

## NEWS AND NOTES

### Lost and Found

**Found:** The earliest intact wall painting of the Maya civilization, depicting scenes from mythology and ritual, has been discovered in Guatemala, dated about A.D. 100. The dominant figure is a man looking over his shoulder at two kneeling women probably a part of an important ritual, the "dressing of the maize god."

**Found:** *Cathedra* by Barnett Newman, slashed more than four years ago at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, is now back on the museum's walls, visible only from a walkway behind a wall of Plexiglass. The restoration was done at the Stedelijk with a committee of 8 museum professionals to consult on its repairs.

**Found:** A painting believed to be a Marc Chagall stolen last year from the Jewish Museum in New York turned up at a postal installation in Topeka. Valued at about \$1 million, "Study for Over Vitebsk" was stolen after a party at the museum on 8 June. After being authenticated, it has been revealed that the painting is owned by an unidentified private collector in Russia who lent it to the museum for an exhibition of Chagall's early work. Authorities said the museum received a ransom note that demanded peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

**Found:** Pompeii's erotic frescoes, discovered 15 years ago by a young Italian archaeologist, Luciana Jacobelli, have been recently restored and open to the public from 19 January this year. One of them is the only known artistic representation of cunnilingus from the Roman era.

**Still Lost:** Leonardo's "Adoration of the Magi" has been enduring diagnostic tests for months, but now the experts have decided that the Adoration is too fragile to repair, much against the desires of the director of the Uffizi, where the painting resides, and finally accepted by Antonio Paolucci, the director of all the state museums of Tuscany, who just did not want an international fight over Leonardo. Yet the diagnostic tests uncovered a whole sketchbook of drawings under the painting, painting added later and six layers of varnish.

**Lost and Found:** The Elgin marbles will not be loaned to Greece during their

Olympics next year. That's what the British Museum has dictated.

**Lost and Found:** The obelisk looted by the Italians in World War II is awaited by the Ethiopians, but they are still waiting. The people of Aksum, Ethiopia await with patience for the obelisk which was supposed to have been returned in 1956. But it was not. The stele is awaited to finally end

Italy's occupation of Ethiopia, which only lasted five years, but seems to have extended since 1937!

**Lost:** A rare and extremely valuable copy of the Bible, known as the Vizsoly Bible after the village in which it was first printed in 1590 and from which it has now been stolen, was the first full translation to be published in Hungarian.

**Saved:** The archives of two of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century's most significant architects, Carlo Scarpa (1906-78) and Aldo Rossi (1931-97) have been presented to the Italian Ministry for Cultural Activities for a future museum of architecture.

**Lost:** The Maslon House in Rancho Mirage, California, was torn down late March by the new owners, who intimated they were going to preserve it, but then the wrecking ball quickly fell.

**Found:** The last of seven Norman Rockwell paintings stolen 24 years ago, in the biggest U.S. theft of the artist's work, were recovered from their hiding place in a Brazilian farmhouse. "The Spirit of '76," "So Much Concern" and "A Hasty Retreat" were returned to their owner, Brown & Bigelow Co., the Minneapolis-based calendar publisher. The works are worth between \$700,000 and \$1 million. They were recovered from a Rio de Janeiro art dealer who had them hidden in the farmhouse 60 miles from the city.

**Found:** the largest trove of Inca mummies ever discovered in Peru, under a Lima shantytown. 2,200 remarkably well-preserved mummies, some in bundles containing as many as seven individuals. Includes some 60,000 artifacts, including textiles, wooden implements, pottery and

burial gifts.

**Lost:** 40,000 negatives of John F. Kennedy taken by Jacques Lowe, his personal photographer, and stored in a safety-deposit box at the Chase branch at 5 World Trade Center. The box was intact with the lock missing, but the box was empty.

**Lost:** 9 Expressionist works were stolen from a Berlin museum in April. The thieves broke into the Brucke-Museum after disconnecting the alarm and smashing a rear window. Six of the paintings were by Erich Heckel and the rest by Emil Nolde, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Max Pechstein. The museum houses one of the most important collections of Expressionist art.

**Found:** A long-forgotten Victorian masterpiece discovered by a 10-year-old Connecticut boy in his school library is expected to fetch more than \$1 million at June 12 auction in London, according to Christie's.

Bingham Bryant had long admired the dusty old painting portraying one of his favorite Greek myths that sat above the bookcase behind the librarian's desk.

After some painstaking research by his father, Christopher Bryant, and a much-needed cleaning, the painting—which had sat in Old Lyme School for nearly 70 years—was revealed to be Walter Crane's "The Fat of Persephone."

