

F R O N T P A G E

Lodz Biennale Launches This Fall

Poland's inaugural Lodz Biennale, scheduled to run Oct. 2-31, will take place at the new 108,000-square-foot permanent home of the International Artists' Museum (IAM), located in a recently converted 19th-century textile manufacturing complex. The city of approximately one million inhabitants, chartered in 1423, has donated the facilities and will also help to sponsor a 12-day preparation period (Sept. 20-Oct. 1), during which the roughly 90 invited artists can fulfill the biennial's signature requirement—namely that all works be newly created for the event, preferably on-site.

The unconventional undertaking marks the culmination of a 23-year struggle by artist-organizer Ryszard Wasko, who conceived the artist-run IAM in 1981, in the heyday of the Solidarity Freedom Movement. Inviting well-known international practitioners to Lodz under the auspices of the largely fictional Archives of Contemporary Thought (consisting of an apartment closet filled with documents, a typewriter and some letterhead stationery), he launched *Construction in Process*, a freewheeling residency-cum-exhibition designed to engage local workmen and the general public, that has occurred seven times at sporadic intervals in locales ranging from Munich to Melbourne to the Negev Desert [see *A.i.A.*, Mar. '91 and Mar. '01].

Altogether, Lodz hosted *Construction in Process* three times (1981, '90 and '93), and it is there that the International Artists' Museum was officially founded in 1990, with Fluxus veteran Emmett Williams as its president. IAM's small, improvisational volunteer staff—headquartered in a 6,000-square-foot building until ousted by developers in 2001—has since organized some 100 international shows, including an artists-and-poets banner project at the 2001 Venice Biennale, and coordinated a network of eight alternative spaces worldwide. All of the 1,500 pieces belonging to IAM—mostly works on paper,

including many project sketches—were donated, at the artists' own discretion, by participants in *Construction in Process* and other IAM exhibitions.

The first Lodz Biennale is headed by director Janusz Glowacki, an art historian and former curator at the Museum Sztuki (Modern Art Museum). About half of the \$510,000 budget comes from the city of Lodz, with the remainder supplied by private sources. Wasko, now dubbed executive director of IAM, serves as official spokesman, while independent curator Aneta Szyrak is artistic director of the "Polish Biennale" section, which will feature about 25 artists. Nine members of an international selection committee are each choosing seven artists. The panelists are Emmett Williams; New York artists Leon Golub and Lawrence Weiner; Won-il Rhee, artistic director of Media-City Seoul and chief curator of the Seoul Museum of Art; critic and former director of Warsaw's Zacheta Gallery of Contemporary Art, Anda Rottenberg; New York critics Robert C. Morgan, Gregory Volk and Lilly Wei; and director of the Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana, Zdenka Badovinac. To date, they have selected a wide range of artists, such as Polly Apfelbaum, Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, Patty Chang, Cai Jin, Tara Donovan, Mona Hatoum, Kimsooja, Richard Long, Mariko Mori, Shirin Neshat, Marjetica Potrc, Ursula von Rydingsvard, Karin Sander, Nancy Spero and Fiona Tan.

Visitors will find Lodz—once an extremely prosperous, multicultural manufacturing center—rich in historical architecture, since the city largely escaped bombing during World War II. In the 1930s, it was home to an important group of Polish Constructivists, most notably Wladyslaw Strzeminski, Katarzyna Kobro and Henryk Stazewski, whose works form the core of the Museum Sztuki collection. The principal galleries of cutting-edge work are Atlas of Art and 86 Gallery. —Richard Vine

Curators Laid Off: NYC, SF & Detroit

In shake-ups at three major art institutions, a number of high-profile curators have been laid off or have resigned to protest changes.

At New York's Whitney Museum, Marla Prather was let go in January. She had been on leave caring for a sick child. The news became public in a *New York Times* story about new director Adam Weinberg and his plans for the museum. Prather joined the Whitney staff as curator of postwar art in 2000, after 13 years at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. At the Whitney she organized the recent "Unrepentant Ego: The

Self-Portraits of Lucas Samaras" and "An American Legacy, A Gift to New York."

According to the *Times* story and a similar report in the *Art Newspaper*, Weinberg, who took the helm last October, is working to eliminate the curatorial specialization by period or medium that was implemented by his predecessor, Maxwell Anderson, which resulted in the departures under similar circumstances of curators Thelma Golden and Elisabeth Sussman. Additional changes at the Whitney are reportedly forthcoming, but further details were not available as this issue went to press.

