

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5-7, 2010

WEEKEND JOURNAL.

EUROPE

The art world's Gordon Gekko

A former corporate raider
shakes up the market

Wine: The chilled pleasure of Eiswein | Travel: Stockholm's island landscape

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The Gordon Gekko of the art world



Asher Edelman with Edouard Manet's 'Berthe Morisot on a Divan'

COVER, Asher Edelman in front of James Nares' 'Ride the Ride,' (2000). Photograph by Ethan Hill for The Wall Street Journal.

WEEKEND JOURNAL.

EUROPE

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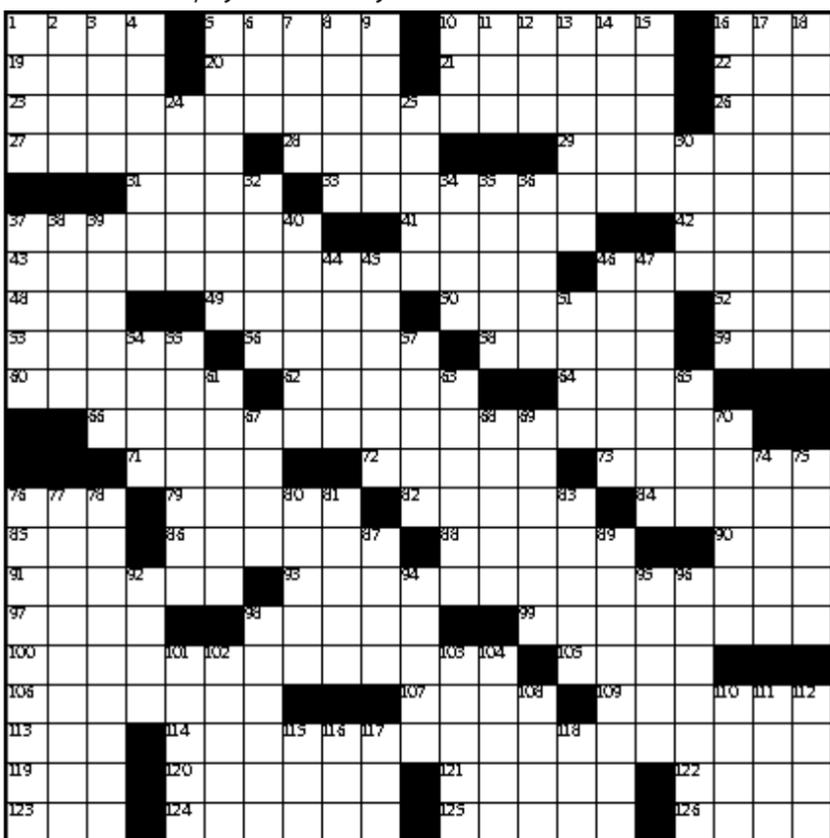
'Gaddi' (Thron) Maharaja: the Splendour of India's Royal Courts, Munich.

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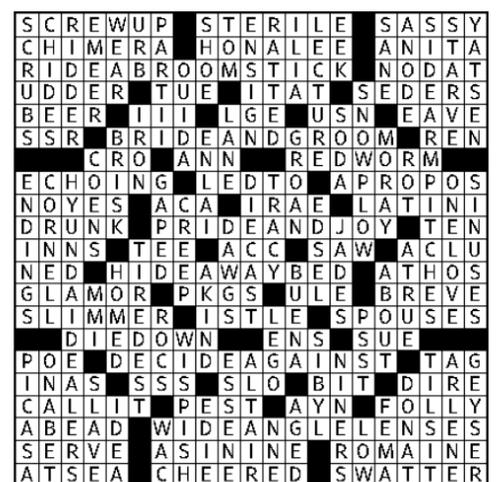


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Last Week's Solution



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Jockeying to dress the stars

As Oscars approach, designers vie to grab the right celebrities

WITH THE ACADEMY Award nominations out this week, fashion designers are already jockeying to dress the stars for their big night. But rather than trying to pick the Oscar winners or the most fashionable celebrities, designers should be asking another question: Who will be the most effective at getting viewers to buy the clothes they see on the red carpet?

On Style

CHRISTINA BINKLEY

Among this year's nominees, the "best seller" award is likely to go to a nominee whom few in the fashion world are discussing: Sandra Bullock. At StyleSpot.com, a Los Angeles-based Web site that links red-carpet photos to stores that sell the looks, Ms. Bullock's Vivienne Westwood dress at the People's Choice Awards ranked among the top of all red-carpet appearances this year in inspiring viewers to "click through" to retail sites.

One lesson: It isn't pure chic that moves clothes. "For the most part, celebrities that drive sales aren't necessarily the ones that get nominated" for awards, says Lily Hollander, editorial director of StyleSpot.com. The 45-year-old Ms. Bullock has a down-to-earth image that means millions of women relate to her.

