

What's On 07-08/2009

Biennials, festivals and events

Manchester International Festival



Various venues
2-19 July
www.mif.co.uk

This is the second Manchester International Festival, which got off to an impressive start two years ago with the debut of "Il Tempo del Postino" (the theatrical presentation of 15 artists curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Philippe Parreno that was restaged at Art Basel in June) and Damon Albarn's *Monkey* opera. This year's offering has equally headline-grabbing events, including the major performance event "Marina Abramovic Presents..." (see below).

Performance-based visual art is a strong theme for this year's festival, and Turner Prize-winning artist Jeremy Deller is leading a procession on 5 July along the Deansgate mile, with the aim of bringing together local com-

munities in a show of civic pride. Processions and parades are currently a popular subject in art, with a group show at Parasol Unit in London dedicated to the theme with works by Deller alongside Thomas Hirschhorn, Francis Alÿs, Annette Messager and others on show until 24 July. Manchester's Cornerhouse gallery is showing "Procession: an Exhibition" (9 July-23 August), which will show documentation of Deller's event, exploring the ideas behind it and the history of parades and processions.

Octogenarian artist-activist Gustav Metzger is still going strong, and is presenting his new *Flailing Trees* installation in the Manchester Peace Garden. Twenty-one upside-down willow trees will be placed in concrete bases as a statement about envi-

ronmental damage, a long-term concern of the artist. The piece will take a permanent home in Manchester following the exhibition, having been acquired by the Whitworth Art Gallery to be installed in its grounds. This is a prominent year for Metzger, with London's Serpentine Gallery holding an exhibition of 60 years of his work from 29 September to 8 November.

On a different register, Iraq-born architect Zaha Hadid is collaborating with Manchester Art Gallery to create a high-tech chamber music hall in one of the exhibition spaces (pictured above), specifically for the performance of works by J.S. Bach. Aside from the nine concerts performed during the festival, her spiralling installation will be a major attraction in itself, open to the public during gallery hours. **Rosie Spencer**

Marina Abramovic Presents...

Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester
3-19 July
www.mif.co.uk

Marina Abramovic (right), in collaboration with the Serpentine Gallery's Hans-Ulrich Obrist and Maria Balshaw of the Whitworth Art Gallery, brings together 14 international artists who perform live in the gallery. The theme of endurance is at the root of the exhibition; each performance will last four hours and take place daily for the duration of the festival. An initiation ceremony led by Abramovic each day will look to "de-programme and disengage the audience from



the outside world and their timetable", explains Ms Balshaw. This initiation will prepare the audience for the exhibition and aims to teach them to "slow down" and commit to the four hours in a culture where

most information comes in small, easily digested segments.

Abramovic has selected contributors who are interested in taking on the challenge of endurance, with many of the 14 works being physically challenging. For instance, for Ivan Civic's *Way Back to Sarajevo*, the artist will spend each day wall climbing (see below).

With the audience free to navigate between the artists, all of whom will be present, the presentation is much like a traditional exhibition and it "steps away from promenade performance theatre as much as possible," explains Balshaw. The Whitworth has been cleared of other works for the show so all eleven galleries can be used by the artists. **William Oliver**

What will you be doing for "Marina Abramovic Presents...?"

Jamie Isenstein:



"I will become a rug in a stack of rugs. The top rug is a bear rug with a sheep rug underneath

it. Beneath the sheep rug is a wolf rug and under that will be a Jamie rug. We will all lie on a commercially produced faux Persian rug."

Melati Suryodarmo:



the phrase "I love you" for the entire performance. It is an intimate situated performance, where the language melts, as well as the meaning of it."

Ivan Civic:



"I will be doing a performance about loneliness, a return to one's roots, without being able to change the past nor the present of the state of what once was my hometown of Sarajevo."

Serpentine Pavilion: SANAA

Serpentine Gallery, London
12 July-18 October
www.serpentinegallery.org

This year's Serpentine Pavilion, designed by Japanese architecture duo SANAA (Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa), is the most open structure so far, a delicate undulating form supported by 99 thin columns (right). "It's really a room that at the beginning is a table, so it's not very high. It starts off at the height of a table and then swings into a room size," Hans Ulrich Obrist, the Serpentine's co-director of exhibitions and programmes and director of international projects, told *The Art Newspaper*. The reflective canopy's height starts at one metre and reaches 3.5 metres at its highest point, so it can be used from the inside and out, with people eating off its surface at the lowest point and sheltering beneath it as its height increases.

The Serpentine Pavilion is a yearly commission for architects who have never completed a building in England. The choice



of architect is "a curatorial decision—it's not a competition," said Serpentine director Julia Peyton-Jones. "There are no runners up, there is always only one choice." SANAA has a strong connection to the museum world, having designed the New Museum, New York, the Toledo Museum of Art's Glass Pavilion in Ohio, and more.

