

INTERNATIONAL ART WORLD CONFERENCES

WORLD ART MARKET

The Art News World Art Marketing Conference, co-sponsored by the UCLA Extension, took place on 16 and 17 March. About 250 dealers, collectors, artists attended, from all over the United States. The conference covered such subjects as corporate and government patronage, investment and tax strategies and market trends. Among more than 100 art authorities participating were Pontus Hulten, Henry Hopkins, Edmund Pillsbury of the Kimbell, and Earl A. Powell of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, all addressing the Future of the American Museum.

What it takes to be a California artist was discussed by Michael Dvortcsak, Roland Reiss, June Wayne and Arnold Mesches. Art criticism was also tackled by such critics as Melinda Wortz, Christopher Knight, Susan C. Larsen, and contributing editor of *Artnews*, Patricia Failing.

The problem with such an all-consuming conference was that many times panelists couldn't sense to whom they were speaking, whether peers or clients. Another problem was to whom the conference was really addressed—to arts professionals or art collectors—to producers or consumers—to the business of art or the aesthetics of art. But the conference was well organized, smoothly run, and could have been highly informative if the registration fee had not been \$465.00. Of course, if you add up the 40 lectures and workshops covering everything from tax strategy to conservation, the cost per lecture or workshop is a little more than \$10, and that's cheap for any expert these days.

ART AS OPERA

Although this symposium on current developments in the visual arts, coined *Art as Opera*, held recently in Los Angeles is not necessarily international in theme, some of the artists are well-known internationally and have dealt with the problem throughout the world.

Sponsored by UCLA Extension and coordinated by Germano Celant, Elyse Grinstein and Ruth Iskin, the symposium dealt with art on a grand scale, either with heroic aspiration, dramatic expressiveness, emotional content, and the convergence of the various languages and media into a total theatrical spectacle—but more than that, a true intermedia experience. With participants as varied as Laurie Anderson and Phil Glass, John Baldessari and Douglas Huebler, Eleanor Antin and David Byrne, as well as Robert Graham, Alexis Smith, Paul Bartel and David Amico, the conference seemed to be as varied as its participants.

To be sure, the catalyst for the symposium was Germano Celant, who believes that opera is back, almost like a nationalistic spirit, against the art system with heroes, and mass media art, and a new order of the privilege of being an artist. The risky, the experimental, even the radical are being explored to make a jam session of the arts, as Celant affirms. The convergence of languages in all media comes together in opera.

As Baldessari pointed out, the myth of individuality is bred in art schools and the marketplace. Now there are group paintings and group sculpture, and in fact group performance. But as Laurie Anderson said, she

is attempting to redefine "opera" and try to make it accessible. Since there is inherent grandness in opera, there is also hero and myth, which is political. So what happens when political issues are addressed in this form? She affirmed the statement that "It's very hard to be an artist in America right now, so any way one can be an artist is all right. It's a question of how to be an artist, which is not a moral issue. You cease being human when you're not moral."

So opera melted into morality, and everyone went home asking questions such as "Can opera be small? or In order to stay moral, is it necessary to work alone? How do you keep your identity when you collaborate? Is collaboration the only way, or can one maintain one's individuality?"

INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE FOR CANADIAN ARTISTS

"The world was all before them, where to choose. . ." as Milton said of Adam and Eve. We could also say that to the artists of Canada, what with the support their government has given them over the years to exhibit abroad and serve as cultural ambassadors. Thus it is ironic that the country that has done the best too get their art exposed has an international conference to teach their own how to do what they know how to do so well already. If that sounds ridiculous, the conference on International Exposure for Canadian Artists was most serious, held in Toronto from 12 - 15 May. It is hard to bring coals to Newcastle, and seems so frustrating, but what the conference really did was bring art people from Europe and America to Canada to talk about the state of the visual arts today.

Because usually three or four sessions were going on at the same time, a conferee had to select at all times, and hope the choice was right. If not, access to audio cassettes for each session were available for sale afterwards. But hearing is not seeing and being there. Actually, the conference was like the College Art Association Annual Conventions compacted into 3½ days which ordinarily should have been at least five if not six. But you had everything from Jean-Christophe Ammann, the director of the Basel Kunsthalle, talking about new perspectives of public art and Carter Ratcliff talking about the Tyranny of Trends; Marcia Tucker discussing how an art museum can help artists make themselves known internationally (it's like bringing coals to Newcastle—she was alluding to telling Canada how to do it, when they know already), Daniel Buren talking about his art; Rudi Fuchs discussing documents and what's beyond that; Robert Mapplethorpe talking about his photography; Pontus Hulten talking about probabilities for the Paris World's Fair, and much more. The British scene was discussed by Richard Francis, Tim Hilton and Robert MacPherson. The print world was discussed by Leslie Luebbers of the World Print Council, Brook Alexander of New York, and contemporary Canadian printmakers. In between there were visits to galleries on Queen Street, receptions at the Art Gallery at Harbourfront, the 80 Spadina Galleries for the official Government of Ontario party, and much more. The interchange of artists and art critics and museum directors and

Other noted people were Wulf Herzogenrath, head of the Kunstverein in Cologne and noted expert in video and performance in Europe; Germano Celant, Italian art critic; Donald Kuspit, New York art critic; Maurizio Nannucci, co-curator of Zona Galllery in Florence, as well as visual artist; Christos Joachimides, curator from Berlin, who directed Zeitgeist; Gijs Van Tuyl, Visual Arts Office for Abroad in the Netherlands and many more.

