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Lio Malca Celebrates a Decade of Summers at La Nave in Ibiza

We kick off the summer season in Ibiza with a new exhibition at La Nave featuring Spencer Lewis, while celebrating ten years of the foundation with Lio Malca.

MICHAEL KLUG

JUNE 26, 2025



Kicking off Ibiza's vibrant summer art season, Fundación La Nave Salinas has unveiled a monumental solo exhibition by American painter Spencer Lewis. Titled "La noche de día (Night by Day)," the show marks both a personal milestone for the artist and a celebratory moment for the foundation's 10th anniversary. Located in a former salt warehouse overlooking the shimmering Las Salinas beach, the exhibition transforms the space with a new series of large-scale, site-specific paintings.

Fundación La Nave Salinas is a non-profit contemporary art foundation in Ibiza, Spain, founded by art patron Lio Malca in 2015 and directed by Isaac Malca since 2022. Located in a repurposed salt warehouse near the island's iconic salt pans, the foundation serves as a public platform for monumental contemporary art exhibitions. With over 8,000 square feet of exhibition space, La Nave hosts annual shows by major international artists, alongside educational programs like guided tours and school workshops—all offered free of charge. Past exhibitions have featured Keith Haring, KAWS, Kenny Scharf, Bill Viola, and other globally recognized artists.

Over 700 guests gathered for the opening night on June 21, 2025, underscoring La Nave's role as a cultural hub for boundary-pushing contemporary art on the island.

Whitewall spoke with founder of La Nave, Malca, about this summer's season.

Spencer Lewis at La Nave



Courtesy of Fundación La Nave Salinas.

WHTIEWALL: This year marks the tenth anniversary of La Nave. How does Spencer Lewis' exhibition reflect the foundation's evolution over the past decade?

LIO MALCA: Having the show with Spencer this year is a very important benchmark –especially since we had been working on the idea for four years. The fact that it finally materialized for our 10-year anniversary makes it even more meaningful. It reflects our ongoing commitment to bold, visceral art experiences and long-term relationships with artists.

WW: You described Spencer's paintings as having a "raw energy" that belongs inside La Nave. What drew you personally to his work, and how did the collaboration begin?

LM: When I saw Spencer's work for the first time, I immediately imagined how incredible it would look at La Nave. In my mind, I saw his paintings hanging on those deep rock walls—walls that hold so much history. Spencer's work feels like a powerful explosion, like a visual Big Bang. That raw force connects deeply with the spirit of the space.



Courtesy of Fundación La Nave Salinas.

WW: The former salt warehouse at La Nave offers a powerful, immersive environment. How did you and the team approach the scenography and spatial setup for Spencer Lewis's monumental works within such a raw architectural context?

LM: The space itself plays an active role in how we envision each show. With Spencer's pieces, the idea was to amplify that "rawness" through contrast—placing his explosive gestures against the nearly 100-year-old stone architecture. It's about creating a dialogue between the artwork and the building itself, where both elevate each other.

10 Years of Fundación La Nave Salinas



Courtesy of Fundación La Nave Salinas.

WW: Previous exhibitions at La Nave have featured figures like KAWS, Keith Haring, and Bill Viola. What role does scale or monumentality play in your curatorial decisions?

LM: At La Nave, we have what I always dreamed of—oversized walls that allow artists to go big. Many artists don't usually have the space to create or exhibit truly monumental works. That's where we come in. We offer the freedom and scale to think beyond limits and bring massive ideas to life in combination with small or medium paintings or sculptures.

“We offer the freedom and scale to think beyond limits and bring massive ideas to life in combination with small or medium paintings or sculptures,”

– Lio Malca



Lio Malca, courtesy of Fundación La Nave Salinas.

WW: How has the foundation's mission evolved since 2015, especially in terms of community engagement and education?

LM: One of the most important aspects of our summer at La Nave is incorporating an educational program and community engagement for children. We have two programs:

Kids Play at La Nave: Summer workshops welcoming around 200 children with their parents to explore and connect with the art.

L'Escola at La Nave: A partnership with local schools to bring students to the exhibition in October. This is why we've extended our summer program to run until October 31st—to accommodate these educational visits.

“We’re always looking to break our own rules,”

—Lio Malca



Courtesy of Fundación La Nave Salinas.

WW: Looking forward, what kind of artistic voices or themes are you hoping to spotlight in the next decade at La Nave Salinas?

LM: That’s a tough prediction since we are always discovering new artists, or we connect with established ones and form collaborations. But I can say that our enthusiasm, energy, and willpower keep growing. We’re always looking to break our own rules and continue bringing exciting, bold propositions to Ibiza that will give our visitors goosebumps—whether they’re from Ibiza or anywhere else in the world.

