

The Examiner

WASHINGTON*

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2010

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TIME OUT! Weekend
Billy Idol at HFStival P. 30

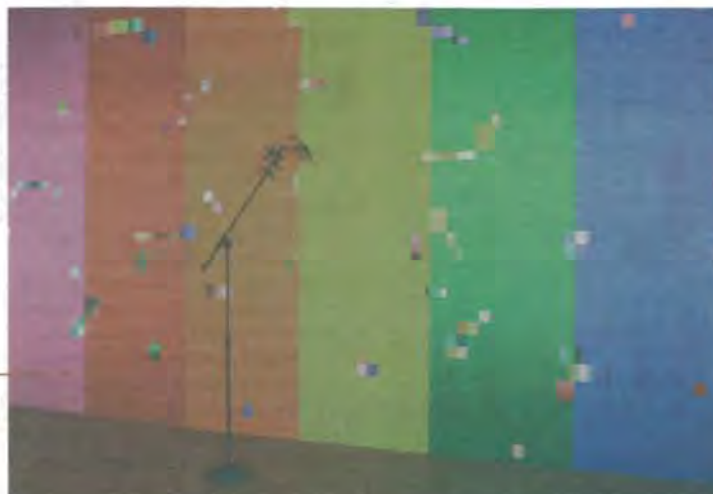
Skins' running game
Will new plan gain steam? P. 60



THE LIST

BEST GALLERIES

- 1 Argentina in Focus – Visualizing the Concept – Cristian Segura / Sergio Vega:** Sergio Vega represents the Argentine diaspora in the United States while Cristian Segura remains active at home in Argentina. Together, these multimedia artists offer a fascinating window into a fertile and underrepresented breeding ground for visual and conceptual art.
Where: Art Museum of the Americas, 201 18th St. NW
When: Through Nov. 21
Info: Free; museum.oas.org/exhibitions.html
- 2 "James Rieck – Mead Hall and Jonathan Monaghan:** Life Tastes Good in Disco Heaven": James Rieck's five-painting, Beowulf-and-Tolkien-inspired series "Mead Hall" explores the eroticization of mortality, while Jonathan Monaghan's pieces combine corporate and religious imagery, interrogating our assumptions of eternity.
Where: Hamiltonian Gallery, 1353 U St. NW
When: Through Oct. 30
Info: Free; 202-332-1116; hamiltoniangallery.com
- 3 Phil Nesmith – Flow:** Phil Nesmith's photos of the Gulf Coast printed on black



glass use a photographic process — collodion — that dates from roughly the same era the artist determines the United States' petroleum dependency began. Pointed and memorable.

Where: Irvine Contemporary, 1412 14th St. NW
When: Through Oct. 30
Info: Free; 202-332-8767; rvinecontemporary.com

- 4 John Stark – Mercurius Duplex:** John Stark's oils on wood panel incorporate traditional landscapes and sci-fi paperback covers to create something original and provocative. It's the London artist's first solo show in the United States.

Where: Conner Contemporary Art, 1358-60 Florida Ave. NE
When: Through Oct. 30
Info: Free; 202-588-8750; connercontemporary.com

- 5 Rebecca Key – Archetype:** Another U.K. artist making her Amerian debut, Rebecca Key uses the set dressing techniques she employs in her career as a film and television art director to interrogate the textures and spaces of the gallery itself.
Where: Transformer, 1404 P St. NW
When: Through Oct. 15
Info: Free; 202-483-1102; transformergallery.org – Chris Klimek

BEST MUSIC

- 1 ABBA – The Music:** The Swedish quartet disbanded, but "Mamma Mia" revived the music that propels audiences to dance in the aisles. Waterloo, the ABBA tribute group, revisits the magic of the "Dancing Queen."
Where: Wolf Trap Filene Center
When: 8 p.m. Friday
Info: \$38 in-house, \$25 lawn; 877-965-3872; wolfttrap.org
- 2 Golden Dragon Acrobats:** The 21-member acrobatic troupe from China is the finest that nation offers with choreographed routines performed to traditional Chinese music created for the New Age.
Where: Wolf Trap Filene Center
When: 7 p.m. Saturday
Info: \$38 in-house, \$17 lawn; 877-965-3872; wolfttrap.org
- 3 Mose Alison Trio:** The quintessential blues and jazz pianist settles in again for four days of musical bliss.
Where: Blues Alley
When: 8 and 10 p.m. Thursday-Sunday
Info: \$25; 202-337-4141; bluesalley.com
- 4 John Jorgenson Quintet:** The legendary musician celebrates the 100th birthday of gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt with two new albums.
Where: Virginia Wine Festival, Bull Run Park, Centreville
When: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday
Info: \$25 in advance, \$30 at the gate
- 5 Bilal:** The jazzy soul singer from Philadelphia introduces his latest album, "Air Tight's Revenge."
Where: The Birchmere
When: 7:30 p.m. Sunday
Info: \$32.50; 703-549-7500; birchmere.com – Emily Cary



Weekend



Holiday Movie Guide

EVERYONE SHOULD
BE ABLE TO FIND A FAVORITE
FLICK THIS SEASON.

