

# NEWS & NOTES

## LOST & FOUND

Piero Cannata, 49--the same man who had been sentenced to a psychiatric hospital in 1991 after he hammered a toe off Michelangelo's David--after he was seen scribbling with a black marker pen on an important 15th-century church fresco. Cannata was arrested after defacing about a square yard of "The Obsequies of St. Stephen," painted by Renaissance master Filippo Lippi on a cathedral in Prato.

**Found:** Police officers posing as art dealers have recovered an oil painting by Raphael that disappeared in the early 1800s. The undercover officers in Vicenza, Italy, had agreed to pay \$24 million for the 16th-century painting, known as "The Madonna with Child and Lamb" as well as "The Madonna of the Hay". The painting was seized at a bank in Milan after several art dealers who had been keeping it in a safe-deposit box in Switzerland agreed to the sale price and sent the work across the border.

**Found:** A Gutenberg Bible taken from a Leipzig museum and carried to Russia at the end of World War II by Red Army soldiers was discovered recently in the State Library in Moscow. According to an Associated Press report, the volume had been so well hidden that Igor Filippov, the director of the library, only learned of its presence a few months ago.

**Found:** 3 young men, two of them brothers, were charged in March with the theft last year of 5 Picasso paintings and other artworks, valued at more than \$10 million. 5 paintings and a bronze sculpture by Picasso, along with two works by Braque, were stolen from the Modern Museum of Stockholm on 8 November. It was the biggest art theft ever in Sweden. 3 lesser-known Picassos were found virtually undamaged in December; the other, more famous works are still missing.

**Found:** The 500-year old Cupola of the Duomo in Florence will emerge in June after a 15-year, \$7-million structural checkup and artistic overhaul. 4,000 square meters of restored 16th century frescoes will re-emerge to dominate the Florentine skyline again. In addition, thanks to 600 tons of lead ingots stacked around the raised north side of its foundation, Pisa's 800-year-old tower has stopped leaning, so the leaning tower of Pisa leans a little less and with more security.

**Found:** In the village of Radovljica, Slovenia, an hour's drive north of Ljubljana is a museum dedicated to apiculture. Among the artifacts for beekeeping is an art form unknown to most people, namely, the front boards of the hives were painted by itinerant artists in the southernmost reaches of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to paint the front boards of their drawer-like Kranjic hives with colorful scenes from the Bible, folk tales and history.

The art of decorating beehives died abruptly after World War I, when Slovenia became part of Yugoslavia and lost its role as imperial honey producer. With the advent of big, modern hives from America, the need to paint hives disappeared, drawing no attention since Austrian administrators regarded the painted front boards as primitive. Now only 1000 of the naive front board paintings survive in a handful of Slovenian museums and in the homes of private collectors. How to preserve them is the big question now.

**Lost:** The famed Sanguszko Carpet, 91 feet 6 inches long and on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, has been claimed by the Prince Paul Francois Roman Sanguszko, who lives in Sao Paulo, Brazil. He offered it to the Museum for \$4 million, but it was to short notice, so that carpet was sold to the Shumei Cultural Foundation of Kyoto, Japan, which is building a 240,000 square foot museum designed by I.M. Pei to be called the Miho Museum of Art.

**Found:** A new way to clean Notre Dame's three main doors in Paris--with laser technology. The work, to remove dirt without damaging color remaining in saints' sculpted clothes, will mark the first major restoration of the cathedral's portals since the mid-1800s. The 13th-century design served as a pictorial Bible for the illiterate.

**Found:** "Christ as a Man of Sorrow", a devotional image by Petrus Christus dating from about 1450, was originally to be part of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's show, "Petrus Christus: Renaissance Master of Bruges," which opened April 14 and runs through 31 July. But the painting, which belongs to the Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery in England, was stolen on 2 December 1993. Although the alarm was sounded and the building was sealed in less than 2 minutes, the thieves got away. Since the painting, oil on wood, was only 4 3/8 x 3 3/8 inches, it could easily be pocketed. It was detected when attempts to sell the painting in the Netherlands and Switzerland led to its recovery. Several arrests were made after an investigation. A new frame was secured for the work and a new Plexiglas case. It is now included in the exhibition, as one of the earliest works to show the artist's connections with manuscript illumination, both in size and technique.