About Fundación La Nave Salinas and Lio Malca



Courtesy of Fundación La Nave Salinas.

Fundación La Nave Salinas is a non-profit foundation in Ibiza, Spain. It was founded in 2015 by art patron Lio Malca, and it has been under the directorship of Isaac Malca since 2022. Housed in a former salt warehouse in the salt pans of Ibiza, the foundation was created as a space that makes contemporary art accessible to the public. Lio Malca's connection to Ibiza spans more than 20 years, and this project is a way for the collector to give back to the island's community.

With an exhibition space of over 8,000 square feet, the foundation is devoted to showcasing exciting curatorial projects and monumental installations of contemporary art on a yearly basis. The ambitious programming is paired with extensive educational initiatives, including guided tours and teaching workshops for local schools. These activities aim to bring contemporary art closer to people of all ages. Perhaps most important to the foundation's mission is that admission to La Nave Salinas and all programs is free of charge. La Nave Salinas has presented solo exhibitions by artists Keith Haring, Kenny Scharf, Marco Brambilla, Bill Viola, KAWS, Rafa Macarrón, Eva Beresin, Jonny Niesche and Mai Blanco.



Courtesy of Fundación La Nave Salinas.

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Spencer Lewis Brings Monumental Paintings to Ibiza's La Nave Salinas

Discover Spencer Lewis's bold new exhibition in Ibiza, where monumental paintings meet salt, sea, and light at Fundación La Nave Salinas.

MICHAEL KLUG

JULY 08, 2025



This summer, Fundación La Nave Salinas in Ibiza presents a powerful solo exhibition by American artist Spencer Lewis. Titled *La noche de día* (Night by Day), the show marks the culmination of four years of planning between Lewis and the foundation's founder, Lio Malca. Installed within the dramatic setting of a former 1940s salt warehouse overlooking Las Salinas beach, the exhibition features a series of new, monumental site-specific paintings.

Known for his raw, gestural abstraction, Lewis continues his exploration of color, texture, and spatial tension—building upon the legacy of Modernist masters like Hans Hofmann and Willem de Kooning. His layered, emotionally charged surfaces invite viewers into a shifting dialogue between chaos and control. Each brushstroke feels both spontaneous and carefully considered, creating compositions that reward slow, immersive looking.

As Isaac Malca, Director of Fundación La Nave Salinas, notes, this exhibition offers a rare chance to experience Lewis's work in direct dialogue with the foundation's soaring industrial architecture and the island's luminous Mediterranean light. With works also held in major American museum collections, Lewis brings international energy and a deeply personal visual language to this landmark Ibiza exhibition—cementing La Nave's decade-long legacy of championing bold, visceral contemporary art.

For Lewis, each canvas becomes a physical conversation—balancing chaos and control, movement and materiality. Trained on the works of Hans Hofmann and Willem de Kooning as a child, Lewis's painterly instincts are both studied and spontaneous. Known for his raw, gestural abstraction and vibrant color palette, Lewis continues his dialogue with the legacies of Abstract Expressionism while forging his own bold visual language.

The show offers a rare opportunity to experience Lewis's work in immersive scale, engaging directly with the luminous architecture and Mediterranean light unique to this storied Ibiza venue.



Courtesy of Fundación La Nave Salinas.

WHITEWALL: You mentioned that abstraction is not a style, but a condition of being alive. Can you expand on how that philosophy shaped *La noche de día*?

SPENCER LEWIS: I'm not trying to be cheeky when I say everything is abstraction—I mean it sincerely. The symbolic is abstraction so language and any forms for that matter. And the title of the show, which I didn't come up with myself, is brilliant

because it distills these two poles—day and night, known and unknown, illuminated and shrouded—into an epistemological parable. How do we know anything?

There's something Lacan would call the Real—or maybe Freud, I can't quite remember—that is by definition unknowable. And for this show, one goal is to have a space where we can interact with this challenging quality of life: we are never "in" the real, we always strive to understand only through language.

The desire and churning that I think you find in these works leaves a bit of room for this detachment that is reflective of abstracting the world. This is why people are so interested in truth in painting. Abstraction is violent, but painting can be a place for violence.

Spencer Lewis's Monumental Exhibition in Ibiza



Courtesy of Fundación La Nave Salinas.

WW: Your work is physically intense and labor-driven, yet deeply conceptual. Do you consider your practice a form of resistance or preservation? Or both?

SL: I'm a bit odd in that I think, of course, all work comes from ideas and is conceptual, but I'd prefer to keep my ideas on the canvas and in the process as much as possible. So yes, I think this is a type of resistance that I'm trying to own now. The process is the idea. Or say we need to keep delineating and pulling the thread of the idea without closing the parentheses.