In mid-February, San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts announced that longtime chief curator Renny Pritikin had been laid off, along with eight other staff members

from various departments. Citing budgetary constraints brought on by a drop in revenue and the loss of a \$400,000 annual grant from the Lila Wallace Readers Digest Fund, executive director Ken Foster said that none of the positions will be filled. Foster, who last fall replaced former director John Killacky, will take on Pritikin's role, working with current visual arts curator Rene de Guzman and Berin Golonu, who joined the staff last July as assistant visual arts curator. Pritikin is known for his innovative programming, which included the launch in 1997 of a popular biennial survey of Bay Area artists. He will organize two exhibitions for the center next year, "Big Deal," featuring large-scale works, and a show about magician Ricky Jay.

And at the Detroit Institute of Arts, a restructuring undertaken

last fall by director Graham Beal resulted in the folding of two departments into broader categories and the subsequent resignations by Egyptian art curator William H. Peck, his wife Elsie Holmes Peck, curator of Middle Eastern art, and Penelope Slough, associate curator of Greco-Roman art. The reorganization is part of the museum's renovation and expansion, scheduled for completion in 2006.

Russian Tycoon Buys Fabergé Eggs

On Apr. 20 and 21, Sotheby's had planned to sell at auction one of the season's biggest treasure troves, a group of nine jewel-encrusted Fabergé Imperial Easter Eggs consigned by the Forbes Collection. The celebrated works were expected to fetch around \$120 million. In early February, however, auction house officials announced that the eggs had been sold privately to Viktor Vekselberg, a prominent Russian industrialist. Sotheby's brokered the transaction on behalf of the Forbes family, which welcomed the deal aimed at keeping the works together and returning them to Russia. While the final sale figure was not announced, experts have suggested a sum of about \$110 million. Saving the costs of producing a catalogue and promoting the works with exhibitions in New York and London, not to mention avoiding the uncertainties of the shaky auction market of recent years, Sotheby's opted to forgo the auction and accept a 12-percent commission for the private sale. Vekselberg plans to exhibit the works in Russia, although he has not yet designated a public venue. In order to help ensure that the works return to the country, the Russian government decided to waive all import taxes and duties on the gems. Officials from the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg and the Kremlin Museums in Moscow, whose collection already contains 10 Fabergé Easter Eggs, have both expressed interest in housing the works. But Vekselberg, a billionaire who made his fortune in oil and aluminum companies, has stated to the press that the eggs might best be displayed in Yekaterinburg in East-Central Russia. Vekselberg is currently building a church in that city, on the site where Czar Nicholas II and other members of the Russian imperial family were put to death by the Bolsheviks in 1918.



Tom Wesselmann, *Landscape #3, 1964*, at Robert Miller.

white-striped painting by Daniel Buren, *T11-332* (1966). Matthew Marks showed an unusually shaped untitled 2001 pastel-on-paper tondo by Jasper Johns alongside Ellsworth Kelly's large canvas *Yellow/White* (1961). At Mary-Anne Martin/Fine Art's space a pair of self-portraits by Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera hung near *Shooting Star*, a classic 1944 painting by Wilfredo Lam.

A number of galleries devoted their booths to solo exhibitions. Sperone Westwater, for instance, presented works by Argentine painter Guillermo Kuitca; and Tasende Gallery showed bronzes by the late British sculptor Lynn Chadwick.

PaceWildenstein's booth was filled with recent small sculptures by John Chamberlain. Glittering brightly, all were sold within three hours of the preview's opening. Michael Werner presented a survey of paintings and sculptures by Per Kirkeby, while CRG once again devoted its booth to early ceramic works by Lucio Fontana.

Piet Mondrian, *Zeeland Girl, 1909-10*, at James Goodman.

Record-Breaking Attendance at ADAA Art Fair

Each winter in New York some of the country's best art dealers get together to show off their prized possessions at "The Art Show," an exhibition hosted by the Art Dealers Association of America (ADAA). This year's event, held at the Seventh Regiment Armory at Park Avenue and 67th Street, Feb. 18-23, drew a record 13,000 visitors. The show's preview, attended by some 2,500, raised \$900,000 to benefit the Henry Street Settlement, one of the city's most venerable social services organizations. All 70 participating dealers reported brisk sales and enthusiastic responses to their offerings, which ranged from Rembrandt etchings (presented by David Tunick) to recent video works by Mary Lucier (on view at Lennon, Weinberg's booth).