**Found:** 202 works of art confiscated while leaving or entering France illegally during the past decade were given to France's culture ministry from customs officers in May. Valued by some experts at \$2.6 million, including paintings, drawings, sculptures and ancient musical instrument, the works of art will be given to museums.

**Missing:** Edvard Munch's *The Scream*, world famous painting, was stolen from an exhibition in Oslo, Norway, connected with the Winter Olympics. The alarm was set off and the thieves were registered by a security camera, but not too clearly. Rumor

has it that anti-abortion protesters have taken it as a means of getting high-profile media coverage, returning it only if the anti-abortion film, "The Silent Scream" is shown on national television. Another offer was made on 3 March in which the lawyer representing opponents of abortion said that one of his clients would arrange the return of the painting for \$1 million.

**Found:** Evard Munch's masterpiece, "The Scream" was returned to its place at the National Art Museum in Oslo, Norway in May nearly three months after being stolen from the museum on 12 February 1994. Two thieves climbed a ladder, broke a second-floor window and climbed in to grab the painting.

**Found:** The world's oldest paved road, a 4,600-year-old highway that linked a basalt quarry in a desolate region of the Egyptian desert to waterways that carried basalt blocks to monument sites along the Nile.

**Found:** Schwitter's *Ursonate*, a 41-minute composition made of bits of "shattered words"--rhythmic phonetic sequences--arranged in four movements. Discovered by Jack Ox, a German-based American artist, who was planning a mixed-medium "visual interpretation" of the Schwitters work and recently ruled genuine by a Cologne court, the electronically remastered version will appear in America distributed by the L.A.-based distributor Harmonia Mundi USA, while it has already appeared on the German market.

#### FOUNDATION NEWS

The Lannan Foundation, a Los Angeles-based philanthropic agency maintaining a 1,750-piece collection of contemporary art, has announced the termination of its art collecting program. It will continue an exhibition program and grants to other art institutions for exhibitions, installations and performance, but no more purchases.

#### MUSEUM NEWS

**St. Petersburg.** The Hermitage is sinking under lax security. The alarm and sprinkler systems hasn't yet been fully installed. It has no air condition-

ing, basements are undermined by flooding and long-forgotten tunnels and drainage systems, and is actually sinking at a rate of a half-centimeter a year, into ground that grows more sodden with the passing of each season.

The Getty Museum has been trying to buy *Three Graces* by Antonio Canova, but has been delayed for five years, since a new law in England was enacted stipulating that artworks considered part of Britain's national heritage might leave the country only if no public or private parties in Britain wanted to buy them. (The V & A is the only British public institution which has attempted to buy it, but by 1990 was unsuccessful in raising enough money to acquire it. The Getty is willing to pay \$11.4 million if an export license is granted, but the British Government has again delayed deciding whether to allow the work to leave the country until 5 August.

The Uffizi's Michelangelo room, a part of the museum damaged in last May's bombing which killed five people, has reopened, the first part of the museum to be restored in the west wing, which was the most heavily damaged area. 15 more rooms are to be reopened by the end of the year.

**Genghis Khan: Treasures from Inner Mongolia** containing more than 200 artifacts spanning 3,500 years of Mongol history from the 2nd millennium B.C. to the 14th century, culminating with the reign of Genghis Khan, is now at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County travelling in September to the American Museum of Natural History in New York and to the Tennessee State Museum in Nashville in December before continuing on to Canada.

