

NEWS AND NOTES

MUSEUMS

Zentrum Paul Klee, a new museum for the works of the painter, opened in June in Bern, Switzerland, with a collection of some 4,000 of his works. The museum has a permanent exhibition of Klee's work, with paintings as well as hand puppets he made for his son, Felix, from 1916 to 1925. It also has a music hall with 300 seats, a children's museum and room for workshops, and will be home to a summer academy for young artists.

- Disney will give its African art collection, hailed by experts as one of the most important collections in private hands in the U.S., to the Smithsonian Institution. 525 objects, spanning five centuries and valued at \$20 million to \$45 million, the collection will become part of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art, with a debut exhibition in 2007.

Artists' SOAPBOX DERBY

From Yellow Submarines to fur-covered cars, this race now has a youth division and also one for mayors, attracting thousands of people in Kingston, NY. For instance, Robert Johnson, the director of graphic design at SUNY Ulster, entered a take on "False Mirror", Magritte's close-up of an eye with clouds for an iris, by using an old satellite dish hitched to the gutted lawn tractor as a tribute to Magritte. The event was inspired by Yorij Donskoj, a local gallery owner who generated the idea in the early 1990s.

LOST AND FOUND

"Young Parisian" by Renoir, stolen from the National Museum in Stockholm five years ago, has been recovered in the United States. It has been returned to Sweden. The Rembrandt self-portrait stolen along with the Renoir was recovered in a sting operation in Copenhagen a week before the Renoir was found.

Found: The special glow of paintings by Tintoretto and other Venetian Renaissance artists comes from tiny bits of glass the artists mixed with their pigments. This is a discovery by a senior conservation scientist at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, Barbara Berrie.

- The curator of a Copenhagen art museum has been charged with stealing 100 exhibits from the museum, worth

more than \$1650,000. HE is accused of stealing small porcelain, glass and metal items while working with at the Danish Museum of Art & Design from 1999 to 2002.

Found: Mona Lisa's smile is 83 percent happy, 9 percent disgusted, 6 percent fearful and 2 percent angry, according to a computer at the University of Amsterdam.

Stolen: An oil painting by Jackson Pollock and a silkscreen by Andy Warhol were stolen from the Everhart Museum in Scranton, PA by thieves who shattered a glass door in the back of the building.

Found: Archaeologists announced the discovery of a masterpiece of Maya art showing a surprisingly early flowering of the civilization, well before the classical period that began after A.D. 250.

A 30 x 3-foot mural in vivid colors depicting the ancient culture's mythology of creation and kingship, were first discovered and exposed in Guatemala four years ago. The painting after new radiocarbon tests is 200 years older than originally estimated, dating to 100 B.C.

Found: Three paintings stolen from a German museum near the end of World War II have been recovered. Among a group of four dozen paintings stolen on March 22, 1945, as Allied forces swept through Germany, they eventually were brought to the U.S. and were acquired by a New Jersey resident about 20 years after the war. They were found when the current owner put them up for auction a few months ago.

Found: 9,000 antiquities plundered from archaeological sites in Italy. The police raided the home of an unidentified man who was apprehended while delivering wares to clients in a flea market in Rome. There was a sophisticated restoration laboratory, metal detectors and other archaeological tools, but also thousands of Etruscan and Roman terra-cotta vases, polychrome mosaic tiles, pieces of travertine and multi-colored marble that once adorned Roman villas. Included were ancient copper and bronze objects, amphorae, goblets, masks, brooches, votary statuettes and oil lamps.

Stolen: A 4,000 pound bronze sculpture by Henry Moore from the grounds of the Henry Moore Foundation, called "Reclining Figure" in December.

Wrecked: an artists' village in a rundown section of northeast Beijing was being wrecked by the powers that be. Known as the Beijing International Art Camp, the 100-or so loft spaces were attacked with the wrecking ball, many of which were updated and invested in by the artists who wanted to stay for the long run. Painters and sculptors have been dislodged by the bulldozers.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Ansel Adams' "Autumn Moon," shot at 7:03 p.m. on 15 September 1948 was replicated on 15 September 2005 when the alignment of the moon, the sun and the Clark Range was photographed by a large group of photographers gathered at Glacier Point in Yosemite National Park.

