PRESS COVERAGE

Camera/Action: Performance and Photography

October 15- December 23, 2004

1. Chicago Life, 11. 2. 2004
2. Chicago Sun Times, 9. 12. 2004
3. Chicago Sun Times, 10. 15. 2004
4. Chicago Tribune, 11. 4. 2004
6. The New Yorker
Events

Museums

The Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Ave., 312-443-3600, presents Unbuilt Chicago, featuring local architectural projects that were never realized, through Jan. 16. American Horizons: The Photographs of Art Sinsabaugh continues through Jan. 2. This is the first major exhibition highlighting the career of Sinsabaugh. Chicago Architecture: Ten Visions opens Nov. 26 and runs through April 3. Hero, Hawk, and Open Hand: American Indian Art of the Ancient Midwest and South opens Nov. 20 and continues through Jan. 30. This exhibition presents a full-scale exploration of the art, ritual, ceremonial places and settlements of the ancient peoples who lived in the central part of the United States, north and south, between 5000 B.C. and A.D. 1000.

The Terra Museum of American Art, 664 N. Michigan, 312-664-3939, presents A Narrative of American Art through Oct. 31. The last collection exhibition before the museum closes, it traces a 200-year history of American art as represented by 80 works from the Terra Foundation for the Arts collection.

The Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), 220 E. Chicago Ave., 312-396-3900, presents Soft Edge through Jan. 9 and Stalemate through Jan. 5. Soft Edge features pieces made from soft, pliable materials, predominately by women artists working from the 1970s through the present. Stalemate examines the ambivalent nature of contemporary life, particularly with regard to issues of systems, language, play, sexuality, death and transcendence. Also at the museum is Correction, a new commission of work by Fiona Tan, on display through Jan. 23.

The Field Museum, 1400 S. Lake Shore Dr., 312-922-9410, hosts Machu Picchu: Unveiling the Mystery of the Incas through Feb. 13. The lost city of Machu Picchu is one of the most spectacular archeological sites in the world. Jacqueline Kennedy: The White House Years opens Nov. 13 and runs through May 8. The exhibition explores the profound influence of the former first lady through 70 garments from her wardrobe, along with photographs, video excerpts, handwritten notes and other documents.

The Museum of Science and Industry, 5700 S. Lake Shore Dr., 773-871-4600, hosts Action! An Adventure in Moviemaking through Jan. 9. Guests will encounter the best of Hollywood’s top actors, writers, directors, sound technicians and masters of special effects to discover how these movie wizards make celluloid magic. The Changing Face of Women’s Health continues through Nov. 30. This exhibit explores how far women’s health has come in the last 50 years. And don’t miss the latest Omnimax show, Forces of Nature, playing through February.

The Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, 1832 W. 19th St., 312-573-1503, presents Annual Sor Juana Festival, an exhibition that showcases the rich talent and cultural contributions of Mexican women in theater, music, literature and dance. The festival runs through Nov. 12. The Annual Day of the Dead Exhibition continues through Dec. 12. This is the nation’s largest exhibit of its kind.

The Chicago Historical Society, Clark Street at North Avenue, 312-642-4400, presents Latin Jazz: La Combinacion Perfecta, the story of the evolution of Latin jazz in the United States, through Nov. 28. The exhibition, curated by the Smithsonian Institution, offers a concise look at Latin jazz, its history, major personalities and icons. The exhibition features maps, audio-visual stations, vintage film footage, oral history interviews, documents, photographs, musical scores, programs and album covers. Documents of Freedom is also on exhibit through Nov. 7. The exhibition of rare manuscripts tells the story of America’s quest for freedom. Teen Chicago continues through January.

Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, 40 Arts Circle, Evanston, 847-491-4900, hosts Gene(s): Contemporary Art Explores Human Genomics through Nov. 28. From digitally-altered photographs of mammoths and artistic explorations of other transcogic beings to DNA portraits and abstract gene-mapping paintings, the exhibit investigates the potential social, emotional and ethical implications of one of the most compelling subjects of our times.

The Museum of Contemporary Photography, 600 S. Michigan Ave., 312-684-5554, presents Camera/Action, a survey of photographic documentation of performance art from the late 1960s to the present, through Dec. 23. Initially, the experience of a live performance often involved watching a photographer moving in tandem with the artist, with the tacit assumption that photographs can serve as a transparent medium for the translation and preservation of performance.

The Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington St., 312-744-6630, presents Voices in the Hall: Photographs of Paul Revere School through Nov. 21. This exhibition provides a provocative and compelling look into the lives of students and teachers.
2004 FALL PREVIEW: MUSEUMS

Museums get into the spirit of collaboration

BY MARGARET HARRIS

The art world has been abuzz with the term "collaboration" as museums, artists, and curators work together to present new exhibitions and programs. This trend is part of a larger movement towards interdisciplinary programming that seeks to engage a wider audience.