**The Andy Warhol Museum** is to open 16 May in Pittsburgh, but the press conference took place in March at Mr. Chow in New York City. It is to be "the largest museum to a single artist in America, and perhaps the world--even large than Musee Picasso. Tom Armstrong, former director of New York's Whitney Museum of American Art and now director of the Andy Warhol Museum, will oversee 3,000 of Warhol's works, 500 of which will be on display on separate floors for the

opening--which will involve three days of raucous revelry including a tour of the Pittsburgh sites of Andy's life, fireworks at midnight and a 24-hour museum open house. The museum is located at 117 Sandusky St. in Pittsburgh, in a 73,000 square foot warehouse built in 1911 and renovated at a cost of \$12.3 million by Richard Gluckman Architects of New York. Included is an Archives Study Center, a film theater and a coffee shop. The museum belongs to Carnegie Institute, and is a collaboration between the Carnegie, Dia Center for the Arts and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts Inc.

The museum at the seaside town of Koksijde, Belgium featured last year an exhibition that traces the history and use of the toilet through the ages. About 10,000 people visited the exhibition--entering through a giant toilet seat--for a two-week period, which generally averages 5,000 people a month. The last show of the year dealt with culinary habits--2,000 years of eating by the rich and by the poor.

**Laguna Art Museum** director Charles Desmarais was dismissed by the museum's board at the end of March after the board president called for "more energy" in the museum's administration. In a statement, the board said it failed to work out "differences in management philosophies" with Desmarais.

Lisbon is the designated Cultural Capital of Europe this year and first offered an exhibition of the sculpture of Angola, long ruled by Portugal. Starting in May will be an exhibition of the juxtaposition of the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch with Surrealism.

**The American Visionary Art Museum (AVAM)** has been dedicated in Baltimore on the south side of the Inner Harbor. Scheduled to open in the summer of 1995, the 26,000 square foot facility will include five climatized exhibition galleries, an archival and reference library, wildflower sculpture garden, large sculpture barn, gift shop, theater, and classroom. The inaugural exhibit will examine visionary artists' relationship with nature. Then, there will be an examination of the motorcycle subculture and an exhibi-

tion of work by visionary apocalyptic painters.

**Paul Rebhan**, a 33-year-old artist, musician and computer consultant, carried a 11 x 14" painting into the Museum of Modern Art in New York City one Friday, hung it in the Tatyana Grosman Gallery next to a Robert Motherwell, Jasper Johns, a Claes Oldenburg. Using "double-sided, low-adhesive tape", so as not to damage the wall or the painting, he put it on the wall with a little card identifying the work as "Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Donald Trump." Only 48 hours later did the museum realize it had acquired a Paul Rebhan.

**Alighiero e Boetti**, an Italian conceptual artist who saw his work as a collaboration between different people, cultures and disciplines, died in April of brain cancer at the age of 53. He used unconventional techniques such as geography and embroidery, or the common ballpoint pen, creating big, patchwork-like world maps and invented aphorisms into dense, embroidered surfaces fabricated in Afghanistan, or later into kilim rugs. Collaborative artworks so appealed to him that he took "e," the Italian word for and, as his middle name to suggest two people.

Jose Maria Luzon Nogue will be the fourth director in three years of the Prado Museum in Madrid, succeeding Francisco Calvo Serraller. Serraller resigned after being in his position for only 200 days after being criticized for allowing a magazine to photograph designer chairs in a museum gallery.

#### CD-ROM NEWS

**Maus: A Survivor's Tale and Maus: A Survivor's Tale II. And here my Troubles Began** have been published by the Voyager Company, costing \$59.95. The two books and large amounts of related materials have been included on this new release. The process of producing **Maus** are discussed by both Art Spiegelman and his father, Vladek.

IBM has just unveiled a new technology that allows digital disks to hold more than 10 times as much data as they do now. The laser that "reads" a disk, it seems, can be made to read different levels of a multilayered,

transparent disk. The result: several movies, or a million pages of text, on a single CD. Tomorrow's unemployed: bookshelf makers. (New York Times)

**ArtNet**, a new art-information system based in Salt Lake City, begins in mid-June. It is a customer-referral service for art dealers, including more than 23,000 print titles and 2,000 originals by 9,000 artists, as well as listings for art, sculpture and stamps, with access to editions by more than 2,500 publishers nationwide.

