

## NEWS AND NOTES

### LOST & FOUND

**Found:** 20 stolen artworks by Goya, Juan Gris and others were found in a home in the Spanish resort town of Playa d'Aro. The paintings, stolen from one of the world's wealthiest women, Esther Koplowitz, were bound for the collection of a Colombian drug baron.

**Restored:** The Kenje Giysem a 1932 lakefront villa in Berlin by Mies van der Rohe, has been reopened after two years of reconstruction. The conversions were done by the Red Army, later the Stasi, and then a became a community center. Now it is back to its original configuration. The original furnishings were also donated by the original owners to the Museum of Applied art in Berlin. The house is at Oberseestrasse 60.

**Broken:** A 15<sup>th</sup>-century marble statue of Adam by Tullio Lombardo crashed to the ground at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, scattering its arms, legs and an ornamental tree trunk into dozens of pieces. The head and torso were the least damaged. The statue will be restored.

**Found:** A series of discoveries by a Japanese archaeologist who shatters the long-held belief that the inhabitants of Mexico's mysterious Teotihuacan - The City of the Gods - were a peaceful people who managed to build a metropolis without having a warlike despot typically associated with vast empires. Instead, they were as warlike as their Mayan contemporaries, and the Aztec and Inca who came after them.

**Together again:** Giotto's restored fresco of St. Jerome is on the ceiling of San Francesco Basilica in Assisi, five years after an earthquake sent the masterpiece crashing to the floor in tens of thousands of fragments.

Restoration on some 120,000 fragments of Cimabue's St. Matthew will begin shortly, aided by a computer that will try to find matches between the pieces and a photograph of the masterpiece. Fragments of the Cimabue now fill 880 drawers in a cloister of the Franciscan Basilica's convent.

**Found:** A collection more than 130,000 photographic negatives made by the Hungarian photojournalist Michael Peto

that had been given to the Dundee University in 1972 after the photographer's death by his stepson and heir, Michael Fodor. Peto, best known for his behind-the-scenes pictures of ballet dancers, also took pictures of the Beatles in the early 60s before they had become internationally famous.

**Damage in Czech Libraries:** As a result of recent floods in Central Europe, about 50 libraries in the Czech Republic have reported extensive water damage. More than 600,000 volumes have been damaged, along with thousands of 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> century prints and tens of thousands of 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century periodicals. The archives of several institutions have been severely affected, particularly the architectural archives of the National Technical Museum and the Military Historical Archives. Books in the National Library in Prague have not been damaged, but substantial parts of its technical systems, located in the basements of the Klementinum, have been destroyed or severely damaged. The freeze-drying method of conservation is being utilized away from Prague.

**Found:** Cleaning out a storage room before renovation, a staff member in the Senate historian's office and works for the Architect of the Capitol found the original accounting book of the Senate carrying careful entries by the likes of John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr, among others.

**To be saved:** A modernist house by Oscar Niemeyer, best known for Brasilia and for his work with Le Corbusier in designing the U.N. building in New York, which was designed in Santa Monica, CA 38 years ago. A committee has been formed to prevent the house from being torn down by the new owner.

**Restored:** 10 motel, restaurant signs of Route 66 in New Mexico are being restored to their former glory thanks to a \$50,000 grant by the Route 66 Cultural Corridor Preservation Program of the National Parks Service.

**Saved:** The last memorial to stand as testimony to what was left when the smoke lifted at the World Trade Center was removed and preserved by the New York Historical Society. The toxic dust covering everything in Chelsea Jeans memorial, a

glassed-in collection of dust-covered, flag-bearing Ralph Lauren sweaters and Levi jeans, was painstakingly dismantled and moved to the museum in October 2002.

**Stolen:** Two Vincent Van Gogh paintings worth millions of dollars were taken in a daring theft from the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam on 7 December. A 15-foot ladder leaning against the rear of the building was found. The thieves had climbed to the second floor and broken a window.

### WEIRD & WONDERFUL ART

Retired graphics designer J. Jules Vitali has created more than 1,000 pieces of small art in his preferred medium, foam polystyrene (Styrofoam) cups (some with flourishes of acrylics or bronze), according to an October Boston Globe profile. He took up his craft with a carry-out coffee cup and a Craftsman knife 20 years ago, inspired, he said, by boredom. A display of his "Styrogami," with pieces priced at up to \$800, is housed at the Freeport (Maine) Public Library.

