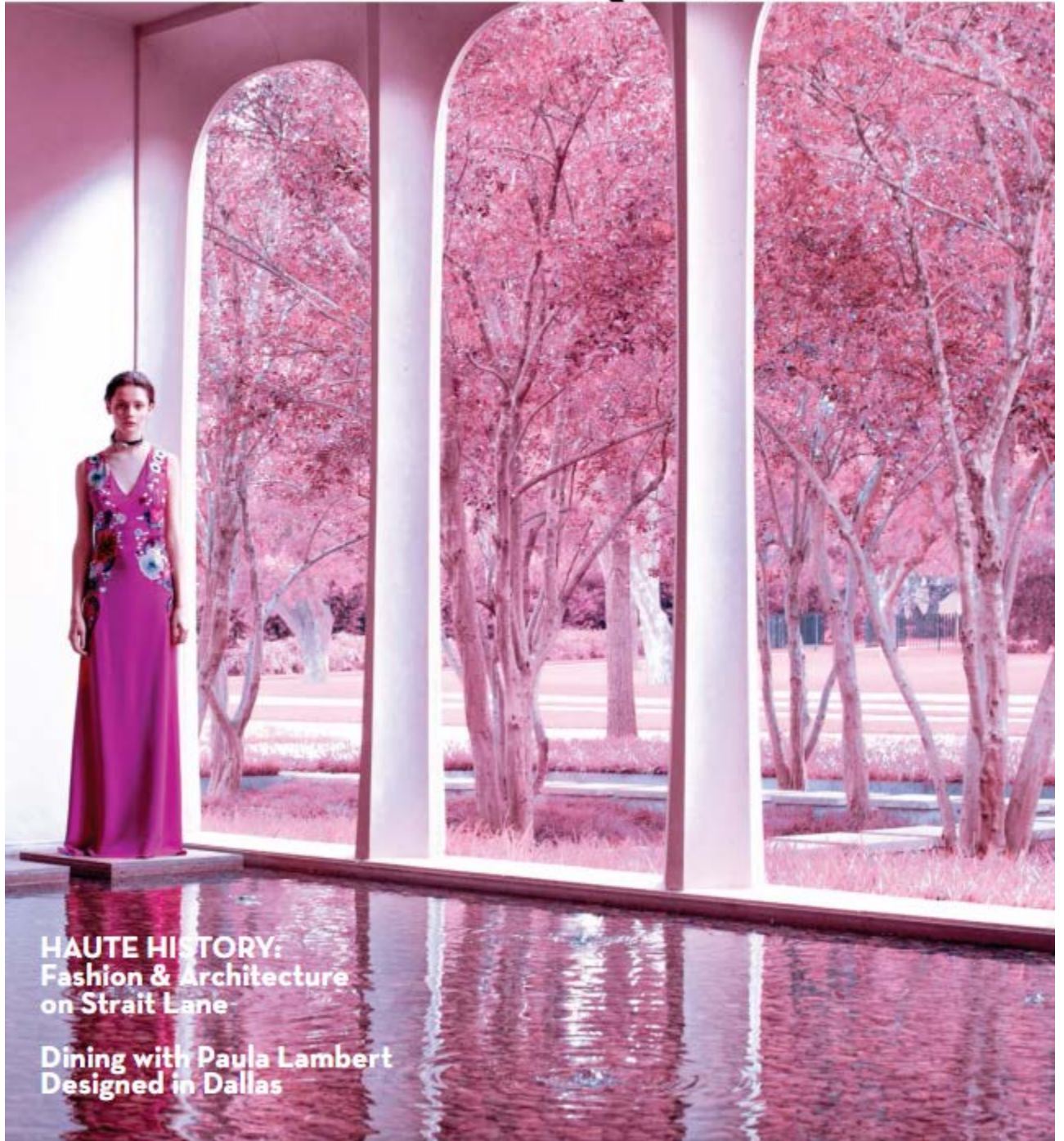


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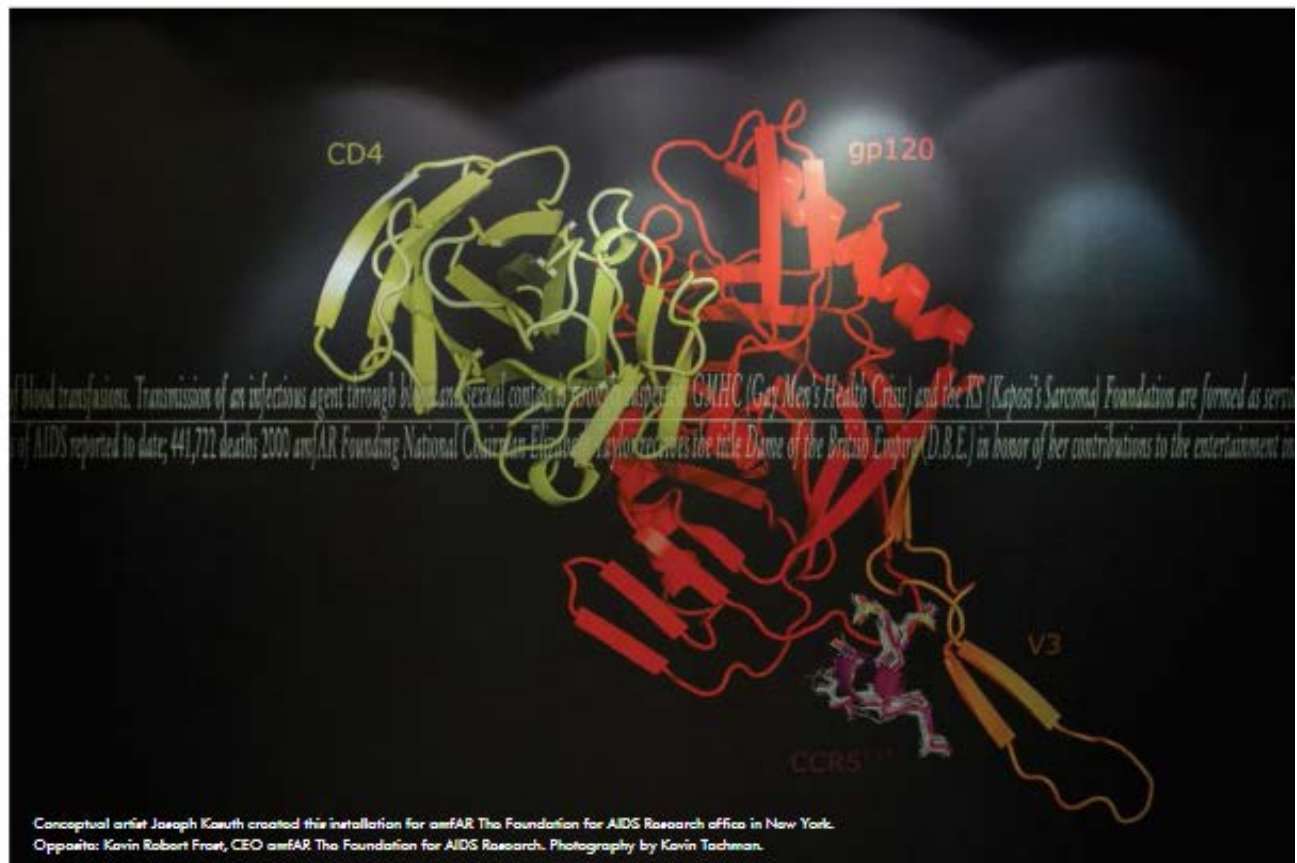
ART / CULTURE / DESIGN



HAUTE HISTORY:
Fashion & Architecture
on Strait Lane

Dining with Paula Lambert
Designed in Dallas

BY KAT HERRIMAN
 PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN TACHMAN



CULTURED COUNTDOWN

amfAR's accelerated HIV/AIDS research finds advocacy through TWO x TWO.

TWO x TWO for AIDS and Art is not your typical benefit. The gala is amfAR's single largest domestic fundraiser—raising over 7.5 million last year. amfAR's CEO Kevin Robert Frost believes the event's success lies in the unique partnership between the organization and the Dallas Museum of Art, the evening's dual beneficiaries. "You put these things together, and most people would say this is a formula for disaster, but it's actually been a recipe for tremendous success," Frost says. "I feel like the impact of TWO x TWO is hard to measure because it goes so much farther than the money that is raised. It is the relationships that we've been able to build and the support that amfAR's been able to build that goes way beyond our normal reach."

Frost gives full credit to local power collectors and Dallas Museum board members, Cindy and Howard Rachofsky, for being the glue that enables TWO x TWO to function. "Cindy and Howard do an extraordinary job of making TWO x TWO into such a premiere event," Frost says. "I don't know of anything else out there like it. The event is a testament not only to their love of contemporary art but also their commitment to the cause." The Rachofskys certainly have the pull to bring big names from the contemporary art world to the table, and every year they seem to up the ante. In the past, big-ticket items by blue chip artists like Laura Owens, Richard Phillips, and Jeff Koons have sold for seven figures. The energy in the room seems to snowball every year, getting grander and grander.