At the Art Show entrance, visitors faced a striking display by David McKee, featuring a large pink-and-black Philip Guston painting, *Division* (1975), flanked by Francis Bacon's 1961 canvas *Two Figures* and small-scale but intense paintings by Vija Celmins and Harvey Quaytman. Another late Guston, *Dark Room* (1978), was the centerpiece of Richard Gray's nearby booth. Guston's work was echoed in the series of drawings by Mexican-born artist Enrique Chagoya, *Poor George (After PG)*, 2004, shown at George Adams; the politically charged images blasting Bush policies were modeled after Guston's Nixon-era "Poor Richard" series.

Among other outstanding presentations, at Marian Goodman's booth, a haunting Juan Muñoz painted-bronze figure about 4 feet high (cast in 2003), *Louisiana #1*, stood before a large yellow-and-

Several galleries featured two-person exhibitions. Jill Newhouse showed works on paper by Bonnard and Vuillard; and Brent Sikkema presented one of the Art Show's best displays, pairing small and medium-size sculptures by St. Clair Cemin with recent, scaled-up canvases by Shahzia Sikander.

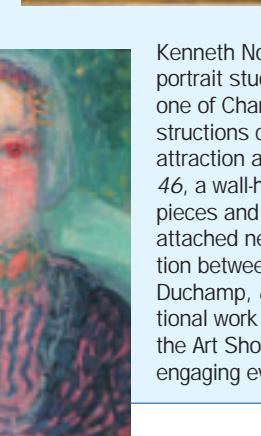
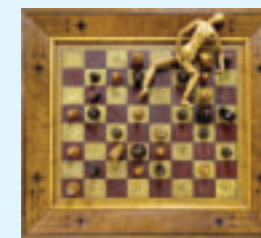
There were some dazzling individual pieces scattered throughout the exhibition. James Goodman, for example, brought a rare early Mondrian portrait, *Zeeland Girl* (1909-10). An extraordinarily large (4 by 4 feet) Charles Burchfield watercolor, *Backyards in Golden Sunlight* (1946-66), radiated from the Kennedy Galleries booth. Robert Miller presented a 1964 Pop-art gem by Tom Wesselmann, *Landscape #3*, a painted-panel work with collaged rubber elements showing a young couple seated in a red convertible; the piece had never before been exhibited.

At DC Moore's booth, a stone carving by William Edmondson, *Two Birds* (1939), had a kind of wistful charm, while Jason McCoy's display was punctuated by a vibrant abstract painting by Cora Cohen, *A Condition of Nature* (2004). A highlight of June Kelly's booth was *Embrace* (2003), a tall wood totemlike abstract sculpture by Jane Schneider; a large colorful digital photograph of a row of books, by Victor Schrager, was a standout at Edwynn Houk's booth.

L.A. Louver presented recent figurative paintings by Rebecca Campbell, and James Graham & Sons showed those by Duncan Hannah, along with abstract compositions by Nancy Lorenz, whose surfaces are inlaid with mother-of-pearl. Ameringer & Yohe brought along recent small stripe paintings by Kenneth Noland, and at Forum, a 2004 portrait study by Odd Nerdrum hung near one of Charles Matton's boxlike constructions containing a tiny video. A key attraction at Zabriskie's booth was *64 in 46*, a wall-hung chessboard with peglike pieces and a small wooden mannequin attached near the top. A 1946 collaboration between Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp, *64 in 46* is the kind of exceptional work that each year helps make the Art Show one of the season's most engaging events. —David Ebony



Charles Burchfield, *Backyards in Golden Sunlight, 1946-66*, at Kennedy.



Model of Serra's planned installation for the Guggenheim Bilbao.

New Serras for Bilbao

In what is billed as one of the most expensive contemporary art projects ever undertaken, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao has commissioned Richard Serra to create a football-field-size installation of his signature curving steel sculptures for its Frank Gehry-designed facility. The monumental works will be located in the 427-foot-long "Fish" gallery, which the architect intended to accommodate large-scale works. Serra's *Snake*, also a Guggenheim commission, has occupied the space since the museum's opening in 1997, along with a rotating selection of works from the permanent collection and with temporary exhibitions, among them a 1999 show of the artist's "Torqued Ellipses."

As part of the new installation, *Snake* will be joined by seven new sculptures, including a number of "Torqued Ellipses." Designed and positioned in response to the gallery's shape, the works will range in height from 12 to 14 feet, and vary in weight from 44 to 276 tons. Though its most prominent gallery will be turned over to Serra, the museum will still be able to show large works in other spaces.

The \$20-million commission is to be paid for by Basque regional and local governments, which cover the museum's operating costs and acquisitions as part of a 20-year partnership agreement with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. Fabrication and installation are expected to take about a year and a half, with completion scheduled for May 2005. —Stephanie Cash