

Art in America

JUNE 2002



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Bernd & Hilla Becher
Thomas Eakins Whitney Biennial
Report from Germany

Documenta 11 Debuts

The 11th edition of **Documenta**, the vast international art show that takes place at five-year intervals in Kassel, Germany, opens this month and runs all summer [June 8-Sept. 15]. Organized by artistic director **Okwui Enwezor**, in conjunction with curators **Carlos Basualdo**, **Ute Meta Bauer**, **Susanne Ghez**, **Sarat Maharaj**, **Mark Nash** and **Octavio Zaya**, the exhibition will present some 120 artists and/or groups, and will have an unprecedented global reach. Adjunct activities will include lectures, colloquia and research projects. Several off-site satellite events have already taken place in locations as diverse as Berlin, Saint Lucia, New Delhi and Lagos.

As with Documenta 10, the exhibition will occupy the **Fridericianum** (Documenta's original, center-city museum site) and the **Kultur Bahnhof** (formerly the city's principal train station); pieces will also appear in the **Orangerie**, the **Karlsaue park** and the **Documenta Halle**. New this year will be a striking and capacious venue, the former **Binding brewery**, where architectural work (a Documenta first) will be sited.

The curators have put together a multigenerational list ranging from **Louise Bourgeois** (b. 1911), **Leon Golub** (b. 1922), **Jonas Mekas** (b. 1922), **Frédéric Bruly Bouabré** (b. 1923), **Yona Friedman** (b. 1923), **Pere Portabella** (b. 1927), **Bernd and Hilla Becher** (b. 1931 and 1934) and **Luis Camnitzer** (b. 1937) to **Feng Mengbo** (b. 1966), **Carlos Garaicoa** (b. 1967), **Pascale Marthine Tayou** (b. 1967), **Kendell Geers** (b. 1968), **Steve McQueen** (b. 1969) and **Yang Fudong** (b. 1971). The curators did not troll the trendy graduate schools for budding talent; the youngest artist is **Giuseppe Gabellone** (b. 1973). A large representation of midcareer artists includes **Georges Adéagbo** (b. 1942), **Isa Genzken** (b. 1948), **Adrian Piper** (b. 1948), **Craigie Horsfield** (b. 1949), **Cildo Meireles** (b. 1949), **Chantal Akerman** (b. 1950), **Mona Hatoum** (b. 1952), **Michael Ashkin** (b. 1955), **Chohreh Feyzjoui** (b. 1955), **William Kentridge** (b. 1955), **Ken Lum** (b. 1956), **Alfredo Jaar** (b. 1956), **Raymond Pettibon** (b. 1957), **Fareed Armaly** (b. 1957), **Ravi Garawal** (b. 1958), **Eija-Liisa Ahtila** (b. 1959) and **Renée Green** (b. 1959). **On Kawara** will be 25,373 days old when the show opens on June 8. Two of the artists—**Dieter Roth** (1930-1998) and **Juan Muñoz** (1953-2001)—are deceased.

Broken down by where the artists are based, the roster of participants shows close to half from Europe, about 25 percent from North America, and the rest from Africa, Asia, Latin

New Cultural Complex for Beacon, N.Y.

Located about 60 miles north of New York City in the Hudson River Valley, the sleepy little town of Beacon, N.Y., may soon be a thriving art center. In 2000, the **Dia Art Foundation** announced that it would open a new museum there in a renovated factory to house its rarely seen permanent collection. That project is already well under way and is scheduled for completion in spring 2003. But Dia won't be the only art game in town.

In April, real-estate developer and art patron **William S. Ehrlich** announced phase one of the **Beacon Cultural Project** (BCP). The massive, multimillion-dollar undertaking is somewhat reminiscent of MASSMoCA in North Adams, Mass., though on a much larger scale. Entirely funded by Ehrlich, it is an innovative collaboration involving nonprofit, for-profit and governmental organizations, and coincides with the town's revitalization plans for its Main Street. Plans call for the eventual development of industrial, residential and retail facilities throughout the town.

David A. Ross, former director of the Whitney Museum and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, has been named executive director of the project, which he hopes will become an extension of the New York art world. According to Ehrlich, Ross "has the opportunity to do something really creative, to engage with collectors, artists and the public in a completely new way."

The BCP will consist of the **Beacon Art Society** (BAS), **Beacon Performing Arts** and the **Project Space**. The BAS will be housed in a 150,000-square-foot complex of six buildings—from an 1814 waterwheel-powered mill to modern International Style structures—being renovated by **Gluckman Mayner Architects**. The BAS will be dedicated to the care and management of private collections, such as that of Ileana

Sonnabend, whose collection will occupy 12,000 square feet of space. State-of-the-art storage facilities, on-site art handlers, conservators and curatorial consulting services will be available for collectors. Each storage area will also have a private exhibition/study space.

