

# APT Insight

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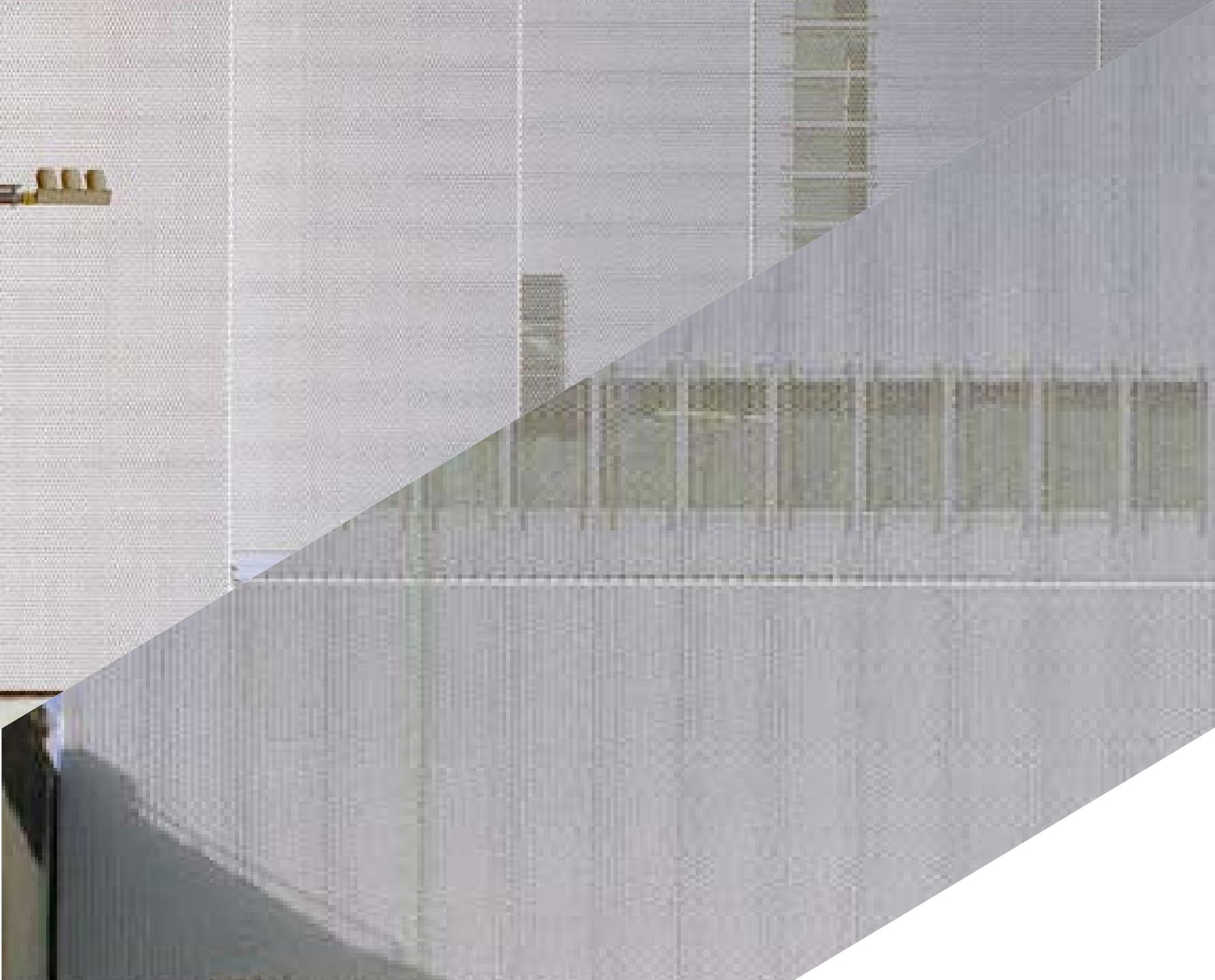
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# APT Insight

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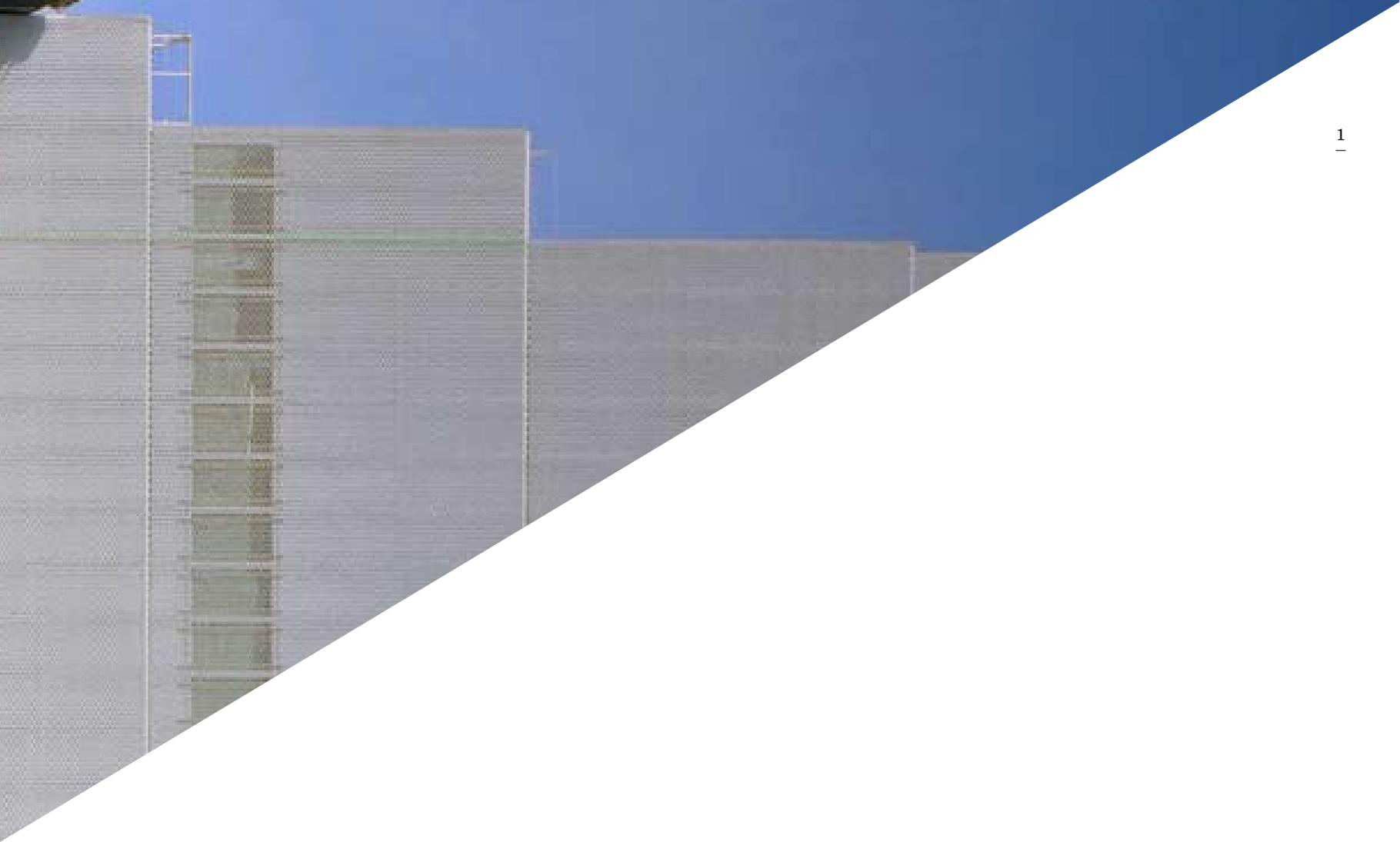
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## Letter .

We are very pleased to bring you this second issue of APT Insight.

Having received great feedback regarding the first issue, which included features on national survey shows and international biennials, our commitment to presenting a global view on prevailing developments and important art events is no less evident here. This volume examines the fast growing trend of the privately held museum—founded and funded by individual collectors—and the implications for established and emerging art centers around the world.

The private collection museum is beginning to take center stage as a presenting organization of contemporary art. Here in the US, the practice of endowing an institution towards the future disposition of one's collection is well known. Traveling from New York to Los Angeles, almost every major city that came to life during the 20th century has a significant collection in the vaults of a city museum. But as the contemporary art scene dominates the press, the auction houses and the art market, the wealth of art in single collections has exploded, and is not so likely to be destined for your favorite local institution.

Not surprisingly, the US leads the way with two major family collections that are available for public viewing: the Rubell Family Collection in Miami, Florida and the Broad Art Foundation in Santa Monica, California. But Europe, Latin America and now China are no less than a half-step behind. Recently, the Ellipse Foundation Contemporary Art Center opened on the outskirts of Lisbon and the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art premiered selections from

the Ullens Collection of Chinese art in Beijing. The Daros Collection of Latin American art, which was collected and is currently housed in Switzerland, will return to Brazil with a complementary space for new projects by up and coming Latin American artists.

What does the private museum contribute to the contemporary art scene and cultural discourse in these cities? Do they replace—or challenge—conventional venues of contemporary art such as museums, kunsthallen and art centers? Are collectors in service to the community or their own net worth by building these extraordinary architectural spaces to house their extraordinary (or maybe not so extraordinary) collections?

Finally, we could not overlook the New Museum opening in November '07, which prominently features ten international APT artists, or the Whitney Biennial with another fourteen artists from around the US. And for the *APT Insight* opinions section, we let our artists speak out on the painful reality of rising real estate prices in major cities around the world. Are our art and cultural centers losing their “creative capital?”