The Zhou Brothers

The Zhou Brothers, who are known for their multimedia installations, have collaborated with the Institute for Contemporary Art at the University of California, Berkeley, to create an exhibition that explores the themes of love, death, and regeneration. The show features large-scale sculptures, video installations, and immersive environments that challenge viewers to question their own perceptions of reality.

The Elkhart Art Museum and the Chicago Cultural Center

The Elkhart Art Museum and the Chicago Cultural Center have partnered to present "Between Past and Future: Photographs and Video from China," an exhibition that showcases contemporary Chinese artists' work. The show features a mix of video installations and photographic prints that explore themes of identity, culture, and politics.

The Whitney Museum of American Art

The Whitney Museum of American Art has launched a new initiative called "Art & the City," which brings together artists, architects, and designers to create works that reflect the spirit of the city. The first project of this initiative is a public art installation that transforms a vacant lot into a community space.

The Baltimore Museum of Art

The Baltimore Museum of Art has opened a new wing dedicated to contemporary art, which features works by artists from around the world. The wing also includes a new restaurant and a rooftop garden that provides a unique setting for visitors.

The Art Institute of Chicago

The Art Institute of Chicago has launched a new program called "Art Institute Loop," which brings together artists, designers, and architects to create public art installations in the city. The first project of this initiative is a site-specific installation that transforms an abandoned building into a community space.
Unveil some mysteries via Field trip to Machu Picchu

BY NISHA DAVENPORT
Museum Pieces

I
live in Chicago but I spend my summers in Machu Picchu. Thanks to the exhibit opening today at the Field Museum, "Machu Picchu: Unveiling the Mystery of the Incas," Chicago area visitors to the Field should have no problems making that declaration.

Er, sort of.

"Machu Picchu (pronounced MAH-choo PHICK-choo) was the Inca kings' summer home high atop the Andes Mountains in Peru. It was rediscovered in 1911 by Hiram Bingham of Yale University. The Field has partnered with Yale's Peabody Museum of Natural History to bring the exhibit here.

More than 400 artifacts are in the exhibit, which has the distinction of being the largest traveling collection of Inca artifacts. Some of the objects really capture the imagination, says Hilary Hansen, the Field Museum's project administrator for the exhibit.

"Normally, we see male and female figures and jewelry all made out of gold," Hansen says. "This exhibit is filled with unusual, whimsical kinds of things like an ear of corn made out of gold."

Of course, in the high-stakes world of museum exhibitions, it's not enough to just display artifacts. Museum patrons are expecting more and more. "Machu Picchu" doesn't disappoint. There are replicas of ancient Inca roads, an Inca burial chamber and a royal residence can walk into to view a diorama.

"We want to give our visitors a complete and well-rounded experience," Hansen says. "Our designers did an excellent job with the architectural re-creations. It really helps in putting the artifacts into context."

"Machu Picchu: Unveiling the Mystery of the Incas" continues through Feb. 18. The Field Museum is at 1400 S. Lake Shore Drive. Tickets are $16 for adults, $11 for seniors and students, $8 for children ages 2-11. Discounts for Chicago residents. Call (312) 922-9410 or visit www.fieldmuseum.org.

EVANSTON DEBUT: Spanish artist Renee Hernandez will be on hand from 5 to 8 tonight at his long-awaited Chicago debut exhibit at the Unitarian, Evanston. His work will be in the gallery 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, through Nov. 29. Call (847) 869-8050.

HOMAGE TO THE FROMAGE: Elmhurst College's Julie Nephew opens "The History of French Cheese" from 1 to 3 p.m. Thursday as part of Tea Time Hour at the Elmhurst Historical Museum, 129 8th St., Elmhurst. Several cheeses will be sampled and afternoon tea and coffee will be served following.
ART REVIEW

Focusing on camera in performance art

By Alan G. Artner
Tribune art critic
Published November 4, 2004

Dance and performance art are two forms of cultural endeavor that have had their lives extended by means of photography. Both, of course, live on through the medium only imperfectly. But of the two, performance art has survived more happily, to the extent that however much of the live experience was lost in photo documentation, it eventually was balanced by gains from a different kind of performance conceived and presented solely for a camera.

This history is traced in “Camera/Action: Performance and Photography,” an ambitious, well-chosen 35-year survey at the Museum of Contemporary Photography. Through the work of 17 artists — pioneers and contemporary practitioners alike — the show explores a relationship that has been near the center of art production for decades yet has not been closely examined by any other Chicago institution.

The absence perhaps is accounted for by a feeling among art museums that photographs documenting performance simply present an added turnoff to a genre that already makes enough demands on an audience. And if the exhibition were only about performance art history, viewers might find themselves feeling the same. But here, at a museum dedicated to photography, the focus is on the changing role of the photographic medium in performance art, and that shift has made all the difference.

Many of the performances documented are in the category of what once was called Bodyworks: pieces unfolding in time through the activity (or inactivity) of the human body. Marina Abramovic, Vito Acconci and Chris Burden were pioneers of this kind of performance, and most of the other artists on view owe something to them. However, younger ones — from America, Britain and France to China — are often more conscious of the camera’s place in this, being seen less as a recording device than an active agent in the performance’s conception.