ANN HORNADAY GIVES THE
LOWDOWN ON DOZENS OF
FILMS. **PAGE 22**

PLUS: REVIEWS OF "UNSTOPPABLE
HOURS," "CLIENT 9" AND MORE.

D.C. gets a taste of Argentine art today

BY MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN

In celebration of Argentina's bicentennial, contemporary art from that country is the focus of three Washington exhibitions. The most prominent is the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden's "Guillermo Kuitca: Everything — Paintings and Works on Paper, 1980-2008." On a smaller scale, but still worth seeing, is "Argentina in Focus: Visualizing the Concept — Cristian Segura/Sergio Vega" at the Art Museum of the Americas. (Hurry, the little show closes Nov. 21.)

The third must-see is a bit harder to find.

Hidden underground in the International Gallery of Smithsonian's S. Dillon Ripley Center, and organized by the Smithsonian's Latino Center in conjunction with Argentina's Secretariat of Culture, "Southern Identity: Contemporary Argentine Art" features 80 works by 32 of Argentina's most prominent and/or intriguing living artists. Perhaps the most important one in the show is Leon Ferrari.

Born in 1920, the conceptualist is represented by his best-known work, an iconic 1965 sculpture of the crucified Christ on a "cross" that is actually a miniature U.S. Air Force fighter jet. In a single object, Ferrari encapsulates a critique of war, the hypocrisy of organized religion and, more generally, government-sanctioned violence. The artist's point is not theoretical; his own son would later "disappear" during Argentina's Dirty War of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Politics abounds. How could it not, given the country's history? The show is organized into four broadly thematic sections related to politics, identity, landscape and abstraction. There is lots of overlap. One of the first things you'll see is Norberto Gomez's 1984 "Wires," a massive floor sculpture that enlarges barbed wires to the size of nautical rope. At that scale, it has an almost abstract feel.

Among the show's standouts is photographer Marcos Lopez. He has four wryly humorous, almost surreal works in the show, including "Barbecue in Mendiolaza." Based on da Vinci's "The Last Supper," the nearly 10-foot-wide photo centers on a contemporary shirtless "Christ" carving a piece of poultry while surrounded by 12 carousing "apostles." The theatrical tableau features a groaning board of wine, beer, sausage and other grilled meats, an ironic allusion to one of Argentina's most



MARCOS LOPEZ

"Barbecue in Mendiolaza," a nearly 10-foot-wide photograph by Marcos Lopez, is a takeoff on da Vinci's "The Last Supper." It can be seen in the Smithsonian's S. Dillon Ripley Center exhibit "Southern Identity: Contemporary Argentine Art."

THE STORY BEHIND THE WORK

Marcos Lopez isn't the only Argentinian artist in "Southern Identity" whose work touches on the culture of meat and its discontents. Nicola Costantino even went to school for it.

The conceptual artist, who at one point studied taxidermy at the Museum of Natural Sciences in Rosario, has three works in the show that feature extremely lifelike casts of actual farm animals. One, called "Pig Ball" looks exactly like it sounds: a cast of a hog carcass that has been squeezed into a space the size and shape of a Pilates ball. (It's not her most provocative work. She has also made soap out of fat liposuctioned from her own body.)

Using high pressure, Costantino compresses the skin, hooves and head of a dead pig into a sphere. The sculpture itself is cast from aluminum and polyester resin. It has a silvery, metallic sheen, like a giant pendant. Its power resides in the balance it strikes — and the highly charged psychological tension — between violence and vanity.

— Michael O'Sullivan



FROM NICOLA COSTANTINO

"Pig Ball" by Nicola Costantino is a cast of a contorted hog carcass.



FROM GYULA COSICE

Gyula Kosice was a pioneer in the use of neon as an art medium. His sculpture "Structure and Partial Curves in Neon Gas" is part of "Southern Identity."

sacred customs: the asado, or outdoor roast.

Another resonant contribution comes from Jorge Macchi. His video work "12 Short Songs" is just what the title implies: a series of half-minute ditties played on a hand-cranked music box. The score, however, is what's really interesting. Macchi has taken a dozen depressing news headlines — "World Bank Predicts Devastating Global Poverty," for instance — and printed them on long hole-punch cards. When run through the music box like the scroll of a player piano, the cards create plinking melodies that are at once discordant and oddly jaunty, a reference perhaps to our ability to ignore bad news.

The show isn't all politics. (This will

come as good news to anyone who overdosed on the most recent election cycle.) Lots of pieces are simply — one mustn't say merely — pretty. Check out Gyula Kosice's "Structure and Partial Curves in Neon Gas." Yes, it looks like every other piece of neon public art made since the 1960s and 1970s: safe, soothing, a little sleep-inducing. But now look at the date: 1948. Kosice was the first artist, anywhere, to use neon as his main medium.

