

NEWS AND NOTES

LOST & FOUND

Found: Using digital cameras and processing techniques, experts have deciphered five pages of the only known copy of Archimedes' 2,300-year-old treatise "On Floating Bodies." Text believed to have been copied in the 10th century from the original Greek scrolls appears side by side with 12th century script by a monk who reused the parchment for a prayer book.

Found: Archeologists have found what they believe is the world's first sculpture, chiseled from a small lump of volcanic rock more than 220,000 years ago. If they are correct, the discovery places known representations of human life some 170,000 years earlier than previously thought. The rock was found in 1986 in the Golan Heights, near Israel's Syrian border, but most academics discounted the claim of professor Nama Goren of Jerusalem's Hebrew University, who discovered it, that the stone was crudely carved to suggest a female figure. Using powerful microscopes to examine the rock, scientists in France and Canada now say Goren was right.

Found: The explanation (scientific) of Mona Lisa's smile. After staring at the picture, Dr. Margaret Livingstone discovered that the human eye makes the Mona Lisa smile, but it is not painted by Leonardo. So, when a person's center of gaze is on Mona Lisa's eyes, his less accurate peripheral vision is on her mouth. So it picks up shadows from Mona Lisa's cheekbones, which enhance the curvature of a smile. But when you look directly at Mona Lisa's mouth, your central vision does not see the shadows, and there is no smile.

Lost: Since September 1999, a vandal has destroyed 60 art and music books worth \$3,000 in the Forbes Library in Northampton, Massachusetts. About 20% of the

damaged books had all their pages cut out before being returned to the shelf; the rest were missing a page or two here and there.

Found: 100 charcoal drawings, some dating back 1,100 years, were found by an amateur archaeologist searching for ancient Native American art in a cave in southwestern Wisconsin.

TO BE FOUND MAYBE:

The antiques dealer who claimed 3 years ago that he could broker the return of the immensely valuable paintings stolen from the Gardner Museum in Boston is back after serving 3 years in prison on another unrelated charge. He is now back wanting to resolve the whole issue and mum's the word.

MUSEUMS

The Museum of American Folk Art has acquired a large group of paintings and all the manuscript books of Henry Darger (1892-1973), a Chicago recluse whose imaginary world centered on a tribe of sometimes androgynous child-warriors led by seven angelic sisters called the Vivian Girls.

• The Kunsthalle in Hamburg has asked 48 contemporary artists to look at what the museum's function is to them and respond by exploring new ways for people to interact with objects from the past. One artist put talking paper towel holders in the lavatories, dispensing quotes from Hollywood movies!

• The British Museum has opened its Great Court, designed by architect Norman Foster, who has integrated the Reading Room into a vast-reopened quadrangle, considered "Europe's largest covered square."

ANGELS IN THE CITY OF ANGELS

Well, New York had cows, and so did Chicago. There were pigs in another city, and now "A Community of Angels" will place individually

decorated angel sculptures all over Los Angeles as a fund-raiser for Volunteers of America and Catholic Big Brothers. 6-foot angels in three positions, designed by Tony Sheets, will be reproduced in fiberglass and painted by artists. They will be on exhibit February through April and then auctioned in May.

CAT CAIRN KIELDER SKYSPACE

James Turrell has a new installation in a new site Kielder Forest Park, on the English border near Scotland. Situated at a rocky outcrop commanding spectacular views, two miles from Kielder Village, "Cat Cairn Kielder Skyspace" is his most recent in a series of large installations around the world, including Israel, France, Ireland and the Netherlands, as well as in Arizona.

Dateline: New York: Sound Gallery

Engine 27, founded by Jack Weisberg, a sound engineer, is the first Sound Gallery in Manhattan, dedicated to electronic music, a space constructed in such a way that it could be adapted to various sound installations. Located at 173 Franklin St., works by composers such as Earle Brown, Hildeard Westerkamp and others will be presented.

John Cage's "Bird Cage" composed in 1970 and 1971, has been prepared as a "spatialized, new realization" of the work for a digital age, with a complete presentation lasting four hours. *Bird Cage* is a sound collage of moaning, rumbling, whistles, crackles, intoned vaguely audible words, all presented against a background of quiet chirping.

