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WEEKEND JOURNAL.

EUROPE



Children's tales grow up

Hollywood targets adults
with edgy makeover of classics

MI5 reveals some secrets | London and Paris fair fight

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WEEKEND JOURNAL

EUROPE

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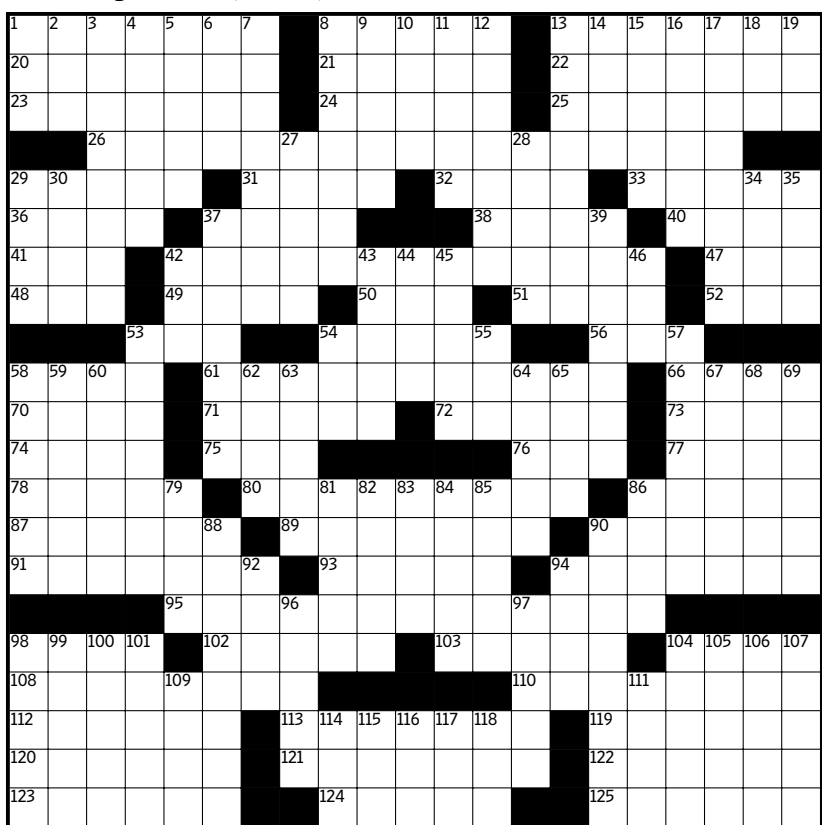
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❖ Fashion

In Paris, designers go for sexy, not safe, looks

THESE HAVE BEEN plenty of beautiful clothes at Paris fashion week, but the trendy looks reveal how hard the industry is struggling to grab shoppers' attention: micro miniskirts, transparent blouses, pointy "Mad Men" bras and panties worn as shorts.

These sorts of styles, shown by fashion houses including Christian Dior, Jean Paul Gaultier, Giambattista Valli and Yves St. Laurent, garner attention. But they risk turning off many professional or mature women, who can only imagine how embarrassing it would be to wear

On Style

CHRISTINA BINKLEY

such things.

The lingerie look on the Paris runways is an about-face from the more wearable, classic clothes Paris featured in March, which are in stores now and are said to be selling relatively well.

But even as department stores see interest in these classic clothes, many specialty retailers are demanding designers up the ante with newer, more exciting styles.

"Safe does not give my clients a reason to buy," says Karen Daskas, owner of a Birmingham, Mich., boutique called Tender. She says she wants colorful, feminine looks with "a few hard edges. ... It needs to be emotional, exclusive and be able to work into her lifestyle."

One of Ms. Daskas's favorite collections in Paris was Lanvin, designed by Alber Elbaz. Lanvin, with plunging necklines and mid-thigh-length dresses—including a beige slip-dress wrapped like a gift in transparent red silk—drilled down on evening and cocktail wear.

Retailers have their fingers crossed for this week's collections. While retail stocks have bumped up recently and some stores see tentative improvements, many luxury stores are frequently empty of customers these days, says Jean Marie Brucker, chief executive of Pôle Luxe, a Paris-based luxury consultant. He says brands that are selling best are paying close attention to quality and their own heritage. He cites the relatively strong performance of Hermès and Louis Vuitton.

At Chanel this week, designer Karl Lagerfeld sought a careful balance; he used theatrics to promote the brand while delivering a cocksure collection of suits, dresses and wide-legged pants with all the Chanel cues, like fringe-y edges, that clients expect.

For a nod to the trends, he tossed in a pair of panty-shorts and transparent tops, and to entertain the audience, he erected a barnyard at the Palais Royale, with models walking out of a center haystack. The coup de grâce: He put the singer Prince in the front row. It was a masterful approach to finding a mix between marketing fashion fantasies and delivering wearable clothes.

Mr. Gaultier did something similar, inviting Janet Jackson and burlesque artist Dita von Teese in order to create a press scrum. He salted in gorgeous trench coats and suit jackets among his pointy Madonna-bra overalls, which recalled a well-known earlier look.

At the same time, the collection Mr. Gaultier designed for Hermès, shown on Wednesday evening, was in keeping with the brand's tradi-



tions. That collection, which heavily featured the famous bags, including one white and gray crocodile Birkin, was positively preppy with tennis skirts and Gatsby sweaters.

To a great extent, the clothes shown on runways are marketing devices, produced to entertain and excite the imagination. Gucci Group's Alexander McQueen is a master of that. His show on Tuesday evening, live-streamed on the Web, showed models metamorphosing from humans into snakes while wearing dresses that resembled reptiles and shoes that looked more like hooves than footwear. It was tremendously entertaining, despite the undercurrent of fear about a globally warmed world. There is a risk some women will expect to see those reptile garments in stores. But the brand consistently produces a fuller collection of sharply tailored ready-to-wear clothes for store shelves.

While McQueen left lingerie out of the lineup, Akris played the trend with subtlety in its show. Akris scion and designer Albert Kriemler delivered the brand's signature long, slimming vertical lines, trapezoid patterns, and wildly luxurious, soft fabrics, including a silk print made from a photograph of a pile of fabric.

This is the first season Akris has included handbags. After the company bought a small German handbag maker in October 2008, Mr. Kriemler began creating a line of trapezoid-shaped bags whose underlying material is horsehair from Mongolian ponies. Asian retailers "always ask you for a bag," Mr. Kriemler says. "It's a major need for the development of our company."

The elegant, lightweight horsehair line (horsehair is often used in high-fashion textiles to give strength without weight) ranges in price from \$1,600 to \$7,000.

Yet even Mr. Kriemler snuck a series of visible bras—peeking from blazers and plunging necklines—into his runway show. "We have to give a nod to that trend," he said.

It may be that lingerie will generate the sort of buzz brands need. New York digital-marketing firm Zeta Interactive measured the response to the Paris fashion shows this week on more than 100 million blogs, message boards and social-media posts. It said the volume of postings rose 14% from a year ago (the depths of the financial crash), and 85% of this year's postings reflected positive reactions.



Clockwise from top left: Dior's lingerie look; a seemingly cut-apart dress by Viktor & Rolf; Gaultier's pointy bras; Prince at Chanel.

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❖ History

Saving the wrecks of the Channel

Marine archaeologists fear historic vessels, under threat from fishing trawlers, may be lost forever

BY DALYA ALBERGE

MARINE ARCHAEOLOGISTS have discovered a 17th-century shipwreck in recent months with a cargo that includes the world's earliest pocket calculator—a wooden carpenter's rule—while exploring the seabed of the English Channel. It offers a tantalizing taster of treasures that may lie within nearly 270 wrecks that have been identified, but whose survival is under serious threat from 21st-century trawlers working the busy channel between the Continent and Britain.

Some historic vessels that fell victim to the sea or cannon fire centuries ago could disappear within five years, according to a leading British marine archaeologist, Sean Kingsley, who is an adviser on the most extensive archaeological deep-sea survey of the Channel ever undertaken.

"Incalculable wreck destruction has already occurred," says Dr. Kingsley, who heads Wreck Watch International, a specialist consultancy. "Sites of major archaeological significance have been or are being completely destroyed. Without a swift resolution, future generations may judge us as having signed the death warrant for some of the world's most important archaeological sites."

He is working with an American underwater explorer, Greg Stemm of Odyssey Marine Exploration, a company that specializes in shipwreck search and recovery with a record of discovering hundreds of shipwrecks and treasures worldwide. Odyssey already has invested \$10 million on the Channel survey, which the company started in 2005.

Commercial fishermen—predominantly from the U.K., France and Spain, as well as Estonia and Russia—deliberately seek out shipwrecks because fish are particularly drawn to their nutrient-rich surfaces, according to the archaeologists. Some species like whiting are almost exclusively found on wreck sites and large fish, such as conger eel, like to shelter within their vast structures.

Historic wooden ships are being broken up by dredgers and trawlers striking them and exposing them to oxygen, which leads to a deterioration of organic remains, while artifacts can be damaged and dragged

away for kilometers. One beam trawler lifted and flipped a 4-ton, 18th-century bronze cannon 55 meters off-site. Another dealt a devastating hammer-blow to a World War II German submarine, while wooden wrecks of the 17th to 19th centuries bear the furrowed scars of scallop dredges. As many as 115 wrecks have been chewed up in this way during the past 25 years.

Almost a quarter of all lost ships sank in deep sea, but only a fraction has been discovered so far. Within the remains of these ships lie untold stories about the world's past. The Channel has been a crucial ship-

"Incalculable wreck destruction has already occurred.... Without a swift resolution, future generations may judge us as having signed the death warrant for some of the world's most important archaeological sites."

Sean Kingsley, head of Wreck Watch International

ping lane for millennia: Phoenicians searching for tin off the Cornish coast, invasions by Romans and William the Conqueror, and in two world wars, British and German naval vessels.

Dr. Kingsley says these wrecks are capable of extensively expanding our knowledge of the Channel's maritime history and can't be left in situ without guaranteeing further deterioration or destruction.

He is among marine archaeologists who argue that governments, along with the private sector and the fishing industry, should pool resources to rescue shipwrecks of international significance. In Norway, for example, legislation protects shipwrecks from offshore oil pipelines in the Norwegian Sea.

"No viable legal instruments exist to safeguard the world's deep-sea shipwrecks," Dr. Kingsley says, noting the sites' locations are remote from territorial waters. "The protection of shipwrecks stands at the bottom of the food chain in issues of marine studies and conservation."