One thing you shouldn't expect from "Southern Identity" is a history lesson. The show, co-curated by the cultural secretariat's Alberto Petrina, national director of patrimony and museums, and Andres Duprat, director of visual arts, is a mixed bag, a tasting menu of contemporary art from a

nation that is not terribly well represented in Washington's museums.

It's about introductions. And it's about time.

osullivanm@washpost.com

SOUTHERN IDENTITY: CONTEMPORARY ARGENTINE ART

Through Jan. 23 at the International Gallery of the Smithsonian's S. Dillon Ripley Center, 1100 Jefferson Dr. SW (Metro: Smithsonian). 202-633-1000 (TDD: 202-633-5285). www.latino.si.edu/argentina. Hours: Open daily 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Admission: Free.

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THURSDAY | 10.21.2010 | EXPRESS | E25

entertainment | Weekend Pass

Alone Together



EMILIA GUTIERREZ

SAD AND BEAUTIFUL: The Art Museum of the Americas brings to D.C. the paintings and drawings of the late Argentine artist Emilia Gutierrez. Focused on ghostly figures walking through the streets, Gutierrez's work somehow found the beauty in portraying loneliness. Although she was a member of the Argentine art group Grupo de Plata, Gutierrez operated in her own defined world.

The Smithsonian's National Museum of History and Culture Invites District Area Teachers to the exhibition

"The Kinsey Collection: The Shared Treasures of Bernard and Shirley Kinsey—Where Art and History Intersect"

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2010

7:15 & 9 p.m.

Smithsonian Teachers' Night 2010: Tours for Educators Only

NMAAHC Gallery, National Museum of American History
14th Street and Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC

Meet Bernard and Shirley Kinsey in the exhibition and learn about their history and art collection. The Kinseys will introduce teachers to their artifacts and tell how their materials have been used in school systems around the nation. Space is limited; please do not bring children or other guests. Register for this free event at www.TeachersNight.org. A book signing will follow.

For more information, call 202-633-0070 or visit NMAAHC.si.edu.



Smithsonian
National Museum of African American
History and Culture



EDWIN J. COLEMAN



entertainment | **Weekend Pass****the scene**

si.edu.

Newseum: "Inside Tim Russert's Office: If It's Sunday, It's 'Meet the Press,'" "First Dogs: Presidential Pets in the White House," both through Dec. 31.

"Athlete: the Sports Illustrated Photography of Walter Ioss," through Jan. 16;

"Elvis! His Groundbreaking, Hip-Shaking, Newsmaking Story," through Feb. 14. Ongoing permanent exhibitions illustrating the role of a free press in a free society. 555 Pennsylvania Ave. NW; 888-639-7386, Newseum.org.

Old Print Gallery: "Nikolas Schiller: Geospatial Art," Schiller's maps won't get you very far; his prints offer viewers an infinite path through both space and time, through Nov. 13. 1220 31st St. NW; 202-965-1818, Oldprintgallery.com.**International Art Play**

SERGIO VEGA

O, ARGENTINA: Continuing its celebration of Argentine art, the Art Museum of the Americas presents "Argentina in Focus: Visualizing the Concept—Cristian Segura/Sergio Vega." Segura presents installations that make museum-goers question the permanence of the art. Vega is concerned with outsiders' views of Argentina and whether it is the exotic oasis it is often portrayed to be.

LAST CHANCE Pass Gallery: "Paintings by: Michal Hunter and Joanne Kent," exhibition of work by two D.C. artists, one focusing on the cultural iconography of jeans, the other an exploration of sensuality and strength in painting, through Tue. 1617 S St. NW; 202-745-0796.

The Phillips Collection: "Truth-Beauty: Pictorialism and the Photograph as Art, 1845-1945," through Jan. 8. "Coburn and the Photographic Portfolio," through Jan. 9. "Side by Side: Oberlin's Masterworks at the Phillips," through Jan. 16. 1600 21st St. NW; Phillipscollection.org.

Piola Restaurant: "Suenos de Insomnio," highlights of work from recently relocated Argentinian surrealist Marcelo Novo, through Nov. 27. 1550 Wilson Blvd., Arlington; 703-528-1502, Piola.it.

Continued on page E24

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entertainment | **Weekend Pass****the scene**

Continued from page E11

\$40-\$100.

Music Center at Strathmore:

National Philharmonic: Dvorak's New World Symphony, 3 p.m., \$32-\$79.

Rams Head On Stage: Gerald Albright, 5:30 & 8:30 p.m., \$35.**Velvet Lounge:** Bellman Barker, 7:30 p.m., \$8.

Exhibitions highlighting Alexandria's history, ongoing. 902 Wythe St., Alexandria; 703-746-4356, Oha.alexandriava.gov/bhrc.

Alliance Française: "Paris Façades," watercolors by New York City-based artist Carol Gillott, through Nov. 5. 2142 Wyoming Ave. NW; 202-234-7911, Francecdc.org.

Anacostia Community Museum: "Separate and Unequal: Black Baseball in the District of Columbia," an examination of the popularity of the

si.edu.

