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Dallas gallerist launches art book company with 2 must-have titles

Digital media may dominate our consciousness, but nothing can ever take the place of leafing through a glossy hardback. And with an eye to elevate the coffee table book business comes the newest publisher on the block: [Archon Projects](#).

Helmed by Dallas gallerist and graphic designer Brian Gibb, Archon launches this month with two must-have titles. As a co-founder of the now-defunct arts and culture magazine *Art Prostitute*, Gibb had an extensive background in publishing, even if it had been over a decade since he worked in the industry full time. A fortuitous call last year from the imprint's silent investors led to a dream gig of creating his own art book company.

"It started at the end of last year when I was approached by a couple of people who knew I had experience in publishing," recalls Gibb. "They said they'd be willing to fund the start of an imprint and there wasn't a whole lot of negotiation — they expected that I would just act as editor and designer and started me with enough funding for two titles."

Although Gibb says *Art Prostitute* will never surface again — "When the band broke up, the band broke up" — this new platform draws on his vast experience exposing new and established names to a wider audience. Choosing the Greek name Archon, the term for the ancient city-state's chief magistrates, Gibb honed in the concept of giving career artists their first monograph.

First up is *Robyn O'Neil: Twenty Years of Drawings*, a 184-page black and white book exploring the Los Angeles-based artist's quirky, delicate work.

"Robyn and I have been friends for such a long time and I'm such a big fan of her work," says Gibb of the artist, who has been featured in the [Whitney Biennial](#). "She had this crazy meteoric rise before the age of social media, and had all these things happen that if they were happening today, everyone would know about it. Her career is still totally surging, but in a pretty unassuming way."

With O'Neil nailed down, Gibb worked on a business plan with his photographer-wife, Misty Keasler, who happened to be working on new images of commercial haunted houses. Although she had published a book on Japanese [love hotels](#) for another imprint, Keasler wanted a different angle for her sophomore effort.

"She was going on all these trips to haunted houses with no book deal in place and I said to her, 'Why don't we put this book out with Archon?' Her publisher wanted to do the book, but not in the way Misty wanted to do it. I did the limited edition of *Love Hotels* for her, and I understand her work as a photographer."

In the middle of pulling together the concept, Keasler was approached by the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, whose exhibition, [Haunt](#), curated by the museum's senior curator Andrea Karnes, opens September 23. Archon's accompanying 212-page title will now serve as the show's catalog.

"Right around the time we were reaching out to Andrea to write the essay for 'Haunt,' they decided it would be a show at the museum. This whole thing just perfectly came together in a way that doesn't happen very often."

Bolstered by substantial [tour](#) for both tomes, Webb anticipates the success of his first two projects to provide the funding for future books. With an eye to publish two monographs a year, he says he can keep quality consistent and worthy of stocking on the shelves of independent bookstores.

Webb admits the way Archon fell together is almost spookily serendipitous.

"I've been trying to figure out ways to get back (into publishing) for a while, but for this to happen the way it did seemed really cosmic," he says. "[Being] presented with the opportunity to have two projects funded is a really rare thing, and I've got an opportunity to really do this thing right."

