

NEWS AND NOTES

BOOK SALES

A rare, magnificently illustrated, hand printed copy of "The First Book of Urizen" by William Blake, which has been hidden away in a private collection for more than 50 years, was sold in late April at Sotheby's New York for \$2.5 million. The 1794 volume, auctioned as part of the estate of Mrs. John Hay Whitney, is believed to be one of only 8 surviving copies of the book printed by the visionary English Romantic poet and artist.

MUSEUM NEWS

The Samuel H. Kress Foundation, celebrating its 75th year, has approved a \$20 million, five-year program. "The Art of Europe in Context," to help finance projects by museums and scholars intended to sharpen the public's awareness of Old Master paintings: how and for whom they were made and how they were originally viewed. Interpretative installations, historical research and conservation projects are included in the program.

The Museum of American Folk Art is looking for a permanent home, but may find it next door to its old address on West 53rd St. in New York City, with desire to build an 8-story building on property it owns at 45-47 W. 53rd St. It hopes to open in 2001.

The Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC has selected Frank O. Gehry as the winner of a competition to design a new wing for its historic Beaux-Arts building one block west of the White House. In the new wing, there will be new spaces for the College of Art, new administrative offices, restored and expanded galleries and a new conservation laboratory. Hopes for construction to begin by spring 2001 will depend upon raising the rest of the \$40 needed, of which half has already been raised.

Laguna Art Museum has received 109 contemporary works by prominent and emerging California artists from Judith and Stuart Spence, considered among the world's top art collectors. Included are works by 57 artists, including John Baldessari, Allen Ruppersberg, Kim Abeles, Chris Wilder, Meg Cranston, Russell Crotty, Robert Williams, Craig Stecyk, Sandow Birk and Chaz Bojorquez.

Nagoya-Boston Museum of Fine Arts opened in April by sharing the art of Boston with the cash of Nagoya over a 20-year contract. They say that this museum is "the first museum in Japan to provide a comprehensive view of world art across all cultures and time periods."

The Getty Museum in Los Angeles has commissioned 11 artists to create work in response to works in the Getty collection which will go on exhibit from 29 February through 7 May 2000. Included are John Baldessari, Uta Barth, Sharon Ellis, Judy Fiskin, Martin Kersels, John M. Miller, Rube Ortiz-Torres, Lari Pittman, Stephen Prina, Alison Saar and Adrian Saxe.

Menil Collection in Houston, Texas has set up a long-term installation called *Surrealism and Wunderkammer*, including paintings, sculpture, works on paper drawn from the Menil's renowned holdings of works by such artists as Rene Magritte, Max Ernst, Yves Tanguy, Victor Brauner and Man Ray. It features a wunderkammer, or room of wonders, housing curiosities (for example, African artifacts and astronomical instruments), that fascinated and inspired the Surrealists. The new installation, curated by Paul Winkler, director of the Menil from 1990 to 1999, probes the mystery of the ordinary, as the noted Magritte scholar David Sylvester has described the essence of Surrealism.

LIBRARY NEWS

Library of Congress Assessing A Policy Of Shelving by Height and Not Subject -- For several years there has been internal discussion at the Library of Congress on the possibility of saving money by shelving books by size instead of by subject. In Congressional testimony this spring Librarian James Billington referred to the Library's strategic objective of "re-engineering our handling of access to books." Many inside and outside the Library are wondering if this means that the Library will be making a shift in its shelving policy. Reference librarians, the Library of Congress unions, and Congressional Research Service staff have all expressed strong opposition to shelving by size at the main buildings.

A 1997 Library of Congress report from the working group on reference and research to the task group on shelving arrangement concluded that while shelving by size may be an option at the library's remote storage locations that the shelving of the general collections at the Capitol Hill facilities should, if possible, retain the classified subject arrangement.