### Leonardo's Bridge

Leonardo has finally gotten his bridge, created in 1502 on a piece of paper, it has just been completed by the Norwegian artist Vebjorn Sand in collaboration with the Norwegian transportation ministry. The bridge, 330 feet long of laminated timber, joins Norway and Sweden over a highway at the town of Aas, 16 miles south of Oslo.

### Dateline: Bradford, England

Three bus shelters will become miniature art galleries, powered by their own wind turbines on top of redesigned bus-stop poles, these bright red shelters will offer a choice of electronic artworks, including music triggered according to the color of waiting passengers' clothes.

## Holocaust on my Mind

The German Historical Museum in Berlin had a multimedia presentation of the Nazis' meeting at Wannsee to discuss "a final solution to the Jewish question" through 9 April in conjunction with the Topography of Terror Foundation. There is art, photography, clothing, letters and newspapers to document the daily existence of German Jews from World War I through the pogroms of the Nazis and the creation of death camps. The second part dealt with Germany's attempts to address its wartime past, including the effect of the American TV miniseries "Holocaust" which was shown in Germany in 1979.

## Foundations

The Warhol Foundation has funded cutting edge work rebuffed by the National Endowment for the Arts, such as performance artist William Pope.L receiving \$50,000 for an exhibition organized by the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art at the Maine College of Art. Pope addresses racial and social inequity; but he also engages in the kind of provocative art that the agency has shied away from since it was attacked by Congress in the early 1990s over its financing of projects some critics saw as obscene. In a 1996 piece Mr. Pope.L walked around New York wearing a 14-foot-long white cardboard penis.

The Andrew Mellon Foundation made a first in a series of grants totaling \$50 million to aid cultural institutions directly affected by the World Trade Center attack on 11 September. The Alliance of Resident Theaters/New York, the American Music Center and the New York Foundation for the Arts were recipients.

## Catalogues raisonnés

Joachim Pissarro has just been selected by the Dedalus Foundation to write and direct the catalogue raisonné of Motherwell's paintings and collages. Pissarro has just finished the c.r. of the paintings of his great-grandfather, Camille Pissarro.

## MUSEUMS

The Jewish Museum in New York City has drawn controversy over its "Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art" long before it opened on 17 March, due to its press releases and its published catalog well before the opening, which generated articles from Australia to Germany. The discussion is ongoing, since its 18 pieces by 13 artists from 8 countries generated a catalog with 20 essays, which show the large installations in

reproduction on a page. So, this is a show where the works do not speak for themselves, but have 20 essayists speaking for them. Ah, well, another controversy at the museum famous for "Too Jewish" or "The Dreyfus Affair" which also included outrage from the larger communities.

**Noguchi Garden Museum** will start on a renovation project due to structural problems, which will include a redesign of the café and updating from lighting to storage. New 18-month temporary space is at 36-01 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, near P.S.1.

The Museum of Modern Art has been promised 37 works of paintings, drawings and sculpture by Warhol, Lichtenstein, Freud and Johns from the UBS Paine Webber collection. The gift will be the subject of a show in 2005

The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston is expanding with a plan by architect Norman Foster that marries the new and old creating the first great Boston public building of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Its new East Wing will be a three-story building for display of American and contemporary art.

The Strong Museum in Rochester has a planned \$20 million expansion, a treasure house of objects and art.

## Dateline: Paris

The Palais de Tokyo in Paris is now the Site for Contemporary Arts with its opening show of more than 40 guest artists from all over the world showing France's Culture Ministry wanting to show innovative work by relatively unknown artists from around the world.

## Dateline: Berlin

•The Alte Nationalgalerie (Old National Gallery) in Berlin has reopened its collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century German art, including work by Caspar David Friedrich, Adolph Menzel, Arnold Böcklin, and Lovis Corinth and Max Beckmann.

• Berlin is becoming a City of Museums. It starts with Museum Island with 5 museums built between 1830 and 1930 in East Berlin and the Kulturforum just two miles away in west Berlin.

Everything before 1900 will be displayed on Museum Island, and that includes the new Gemaldegalerie's entire collection, and almost all art after 1900 will be at the Kulturforum, with the Gemaldegalerie receiving the Neue Nationalgalerie's 20th-

century collection as well as much of Erich Marx's collection from the Hamburger Bahnhof, while Mies van der Rohe's Modernist masterpiece, the Neue Nationalgalerie, will become a space for international exhibitions. The Hamburger Bahnhof will in turn be given over to contemporary art. This adds up to 17 state museums in Berlin plus many other museums devoted to individual artists and themes.