At the very least, comprehensive mapping of the most historic sites could help fishermen to avoid them, and save their fishing gear from damage. That would leave the great majority of modern wrecks that have no historical significance to be exploited by the fishing industry.

The archaeologists have sailed into a net of government bureaucracy. Unesco champions the idea of leaving shipwrecks in situ as the most responsible means of protecting the submerged past.

In the U.K., archaeologists have sought permission to excavate and establish maps to guide fishermen away from wrecks, but the Ministry of Defence awaits a decision by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, which is in turn awaiting advice from its own advisers. The European Union has yet to put out a directive on this issue.

The "calculator" found by Odyssey is a 30-centimeter-long folding wooden rule with a logarithmic scale etched into the wood. It emerged with elephant tusks and cannons from a merchant vessel that went down in the 17th century and which is now being heavily smashed apart by scallop dredges, its hull almost completely de-

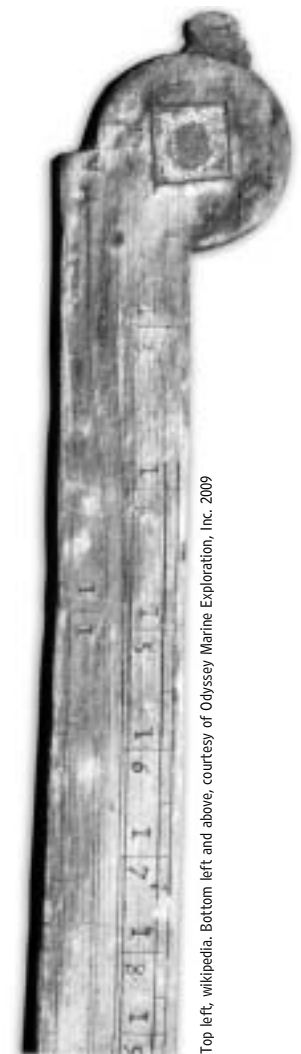
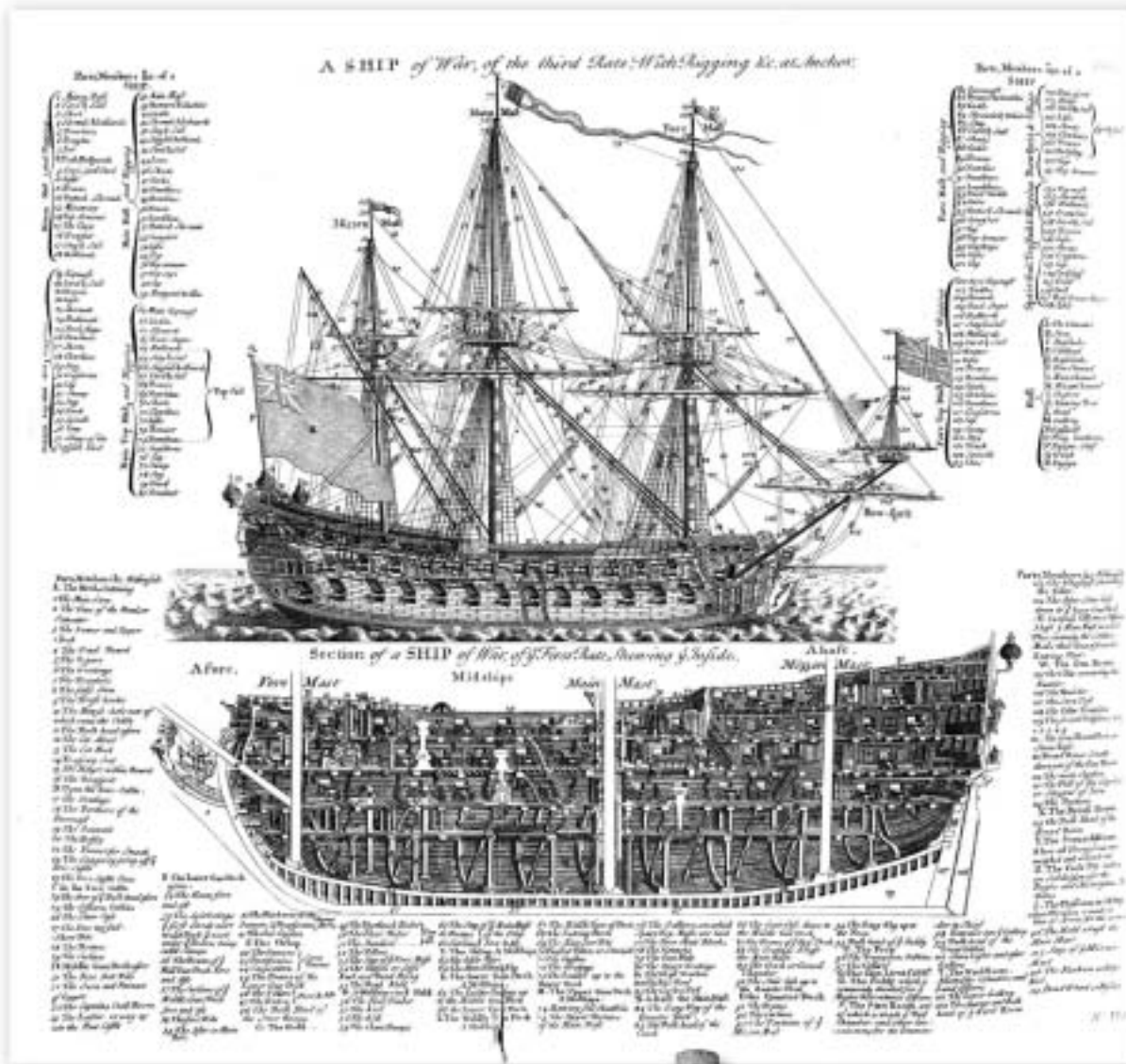
stroyed and its surviving pottery shattered.

As saving and excavating just the top 10 shipwrecks would easily cost hundreds of millions, some archaeologists believe Florida has the best funding model. The state encourages private explorers and archaeology firms, rewarding them for their finds. As a result, Florida has excavated the world's largest collection of shipwreck artifacts.

As to the U.K., although a government spokesman says the country is committed to strengthening the protection of these underwater sites, it is "waiting for a legislative opportunity," and that is unlikely to be in the near future.

Odyssey's work in the Channel is providing a wake-up call that some vessels can't wait that long. "Our maritime heritage is vanishing," Dr. Kingsley warns.

Dalya Alberge is a writer based in London.



Top left, wikipedia. Bottom left and above, courtesy of Odyssey Marine Exploration, Inc. 2009



Clockwise from left: Diagram of a warship from the 1728 Cyclopaedia; mid-17th century wooden folding rule discovered by Odyssey Marine Exploration in the English Channel; 12-pounder and 42-pounder bronze cannon recovered from the shipwreck site of HMS Victory.

London, Paris engage in a fair fight

BY KELLY CROW

TO UNDERSTAND THE current state of the art market, look to London and Paris.

The Frieze Art Fair, unfolding in London next week, is known for showcasing the hottest, fastest-rising artists in the contemporary art scene. Paris's Foire Internationale d'Art Contemporain, or Fiac, beginning the following week, has a reputation for showing older, less buzzed-about works. This year, for the first time, many in the art world are placing their bets on Paris.

The stakes in this competition are high. The art world looks to these fairs, along with others in Miami and Basel, to gauge tastes and test markets for top artists around the world. London's major auction houses time their contemporary fall sales to coincide with Frieze every year. Yet wary collectors who used to travel to a different fair every month are choosing to attend only one or two fairs this year.

This year, the fair in Paris is gaining ground by attracting Frieze defectors like Nicole Klagsbrun, whose skull sculptor Matthew Day Jackson is a new favorite of French megacollector Francois Pinault. The fair also won over galleries like Mitchell-Innes & Nash who sell modern and post-war classics. London's Frieze is sticking with its younger aesthetic.

Fiac's blue-chip strategy could pay off because prices for 20th-century masters haven't dropped as sharply this year compared with works made by the young and untested. During the first-half of 2009, for example, Christie's sales of Impressionist and modern art fell 36%, to \$621 million, from the same period a year earlier, but its post-war and contemporary sales sank 76%.

The fairs also reflect a cultural power struggle going on between London and Paris for the art world's attention. London, with its bigger auction presence, enjoyed the upper hand before the recession. But Paris can take credit for hosting the most lavish auction of the year, Christie's \$443 million sale of estate of designer Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Berge in February.

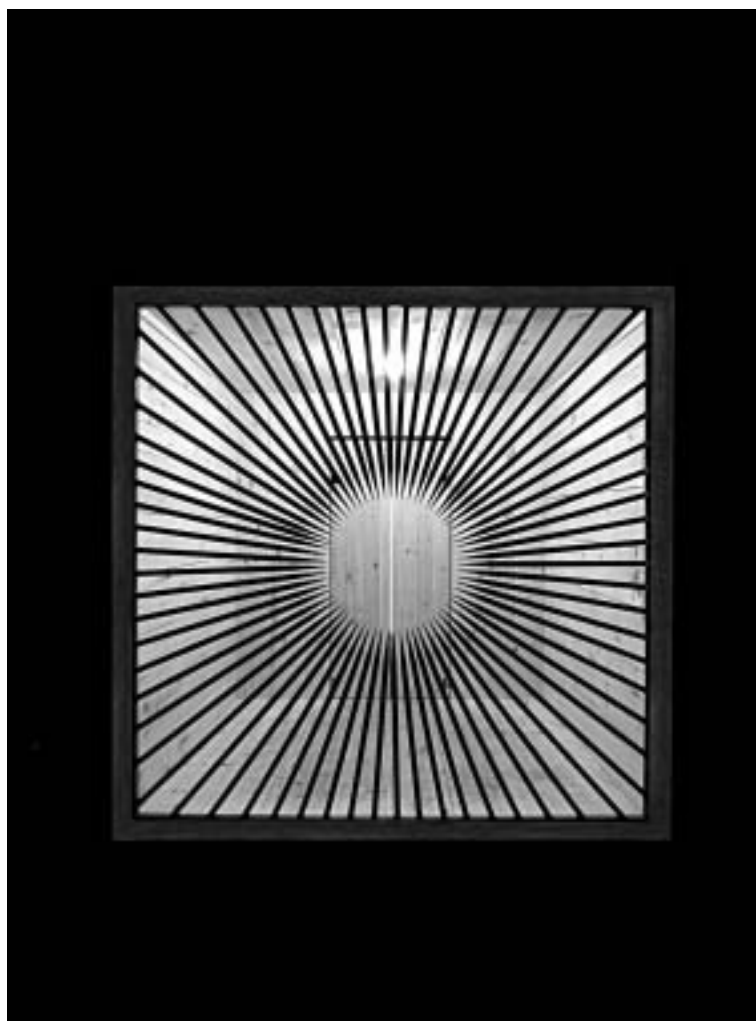
"The big difference is that London crashed and everyone's broke there," says Johann König, a Berlin dealer, who is exhibiting at both Frieze and Fiac this year. "But Paris is old money and old money is almost always OK."