Although the library stacks are closed to researchers, some library -- including cataloguers, reference librarians, and Congressional research staff -- regularly browse the stacks in the course of their work. Some Congressional research staff have noted that they would never have met their deadlines if they had not had been able to look at books in the stacks. Subject classified shelving not only enables a more

efficient evaluation of a collections, but it allows for the in-depth research that is not available through on-line subject catalogues. Reference librarians are often able to answer scholars' queries only by going to the stacks. The Library of Congress Professional Guild, which went on record in 1997 opposing shelving by height at the main library buildings, has recently circulated, in the interest of furthering discussion of this policy issue, an essay titled "The Height-Shelving Threat to the Nation's Libraries." And a June 11 opinion piece in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* highlighted the negative implications for research that would result from shelving by size and raised the question of whether the Library of Congress of the future will be more like a warehouse than a library.

350,000 books burn in France: A Major Library Disaster In France

The library shared by the University Lumiere (Lyon 2) and Jean-Moulin (Lyon 3) possessed about 450,000 physical volumes (monographs and periodicals). A large proportion of this collection was destroyed in the fire that started on Saturday, June 12th, a little before 2:00 a.m. First estimates indicate that about 350,000 were volumes lost. Included in this group are all of the periodicals from the 19th and the 20th centuries, as well as the basic collections needed for the programs in humanities and law.

As of now, it is not possible to determine the exact number of volumes that will ultimately be rescued. However, the first rescue operations that took place June 12 and 13 have saved the most precious volumes from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, as well as the manuscripts and the incunables (about 150 items). As a whole, about 8,000 early volumes have been recovered by the rescue workers, the personnel of the two universities and the students.

Other collections seem to have survived, but located as they are in areas that have become dangerous, their exact status cannot be easily ascertained. All in all, it is not yet possible to evaluate the number of volumes that can be saved when the situation is completely under control.

This catastrophe decreases in a significant manner the library materials at the disposal of Lyon students and while various measures are being implemented to ensure the preservation of what has been rescued. Various scenarios are being studied and they all aim at rebuilding the collections which are needed for teaching and research in the shortest possible time.

LOST & FOUND

Five important paintings by Gustav Klimt plundered by the Nazis and claimed by their Jewish owners' descendants under a new

Australian law will not be returned, at least for now. 16 drawings and 19 porcelain settings can be returned to the Bloch-Bauer descendants, who live in the U.S. and Canada, but the paintings willed to the Austrian National Gallery, were left by Mr. Bloch-Bauer to his family. The deals ensued were not honored.

•Police in Manhattan found that Alastair Duncan, long regarded as one of the world's leading experts on Tiffany stained glass who even advised the F.B.I. in its investigations into thefts involving the valuable objects, has been accused of stealing or conspiring with others to buy Tiffany windows from a grave robber and offering the glass for sale overseas for hundreds of thousands of dollars. He has been charged.

•A Dutch psychiatric patient wilding a kitchen knife severely slashed a Picasso painting called "Nude in Front of the Garden" at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam on 16 May, then went to a newspaper office to brag about his act. The police were called, and the psychiatric patient was arrested.

Lost and Found: The most expensive painting ever sold—Vincent van Gogh's "Portrait of Dr. Gachet" — reported missing after the previous owner, Japanese businessman Ryoei Saito, who had bought the painting for \$82.5 million in 1990 and stored it in a warehouse, had died. He died at the age of 79 six years later, stating that the painting should be burned upon his death in order to avoid inheritance tax. When the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York tried to find the painting for a current exhibition, museum officials could not locate it, but German radio has reported that the painting was sold early this year to an unnamed U.S. buyer for between \$87 million and \$130 million to a man who wished to remain anonymous. The buyer has no plans to display the painting publicly.