DATELINE: NEW ZEALAND

A new tourist stop in New Zealand is the town toilets of Kawakawa, Friedensreich Hundertwasser's adopted hometown on the North Island, where he had lived for 30 years before his death in February at the age of 71. This was his last project, and since he found straight

lines anathema, you can imagine that these toilets are par for Hundertwasser's course.

The toilet entrance resembles a Moorish fantasy with colorful bulbous towers, a sod roof, and columns fashioned from construction pipe and pottery.

Inside, abstract patterns of bright tiles combine with light that sifts through hundreds of wine bottles, stacked sideways and set in the cement walls. Everywhere a visitor looks, there are charming sculptural details: a whale swims across a wall, a river of blue tiles leads to a floor drain. There are lots more details, so pay a visit to New Zealand to see the loos. (New York Times)

DATELINE: New York

The Paula Cooper Gallery, which has presented avant-garde music performances in its space since it opened in 1968, has now launched its own record label, *dog w/a bone*. The label will showcase avant-garde music and works by experimental composers who have been ignored by the museum establishment. The three initial offerings from *dog w/a bone* are CDs prepared and performed by Petr Kotik and his Brooklyn-based S.E.M. Ensemble. Three disks are out and in 2001, perhaps a CD of underknown compositions by John Cage.

DATELINE: Mexico City

President Vicente Fox Quesada has stated that "artists and writers that work to promote culture and art around the world" will find they have friends in the Foreign Ministry.

NEW MEDIA & THE MUSEUM

Using new media, one can touch a resin replica of an original black Shichiri tea bowl and upon touching it, the data is sent to a PC, which uses graphics software to synchronize the replica's movement with a three-dimensional rendering of the real bowl on the screen. It gives the viewer a sense of the exact shape and weight of the bowl, and they can touch the smooth insides.

It is also possible to read a book or an ancient scroll. The paper, however, is blank, sits underneath a sheet of glass and acts as a display screen for images from the original scroll from a projector underneath it, which is connected to a PowerMac G4. For instance, the scroll's dowels contain sensors that detect the user's scrolling motions, which are sent to the computer, so that when the scroll is turned, the corresponding verse and images are projected onto the paper. And if you press a button on the glass, you cause the projector to show only the calligraphy, or only the images.

DATELINE: New York

The **International Center of Photography**, now relocated to Sixth Avenue and 43rd Street, has a new alliance with the **George Eastman House** in Rochester, NY in which the two museums will share collections, exhibitions and curatorial expertise. Besides 5 exhibitions, there will be a joint Web site, and beginning in 2003, inaugurate a triennial exhibition of contemporary photography.

DATELINE: Washington

Coca-Cola is taking its 50 years of advertising and wrapping it up in a red bow for the Library of Congress in what will be the largest single donation to the Library's archive of commercial advertising. Coke announced the gift, worth an estimated \$15 million, that will take 20,000 advertisements from around the world and make them available at the Library of Congress and its Web site, beginning with eight spots at www.loc.gov

The Washington Post article on the gift contains this statement: Loughney [head of the LC motion picture archive] points out that Coke is paying for video copies of the material--to be used by academics--and the cataloging of the collection. Reels of film will be rolling in for the next five years. The total gift, Billington estimates, is worth about \$1 million. Coca-Cola is also establishing a fellowship for the study of culture and

communication at the library; one fellow will receive \$20,000 each year for the next five years.

CENSORSHIP

Sally Mann is not the only one who has been castigated for photographing her children in the nude. Now we have a 65-year-old grandmother in Newark, who has been photographing her two granddaughters 4 and 6 years old, sometimes in the nude. Having dropped off her film in Montclair, New Jersey one morning, she had no idea that she would soon be making national headlines and becoming a participant in a long-running and highly charged debate over the often fine line between pornography and art.

After being arrested and charged with endangering the welfare of a child, the grandmother is now in a pretrial intervention program that includes a year of probation. She is a social worker, and if she doesn't complete probation, her career is jeopardized and she has over \$25,000 in legal fees.

FLUXUS NEWS

Takako Saito was named Artist of the Year at the Dusseldorf Art Fair from 10 December - 7 January 2001.