So far, Frieze's trajectory has closely mirrored that of the last art cycle. After launching in a white tent in Regent's Park seven years ago, Frieze gained prominence by inviting hip galleries like Gavin Brown's Enterprise to sell their latest art discoveries. Bankers in London and New York lined up to buy, as did wealthy newcomers from Russia, Asia and the Middle East decorating their second homes in London.



Courtesy Galerie Daniel Malingue

Above: 'Le Grand Déjeuner' (1921) by Fernand Léger at Fiac in Paris; Jim Hodges' 'the dark gate' (2008) at the Frieze Art Fair.



© The Artist, Photo: Ellen Page Wilson

Much of that money has since evaporated with the recession.

In many ways, the fair in Paris, which launched in 1973, is just now taking off. Until three years ago, Fiac

was moldering in a convention center on the city's outskirts but it got a huge boost when it moved into the renovated Grand Palais, the glass-domed exposition hall located in the

city center near the Tuileries Garden. The new location attracted more collectors in Central Europe and a few powerful New York dealers like Paula Cooper.

After the contemporary art market plunged last fall, dealers realized Fiac's old-fashioned reputation could be a reassuring selling point, says Paris dealer Eleonore Malingue: "We didn't go up that high, so we didn't fall that much."

As competition heats up for collectors and dealers, organizers and curators on both sides are rushing to defend their local fairs—and taking some shots at their competitors. Bernard Blistene at Centre Pompidou in Paris described Fiac as "respectful, serious and nothing like the fairs that surf on speculation." Neville Wakefield, curator of Frieze Projects, said collectors going to Paris "want less interesting art but better food."

Both fairs claim to get at least 60,000 visitors a year, a third more than Art Basel Miami Beach; both decline to divulge sales figures. But dealers say Fiac's footprint is much larger: It has 210 galleries this year, compared with Frieze's 164, and dealers say Fiac charges around €400 per square meter for its booths, compared with Frieze's fees of £250 per square meter. No one expects their booths to sell out in the first hour.

Frieze co-director Amanda Sharp says the London fair is trying

to take the market's "uncertainty" in stride, filling gaps in its roster with younger galleries and shoring up its edgy identity.

London's chief auction houses will also hold a series of contemporary art auctions, led by Martin Kippenberger's "Paris Bar," which Christie's expects to sell next Friday for at least £800,000.

In Paris, expect to see plenty of works by strong-selling modern masters, led by a new consortium of 10 blue-chip galleries exhibiting in a shared booth dubbed the Modern Project. The group, which includes the Acquavella Galleries in New York, Thomas Amman in Zurich, Galerie Beyeler in Basel, and Malingue in Paris, is offering a couple dozen works by artists like Constantin Brancusi, Piet Mondrian and Fernand Léger, including Léger's 1921 "Le grand déjeuner." These choices, added to the fair roster in June, echo some of the same artists who sold well during the Yves Saint Laurent estate sale.

The fair will also feature some upscale events for VIPs this year, like a brunch at Versailles and the Palais de Tokyo and a dinner for 400 people in the Tuileries Garden on Oct. 20 capped by an artist-designed fireworks display. Ray Learsy, a trustee of the Whitney Museum of American Art, says Fiac is harnessing some Paris "sizzle" when "the rest of the Anglo-Saxon world is still grim."

New York dealer Per Skarstedt says he joined Fiac this year because he realized he was selling 40% of his offerings to European buyers, twice as much as he sold there two years ago, and he "needed even more exposure to Europe."

His booth at Fiac will include works by Cindy Sherman and Christopher Wool, priced around \$1.5 million; a Rosemarie Trockel knitted canvas for around \$250,000; and a Fischli Weiss photograph of the Eiffel Tower at night for around \$150,000.

The Paris fair also coincides with the launch of the Pompidou's New Festival, a five-week mix of exhibitions, talks and performances by over 100 artists including painters John Currin, Luc Tuymans and Albert Oehlen. The Jeu de Paume is also unveiling Francesco Vezzoli's latest video, a "commercial" for a fake remake of Fellini's "La Dolce Vita," starring Eva Mendes.

Mr. Perrotin says it makes sense to keep exhibiting in both fairs, but he thinks Fiac is better situated to thrive as the market turns up.

For now, collector Mark Vanmoerkerke, a Belgian real-estate developer, says he would rather double up than choose between the two fairs. "I live in a small city outside the world's large art centers," Mr. Vanmoerkerke said, "so if I can go to a fair and see 200 galleries in a single day, I'm still going."

Contemporary pieces on the block from Italy and the Middle East

Collecting

MARGARET STUDER

DURING NEXT WEEK'S packed round of contemporary art events in London, the city's international auction houses will sell a selection of exciting, modern pieces from Italy and the Middle East.

Both Sotheby's and Christie's are hosting special Italian art sales on Oct. 16, and Sotheby's will devote a special section in its main sale to Arab and Iranian art the same day.

The Sotheby's auction will feature Greek-born, Italian artist Giorgio de Chirico's classic-surrealist still-life painting "Interno con frutta" (1926-1928), which depicts a table of luscious fruits with ancient temple ruins and a bust in the back-

ground (estimate: £900,000-£1.2 million). "Piccolo Cavaliere" (1950), Marino Marini's superb sculpture of a horse with a falling rider, symbolizes human vulnerability (estimate: £600,000-£800,000).

At Christie's, Pino Pascali's "Pelle conciata" (1968), priced at £350,000-£550,000, is an artificial animal skin made from a synthetic blue, fur-like fiber that links age-old hunting practices to the industrial

world. Maurizio Cattelan's "Untitled" (1997), also at Christie's, is a joke, but one that offers an important reflection on our modern era. Estimated at £150,000-£200,000, it features three real, taxidermied mice under a beach umbrella.

On Oct. 16, the Sotheby's special section devoted to Arab and Iranian art will offer works ranging from abstract paintings and photo art to contemporary calligraphy.



Piccolo cavaliere, 1950, by Marino Marini.



CHILD'S PLAY

Kids' tales become edgy films; Spike Jonze shows 'Where the Wild Things Are'

BY LAUREN A. E. SCHUKER

MAX'S WOLF SUIT is being sold in adult sizes. Mr. Fox dances to a soundtrack that features the Rolling Stones and British indie rocker Jarvis Cocker. And Alice has blossomed from a seven-year-old girl into a 19-year-old woman.

In the coming months, Hollywood will unveil a series of films based on classic children's books and made by leading art-house directors who have reworked the tales for the 21st century. The result: a slate of big-budget movies sewn from the fabric of children's literature but tailored to look edgier, hipper and more appealing to adults.

Tim Burton transforms the lead character of Lewis Carroll's books into a young woman escaping an unwanted wedding proposal in Walt Disney's "Alice in Wonderland," due out next year. (Johnny Depp plays the Mad Hatter.) Wes Anderson reinvents Roald Dahl's fairy tale, "Fantastic Mr. Fox," in stop-motion animation, filling the film with ironic twists and quick-witted dialogue about marriage and mortgages (George Clooney provides the voice of Mr. Fox, and Meryl Streep plays his wife). And Spike Jonze—the indie filmmaker who made his name with the high-concept film "Being John Malkovich"—signed on acclaimed author Dave Eggers to help adapt Maurice Sendak's storybook "Where the Wild Things Are."

The new films feature jokes that may go over the heads of some children and music



Top, James Gandolfini plays Carol (left) and Max Records plays Max (right) in director Spike Jonze's 'Where the Wild Things Are.' Above, Mr. Jonze with Alexander, a character played by Paul Dano.

that's more likely to be on adult iPods than on the playlists of seven-year-olds. Singer Karen O of the rock band Yeah Yeah Yeahs penned and performed original songs for the soundtrack of "Where the Wild Things Are." "It was about getting the right sentiment," she says.

Some Hollywood executives worry that

studios are aiming to make hits that appeal to a wide audience at the expense of making movies that are truly for children. Others believe that studios are just trying to hook adults, never mind what children want.

"Where the Wild Things Are," which cost \$80 million to \$100 million to make,

hits theaters next weekend. If it, along with "Fox" and "Alice," succeed at the box office, they could help encourage other art-house directors to take on children's properties, an arena normally dominated by computer-animated films from Walt Disney's Pixar and DreamWorks Animation SKG.

"When we first brought the script to Warner Bros.," recalls "Wild Things" producer Vince Landay, "We told the studio, 'this is pretty much as far from a Pixar movie as you can get.'"

From the beginning, says Mr. Landay, he and Mr. Jonze wanted to make a movie that would draw an older audience, and told the studio that the film wouldn't appeal to three-year-olds. "We always wanted to age higher," Mr. Landay says.

Advance research on the "Wild Things" movie—called "tracking" in the entertainment industry—shows that of all groups, young women seem most aware of and interested in the film. A number of fashion designers are seeking to capitalize on that interest. Opening Ceremony, a specialty clothing store based in New York with locations across the country, is selling a jewelry collection and faux-fur line based on the movie. The store sold out of the \$610 adult-sized unisex wolf suits, which Opening Ceremony modeled on Max's, in the first hour they went on sale.

"I think our clothes have sold so well because customers have a nostalgia for the book," says Humberto Leon, co-owner of Opening Ceremony.

"Wild Things" faced a number of challenges, among them the question of how to



©Disney Enterprises, Inc. (2)

“I realized that what I wanted was to make a movie about what it really feels like to be nine years old.... As I started to write, I began thinking about the wild things as wild emotions.”

Director Spike Jonze

animate the monsters' faces. Without the assistance of computer-generated imaging, the faces of the wild things—actual costumes designed by artist Sonny Gerasimowicz and built by the Jim Henson Company—were initially frozen in place, and audiences didn't react well to them in early test screenings. “You couldn't figure out which voice was coming from whom” because the monsters' mouths didn't move, explains Mr. Landay. The filmmakers ultimately decided to use computer-generated images to animate the faces of the wild things.

When Mr. Jonze signed on to make the movie roughly six years ago, the biggest film he had made cost \$19 million (2002's “Adaptation,” co-starring Ms. Streep and Nicolas Cage) and he had more experience with skateboards than with children's literature. But he had a clear idea of what he wanted to do with the film.