Like the Rachofskys, the evening's corporate sponsor, Harry Winston, seems to go above and beyond for amfAR. A fact that Frost notes during a conversation about the nonprofit's talent for creating lasting partnerships: "What makes our partnership with Harry Winston unique is that not only do they sponsor all our events, but they are also contributing directly to our research program, and particularly research related to trying to find a cure for AIDS," Frost says. "I think it's a sign of just how dedicated Harry Winston is to what we do."

At the moment, the entire organization is consumed with the Countdown to a Cure initiative, which hopes to make AIDS obsolete by 2020. "These days we are very much dedicated to finding a cure," Frost says. "Everything we do these days ties into finding a cure. It is where we are putting the vast majority of our resources."

If last year's record-breaking sales are any indication, the festivities in Dallas will raise a significant portion for amfAR's targeted fight. Frost hopes in addition to donations that new voices will be inspired to get more involved. Take, for example, this year's honoree, artist Jonas Wood, who has routinely donated to the auction but is now participating with the organization in a bigger way.

These new faces not only inspire those outside the amfAR family but those within. At the amfAR headquarters in New York, one sees the impact art has had on the organization not only as a fundraising tool but as a source of inspiration. The offices are outfitted with a site-specific Joseph Kosuth installation, which depicts the history of AIDS and the organization. "We wanted to create an environment that invigorated us, where we were constantly stimulated and surrounded by the people we love," Frost says. "That is what Joseph really captured in the installation. It's not just the milestones. It's not just the story of our past, but also our roadmap to the future. It's what inspires us everyday to find a cure."

In this way, Frost sees the artwork that is sold at TWO x TWO serving two purposes. It raises money and it inspires action. "The fight against AIDS can be an emotionally challenging fight because most of the people who work here have loved ones that have died of AIDS," Frost says. "Yet at the same time, we also understand that there has always been risk of complacency. We face that risk even more so today because the success we've achieved threatens our future. Art helps combat this fatigue in a way we can't." P