## Dateline: Vienna

Vienna now has a MuseumsQuartier will have a new complex called Quartier 21, which will house music, architecture and especially electronic media. These are all in the Baroque former stables of a former king of the former empire.

## Dateline: Barcelona

2002 has been named the International Year of Gaudí, with six months of special tours and exhibitions, where buildings usually closed will be open to the public, such as the first floor of the Casa Batlló and the interior garden of the Casa Vicens. From 17 June through 24 September, the exhibit "Gaudí: Arts, Trades and Design" will be at the architect's La Pedrera building to contemplate furnishings he designed. This is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth.

## Dateline: Perth

The remains of a car, which originally belonged to Robert Hughes, former art critic of Time, was on exhibit at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art. Hughes had a near fatal crash in his Nissan in May 1999, when returning from a fishing trip on the west coast of Australia. Artist Denius Kesminas got hold of the wreckage of the car, already compressed in a metal yard, and made a piece entitled "Hughbris" for the exhibition "Elvis has just left the building", which is now on exhibit at the Kunsterhaus Bethanien, Berlin. The piece is in a plexi box along with fishing lures, a crushed pair of glasses, a copy of the writer's most famous book, *The Fatal Shore*, and other debris.

## Dateline: Toronto

The Royal Ontario Museum and Art Gallery of Ontario are going to receive \$140 million in public money to finance ambitious expansion. The ROM will be redesigned by Daniel Libeskind, winner of the international competition at a cost of \$150-million.

## Dateline: Madrid

The Prado museum has about a year to get ready for the biggest expansion in its history,

but it is hamstrung by lack of staff, funding and financial independence. Change does not come easily to a conservative institution and the civil war is between modernizers and traditionalists.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

The Smithsonian Institution will create a National Center for Photography at the museum complex, opening in May 2003 under the curatorship of Merry Foresta with a general survey of the Smithsonian's 13 million photographs, at the Arts & Industries Building.

- An archive of 80,000 negatives and several hundred vintage prints of Charles H. Harris, a photographer for the Pittsburgh Courier, who died in 1998, has been acquired by the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. It reflects the daily life of Pittsburgh in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including visits of celebrities such as Duke Ellington, Jackie Robinson to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and John F. Kennedy.

- The Museum of Modern Art is selling 1,000 prints by Eugène Atget at prices from \$3,000 to \$15,000. These have been culled from a collection of 5,000 photographs, of which there was also a package of 2,000 duplicates and triplicates, all printed by Atget himself.

- The United States State Department, not usually known for its generosity towards the arts, is currently paying for an exhibition to travel around the world. The only officially permitted photographs of Ground Zero in New York, done by Joel Meyerowitz, began showing at the Museum of London and will be traveling to Tashkent, Adana, Rabat, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Damascus and Dar es Salaam, among others—all marginally US-friendly places.

## BOOKS & PAPERS

The Taliban mullahs used to ban books from the libraries of the university, or even have their followers shoot Kalashnikov rounds at proscribed volumes on gynecology and human rights and other abhorred subjects, which now sit as testament to the Taliban's ways in glass cases in the library's lobby of Kabul University.

- The literary archive of Susan Sontag, which includes essays, film scripts and diaries, has been purchased by the UCLA Library for \$1.1 million.

- The Library of Congress, home to the world's largest collection of books, is going

to preserve a million of them by removing the acid from their paper. Preservation Technologies L.P. of suburban Pittsburgh has the contract for treating 250,000 books per year for the next four years, after having already processed 150,000.

- The spanking new Memphis (Tennessee) public library is accompanied by sidewalk art in which Marx and Engels are quoted. This has irritated some of the Shelby County commissioners—not the words of Dr. Seuss, or a W.C. Handy ode, Shakespeare to Salman Rushdie to Lao Tzu to Isaac Newton and so much more.

- Aperture Magazine will be marking its 50<sup>th</sup> year in 2002 with a fall publication surveying the 50 years of Aperture's influence over international photography. They also will be publishing 19 books this year. The new interim executive director, Janice Stanton, replaces the late Michael Hoffman who died on 23 November 2001.

## Dateline: MIAMI BEACH

Well, you've see the fiberglass cows in Chicago in 1999, and more cows in New York and Houston, moose in Toronto and pigs in Cincinnati the next year. Well Miami Beach's own sidewalk animal show will aim to place about 100 8-foot tall flamingo sculptures throughout the South Florida city from May through October.

## POETRY ON THE PEAKS

This is the United Nations International Year of Mountains has generated a worldwide series of readings of poetry on mountaintops, called Poetry on the Peaks, coordinated by a group called Dialogue Through Poetry.