“I realized that what I wanted was to make a movie about what it really feels like to be nine years old,” he says. “As I started to write, I began thinking about the wild things as wild emotions.”

In the movie, young Max clashes with his mother, who is raising him alone. Frustrated, he sails off to the land of the wild things, a band of monsters who have deposed king after king in their quest to get along with one another. In one scene, one of the wild things builds a bonfire and starts smashing houses. Love and anger in the movie are closely linked, with gentle dirt clod fights turning violent.

Some of the primal emotions in “Wild Things” are true to the original story. When Harper & Row published “Wild Things” in 1963, the book provoked controversy among parents, librarians and child psychologists, some of whom pronounced the wild things—with their fangs—too scary for children. In a column written for the *Ladies' Home Journal*, psychologist Bruno Bettelheim criticized the book for heightening children's fears of abandonment.

Those were the very elements that Mr. Jonze says he wanted to preserve in his film. Mr. Jonze says when he first starting writing the script he told Mr. Sendak that he was “nervous” because the book meant so much to so many readers. “We talked a lot about how it was important to create something that doesn't pander to children—something that is as dangerous as the book was considered at the time,” says Mr. Jonze.



TM and ©2008 Twentieth Century Fox Film

Mia Wasikowska plays Alice (top left) and Helena Bonham Carter plays the Queen of Hearts (top right) in 'Alice in Wonderland.' Above, Mr. Fox, voiced by George Clooney, stars in 'Fantastic Mr. Fox.'

Diane Levin, a professor of child psychology at Wheelock College in Massachusetts, says the line between entertainment for children and adults is becoming increasingly blurred.

She adds that while books like “Where the Wild Things Are” can help kids express and understand emotions, the live-action representation may affect children differently because “once the story is created and rendered for them visually, it can be scarier.”

In “Fantastic Mr. Fox,” the title character desperately tries to overcome his animal urges to become a respectable newspaper writer and settle down into a comfortable domestic life with his wife—but fails. In one scene, Mr. Fox stops to admire the silhouette of a wolf—identifying with the creature's untamed instincts. The film was co-written by Mr. Anderson and Noah Baumbach, who wrote and directed the 2005 movie “The Squid and the Whale.”

Mr. Burton's “Alice in Wonderland” takes its title from the classic tale, but deviates from the book in its story. (Mr. Burton's

2005 film version of “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” also took liberties with the plot of the original novel by Roald Dahl, adding in flashbacks to the childhood of eccentric candy maker Willie Wonka, played by Mr. Depp.) Although the coming film is set in the whimsical world of Wonderland, the film picks up more than a decade after the book leaves off, with Alice returning as an adult to the magical place she first discovered as a child.

Alice attends a party at a lavish Victorian estate where an unwanted suitor proposes marriage to her in front of hundreds of people. She follows a white rabbit down a hole—and lands in Wonderland, which she doesn't remember.

Andrew Sellon, president of the Lewis Carroll Society of North America, worries that the title of the film will confuse audiences, who might not understand that it's an amalgamation of two Carroll books (“Alice in Wonderland” and “Through the Looking-Glass”) with Mr. Burton's personal touches. “But I get it,” says Mr. Sellon. “That title is what sells.”

One of the first moves Mr. Jonze made to take “Wild Things” in a more mature direction was to hire Mr. Eggers—whose memoir about the death of his own parents, “A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius,” became a bestseller and was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize for Non-Fiction—to co-write the screenplay with him. Mr. Eggers later wrote a novel loosely based on that screenplay and Mr. Sendak's book, due out this month—in hardback and fur-covered editions.

With their script, Mr. Jonze says that he and Mr. Eggers aimed to create a sense of reality that would pervade a story that exists mainly in the realm of fantasy. He felt that by making the film look as real as possible, he could preserve the sense of danger and loneliness that pervades Mr. Sendak's book.

“I wanted to be on location, I wanted the creatures to look like they actually lived there,” says Mr. Jonze. “That way the story would feel real and it would feel dangerous.”

Mr. Landay says that he and Mr. Jonze brought together some of the voice actors (including Forest Whitaker and James Gandolfini) in the spring of 2006, months before they cast 12-year-old Max Records in the role of Max. They recorded the entire film together in Los Angeles over about three weeks, with Mr. Jonze and Catherine Keener—who plays Max's mother—taking turns acting out the role of Max. For the dirt clod fight, Mr. Landay and Mr. Jonze had the actors perform it with pelting each other with dinner rolls. “To record them together allowed a much more naturalistic performance,” says Mr. Landay.

In order to provoke strong emotions from Mr. Records when he began to film his part, Mr. Jonze, Ms. Keener, and members of the crew all would take turns surprising the young actor, dressing up as characters from “Star Wars.” And in one scene where Max must act scared, Ms. Keener covered herself in fake blood.

The film does feature scary moments, particularly one scene where Max, who becomes the leader of the monsters, happens upon a stack of bones and asks the wild things whether they are the remains of previous kings. But Mr. Jonze and Mr. Landay find moments like those key to their concept. “One of the central ideas in the movie is uncertainty—the way you never know if you're in a safe place or not,” says Mr. Landay.

❖ Books

In history lies all the secrets of statecraft

First official account of MI5 released to celebrate U.K. security service's centenary

BY CON COUGHLIN

ESPIONAGE IS NOT a subject that readily lends itself to public scrutiny. The guiding principle that has underpinned the response of successive British governments to requests for more information about the activities of Britain's intelligence services was best summed up by Conservative Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in the 1960s.

Responding to Parliament's request for more detailed particulars about the defection of Cambridge-educated Soviet agent Kim Philby to the Soviet Union in 1963, Macmillan declared, "It is dangerous and bad for our national interest to discuss these matters."

The decision, therefore, to compile an authorized history to mark the centenary of Britain's security service, MI5, marks a bold departure from the obsessive institutional secrecy that traditionally has surrounded the organization's dealings. It has also posed many challenges. How, for example, could any self-respecting historian be expected to provide a credible account of MI5's activities without compromising the organization's future operational effectiveness? After all, the whole point of having a secret service is that its murky transactions remain just that—secret.

Sir Stephen Lander, the former MI5 director general who pressed for the publication of an official history, essentially faced two options. Either he could commission an account written for internal consumption only, thereby guaranteeing protection against any potentially compromising revelations. Or he could take the more perilous option, a public airing of MI5's 100-year involvement in international espionage, warts and all.

As a Cambridge-educated medievalist, Sir Stephen was particularly struck by the wealth of documentation MI5 had accumulated within the registry of its Gower Street offices, where the archives were stored until being moved to the organization's current headquarters at Thames House. Those archives contain a deep mine of information, detailing everything from the penetration and arrest of the Kaiser's entire British-based spy ring at the start of World War I to the inconclusive assessments of the threat Osama bin Laden posed prior to Sept. 11.

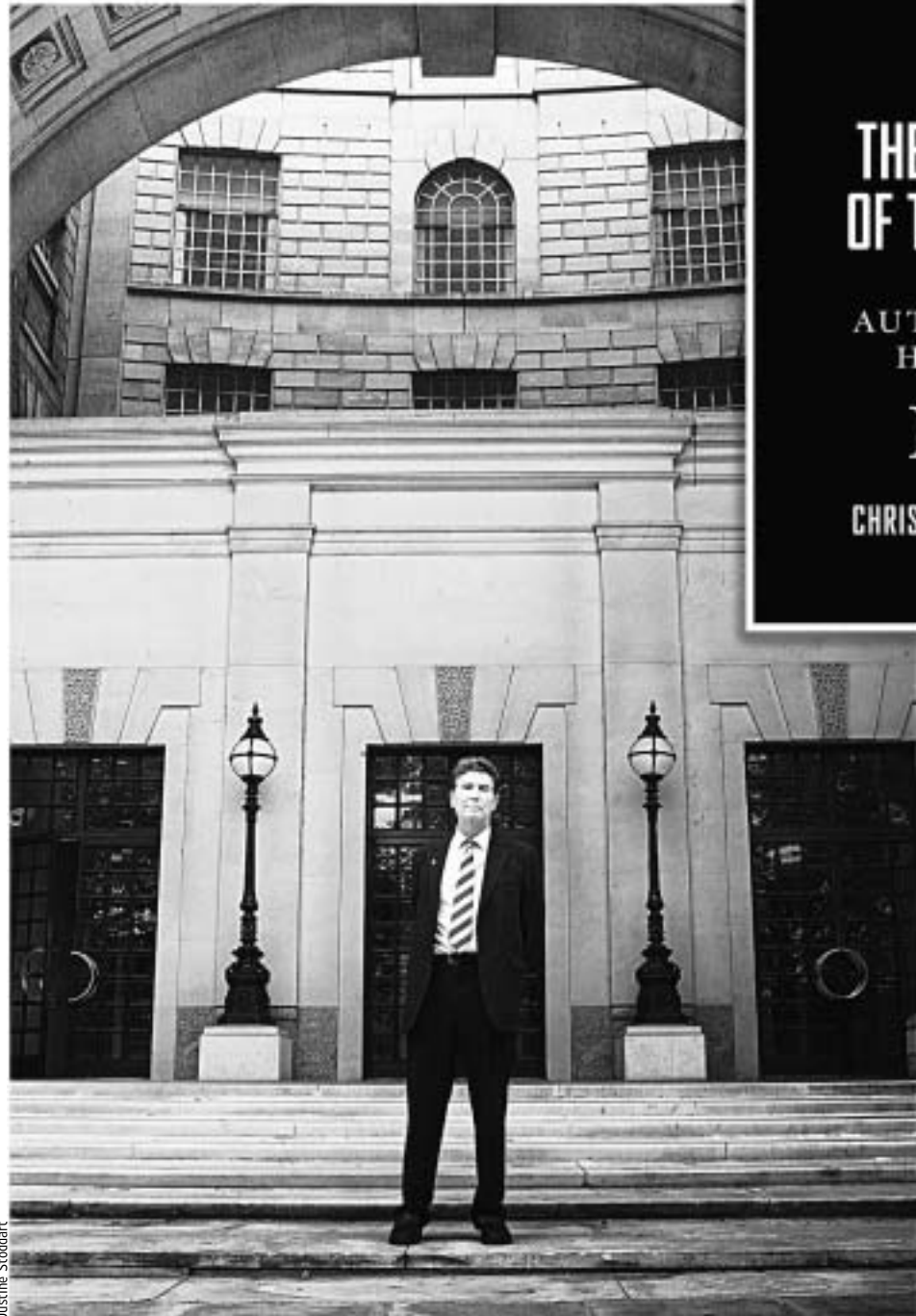
Shortly before his retirement in 2002, Sir Stephen opted for the more adventurous option, and commissioned Christopher Andrew, his fellow Cambridge historian, to undertake this daunting task, which has now resulted in the publication this week of a 1,032-page book, "The Defence of the Realm: The Authorized History of MI5" (Allen Lane).