#### CHRISTO PROJECT

To Christo, his most important project, conceived more than 20 years ago, will be realized in either April or May 1995--he gets to wrap the Reichstag, Germany's most famous building, with a million square feet of silver fabric. By wrapping and unwrapping the building, Christo seeks to portray the end of an era in world history and the beginning of another. It will take at least a year for workers to prepare the fabric and cables needed to wrap the Reichstag with 25 miles of rope and cable holding the industrial-strength fabric which is to be cut and sewn by about 200 specialists at plants in eastern Germany. 400 laborers led by experienced mountain climbers will then take four days to mount the fabric onto the building, which will be closed.

#### CENSORSHIP

Eli Langer, a 26-year-old artist who faced a penalty of up to 10 years in jail over child pornography charges, is free after charges were dropped by the Crown in Toronto. The charges against Mr. Langer and Mercer Union Gallery director Sharon Brooks were the first involving purported works of art under a new federal law on child pornography passed in 1993. The law provides that artistic merit is a defense to a charge of producing materials involving explicit sexual activity by anyone under 18.

In December, police seized five paintings and 35 drawings from an exhibition of Mr. Langer's works. Included in the paintings were two images of naked children and naked adults, while the drawings include images of children having anal and oral sex with one another.

The Mercer Union Gallery said in a news release that its directors are relieved the emotional ordeal is over for Mr. Langer and Ms. Brooks.

**Alice Walker**, Pulitzer Prize-winning author, was horrified when she received an award statuette for being a California "state treasure." She received a statuette, almost a foot tall, of a nude woman's torso--created by world-recognized California sculptor, Robert Graham. Walker said she is going to keep the gilded statuette packed in a box. Having thought about the mutilation of women for four years, she was presented with a "decapitated, armless, legless woman, on which my name hung from a chain", according to Walker's comments in the San Francisco Chronicle.

**Barton Lidice Benes** was prevented from selling some of his works in Sweden, because Swedish health authorities banned their sale because they feature the AIDS-infected man's blood. An exhibition in a gallery in Lund featured bottles of Benes' blood, a water pistol firing drops of his blood and a syringe spurting the blood, which authorities said could pose a danger to public health.

Andes Tornberg, gallery manager, disputed doctors who said the works, shown previously in the United States, posed a theoretical, if minimal, risk of infection.

#### NETWORKS ON-LINE

##### African-American Network

CompuServe on-line computer network announced plans to introduce an African-American culture and arts forum in April. The forum will offer related databases covering education, business, music, history and other topics.

**CultureNet** is a computer service combination of e-mail, electronic conferencing, a bulletin board and an on-line library, approved by a consortium of private and public sector members developing the information highway for Canada. **CultureNet** is a project of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, the University of Calgary and the Canadian Institute for Theatre Technology, and will become available to users on 1 April 1995. It will cost about \$100 a year for individual users,

while non-profit groups will pay \$200 and institutions a projected \$250.

#### **DATELINE PARIS**

The Fondation Cartier has moved from their villa and park at Jouy-en-Josas near Paris and has opened a grand glass palace in the Montparnasse area of Paris designed by Jean Nouvel, the futuristic French architect, which will house the headquarters of Cartier France and the Fondation Cartier art collection. The core collection will be stored in the Montparnasse building, but the bigger pieces of sculpture will be donated to museums in eastern Europe. Cartier will now organize temporary exhibitions and artists' residencies at Montparnasse.

#### **DATELINE AUSTRALIA**

The Ausflag Organization has appointed a committee of leading Australian designers to create a new Australian flag it hopes will be flown at the Sydney 2000 Olympics. More than 20,000 designers were received in the Australian Flag Competition run in *The Australian* newspaper last year.

**DATELINE ANTWERP.** A Belgian artist unveiled the world's most expensive table in May, worth the equivalent of about \$8-million and encrusted with more than 7,000 carats of precious stones. The stone have been arranged in 196 squares, with the center depicting the tricolor Belgian flag. The table took Chale six months to complete and will be displayed at Antwerp's Museum of Diamonds.

#### **DATELINE BRUSSELS**

The International Very Special Arts Festival was held in May in Brussels, Belgium with disabled people from 70 countries represented. Included was U.S. artist Brom Wikstroom who, paralyzed from the neck down 18 years ago after diving into shallow water in the Mississippi River, learned to paint using a brush between his feet.

