



WORLDWIDE

Off the Wall with Paul Davies

The LA-based, Australian-born artist tells us about his latest work, debuting on the Soho Warehouse rooftop

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"When you're on the rooftop of [Soho Warehouse](#), there's a collection of different views: from palm trees to the mountains, all the way west to the beach or north, to the mid-century homes and pools of the Hollywood Hills," says LA-based artist Paul Davies. "I tried to replicate that intersectionality in my work. Rather than paint one continuous picture, I wanted to create a flow of landscapes that present a different story each time."

Davies' latest work for Soho House is an 18-foot-long triptych which will sit atop the rooftop of our third West Coast property, Soho Warehouse. The piece, entitled "We Tell Ourselves Stories," is loosely based on the work of writer Joan Didion.

"Didion's book of essays, *The White Album*, opens with the line, 'We tell ourselves stories in order to live,'" he explains. "It's this collection of memoirs and reportage ranging from the Manson murders, The Doors recording their album and memories of growing up in Sacramento. That made me think that Los Angeles and California mean something different to everyone."

Davies, whose art is already on display at Soho House Mumbai, Little Beach House Barcelona and DUMBO House, also has work on the penthouse corridor of Soho House West Hollywood — a 12-piece collection of prints inspired by the same narrative. Another of his prints, "Built on Spec," is available for purchase on [Soho Home Editions](#).

Here, we visit the artist at his West Hollywood studio to hear more about his inspiration, process and insights behind his work for Soho Warehouse.



Paul Davies in his studio working on the Soho Warehouse mural (Carmen Chan)

How did you come to design this piece for Soho Warehouse?

"It was a commission from [Soho House's Head of Collections] Kate Bryan, who I've known for nine years and met back in Hong Kong when she was a gallery director there. Once I heard about the size of the space I'd be creating work for, I wondered how I could make one long, continuous flow of a picture that still makes you come back for a second look."

What was your process for creating this piece?

"The house in this is a collage of different mid-century homes that I've been to and taken photographs of. Once I printed the photographs, I'd cut them and use them as stencils, painting through them to build out the layers. The same goes for the mountains, the trees, the pool and the chairs. The idea with all of it is that it's not one fixed perspective; rather, it's a collage of all of these different perspectives in one continuous image."

Why did you opt for a triptych?

'While the painting itself is engaging because of the color palate, I wanted the viewer's relationship with the piece to be a bit difficult, in a way. It's hard to trust anything because the three perspectives are never continuous, and so much is flipped around.'



Paul Davies in his studio working on the Soho Warehouse mural (Carmen Chan)

Does this riff off any of your other work in the House?

'Definitely; I also did a photo collage that will live around the corner from the painting. That tells a bit about the process and inspiration behind the piece — it's kind of like the key to this series. And then I've also done a print for the bedrooms incorporating elements that are similarly Californian in their nature. The print I did for Soho Home Editions is a smaller-sized version of those pieces.'

How long did it take you to make this piece?

'It took me three months to do the painting aspect of it, but sketching, planning and scheduling took me about six months before that, during a time where I had three big trips scheduled. Having that distance from the piece and coming back to it each time with a new perspective was so important to my process. You need that space to think about what you're doing.'

Speak a bit to your creative process in general — this specific work aside

'For me, it all begins with research photographs. I'm always traveling; I was in India earlier in the year and go to Europe often on residency. Wherever it is, I'm constantly taking photos and sketching the things I'm seeing. When I come back to the studio, I sift through images and pick one or two to print out and put on my studio wall, and that's where they'll stay for about two years. And if I still like an image after two years, I'll enlarge it and make it into a stencil. Once I've got a few of them, I'll start collaging them into different scenes and creating stencils from them. Everything I do is about preserving memory. It's pretty much the opposite of Instagram.'

Soho Warehouse will be part of your Every House membership, and you can be the first to stay in a bedroom by [clicking here to book](#). If you know of anyone interested in Soho Warehouse membership, feel free to refer them to sohohouse.com/membership.

Lead image: Paul Davies in his studio (Carmen Chan)



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