Read on and enjoy.

Pamela Auchincloss  
Editor, APT Insight

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# Person

## Person



# Personal Motivations and Civic Matters: Personal Collection as Public Museum

By Irene Tsatsos





Opening  
to the public  
in 1996, the **Rubell**  
**Family Collection**  
introduced  
a new paradigm for  
late 20th century  
private art collectors  
— a 45,000 square  
foot converted  
warehouse in the  
Wynwood District  
of Miami, Florida,  
dedicated to the free,  
public presentation  
of its artworks.

While programming began with exhibitions drawn exclusively from its holdings, the Rubell Family Collection has since grown to include shows that reach beyond the collection and are lent to institutions around the country.

Recently, The Broad Art Foundation surprised the art world when it announced plans to open a public presenting space in Los Angeles, where it has been headquartered since 1984. Established as an educational lending collection housed in a 20,000 square foot facility in Santa Monica, California, the Foundation is accessible by appointment only to art professionals and scholars. The Foundation's announcement preceded by just a few short weeks February's highly-anticipated unveiling of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's \$56 million Broad Contemporary Art Museum (BCAM), the previously-presumptive heir to the 2000-piece Broad Collection.

What these collections, and others like them in growing numbers around the world have in common is that they are spearheaded by collectors who have chosen to create their own cultural institutions, free and open to the public, rather than invest in publicly-held museums that already exist. As such, they present new versions of the centuries-old practice of cultural patrimony, and reflect shifting, at times uneasy, and yet potentially promising new relationships between various members of the art world including artists, dealers, curators, trustees, collectors and the museum-going public.

Traditionally, museum acquisitions are the result of curatorial scholarship and a rigorous vetting process combined with the philanthropy of individuals who support the institution's curatorial scholarship, protocol and vision. Yet these new public/private hybrids are the result of the collecting whims and passions of a privileged few. Conventional thinking holds that museums are repositories for what are collectively acknowledged to be representative and relevant cultural artifacts, worthy of study and preservation. "I still see a museum as having a responsibility to reflect a cultural output of our time and location," noted dealer Susanne Vielmetter of Susanne Vielmetter Projects Los Angeles. Yet because they are based on the vision and investment of a single individual, she added, private collections "have nothing to do with the responsibility of showing work being made at a certain time in a certain location."

For many observers, scholarship isn't the only concern; so is access. "There is a fine line between vanity and public responsibility. Where I would draw that line is how accessible is the collection," observed New York-based advisor Alexander Gray of Alexander Gray Associates and formerly of the ArtPace Foundation in San Antonio. "This is relevant to the Artist Pension Trust collection as well," he added. The Artist Pension Trust is, of course, building a collection of works of artists over a twenty-year period, functioning as a caretaker of this collection for the artists invested in the trust; these works are available for loan to institutions worldwide.



\_ Mark Bradford (APT Los Angeles) **(Untitled) a.k.a. Gwen**, 2005–06, Mixed media collage on canvas, 112 x 144 inches, The Broad Art Foundation, Santa Monica © Mark Bradford

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What these collections have in common is that they are spearheaded by collectors who have chosen to create their own cultural institutions, free and open to the public.



“The current impulse after this heady period of acquisition, which is very much embodied by the art fair phenomenon and the art market boom, would be the institutionalization of these collections,” continued Gray. “The concern that most museum professionals have is that mausoleums will pop up around the globe, and who will then have access to them?” Without the same oversight and institutional checks and balances, both curatorial and financial, the concern of some is that private individuals, at least in the US, can reap the benefits of holding a public collection (such as favorable tax considerations) without taking seriously the matter of public trust.

That said, despite a few exceptions, signs are promising that most institutionalized private collections are, in general, taking very seriously their responsibilities to collect, conserve and provide public access. In May 2007, collector Axel Haubrok opened a space in Berlin in which he mounts shows of works from his own collection. “There is nothing wrong with this as long as we know this is a very small subjective take—a crystallization of a personal taste,” said Vielmetter, who went on to characterize the shows as among the best she’s seen in recent memory. Gray added, “There is a difference between taste-making, market-making and scholarship. That doesn’t mean there aren’t collectors that are better than museum curators.”

Last century’s Carnegies, Norton Simons, Walkers and others championed new art and institutions for display, but doing so wasn’t always easy or tidy. Peggy Guggenheim’s famous The Art of This Century Gallery was itself a hybrid, one that would be considered highly problematic by today’s standards; two of its three galleries were dedicated to Surrealism and Cubism while the third functioned as a commercial gallery. Today’s collectors, who choose to institutionalize their collections, are to a great degree unencumbered by conventional institutional constraints—legal, curatorial and financial. Yet this nimble position, like wealth alone, does not ensure lasting recognition, which is certainly another consideration in the

There is a fine line between vanity and public responsibility. Where I would draw that line is how accessible is the collection.

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minds of this generation of philanthropists. As they create new models for building and housing collections, these mega-collectors, like their forbearers, have an additional opportunity, indeed, an obligation, to affect standards by which we measure institutional responsibility, artistic and curatorial quality, public cultural discourse, civic engagement and historical relevance.

Irene Tsatsos is Director of APT Los Angeles



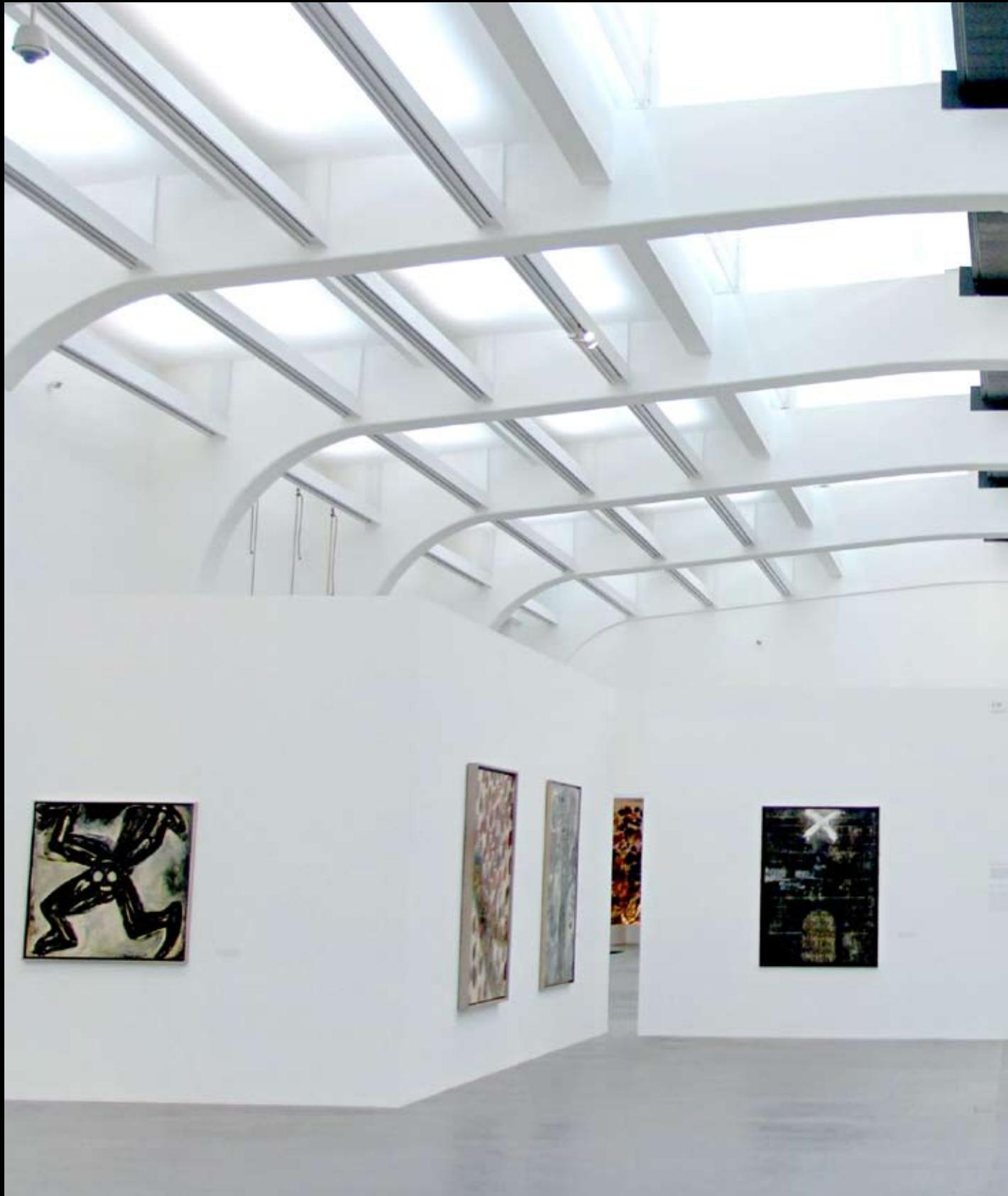
# Destination Beijing :

## **The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art**

**China has captivated the imagination and the money of the international art market.**

By Pamela Auchincloss





Prices for Chinese art by established as well as emerging artists have increased exponentially in the past few years fueled by speculation and the double digit economic growth in China, which has given rise to new wealth both within China and abroad. New auction markets dedicated to Asian art have created further opportunities to export the frenzy, and this has led, of course, to the rapid rise of art galleries and artist enclaves in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. It is a remarkable event to witness with barely 10 years of credible traction.

