

# LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL

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## Up Front



This retailer has seen the light for 60 years.  
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## News & Analysis



Why this painter doesn't want to be a \$1 million artist.  
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## The List

The largest money management firms in Los Angeles.  
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## Op-ed



Eli Broad calls for making art accessible to all.



Laying It Out:  
Courtney Azzara  
of Gemini G.E.L.  
works on a  
project for  
Richard Serra.

# Artistic Haven

RINGO H.W. CHIU/LABJ

## MANUFACTURING: Gemini still hailed as producer of fine prints.

By **OLGA GRIGORYANTS**  
Staff Reporter

**G**EMINI G.E.L. sits tucked behind nondescript walls that stand out for their plainness among the high-end fashion shops and houseware retailers along Melrose Avenue. The simplicity of the building – even of its Frank Gehry-designed extension – belies the painstaking detail work that goes on inside.

The company, which will celebrate its 50th anniversary in September, has been the go-to printmaker for some of the leading artists of the second half of the 20th century and early 21st: Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, John Baldessari, David Hockney, Ellsworth Kelly, and a host of others.

"We knocked on the doors telling artists: Come, work with us," said Sidney B. Felsen, who co-founded the business with Stanley Grinstein in 1965. Working with Ken Tyler, a graduate of the Tamarind Lithography workshop in Los Angeles, the studio gradually attracted big-name artists.

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## City Long Framed as Artist Enclave

**REAL ESTATE:** Inglewood's low costs big draw for studios.

By **DAINA BETH SOLOMON** Staff Reporter

**Bruce Blair** looked all around Los Angeles for a spot to open a fiber arts gallery. Culver City was too expensive. Downtown Los Angeles was too dicey. Inglewood was just right – affordable and surrounded by artist studios.

"This place is ideal for what we want to do," said Blair, who opened the **Branch Gallery** in a storefront adjacent to an industrial park in February. "I re-discovered how big Inglewood is as an arts mecca."

Artists have flocked to Inglewood for decades, drawn by low rents at warehouse and commercial spaces and its proximity to the Westside. That scene

has grown recently as rents in other artists' enclaves have become prohibitively high. Industrial rents in Inglewood hover around \$1 a square foot a month, compared with twice that or more in Culver City and downtown Los Angeles.

But changes are afoot that might put upward pressure on rents: A light-rail line passing through Inglewood on its way to Los Angeles International Airport is under construction, the **Los Angeles Rams'** football stadium is set to open in 2019, and Hollywood Park is being redeveloped as a 238-acre housing and retail community.

That has some longtime arts residents worried. "We don't know what kind of impact there'll be on the arts community," said mixed-media artist **Michael Massenburg**, who has lived and worked in Inglewood

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## Deepest Pockets In Paper's Fold

**MEDIA:** Patrick Soon-Shiong looks to take Times high-tech.

By **KRISTIN MARGUERITE DODGE**  
Staff Reporter

Having invested \$70.5 million in **Tribune Publishing Co.**, **Patrick Soon-Shiong** said the Los Angeles Times is poised to become "the Harry Potter of news."

As part of his deal for a 12.9 percent stake in the company, Soon-Shiong's **NantWorks** has licensed more than 100 artificial intelligence and machine

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## No Resale Cut?

By **HENRY MEIER** Staff Reporter

Auction houses have reason to cheer in the wake of a local federal judge's ruling last month gutting the California Resale Royalty Act, the only law in the United States granting artists a cut from the sale of their work on the secondary market.

The demise of the CRRA, which allowed artists to collect a 5 percent royalty from any secondary sale of their work in the state worth more than

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Part of the Mix:  
**Michael Massenburg**  
at his studio in  
Inglewood.

RINGO H.W. CHIU/LABJ

# What it takes to get ahead.



## Lighting Firm Local Fixture Since 1956

*Paul Ferrante founder Tommy Raynor still takes shine to business.*

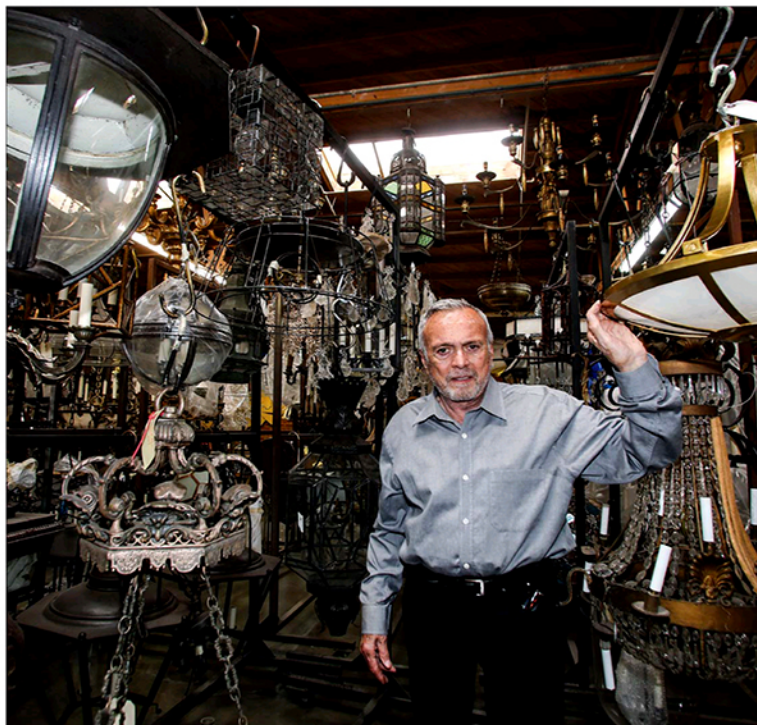
Luxury lighting firm **Paul Ferrante** is a shining example of how to stay in business. Now celebrating its 60th anniversary, the West Hollywood firm is still guided by co-founder **Tommy Raynor**, now 85.