Art Museum of the Americas:

"Emilia Gutierrez: Drawings and Paintings," an exhibition of an inverted Argentinian artist, showcasing drawings created after illness halted her painting career; "Argentina in Focus: Visualizing the Concept," Cristian Segura and Sergio Vega combine images of local Argentina and the Argentina diaspora in the U.S., through Nov. 21. 101 18th St. NW; 202-458-6016, Museum.oas.org.

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RACE

Sculpture and the art of diplomacy

BY MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN

The engagement in "Bilateral Engagement," a contemporary sculpture exhibition at the Art Museum of the Americas, is a little lopsided. In art, as in diplomacy, that's not always such a bad thing.

The exhibition — a two-sided showcase for work by members of the Washington Sculptors Group, on the one hand, and the museum's permanent collection of Latin American art, on the other — strongly favors the local delegation. And that's a good thing. The work by the Washington area sculptors is simply better.

What does the show tell us about contemporary sculpture? For one thing, that it's often about the material itself — and its properties — and seemingly little else. That idea's not new, necessarily. But Kyan Bishop's "A Fascination With the Potential of Completely Falling Apart" epitomizes the trend.

It's a mountain of white ceramic fragments piled on the floor. Designed to resemble a heap of smashed china that has been swept into the middle of the room by a janitor, it's actually made to look broken. In other words, though its theme is entropy, it's very orderly. That gives the work a subtle tension.

Other WSG pieces get their kick from a different sort of materiality. Take Cheraya Esters's "You Spin Me Round Sweet Darlin." It's three automobile tires, made of wood. And painted pink on the inside. That's it. They're not oversize monuments to industry, like a Claes Oldenburg. Rather, they're kind of sweet. Call them corny love letters to improbability.

Other works do something similar:

Check out Brent Crothers's "Golden Egg No. 2" (outside, on the museum grounds). The size of a small refrigerator, it's a giant egg, made of tire treads.

Or Joel D'Orazio's "Dreadlock Chair (1003)," in which the artist has woven hundreds of pieces of black tubing — like hair — through the holes in the seat caning of a



MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN

"A Fascination With the Potential of Completely Falling Apart" by Kyan Bishop is an orderly pile of what looks to be smashed china.

chair.

What do they mean? They don't. Or, if they do, the question isn't *what* they mean, but *how*. They're visual poems, meant to make us look at an egg, or a chair, a little differently.

Ax grinding is largely absent. A multimedia installation by Washington's Renee Butler, "2 States/4 Dimensions," features video of melting glaciers and heaving lava, along with a plinking soundtrack. It makes

a point about the environment, but a quiet one.

Of the work from the museum's collection, the Dominican artist Tony Capellan's "Mar Caribe (Caribbean Sea)" is among the best. Made from a "sea" of blue rubber flip-flops with barbed-wire toe straps, it's practically an editorial on immigration and poverty.

It's also the rare instance of shouting, in a cultural-exchange show that prefers to

speak softly and carry a big stick.

osullivanm@washpost.com

BILATERAL ENGAGEMENT

Through Jan. 15 at the Art Museum of the Americas at the Organization of American States, 201 18th St. NW (Metro: Farragut West). 202-458-6016. www.museum.oas.org.

Hours: Open Tuesday-Sunday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Admission: Free.

THE STORY BEHIND THE WORK



LINDA HESH

Linda Hesh's "For and Against Bench Project" features photographs of people sitting on two benches. The people were asked to provide captions for the pictures.

One work in "Bilateral Engagement" stands out for its immateriality. That's the "For and Against Bench Project," by Alexandria conceptual artist Linda Hesh.

There is a sculptural component, of sorts. Out back of the museum sit two metal park benches the artist purchased from a commercial manufacturer. One, in turquoise, has the word "For" on it; the other, in red, reads "Against." Inside, there's a rotating slide show of photographs the artist shot featuring people sitting on one bench or the other during a series of public appearances by the benches in the Washington area, beginning in fall 2008. Captions come courtesy of her subjects; Hesh invited them to write what they were for or against on a clipboard. "Against Conformity" is a example.

The real work isn't the benches, though. It isn't even the photographs. Rather, it's the performance that takes place whenever someone stumbles upon them. It's all part of what exhibition curator Laura Roulet calls "relational aesthetics," meaning that the work changes because of your interaction with it. Go ahead and pull out your own digital camera. Make your own art. "I welcome that," says Hesh, whose two more benches on current view — featuring the words "Doubt" and "Trust" — sit outside Baltimore's Lyric Opera House.

In fact, the artist encourages visitors to e-mail her (linda@lindahesh.com) with their own photographs and captions.

— Michael O'Sullivan



[sculpture]

Loud Marriage

Sculptures by Local, Latin Artists Scream Out for Engagement

by Rima Assaker

Engagement has been the latest catchphrase in Washington lately, but it's not just presidents and politicians reaching out for more recognition. Washington's treasure-trove of cultural institutions — from the city's many art museums to its historic monuments and buildings — also regularly try to “engage” residents, especially those who may become complacent as time ticks by, forgetting to raise their heads and take in the culture all around them.