Found: A Salvador Dali painting stolen 25 years ago was found in the collection of his former personal assistant in August, according to Spanish police. "The Double Image of Gala," a 1969 work by the renowned surrealist, was stolen from New York's Knoedler Gallery in 1974. Since then the painting, inspired by Dali's wife Gala and worth \$125,000 in 1975, had been sought worldwide without success by the FBI and Interpol. Police confiscated the painting at the art center owned by John Peter Moore, a British citizen who worked for Dali for 20 years. Moore, 80, was detained, then released because of his age.

Found: An avid reader who bought a box of secondhand books for \$25 at a market

near Amsterdam in early August found a little something extra inside: two etchings that historians have identified as the work of Dutch master Rembrandt. The man, whose name was not released, discovered the etchings in an envelope when he emptied the box. One depicts the artist's mother, and the other shows an image of the good Samaritan. In May, a Dutch woman pocketed \$50,000 after she bought a book for \$1 and found two Rembrandt etchings inside.

Lost: The U.S. Post Office has airbrushed the cigarette out of Abstract Expressionist painter Jackson Pollock's mouth in a stamp that has been released. The image was based on a photograph by Martha Holmes for a 1949 *Life* Magazine cover story. Noting that Pollock was a chain smoker who always smoked when he painted, the *Boston Globe* editorialized that although a government spokesman says the decision had nothing to do with the government's anti-smoking campaign, the change is unsettling.

The newspaper went on to say that although no one is condoning smoking, the revisionist history on legends is often murky. Little things, good or bad, say a lot about a person and the America in which he or she lived. They should not be air-brushed away—not even in miniature in the corner of an envelope."

Found: Artwork by René Magritte and Salvador Dali have been discovered tucked away behind mattresses and under dusty old dormitory furniture at Russell Sage College in Troy, New York.

PUBLIC ART

There are more than 300 cows invading Chicago during the summer, sponsored by the Department of Cultural Affairs of Chicago, which is now riding herd on the project. Hundreds of molded sculptures to be decorated by notable local artists are displayed along Michigan Avenue and in October, some of the cattle will be auctioned off to benefit charity. Included amongst the 240 artists are Ruth Duckworth, Ed Paschke and Helmut Jahn.

AUCTIONS

Sotheby's on 3 May held a sale called "Pulp Fashion" which included all things made of paper such as books, photographs and illustrations, as well as a dress made of Bergdorf Goodman gift cards, a jeweled shoe made of paper, a pair of Calvin Klein briefs mounted on cardboard by Andy Warhol, colorful paper dresses from the 1960's, men's "chinos" made of manila envelopes, and vintage luggage, covered with paper travel stickers.

PUBLIC ART

A new sculpture at the Adler Planetarium in Chicago was recently dedicated, created by Brazilian artists Ary Perez and Denise

Milan, a husband and wife team. Consisting of 60 stones, rough-hewn on the sides, polished smooth on the top, 45 resemble slightly cured benches in height, width and depth. When arranged in a circle, they decrease in height toward the center, so that the arrangement suggests being in an amphitheater. The location has intersecting paths that mark the points on the horizon where the sun will rise and set each year on the days of the summer and winter solstices.

On the campus of Brock University, a small institution deep in Ontario, Canada wine country, there is a large collection of sculpture commissioned by Lutz and Hannelore Teutloff, weather German art dealers with a home and some investments in St. Catharines. So since 1988, the Teutloffs have commissioned artists to make an art work for some prominent spot on campus including 3 by noted Israeli sculptor Ilan Averbuch, then by Israeli New Yorker Buky Schwartz, a video work by well-known Ilina Fabrizio Plessi, an ambitious, unsettling installation by a Cologne collective called UnterbezirksDada, as well as the latest from Reinhard Reitzenstein, a Canadian environmental artist. Eventually the Teutloffs are expected to hand over the work to the university, but at present they are sharing it.