But without institutional support, this cultural transformation is neither recorded nor secured. Without museums, there is no measure of how the culture is changing—where the influences from the western world are making a mark (or not) or how the political, economic and social landscapes are experienced by the population and, in turn, related as visual narrative.

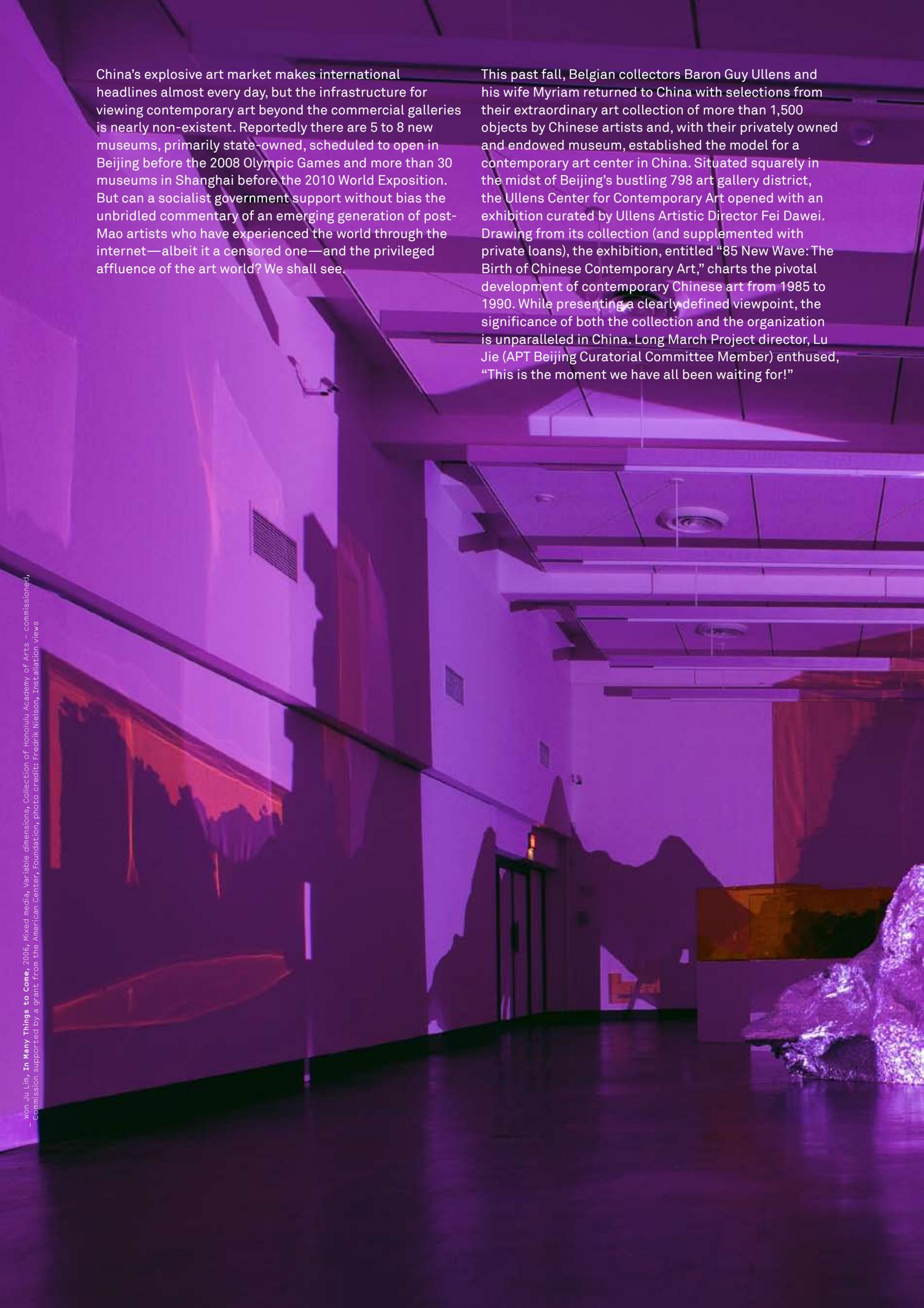


– Exhibition Hall 1, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Photo courtesy of Ullens Center for Contemporary Art

China's explosive art market makes international headlines nearly every day, but the infrastructure for viewing contemporary art beyond the commercial galleries is almost non-existent.

China's explosive art market makes international headlines almost every day, but the infrastructure for viewing contemporary art beyond the commercial galleries is nearly non-existent. Reportedly there are 5 to 8 new museums, primarily state-owned, scheduled to open in Beijing before the 2008 Olympic Games and more than 30 museums in Shanghai before the 2010 World Exposition. But can a socialist government support without bias the unbridled commentary of an emerging generation of post-Mao artists who have experienced the world through the internet—albeit it a censored one—and the privileged affluence of the art world? We shall see.

This past fall, Belgian collectors Baron Guy Ullens and his wife Myriam returned to China with selections from their extraordinary art collection of more than 1,500 objects by Chinese artists and, with their privately owned and endowed museum, established the model for a contemporary art center in China. Situated squarely in the midst of Beijing's bustling 798 art gallery district, the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art opened with an exhibition curated by Ullens Artistic Director Fei Dawei. Drawing from its collection (and supplemented with private loans), the exhibition, entitled "85 New Wave: The Birth of Chinese Contemporary Art," charts the pivotal development of contemporary Chinese art from 1985 to 1990. While presenting a clearly defined viewpoint, the significance of both the collection and the organization is unparalleled in China. Long March Project director, Lu Jie (APT Beijing Curatorial Committee Member) enthused, "This is the moment we have all been waiting for!"



The Ullens Center's 26,000 square foot converted warehouse space boasts high ceilings, vast open exhibition spaces, an auditorium, a research library and an education program. Every attribute of an institutional museum is here—and maybe more. Its location ensures an audience that has interest and knowledge of art, which is strategically relevant given the vast sprawl of Beijing, and the ambition seems to be genuinely about giving back as well as substantiating the development of contemporary art in China as something far greater than the two-month appreciation rate of a work of art.

Future programming at the Ullens Center will reach beyond China and its collection of Chinese art, and in doing so truly establish the Center as an international forum for contemporary art. To coincide with the 2008 Summer Olympics, in-house curator David Spalding selected Los Angeles artist Won Ju Lim (APT Los Angeles) for a site-specific commission at the Ullens.

Lim creates multi-media environmental installations that include video, sculptural elements and vitrined miniature landscapes often derived from the region of the commissioning agency. The video projections animate the sculptural components creating an ambient representation of Lim's well researched subjects, as pictured here in her work titled *In Many Things to Come* (2006) created for the Honolulu Academy of Arts. Lim addressed Hawaii's central industry, tourism, and the contrived representations and experiences of the islands that are ultimately intended to seduce visitors into returning for their next family holiday. Very often Lim's work questions the authenticity of experience when informed and shaped by the interventions of modified realities.





During a month long residency at the Ullens this past November, Lim traveled in and around Beijing, with video camera in hand, recording the architecture and the landscape. This experience will be central to Lim's new work alongside an elaborate, newly constructed installation.

On April 12th "Stray Alchemists", organized by Ullens curator Kate Fowle, will open at the Center with an international selection of artists including Matt Bryans (London), Amy Granat (New York), Takeshi Murata (Saugerties, NY), Robin Rhode (Berlin/Johannesburg), Lim Tzay Chuen (Singapore) and Sterling Ruby (Los Angeles). Working across sculpture, performance, collage, drawing, photography and video, each artist is focused on how process extends and informs the possibilities of his/her practice. As with the Lim project, the artists will produce new work specifically for "Stray Alchemists." Fowle will also curate a selection of one-off performances and music events into the program demonstrating how truly interdisciplinary art making is today.



Fowle, like Spaulding, is American. She recently relocated from California where she was the founder and Chair of the MA Program in Curatorial Practice at the California College of the Arts (CCA). When asked what drew her to China and the Ullens Center, she responded, "I had been traveling to China for four years, inviting artists and curators to teach as part of the curatorial program at CCA. Through this I became more and more interested in the developments of the museum and non-profit style gallery infrastructure in China and realized how key these spaces will be to how artists can develop their practices in the future. These kinds of spaces extend the possibilities for both art and exhibition making, as well as providing a place for international dialogues to evolve."

Certainly private museums/art centers serve the interests of the individual who has founded them: the value of the collection is enhanced; the collection is on permanent view rather than rotated within the broader collection of an institution; there is no governing board other than the founder and thus the mission is clear and singularly driven; and it is a face-value way for a passionate individual to outwardly engage his/her community. But in emerging art markets like China, India, Latin America and the Middle East, private museums/art centers will become a key part of the contemporary art scene and likely a new model for how the public will engage new art and the ideas they promote.

Beijing is fortunate to have the Ullens Center at this very moment in time when the distraction of the fast-tracking market easily obscures the inherent value of art's proposition—the intellectual and intuitive pursuit of meaning.