A multimedia sculpture exhibit at the Art Museum of the Americas, on the grounds of the Organization of American States (OAS), aims to turn heads by marrying two important milestones in the city's local and international arts community. “Bilateral Engagement” celebrates 25 years of the Washington Sculptors Group (WSG), in conjunction with the 2010 centennial of the OAS's historic headquarters.

The show examines the historical sweep of WSG member work over the past 25 years — from the radical social changes of the 1960s to today — while also connecting it with select pieces from the Art Museum of the Americas that offer a parallel commentary on Latin American political and artistic trends.

It makes for an interesting conversation — and perhaps what's most striking about this “exchange” are the materials that the artists use to voice their messages. These range from stone, wood and organic earth to industrial steel and recycled objects like bottle corks, discarded flip flops and severed cables.

In Dominican artist Tony Capellan's work “Mar Caribe,” the artist channels the often difficult experiences of Latin American immigration through hundreds of well-used blue and green flip flops with barbed wire thongs that span an entire wall of one gallery room. The ebbing and flowing lines of ocean water created by the beach footwear reminds us of the many vicious obstacles involved with emigrating.

Similarly, “Back and Forth,” a 15-foot banner by Maria Barbosa — a local WSG member artist originally from Brazil — brings to mind the fluid borders between the United States and the Latin world. The embellished aerial map of the border is marked with minuscule footprints reminiscent of those painted in

ancient Mesoamerican codices and speaks to the ongoing struggles of Latin migration.

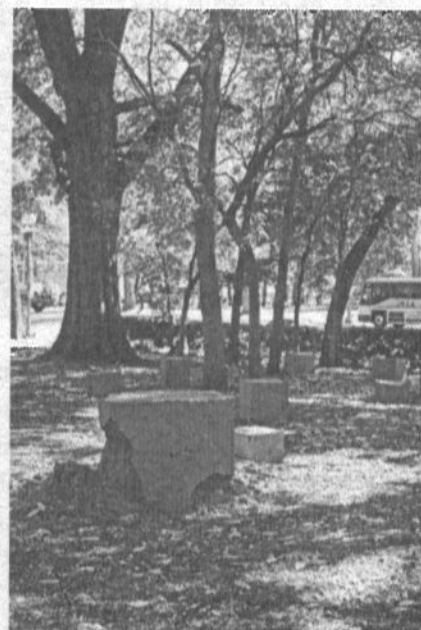
Meanwhile, Kristen Campbell's “Mangrove,” a steel-and-wire-wrapped creation that resembles a huge spider-like web of mangled tree roots, uses line as freeform sculptural device, hinting at the powerful forces of nature with its menacing appendages.

Venezuelan artist Jesus Rafael Soto takes a cleaner, minimalist approach with “Escritura Hurtado (Hurtado Writing),” which elegantly illustrates the power of geometric abstraction using basic black-and-white stripes, fronted by wire and nylon



PHOTO MARK GUEZMAN

Mariah Josephy's “Warmongers and Their Pet Dog,” above, and Leah Frankel's “Earthcube Colony” are part of the multimedia sculpture exhibit “Bilateral Engagement” at the Art Museum of the Americas, on the grounds of the Organization of American States (OAS), which celebrates 25 years of the Washington Sculptors Group, in conjunction with the 2010 centennial of the OAS's historic headquarters.



curving cords. The effect is both simplistic and sleek — mirroring in many ways Joanne Kent's Zen-like twin circular reliefs “Isis Revisited” and “Hard Rain.”

American sculptor and WSG member Gale Jamieson uses mixed media and steel pins to convey a more multi-textured and layered effect — literally — by attaching the steel pins to an old-fashioned dress form, juxtaposing the garment's traditional dress patterns with steel-tipped accents that channel an oddly cold-hearted aggression through the pins' visibly sharp points.

The artists' clever use of materials also suggests a strong reverence for the environment, which forms the basis of many pieces. Letting no material go to waste is recycling-conscientious Brian Reed, who uses thick, six-foot branches of natural wood and recycled materials for pieces like “Beer Bottle Cap Minkisi,” which is covered with hundreds of colorful beer bottle caps, wine and champagne bottle corks and caviar jar caps. Minkisi objects are thought to contain spiritual powers and are commonly used in healing rituals in the Congo Basin of Central Africa, though minkisi vessels and bundles are also found in Cuba via African influence. A number of Reed's minkisi pieces are included in the exhibit, some incorporating such diverse materials as seashells, nails, screws, juice caps and bells. One whimsical piece enlists basic arts and crafts supplies, including pastel-colored cotton balls, googly eyes and ladybug cutouts.

Other works turn to more high-tech resources to make their point. In “2 states/4 dimensions,” Renee Butler builds “resonant environments” using sound, visuals and mirrors to evoke the viewer's senses. Video flashes images of raging lava, flowing waterfalls, rising steam and shifting icebergs. Though beautiful to watch, the viewer is left with an uneasy feeling about the unpredictability and precariousness of the world's ecosystems.