## 9-11MEMORIALS

The New Jersey Governor, Donald DiFrancesco has established a commission and charged it with developing a suitable New Jersey memorial to be located in Liberty State Park. The ideas are sublime, as indicated in a recent issue of the Newark, NJ Star-Ledger.

- Window washer Jan Demezur was on break when the first hi-jacked plane slammed into the north tower of the World Trade Center, trapping him and five other men in an elevator on the 50<sup>th</sup> floor.

When they managed to pry open the elevator doors, instead of an exit they found a wall. Demezur used the blade of his squeegee to carve a hole through which they could crawl. It took 45 minutes, then the men raced down a stairwell to safety before

the tower collapsed. It is considered "evidence of survival" by the curator at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History where it now resides.

- Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City who plans to cut city aid to museums, theaters and other cultural institutions, quietly dipped into his personal fortune to help them out, donating \$10 million just before he took office. He gave the money to the Carnegie Corp. in December. Carnegie President Vartan Gregorian then selected 137 arts and cultural organizations in the city for the gifts. The awards ranged from \$25,000 to \$100,000.

- Many towns in the U.S. are planning tributes across the United States such as Waterloo, Iowa or Cleveland, Tennessee; South Bend, Indiana and many more which want to incorporate recovered pieces of the World Trade Center in their monuments.

## FLUXUS

The Fluxus Constellation, 14 February - 16 June 2002 at the Villa Croce, Via Jacopo Ruffini 3, Genova, Italy with the participation of Eric Andersen, Giuseppe Chiari, Philip Corner, Geoffrey Hendricks, Alison Knowles, Larry Miller, Ben Patterson, Ben Vautier, and Emmett Williams the first week in performance. There were also openings for Ben Vautier at the Archivio Caterina Gualco and Giuseppe Chiari at the Studio Leonardi V-Idea. Something not to miss!

- Geoffrey Hendricks chaired a panel discussion on Fluxus and Duchamp at the CAA in Philadelphia in February with Alison Knowles as discussant and Larry Miller and 3 young scholars giving talks (Chris Thompson, Liisa Soccio, and Midori Yoshimoto).

- An exhibition of Brian Lane's work, entitled Brian Peter Lane: 1942-1999, Artist, Printer, Publisher and Writers was held at the Fore Front Gallery, Suffolk College, Rope Walk in Ipswich, UK from 18 - 22 February 2002. The curator was Michael Lumb at [MLumbE@aol.com](mailto:MLumbE@aol.com) for further details. Lane was one of only a handful of people in the UK to be in contact with Fluxus during the 1960s. He was a major publisher of artist books as well. An excellent book about Brian Lane is "The Printed Performance: Brian Lane Works 1966-1999", edited by Martin Rogers & Simon Cutts. (Coracle) There are plenty of illustrations including color plates of Lane's work, as well as a selection of essays. Available from Amazon in the UK.

**40 Years of Fluxus:** The URL of 4T FluXuS Association which reveals information about the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Fluxus in the world, and everything about the French World Fluxus Festival for November 2002 can be visited at [www.4t.fluxus.net](http://www.4t.fluxus.net)

RHA (Roth Horowitz Anderson) is a new gallery in Los Angeles, a branch of RH in Manhattan and has recently shown Fluxus Necessarius: The Ellsworth Snyder Collection of Fluxus Multiples and Ephemera through 27 April at their gallery. A Fluxfest was held on 31 March where participants such as Simon Anderson, Peter Frank, Judith Hoffberg and Michael Solway performed various Fluxus actions and students from CalArts played wonderful weird musical instruments, and outdoors and indoors integrated into a remarkably well-timed Fluxus event. A good time was had by all participants.

#### NEA NOMINATIONS

A majority of art practitioners have told Arts Wire Current that President Bush should consider his criteria for nominations to the NEA and choose those who are integrally involved in the arts, not Republicans who reflect Mr. Bush's political philosophy. See <http://www.artswire.org/nea.html>

#### STATUES & POLITICS

Attorney General Ashcroft in the U.S. has spent \$8,000 of the Justice Department's budget to buy blue drapes to hide two giant partially nude statues in the Great Hall of the agency's headquarters. These two Art Deco statues represent the Spirit of Justice and the Majesty of Law, installed in the 1930s when the building was finished. They now have been hidden since 20 November because Ashcroft didn't like being photographed in front of them, especially since the Spirit of Justice has a single breast exposed. Being a good Christian, I guess he doesn't want to be seen with Justice.

•Two magnificent statues of Buddha destroyed in Bamian, Afghanistan last year, now have the attention of the Prime Minister Karzai and the United Nations, who have picked the Afghan sculptor to rebuild them—or at least one of them and leave the second one with remnants as a monument to Taliban barbarism. Now who will pay for them?