HOLOGRAPHY REDISCOVERED

Somerville House Books Ltd. is about to publish the first book that will have computer-generated holograms in full color. The book and accompanying stargazing kit is called *The Holographic Night Sky* and comes with eight holographic stickers of constellations. New technology for making full-color holograms came out of the laboratories, and at the same time, complex three-dimensional designs have become possible with the advanced software and lower prices for powerful graphics cards and large stores of computer memory. Websites for holography are:

www.sombooks.com
www.pro.on.ca
www.holophile.com
www.zebraimaging.com
www.cnaisonneuve.qc.ca/
holostar/maine.html
www.enter.net/~holostudio
www.cfeintl.com

FLUXUS NEWS

In Rome last November at the Centro Nazionale di Drammaturgia "Teatro Totale" Sylvie Ferrè curated "Poesia Intermedia" in homage to Dick Higgins with the participation of many Fluxus and Fluxfriends, including Aguiar, Bentivoglio, Blaine, Bory, Caruso, Chiari, Chopin, Dreyfus, Gappmayr, Garnier, Gut, Heidsieck, Hubatu, Kostelanetz, Kubota, Lora Totino, Miccini, Pignotti, Sarenco, Mark Sutherland and Nicholas Zurbrugg, among others. They also showed the last video fo Dick Higgins, as well as a Soirée FuturDada.

In Ferentino, Ferrè also curated an exhibition during the Europa Festival in November 1998 an Omaggio a Dick Higgins called *Poesia Intermedia* with performances of Fernando Aguiar, Wladislaw Kazmierczak and Eva Smigielska.

DATELINE: Philadelphia

Philadelphia is now the mural capitol of the U.S. which with its Mural Arts Program has focused on decorating the urban landscape with public art. Using the Los Angeles Mural Conservancy as its model, Philadelphia has now committed its funds to preserve public art, since each year from 124 - 144 murals are created, but now restoration projects are detailed to preserve the images from water damage, cold weather freezing, graffiti. With more than 1,800 murals and a waiting list for 3,000 new ones, Philadelphia has its hands full. But the artists are committed to preserving their creations.

DATELINE: Bonn

With the German government's move to Berlin under way, Gerhard Schröder, German chancellor, handed over to the city of Bonn the Henry Moore *Large Two Forms*, bronze sculpture which has sat in the chancellery gardens since 1979. The new government opened its Berlin venue on 23 August.

DATELINE: Galveston

The Flagship Hotel building, located on a pier over the Gulf of Mexico, has hired Houston sculptor Sergio M. Pineda to redecorate the building's exterior. However, the new designs' renderings of two 50-foot-tall, topless mermaids have caused some controversy.

The hotel building is owned by the city but leads to a management firm. According to the city attorney, the city has no control over the exterior decorations unless they compromise the building's structural integrity. And "this clearly does not compromise the integrity of the structure," according to the attorney.

The artist in a written statement said that he is depicting mermaids the way many artists have over the ages. Once it's finished, he doesn't believe it will be offensive to anyone. And if it is, he can come back in and cover her with fish scales!

DATELINE: London

An empty plinth on Trafalgar Square, previously designated for a bronze equestrian statue of William IV which was never funded, has remained unoccupied for 158 years, but now the first in a series of six-month occupants, all produced by British sculptors, has taken its place, a human-scale Jesus in white marble resin,

bare-chested, without the customary long hair and beard, his eyes downcast and his hands bound behind him. A twist of gold-plated barbed wire encircles his head. This work, called *Ecce Homo - Behold the Man* is by Mark Wallington, a London sculptor.

The next sculptors are Rachel Whiteread, then Bill Woodrow. A Web site has been created to elicit comment and suggestions, at www.fourthplinth.com.

DATELINE: Mexico City

The National Museum of Anthropology, opened in 1964, is going to undergo a \$13 million renovation supposed to be completed in December 2000. The new design is interactive, rather than passive. There will be touch-screen computers, there will be special regional music and voices interspersed in the exhibits. There will be revisions to many exhibits due to new information gleaned from more than 200 archeological digs in Mexico in the last five years. In addition, labels will be in English as well as in Spanish.

