

SPOTLIGHT

Lio Malca Brings Spencer Lewis to Ibiza for La Nave Salinas' Tenth Anniversary

American collector Lio Malca hoped to revive the artistic spirit of Ibiza with his foundation founded in 2015. Now, ten years on, he's celebrating the space with an exhibition by U.S. artist Spencer Lewis.

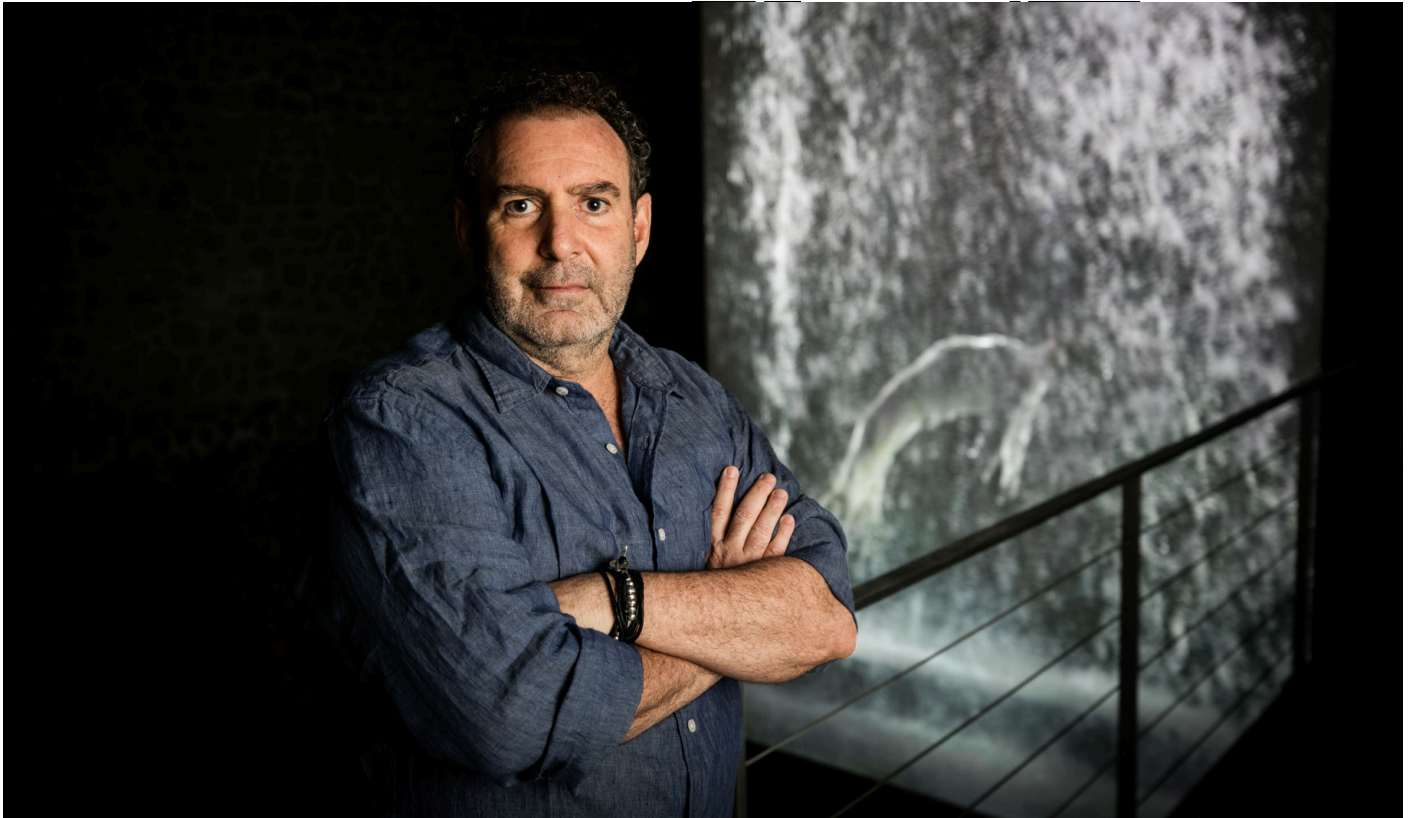


By Tom Seymour – 15 July 2025, Ibiza

I meet Lio Malca relaxing at sunset by the entrance of Fundación La Nave Salinas in Ibiza. He's wearing Adidas trainers, a light scarf over his shoulders, a dusting of stubble. The cork goes on a bottle of rosé. He couldn't look more at home, yet it's a big occasion; he's celebrating ten years since he transformed the once-derelict warehouse, built into a bay on the island's lush north, into a non-profit art foundation.

