

NEWS AND NOTES

LOST & FOUND

Colossal Art Theft in The Netherlands
In the night of February 24th, 35 paintings were stolen from the exhibition room at the house of the well known Dutch painter Henk Helmantel. They formed a part of his private collection (his own paintings not for sale) gathered over a period of more than 25 years. Apart from their financial value (more than 600.000 EUROS) they represent an emotional loss for the painter which cannot be measured in pecunia.

Sometime during the night of the 24/25th 35 small and middle-sized paintings were transported to a hiding place either in The Netherlands or in a neighbouring country. Germany is just half an hour from the village of Westeremden, situated in the Northeast of The Netherlands.

Found: A 10th-century marble sculpture that customs officials say had been stolen from an ancient Chinese tomb and was about to be sold at Christie's auction is to be returned to China. This is one of 10 that were taken by raiders who blasted their way into the Five Dynasties tomb of Wang Chuzhi in Hebei Province in 1994.

Found: A small late 13th century panel by Cimabue, "The Madonna and Child Enthroned with Angels" found at Benacre Hall in Suffolk, England, will be auctioned off on 6 July by Sotheby's in London.

Lost: American architects and designers' archives have been lost to the Vitra Design Museum in Germany, who have acquired the estates of Charles & Ray Eames, George Nelson, Harry Bertoia and Alexander Girard.

Found: Two men connected with the theft of literary treasures from the public library in Armagh, Northern Ireland on 29 January. 5 stolen items were recovered, but the 1726 copy of *Gulliver's Travels*, with handwritten alterations by Jonathan Swift, had still not been found.

Lost: Lawrence University's Mudd Library discovered that 11 rare volumes had been stolen, valued at \$20,000, including illustrated nature books, items that are particularly vulnerable to being destroyed by a thief intending to sell individual prints.

Lost: A rare copy of Nicholas Copernicus' 1543 revolutionary treatise *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* has been stolen from the Russian Science Academy's library in Saint Petersburg. The copy, one of around 100 original editions in the world, was found to have disappeared after library directors ordered a search,

prompted by news that a copy had just been offered for sale in the United States. 23 other books dating from the 16th and 17th centuries were also found to be missing. Another copy had been stolen from Krakow, and a copy seemed to be up for auction at Christie's in New York in December, halted on suspicion that the edition had indeed been stolen.

Lost: Athena Tacha's *Marianthe* (1985-86), a lattice-like maze in the middle of Edison Community College in Fort Myers, Florida, has been demolished by the college. "They did not notify any of the media that had asked for the date of the event—so nobody documented the demolition." Although Tacha's contract with USF specifically obligated the University to "keep the sculpture in good condition and repair" and "not to destroy or alter it," ECC decided that the sculpture had deteriorated to a dangerous degree and was "an attractive nuisance"

Reborn: Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion House, the aluminum structure shaped like flying saucers and supported by a central shaft, somewhat like an umbrella, is being restored and rebuilt by the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan and part of its Website is dedicated to the project (www.hfmfgv.org/dymaxion). It will be finished in 2001.

Reborn: The Bauhaus home of Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky used by them during their tenure as Bauhaus instructors reopened in March in the industrial city of Dessau, home of the Bauhaus since 1925. Listed on the Unesco World Heritage List in 1996, the Klee-Kandinsky house has interior walls repainted with the 170 rainbow colors that K and K used for its original decor.

PUBLIC ART

Forest City Ratner Companies have invested \$5 in buying and commissioning new works by artists like Sol LeWitt, Tom Otterness, Pat Steir and Kurt Kauper. They place the work in two new Manhattan hotels, the Embassy Suites Hotel and the Hilton Times Square. Artists such as Roy Lichtenstein, Frank Stella and Ellsworth Kelly also have prints in meeting rooms and guest rooms, as do some lesser-known artists as well.

Dateline: Mexico

In February, thief carried off a bronze sculpture by British-born artist Leonora Carrington from a Mexico City street here it was on display with 88 other works. The statue was anchored to a steel base cemented into the ground. It was part of an exhibition

of sculptures by 11 artists, among which was Carrington's "Luna Leon" piece which was wrenched off its base but could not be carried away from the exhibit area.