Ehrlich expects to attract 20 to 25 collections, selected through a screening process. The BAS complex will contain a 20,000-square-foot exhibition space for the display of shows organized by Ross or guest curators as well as traveling shows from other venues. Though the BAS has no plans to build a collection of its own, on-site collectors willing to lend works to BAS-curated shows could provide a rich resource from which to draw.

Located in a storefront on Main Street, the **Project Space**, a gallery for contemporary art projects, is set to open this July with a show of commissioned photographic works depicting Beacon. At press time, **Carrie Mae Weems** and **Richard Misrach** had committed to the project. The 2,000-square-foot space, designed by architect **Aryeh Siegel**, will also contain the offices of the BCP.

Beacon Performing Arts will be located primarily in the former **Dibble Opera House** on Main Street, but will also partner with other organizations in the region. Additional performances will also be held in a 1,000-seat theater in the town's new \$32-million high school, outfitted with cutting-edge technology.

Beacon mayor **Clara Lou Gould** said that a new bus service is being added from the train station, about one mile away, directly to Main Street to accommodate weekend crowds. The area is already a weekend attraction because of the large number of antique shops, particularly in nearby Cold Spring. It may soon be a destination for the contemporary art world as well.

—Stephanie Cash

America and Australia. However, these numbers reflect the pull of major art centers; the artists' origins (nearly half were born in countries outside Europe and North America) are far more diverse and illustrate the increasingly nomadic nature of today's art world.

This recently released data suggests a stimulating mix, and promises a higher ratio of new information than is usually found at such high-profile events on the internation-

al circuit. The complete list of artists, along with documentation of the satellite events, can be found on the Web at www.documenta.de.

Studio Program Looks Back

In May 2001, on the verge of ending its innovative free studio-space program for emerging artists, the **Marie**

Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation received a generous 11th-hour donation that allowed it to continue the program [see "Artworld," Sept. '01]. The foundation just celebrated its impressive 10-year history with an exhibition at **Ace Gallery** in New York, accompanied by a 368-page catalogue, both funded by the same anonymous donor that kept the program alive. Over the years, 161 artists have been selected to receive free studio space in a Tribeca building. They include such now-familiar names as **Xenobia Bailey**, **Ron Baron**, **Nina Bovasso**, **Luca Buvoli**, **Teresita Fernández**, **Carl Fudge**, **Elliott Green**, **Stephen Hendee**, **Arturo Herrera**, **Anna Sew Hoy**, **Brad Kahlhamer**, **Josiah McElheny**, **Mira Schor**, **Al Souza**, **Sarah Sze**, **Eve Sussman**, **Su-en Wong** and **Amy Yoes**. The anniversary exhibition was on view May 17 to June 1.

People

Dan Cameron, senior curator at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York, has been selected as curator of the eighth Istanbul Biennial, to take place September-November 2003.

James T. Demetron, recently retired director of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C., is now serving as interim director of the Menil Collection in Houston. **Ned Rifkin**, former director of the Menil, left that museum to assume Demetron's position at the Hirshhorn.

Artist **Peter Halley** is the new director of graduate studies in the painting department at Yale University School of Art.

Permanent Home for Dinner Party

The **Brooklyn Museum of Art** recently announced that it had received a gift of *The Dinner Party*, a spectacular and controversial installation piece by **Judy Chicago**. Presented to the museum by the **Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation**, the gift is valued at around \$2 million. A feminist icon created over the course of more than five years, beginning in 1974, the work features a large, triangular table set with 39 handmade plates of painted and glazed porcelain. Each commemorates an important woman in world history. The plates are adorned with decorative images such as flowers and butterflies, along with semi-abstracted female genitalia; the latter provoked widespread debate when

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Rosemarie Trockel

Al Held

Rediscovering Gego

Report from Rome



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Steamboat Off Harbor's Mouth Making Signals in Shallow Water and Going by the Lead. It continues the Bard College professor's decade-long study of the Hudson River and incorporates his film footage of the Yangtze River in China.

A "Watershed" project that will go on view next February and March is James Welling's photographs and audio recordings of farmland, livestock, vineyards, tools and other elements of agriculture in the Hudson Valley. His work will be presented at the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art at SUNY New Paltz and will also be published as a book. For the summer of 2004, writer Lynne Tillman will commission four writers to create new works of fiction responding to Washington Irving's story "Rip Van Winkle." They will read their works at sites in the Hudson Valley including the University Settlement, a 95-acre campsite in Beacon where a social-service agency of the same name based in Manhattan presents summer programs for inner-city youth.