• **Amazing Anish Kapoor** who has created *Marsyas*, a sculpture that stretches twice the length of a Boeing 747 and soars 10 stories high. The structure consists of three giant steel rings - two wedged vertically at either end of the vast Turbine Hall of the Tate Modern in London, with a third suspended horizontally over a walkway in the center of the space.

It is 508 feet long and 115 feet high, made from a single span of PVC membrane pulled taut over the three steel rings. The blood red membrane forms a giant trumpet at each ring and tapers into a fluted tunnel that arches across the hall. The PVC is stretched so tight it looks as solid as cast bronze. It is so large that it's impossible to see the entire sculpture from any one position.

*Marsyas* refers to the satyr in Greek mythology, who was flayed alive by the god Apollo. It has gained praise and satire: from "simple magnificent" to the "world's biggest tapeworm" or "at once stupid and unforgettable." Go and see it yourself!

• A new museum is planned for Seattle, one which will help one of the largest concentrations of Cambodian immigrants in the U.S., called the Killing Field Memorial

and Cultural Museum to commemorate the 2 million Cambodians killed by the Khmer Rouge during Pol Pot's regime.

• The Royal Ontario Museum, slated to be a crystalline addition to Toronto to be designed by Daniel Libeskind is now slated to become a building clad in stainless steel, in order to withstand the unforgiving Canadian climate and cut the costs of building a new addition.

• Now Los Angeles has competition. In Winchester, Massachusetts, across the street from a Methodist church, there is a small, 1950s ranch house which was transformed into a five-bedroom, five-bathroom mansion with stone replicas of Michelangelo's David, the Venus di Milo and a Greek goddess Aphrodite placed in openings in front of the fence. Church goers are aghast, but the minister, a former art major in college, said he isn't offended.

In Los Angeles, there is a house in mid-Wilshire which has an array of Michelangelo's David in front of the white mansion as well. Ah, well, you've seen one, you've seen them all!

## PERFORMANCE ART

A Belgian actor is sharing a cage with a pig for three days in the hope that the animal will reveal why there is so much conflict in the world.

Inspired by the German artist Joseph Beuys, who spent a week in a cage with a coyote to protest the Vietnam War, Benjamin Verdonck said he figured the sow had as much chance as anyone of coming up with an answer. He insisted he was not taking sides in any conflict.

## BOOK TALK

**Book Talk in the East Wing:** Laura Bush is staging penetrating two-hour literary symposia at the White House on such subjects as Mark Twain, the Harlem Renaissance and women writers of the West. Her commitment is to reading with no other agenda, e.g. political. She has brought together notable scholars, students, teachers, friends, writers and sometimes family members of long-deceased writers.

**Book Thief Banned by Judge from Libraries:** A Simi Valley (CA) man has been placed on three years' probation after pleading no contest to the theft of 3,500 volumes and videos. The 85-year-old book thief Ernest Heyneman would check out books, videos and audiotapes, take them

home and remove the security strips before returning the borrowed items on time. He would then return to the libraries and smuggle out the desensitized materials. When a librarian noticed a dearth of the facility's medical books, she eventually made the link to Heyneman where authorities seized 124 boxes of library materials.

The Sarajevo Haggadah, which survived the Spanish Inquisition, the Bosnian war and the ravages of time, is now on public display as one of Bosnia's most prized artifacts. Written on calfskin, the 109-page Passover ritual text was a 14<sup>th</sup>-century wedding present in Spain, which then had a thriving Jewish community. When Spain expelled its Jews in 1492, a refugee took the manuscript to Italy. Eventually it ended up in Bosnia and was sold to Sarajevo's National Museum.

Saved from the Nazis by a Roman Catholic museum director and his Muslim colleague, it was also salvaged by a museum official in 1992, braving Serbian sniper fire to rescue the text. Now through the efforts of the United Nations Trust Fund, it is on permanent display in the National Museum alongside Orthodox, Christian and Muslim manuscripts.

## FLUXUS

**Mesmerising Quaziphonic Bubbledrone Greetimeasure** with word collages by Reed Atemus and illustrations by Sol Eyoka Nte (Stoke-on-Trent, Acts of Flux Editions, 2001) is a collaborative chapbook which has appeared in the Artist Book show at Wexford, Ireland in 2002.

## MUSEUMS

**Dahesh Museum of Art** will occupy the old IBM Gallery of Science and Art at corner of Madison and 57<sup>th</sup> at New York City.