Pamela Auchincloss is APT Managing Director and Director of APT New York



“Come, come,  
come into my world”

By Pamela Auchincloss in conversation with Andrew Renton

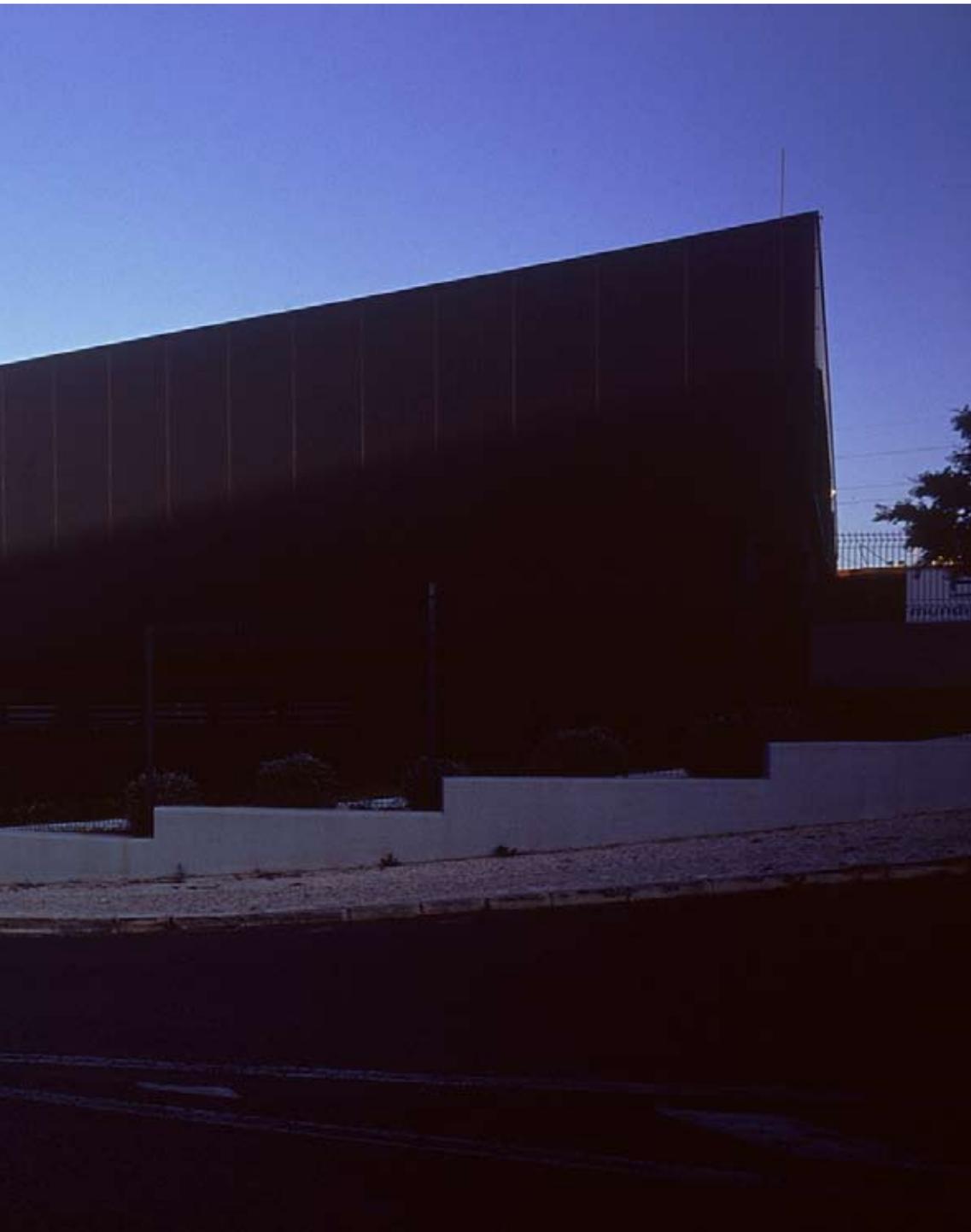
**In Cascais,  
Portugal on the  
outskirts of Lisbon,  
a warehouse  
conversion by  
Portuguese architect  
Pedro Gadanho  
marks  
the landscape.**

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\_ Exterior View, Ellipse Foundation, 2008, Photo courtesy of the Ellipse Foundation





It is a surprising building in this otherwise quiet seaside suburb of industrial factories and modest homes, made all the more remarkable by its purpose—it is the home and repository of a collection of over 600 artworks spearheaded by collector and Portuguese banker, João Rendeiro. The Ellipse Foundation Art Centre, like other privately funded and endowed contemporary art spaces founded by collectors worldwide, has engaged this community through art education, internationally curated exhibitions and an artist residency program. When curator Andrew Renton was invited to consider a project for the Ellipse, the challenge was, then, how to account for the unique contribution of this institution in league with the objectives of its visionary founder.

According to Renton, “Come, come, come into my world” is as much a reflection on curatorial practice as it is on art itself. The exhibition begins with the possibilities of a collection, its realization and its materiality. In a post-conceptual moment of art production, “Come, come, come into my world” is a celebration of the physicality and persistence of the object. It seeks to explore various juxtapositions of works outside of purely art-historical perspectives, articulating the exhibition space through a series of journeys from one object to another. Medium, style and ideology are thus subverted, allowing for the viewer’s embodied experience of the work itself.



Drawing on the extensive collection of the Ellipse Foundation, Renton raises some philosophical questions through the exhibition. What are the responsibilities to context when bringing such a disparate group of works together? What useful histories could unfold? How might we usefully understand the gaps and discrepancies in art production and dissemination?

The process of collecting, as suggested by the exhibition, is highly subjective and unpredictable. It resists categorization, despite the impression offered by, say, the museum. Rather, it provides an index of possibilities with countless options for display.

“Come, come, come into my world,” Renton continues, is less concerned with histories of representation and illusion than it is with the lived experience or intervention offered by the work of art as it somehow gets in the way of the field of vision. The selections from the Ellipse Foundation point to the very problems of curating within the contemporary. There is no primary activity that the contemporary collection must follow, no single ideology or style that might make the process of collecting and subsequent display, easier to understand. Yet, this diversity produces new possibilities rarely seen within the traditional museum. The chronological approach to display is rarely satisfactory or helpful in interpreting works from the past twenty years or so. Perhaps the simplest strategy is most effective; the juxtaposition of one object with another.

Ellipse’s collection, scrupulously assembled by its three curators, tells many versions of recent contemporary practice and the process of selecting works for the exhibition will tell yet another. The collection is not—could never be—exhaustive. But what it does offer is a way of seeing through the contemporary condition, finding sites of convergence and familiarity. Pieced together by taking iconic works and building around them, Renton’s exhibition should be, for the most part, self-explanatory, where one work revisits, engages and reinterprets another.

Ellipse's collection offers a way of seeing through the contemporary condition, finding sites of convergence and familiarity.

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— Douglas Gordon (APT London), SELF PORTRAIT OF YOU + ME (GEORGE RAFT), 2006, Burnt C-print and mirror, 62.5 x 62.5 cm, Photo courtesy DMF



It seems as if Douglas Gordon (APT London) may have made *Self Portrait of you + me* specifically in reference to the notion embedded in the exhibition. This series underlines contemporary art's emphasis on the act of the viewer completing the work through the personal experience of direct engagement. Neither image nor object, Gordon's art must be *lived* to be understood at all. *Self Portrait of you + me* asks the viewer to peer through stock portrait shots of famous people to a mirror behind. Charred, burned apertures in the eyes and mouths of the stars' images create a type of mask that we endeavor to place our features in line with as we look directly at the portrait—therefore creating a self portrait of you and me, a hybrid face that differs with every visitor's gaze.

Perhaps this is the experience of the exhibition as a whole. The journey of the viewer brings these relationships to life as the title of the show, taken from a song by Kylie Minogue, suggests. In the video that accompanies the song, Kylie strolls purposefully through the street of Paris, time and again almost bumping into another manifestation of herself, then swerving and moving on in another direction. So it should be with the exhibition, where one encounter forces you to move onto another.

Andrew Renton is Director of the Curatorial Program at Goldsmiths College and a Curatorial Committee Member of APT London



# Project: Casa Daros

By Jennifer Teets



\_ The raw space for new Casa Daros in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

**Among the many private collections of post-war and contemporary art in Europe, the Daros Collection distinguishes itself not only by the exceptional quality of its holdings but also by its commitment to collecting in-depth.**

As a result of a collaborative effort between Thomas Ammann, the renowned Swiss art dealer, and collector Alexander Schmidheiny in the 1980's, a collection—principally comprised of painting—was created featuring some of the most legendary American and European artists of the last fifty years, among them Pollock, Rothko, Warhol, Hesse, Kruger, Beuys and Richter. It was only after the death of both collectors in the early 1990's, however,



that the collection attained a name, "Daros Collection," given by brother and entrepreneur/philanthropist Stephan Schmidheiny. By focusing on a thorough representation of select artists rather than the encyclopedic approach to collecting, Schmidheiny has created not the largest but arguably the finest collection of post-war and contemporary art from Europe and the United States in continental Europe.

In 2000, Schmidheiny expanded his collection endeavors and launched Daros-Latinamerica, a collection specifically dedicated to contemporary Latin American art. Today, Daros-Latinamerica is perhaps the most

comprehensive collection of contemporary Latin American art in Europe with over 1000 works by 100 artists from the last 20 years plus a number of pertinent works from the sixties and seventies. The organization notes that the holdings from the Latin American collection are as heterogeneous and distinctive as the countries from which they come. The spectrum includes sculptures, paintings, drawings, photographs, videos, installations and sound pieces by artists living in their country of origin as well as others who have moved abroad. Daros-Latinamerica intends to build up an increasingly complex network of relations within the collection that will encourage numerous avenues of study and discourse, such as guest curatorial projects and interchange with other Latin American initiatives.