At Denning's Point State Park, sculptor Lothar Baumgarten will complete and install *Seven Rings for Contemplation* by May 2004. Low concrete circles varying from 9 to 31 feet in diameter will be placed along the shoreline and throughout the 66-acre peninsula as focal points encircling vegetation—which will in turn grow over them—as well as for seating and social gatherings. They will

Howland Cultural Center, 477 Main Street (former public library, built 1872).



remain in place for two years. The German artist has been collecting audio recordings of animal activities, river life and local weather, and will make an atmospheric seasonal soundscape to be distributed on compact disc.

A complimentary 23-page field guide to the "Watershed" sites can be obtained at the Beacon office of Minetta Brook, where visual materials and descriptions of the projects can be viewed daily (see listings box). The artists' preliminary plans have also been published, along with essays about the art, profiles, and stunning photographs of the Hudson River and valley, in *Watershed*, a book edited by the scholar Miwon Kwon; it is available from Minetta Brook for \$20.

An Instant Art Scene

"Watershed," which opened a week after Dia:Beacon's premiere, is the largest of many exhibitions and programs catalyzed by the prospect of large art audiences visiting Dia. Soon after Dia acquired the Nabisco site in 1999, commercial properties in Beacon began to be purchased by both developers and small businesses. Galleries opened in anticipation of Dia's announced 2001 debut, and when that was postponed, a few closed. Some new owners have just let their spaces sit. Local contractor Ron Sauers, on the other hand, renovated the east end of town into a quaint shopping district.

Last fall, businesspeople founded the Beacon Arts Community Association. Beginning last December, BACA instituted a "Second Saturday" event with galleries and shops open until 9 P.M. on the second Saturday of every month. The current "Second Saturday Beacon Gallery Guide & Points of Interest" brochure lists 14 galleries; 20 boutiques, antique stores, jewelry, gift and clothing shops; and 13 places to eat. Most of these establishments are along the lengthy Main Street,³ where a complimentary trolley makes several stops in the afternoon and evening.

Beacon Project Space, designed by New York/Beacon architect Aryeh Siegel, is the spiffiest storefront in town. Fine aluminum mesh screens form luminous gray dividers between a gallery space and offices. This is the headquarters of the Beacon Cultural Project [see "Artworld," June '02], founded in April 2002 by William S. Ehrlich, a collector, trained architect and principal in the real estate development firm of Milton L. Ehrlich, Inc., established in 1935 by his father. Ehrlich was one of the earliest Manhattanites to buy in Beacon after he learned of Dia's plans. At the time of the Project's announcement, he raved to the *New York Times* [Apr. 26, '02], "Once I knew Dia was a done deal, I ran around Beacon and bought everything I could. I'm now Beacon's largest taxpayer. David will be the impresario for culture." That is David A. Ross, director of the Beacon Cultural Project and president of its nonprofit sibling, the Beacon Cultural Foundation. Formerly the director of the San Francisco Museum



Beacon Project Space, 240 Main Street. Unless otherwise noted, all photos Suzaan Boettger, April 2003.

Collaborative Concepts, 348 Main Street.



of Modern Art and, before that, of New York's Whitney Museum of American Art, Ross is now engaged in collaborations between private, public and institutional sectors in a move to foster growth in Beacon. The Cultural Project's aim is to spur Beacon's revitalization through innovative cultural initiatives.

One potential project is to rehab a group of eight vacant industrial buildings near Fishkill Creek, a site called Beacon Terminals, into storage and informal exhibition spaces for a "Beacon Art Society" to be made up of major galleries and private collectors from elsewhere. Sonnabend Gallery director Antonio Homem confirms that Sonnabend is eager to take space there. Ehrlich and Ross also plan to transform Beacon's former Dibble Opera House into a nonprofit space for contemporary dance, music, theater and media arts.

The Beacon Cultural Foundation was incorporated in November 2002 with seed money from Ehrlich and his Beacon Terminal Associates. Sara J. Pasti, formerly director of curatorial affairs at the Henry Art Gallery, Seattle and previously associated with Socrates Sculpture Park in Long Island City, Queens, is its executive director (and deputy director of the Beacon Project Space). One of its aims is to turn the former Beacon High School building into a Decorative Arts and Design Institute. Ross says, "We thought that would be a wonderful complement to the rigorous cutting-edge conceptual and minimal esthetic of Dia." Objects for display would be borrowed from established museums, which customarily lack sufficient space to show their collections. Until funds can be raised for a substantial architec-