Mr. Andrew is no stranger to the secret world of Britain's intelligence community. As the author of "The Mitrokhin Archive," an account of the KGB's Cold War penetration of MI5's rival organization, the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), Mr. Andrew is used to reconciling the sensitivities of top-secret intelligence with the exigencies of providing a credible narrative.

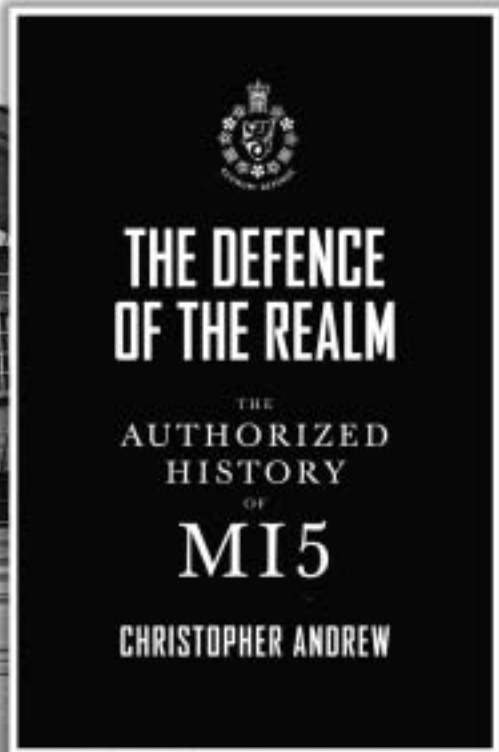
For this particular exercise, Mr. Andrew, who is currently a professor of modern and contemporary history at Cambridge, agreed to observe three fundamental rules that would ensure against any potentially compromising disclosures concerning MI5's modus operandi. He refrained from revealing potential target groups, the techniques used to track them or the agents employed to provide the human intelligence.

Despite these restrictions, Mr. Andrew has succeeded in producing a highly readable book that offers several important new insights into MI5's operations over the past century. Apart from examining the difficult decisions intelligence officers face in trying to decide whether a particular target actually poses a tangible threat, the book also shows how, in the real world, espionage can be a somewhat mundane experience.

For example, Stella Rimington, a former director general, recalls how she was once dis-



Justine Stoddart



Left, Christopher Andrew stands in front of Thames House, MI5 headquarters in London.

patched to the University of Sussex in the late 1960s to see whether the Soviets had penetrated the highly active Marxist student groups there. She quickly found that the students were precocious, rather than subversive, but was unable to persuade her bosses that they posed no threat. Ordered to remain in Brighton for several months, she whiled away the time reading a number of novels.

Mr. Andrew's book also gives us a valuable glimpse of MI5's operational shortcomings. To the post-Sept. 11 world, for example, it seems incredible that as late as 1996 Dame Rimington had never heard the name al Qaeda, even though Bin Laden's group had been well-established for several years. This was because the main preoccupation at MI5 following the collapse of the Soviet Union was cost-cutting, or implementing the so-called "peace dividend." Despite warnings, the service had not woken up to the threat posed by Islamic militants.

The main focus of MI5's post-World War II activity was countering the Soviet Union's attempts to strengthen its grip over left-wing British institutions like the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. The organization's red-under-the-beds obsession undoubtedly led it to exceed its authority, a tendency that famously resulted in MI5 compiling a dossier on Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson (code-name Norman John Worthington), who was suspected—wrongly—of being a KGB agent.

But in other respects MI5 was right to target left-wing trade-union figures like Arthur Scargill, the self-avowed communist who led

the National Union of Mineworkers. Though Mr. Scargill was not a spy, MI5 classified him as "an unaffiliated subversive" whose declared aim was to overthrow the democratically elected government of Margaret Thatcher via the 1980s national miners' strike.

The IRA, another key focus of MI5, posed an altogether different type of threat, with its repeated attempts to assassinate the entire British cabinet, first with the 1984 Brighton

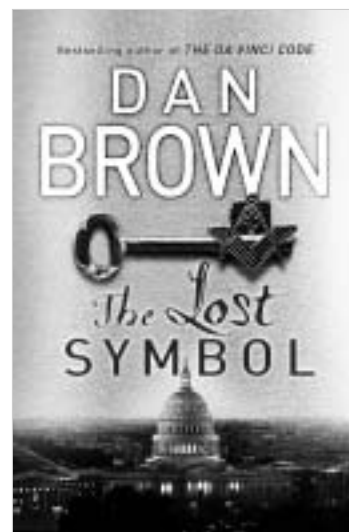
bombing and then with a mortar attack on Downing Street in 1991, which narrowly missed killing half the cabinet. MI5's determination to neutralize the IRA's activities not only resulted in some notable counter-terrorism successes—such as the 1988 interdiction of an IRA terrorist cell in Gibraltar, whose members were shot dead while they were planning to bomb a British military base. The agency also succeeded in persuading the IRA leadership to enter into negotiations with the British government, a move that paved the way for the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

Like everything else, MI5 has been changed beyond recognition by the Sept. 11 attack and its aftermath. One important consequence of the attack has been closer cooperation with the U.S. that began when the leaders of Britain's main intelligence services flew to Washington the day after the attack to offer support. George Tenet, then CIA director, later called it "as touching an event as I experienced during my seven years at the CIA."

Britain, of course, has had to cope with its own radical Islamic terrorist attacks, such as the bombing of London's transport system in 2005. But many others have been thwarted, not least because of the close intelligence-sharing that now exists between Washington and London, a relationship that is likely to feature prominently in MI5's history during the next 100 years.

Mr. Coughlin is executive foreign editor of the *Daily Telegraph* and the author of "Khomeini's Ghost: Iran since 1979."

Arbitrage



Dan Brown's 'The Lost Symbol'

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Paris	€28	€28

Note: Prices, plus taxes, as provided by retailers in each city, averaged and converted into euros.

❖ Theater

Phantom redux: a legend revived

BY PAUL SONNE

Twenty-three years after "Phantom of the Opera" debuted in London's West End, British musical-theater mogul Andrew Lloyd Webber is about to give "phanatics" exactly what they've always wanted: more Phantom.

The veteran composer, whose megahits include "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" (1968), "Jesus Christ Superstar" (1971), "Evita" (1978) and "Cats" (1981), began selling tickets Thursday for "Love Never Dies," a sequel to "Phantom of the Opera" set in New York's Coney Island, which is scheduled to premiere in London on March 9 and in New York eight months later.

The endeavor marks a defining moment for the 61-year-old composer, who hasn't written a hit score for Broadway since "Sunset Boulevard," which opened in London in 1993 and later brought Lord Lloyd-Webber his sixth and seventh Tony Awards. Since then, Lord Lloyd-Webber hasn't won any Tonys, though he has written the music for a number of major shows. Two of those, "Whistle Down the Wind" (1998) and "The Beautiful Game" (2000), never made it to Broadway. "The Woman in White" (2004), despite garnering praise in London, closed in New York after three months.

"Love Never Dies" will test whether Lord Lloyd-Webber can resurrect his Midas touch by crafting a sequel to his greatest success. "Phantom of the Opera," which celebrated its 9,000th performance on Broadway last month, has grossed an estimated \$5 billion world-wide since its 1986 debut and attracted about 100 million viewers in more than 25 countries.

"It's definitely a way for him to say 'I'm back and I'm still a player,'" said Michael Walsh, who has written a biography of Lord Lloyd-Webber. "He will give it his best shot. It will come out of the top drawer."

But calibrating a follow up to the most successful musical of all time poses a tremendous risk even for a seasoned composer. Musical sequels have a troubled track record, with problematic shows like "Bring Back Birdie" (1981), "Annie 2: Miss Hannigan's Revenge" (1989) and "The Best Little Whorehouse Goes Public" (1994) going down as some of the most disastrous on-stage flops in recent history.



Press Association

Moreover, self-described "phans" are looking to relive magical moments from the original "Phantom," but soaring expectations will be difficult to satisfy, and Lord Lloyd-Webber has no plans to reprise musical themes from the original "Phantom" in the sequel.

Despite the odds, Lord Lloyd-Webber insists "Love Never Dies" will buck the trend. "I don't regard this as a sequel. I regard this as a completely stand-alone piece," he said. "It's not me sitting down and saying, 'How do we use the themes of the original Phantom?'"

Many musical fans, a number of whom attended Thursday's partial preview at Her Majesty's Theatre in London, remain confident that if anyone can pull it off, it's Lord Lloyd-Webber. Jack O'Brien, the sequel's director, agreed, adding he and Lord Lloyd-Webber have been cognizant of the dangers associated with "Love Never Dies" from day one.

"We are playing around with people's memories, with what they consider sacrosanct," said Mr. O'Brien, who recently won a Tony Award for his direction of Tom Stoppard's "Coast of Utopia." "We cannot be cavalier with this story because if it doesn't add up, if it doesn't make sense, if you don't believe it, we are going to be doubly culpable."

The idea for a sequel has been floating around for more than 16 years, Lord Lloyd-Webber said. In 1999, author Frederick Forsyth published "Phantom of Manhattan," which was a continuation of Gaston Leroux's original early 1900s book and, according to Lord Lloyd-Webber, it was based on conversations he and Mr. Forsyth had about a "Phantom" sequel in the 1990s. But despite the release of Mr. Forsyth's novel and years of discussions, Lord Lloyd-Webber remained unready to launch into the sequel.

"I could never unlock the story, and I could never make it work musically," Lord Lloyd-Webber said. But then he had a eureka moment that paved the way for him to finish the musical six weeks ago. "One thing can unlock everything—and in this case it did." He said he could not reveal what that key moment was because it would give away the ending to "Love Never Dies."

Renowned for its crashing chandelier and titillating mix of horror and passion, the original "Phantom of the Opera" follows young French soprano Christine Daaé as she becomes the infatuation and protégé of the Paris Opera House's resident ghost in the late 1800s. The musical concludes with Christine forsaking the Phantom's love and running off with her sweetheart, Raoul.