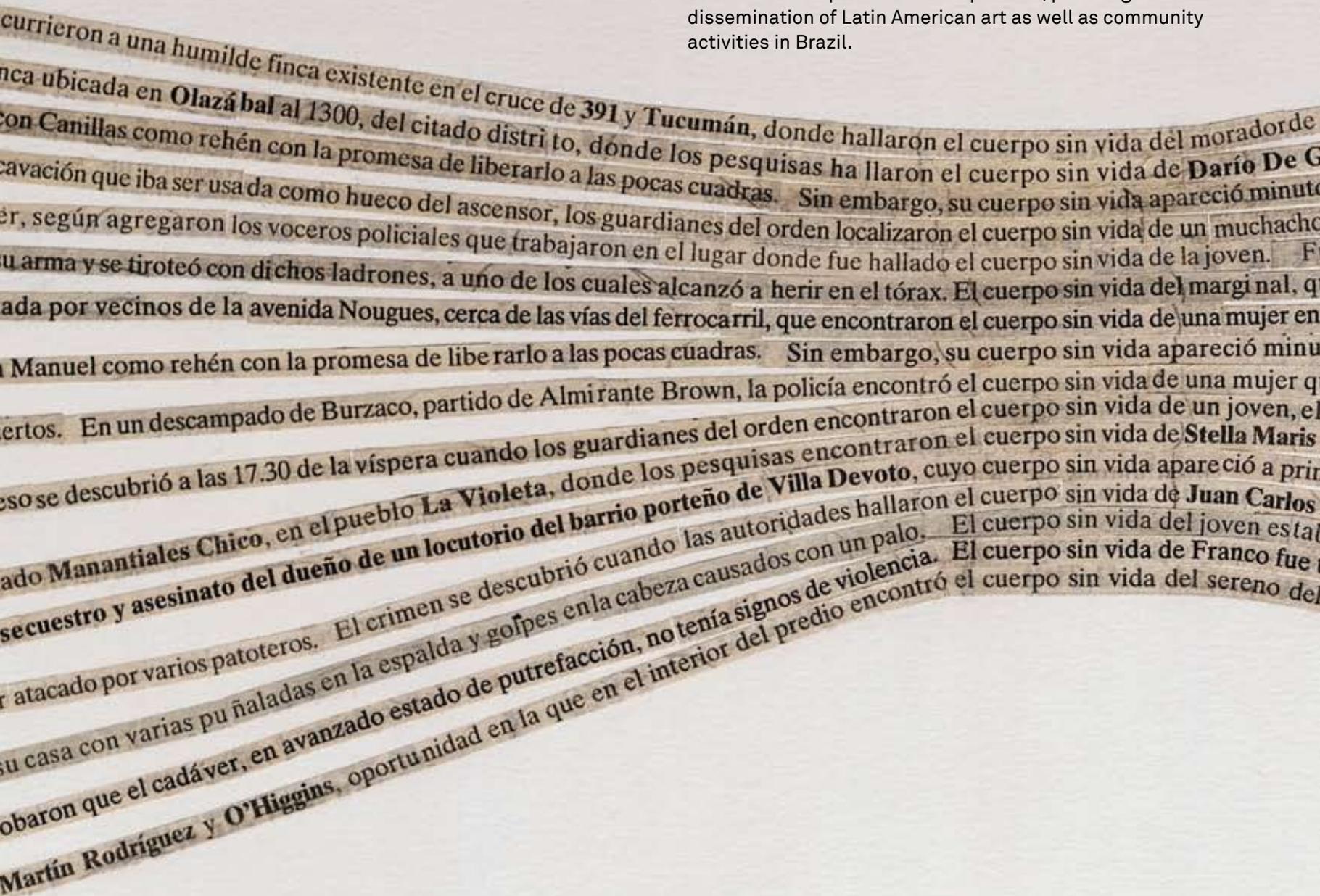


Internationally established and regionally emerging artists from the Daros-Latinamerica include Carlos Amoraes (Mexico City; APT London), Dario Escobar (Guatemala City; APT Mexico City), Guillermo Kuitca (São Paulo), Luis González Palma (Guatemala City; APT Mexico City), Jorge Macchi (Buenos Aires; APT Mexico City), Vik Muniz (New York/Rio de Janeiro), Betsabeé Romero (Mexico City; APT Mexico City), Chemi Rosado-Seijo (San Juan, Puerto Rico; APT New York) and Melanie Smith (Mexico City; APT Mexico City).

Recently, Daros presented the exhibition "Face to Face" in Zurich adjoining the works of its European/American and Latin American collections in a juxtaposition and contrast of meanings. In its first installment (with later exhibitions and dialogues to develop), "Face to Face"

included works from a variety of mediums and historical contexts, rupturing traditional readings of art history and perspective. The meticulous and intertwined narratives of the newspaper clipping "drawings" of Jorge Macchi, for example, were contrasted with the haunting and uneasy sculptures of Robert Gober. Also, in "Face to Face," Chemi Rosado-Seijo presented a work from his ongoing series titled "History on Wheels" in which the movements of skaters are recorded on the white surface of a ramp. These surfaces are then placed on the wall, transforming the erratic streaked lines left by the skaters into Pollockesque brushstrokes.

Other plans for the collection include the long awaited opening of the Latin American headquarters in Botafogo, Rio de Janeiro. Once completed by 2006 Pritzker Prize winner architect Paulo Mendes da Rocha, the new building will include not only exhibition galleries but also study centers with computer facilities and artists' studios. Casa Daros will promote the acquisition, patronage and dissemination of Latin American art as well as community activities in Brazil.



Prior to the center's official opening late this year, Casa Daros is already engaging in its dedicated mission to the region by organizing events throughout Rio. Twenty-four art students from the city, for example, are attending workshops and lectures that will equip them to become staff members of Casa Daros' art education program. Most of the workshops are led by artists represented in the collection, among them Ernesto Neto, Vik Muniz, Humberto Vélez, Luis Camnitzer and Betsabeé Romero. Other initiatives include the 'Casinha Daros,' a workshop for children from the Favela da Maré—a photographic documentation of the gradual transformation of the Casa Daros space by older schoolchildren from the same shanty town. In addition, Casa Daros is directing a project run jointly with Pontificia Universidade Catolica and the Universidade Federal to acquaint students of architecture with the ideas and designs of Pedro and Paulo Mendes da Rocha, the architects responsible for the remodeling.

Casa Daros is also preparing its inaugural exhibition Cantos/Cuentos Colombianos. First premiered at its Zurich premises in the fall/spring of 2004, the exhibition will feature ten artists from Colombia. The complex social and political facets of this inaugural exhibition would seem to outline Daros' future ambitions in its soon to be second and adopted home of Rio.

Jennifer Teets is an Independent Curator currently residing in New York City and an APT Intelligence advisor

la vivienda, identificado, oficialmente, como **Raymundo Chaparro Morcillo**, paraguayo, de 62 años. Fuentes confiables  
Gregorio, agente de la **Policía Federal**, destinado en la comisaría 27ª de la mencionada institución, la que tiene jurisdicción  
os más tarde con un balazo en la espalda. Fuentes del caso admitieron que Canillas pudo haber sido asesinado porque ha  
o de alrededor de 25 años, que tenía un gran pedazo de hierro incrustado en el ano. El elemento, que perforó por completo  
uentes policiales informaron, por otra parte, que Ledesma fue vista por última vez el lunes a las 19 por una amiga que  
ue tenía 17 años, fue localizado luego por los policías, que a su vez detuvieron al otro imputado, de 18. Finalmente,  
la parte posterior de una chatarrería, mezclado entre pedazos de hierros y latas. Al arribar al lugar, el personal de la fuerza  
tos más tarde con un balazo en la espalda en la localidad de Florida, a sólo unas cuadras de la casa de la familia Canilla  
ue vestía equipo de gimnasia, en el interior de una bolsa de arpillera. "Nos avisaron por teléfono y nos dijeron que había  
cual yacía parcialmente sumergido en un arroyo, situado en cercanías de la calle **Baradero** del citado distrito, al sur de  
**Ruiz Díaz**, de 28 años. En un principio se creyó que la mujer había muerto ahogada, pero luego los expertos de la **Policía**  
ncipios de este mes en el río Matanza, a la altura del partido bonaerense de Cañuelas. Las tres detenciones fueron efec  
**López**, que yacía ensangrentado en calle **125** entre **79** y **79 bis**, en un sector conocido como villa **Progreso**, que está situado  
a en el piso de la habitación, a un costado de la cama, con las señas particulares del cabello teñido de color verde y vest  
traslado a la morgue judicial donde se le practicará la autopsia pertinente para determinar las causas de la muerte. Has  
lugar, identificado de manera oficial como **Juan Artigal**, de 65, que se hallaba tendido en medio de un gran charco de





# The NEW NEW MUSEUM of Contemporary Art

opened its doors to  
the innovative space  
designed by Tokyo-  
based architects  
Kazuyo Sejima and

Ryue Nishizawa/SANAA  
with Gensler, New York  
on December 1, 2007.

Designed like a stack of  
boxes, each one askew  
from the others,  
the new building  
immediately  
strikes a chord  
with contemporary  
aesthetics.

Viewed from the street at night, the building is luminescent, punctuated by Ugo Rondinone's "Hell Yes!" rainbow light sculpture on the aluminium clad façade. Rondinone's exclamatory phrase is a congratulatory high five, signalling the repositioning of the New Museum: a new building, a new curatorial team and a new exhibition model for a museum of this scale.

By Sara Reisman

The new New Museum extends its dialogue with the passer-by on the street with its 15 foot transparent first-floor public access gallery. Through the expansive lobby window, the seven-screen new media project by the Korean collective YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES (APT Beijing) reads like a beat poetry text-based animation set to electronic music and sound. It is a hip, cool and conceptual pre-text that hints at what is to be found beyond.