#### **DATELINE ROME**

On view until 15 June in the Castel Sant'Angelo is a curiously eclectic art exhibition called "Treasures from the Darkness" consisting of stolen artworks that were recovered by the Italian police. All kinds of art from

classical statuary to 19th century paintings, calling attention to the problem of art theft worldwide and especially in Italy. The problem is even more critical, because of the opening of the European Community's internal borders last year. 29,000 works of art were stolen in Italy in 1993 and only 5,500 were found.

#### **FLUXUS**

**In the Spirit of Fluxus** opened on 12 May at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art with performances by Dick Higgins and Alison Knowles.

871 Books had a show of Happenings & Fluxus ephemera in April and Lure Art Books has a show of happenings, action art, fluxus objects, and conceptual performance photos of the early sixties and seventies at 3227 16th St. #1, San Francisco, CA 94103 by appointment.

**Joe Jones: Musikobjekte und Zeichnungen** was exhibited from 4 February - 15 March 1994 at Galerie und Edition Hundertmark in Cologne, Germany. There is a catalog with an essay by fellow Fluxist, Ben Patterson. Joe Jones died last year in Dusseldorf.

**Artpool** in Budapest has a catalog of the **Fluxus Library** which they have. It consists of Fluxus books and general catalogs in chronological order. It also includes a Wants List, which many of our members can help them find. Write to Artpool, H-1277 Budapest 23, Pf. 52 Hungary.

**Artpool** is an Art Research Center which has the largest collection of Eastern European avantgarde media and art documentation, available to the public. open from 2-6 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays (except holidays) at Budapest VI, Liszt Ferenc ter. 10, 1st floor.

**Fluxbritannica: Aspects of the Fluxus Movement 1962-73** is a documentation exhibition of posters, artworks, letters, photographs and newspaper clippings. April - May 1994.

#### **TUNNEL VISION**

To celebrate the opening of the Eurotunnel connecting France and England, Tunnel of Art was conceived as a three-installment series of en-

counters by international artists, architects, writers, thinkers and public figures. In February, the first meeting attracted Daniel Soutif, an official of the Pompidou Center in Paris, the writer Thomas McEvelley, the rock musician John Cale and the artist, Dennis Oppenheim. The second, in early April, had Max Neuhaus, a sound artist; Min Tanaka, a Japanese butoh dancer; James Turrell, the American who is reshaping a dormant volcano in Arizona, and several more. The third meeting, scheduled for early June but in doubt for financial reasons, has an invitation list that includes the artists Daniel Buren and William Wegman, the architect Rem Koolhaas and the 1968 revolutionary turned Frankfurt cultural official, Daniel Cohn-Bendit. Conceived by Alanna Heiss, who hopes to make a book out of the project, found the April meeting somewhat evanescent. Min Tanaka, dressed like the other workers in full hard-hat regalia, offering a strangely moving dance in the tunnel itself, dedicated to those who lost their lives during its construction (9 in all). Turrell, a licensed pilot, presented a design of an aircraft he said could fly through the tunnel. Jean Dupuy, a French performance artist, suggested cute, bilingual graffiti for the tunnel walls. (NY Times)

#### **KITCHEN TABLE**

An extraordinary event, **The Kitchen Table**, a series of conversations organized by artist Eugenia P. Butler, was presented during the Art/LA '93 art fair in December 1993. It brought together a gathering of articulate cultural thinkers of our time--primarily artists--who were seated around, perhaps the oldest cultural institution, **The Kitchen Table**, to create the intimate discourse about the powerful impact of art on society. Their focus was to better understand our present, and, by using the visionary tools of the artist, to begin to visualize our future.