Problems of the avant-garde (is there one or not?), regional culture versus nationalism, the isolation of the artist in contrast with the exchange of languages and ensemble creativity, national identity and national style vs. transnationalism and an international identity, the moral responsibility of the artist versus consumerism of art were all broached and discussed, but it was A.A. Bronson who put it so aptly saying that one has to think internationally, that national boundaries don't have much bearing on the art community which is so small that one can make one's art the best he or she can and that becomes the best expression you can say about yourself.

The staff of five full-time people at Visual Arts Ontario, blending with some part-time people and several volunteers, made this conference one of the most successfully run I have ever attended—except for my own, of course. The orchestration of all the facets into a whole are to be commended with accolades to Bill Boyle, director of Visual Arts Ontario and Hennie L. Wolff, Conference Coordinator. A new publication came out of the Conference, published even before the conferees arrived, called **International Resources for Canadian Artists** by Alan Bakes, which includes a list of world museums, public galleries and alternate spaces; international exhibitions; art schools and workshops; international grants, scholarships, fellowships and internships; international resources; external affairs; international art magazines and periodicals, and a bibliography.

Ironically enough, the United States State Department has historically failed to see the opportunity and the strength that the arts and education provide for improving out image with other countries, particularly the underdeveloped ones. In turn, the USIA has been culturally heavy-handed and financially undernourished. In turn, the National Endowment for the Arts has an International Program which has a budget of only \$50,000, down from last year's \$121,000, but, ladies and gentlemen, President Reagan's budget calls for \$102 million for military bands—an increase of \$3 million over last year and \$9 million more than the year before. Yes, "The world was all before them, where to choose. . . ."

HAVE A HAPPY SUMMER!

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

A legal battle has broken out in Belgium over a book charging that Rene Magritte, one of the century's great surrealist painters, was also an art forger of the first magnitude. The book, *Memory's Raft* by Marcel Marien, charges that Magritte faked pictures by Picasso and fellow surrealists Max Ernst, Salvador Dali and Giorgio di Chirico during World War II because he needed money. Magritte's widow charges that the book is libelous and says her husband was "the most honest of men." The issue is now in court, where she is seeking to have sales of the book halted.

- A Chinese artist in Peking, reviewing China's first Picasso exhibit, said that the "creative spirit" in the artist is "highly commendable, but certain of his works, while not lacking interest, suffer from being weird." The exhibit closes in Peking and then moves to Shanghai.

- An independent postgraduate school of designers and architects will open in Milan next fall, according to members of a prominent Italian design group. Limited to 50 students with design degrees, the school, called **Domus Academy**, is being financed largely by countries in the European Economic Community. They will pay tuition for 40 students from community nations; students from outside the community will occupy the other 10 places, at their own expense. The school's director will be Maria Grazia Mazzocchi. The school has an informal tie with its namesake, *Domus*, the Italian architecture and design magazine.

- Organized and curated by Walter Storms, 8 painters from Prague have come to Munich at the Kunstlerwerkstatten, Lothringer Strasse 13 from 28 May through 26 June. Included are Bostik, Boudnik, Demartini, Grygar, Jetelova, Kolibal, Malich and Simotova. There is a catalog for 15 DM.

- David Hockney was awarded the 1983 Shakespeare Prize for his services to painting and the arts. The prize is worth DM 25,000 in cash and a scholarship of DM 9,000 for a year's study in the Federal Republic of Germany.

- McDonald's of fast food fame are decorating their 100 stores in England with etchings and contemporary prints with the cash outlay per store of £500 to £600. No extreme abstract works are included, and in some places they have commissioned local artwork.

- *The Blue Guide Museums and Galleries of London* has just been published by W.W. Norton & Co. for \$12.95 in the US and it seems to be the best insider's view of the museum world in London by Malcolm Rogers, curator of the 17th-century paintings at the National Portrait Gallery.

- *Robert Delaunay*, a major exhibition, is being shown at the Galerie Gmurzynska in Cologne, through 30 July 1983. There is a bilingual catalog (German/French) with about 30 reproductions in color and 100 illustrations in black and white (most previously unpublished documentary photos) available for 50DM from Galerie Gmurzynska, 5 Cologne 1, Obenmarspforten 21, West Germany.

- The Victoria & Albert Museum's first extension in over 70 years, the Henry Cole Wing, opened to the public on 23 March. Immediately next to the museum, the new wing