Inside, the museum's inaugural exhibition

# Unmonumental: The Object in the 21st Century

organized by Chief Curator Richard Flood, Senior Curator Laura Hoptman and Director of Special Exhibitions Massimiliano Gioni, presents a group of 30 international artists, each working with sculpture, in many cases resisting the fixed status associated with the medium. The museum's new space is as much on view, however, as the sculptures themselves. The works are installed without disrupting the main galleries; the walls, left bare for the first of the Unmonumental cycles, give the viewer two simultaneous shows: the architecture of the building and a sculptural exhibition staged within the continuous flow of the museum's newly unveiled design.

In staging the exhibition "Unmonumental: The Object in the 21st Century", the New Museum questions both its own position as an institution originally dedicated to housing objects and the monumental architecture associated with museums. This multi-layered exhibition nearly defines what appears to be an artistic movement in the 21st Century: an assemblage of artistic practices that question the permanence and stability of objecthood itself.

ED  
MENT

"WELL,  
ACTUALLY,

\_ Urs Fischer (APT London) **Untitled (kerze)**, 2001, wax, wick, pigment, brick and metal, 66 7/8 x 18 1/8 x 11 3/8 in. / 170 x 46 x 29 cm, Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich





Perhaps the work that best illustrates this concept is Swiss-born artist Urs Fischer's (APT London) *Untitled (Kerze)* (2007). Fischer explores the issue of

impermanence through material transformation in what appears to be a ritualistic decomposition of sculpture.

An approximately life-sized figure of a woman fashioned from wax is actually a candle that burns and melts over the course of the show, confirming Fischer's interest in the transience of art and the human condition. The candle woman burns atop several cinder blocks, diminishing into puddles and drips of pink, brown and black flesh-colored wax. Eventually, she will become a scorched shell of herself leaving behind a gruesome scene of abuse.







Dealing with more durable materials, Glasgow-based artist Martin Boyce (APT London) integrates modernist design tropes found in European cityscapes with sculptural configurations that allude to the social anxieties of common locations within the public realm: foyers, lobbies and parks. Boyce's *Our Love is Like the Flowers, the Rain, the Sea and the Hours (Tree)* (2003) evokes the sinister qualities of a desolate parking lot where fluorescent lights are the trees of an unnatural landscape. Also included in the exhibition is Boyce's *We Climb Inside and Everything Else Disappears* (2004), comprised of a white lawn chair intersected by a large yellow hose. The simple gesture of these two objects meeting suggests the impulse to escape into a minimalist realm of nothingness.

Mexico City artist Abraham Cruzvillegas (APT Mexico City) further explores the material possibilities of sculpture in his abstract works *Canon enigmático en 108 voces* and *Matiere brute*. *Matiere brute* is a delicately balanced scale of two-by-four found wood with sandpaper folded into a square on its left side. Comparatively more ornate and drawn from more highly produced objects is *Canon enigmático*, a collection of buoys with different shades of pinks, blues, greens and yellows bleached by the sun and water. Installed on the ceiling, the buoys' initial purpose as weightless floating devices is transformed.

Heavy and dangling, the buoys become a monument to drifting.

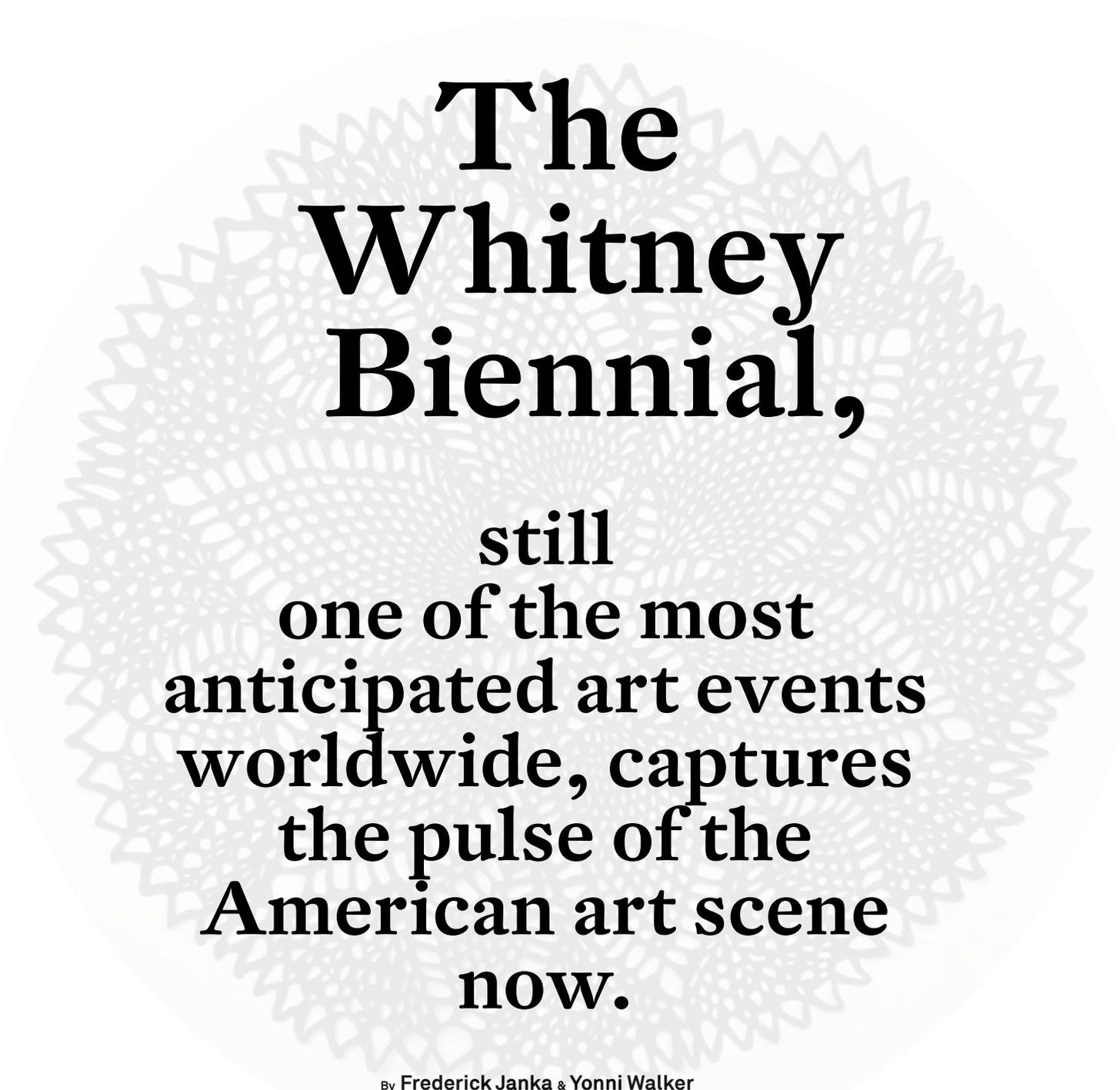
Cruzvillegas's most striking piece in the show, however, is *Encore universales* composed of a beanstalk of black tire tread footprints that wind their way up and down a metal rod. The poetic possibilities for this work are vast, but it is clear that the discussion of nature versus technology (albeit the low-end technology of tire treads as the soles of shoes) is eclipsed by Cruzvillegas's delicate use of crude materials.

Weaving its way back to the production of monuments dedicated to political conditions is New York-based artist Marc André Robinson's (APT New York) *Myth Monolith (Liberation Movement)* (2007), a tangle of wooden chairs ascending upward. Like most of the works in the show, Robinson's use of abstraction leaves the sculpture open to viewer interpretation. The collection of furniture projects a sense of freedom from being bound to passive activities like armchair politics. Robinson's sculptural inquiry into the validity of monolithic anything is just one example of how the New Museum has re-inscribed museum practice in the 21st Century.

Sara Reisman is the Associate Dean at the Cooper Union School of Art, New York, and an APT Intelligence advisor

— Marc André Robinson (APT New York) **Myth Monolith (Liberation Movement)**, 2007, Wood, Dimensions variable, Courtesy of the artist, New York