- The recluse **Angelo Rizzuto** stalked Manhattan with a camera from May 1952 to June 1966, finding solitary beings isolated amid the architectural grandeur, cold streets prowled by disillusioned women, exhausted men and vulnerable children, yet ending every roll with a portrait of himself, alone in a spare room, sullenly staring or bizarrely grimacing into the camera. When he died in 1967, he asked that the 60,000 photographs be sent to the Library of Congress, along with \$50,000 from his estate to finance a book of his work. It took L.C. 40 years after publishing a flimsy booklet to get that book done and it is now Michael Lesy's "Angel's World," published by Norton.

- Another find by **Lillian Bassman** were her experimental fashion photographs done for Harper's Bazaar in the 1940s and 1950s, nearly all destroyed in the 70s, and now finding a new audience in the 90s.

- Still another photographer who was a traveling salesman of lace and embroidery until he was 50, a Lomanesque figure with a sample case, a mortgage and a family to support, **Samuel H. Gottscho** shot pictures of New York City architecture and interiors from the late 1920s and early 1930s. Now, the Museum of the City of New York is showing 150 from one of the largest archives of Gottscho's work in "The Mythic City: Photographs of New York by SHG, 1925-1940."

- **Luke Swank** was lost to the world of photography for decades, but his elegant black-and-white images of workers, circus performers and steel mills have finally

come out in a new book and museum retrospective. "Luke Swank: Modernist Photography" is now at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Museum of Art through 5 February.

LIBRARIES

The New Museum of Contemporary Art in Manhattan has transferred its library to the New York University Libraries, creating a partnership between the two downtown institutions. Consisting of more than 30,000 volumes, including artist monographs, exhibition catalogs, periodicals and artist archives dating from postwar to the present, the library will not be far more available to historians, scholars, curators and students.

FLUXUS

Harvard has acquired 121 works, part gift, part purchase, of Fluxus artists, writers and musicians including Christo, Oldenburg, Ono and George Brecht, collected by Peter and Barbara Moore. Peter, a photographer who died in 1993 was known for recording Fluxus activities and Barbara, an art historian writer and former rare-book dealer. There are also 20 works by George Maciunas, who gave the movement its name and organized and promoted many of its efforts. The collection will be part of the Fogg Art Museum's collections.

SHADOW ART

Former graffiti artist Ellis G. (to his Mom, Gallegher) has left his chalk mark on the sidewalks of Cobble Hill, Brooklyn with the outlines of shadows of objects and the public loves them. He has traced objects and whole city blocks. He also shows paintings on canvas in group shows and solo exhibitions. It has added conversation and pleasure to those who live and walk through Cobble Hill.

ART AND LIFE

The Munch Museum in Oslo, which lost the world-famous "Scream" in a daring robbery in 2004, is drawing criticism for selling a new cops-and-robbers board game, "The Mystery of 'The Scream'". Some people think it's horrible to treat the matter as a game, but the game is meant for players above the age of 6, and it is called "educational" by the publishing house, allowing its participants to play either detectives or thieves. It has 36 cards featuring works of art known to the children.

Dateline: Vienna

Peter Noever, the head of Vienna's MAK Center of applied and contemporary arts, is turning an anti-aircraft tower into a Vienna art space. From a bunker, the Arenbergpark Flak Tower will become a beacon for the future: The Contemporary Art Tower will serve as the basis for something unprecedented. It will contain a collection of the 21st century, a slow process over 15 - 20 years. He will invite one artist, and then see what he has done, and then see what the next artist can do. The tower has raw industrial space, ready to be reshaped by the sensibility of living artists.

The first artists will be James Turrell and Jenny Holzer, who will project light on the outside of the tower, beginning in late 2006.

Dateline: Illinois

Go to enjoyillinois.com to see an amazing poster campaign to generate tourism in that state. The imagery is dynamic, exciting, and colorful. Produced by an ad agency in Chicago, the posters are not for sale, although there have been many calls for them by the public.

Dateline: Biloxi

A memorial fund honoring curator and art collector David Whitey will help rebuild the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum, designed by Frank Gehry, named for Biloxi native and art potter George E. Ohr and former Biloxi Myor Jerry O'Keefe. It will be completed in two years.

The museum's centerpiece will be four podlike gallery pavilions, featuring the work of Ohr (1857-1918), who was known as the Mad Potter of Biloxi.