MUSEUM NEWS

According to an annual survey of museum attendance compiled by *Art Newspaper*, a record number visited American art museums in 1999. Los Angeles County Museum's exhibition of "Van Gogh's Van Goghs", drew 821,004 visitors; next "Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids" at the Metropolitan Museum, attracted 473,234. Another 9 U.S. exhibitions drew more than 300,000 visitors apiece.

Frank Gehry, the architect who built the Bilbao Guggenheim, has completed a design for what Guggenheim officials hope to be another branch of the museum in Lower Manhattan, along the East River near Wall Street. But the City of New York has other plans for the land. An exhibition of the site, model, etc. will be shown in April.

Dateline: UK

350 works of art are on a list combed from 10 major institutions across Britain, including the Tate Gallery, the National Gallery and the Victoria & Albert Museum, including paintings by van Gogh, Picasso, Renoir, Munch and Matisse, which have a murky provenance for the period around World War II and may have been seized by the Nazis. Britain is the latest European country to make a concerted effort to restore artworks stolen by the Nazis to their rightful owners. The U.S. is far behind.

VIRTUAL MUSEUM

While waiting for enough funding for a "real" space, the Women of the West Museum has finally opened on-line with the LoDo Mural Project, which combines a public mural project in downtown Denver with corresponding online images and text. Its current exhibition can be seen on the streets of Denver along a temporary construction walkway, and this mural consists of colorful paintings of women who have contributed to Colorado history. Here is the museum's web address: www.wowmuseum.org which has won a Yahoo pick-of-the-week.

NEW MUSEUMS

The new **Tate Modern** in London, devoted to international art of the 20th century, opens on 12 May. The **Tate Britain** opens on 24 May. The **Wallace Gallery** in London introduces new galleries on 22 June, and the **Dulwich Picture Gallery** opens new buildings on 25 June.

SEX MUSEUMS

The Museum of Chinese Ancient Sex Culture recently opened in Shanghai.

Pompeii's Secret Cabinet is now being made available at the National Archaeological Museum of Naples, with special permission from parents needed for schoolchildren to see the "Forbidden Collection" of 250 frescoes, mosaics, statues, talismans, amulets, oil lamps as well as votive fertility symbols.

New York Sex Museum, is a project of Dan Gluck and Alison Maddex, graduates of the Graduate School of Fine Arts, University of Pennsylvania, who want to open it on New York's Fifth Ave. The stated purpose of the Museum of Sex is to serve as a center for the study of "the history and evolution of human sexuality." The museum will examine how sex has invaded our culture, from politics to art to movies.

WEBBY PRIZE

The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art has created the Webby Prize for Excellence in Online Art, a \$50,000 award to be given annually for a body of work that is primarily experienced online. A panel will select the winner, who will be announced on 11 May and will be featured on the museum's Web site.

MOCA of Los Angeles has closed the museum's department of experimental programs, headed by long-time curator **Julie Lazar**. She and her assistant, Brent Zenger, have left the museum at the end of March.

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ARTISTS AND SMOKING

Although advertising by tobacco companies has been banned on television, Camels has just hired Damien Hirst, Nan Goldin and Christopher Chiappa to design packages for the brand. Hirst came up with a bright red package embossed with butterflies, Chiappa's pack of smokes carries a photograph of himself standing on a city sidewalk wearing a sandwich board made of the original Camel pack, and Goldin's idea was to place a photo of a man bumming a cigarette from someone on one side and on the other side put a picture of the same man smoking it while talking on a

pay phone. And whatever scruples these artists have, I guess the money came in handy!

DATELINE: Austria

Artists and cultural workers including curator Robert Fleck, Wolfgang Stehle and many others are protesting the inclusion of Joerg Haider's far right Freedom Party in the new Austrian coalition government. Fleck urges international artists and curators to no longer exhibit in Austria. "Only with a complete boycott of the local art life, we can help the Austrian artists to survive." Artists, critics, curators and collectors have protested throughout the past two months.