The poles are represented by, say, Burden’s “Bed Piece,” which captures a moment from a long time spent silently in a gallery in bed, and Jemima Stehli’s, “Mirror no. 1, 2, 3,” a triptych of the artist shooting herself nude in her studio before a mirror. The Burden provides a straightforward document of a public action of great duration. The Stehli offers complicated views of a private action that was, more or less, instantaneous. In between, with variations in both photographic prints and videos, come all the other artists.

The videos and photo piece by Acconci show him anticipating most of the artists’ thinking about the camera in relation to performance documentation and the audience. So while it is secondary to the thrust of the show, there are nonetheless moments of clarity regarding key achievements as well as shadings that distinguish between provocative but not path-breaking young contemporaries.

In all ways, including a lucid introductory brochure, the effort is exemplary.

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“Camera/Action: Performance and Photography” continues at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, 600 S. Michigan Ave., through Dec. 23; Tehching Hsieh and Marina Abramovic, artists with works in the exhibition, will respectively speak at 6 p.m. Nov. 17 and Dec. 6. 312-663-5554.

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Focusing on camera in performance art

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EXHIBITS

Camera/Action
Is being shown through Thursday, Dec. 23, at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College Chicago, 600 S. Michigan Ave. This is a survey of photos documenting performance art from the late 1960s to the present. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Wednesday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday, noon to 5 p.m. Saturday. Admission is free. Call (312) 663-5654.

The Interpretation of Sear's: Works by Cal Chow is on display through Thursday, Dec. 23, at Galesburg Civic Art Center, 114 E. Main St., Galesburg. Artwork will be wearable pieces constructed from non-traditional materials. Hours are 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday and Saturdays; 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday. Admission is free. Call (312) 662-2321.

Ethereal Light: The 2004 Philip & Sylvia Judaica Prize exhibit is being shown through Sunday, Feb. 13, at Spertus Museum, 618 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago. Artwork will focus on the theme of eternal light, how it illuminates the art in synagogues around the world, and new expressions of its meaning. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday through Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday. Admission is $5; $3 for children, students and seniors; $10 for families; free Friday. Call (312) 322-1747.

Christmas Around the World and Holidays of Light is being shown through Sunday, Jan. 9, at The Museum of Science and Industry, 57th Street and Lake Shore Drive, Chicago. The exhibit showcases how people around the globe celebrate the holiday season. More than 50 trees and displays, as well as a multicultural display celebrating light or enlightenment such as Hanukkah and Kwanzaa, will be displayed. Hours are 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. Admission is $9, $7.50 for seniors; $5 for children 3 to 11. Call (773) 664-1414.

Holiday Happenings exhibit is being shown through Friday, Dec. 31, at La Grange Art League Gallery & Studio, 122 Calendar Court, La Grange. Miniature paintings, photography, pottery, jewelry, sculpture and handcrafted artisan gifts will be featured. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Admission is free. Call (708) 352-3101.

American Horizons: The Photographs of Art Sinsabaugh is on display through Saturday, Jan. 2, at Art Institute of Chicago, galleries 1 and 2, 111 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago. Sinsabaugh’s photographs highlight American landscapes, especially Midwest prairies and Chicago urban skylines. Hours are 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Wednesday and Friday; 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Admission is $12; $7 for children, students and seniors; free for members and on Tuesday. Call (312) 443-3800.

Scottish Jewelry is being shown through Sunday, Jan. 2, at Lizzadro Museum of Lapidary Art, 220 Cottage Hill, Elmhurst. Scottish jewelry, brooches, pins, bracelets, seals and desk accessories feature handmade silver work and semi-precious stones. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is $4, $3 for seniors, $2 for students and teenagers, $1 for children 7 to 12, free for children 6 and younger and on Fridays. Call (630) 833-1616.
MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY
600 South Michigan Avenue (312-344-7104)—The Museum of Contemporary Photography, located at Columbia College, Chicago, features works by individual artists, along with exhibits about photographic history and technology. • “Camera Action: Performance and Photography” explores the relationship between performance art and photography, starting with photographic and video works from the sixties and seventies that recorded “happenings.” Over the years, the journalistic relationship between photography and performance art gave way to a more interdependent dynamic, and artists increasingly integrated photography into their work and staged their performances with the final photographic product in mind. The museum’s show includes films, videos, and photographs; artists represented include Chris Burden, Vito Acconci, Jemima Stehli, Ma Linning, Zhang Huan, and Barbara Probst. From Oct. 15 to Dec. 23. (www.mocp.org)

STEPHEN DAITER / DAITER CONTEMPORARY
311 West Superior Street, Suites 404 and 408 (312-787-3350)—Stephen Daiter focuses on American and European photographers of the twentieth century, particularly those with an experimental