Deadline: New Orleans

New Orleans children who fled the city after Hurricane Katrina have expressed themselves at Houston shelves through crayons and paper. Their artwork went on display in December showing 30 often-disturbing scenes of experiences from the hurricane through children's eyes at the Houston Public Library. If the funding can be found, the exhibit will go on a national tour this year to raise money for young hurricane survivors and promote art therapy. There are more than 600 pieces, from which the choice was difficult, along with a quilt made from 48 drawings that were transferred to fabric and trimmed with cloth salvaged from the ruins homes of New Orleans quilters. The website to contribute to pay the salary for an art therapist is: www.katrinaskidsproject.org

• New Orleans is full of art created by detritus from Hurricane Katrina, including barbecue grill parts, a microwave oven, adding machine keyboards to make "trashbot" a kind of robotic art. There is now art on canvas, T-shirts, refrigerators or tattooed arms and legs. As one of the artists has said, "We have to come back and make art. If you don't have culture, the city will become Disneyland for condo people."

In addition, an exhibit called "The ties that Bind: Making Family New Orleans Style" will travel to displaced residence in Atlanta, Baton Rouge, Houston and Jackson, Miss. Those who attend will be asked to write stories of memory and hope on cloth that will be transformed into another traveling exhibit.

Deadline: Florence

The Rabula Gospels, the first dated Christian manuscript, was shown at an academic conference in Florence, Italy to have been repainted. Pigment tests and scientific analyses of the illustrated manuscript have revealed that the illustrations of 586 A.D. were repainted after it entered the Medicis' Laurentian Library in the 16th century, where it remains today. The oversized book, originally produced in a Syrian monastery, includes the first dated pictorial representation of the Crucifixion. In the repainting, Jesus' curly red hair was restyled as black and straight.

Deadline: Tokyo

Vintage Disney animation, including scenes from Walt Disney's first color short, "Flowers and Trees," in 1932 has been found at Chiba University, near Tokyo. The original sketches, celluloid and background pictures from such films as "Sleeping Beauty," "Bambi," "Fantasia" and "Cinderella" were also part of the find of about 250 items. After the collection traveled to Japan in the early 1960s for exhibitions at department stores and museums, it was donated to the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, which later gave it to an animation scholar at Chiba University for use in education and research. The materials were rediscovered when the school decided to digitize them and reached out to Disney for copyright guidance.

Deadline: Genoa

A new museum of decorative arts has opened in Genoa, thanks to the private collection of Mitchell Wolfson Jr., who acquired some 100,000 objects from the late 19th century and first half of the 20th century. Divided between the Wolfsonian,

the museum he founded in Miami (now a department of Florida Atlantic University in Miami) and the Wolfsonian, which has been given the bulk of the pieces relating to Italy.

The Gallery of Modern Art in Genoa already contains large collections of Art Nouveau and Art Deco, donated by Wolfson, located in a villa dating to the early 17th c. The new collection will be housed in a former school building in the park, which has been remodeled and refurbished.

PARADISE IN BROOKLYN

A colorful ancient synagogue floor depicting Paradise is on exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum to celebrate its centenary of acquiring them. The mosaic was excavated in what is now Tunisia. The mosaics are very well preserved, and are displayed with contemporaneous textiles, statues and jewelry from the museum's collection in "Tree of Paradise: Jewish Mosaics from the Roman Empire" through 4 June.

Dateline: New York City

The Drawing Center, which was supposed to have been in the new trade center redevelopment sharing a space with the International Freedom Center, but when the Drawing Center was accused of showing anti-American artwork, it was decided that it would be inappropriate for the Center to be located on the side of a 9/11 memorial.

Aided by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, they finally found a site at the South Street Seaport, where it will construct a building immediately north of Pier 17 on the site of a large shed that was used until recently by the Fulton Fish Market. It will be double the size of the site it now occupies at 35 Wooster St.

Dateline: Paris

"Melancholy: Genius and Madness in the West," an art exhibition at the Grand Palais through 16 January with 250 works by artists from Lucas Cranach the Elder to Ron Mueck and Anselm Kiefer.

The Wig Project

Ken Solomon, a painter who lives in Brooklyn, bought the black wig for \$20 as part of a Halloween costume in 1998, setting it atop the head of just about anyone he could find, standing them against a white background and shooting with a 35-millimeter camera. He recruited most of his subjects by putting up fliers with the wig superimposed on

everyone from van Gogh to Tony Soprano. The culminate of the Wig Project ended up at Bienvenu Gallery in Chelsea with 98 of the faces. Now the wig resides in a drawer in the artist's studio.