The pavilion plays host to a series of events throughout its three months in Hyde Park. "We are going to particularly have links to the Japanese context of SANAA," said Mr Obrist. "There is going to be a Japanese music

night, for example, with Japanese composers using the pavilion." The structure is always sold off at the end of its life in the park. "The concept is that it should have this other life," said Ms Peyton-Jones. "For example the Toyo Ito pavilion [in 2002] was bought and transferred to Battersea Power Station. It was then sold as part of the power station to the new owners, and then bought back by the old owner, and is now being installed in France." "Everything we do at the Serpentine in the 21st century aims to be about sustainability and legacy," added Mr Obrist. **R.S.**

Les Rencontres d'Arles

Various venues, Arles, France
7 July-13 September
www.rencontres-arles.com

Les Rencontres d'Arles turns 40 this year, and to celebrate the photography festival is hosting a total of 60 exhibitions, under the rubrics "40 Years of Rencontres" and "40 Years of Ruptures", directed by François Hébel. The exhibitions look to the history of the festival, with shows dedicated to key figures in the development of Les Rencontres.

US photographer Nan Goldin is the presiding matriarch of the festival as the "Special Guest" for "40 Years of Ruptures", with her own work on display as well as works by others that she has chosen. Her 1986 work *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*—a no-holds-barred visual diary of the sex- and drug-fuelled lives of those close to her—shows at the Atelier de Mécanique, and



Sisters, Saints and Sibyls—Goldin's 2004 tribute to her sister who committed suicide—is at the Église des Frères-Prêcheurs. She has invited 11 living photographers to exhibit as part of her curated show, "Ça Me Touche", at the Atelier de Mécanique, including Boris Mikhailov, Annelies Strba, J.H. Engström,

David Armstrong and Lisa Ross. Also on display as part of "40 Years of Ruptures" are solo shows in various venues, including Duane Michals at the Palais de l'Archevêché and UK-based photographers Brian Griffin and Martin Parr at the Atelier de Maintenance.

The other strand of the festival, "40 Years of Rencontres", has solo shows of French photographers Willy Ronis and Lucien Clergue (a founder of Les Rencontres), a show dedicated to the publisher, curator and film producer Robert Delpire, and a show of images and text curated by Jean-Claude Lemagny, former chief curator in the prints and photography department of the French National Library. Other shows include Roni Horn's 2008-09 series of 30 paired self-portraits at the Grande Halle in Arles. The nearby city of Avignon is hosting "Roni Horn aka Roni Horn" (fresh from Tate Modern) at the Collection Lambert until 4 October. Above, Nan Goldin, *The Hug, New York City*, 1980. **R.S.**

Momentum: Nordic Biennial of Contemporary Art

Moss, Norway
29 August-18 October
www.momentum.no

Momentum, the fifth Nordic Biennial of Contemporary Art, is curated this year by Stina Högvist, curator at the National Museum in Oslo, and Lina Džuverović, director of Electra contemporary art agency in London. The biennial presents 31 artists and artist groups in two venues in the coastal town of Moss in south-east Norway.

This year's theme, "Favoured Nations", a legal term borrowed from international trade agreements, focuses on equality. Although all the artists in the show are based in Nordic countries (Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Iceland and Finland)—as opposed to the 2006 Momentum in which artists from across northern Europe were included—it is not intended to represent something specifically about the region. "I



don't believe that there is such a thing as a 'Nordic sensibility' in contemporary art," Ms Džuverović told us.

For this year's biennial the works will be presented in two very different spaces—Momentum Kunsthall is a former brewery in the centre of town, while Galleri F15 is a former farmhouse in a bucolic countryside setting. Above, Josefina Lyche, *Consequence of Consequence* (detail), 2008. **R.S.**

Contemporary Art Norwich

Various venues
11 July-31 August
www.nnfestival.org.uk/
contemporary-art-norwich

The Contemporary Art Norwich biennial in the east of England presents exhibitions and events featuring established and emerging artists, organised by Norfolk & Norwich Festival. Outpost gallery is showing solo shows of UK artists Lynn Hynd, Jamie Shovlin and Matthew Darbyshire, as well as a number of residencies. "Take a Look at Me Now" at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts consists of contemporary art from Poland, while "No Visible Means of Escape" at Norwich Castle is a major group show including works by Louise Bourgeois, Christine Borland and Marc Quinn. EASTinternational, an open-submission show at the Norwich University College of the Arts, is showing 25 artists selected by Art & Language with Raster Gallery, Warsaw. **R.S.**