

People

Photos: AFP, Reuters

Love loses legal custody of daughter

The only daughter of Kurt Cobain and Courtney Love has been placed in a temporary guardianship, court records show.

A Los Angeles Superior Court commissioner granted control over 17-year-old Frances Bean Cobain (right, with Love) to Kurt Cobain's mother Wendy O'Connor and his sister Kimberly Dawn Cobain.

The court filing does not mention Love or give a reason for the guardianship.

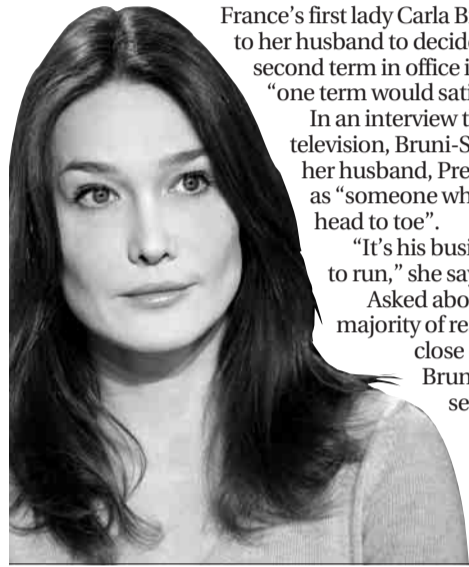
In recent months, Love, former frontwoman of the band Hole, has been criticised for rambling online postings that have attacked a former bandmate and others. A fashion designer sued Love in Los Angeles earlier this year over some of the



posts, claiming they were libellous. A three-page order issued last week was all that is publicly available on the guardianship.

Lawyer Geraldine Wyle, who is handling the case for the mother and sister, calls it a private family matter and said no other comment would be issued. AP

One term enough for France's first lady



France's first lady Carla Bruni-Sarkozy says it's up to her husband to decide whether to run for a second term in office in 2012 but says "one term would satisfy me".

In an interview that aired on French television, Bruni-Sarkozy (left) hailed her husband, President Nicolas Sarkozy, as "someone who's committed from head to toe".

"It's his business [to decide] whether to run," she says.

Asked about a survey in which a majority of respondents say she is not close enough to the French people, Bruni-Sarkozy says "they don't see me as I really am".

Bruni-Sarkozy, a former model-turned-singer, was interviewed in her apartment in western Paris. AP

Lakshmi speaks out on illness

HEALTH

Ros Krasny

Cookbook author Padma Lakshmi is hoping to raise awareness and help tens of millions of women who suffer from endometriosis, a painful illness that can cause infertility.

The 39-year-old model and host of reality cooking show *Top Chef*, who is pregnant with her first child, has been talking about her two-decade struggle with the disorder, in which tissue that normally lines the uterus migrates to other parts of the body, causing pain and swelling. She says her decision to go public with her struggle was prompted by a desire to help young women avoid the suffering she has experienced. "I remember school dances that I didn't go to, mid-terms I failed and family occasions that I missed," she says. "Only now do I realise how much of my life was mangled and distorted by this illness."

Lakshmi has become the driving force behind the Endometriosis Foundation of America, which together with researchers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), is pushing to develop new treatments for the illness.

Little is known about the illness that affects up to 90 million women worldwide.

Surgery is often required to remove scar tissue that can attach itself to the ovaries, bowels and lining of the abdominal cavity.



Padma Lakshmi. Photo: AP

"It's like roots in a garden, with the womb being the garden," Lakshmi says.

"Endometriosis attaches itself like weeds. You have to clean under the rocks and behind the fence and through the trees and get every last bit of it out."

After multiple surgeries for the condition she is now in the second trimester of her pregnancy and is due to give birth early next year.

Lakshmi hopes other celebrity sufferers, who include comedian Whoopi Goldberg, will lend their weight to her campaign by continuing to speak out publicly.

"I guard my privacy closely, and it seems contradictory when I'm standing here, talking about my period," she says. "But you always have to remember the greater goal. What's more important - my privacy, or the lives of women? I chose the latter."

Reuters

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Art and design merge in the concept store, writes Divia Harilela

FASHION

Original spin

Concept stores are not a novel idea - in Europe and the US, fashion retailers have long established independent boutiques that centre on a lifestyle theme. These offer fashionistas a well-edited selection of clothing alongside accessories, art, homeware, music and design, merging fashion with other creative disciplines. Well known examples are Colette in Paris, Milan's 10 Corso Como and Rei Kawakubo's Dover Street Market in London.

It has taken time for Hongkongers to embrace this type of shopping experience, but recently several stores have opened offering more than just high fashion.

"There is so much on offer in the market these days that mass luxury has lost its appeal and there is no originality for the customer," says Luigiano Bottos, founder of Bothos. "Concept stores appeal to the curiosity and want of the customer to discover something new and original. The concept store also offers more in that it touches on design, art, architecture and much more, giving a deeper understanding of the brand."