DADA IN LAWRENCE, KANSAS

Mayor Book Highberger in Lawrence, Kansas proclaimed International Dadaism Month in honor of the provocative, sometimes absurdist art movement that flowers in the 1920s. But in the spirit of an art movement that declared that "art is dead," the mayor has chosen not to specify a month for the observance. International Dadaism Month is Feb. 4, March 28, April 1, July 15, Aug. 2, 7, 16 and 26; Sept. 18 and 22, and Oct. 1, 17 and 26. How did he reach that conclusion? HE rolled dice and picked numbers from a hat. "I just think it is good to acknowledge that there is a place for chance and nonsense in every healthy lifestyle," said Mayor Highberger. Not all members of the electorate agreed. "It sounds like a waste of time to me," said Joe Hutchens, a construction worker. "It seems like the City Commission would have something better to do than that."

PERFORMANCE

More than 600 years after Chaucer's pilgrims rode together through Kent, a performance artist has set off on the same route. But Mark McGowan is more interested in highlighting the plight of the lonely at Christmas than reaching the shrine of Thomas Becket.

Instead of a clutch of companionable tales, he is taking on the 88-kilometre journey 18 boxes of chocolates with which to woo passing maidens. He has also done without a horse: with a sign on his back reading "Could you love me?", he is making his way on his hands and knees. McGowan, 37, has rolled a monkey nut 11 kilometers with his nose from Goldsmiths College in south London to 10 Downing Street in protest against student-loan debt; towed a London bus for 30 meters using only his big toe; and walked backward for 18 kilometers with a turkey on his head while shouting at fat people through a bullhorn.

Dateline: Denver

The City of Denver and the Clyfford Still Museum have acquired the artist's archives and approximately 400 works of art from the estate of his widow Patricia Still, who died in August. Included are sketchbooks, correspondence, diaries, manuscripts of the artist's writings, photo albums, articles and reviews, and his personal library.

Dada for Cooks

Just out is a pocket-sized paperback edition of Allan Ben's "Art and cook: Love Food, Live Design and Dream Art" (University, \$23) which has on its cover, reminiscent of Man Ray or Magritte, a surrealist shot of an egg cracked open to reveal an eyeball, which stares, Cyclops-like, at the viewer.

Inside are recipes in nine categories with arresting or alarming visuals throughout. All the illustrations, surreal and strange, make us think about food and its role in our lives and culture.

CENSORSHIP

John Latham's *God is Great* was to have gone on display as part of the redisplay at the Tate Britain in September, but was withdrawn because "to exhibit the work in London in the current sensitive climate, post 7 July, would not be appropriate". It features copies of the Bible, Koran and Talmud, cut in half and affixed to a large sheet of glass. However, it is illustrated in the catalog, but of course is not shown. The artist, irate, asked the museum to explain why the work is not on exhibit, so the notice says: "Having sought wide-ranging advice, Tate felt that to exhibit the work in the current climate would be inappropriate. The artist regrets the decision." There was a debate on 8 November at Tate Britain, sparked off by the Latham affair, about the exhibition *Sacred, sacrosanct or just art*.

FLUXUS

At Pavel Zoubok Gallery, Geoffrey Hendricks is showing *Continuing Sky Dialogues* and Berty Skuber is showing *Labels* through 4 February 2006 at 533 W. 23rd St. In Chelsea, New York City.

JEAN TOCHE IN ITALY

Over fifty photographic works will be exhibited in the first Italian show dedicated to Jean Toche at Artandgallery.

On Tuesday 17 January, Artandgallery opens the year 2006 with an exhibition dedicated to Jean Toche, entitled "Burn, baby, burn" and organized by Manuela Gandini. This Belgian artist, a naturalized American, founded — the Guerilla Action Art Group — in the Seventies with Jon Hendricks and Poppy Johnson. These days, like a monk in his hermitage on Staten Island, he produces a daily output of postcards commenting on the international political scene created by the actions of the Bush administration. In this way Toche transmits a sort of interference or counter-information — somewhere between politics and poetry — aimed at artists, journalists and critics living in various parts of the

world. Every morning Toche sends around fifty identical postcards, denouncing the violent distortion of power by describing the relevant events. The stated facts, taken from articles by political commentators and enriched with his own observations, are always accompanied by a photo of the author, captured using the self-timer, inspired by the latest declarations of Bush or Condoleeza Rice, the latest western hostages, the most recent bombings or burning suburbs. Toche, who is under special observation by the American government, has become a constant and subtly pervasive presence for the recipients of the "postcards": the dirty conscience of puritan America. His observations are caustic and attentive, to the extent that even some of the *New York Times* journalists on his mailing list take their cue from his assertions, a few days after receiving his creations.