#### OUTSIDER ART

Leonard Knight, the religiously inspired artist who has spent 16 years in the desert of Imperial County in California painting "God is Love" and other inspiration messages on a mound of baked earth that he calls Salvation Mountain, finally has caught the notice of art scholars. The Folk Art Society of America has declared his site a national folk art shrine. The mountain is actually a sloping,

terraced hill about three stories high and 100 feet wide. The land is controlled by the state of California, which views Knight as a trespasser but does nothing to evict him.

Knight has created a mosaic of waterfalls, free-form designs and biblical quotations, using an estimated 100,000 gallons of donated paint.

#### AFGHANISTAN'S LIBRARIES

Although the National Library of Afghanistan is still standing, its contents have been plundered. 20 years ago, the library was full of readers but under the Taliban, women were banned and men avoided appearing in public places for fear of being drafted. While in other cities all library books were destroyed, NLA books that were deemed un-Islamic were put under lock and key, among them books with illustrations, including children's books. Anatomy books had to be hidden, and the Taliban said people didn't need books.

In a recent tally, about 80,000 books have been lost in the course of Afghanistan's civil war under Taliban rule. Many were burned for heating or used to wrap food. Eight of Kabul's 18 libraries were shut down and seven more were converted into residential buildings by the Taliban. However, several librarians managed to rescue a great number of handwritten and illustrated books on calligraphy.

However, you cannot read without light and there is no electricity. In addition, the library is only open a few hours in the morning.

#### TAKING CARE OF BENEFACTORS

Chris Ofili, the British artist whose dung-daubed portrait of the Virgin Mary angered religious leaders and the mayor of New York, is taking care of the elephants that supply raw material for his art.

The Zoological Society of London announced recently that Ofili had agreed to donate proceeds from the sale of one of his paintings to elephants at the Whipsnade Wild Animal Park in Dunstable, northwest of London. Three of its elephants lived until recently at the London Zoo and have supplied Ofili with dung for a decade.

The painting "Triple Couple," was offered for sale at the Armory art fair in New York City, expected to sell for at least \$57,000.

#### Umbrella Museum Contributions

Genie Shenk, Anna Banana, Lady C, Sherman Clarke, Donna Henney, Katherine Ng, Annie Wittels, Annie Silverman, C. Mebri Bennett, Alison Frank, Pamela Zepplin, Maritta Tapanainen and Patrick Percy

#### Umbrella News

Chinese small-town officials love to play poker and use their official powers for personal gain. Now they've put the two together with the distribution of decks of playing cards with forbidding messages. Each card carries the legal definition of a "crime of public office" and a cartoon depicting the illegality. For instance, the king of spades depicts a practice that is much reported these days, the bribery of officials with sexual favors rather than cash. No statute specifically refers to sexual bribery, but the cartoon is explicit: a man covered only by a towel luxuriates on a beach, shielded from the sun by a woman with her dress billowed out, forming an umbrella. So the Chinese now play cards and at the same time learn the law.

•Headline in the New York Times Business Section: "Publisher is Put under Entertainment Umbrella" and the article tells how Simon & Schuster, the venerable book publishing firm, owned by Viacom, has been put into its entertainment group, meaning that the consumer book publishing division of S & S is saved. The reference publishing and educational, professional wings of the publishing house were sold to Pearson in 1998.

•Françoise Gilot is featured in the April issue of *Smithsonian* magazine in the famous photograph of her and Picasso holding an umbrella over her. In 1995, photographer Timothy Greenfield-Sanders restaged Capa's famous photograph, and these photographs are in the issue.

•Salvador Dalí's Pavilion at the 1939 World's Fair has been resurrected in North Miami, where the interior environment, watery as it appeared, was meant to symbolize a return to the womb. A photograph shows Dalí sitting holding an umbrella, while his wife, Gala appears in a kind of tub beneath him. See the New York Times for 8 April.

•The lost umbrella may be no more, as far as taxis go. A new credit card whose patent is held by Jay Walker and two others which allows people to pay cab fare with the swipe of it may also make it possible for those leave cellphones, umbrellas, purses and other belongings in taxis to have an immediate record of the cab's medallion or other identifying number. Usually, one never remembers the license number or the driver's name which you have taken. By the same token, drivers who find lost items usually do not know the name of the last person who rode in the cab. With this system, both passengers and drivers will have a record of taxi travel that can be used to match lost items with their owners. So, if he ever goes into production, the lost umbrella will be no more. Make sure Japan knows about this!