"Love Never Dies," whose score will include hints of Vaudeville, picks up with the story 10 years later, in 1907, after the Phantom has moved to New York and established himself as a kingpin at the burgeoning Coney Island amusement park. At home among the park's freaks, the Phantom has rocketed to success, but in spite of his triumphs he yearns to hear the enchanting voice of his lost love, Christine, once again. He finds a way to contact Christine, now married to Raoul and the mother of his child, and lure her



ImageForum (2)



Top, cast members mark 9,000th 'Phantom' show on Broadway; above, John Cudia plays the Phantom in New York; below, Andrew Lloyd Webber.

to Coney Island, where she comes to realize that the Phantom's dark, passionate obsession—a curiously expressed sort of love—has never died. The sequel features a far more prominent role for the Phantom, who has relatively little stage time in the original musical even though he holds the eponymous role.

Though some critics say Lord Lloyd-Webber—who recently revived Rodgers and Hammerstein's "The Sound of Music" and simultaneously hosted a British reality show to choose the show's leading actress—has undertaken a "Phantom" sequel as a way to cash in on a second trip to the well, the venture portends as much risk as reward.

Moreover, Lord Lloyd-Webber doesn't need the money. According to this year's Sunday Times Rich List, the musical maven is worth an estimated £750 million (\$1.2 billion), making him the 52nd richest person in Britain. His private company, Really Useful Group Ltd., owns or co-owns seven theaters in London's West End, produces 12 Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals at venues around the world and earns money on merchandise and licensing agreements.

Money, it seems, is not a primary concern: when asked what the budget was for "Love Never Dies," Lord Lloyd-Webber said he had no idea. He said he was undertaking a sequel because the original "Phantom" left so many questions unanswered; the ending, he said, was too enigmatic.

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❖ Top Picks

'Pop Life': the art of 'selling out'

LONDON: One of the titles mooted for "Pop Life: Art in a Material World" at the Tate Modern was "Sold Out." It's a more appropriate tag for this huge, glitzy demonstration of what one British critic called "the dynamics of selling out." Indeed, despite the expensive packaging, much of the contents of this show of the spawn of Andy Warhol's factory looks cheap and tawdry, piled high and appealing to junk-food appetites, like the interior of a low-end discount supermarket.

Though the police have no business acting as art critics, they have made the ultimate critical judgment and shut down one of the four (and the least offensive) of the rooms displaying pornography—the gallery containing nothing but Richard Prince's 1983 "Spiritual America," his re-photograph of a creepy photograph of the pre-pubescent Brooke Shields, nude and wearing a ton of too grown-up make-up.

The gold-framed photograph, originally made for "Playboy," strongly makes the show's argument. The artists featured in it, these children of Warhol, have turned their "art" into just another commodity, something to be bought and sold, rather than something to be contemplated in tranquility.

There's no reason at all why a show at the Tate Modern shouldn't deal with sex, even when it's as gross as the room displaying Cossey Fanni Tutti's genitalia, or the one showing a tediously long 2003 video of artist Andrea Fraser having sex with a collector who paid \$20,000 for the doubtful pleasure of her body; or even the entire big room of Jeff Koon's explicit pictures and sculptures of him cavorting with his ex-porn-star wife (to gain admission you have to prove to the guard on the door that you're over 18). Rubbish though most of this is, it's high culture compared to the ex-

hibition's final room, which shows the garish, candy-colored, cutesy debris of the frontal assault on taste by the Japanese Takashi Murasaki, whose own New York factory, a successor to Warhol's factory, churns out this stuff at stiff prices.

This show has its artful moments: the many Warhols themselves, especially the skeletal self-portrait of Warhol in his fright wig (the same one used in one of his sell-out advertising appearances), the Martin Kippenberger pictures and the reconstruction of Keith Haring's "Pop Shop" complete with merchandise, cash register and sales assistant. There are some good Damien Hirst pieces, though not good enough to convince me that his sale at Sotheby's on the day following the collapse of Lehman Brothers was really worth £111 million.

It's salutary to remember that there are other strains of Pop Art—think Allen Jones, Roy Lichtenstein,

Patrick Caulfield, the Oldenburgs, Peter Blake. Not all pop artists agreed with Warhol that business was "the best art." Some commentators have made (what I think is) the perverse mistake of assuming that the sympathy of the show's curators is with Warhol: if so, the Tate's curators have undermined their own case. This show isn't a pat on the back for those who have sold out their art. As the excellent catalog points out, the transgressions of this kind of Pop Art (I'd label it Capitalist Realism) are counterfeiting, exploitation and prostitution—and this show has plenty of examples of all three.

—Paul Levy
Until Jan 17, then at Hamburger Kunsthalle and the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa
www.tate.org.uk



'Rabbit' (1986) by Jeff Koons at the Tate Modern.

'The Power of Yes' deserves a 'no' in dramatizing the financial crisis

LONDON: "This isn't a play. It's a story. It doesn't pretend to be a play. It pretends only to be a story." These are the first words of the National Theatre's new play, "The Power of Yes," by Sir David Hare. They're spoken by the character called "the Author," played by Anthony Calf, who does, indeed, bear a passing resemblance to Sir David; but the lines are both prologue and death sentence, summing up the reason for the work's failure.

It isn't often that you greet an old friend, as I did going into the big Lyttelton auditorium, only to see him portrayed on the stage in one of the principal roles. Though whether my very amusing friend, Sir Howard Davies, the first Chair of Britain's Financial Services Authority and now Director of the London School of Economics, is cast as hero or villain is hard to say, even after seeing the play and reading the script, in which he describes Britain's current policy

of "quantitative easing" as "throwing money out of helicopters."

But it turns out that the work is exactly what its subtitle says: "A dramatist seeks to understand the financial crisis." The dramatist has interviewed many of the chief players in the crash, from George Soros and Ronald Cohen to the (in real life) self-deprecating Sir Howard. He then used their own words to tell his story, with a cast of 24 named and unnamed bankers, financial journal-

ists, industrialists, academics and lawyers. But none of them ever becomes a character in a play.

The play doesn't work as drama. It's more like a lecture given by two dozen speakers. The only real humor in the piece is contributed near the end, by the actor playing Mr. Soros. The only excitement is the denunciation of the disgraced Sir Fred Goodwin, which is vitriolic. There's precious little emotion on display or elicited, though the usually faux-naïf "author" sometimes gets cross, or even angry. At one point he loses his temper, and shouts repeatedly, with increasing volume, "stinking fish." Because this doesn't grow naturally out of dialogue, we don't identify emotionally with the character. Instead of sharing the character's anger, we're a little embarrassed for the actor who has to say the lines.

Worse still, since Nicholas Hytner, the head of the National Theatre, commissioned Sir David to write this piece about the credit crunch and financial crash, they've been beaten to the finish by Lucy Prebble's magnificent "Enron," now playing in London. If you need the crisis explained to you, don't bother seeing "The Power of Yes." "Enron" explains "securitized debt arrangements" and "sub-prime mortgages" in a really dramatic way, which you won't ever forget.

—Paul Levy
Until Jan. 10
www.nationaltheatre.org.uk

Courtroom classic 'Inherit the Wind' energizes Old Vic

LONDON: Though European education systems aren't plagued—as American schoolboards are—by a sizable minority that thinks Darwin is a dirty word, there is still a small movement in Britain that wants creationism taught in science courses. So Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee's 1955 courtroom drama, "Inherit the Wind," remains topical in its terrific revival at the Old Vic. Director Trevor Nunn's staging of this thinly disguised dramatization of the 1925 "Scopes Monkey Trial" fizzles with excitement, some of which comes from having the large cast sing plenty of good old fundamentalist hymns.

Rob Howell's ingenious sets smoothly transform a 1920s small-town Tennessee railway depot into a courtroom, or an outdoor revival meeting. The uniformly splendid cast includes Mark Dexter as "E.K. Hornbeck," who is actually America's wittiest-ever journalist, H.L. Mencken. He plays him as a languid dandy, a wasp who appears to be asleep—until he stings you. He's come South from Baltimore to report on (and finance the defense of) a conscientious science teacher who has agreed to be a test-case for the Tennessee law that prohibits the teaching of evolution.

But the reason this production is a must-see is the clash between its two stars, the theatrical big beasts who play the characters based on the trial's opposing lawyers. David Troughton is magnetic as Matthew Harrison Brady, modeled on William Jennings Bryan, the prosecutor and three-time candidate for president with fundamentalist Christian beliefs. Kevin Spacey, the Old Vic's artistic director, plays the agnostic Henry Drummond, based on Clarence Darrow, as an aging lion, whose arthritic knees make his gait tentative, though his bite remains ferocious. Brady's vainglorious belief that he is an expert on the Bible leads him to allow himself to be called as a witness for the defense. The electrically charged scene of his demolition by Drummond is one of those historic stage moments no one present will ever forget.

—Paul Levy
Until Dec. 20
www.oldvictheatre.com



Malcolm Sinclair as Myron Scholes in David Hare's 'The Power of Yes.'

The diversity of Futurism on display in Berlin

BERLIN: On Feb. 20, 1909, the Paris newspaper *Le Figaro* published a prankish polemic by an Italian law-school dropout, who called himself "Filippo Tommaso Marinetti." Written in the form of a manifesto that demanded the destruction of Europe's museums and libraries, while praising the automobile and the so-called "hygiene" of war, the polemic announced the founding of a new artistic movement—Futurism. It was not quite clear what form this new movement would take. Within a few years, however, Marinetti, now recognized as a poet, had become the impresario of an unmistakable revolution in the arts, and for a few heady years before World War I, the future of art indeed belonged to the Futurists.

A comprehensive exhibition at Berlin's Martin-Gropius-Bau, called "Languages of Futurism," commemorates the 100th anniversary of the first Futurist Manifesto by documenting the diversity of Italian artists who flocked to Marinetti's movement. Now generally associated with the explosive paintings and sculptures of a few artists, Futurism was actually a steady outpouring that encompassed paintings, stage sets and even musical instruments.

The surprise of the show is Fortunato Depero (1892-1960), a painter, sculptor, collagist and designer, whose work was as diverse and deviant as the movement itself. Predictably, and joyously, the highlights of the show are the paintings of Umberto Boccioni (1882-1916), who has

long been acknowledged as the true genius of the movement. His masterful works "Woman in Café" ("Donna al caffè") (1912) and "Dynamics of a Human Body" ("Dinamismo di un corpo umano") (1913) demonstrate a unique use of color that rightly serves as Futurism's signature trait and main accomplishment.

Futurism lived and died by the sword. World War I killed many leading Futurists, including Boccioni, ending the movement's most creative phase. Marinetti (1876-1944) himself lived on to redirect his enthusiasms toward another -ism, Italian Fascism, taking a new generation of Futurists with him.