Located on Hollywood Road, Bothos stands out with its LED display installation for video art, oriental garden and goldfish pond at the back of the store. Bottos, who was previously a consultant with brands such as Diesel and Valentino, wanted the store to "merge art/fashion/lifestyle in order to express our ideals".

The 1,000 sq ft space showcases products designed by Bottos, including clothes, bags, jewellery,

small leather goods and customised belts, all handmade by artisans. Each piece is inspired by the Silk Road, merging Eastern decorative arts and Italian craftsmanship to create something cool and modern.

Objects from Bottos' private collection also enhance the store's unique look. Scattered around the store is everything from Chinese art, Italian sculpture and Venetian chandeliers to antique lamps, display tables and vintage Louis Vuitton steamer trunks. Bottos and his team design all the furniture and everything is for sale so customers can recreate the Bottos experience in their own homes.

Concept stores appeal to the curiosity and want of the customer to discover something new and original

Luigiano Bottos, founder of Bothos

"This completes our concept and gives the right environment for our product to be understood," says Bottos. "This is an expression of our style that we try to be as original as possible."

Bothos regularly displays works of art in-store on loan from nearby galleries such as Connoisseur, along with pieces from Bottos' personal collection.

Also promoting art to fashionistas is Gallery La Vie, which

can be found in the trendy NoHo area on Gough Street. The quirky store is run by fashion buyer Ruby Leung and her partner, creative director Nelson Lai. They relocated last year because the new premises included a space downstairs which they transformed into an art gallery for exhibitions and installations.

"Art and exhibitions aren't popular in Hong Kong, so we wanted to have a gallery in the store so that people could come select clothing they love and then be entertained by the art downstairs," says Leung. "Hongkongers are looking for something new and we hope this is it."

Currently on display is the work of Royal College of Art graduate Lilia Yip, which was previously shown at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. Yip's clothing line, featuring deconstructed dresses, is draped on hangers suspended from the ceiling, while headphones in the corner play music composed by the designer. The clothes are part of the exhibit and are not for sale.

"We welcome all types of artists using all mediums such as painting, sculpture, ceramics or fashion. It is an advantage to have an exhibition space - artists usually introduce friends or the press, so it's great exposure. Half of our customers come for the art, while the other half come for the clothing. This is not a commercial venture. It's an added bonus for our customers."

Back in the store, there is plenty to choose from, including clothes from Swedish designers Andrea Crews and Daniel Paillio, and local brands Plotz and Creature de Keis, with an emphasis on emerging designers.



Clockwise from top: Ruby Leung at Gallery La Vie; handbags and leather goods at Bothos in Central; Siu in Causeway Bay combines fashion and homeware; Ramby Tse, owner of Clash Concept Store. Photos: Edward Wong, May Tse, Dickson Lee

Other highlights include handbags from Slow & Steady Wins the Race, printed bags by Maron Bouillie, fish tanks, glasses, Chinese dolls, CDs and a station where customers can design their own plants.

Also merging fashion and art is Clash Concept Store, a multi-brand boutique that was opened three months ago by 26-year-old fashion designer Ramby Tse Wai-ting. Tse is giving high fashion new lines that are hip and eco-friendly. Standouts include Junkie Stylist, which Tse describes as an eco-friendly version of Vivienne Westwood, denim label Monkee Genes, and Ciel, which includes silk and hemp trousers that would rival Jean Paul Gaultier's.

Also part of the Clash experience is an education in art - scattered around the store are 10 paintings by local artist Shen Ping, which will be on display for two to three months. Tse plans to introduce new artists every few months.

"I hope I am pioneering a new concept. I have modelled the store on boutiques in London that merge art and other lifestyle elements with fashion. It makes sense as they are related in some way," says Tse, who is also an artist. "I want our customers to have an experience with art and enjoy it. I think the art attracts a different type of customer. I tend to choose local designers as they are the ones who need a break and a space to showcase their work."

"Local boutiques need more character. Everything out there is the same, from high street to designer

shops, which have the same decor whether you are in Beijing or New York. We need to make a difference."

At Siu in Causeway Bay, customers will find men's and women's brands including Les 100 Ciel's, Aquilano Rimondi, Tim Van Steenberg and Jamin Puech, along with selected home interior decorations, houseware and furniture. To give shoppers the complete Siu experience, music compiled exclusively for Siu stores plays in the background.

"We want to be available to everyone who wants to blend fashion and art in clothes, accessories, home interiors and lifestyle products," says founder Ricky Ho, who launched his first series of Siu Concept Stores on the mainland a few years ago.

"Today's consumers want more than ever to be themselves. They are increasingly searching for added-value products and shopping experiences that have meaning and spirit, and can create emotion. That's what we do," he says.

Next year, Ho plans to open another store in Tsim Sha Tsui and expand in Shanghai and Hangzhou.

Bottos, too, is looking to expand, with a sister boutique already opened on Wyndham Street and stores planned for Tokyo and Venice. Opening soon in 1881 Heritage is a new fashion concept store, billed as the next Colette by entrepreneur and Dragon-i founder Gilbert Yeung. It seems Hongkongers just can't get enough of concept stores.

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