So there is a resistance to engage with a completed idea, but what is preserved is the space as long as possible. I find preservation a very specious concept, or I should say I suppose I'm thinking about inertia.

Conservation is a word that also comes to mind—resistance, rebellion, destruction. They are all types of labor. Objects take maintenance, which is like the most boring adult concept we have to learn.

The paintings are a bit like bandages, and the paint is a bit like wounds. Or I rarely share this, but I think of the marks often as scars—whether ritual scarification or at the end of a whip. But here the jute contains and can help preserve or create the space for healing, and the paint, once dried, is the scar after the wound. I'm not sure if I'm being clear. Maybe ritual is the best word for the notion of practice.

WW: What do you hope viewers take away from experiencing this series in person, surrounded by salt, light, and sea air?

The installation engages all the senses intentionally and brings the outdoors inside, I believe. The lighting, the smells and sounds, the salt—which again was suggested by Isaac and Lio for the installation—is a fantastic choice and one I would not have thought of, which is why I love this collaboration.

I'm still processing the landscape and the light here and what it means to me, but I think we have created the space to contemplate the work. And then afterwards, I suggest a swim at the beach right here in Salinas.

Abstract Paintings in Conversation with La Nave



WW: You've described painting as a conversation with the canvas. How did the architecture and history of La Nave shape that dialogue in this new body of work?

SL: with the Malcas and the space of La Nave. Because it is not just a white cube—it's alive with the history of Ibiza.

I had never been to Ibiza, and I think people have this assumption that it's very superficial, but the passion that Lio has for it and for art has allowed us to dream a bit together about this show. Because like a painting, it's something you can't convey in words but you are compelled to relate. Collectors bring their subjectivity as do artists, and I think that's very important to digest.

And in the end, I think we are both very interested in spaces and the notion of place that they carry. How art interacts with a place, almost like graffiti—it forefronts the world.

So my painting language has changed in a way I couldn't have imagined here. The materiality and the uncanny nature of the work I think, are strengthened here. Our notions of place are rooted in our whole history's relationship to history. But there's room for slippage between the two.

I have my own assumptions about labor here and colonialism, Franco and fascism, economic opportunity and depression. But the goal of the artist is again to digest all of our symbols.



Courtesy of Fundación La Nave Salinas.

WW: You often work with jute and burlap—materials that carry personal and historical weight. How do you see materiality functioning as language in this exhibition?

SL: The jute carries its own history that's not so dissimilar to the space. A salt warehouse, a port, international shipping and trade. I hope it is the perfect place to explore these materials as a language. In my work, there is this extreme forefronting of material, yet there is still an image typically. And I think that's so important to highlight because it's hard for us to move from our instinctual processing of the world via material. Is it because our brains are so efficient or purpose-driven? Can we be present?