—J.S. Marcus
Until Jan. 11, 2010
www.gropiusbau.de



Nicolaj Diulgheroff, 'Licht-Raum' (1930).

The Rich Fabric of Invention

In his short, tormented life, the Russian novelist Nikolai Vassilyevich Gogol (1809-1852) managed to write for the ages. His oeuvre is huge. Among the familiar masterworks are "Dead Souls," the first great epic Russian novel; "The Inspector General," a dramatic success; and volumes of Ukrainian and Petersburg tales, rich in folklore and culture with a froth of the supernatural. He is regarded as one of the major influences in the development of realism in Russian literature.

But it is "The Overcoat," the last story that Gogol wrote—perhaps his finest and most famous—that particularly characterizes his legacy. It is a remarkable piece of literary art, displaying Gogol's gift of caricature and imaginative invention. With "The Overcoat," Gogol introduced the short story as a literary form in Russia, providing a new model for other writers of the time. No one said it better than Dostoevsky: "We all came out of Gogol's overcoat."

Gogol, a sickly and delicate infant, was born 200 years ago to parents who were among the countless members of the petty gentry in the Ukraine. Educated at boarding school, he was a poor student but a good mimic. At age 19, he set off for St. Petersburg to make his career and, once there, met Alexander Pushkin, Russia's greatest poet. Three years later, in 1830, he published his first collection of Ukrainian tales, "Evenings on a Farm in Dikanka," which Pushkin was the first to praise. Gogol

told Pushkin how his publisher had gone to the shop where the collection was being printed and found the typesetters all laughing merrily as they set the book. Gogol had found an audience.

Through his stories, which contain multitudes, Gogol is principally perceived as a champion of the poor and downtrodden, a writer with an increasingly moralistic point of view. He gave literary life to the "little man," usually a minor official

Gogol's 'The Overcoat' has weathered the test of time.

crushed by an insensitive administrative system. This is the theme of "The Overcoat," and Gogol's pathetic little man is Akaky Akakievich Bashmachkin, an insignificant copying clerk, wholly dedicated to his work though little appreciated.

The prevalent theme of alienation is closely tied to the story's rendering of the human condition. Akaky has no close friends and is so alienated that he is virtually unable to communicate. He merely wants to copy. He is the subject of derision from his fellow clerks, which he accepts without struggling against it. Akaky's only utterance is poignant: "Let me be. Why do you offend me?" (The translation I use throughout this essay is that of Richard Pevar and Larissa Volokhonsky in the "Collected Tales" published by Everyman's Library.)

Akaky lives frugally on 400 rubles a year, his only dream to acquire an overcoat to replace the threadbare, irreparable garment he wears against the St. Petersburg winters. He needs a sum

equal to one-fifth of that annual income to buy the new coat, and he scrimps and denies himself to obtain the funds. With the one-eyed, drunken tailor Petrovich—a marvelous character who provides the story with some semblance of humor—he selects fine cloth. But there are no perfect moments in Akaky's life, as he must settle for a collar of cat fur instead of marten.

On the day Petrovich delivers the completed coat, Akaky's fellow clerks arrange a party to celebrate the event. He is uncomfortable in the social gathering at his colleague's house and soon leaves in his new coat, which he finds on the floor. On the way home through an unfamiliar district he is attacked, brutally beaten and left unconscious. The longed-for coat—in his possession less than a day—is stolen. The police are ineffective and a fellow clerk advises that he must seek help from an "important personage." His appeal to such an eminence is met with cruel intimidation and summarily ignored. Without hope and vulnerable, he falls gravely ill and days later dies. It is a tale both simple and philosophical, though with a difference. The story has, in Gogol's words, a "fantastic ending"—one of spectral retribution and redemption.

Akaky returns as a phantom and has his revenge. He prowls the dark streets of St. Petersburg, terrifying people and stripping them of their coats. He delights in robbing the "important personage" of his overcoat.

The once overbearing personage, now stricken with horror and remorse, redeems himself. The story ends as Akaky's ghost frightens a policeman away with "such a fist, as is not to be found even among the living," and, seemingly taller and more robust, disappears "completely into the darkness of the night."



Some of Gogol's contemporaries interpreted the robbery of the important personage's overcoat by Akaky's ghost as a fate awaiting the unrepentant Rus-

sian ruling class—a most prophetic speculation.

"The Overcoat" was begun in 1839, redrafted until 1841. A year later a four-volume edition of Gogol's collected writings was published and "The Overcoat" was included in the third volume. Although Gogol was to live another decade, his creative life—which lasted but 12 years—was virtually over.

The story persists in popular culture, having been adapted in a variety of stage and movie interpretations. Gogol's other works are present in more than 35 films, the most recent being "Taras Bulba," released this year.

Gogol was deeply sensitive, and criticism of his writing from peers drained his spirit. Turning to religion, he made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1848. Upon his return, greatly depressed, he fell under the influence of the intolerant, fanatical priest Matthew Konstantinovsky. He subjected himself to purgings and bloodletting and a final, fatal fast. He died on May 4, 1852, at age 43, and was buried in Moscow's Novodevichy Cemetery.

Vladimir Nabokov allowed that the real Gogol was found only in "The Overcoat." "When he tried to write in the Russian tradition," Nabokov said, "he lost all trace of talent. But in the immortal 'The Overcoat' he let himself go and became the greatest artist that Russia has yet produced."

Mr. Amelia is a writer based in Dagsboro, Del.

On Tattered Fairy Wings

In a dumbed-down world, what a pleasure it is to dive into the dense, allusive, uncompromisingly erudite novels of A.S. Byatt. Ms. Byatt has inherited Iris Murdoch's mantle as England's pre-eminent novelist of ideas, but her books are richer and more satisfying than Mur-

The Children's Book

By A.S. Byatt
(Knopf, 675 pages, \$26.95)

doch's, and less inclined to preciosity and abstraction. Ms. Byatt might more profitably be compared with the great Victorians in whose work she has immersed herself. While her novels may not be read as far into the future as those of George Eliot, her idol, they are certainly on a par with Disraeli's or Mrs. Gaskell's panoramic and socially astute works of fiction.

"The Children's Book," Ms. Byatt's new novel, will not disappoint fans of her phenomenally successful "Possession" (1990), the book that turned a middle-age author known mostly in her native England into an international sensation. Like "Possession"—which presented a kind of mystery story

that reached back into the Victorian world of letters—"The Children's Book" is a tour de force of literary chameleonism and social history, set, this time, between 1895 and 1919. Edwardian England was the great age for fairy stories and utopian politics. Equally illusory, both attempts to embrace unreality came to grief on the battlefields of World War I.

"The Children's Book" centers on the lives of two generations of artistic, bohemian families. Olive Wellwood, a writer of children's stories, and her journalist husband, Humphrey, have created a magical realm at Todefricht, their rural retreat, where they bring their seven children up "in the Fabian atmosphere of rational social justice" and cultivate a fairy-tale atmosphere. The Wellwoods' situation and many of their characteristics are based on the real-life children's author E. Nesbit and her husband, Hubert Bland, founding members of the socialist Fabian Society.

The Wellwoods' lives faithfully trace a prominent strand of English society at the time, a world—to quote Ms. Byatt's narrative voice—of "socialists, anarchists, Quakers, Fabians, artists, editors, freethinkers and writers, who lived, either all the time, or

at weekends and on holidays in converted cottages and old farmhouses, Arts and Crafts homes and working men's terraces, in the villages, woods and meadows around the Kentish Weald and the North and South Downs. These were people who had evaded the [industrial] Smoke, and looked forward to a Utopian world in which smoke would be no more."

One such person, in the novel, is the potter Benedict Fludd (loosely based on Eric Gill), who dominates and brutalizes his wife and daughters while creating exquisite works of art. Another is the narcissistic Olive Wellwood, a woman whose fecundity and happy marriage are achieved at the expense of her drudge of a sister and whose single-minded attention to her writing ends up destroying the child she loves best.

But Ms. Byatt is a multi-dimensional artist, and in Olive she has created a complex woman who is by no means unsympathetic. Ol-

ive is above all an artist, with the vagaries that the term implies, and narcissism goes with the territory. If on one level she is a "dark queen weaving her webs, and snares, and shrouds," she is also an affectionate woman who has, with great effort, constructed what she perceives to be an idyllic family life.

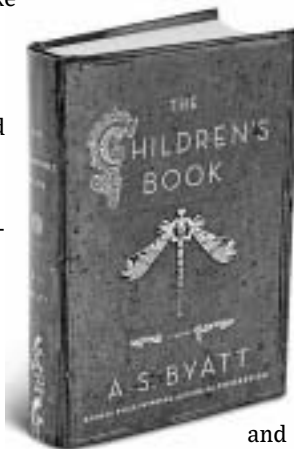
To the members of the next generation, of course, it all looks rather different. Todefricht turns out to be built, as they see it, on a foundation of lies: The children cannot even be sure who their parents really are. It is all very much like a fairy tale that Olive has thought of, "in which the gentle and innocent inhabitants of a house become aware that a dark, invisible, dangerous house stood on exactly the same plot of land, and was interwoven, interleaved, with their own."

The events of "The Children's Book" might be said to mirror the ways in which all parents, of every generation, deceive and be-

tray their children; but Ms. Byatt seems to find a special culpability in the Edwardian era, a time in which "people talked, and thought, earnestly and frivolously, about sex. At the same time they showed a paradoxical propensity to retreat into childhood, to read and write adventure stories, tales about furry animals, dramas about pre-pubertal children."

The children of the next generation—the Wellwoods, the Fludds and their close connections—end up paying the price for their parents' greed and self-deception. Ms. Byatt's sympathies are unrestrainedly with this group. But they are less vivid than their parents, and it is not Dorothy, the worthy medical student, who will haunt the reader months after the book is closed but her rather less worthy mother, Olive. Olive's dilemma, the challenge (which she fails) of coping with the creative and destructive powers given to the artist, is clearly one with which her author is passionately concerned. In the end, "The Children's Book" brings to vivid life the often irreconcilable demands of being an artist and being a human being.

Ms. Allen is a writer based in Brooklyn, N.Y.



timeoff

Amsterdam

photography

"Leonie Purchas—In the Shadow of Things" shows projections, photographs, sound and film recordings by British photographer Purchas.

Foam Fotografiemuseum
Until Oct. 25
☎ 31-20-5516-500
www.foam.nl

culture

"View of Oman" examines the history and culture of Oman with a show of 250 objects, including maritime and landmaps, archaeological finds and silverwork.