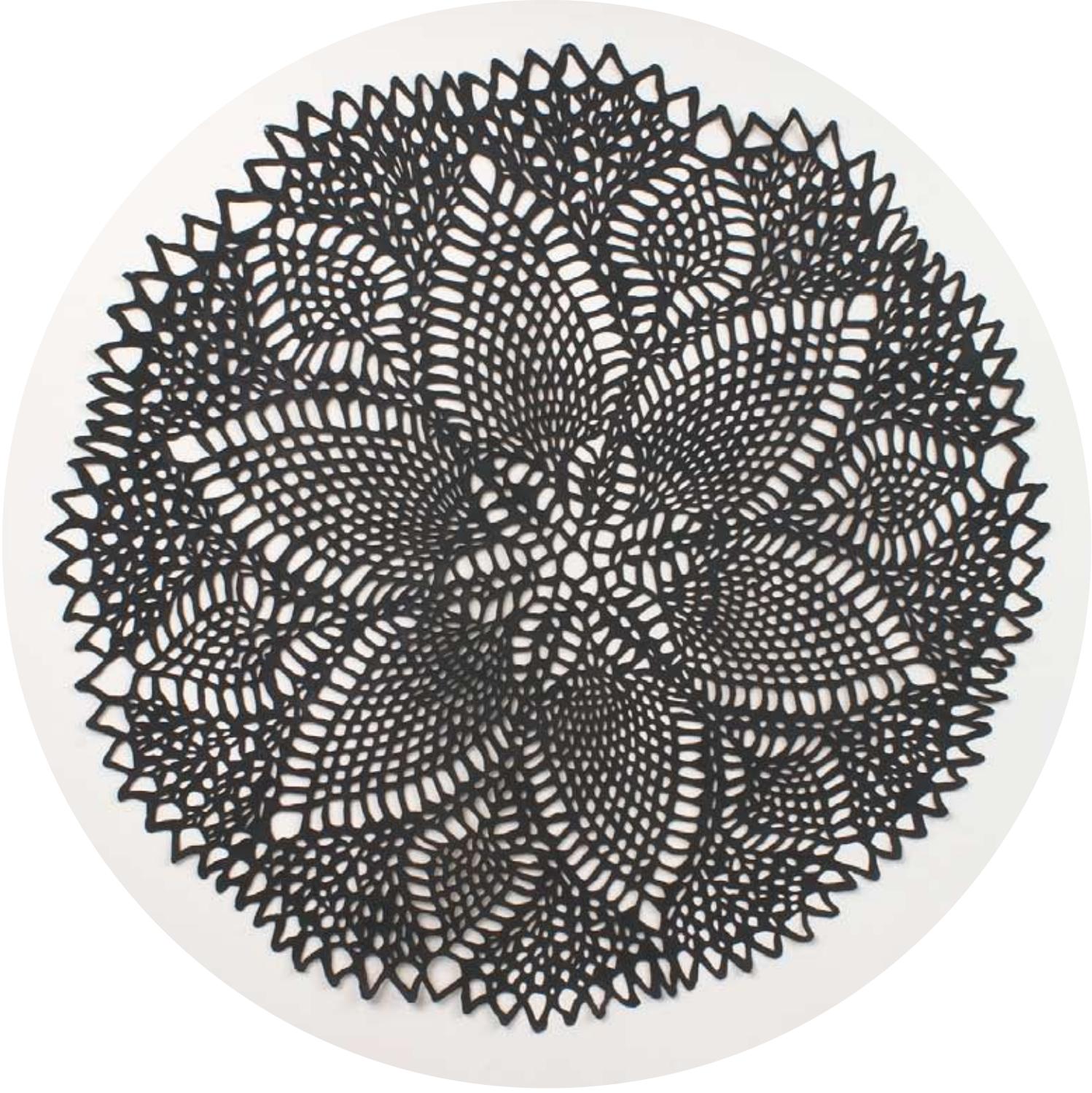




# **The Whitney Biennial,**

**still  
one of the most  
anticipated art events  
worldwide, captures  
the pulse of the  
American art scene  
now.**

**By Frederick Janka & Yonni Walker**

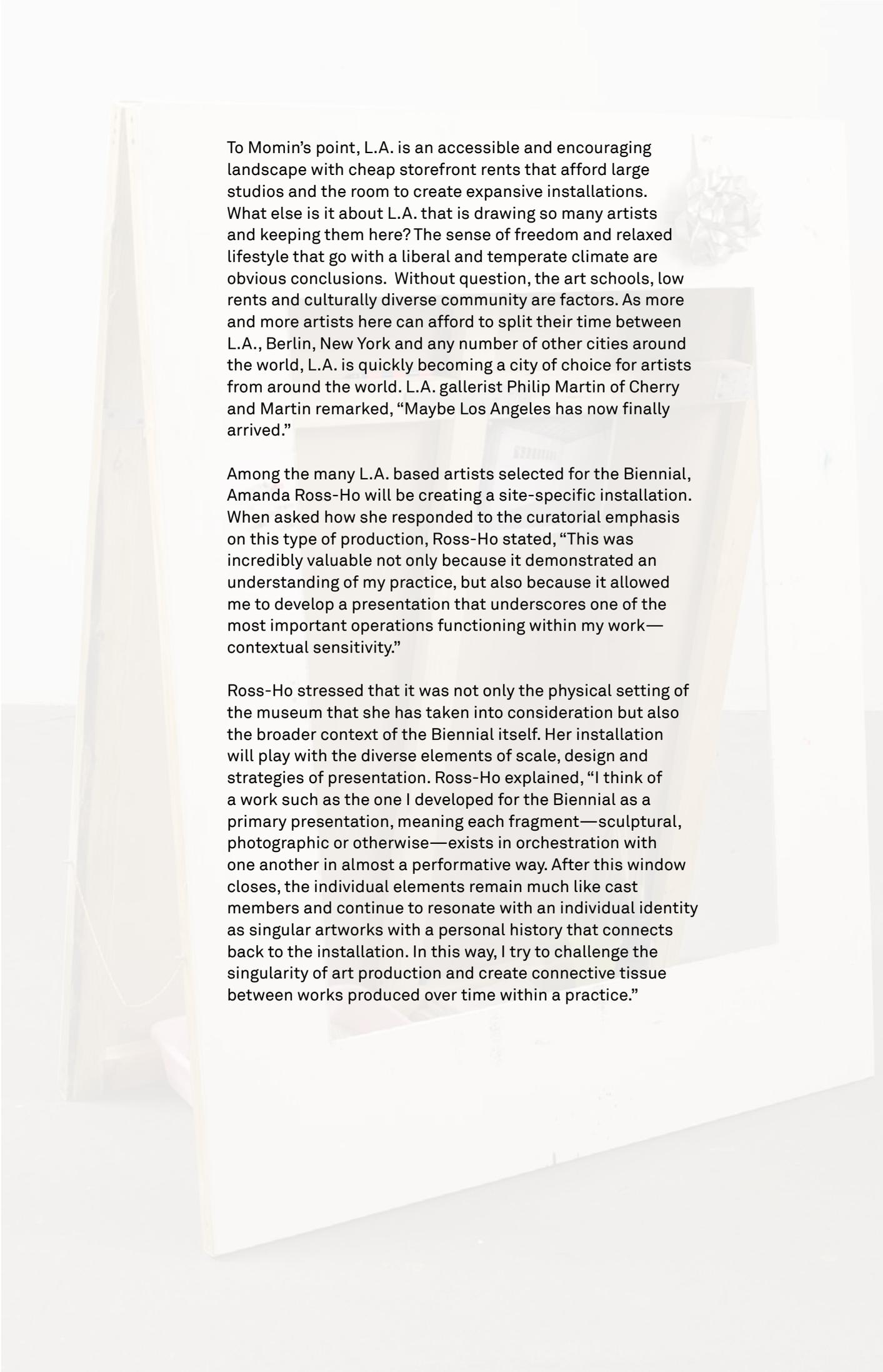




This year's curators have selected eighty-one artists, commissioning many site-specific installations that address the interdisciplinary nature of current artistic practice. The ambitious scale of the exhibition and its diverse programming—including performance, a dance marathon and a 24 hour video program—fills the entire museum and, for the first time ever, takes over the 7th Regent Armory at Park Avenue.

Whitney Museum of American Art curators, Henriette Huldish, Assistant Curator, and Shamim M. Momin, Associate Curator, selected fourteen artists who are participating in Artist Pension Trust © (APT) for the 2008 Biennial: Edgar Arceneaux (APT Los Angeles), Walead Beshty (APT Los Angeles), Jedediah Caesar (APT Los Angeles), William Cordova (APT New York), Rashawn Griffin (APT New York), Drew Heitzler (APT Los Angeles), Leslie Hewitt (APT New York), Alice Könitz (APT Los Angeles), Charles Long (APT Los Angeles), Michael Queenland (APT Los Angeles), Amanda Ross-Ho (APT Los Angeles), Eduardo Sarabia (APT Los Angeles), Mungo Thomson (APT Los Angeles) and Mario Ybarra Jr. (APT Los Angeles). Ten of these artists are living (at least part time) on the west coast while one is in Texas and the others are in New York.

With 28 artists from L.A. alone participating in this year's Biennial, there is a critical presence from the west coast. When asked about the number of Los Angeles artists included in the show, co-curator Momin offered, "It's not the numbers that signify most importantly. I think the sense that a lot of folks have about the prominence of L.A. artists has more to do with how dynamic that artistic community feels at the moment—for a broad array of reasons, Los Angeles feels particularly present, particularly relevant, within the types of approach and practice that we're including in the exhibition."



To Momin's point, L.A. is an accessible and encouraging landscape with cheap storefront rents that afford large studios and the room to create expansive installations. What else is it about L.A. that is drawing so many artists and keeping them here? The sense of freedom and relaxed lifestyle that go with a liberal and temperate climate are obvious conclusions. Without question, the art schools, low rents and culturally diverse community are factors. As more and more artists here can afford to split their time between L.A., Berlin, New York and any number of other cities around the world, L.A. is quickly becoming a city of choice for artists from around the world. L.A. gallerist Philip Martin of Cherry and Martin remarked, "Maybe Los Angeles has now finally arrived."

Among the many L.A. based artists selected for the Biennial, Amanda Ross-Ho will be creating a site-specific installation. When asked how she responded to the curatorial emphasis on this type of production, Ross-Ho stated, "This was incredibly valuable not only because it demonstrated an understanding of my practice, but also because it allowed me to develop a presentation that underscores one of the most important operations functioning within my work—contextual sensitivity."