Likewise, American artist Joel D'Orazio uses a simple, seemingly benign structure to convey deeper emotions. His “Dreadlock Chair,” an old wooden chair with cables sprouting through its back, evokes the claustrophobia of being tied down by technology and modern-day responsibilities.

In a city full of talking heads, these materials talk to us in a way that drowns out the usual Washington rancor, whether the conversation has to do with the pitfalls of technology or environmental sustainability. These sculptures scream out for engagement with their quiet power, and thankfully, the Art Museum of the Americas was listening and heeded their call.

Rima Assaker is a freelance writer in Silver Spring, Md.

Bilateral Engagement

through Jan. 15

Art Museum of the Americas
at the Organization of American States

201 18th St., NW

For more information, please call
(202) 458-6016 or visit www.museum.oas.org.

THE NORTHWEST CURRENT

WEDNESDAY, MAY 26, 2010 37

THE CURRENT

EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Show fetes House of the Americas' centennial

"House of the Americas Turns 100: Paul Philippe Cret and the Architecture of Dialogue," celebrating the centennial of the Organization of American States

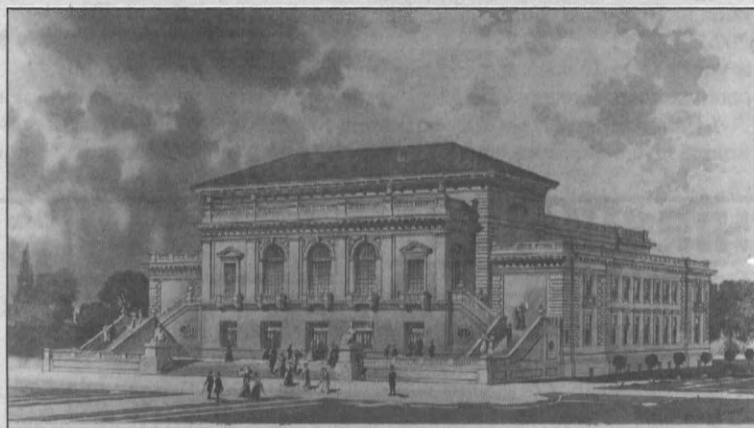
On EXHIBIT

Headquarters Building, opened recently at the **Art Museum of the Americas**, where it will continue through Aug. 29.

Designed by Cret in the classically influenced beaux-arts style, the historic building is located on 17th Street between C Street and Constitution Avenue NW. The show features original plans, drawings, blueprints and sketches never before shown in the city. There are also archival photographs of the building and the architect, as well as travel sketchbooks, drawings, original furniture and a large model.

Located at 201 18th St. NW, the museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. 202-463-0203.

■ "Beyond: Visions of Our Solar System," featuring 120 color and black-and-white photographs taken in space by unmanned interplanetary probes, will open today at the **National Air and**



This rendering of the rear facade of the Pan American Union Building, part of the Organization of American States Columbus Memorial Library Photograph Collection, is part of an exhibit at the Art Museum of the Americas that will continue through Aug. 29.

Space Museum and continue through May 2, 2011.

Combining art and science, the photographs offer a diverse tour of landscapes in our solar system and document the legacy of robotic

spacecraft over the last 50 years.

Located at 6th Street and Independence Avenue SW, the museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. 202-633-1000.

■ "On Display, in the Field, in the Lab: 100 Years at the National Museum of Natural History" will open Saturday at the **National Museum of Natural**

History and continue through Nov. 7.

Items on view demonstrate how the museum's researchers have used photography to document their findings and reveal the natural world.

Located at 10th Street and Constitution Avenue NW, the museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. 202-633-1000.

■ **Gallery plan b** recently opened an exhibit of abstract images by Karen Hubacher and Tory Cowles and will continue it through June 20.

Both artists employ widely varying textures and colors, but "Hubacher's works are carefully orchestrated and constructed while Cowles' are organic and spontaneous," according to a release.

See **Exhibits**/Page 38



Tory Cowles' work is part of a new exhibit at Gallery plan b.

