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ARTNET NEWS

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TURNER PRIZE SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED

The shortlist for the 2006 **Turner Prize** has been announced, featuring a group of artists who are rather fresh, especially to U.S. audiences: 38-year-old **Tomma Abts**, an abstract painter who has showed at the **Wrong Gallery** and is presently represented by **greengrassi**; 35-year-old video artist **Phil Collins**, last seen in New York with an exhibition at **Tanya Bonakdar Gallery** featuring disaffected youths from the streets of Istanbul belting out karaoke renditions of songs by **The Smiths**; 33-year-old mixed-media artist **Mark Titchner**, known for drawing on billboard art and corporate logos; and 41-year-old **Rebecca Warren**, who is represented by **Matthew Marks** and creates voluptuous, blob-like sculptures of women.

The British tabloid press has, rather predictably, latched onto the big breasts of Warren's sculptures as this year's scandal, referring to the artist as a "pervy potter" (though if an obsession with outsized breasts be a crime, it's hard to imagine the British tabloid press being in a position to say anything about it). Fans can judge for themselves when an exhibition of work by the finalists opens at the Tate, Oct. 3, 2006-Jan. 21, 2007. The 2006 Turner jury consists of **Lynn Barber**, **Margot Heller**, **Matthew Higgs**, **Andrew Renton** and Tate director **Nicholas Serota**, and announces the winner of the £25,000 prize on Dec. 4, 2006.

NEW CANDIDATE FOR PICASSO BUY

As **Art Moscow** gets under way at Moscow's **Central House of Artists**, May 17-21, 2006, the young Russian art dealers are all asking their clients the same question -- "Did you buy the Picasso?" The reference is to the mystery sale of **Pablo Picasso's Dora Maar au Chat** (1941) for \$95.2 million at **Sotheby's New York** on May 3, 2006 [see **Art Market Watch**, May 8, 2006]. The notion that it may have been **Roustan Tariko**, the 40-something **Russian Standard** vodka entrepreneur, was dismissed by Moscow locals, since he doesn't collect art. "I just gave my official denial to the *Wall Street Journal*," Tariko told one dealer. "I don't want to talk about it any more!"

A more likely candidate for the role of mystery Picasso purchaser is the group around **Victor Vekselberg**, the oil and gas tycoon who made headlines in early 2004 after he snatched the **Forbes Collection** of nine Faberge eggs out from under the auctioneer's hammer, buying the lot from Sotheby's in a private deal estimated at \$90 million. The Vekselberg group is said to be planning to open its own museum near the Kremlin, and is thought to be close to closing on a \$25-million deal just to secure the land. Stay tuned.

HOLZER AT 7 WORLD TRADE

While the debate over the future of **Ground Zero** as a whole has marked a new low in the culture wars over contemporary art, with the **Drawing Center** being chased away from the site for its left-leaning politics, this has not stopped politically outspoken artist **Jenny Holzer** from gracing the lobby of the new **Skidmore Owings and Merrill**-designed **7 World Trade** building with an installation. To be fair, the piece, commissioned by **Silverstein Properties** and designed in collaboration with architect and glass wizard **James Carpenter**, is described by the artist as a "mash note" to New York, incorporating a scrolling display of great poems about the Big Apple in sans serif type. The installation debuts May 22, 2006, in a bash hosted by **Larry & Klara Silverstein** and Holzer's gallery, **Cheim & Read**. (As another note on art at Ground Zero, reports have it that the park facing 7 World Trade is to feature a sculpture by **Jeff Koons**).

ALTMAN AT ANTON KERN

Robert Altman is getting the spotlight thrown on him with the just-opened "I Am What I Am" at **Anton Kern Gallery**, May 18-June 24, 2006, an exhibition of the American film auteur's ephemera, featuring photographic works and screenings of Altman-made home movies, including *Pot au Feu*, which gives instructions on rolling the perfect joint. The show is curated by painter **Ellen Berkenblit**.

KANSAS CITY SCULPTURE PARK REOPENS

The 22-acre, **Dan Kiley**-designed **Kansas City Sculpture Park** at the **Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art** reopens Sept. 30, 2006 after restoration. The park, which includes 34 sculptures, is being revamped as part of the institution's revitalization plan, which includes a new building designed by **Steven Holl**, set for completion in 2007. A week of public events is scheduled to coincide with the reopening, including tours, lectures and even a badminton and croquet tournament (in honor of one of the park's signature pieces, *Shuttlecocks* by **Claes Oldenburg** and **Coosje van Bruggen**.)