There were 15 female and 15 male participants in the "conversations", creating dialogue where women's and men's attitudes and practices hold equal weight. Assembled from the United States, Mexico, Germany, Holland, France and Australia, the participants were drawn from the local and international community, having been carefully chosen for their

qualities as human beings and artists. They are characterized as deep and catalytic thinkers, who also have the ability to enter and move into a dialogue. They were fed and housed within the Los Angeles community--in effect, serving as bio-implants into Los Angeles. As the city itself sat poised for change, aware of its shadow while gazing at the horizon, **The Kitchen Table** examined the power of art to affect culture, using discourse as a social tool.

During the four days of the art fair, Art/LA '93, inside a secret room--a metaphor for the soul of a society--there were eight "meals", (luncheons and dinners) moderated by Eugenia Butler. The 16 x 32 foot space reflected the essence of a kitchen, set up with delicious food and drink, the ideal atmosphere to engage in such a dialogue. The kitchen itself had a variety of chairs around the table and hanging on the wall, as well as aromatic rosemary hanging in the kitchen. Because each meal involved different guests, with each guest reflecting a different background, experience, and ideology, **The Kitchen Table**, like life, was collaborative and its outcome, mysterious.

Many of the artists who came from abroad and from other parts of the United States had never met, but the chemistry of selection was careful enough to lead to engrossing and deep discussion. The discussions were sometimes quite heated, other times peaceful and meditative. Such well-known artists as Marina Abramovic, Felipe Ehrenberg, Allan Kaprow, Suzanne Lacy, John Outterbridge, Roland Reiss, and Carolee Schneemann were joined by younger artists and less well-known artists who had much to discuss along with them. New friendships ensued, and two writers, both art critics, served as witnesses within the "kitchen", to prepare a written documentation of the event. These were Judith A. Hoffberg, Editor & Publisher of **Umbrella**, and Cuauhtemoc Medina of Mexico City, art critic in Mexico.

The "meeting of the minds" was enlightening and entertaining. Beginning with a small meditative trio in a kind of quiet meditation, the event culminated in the last meal around the table, an intense discourse on the Power of the Artist, with a lively and

eclectic assembly. The coalescence of chosen guests led to deep discussions such as "Art and the Spirit, the Dream, the Invisible Other," or "Art and its Power to Change Community". While these discussions were going on and food and drink were being consumed, a team of video producers created a video documentary of the event. Video monitors were placed in the nearby "village square" within the Convention Center to broadcast the dialogues, thus allowing a general "art audience" to absorb the discussions.

Future Kitchen Tables are slated for Mexico and Europe.

#### WILD ART

Austrian artist, Wolfgang Flatz, who is based in Munich, does artist-destroys-house projects, called **Demontage**, and the fifteenth one was performed for Styrian Autumn in Graz in October. The work of art for the festival is not the demolition but the video of it, featuring Ina Brox, soprano, in the foreground. He started doing **Demontage** in 1987; as Brox sang German arias, he destroyed living-room furniture by chainsaw and fire. Later, he stood by a table with 30 doubles of tequila on it while Brox sang German drinking songs. By the time she was finished, he had downed 28 tequilas.

**Shades of Diter Rot.** German-born sculptor Christian Lemmerz was a hit at the Esbjerg Art Museum in Copenhagen, where hundreds of people paid \$4.40 to see six beheaded pigs and an aluminum mirror covered in pig's blood. The artist stitched hind quarters of pig carcasses together in 3 display cases, and front parts in the other three. The Health Committee chairman wanted the shown shut down. The artist, in turn, says that people "must take a stand on their own existence and face the reality of what happens to their bodies after death." This is "art that makes people think"...and grimace.

**Rusty Slackman** of Spokane, WA is a dental technician who once worked at a California dental lab that put traditional Islamic symbols such as gold stars and moons on front teeth for some Muslim customers. About 12 years ago, he began experimenting with different colors of staining powders that are normally used to make crowns look natural. He uses fine

sable brushes and magnifying goggles to paint tiny details and charges \$10 to \$35 for each picture on the porcelain crowns--usually back teeth that aren't normally visible.

The Zurich Sewers Museum is putting on an exhibition of works by artist-friends of Hans Ulrich Obrist, who asked Fischli & Weiss, Ilya Kabakov, John Miller, Paul-Armand Gette and others to display their visions from 9 June - end of November.

