinions, seeming to want to set the record straight about where he has come from and where he sees MOCA going.

Mr Deitch, now 57, caught the bug for dealing early on, opening his first gallery in the Berkshires, Massachusetts,...

[Access from your library](#)

This is a preview. Get the full text through your school or public library.

Source Citation

Source Citation

Katz, Vincent. "Man of the moment: the appointment of Jeffrey Deitch in 2010 as director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, ignited a debate that sent shock waves through the art world. How would a dealer with a penchant for underground culture tackle the demands of running a world-class museum? Apollo caught up with him at his L.A. home to discover what might be in store." *Apollo*, vol. 173, no. 583, Jan. 2011, p. 28+. Accessed 6 Nov. 2020.

Gale Document Number: GALE|A247738132

Explore

This is a preview. Get the full text through your school or public library.

[Access from your library](#)

Footer

- [About](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Terms of Use](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Accessibility](#)