AMERICA'S BEST ARTS CITIES

New York City is first, followed by San Francisco; Santa Fe, third; Seattle, fourth, and Chicago, fifth. Other cities chosen were New Orleans, 6; Los Angeles, 7; Boston, 8; Philadelphia, 9 and Washington, DC, the tenth. Visit *American Style Magazine* at <http://www.americanstyle.com> for details.

INSTANT LIBRARIES

If a client has from \$20,000 to \$45,000, personal-library dealers can assemble a collection of 800 to 1,200 titles. This is not a cosmetic library, or books-by-the-yard, but in fact involves interviews with the clients to discuss their interests and then tailor the collections accordingly.

ALBRIGHT BROOCHES

A recent show was held in New York City of a collection of brooches that 61 international artists responded to an invitation to make for U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who often wears brooches to send political messages to friends and foes alike. The show, entitled "Brooching it Diplomatically: A Tribute to Madeleine K. Albright" was on display at the American Craft Museum, has been seen in The Netherlands, Finland and Estonia, and will travel to Hawaii. Themes centered on whimsical, serious, patriotic, etc.

ARCHIVES COME & GO

The archives of Buckminster Fuller have been transferred to Stanford University after a long period of planning and negotiations from the B. Fuller Institute in Santa Barbara, partly a sale, partly a donation.

Yaddo's Archives, the renowned artists' retreat, has been acquired by the New York Public Library, which includes work of Sylvia Plath, Milton Avery, Hannah Arendt,

Meyer Schapiro, Philip Guston, Aaron Copeland, Virgil Thompson and many more.

UMI, created by Eugene Power, a Michigan microfilm entrepreneur, now owned by Bell & Howell, is now developing an on-line version which covers nearly 80 percent of all books printed between 1475 and 1700 in England or in English. The service is expensive, but will be available through libraries.

Contributions to Umbrella Museum

Family Elzas, Claire Isaacs, Johanna Todd, Melinda Smith Altshuler, Bruce Altshuler, Richard McMillen, Ray Reece, Cal Davis, Angela & Peter Netmail, Richard Tipping, Beth Thielen, O'Brien family, Jennifer Henderson with great thanks for a huge contribution!

UMBRELLA NEWS

Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles is now owned by Rudolph Murdoch, communications millionaire who owns almost everything else you can think of! But what caught our eye recently is that Mr. Murdoch has banned umbrellas from Chavez Ravine, where the Stadium resides. And it was a rainy day when the reporter went to join the umbrella brigades seen on TV when summer thunderheads shriek into Atlanta or Fenway. But the no-umbrella policy is new to Murdoch. Off the record, however, umbrellas can be brought into the stadium but not opened. "With 50,000 attendance, you can see that if everybody opened their umbrellas all at once, that would present some major problems". Hard to summon up fear of rampaging Dodger fans shoulder-arming umbrellas! And raindrops keep falling. (L.A. Weekly)

Gunter Biere, a Berlin department store executive who broke the closed on Sunday laws by opening up the large Kaufhof department store on Alexanderplatz in Berlin on a Sunday breaking the shop-closing law intended to insure that Sunday remains a rest day in Germany. There is one specific loophole which permits Sunday shopping for a limited number of articles—including sunscreen, umbrellas and souvenirs—so he put a label "Berlin souvenir" on all the items sold to justify the Sunday sale.

I realized today: the umbrella and the bicycle are the two perfect things that we cannot make for ourselves. We know how they work, we follow their operation, they are X-rays of themselves, but we cannot make them, even with effort. Very simple, but we are stumped. So now I realize why the umbrella and the bicycle are so common in modern art. Picasso. Duchamp's wheel. Léger's umbrellas. Magritte. It is because this is the only honest review we can give the modern artist: Very simple, but we are stumped. (Saul Steinberg)