FLUXEVENTS

The World of Charlotte Moorman at Bound & Unbound, 601 West 26th St., 12th fl., New York, NY 10001 has an exhibition from 28 March - 30 June 2000. (212)463-7348 Fax(212)463-8948 Tues. - Sat., 12-6 PM

Beck & Al Hansen: Playing with Matches at Museum Schloss Moyland in Bedburg-hau. Germany from 12 March - 14 May 2000.

The World of Robert Filliou at 871 Fine Arts, 49 Geary St., San Francisco from April - July.

TATTOOIST NAMED TO ARTS PANEL BY JERRY BROWN

Oakland (CA) Mayor Jerry Brown, known previously as Governor Moonbeam in the 1970s, has nominated a tattoo artist, Don Ed Hardy, to serve on the city's Cultural Arts Commission. Hardy who has adorned clients such as film director Werner Herzog with his elaborate Japanese-style tattoos, joins 15 other commissioners in deciding how to spend some \$1 million in city arts funds this year. Hardy, 54, has become one of the stars of the tattoo world with designs exhibited in galleries and museums across the country and a new, 300-page coffee table book.

WILD ART

London (Reuters) - British sculptor Elizabeth Wright commissioned four mechanics to dismantle a van, carry it into a living room and reassemble it in the name of art. "All my work is to do with the everyday. I'm using everyday objects," Wright, 35, was quoted as saying by the Times newspaper Wednesday. "Somehow through repositioning or remaking them, I explore their meaning and how we classify objects." Wright, who has been shortlisted for a 20,000-pound (\$31,680) British arts prize, called her work, "Honey, I parked the van in the living room." She described it as a "deceptively simple intervention."

Dateline:Copenhagen

Ten goldfish were swimming safely in their blender aquariums after power was disconnected to a controversial art exhibit that allowed visitors to mulch them.

FOOD AS ART

The Edible Monument at the Research Institute of the Getty Center in Los Angeles shows how royalty displayed wealth and power in extravagant monuments made of food. Curated by Marcia Reed, this show includes a re-creation of a late Baroque edible monument, showing the sorceress Circe turning Ulysses' men into swine. Made of sugar six years ago by Ivan Day, a British food historian, it was flown in its own seat from England. There are related books and ephemera. Through 21 May.

Food Lab at Cartier Foundation in Paris, dedicated to the culture of food, brought artists together with chefs, chemists, actors and scholars. Even the invitation was edible, made of matzo printed with edible ink. Vik Muniz offered guests plates made of caramel, Marina Babakoff, a musician, created a sound program based on chewing, and on another evening, visitors ate a frieze made of vegetable puree off the floor.

RADIO ART

Because the U.S. Government opened up an AM radio frequency for public use in 1958, CB therefore is the only example of license free, two-way radio set aside for non-commercial use. There is Project Citizens Band, ver. 1, mood control for 27 megahertz, is a broadcast over citizens band radio. Included will be a limited edition CD and cassette of the four tones (intended for re-broadcast). The printouts of the results will be available in a limited edition set of four. Both are editions of 40 and will be available through White Walls, P.O. Box 8204, Chicago, IL 60680. CD \$40.00, Cassette \$10.00, EEG printouts, \$40.00.

TIME CAPSULE

In 1974, Stephen Antonakos invited four colleagues: Richard Atschwager, Daniel Buren, Sol LeWitt, and Robert Ryman to place an object into four steel boxes that would not be opened until the year 2000. The boxes were sealed in 1975 and the artists were sworn to secrecy. From 20 January - 12 March 2000, the Rose Museum at Brandeis University in Waltham, MA displayed the boxes in a neon environment designed by Antonakos and built at the museum. Halfway through the show the boxes were opened. After a concert by Terry Riley, Mr. Ryman's box was opened first, revealing that he had altered the box itself with masking tape, within which was a square wrapped in brown linen; inside the linen was a small, framed glass palette signed by Ryman and dated 1961.