George Brecht had a show of two series under the rubric, VOID, at the Lattuada Pardo Gallery, Milano, where the book was also launched at the opening of the show in October.

Dick Higgins' memorial show: Betwixt and Between: The Life and Work of Fluxus Artist Dick Higgins at the Columbia College Center for the Book and Paper Arts in Chicago from 10 November - 22 December organized by Hannah Higgins and Simon Anderson.

Galerie and Edition Hundertmark in Cologne, Germany has issued its first CD of **Joe Jones: Solar Music**, a concert held originally 20 - 21 April 1983, including Solar Umbrellas! To order, send 38DM to the Galerie at Brusseler Strasse 29, D-50674, Germany.

HOLY WRIT

Everyone is digitizing these days, including the Morgan Library creating internet access to its collection of 1,300 medieval and Renaissance illuminated manuscript, as well as Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, who plans to open one of the world's oldest and least known collections of Anglo Saxon and medieval manuscripts to the public, i.e. the Parker Library which contains over 600 manuscripts from the sixth to the sixteenth centuries, and houses over a quarter of all the Anglo-Saxon books in the world.

Now we have an Irvine, California-based publishing company, 1451 International, which has received a license to reproduce the Vatican Library's holdings, which amount to one of the oldest and largest of its kind in the world. The company was formed especially for this project and takes its name from the year that the library was founded by Pope Nicholas V for clergy and scholars. About 100 works have been reproduced to date, and they are on exhibit in Santa Monica, California at the Patricia Faure Gallery. The Vatican wants the art to reach everyone, whether they can afford a fine print or a postcard.

Some of the most beautiful manuscripts include the illuminated manuscript "In Praise of the Cross", a group of poems by 9th century German monk Hrabanus Marus or Ptolemy's map of the northern Zodiac. There are letters from Michelangelo and Henry VIII. For more information, contact www.1451.com.

ART DURING THE HOLOCAUST

The American Association of Museums and the Association of Art Museum Directors have reportedly reached an agreement with a presidential Holocaust commission to research and disclose on their Web site the backgrounds of all pre-1945 artworks in their collections that were acquired after 1933—when the Nazis took power in Germany and looted many art collections. According to the New York Times, details of the agreement, the latest attempt to

identify the provenance of all Holocaust-era works, is expected to be released in January.

• A rare 16th-century painting of Jesus that had been looted from a German castle by American troops at the end of World War II was returned to German custody by the U.S. Customs Service. The painting by early Renaissance Venetian artist Jacopo de' Barbari is a result of New York's Art Recovery Team that is assigned to find missing works of art some looted by American troops, others by dealers, etc.

RUSCHA ARCHIVE

The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco has purchased the complete archive of graphic works by L.A.-based artist Edward Ruscha for its Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts. The acquisition, made at an undisclosed price with funds from philanthropist Phyllis Wattis, includes 325 final prints and 800 proofs. Impressions of each new print Ruscha produces will be added in the future. Ruscha's graphic works will be exhibited 26 May - 9 September at the Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco.

DATELINE: Vinci, Italy

Leonardo in Azione e Poesia (Leonardo in Action & Poetry) will be held in Vinci, in the Museo Ideale Leonardo da Vinci, opening on 31 March 2001 until 18 April, including the 15th of April, which is the mythical anniversary of Leonardo's birth. There are many international artists in this show, including Anna Banana. Beginning in May 2001 and continuing through the rest of the year, all the artists will have their own personal exhibitions, displaying all their take-offs on Leonardo in one medium or another.

• **Alessandro Vezzosi**, the director of the Museo Ideale Leonardo da Vinci, has been investigating the dozens of fingerprints left by Leonardo on his drawings and manuscripts. Using all the Centers of Scientific Investigation such as that of the Carabinieri in

Rome and the Institute of Anthropological Research at Chieti University in the center of Italy, Vezzosi is seeking help also forensic experts at Scotland Yard and the FBI in order to find a distinct "signature" that can be used to verify authenticity. He is also trying to isolate and extract Leonardo's DNA from the masterpieces.

Vezzosi says, "Searching for Leonardo's DNA is an attempt to understand him physically and emotionally. We want to get closer to Leonardo than anyone has been." (*ArtNews*, October 2000)