Nieuwe Kerk
Oct. 17-April 18
☎ 31-20-6386-909
www.nieuwekerk.nl

Antwerp

silver

"Corals and Bells: a Collection of Rattles" shows 167 silver and gold rattles, dating back to the 18th century, alongside historic children's portraits featuring rattles.

Zilvermuseum Sterckshof
Until Jan. 10
☎ 32-3360-5252
www.sterckshof.be

Berlin

festival

"Festival of Lights 2009" will illuminate historical landmarks—including the Brandenburg Gate and Alexander Platz—using projections and fireworks.

Downtown Berlin
Oct. 14-25
☎ 49-30-3267-9887
www.festival-of-lights.de

art

"Peacock, Dragonfly, Bat—Art Nouveau's Mysterious Fauna" displays 300 Art Nouveau objects featuring animals.

Bröhan-Museum
Until Feb. 14
☎ 49-30-3269-0600
www.broehan-museum.de

Bern

art

"Robert Rauschenberg: Gluts" exhibits 40 works by American artist Rauschenberg (1925-2008) that are assemblages of painted and varnished

pieces of scrap metal.

Museum Tinguely
Oct. 14-Jan. 17
☎ 41-61-6819-320
www.tinguely.ch

Bilbao

art

"The Young Murillo" presents 50 religious paintings by Spanish Baroque painter Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-82).

Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao
Oct. 19-Jan. 17
☎ 34-94-4396-060
www.museobilbao.com

Brussels

art

"Son of Heaven" presents 250 works, including bronze sacrificial vessels, gold and silver work related to the Chinese "Son of Heaven" mythology.

Palais des Beaux Arts
Oct. 10-Jan. 24
☎ 32-2-5408-080
www.europalia.be

Dresden

art

"Georg Baselitz: Women of Dresden" displays major works by German painter Baselitz, capturing his reflections on Dresden and its history.

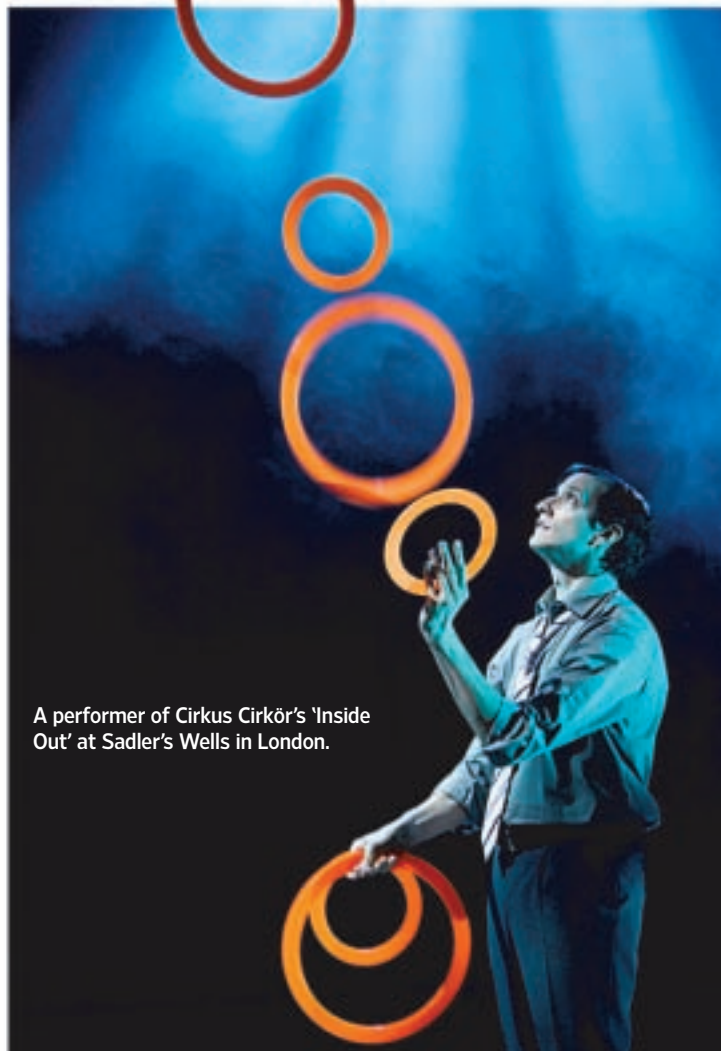
Galerie Neue Meister/
Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister
Oct. 10-Feb. 28
☎ 49-351-4914-2000
www.skd-dresden.de

Edinburgh

photography

"The Heart of the Great Alone" showcases Antarctica photography by George Herbert Ponting (1870-1935) and Frank Hurley (1874-1922).

The Queen's Gallery/Palace of Holyroodhouse
Until April 11
☎ 44-131-5565-100
www.royalcollection.org.uk



A performer of Cirkus Cirkör's 'Inside Out' at Sadler's Wells in London.

London

art

"Frank Auerbach: London Building Sites, 1952-62" brings together 14 paintings by British artist Auerbach, alongside oil sketches.

The Courtauld Gallery
Oct. 16-Jan. 19
☎ 44-20-7872-0220
www.courtauld.ac.uk/gallery

theater

"Cirkus Cirkör—Inside Out (U.K. premiere)": Acrobatics and storytelling in a celebration of circus and rock music by Swedish troupe Cirkus Cirkör.

The Peacock Theatre
Oct. 14-31
☎ 44-844-412-4300
www.sadlerswells.com

Lyon

art

"Picasso, Matisse, Dubuffet, Bacon..." displays 200 works illustrating major art movements of the 20th century.

Musee des Beaux-Arts de Lyon
Oct. 10-Feb. 15
☎ 33-4 721-0174-0
www.mba-lyon.fr

Madrid

art

"Tears of Eros": 19th-century European painting and sculpture, including work by Canova (1757-1822) and Ingres (1780-1867), alongside Baroque art.

Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza
Oct. 20-Jan. 31
☎ 34-91-3690-151
www.museothyssen.org

Munich

art

"Tiffany in a new Light: Clara Driscoll and the Tiffany Girls" exhibits about 60 works from the Tiffany Studios, including lamps, windows, mosaics, enamels and ceramics.

Museum Villa Stuck
Oct. 15-Jan. 17
☎ 49-89-4555-510
www.villastuck.de

Paris

art

"At the Court of the Great Turk: Kaf-tans of Topkapi Palace" presents kaftans, jewelry and accessories from members of the Ottoman court as part of "Turkish Season at the Louvre."

Musee du Louvre
Oct. 22-Jan.18
☎ 33-1-40-2050-50
www.louvre.fr

music

"Carefusion Jazz Festival" presents jazz performances all over Paris by artists including Chick Corea and the Branford Marsalis Quartet.

Oct. 16-24
☎ 33-1-4621-0837
www.looproductions.com/carefusion

Vienna

art

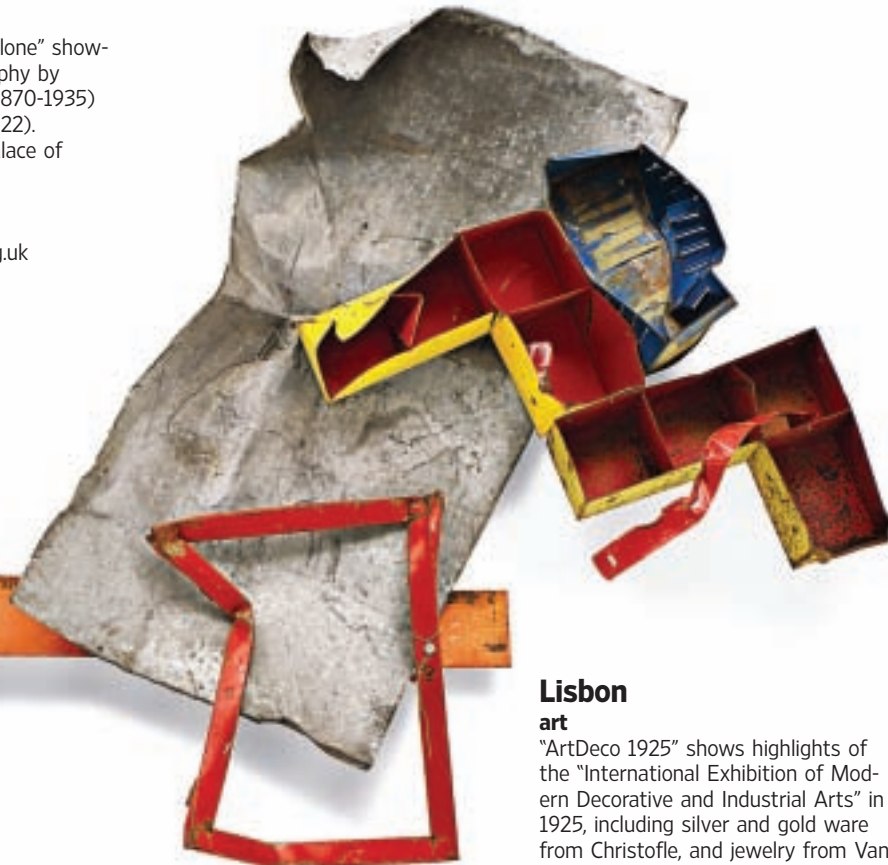
"PastPresentFuture—Works from the UniCredit Group Collection" shows a selection of works by Yves Klein (1928-1962), Andreas Gursky, Gerhard Richter and others.

Bank Austria Kunstforum
Oct. 16-Jan. 10
☎ 43-1-5373-326
www.bankaustria-kunstforum.at

Source: ArtBase Global Arts News Service, WSJE research.



Robert Rauschenberg's 'Greek Toy Glut (Neapolitan)' (1987) on display in Bern.



Hamburg

art

"Views of Hamburg: The City in the Painter's Gaze" shows paintings featuring Hamburg at the end of the 19th century by Auguste Herbin (1882-1960), Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947) and others.

Hamburger Kunsthalle
Oct. 9-Feb. 14
☎ 49-40-4281-3120-0
www.hamburger-kunsthalle.de

Lisbon

art

"ArtDeco 1925" shows highlights of the "International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts" in 1925, including silver and gold ware from Christofle, and jewelry from Van Cleef & Arpels.

Museu Calouste Gulbenkian
Oct. 16-Jan. 3
☎ 351-21-7823-000
www.museu.gulbenkian.pt

Liverpool

art

"Bridget Riley Flashback" traces the career of British abstract painter Riley from the early 1960s to recent years.

Walker Art Gallery
Until Dec. 13
☎ 44-151-4784-199
www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk