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JEFFREY'S CASA

On an overcast day, the hills around Beachwood Canyon are lacking a little of their signature Hollywood glamour. But for ardent runner Jeffrey Deitch, this weather is not a bad thing. He hits the steep winding roads of his neighborhood every morning, looking ready for the New York Marathon: a slim-fitting fluorescent-yellow Nike running jacket, white aerodynamic running shorts, and a pair of gray New Balance running shoes. Despite its location, there is also something very New York about the kitchen in his newly acquired Hollywood home: the *New York Times* and the *New Yorker* on the table (Angelenos don't read those) and not a soy latte in sight — just a plain, delicious, non-decaf Illy Espresso in a brand-new Julian Schnabel mug. But Deitch is not one of those New Yorkers who constantly whine about how much better it is back east. On the contrary, ever since coming out west in May to run the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA), the former owner and director of the legendary New York gallery Deitch Projects seems to have been enjoying life to the full, appreciating things with the contagious enthusiasm of a child. Deitch sees the romance in L.A. (“The view from Mulholland at night... Oh my god!”), he sees the city's hyper-reality, and its benefit for making art. And in the short time he's been in charge at the MOCA, he's created interesting situations where the marriage of Hollywood and art starts to make a lot more sense than one would have thought — whether it's hosting a taping of *General Hospital* at MOCA West Hollywood (starring James Franco and Kalup Linzy), or staging his first big show downtown, a retrospective of the late Dennis Hopper.

Contrary to what one might imagine, for his own home Deitch chose a quietly elegant Spanish Colonial-style house nestled in the hills right below the Hollywood sign. Designed in 1927 by architect Abraham Wesley Eager, the walled property feels more like a pair of generously cozy apartments disposed around an Escher-like staircase. The views from the terrace are probably among the best in the city, embracing a huge swath of downtown across to the Hollywood sign, and, on a good day, a glimpse of ocean. But overall there is something very unpretentious about the building, even if Brangelina own a house down the street and Kelly Lynch and Mitch Glazer live further up the hill.

Deitch has left the interior almost entirely unfur-

nished and with surprisingly little art, in part because he likes it that way, but also because since moving in he hasn't had time to think about it. Not that it's a place to show off a big art collection anyway: most of the walls are too small, not high enough, or obstructed by built-in ornaments or stained-glass windows. Two Robert Longos (depicting Deitch in the 80s), an Andy Warhol, and a Joseph Beuys are among the few pieces that made their way west with their owner. But rather than art and furniture, it seems to be with friends that Deitch wants to fill his house. At the time of our interview, legendary graffiti artist Fab 5 Freddy was staying, and over the previous four months other guests and visitors had included artists Chris Johanson, Ryan Trecartin (who had a party there), Lee Quiñones, Tim Noble and Sue Webster, Kenny Scharf, Richard Coleman, critic Carlo McCormick, and sissy-bounce rapper Big Freedia.

So what made him take this particular house? “First, I can't be too far away from downtown, where the MOCA is. Driving on the freeway in L.A. is not an aesthetic experience,” laughs Deitch. “And as a runner I was looking for a spot where I can just walk out of the house and start running.” We talk about real estate in Los Angeles, and he starts comparing a good real-estate agent with a great art dealer. “The skill of a great dealer is you don't want to waste people's time. You don't show them something they don't want to have, or shouldn't have. You have to read the person you're selling to really well.” The real-estate vendor who showed him this house must have read him like a book, since it was the first he visited. Perhaps Deitch, who likes stories — really colorful stories — was seduced by the house's history: the guest apartment is rumored to have hosted a speakeasy during Prohibition, and the property also belonged to LSD-lover Cary Grant, who lived there for years with his “pal,” actor Randolph Scott. Gushing over the “romantic, Spanish fantasy, a mix of Colonial and Art Deco” in which he now lives, Deitch let slip why his home appears at odds with his professional image: “I deal with modernism all day long, so at home I need another vibe.” He seems genuinely to enjoy connecting the dots between L.A.'s Hollywood heritage, contemporary art, and the city's weirder, darker side. And in that sense, the house is a reflection of the man himself: cool, not too revealing, a little mysterious, but welcoming to everybody.







