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December 30, 2002, Monday

THE ARTS/CULTURAL DESK

## Giovanni Intra, 34, a Founder Of an Influential Art Gallery

By ROBERTA SMITH ( [Obituary \(Obit\)](#); [Biography](#) ) 407 words

Giovanni Intra, a writer and a partner in China Art Objects Galleries, an influential new gallery in Los Angeles, died on Dec. 17 in an apartment on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. He was 34 and lived in Los Angeles. The New York City Medical Examiner's office said the cause of death was unknown, pending further investigation.

Mr. Intra was born in Auckland, New Zealand, in 1968 and grew up in Turangi, New Zealand, and in Auckland. He began painting and living on his own as a teenager. He attended the Elam School of Fine Arts at the University of Auckland, where he earned bachelor's and master's degrees and began writing for the magazine Stamp. During this time he also helped found Teststrip, an alternative space.

In 1996 Mr. Intra went to Los Angeles on a Fulbright scholarship to study at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, where he earned a master's degree in critical studies in 2001.

In 1998 he and Steve Hanson, an artist who, like him, worked at the Art Center library, decided to start a low-key artist-run gallery. After scouring Los Angeles, they found a small store in a deserted mall on Chung King Road in the city's Chinatown district. Taking the gallery's name, China Art Objects, from a sign left by the previous tenant, they opened in January 1999 in a space designed by the artist Pae White and built with their friends.

Their shows often featured collaborations between younger and more established Los Angeles artists, including Jorge Pardo, Laura Owens, Steven Prina and Frances Stark. But they also gave first shows to young unknowns like David Korty, John Pylypchuk, Eric Wesley, J. P. Munro and Mason Cooley, several of whom began showing in galleries in New York and Europe. Other galleries soon followed China Art Objects to the Chung King Road mall.

Mr. Intra was West Coast editor for the magazine Art and Text, and helped edit the magazine Semiotext; his writing was published in Tema Celeste, Artforum, Bookforum and Flash Art.

He is survived by his mother, Barbara Intra of Te Awamutu, New Zealand, and his sister, Anna Intra, of Auckland.

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