ART GROUP RENAMES CAMBRIDGE

The Boston-based art collective known as **The Institute for Infinitely Small Things** invites you to help rename various parts of Cambridge, Mass. Sponsored by the **Cambridge Arts Council**, the performance will take the form of 13 public ceremonies held between June 1 and June 22, 2006, allowing participants to help rechristen the **Massachusetts Institute of Technology**, **Harvard University**, the Charles River and other important spots, with results to be published in a new map titled *The City Formerly Known As Cambridge*. The June 4 renaming ceremony is held in conjunction with a performance by the **Guerrilla Girls**. For complete info, see the Institute's [website](#).

ASIAN ART WEEK IN NEW YORK

The [website](#) for **Asian Contemporary Art Week**, set for May 22-27, 2006, trumpets the endeavor's humble beginnings, when it was "the domain of a small group of curators and collectors" -- but clearly, given today's craze for all things Asian in the art world, times have changed. 28 venues are participating this year, including many powerful new additions such as the **American Folk Art Museum**, the **Brooklyn Museum**, **James Cohan Gallery**, **Max Protetch Gallery**, the **Rubin Museum of Art**, **Tilton Gallery**, **Thomas Erben Gallery** and **Sikkema Jenkins and Co.**, alongside longtime members of the ACAW's organizing consortium, which includes nonprofit venues like the **Asia Society** and the **Japan Society**, along with galleries like **Ethan Cohen Fine Arts** and **Bose Pacia Gallery**, pioneers in the Asian art market.

The core of the week is "Fast Futures: Asian Video Now," an ambitious program of video art from Afghanistan, China, India, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Turkey and Taiwan, selected by a jury composed of **Melissa Chiu** of the Asia Society,



independent curator **Yu Yeon Kim** and **Museum of Modern Art** associate curator of film and video **Barbara London**. Artists to watch for include **Yang Fudong**, **Lida Abdul**, **Shilpa Gupta**, **Vivan Sundaram** and **Kiraki Sawa**. Also be sure to check out "Dialogues in Asian Contemporary Art: Take 4," a panel moderated by Chiu to mark the kick-off of the week, May 22 at 6:30 pm at the Asia Society. The discussion is followed by the opening reception for "Projected Realities," the institution's show of new media works from East Asia.

BRITISH MUSEUM SPOTLIGHTS ISLAMIC ART

The **British Museum** in London is currently presenting "Word into Art," an ambitious survey of recent art inspired by Arabic script, May 18-Sept. 3, 2006, sponsored by the investment consortium **Dubai Holding**. The show, curated by **Venetia Porter**, features 75 artists from countries across the Middle East and North Africa, including **Etel Adnan**, **Ahmad Moustafa**, **Erol Akyavas**, **Abdallah Benanteur**, **Khusrau Hasan-Zade**, **Rachid Koraichi**, **Hassan Massoudy**, **Walid Raad** and **Aref Rayyes**, **Kareem Risan**, **Faisal Samra** and **Parviz Tanavoli**. Though most of the works in the show are from the British Museum's permanent collection, the institution's Great Court has unveiled a special commissioned piece by Iraqi sculptor **Dia al-Azzawi**, alongside a suite of new sculptures by Iranian **Parviz Tanavoli**.

The political significance of spotlighting Islamic influenced artists is, of course, front and center, with one section of the show focusing on work that reacts to current events in the Middle East. But, as the BBC's **Vincent Dowd** notes, the real subtext of "Word into Art" may be the attempt by the British Museum, which has collected contemporary Islamic art since the '80s, to shift its own image: "the museum as a whole wants people to begin to associate it with living artists and not just those long dead."

HIRST GOES RED

Readers of the *London Independent* on May 16, 2006, were greeted by a front page taken over by artwork from **Damien Hirst**, consisting of a solid red field and a cross composed of symbols including a dove of peace, a syringe, a skull and praying hands and the words "No News Today." Small print at the bottom of the page read, "Just 6,500 Africans died today as a result of a preventable, treatable disease. (HIV/AIDS)."

The stunt was part of a special issue of the paper -- renamed *The RED Independent* for the day -- guest-edited by **U2** singer and anti-poverty crusader **Bono**. Half of the proceeds of the day's paper, which featured ads for **Motorola** and other big companies, are meant to go to fighting AIDS in Africa. The following day, the *Independent* reported that within hours of its publication the special edition had become a collector's item.

Other features inside the *RED Independent* included a photo spread about rural poverty by **Sam Taylor-Wood**, a discussion on the relations between fashion and charity by **Stella McCartney** and **Giorgio Armani**, an interview between Bono and **Tony Blair** about the British prime minister's experiences in Africa and a listing of U.S. secretary of state **Condoleezza Rice**'s top ten favorite pieces of music. Feelings were mixed about the special edition, with some praising it for calling attention to an ignored issue, while others complaining that Bono's celebrity egomania (the issue features a spread titled "Can Rock Stars Change the World?") got in the way of a good cause.

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