'I've been coming to Ibiza for 20 years,' Malca tells me. 'Initially just on holiday. But over time, I met locals who showed me the island beyond the beaches and parties. I fell in love with its energy and spirit. Eventually, I found a house and came to feel indebted to the place. I knew I wanted to give back.'

Malca has just opened the 2025 summer season with a solo exhibition by the Los Angeles-based abstract painter Spencer Lewis, further establishing La Nave as the Spanish island's premier space for contemporary art.



Lio Malca. Courtesy Lio Malca.



Exhibition view: Kenny Scharf, Space Travel, 60 White, New York (3 December 2024–28 February 2025). Courtesy 60 White.

Malca, whose art collection began in 1990 with a piece by Jean-Michel Basquiat, has developed a portfolio that includes works by Keith Haring, Kenny Scharf, George Condo, and a growing number of emerging artists.

'The first piece was a drawing by Basquiat—22 by 30 inches—which I bought in Boston while I was still a student,' Malca says. 'That opened the floodgates ... I got bitten by the bug. It became an addiction—but a joyful one. I've been collecting ever since.'

His activities span multiple sites—most notably Casa Malca, a hotel and exhibition space in Tulum, along with The Art Lodge, a residency in Mexico's Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, and 60 White, a multidisciplinary venue in Tribeca, New York.

La Nave Salinas opened in 2015 as a free-admission exhibition space designed to present large-scale, museum-quality shows during Ibiza's peak summer season and has hosted exhibitions by artists like Keith Haring, Bill Viola, KAWS, and Rafa Macarrón.

Malca emphasises that works shown at La Nave are selected not just for their formal qualities but for their ability to engage with the unique spatial and historical context of the venue: 'The pieces truly aren't finished until they're in the space.'



Exhibition view: Spencer Lewis, *La noche de día (Night by Day)*, Fundación La Nave Salinas, Ibiza (21 June–8 August 2025).
Courtesy Fundación La Nave Salinas.



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Courtesy Fundación La Nave Salinas.

The current Lewis exhibition consists of site-specific paintings made in response to the architecture of the warehouse; their scale is created to fit the enormity of the internal space, while earlier prototypes incorporated salt crystals into the materiality of the canvas. Malca first saw Lewis' work in a New York gallery and said he immediately visualised it here. 'Not every work resonates with the strength of La Nave's architecture, but his did,' Malca says.

Malca describes La Nave as an offering to Ibiza. 'I wanted to give something cultural,' he says. 'The island has a long history of attracting artists, particularly in the 1940s and '50s, and I felt that spirit had been lost.'

La Nave is designed as a non-commercial space, with no admission fee, gift shop, or café. 'People are constantly being asked to spend,' Malca says of Ibiza's broader tourism economy. 'I wanted La Nave to be different.'



Opening night, Spencer Lewis, La noche de día (Night by Day), Fundación La Nave Salinas, Ibiza (21 June–8 August 2025). Courtesy Fundación La Nave Salinas.

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Alongside exhibitions, the foundation runs two educational initiatives for children, with around 200 coming through the doors each summer and close to 1,000 school students through October.

‘During the summer holidays, we run weekend workshops for children who live on or are visiting the island,’ Malca says. ‘They learn about the artist we’re showing, the context of the work, and then make their own pieces inspired by that style. Then, in October, we get about 50 children a day, by school bus, for guided sessions. For me, that’s crucial. Many of these children don’t have the means to travel and see museums. So we bring the museum to them.’



Casa Malca, Tulum, Mexico. Courtesy Casa Malca.

In Mexico, Malca’s parallel projects follow similar principles of inclusivity. Casa Malca functions as a hybrid space for hospitality and art display, while The Art Lodge, located in a remote fishing lodge in the Sian Ka’an nature reserve, offers artists informal residencies. According to Malca, there is no pressure to produce work, and the foundation may or may not acquire pieces from participants.

Though he has amassed a sizeable collection, Malca has no plans to establish a private museum. Instead, he prefers to distribute works across his properties or loan them to institutions—a recent Kenny Scharf exhibition in China featured 100 works from Malca’s collection. ‘Art shouldn’t live in storage,’ he says. ‘It should be seen, experienced, shared.’ —[O]

Spencer Lewis: La noche de día (Night by Day) is on view at [Fundación La Nave Salinas](#) in Ibiza through 8 August 2025. It will be followed by a solo exhibition by [Pedro Pedro](#), scheduled to open on 16 August 2025.

Main image: Exterior view of Fundación La Nave Salinas, Ibiza (2025). Courtesy Fundación La Nave Salinas.



TOM SEYMOUR

Tom Seymour is a writer and contributing editor for Ocula.

TAGS

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