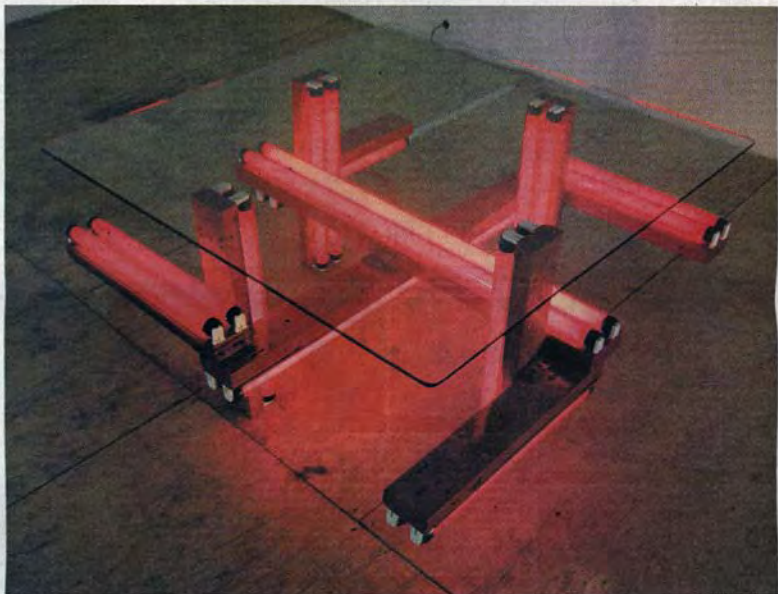
Style & Arts

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2008

DC PM 140 PG. 8

M

Studio



BY MARCO FORTIN—REDFERNS

THE BACK STORY



Latin Americans who were "disappeared" — murdered, kidnapped or tortured by their governments' military dictatorships — are the subject of a provocative group show on view at the Art Museum of the Americas. The exhibition includes several important contemporary artists, among them 35-year-old Chilean-born Iván Navarro. Now based in New York City and represented by G Fine Art here, Navarro injects political tension into objects modeled on 1960s-era minimalism. His most striking contribution to "The Disappeared," a sculpture called "Joy Division 1," mixes the inflammatory with the banal: It's a glass-covered coffee table shaped like a swastika. Navarro recently told us about how the work came about.

Would You Care for Cream? Sugar? Symbolism?

This work is part of a series of coffee tables/sculptures that I call "Social Sculpture." They are well-known ideological symbols that I made out of fluorescent lights, like the Star of David ("Joy Division 2") and the anarchy symbol ("Anarchy Table"). When I made this work, I was interested in the relationship between the political situation in Chile during the dictatorship and other countries that were supporting this violent regime. Citizens from Germany who emigrated to Chile before and after the Second World War had helped repress anti-Pinochet Chileans in a Nazi community in the south of Chile called Colonia Dignidad. This gated place was used by the Chilean military as a

concentration camp. I discovered the history of the term "Joy Division" through the name of the English punk band — one of my favorites. I appropriated the name because one of their early songs, "No Love Lost," makes reference to Nazi concentration camp brothels.

I work between the "real" world and the "artistic" world: The tables can be used as pieces of furniture in a house, yet their design has a specific formal and chromatic relationship to the symbols and their content. The idea of sculpture as coffee table results in a functional object that can be used as a social place.

—Interview conducted and condensed by Jessica Dawson

[history]

Latin Resurrection

Forgotten Memories Resurface in 'The Disappeared'

by Gary Tischer

The Art Museum of the Americas at the Organization of American States seems more of a home than a museum — an intimate safe haven housing unfiltered memories and personal experiences rather than a whole world of art collections.

You start to feel this immediate connection the minute you enter the building, where the first thing you notice is a kind of ladder whose rungs show a list of electronically lit white names that seem to go right up through the roof, perhaps dangling from an unseen helicopter.

The ladder is not a stairway to heaven though. Rather, it's an inkling that you're in the presence of something serious and large, whatever the size of the physical space around it. This is art as a forceful reminder of history, art as a tool of memory. Everything in the various spaces of this exhibition is insistent, pleading, and makes you aware of time passing, fraying the tendrils of memory. Everything in here screams: "Look at us. Look at what happened. You must not forget. It happens everywhere."

What you're looking at is "The Disappeared," an emotionally powerful yet thoughtful exhibition curated by Laurel Reuter of the North Dakota Museum of Art. It's hard to describe — and even harder to take in — but it starts with a large collaborative effort by 13 artists from seven Latin American countries who over the past 30 years have created art relating to human rights abuses.

"The Disappeared" refers to the fate of thousands of people during the dictatorships of Latin America in the mid to latter part of the 20th century — people who because of real or supposed opposition to the reigning governments, or because of association or mere suspicion, simply disappeared into jails, mass graves and into the thin air of anguished memory.

They were the victims of military juntas, reverse revolutions and coups in Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Guatemala, Uruguay, Brazil and Venezuela — vanishing souls still achingly familiar to their remaining family members.

But their disappearance also still haunts the collective psyche of each nation, in part because of the sheer numbers involved (Argentina's so-called Dirty War took more than an estimated 30,000 lives). The

issue also resonates for some because of its visceral connection to the United States. In Chile, for instance, the U.S.-supported coup against Chilean President Salvador Allende helped usher in the rule of Gen. Augusto Pinochet, under whom thousands disappeared.

History has not exactly forgotten these events, but they are little talked about on the international scene, because economic meltdowns, changes in leadership and terrorism are the hot-button focus.



PHOTO: ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES



For "The Disappeared," 13 artists from seven Latin American countries address human rights abuses during the Latin dictatorships of the past 30 years, creating works such as Nicolás Guagnini's installation featuring a portrait of his father, an Argentine journalist who disappeared during the country's Dirty War, above. Also in the series are Juan Manuel Echavarría's "NN (no name)" installation, left, and Luis González Palma's "Empty Shirt," bottom.