The relationship between the *recluse* Jean Toche and the world is explained through his public words and his private image, through the creation of a minuscule network of information which rejects officialdom. The face of the *artist* Jean Toche, thanks to graphic reworkings or unusual settings, takes on the look of the events under discussion. And over the 365 days of the year, a mini-diary is created, a public and private biography that travels the world.

In the exhibition "Burn, baby, burn", the postcards have become posters (50x70). They look like the expression of a movement and they speak the language of the 21st century.

As a GAAG militant, Jean Toche was arrested by the F.B.I. in March 1974 for allegedly having sent sixty flyers to various galleries, newspapers and individuals, strongly criticising the policing of American galleries and specifically the MOMA. Over three hundred artists from various parts of the world signed a petition for his release, including the secretary of Amnesty International, Martin Ennals and the executive secretary of the PEN American Center, Ms. Kristen Michalski.

Toche was obliged to undergo a psychiatric examination in an attempt to diagnose him insane, but Doctor Teich acknowledged that he was of perfectly sound mind. The reason behind the attempt to label him mentally ill was that one evening, with a protesting group, Toche appeared at the Metropolitan Museum and during a banquet for the affluent members of the museum, released some cockroaches onto the table. This protest at how public funds were

spent on lavish dinners ended in a violent assault by the police, followed by Toche being arrested and banned for life from entering American museums.

The right to dialogue and protest would never end for Toche who, along with Hendricks, has written letters filled with bewilderment and truth to Nixon, General Franco and all institutions involved in the arbitrary exercise of power using secret or public violence, both within their own borders and beyond.

"Various kinds of letters have travelled the world during the century just ended – writes Predrag Matvejevic, in *Un'Europa maledetta* (*A Cursed Europe*), Baldini Castoldi Dalai – letters that we sent ages ago and don't know whether they ever reached their destination, letters lost forever, letters adrift at sea in a bottle that somebody will find someday. Their story will certainly be written and will help to write the history of our century."

For Toche today, it is no longer Xeroxed flyers but rather these beautiful color postcards made with Photoshop that orbit the globe like little pearls of wisdom from an outpost where all the surrounding homes display an obtuse comic-book patriotism. Staten Island as Disneyland.

The show closes on 15 February.

• Jean Toche Postcard Sets from 2004/2005 are now available, in an edition of 300 copies, from ArminHundertmark, Plaza Ing. Manuel Becerra 1, 12A, E-35008 Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain. The price is 15 Euros. A Deluxe set is available with an original photo of Jean Toche, price 80 Euros.

DATELINE: Vancouver

Vancouver artist and author, Doug Coupland, was the rage of last summer having chewed up his books, a Bible and U.S. dollar bills to produce his exhibition.

He created a group of faxus hornet's nests fashioned from the pulped remains of books—the artist's own, as well as a Gideon Bible—plus one made from a was of masticated U.S. \$1 bills, called *Royalties*, by the way. Each nest is poised on a branch and sheltered in a wooden vitrinem preserved like a natural-history display. Here, though, the natural process under scrutiny is that of human creativity.

This shows his passion for the print medium. He has read many of the books in his home library repeatedly. His relationships to books as physical objects has made him a connoisseur of paper stocks and binding techniques. He chewed his pages after soaking them in a Tupperware container and watched TV while doing it. He confirms that the dollar

bills are quite durable, and that although he was conscious of the ink, he soaked the used \$1 bills in antiseptic before getting under way.

Instead of launching a book, he has advised his young writer friends to have a "book's over" party where you gather your friends together at your house and you have a good dinner, accompanied by good wine, and then you burn a copy of the book.

DATELINE: Tokyo

Live painting it taking Japan by storm, uniting the visual artist with new audiences in clubs, breaking down the barrier separating artists from club patrons. Most of the performances are done to jazz, blues, or other kinds of music. This draws young people to these performances, allowing artists to end up with works they never intended to create, largely due to the reaction of the audience.