Ross-Ho stressed that it was not only the physical setting of the museum that she has taken into consideration but also the broader context of the Biennial itself. Her installation will play with the diverse elements of scale, design and strategies of presentation. Ross-Ho explained, "I think of a work such as the one I developed for the Biennial as a primary presentation, meaning each fragment—sculptural, photographic or otherwise—exists in orchestration with one another in almost a performative way. After this window closes, the individual elements remain much like cast members and continue to resonate with an individual identity as singular artworks with a personal history that connects back to the installation. In this way, I try to challenge the singularity of art production and create connective tissue between works produced over time within a practice."





Like Ross-Ho, Mungo Thomson has created a site-specific installation that engages with one of the many facets of the institution. His work addresses both the architecture and the museum audience through a primary function of the museum's interface with the public—the coat-check. After months of production, Thomson has developed new coat hangers for the Whitney. The original mechanized coat storage system at the museum was designed and constructed for high volume, like that of a dry cleaner. Thomson has chosen to transform the wooden hangers into tuning forks that resonate as the stored coats move and hit against one another. By creating a mechanical symphony, the piece revolutionizes a relatively mundane experience into a lively audible and performative artwork. The artwork opens a forum for participation by fusing ambient sound with the regimented activity of the general public and museum staff. The space and the tedious (and often annoying) exercise of the coat check are transformed.

This 74th Whitney Biennial not only gives form to the expansive and interdisciplinary nature of artistic practice in the U.S. today, but also shows a fundamental shift in how we experience the world. The lack of a title for this Biennial supports the presentation of such diverse production and interests, and further emphasizes that the theme is, simply, the artworks in and of themselves.



# Creative Capital

Real estate. It is in the headlines most every day now. Sub-prime mortgages, housing starts, housing sales. All tracking and reflecting the economic health of our nation.

So when prices are up, sales are good and construction companies are busy, times are good. But what happens when the prices get too high and people are priced out of the market or, worse yet, find they paid more than their house is truly worth? Like I said, read the papers.

In this issue we asked our artists to speak out on the subject as we look at the loss of what I am calling the “creative capital” of urban art centers around the world. Due to the economic uncertainty of their profession, artists must be resourceful, often leading them to find cheap living and studios in downbeat neighborhoods. However, once settled it is only a matter of time before their creative input attracts gentrification and in no time they are priced out of a real estate market they are responsible for creating. This situation is particularly tragic when it takes the turn Chris Doyle’s story does here.

I believe one can take this a step further. There has been a great deal of talk about price inflation in the contemporary art market over the past 10 years. When will the bubble burst? When will the market crash? Two questions I face with increasing regularity. I point to real estate again. How can a dealer (or an artist, for that matter) afford to put up a show for anything less than \$15,000 per artwork? Figure in the cost of the real estate and there you have it. P.A.



— Hope Sandrow (APT New York) **Shinnecock: June 17 commencing 3:30 PM, peeling an egg's shell to free a chick, one of six from Shinnecock, Chloe and Cleo's first brood, 2007, Size variable, from the study spacetime.**  
Photo courtesy of the artist



Our studios are a more sought after commodity than the art we make. Most likely it's the idea fanned in popular culture that being in our space will fulfill a fantasy rather than what we do with our time there.

The current dialogue about politics and culture provides an opportunity to recontextualize the creative process in time rather than by space. The question for discussion might be which comes first, such as the chicken or the egg:

"...the problem about the egg and the hen, which of them came first, was dragged into our talk, a difficult problem which gives investigators much trouble. And Sulla my comrade said that with a small problem, as with a tool, we were rocking loose a great and heavy one, that of the creation of the world." Plutarch, Table Talk, Moralia 120 AD

People would not need to move out of their places and into our spaces if we had studios and created projects in their buildings. An artist-in-residence program modeled on my onsite project A&HC (1990-96) would align us with collectors and museums, furthering our investigations into the relationship of art to life. As creating art within a space has new meaning in the context of a global community.

H.S. (APT New York)



The time is near. The weight of the real world bears down on me as I approach graduation with an MFA degree from Stanford University. And I couldn't feel more conflicted. For most artists taking that next step into graduate school, the thought of relocating to a place like New York, Los Angeles or San Francisco isn't a dilemma. Grad school was a great reason for me to move to the Bay Area from Texas. Actually, the majority of the MFA graduates here aren't from San Francisco. There's a considered mix of locals and non-locals. I'd imagine that this is a general pattern throughout all MFA programs. This ratio has, for me at least, introduced me to the San Francisco art community, with the local grads in my program as my gracious guides. I like it here! I like the art community here. I'm the ever so present record player booming to my non-Bay Area friends that there is something happening here in the art community that lends me to believe that I should stay.

Now here is the dilemma: should I stay in San Francisco and pay a lofty sum for a studio that I probably can't afford but allows me to live in a community that I have come to know and respect? Or, should I move back to Texas where rent is cheap and reconnect with a community that I have been dissociated from for years? I have until the summer to figure this out. I'm sure that around the same time a slew of other recent MFA grads from the New Yorks, the Los Angeleses and the San Franciscos out there will be facing that same dilemma. At least I'm not alone.

L.R. (APT Los Angeles)

Lordy Rodriguez



Chris Doyle (APT New York) **Stills from Flight storyboard** (filmed in 575 Kent Avenue), 2005, Digital Files Transferred from DVD, Photo courtesy of the artist

# Chris Doyle

On January 20th, 2008, The New York City Fire Department vacated 475 Kent Avenue in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, the building where until a few months ago, I lived and worked for nearly 10 years. On one of the coldest days of the year, tenants were given 6 hours to get out. The building housed an amazing community of working artists, filmmakers, musicians, writers, architects and designers. Ostensibly, the reason for the vacate order was a series of life threatening fire code violations. For the past 10 years, I have watched the fire department come and inspect the concrete factory structure, each time allowing residents to go on living and working in the building. This time, the context has changed.

A decade ago, South Williamsburg was one of those neighborhoods filled with vacant industrial space. Artists, willing to live on the fringe, energetically built out that space, rejuvenating a neighborhood that until recently nobody paid much attention to. Developers have now moved in to take full advantage of the vibrant community that had been created. What happened at 475 Kent is a story that is repeated all over Brooklyn.



In New York City, developers sell condos at exorbitant prices by luring buyers to an “artists’ neighborhood,” while the artists themselves are forced out of the communities they have built. The city relies on this system to “clean up” neighborhoods. The few artists who are able to buy in early, usually well before the developers get there, can stay. Others, driven farther from the commercial center, will either move on to the next frontier or give up on the city altogether. The time when the neighborhood was abuzz with creative energy has passed. New York City is showing the world that it is willing to sacrifice its greatest resource. When the artists flee, the energy that draws people to the city is gone as well.

Back when I joined a group of artists to build out my piece of a nearly empty factory, I took a ten year lease. In another part of the neighborhood, a friend was part of a group that struggled to put enough money together to buy a vacant structure, where they still live and work. I see now what I should have seen then, that if we don’t think creatively about how we can own the places where we live, we will spend far too much of our lives scrambling for space.

It is in the economic interest of the city to make it feasible for artists, the core of the creative engine, to live and work there. Without strong advocacy from both the local and federal levels of government, lack of affordable space will cause the creative nucleus to disperse. While we have to fight for that support, we must also take responsibility and ensure that we are not forced out. As artists, we are smart enough to see the strength in our numbers. We have long pooled our talents to rent space in undesirable places. We are surely creative enough to get together and own it.

C.D. (APT New York)

The loss of affordable housing is a major issue for most artists I know. For the many of us who also work in the spaces where we live, the loss of a home is particularly devastating. Recently, a very good friend of mine, his wife and 220 other artists were evicted by the city of New York. Not only are these people homeless, but also, having lost their studio spaces, jobless in a sense as well.

Artists move into certain neighborhoods usually when they are not safe and desirable for most to live in because they are affordable. They are not compensated by the city, but they do make these neighborhoods safer by bringing more people and businesses to the area. I think the questions of affordable housing needs to be addressed by the city if New York is to stay a relevant artistic community. Most artists I know don’t have much more patience for condominium gentrification. The result could easily be New York ending up like Paris—a great city with artistic institutions, but no artistic communities proportionate to the size of the city, and that would really be a shame.

E.B. (APT New York)

# APT Intelligence

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Artist Pension Trust® (APT) is the first investment planning product, dedicated and tailored to the needs of emerging and mid-career artists - a group whose career trajectories and employment patterns make existing long-term investment programs inaccessible. The program, which is globally patented, is centered on the collective long-term investment of the participating artists' works thereby providing artists with the opportunity to invest in their financial future as well as that of other selected artists.

Built on the established financial investment practice of "risk diversification" and drawing upon the traditional structure of mutual assurance societies, the proceeds from each sale of artwork will be distributed allowing the artist to participate in the financial success of all other participating artists. This unique revenue distribution model ensures that every artist benefits from participation on an annual basis.

Each APT is administered by a Director. The Director is supported by a region-specific Curatorial Committee consisting of individuals who are highly experienced and regarded in the field of contemporary art. The Curatorial Committee is assigned the task of identifying, nominating and then selecting 250 artists for participation in the program.

Artwork is the means of engagement for the artist. Over a 10 – 20 year period, the participating artist will invest 20 artworks towards accumulating a representative collection of that artist's career over the 20-year period. APT will store these artworks until the time at which the work is sold. During this holding period works are made available for exhibition at museums, galleries, and other pre-approved venues through APT Curatorial Services.

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HIM AND  
HIS LOVER

ASSUME  
'BESAME  
MUCHO'

GOON COULD  
SHOOT ME

AND SMILES  
SLIGHTLY,

WITH  
MY  
GUN  
MUZ-  
ZLE--