Thus "The Disappeared" is a kind of resurrection of those who have disappeared from both their homes and the world stage. It is a display about how survivors and artists resurrected these people based on names and bones, stories and testimony. Interestingly though, it is not just about those left behind, but also about the military and state perpetrators behind the disappearances — the people who pulled the triggers, held the keys, dug the graves and never left a map.

Take that ladder, for instance, which initially looks like it contains an endless list of victims' names. Actually, the 600 names on the rungs of this

30-foot ladder by Chilean artist Iván Navarro are of the people recently indicted for killing their fellow countrymen — the torturers, wardens, interrogators, officers and officials whose plain names resemble that of their victims, which adds to the shocking resonance of the piece.

Artists deal with such a black hole of history in different ways, tackling it head on or dancing around the pain — and both methods can be seen in this exhibition. Artists can use videos with faces and voices, show us X-rays and news reels, or ordinary personal belongings such as pictures from a class reunion and those missing from it. Or they can be less concrete with fragmentary poetry and metaphor — strong symbols of the past that transcend time.

For instance, Oscar Muñoz of Colombia drew a set of faces, which never complete themselves, but rather seem to fade into oblivion. An equally haunting series of eyes stare back at you in a separate but related exhibit called "Identity," in which photographs by 13 Argentine artists juxtapose faces of the disappeared with mirrors in place of the missing.

Nicolás Guagnini, also of Argentina, is more specific with his installation featuring a portrait of his father, an Argentine journalist who disappeared on Dec. 12, 1977. The piece, in which the face disappears and reappears, recalls demonstrations against the country's military dictatorship when people held up photographs of missing loved ones.

One of the more vivid yet simple efforts though is by Arturo Dado, who constructed a giant Chilean flag made of 66 human femur bones screwed together to form the patterns on the flag. Likewise, Sara Mancor of Venezuela constructed a chilling blueprint based on photographs taken of dental records from a mass grave.

All of these works embrace the reality of disappearance. Although it's a hard and grim reality, these pieces also act as a balm to an inexplicable insanity, and as a caution to the larger world. After all, we still live in a world where people languish in prisons or disappear in a flash — an abuse that, though fleeting in time, indelibly imprints itself on both history and memory.

Gary Tischer is a contributing writer for The Washington Diplomat.



The Disappeared

through Jan. 25

Art Museum of the Americas
201 18th St., NW

For more information, please call (202) 458-6016
or visit www.museum.oas.org.

The Washington Post Style

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Conan O'Brien hits the ratings jackpot in the coveted 18-to-49-year-old age group in his debut on TBS. But will it last? **C6**

THE RELIABLE SOURCE
The 'Golden' bear
The Forest Service makes Betty White an honorary ranger. **C2**

BOOK WORLD
A universe on Main Street
Ron Charles on Gish Jen's "World and Town." **C4**

ARCHITECTURE
The public process tonight is just checking off the box that they held a meeting."

—Consultant **Robert Hershey**, on Washington Monument security changes. **C3**

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FOTOWEEK DC

Buenos Aires's hidden corners, bared

BY BLAKE GOPNIK

One day in 2007, in Buenos Aires, nothing happened. It was ugly.

That is the gist of Raúl Flores's contribution to a project called "The Next Instant," showing at the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States as part of FotoWeek DC, Washington's third annual celebration of the photographic arts.

Curators Fabián Gonçalves and Marcelo de la Fuente asked eight leading Argentine photographers to capture the feel of a day in their capital city.

Flores, a leading local artist, responded by avoiding the striking scenes or telling moments that some of his colleagues went for. Flores looked for more hidden corners of existence. All his pho-

tos peer under beds and present whatever they find there as directly as they can.

This is what *real* reality really looks like. It doesn't catch the eye or tease the mind. It just sits there, unseen, neglected, like a dust bunny or a long-lost sock. The vast majority of moments in our lives are *undecisive*, and that's what Flores captures. Most of our places are ugly, or at least entirely plain. Which is why Flores's pictures choose to be the same.

Or not exactly, not perfectly ugly. In each of his six pictures, some tiny detail attracts attention to itself as special, artful. A patch of cheap blue carpet, out of focus in the foreground of one shot, could, in some other context, look like a patch from Monet. In the untitled photo we're looking at here, the strangely shiny floor seems to beckon the eye. The soft sheen

running down the middle leg of the bed has a certain optical charm. Even the standard blue-and-white floral pattern glimpsed on the mattress's bottom evokes high-end versions of itself out of Delft china and silk gowns.

It's almost as though, by giving us so very little to look at, Flores makes us more attuned to what's out there to see.

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THE NEXT INSTANT: BUENOS AIRES DAY AND NIGHT — CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY FROM ARGENTINA

Through Tuesday in the Terrace Level Gallery of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States, 1889 F St., open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. Call 202-458-6016 or visit www.museum.oas.org.



RAÚL FLORES/ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

REALLY REAL REALITY: Raúl Flores peers under beds and presents his findings directly.