Raynor, who remains hands on with the company, which has a Melrose Place retail store and Pacific Design Center showroom for the trade, traces Paul Ferrante's longevity to its ability to make any kind of chandelier, lamp, or other lighting fixture at its Culver City factory.

"You could bring in a design on a cocktail napkin, we'll chalk it on the ground and get a good outcome," said Raynor. "We're very obliging to our clients."

Entertainment titans such as **Oprah Winfrey**, **Michael Eisner**, and **David Geffen** are among the regular clients who appreciate the craftsmanship of the custom lighting designs.

"People have become so specific about what they want that every day is a challenge to keep clients happy," added



**Burning Bright: Tommy Raynor at Paul Ferrante's factory in Culver City.**

Raynor. But it's a challenge he's been facing for decades.

Starting as a lamp repair business with four employees back in 1956, Paul Ferrante, named after Raynor's late co-founder, has expanded

to make a name for itself nationally and now employs up to 100 employees.

"We have artisans as far as the eye can see," said Raynor, who noted that the biggest change he has noticed over

his years in the trade is the speeding up of supply and demand.

"The pace of today's business is incredible," he said.

— Amal Khan

## Bad Breakups Put Together For Exhibits

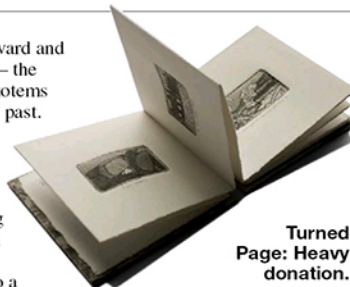
*John Quinn to hook up museum visitors with broken relationships.*

You might think the kitsch and clamor of Hollywood Boulevard's Walk of Fame would clash with a space described as an "abstract conceptual art piece," but it makes sense for the owners of the **Museum of Broken Relationships**.

Slated to open June 4 in the old Frederick's of Hollywood lingerie building — a block east of

Hollywood Boulevard and Highland Avenue — the museum features totems from relationships past. Everything on display is donated anonymously and comes with a placard featuring a description from the donor of the item's relevance to a bygone lover, partner, or meaningful connection, according to the museum's director, **Alexis Hyde**.

The project is wholly funded by attorney and art collector **John Quinn**, the downtown L.A. rainmaker and founding partner of **Quinn Emanuel**



**Turned Page: Heavy donation.**

**Urquhart & Sullivan.**

Quinn licensed the Museum of Broken Relationships name from two Croatian artists who established their project's first permanent home in Zagreb in 2010. Regular admission at the Hollywood attraction will cost \$18.

"It's unlike anything else I've seen," Quinn said of his initial attraction to the project. "People are baring their deepest regrets — some stories are funny and some are tragic — but it's fascinating to experience, in a way, other people's memories." Though he was initially wary of setting up the project on Hollywood, Quinn said he's come full circle in the year it's taken to bring it to fruition.

"I was a little concerned at first about the location, but I got over that," he said. "Part of the message is that this project is a universal experience."

— Henry Meier

## TV Hospitable to Exec

**Omar Spahi** recently sold a \$4.4 million co-op in Santa Monica under the bright camera lights of Bravo's reality show "Million Dollar Listing."



**Spahi, left, Serhant**

"It was definitely intense," said Spahi, 27, vice president of **Ocean Avenue Realty** in Santa Monica. An upcoming episode will feature the sale of the 1,700-square-foot co-op, a two-bedroom unit that had been joined with a studio and renovated to emphasize full ocean views.

Spahi, a fan of the show, pitched himself and the property to Bravo and hit it off with host **Ryan Serhant**.

"The shows are great," Spahi said. "It takes real estate and adds a personal element to it. There's nothing more personal to someone than their home." Spahi knows just how personal the beachside building can be: His father, **John Spahi**, is a partner in the group that owns the Ocean Towers and Omar lives in the unit there where he grew up.

"My dad thought it would be poetic," he said.

The senior Spahi built his real estate business from scratch after his family's successful textile company

was taken by the government in his native Egypt.

But real estate isn't the younger Spahi's only passion. He also publishes comic books and is working on earning a pilot's license.

"People constantly tell me that I do too much and should slow down, but this is me," he said. "We only have one life."

### Under Fire

**Bob Kurkjian**, executive director of **Bob Hope USO Inc.**, recalls holding a unique post when he was deployed to Baghdad almost 10 years ago while serving with the Navy Reserve.

He was attached to the Defense Logistics Agency and was responsible

for handling hazardous material from used oil to yellowcake, the base product to make highly enriched uranium.

Kurkjian, 43, said his missions weren't always smooth sailing.

"There were times when I was either inside or

outside the base and took fire, whether it was small or mortar or rockets," he said. "You just had to think, OK, they're lobbing rockets at us, not a whole lot I can do, but when appropriate

take shelter."

Kurkjian said the safest route would have been to not complete the mission but it wasn't an option.

"The surest way to be safe is to not do the mission," he said. "But you have to get a mission done. The group I worked with, we put in 16-hour days and we made a difference. It was incredible."



**Kurkjian**

Staff reporters **Daina Beth Solomon** and **Subrina Hudson** contributed to this column. Page 3 is compiled by Editor **Jonathan Diamond**. He can be reached at [jdiamond@labusinessjournal.com](mailto:jdiamond@labusinessjournal.com).

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