**Saatchi Gallery** in London is moving to County Hall, the former Greater London Council building on the South Bank, a 15-minute walk from the Tate Modern.

**Museum of Sex** in New York City reports profitability after only six weeks and let go their executive curator to opt for different curators for each show in their three-gallery museum. The only big protest against them has been shown by the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights.

**Guggenheim Museum** received an ultimatum from Peter B. Lewis, the philanthropist who gave them a \$12 million gift only after forcing Thomas Krens, the

institution's ambitious director to accept a pared-down budget. As chairman of the board of trustees and its largest benefactor, Mr. Lewis demanded a pared-down budget and Krens delivered with \$24 million budget, down about 13 percent from last year. A deal is a deal!

**George Ohr, the Mad Potter of Biloxi**, is finally getting his due in Mississippi with his own museum designed by Frank Gehry, scheduled to open in 2005.

**Chelsea Art Museum**, home of the Miotte Foundation, has opened at 556 West 22<sup>nd</sup> St., New York City with *Samadhi: The Contemplation of Space*, curated by Robert C. Morgan with work by René Allain, Robert Barry, Beom Moon, Frederick Eversley, Tadaaki Kuwayama, John McLaughlin, Jean Miotte, Joan Mitchell, Rakuko Naito, Mimmo Roselli and Kazuo Shiraga.

**The Museum of Jewish Heritage: A Living Memorial to the Holocaust** in Battery Park in New York City will have a permanent garden created by British sculptor, Andy Goldsworthy. The project, organized by the Public Art Fund, is part of the institution's considerable expansion. This is Goldsworthy's first garden design and first public commission in New York City.

The Aga Khan IV had to abandon plans to build his planned palatial museum of Islamic art in London, but will be building the site of the largest collection of Islamic art in the English-speaking world in Toronto instead.

## ART ON FILM

The grand prize winner for FIFA in Montreal is *Rivers and Tides*: Andy Goldsworthy Working with Time by Thomas Ridelheimer, a calm meditation on Goldsworthy's methods of making art from nature.. Another is "Albert Stieglitz: The Eloquent Eye" by Perry Miller Adato. Another is the documentary on Canadian artist Michael Snow "On Michael Snow's Wavelength, Zomm Out," by Teri Wehn-Damisch, which won the prize for creativity. And there is "Shirin Neshat" by Susan Shaw.

## CONTEMPORARY GARGOYLES

Duke University recently built a new Gothic dormitory, thanks to the gift of two wealthy donors. The McClendon sisters, who gave \$5.5 million to build the dorm, were shocked to find their likenesses staring down from the hall. So shocked that the

sculptures will be taken down at the couple's request.

#### **BIG ART SALE**

Vivendi Universal's 2500-piece art collection, which will be sold to help pay off the company's massive debt, includes glass works dating to the Roman Empire; a large group of antique drinking vessels' artworks by such masters as Picasso, Dubuffet, Miro, Rothko and Lichtenstein; and classic photographs by Walker Evans, Jacob Riis, Margaret Bourke-White and Robert Frank. Auction or not? When? Not yet defined.

#### **PHOTOGRAPHY**

The International Center of Photography has announced plans to establish the first photography triennial in the United States to be held in September, including about 200 works by 40 to 50 artists. It will be held at 1133 Avenue of the Americas at 43<sup>rd</sup> St. And perhaps other institutions.

#### **PEACE PERFORMANCE**

Concerned that war against Iraq is imminent, 50 women took off their clothes in the cold rain at Point Reyes Station, California, lay end-to-end in the grass to spell out P-E-A-C-E. Organized in just a few days by artist Donna Sheehan, 72, who wanted to convey the desperation she said women in particular feel about the coming military action, she called her friends, etc. and they were ready to pose for local photographer Art Rogers in a baseball field in this small town just north of San Francisco.

#### **DATLINE: AUSTRALIA**

UK sculptor Antony Gormley has been commissioned by the Perth International Arts Festival to make a work, called "Inside Australia", consisting of up to 100 stainless steel figures, which will be installed in the West Australian outback on Lake Ballard. The intention is to create a "field of antennae, allowing what is already there to be perceived and felt, in an acutely heightened way." Echoes of de Maria's Lighting Field in Marfa, Texas. Open from 16 January - April 2003.

•The new National Gallery of Victoria devoted to Australian art has recently opened in Federation Square in Melbourne. Indigenous art (aboriginal) is featured as one of the largest collections in the world.