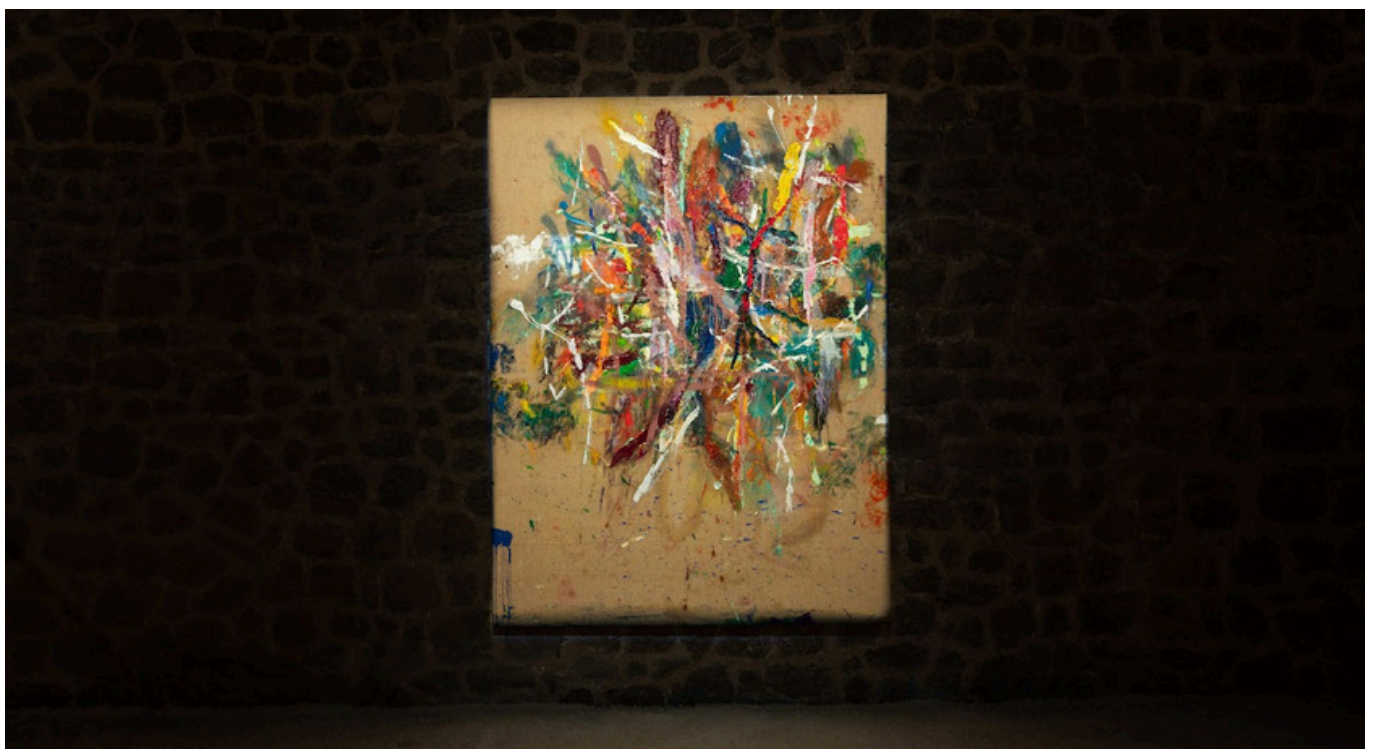
So each work addresses the viewer via image. It is creating problems for the brain to solve and read. Each work takes advantage of the viewer's curiosity about surface and material as well, via the uncanny.

But I hope that the visual language is a bit confounding in these paintings, like semantic satiation. I hope it takes the viewer to the mix of pre-verbal and verbal communication that occurs for the painter while we work.

The jute has been a perfect foil for me because of its ability to handle the layers of paint while maintaining its own objecthood. And those layers then include their histories. But beyond utterance or verbiage or symbolism of the object, the jute material itself is beautiful, like how plants are just beautiful. And similarly their meaning does not always need explanation, as intellectualization can almost cheapen the experience. I can't think of anyone ever needing a metaphor for a sunset while we watched it.

So perhaps I'm fascinated in how we speak and read without thinking.

“I'm fascinated in how we speak and read without thinking,” –Spencer Lewis



Courtesy of Fundación La Nave Salinas.

WW: Your practice exists in a space between control and chaos. How do you know when a piece is finished, or when to let a layer remain visible?

SL: Well, the truth is I don't. If you are letting go enough to try to go beyond your plans and take it to the next level, you can't know that the next move should be your last or if you've had one too many.

Of course, I've been taught what makes a good painting, what makes a complete experience, and various strategies to finish a work. And on the other hand, you are feeling your way through, and you are working to your best capacity. But you may stop because you are tired or you are old. And just learn from experience.

But ultimately, you are done with a work when you begin to work on the next work. When your desire shifts. That is how you know you are done. That is why, when a painter dies, the remaining works are considered unfinished. There isn't a last work really.

Now that doesn't mean you don't come back to a work or take a work further, but in a sense this knowledge—when is it finished—is our only job, and so it takes a bit longer to explain fully. Because it takes a lifetime to develop, and you still don't quite know.

“It takes a lifetime to develop,”

—Spencer Lewis

About Artist Spencer Lewis



Spencer Lewis, Courtesy of Fundación La Nave Salinas.



Spencer Lewis, Courtesy of Fundación La Nave Salinas.

Spencer Lewis was born in Hartford, CT, in 1979. He currently lives and works in Los Angeles. Known for his gestural paintings on cardboard and jute, Spencer Lewis uses flashy bright and colorful notions executed through streaked lines, smears of paint and rough strokes that suggest the impulsive creative process underneath. With chaotic, almost infinite layers, Lewis's canvases conceal and simultaneously unveil a brushstroke, a gesture over the other, stories and moments culminating and accumulating on the painting's densest parts. Despite the apparent unpredictability of Lewis's compositions, they are based on a methodology and structure. Lewis is, in fact, interested in pictorial organization and image-making.

Consistently concentrating towards the centre of the canvas, Lewis's brushstrokes frantically tell the different layers of the same narrative. Descriptive marks and eloquent signs build up on the jute to create a history on the verge of legibility. Lewis' work is in the permanent collection of the National Museum of African American History and Culture at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas.

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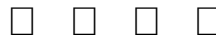
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