By contrast, with her Best Actress Oscar nomination for "An Education" this week, Carey Mulligan has dozens of fashion designers vying to lend her baubles and gowns for the Oscars. The young actress with the pixie haircut is known as a sophisticated dresser. "Carey Mulligan will be the most watched on Vogue.com," says Hamish Bowles, Vogue's European editor at large, recalling a sparkling Prada dress the actress wore recently.

But despite Ms. Mulligan's fashion credibility, she may not be the savviest choice for product placement. At StyleSpot.com, Ms. Mulligan isn't one of the stars who moves the most viewers to buy clothes. Ms. Mulligan wasn't available to comment.

Celebrity placement is more voodoo than science, but among this year's nominees, other Oscar sales influencers may include plus-sized Gabourey Sidibe and the classic Meryl Streep. Ms. Sidibe, the star of "Precious," is "an alternate paradigm for the red carpet, but she can carry these very strong colors," Mr. Bowles says.

And Ms. Streep's maturity and demure style choices may appeal to women over 40, who spend more on fashion than other demographic groups.

Among top StyleSpot.com sellers who aren't current Oscar nominees, Kate Hudson and Drew Barrymore are in a sweet spot—fashionable, and young enough to inspire Internet shoppers, yet not so young that they're attracting teens or college-aged women, who don't have a lot of money for clothes.

A number of sites track what celebrities wear so that viewers can copy the styles. But red-car-

pet photos are at the heart of StyleSpot's strategy. The site, which launched last year, links celebrity red-carpet photos to online retail stores from Barneys to Amazon.com. StyleSpot's database compiles images from red-carpet events and organizes them by star, event, and designer brand. The site, which estimates its unique monthly audience at around 10 million people, earns revenue as a percentage of sales when consumers click on a photo and purchase the related item.

Red carpets have become a primary marketing channel for fashion. The Academy Award nominees' photos will be plastered from Boise to Budapest after the March 7 awards show, which will be watched by something north of 35 million television viewers—and seen on a gazillion blogs. It's an irresistible advertising medium. In Los Angeles, designers employ VIP handlers, who work to get the designers' clothes on celebrities who might be photographed in them.

The fashion industry does this because it works. After Sienna Miller wore Thakoon's spring bustier jumper to the premiere of the fashion documentary "The September Issue," every store that bought the piece sold out, says a spokeswoman for designer Thakoon Panichgul.

Yet success, for a designer, is a delicate balance of star power and timing. After Jessica Alba presented an award at the People's Choice awards last month, her Burberry Prorsum knotted platform sandals generated the most click-throughs to retail sites of any red-carpet appearance this season on StyleSpot.

Unfortunately for Burberry, those spring-season shoes won't be available in stores for another month. So shoppers had to settle for similar looks offered on the site by Robert Clergerie and Callisto.

Of course, there are ancillary benefits. High-profile fashion publicist Karla Otto, who recently opened a Los Angeles VIP office, says any appearance by an A-List actress "sells product from clothing to accessories and, if the consumer can't afford the attire, they might buy the fragrance or the beauty products."

Brands' publicists fire off press releases the minute their star steps outside. During last Sunday's Grammy Awards, Emilio Pucci announced that singer/actress Fergie appeared in its blue strapless dress, while Judith Leiber announced she carried a Leiber clutch. Each time Fergie wore Missoni in Cannes last week, the brand shot out a release. "I hope that others will be influenced by her great personal style," said designer Angela Missoni in an email.

Nothing is too minor for mention. Stylist Mark Townsend announced that he set actress January Jones's hair in a French twist for the Golden Globes, blow drying her hair "with a round brush" and securing "it with about 10 bobby pins." He also named hair prod-

ucts and prices: Moroccanoil Treatment, \$39 (€28) for 3.4 fl. oz.

Dressing Angelina Jolie, Anne Hathaway and Kyra Sedgwick in one-of-a-kind vintage gowns has rubbed off in sales of totally unrelated clothes, says Juliana Cairone, owner of the New York vintage boutique Rare. "They are not looking for the same item," she says, "they just want something from us."

Having jealously noted these benefits, menswear labels are starting to go after male artists. At last week's Grammy's, members of Kings of Leon appeared in Burberry and John Varvatos.

So who's the Oscars' Actor Most Likely to Sell Fashion—the man with Ms. Bullock's combination of attractive looks and guy-next-door accessibility?

No, not Jeremy Renner, the sexy star of "The Hurt Locker." The street money's on Best Supporting Actor nominee Woody Harrelson.

Carey Mulligan tops many designers' wish lists for her risk-taking and love of fashion. But these same factors may make her less widely influential. She wore a Nina Ricci gown to the Golden Globes.



Maggie Gyllenhaal's

insider choices make her a fashion darling but could alienate some consumers. She wore iconoclastic Roland Mouret to the Golden Globes.



Meryl Streep's

maturity and pristine fashion choices may appeal to the huge over-40 market. She arrived at the Screen Actors Guild wearing a spring Balenciaga gown.



Penelope Cruz

has high shopper appeal. At the Screen Actors Guild, she wore a dress by L'Wren Scott.

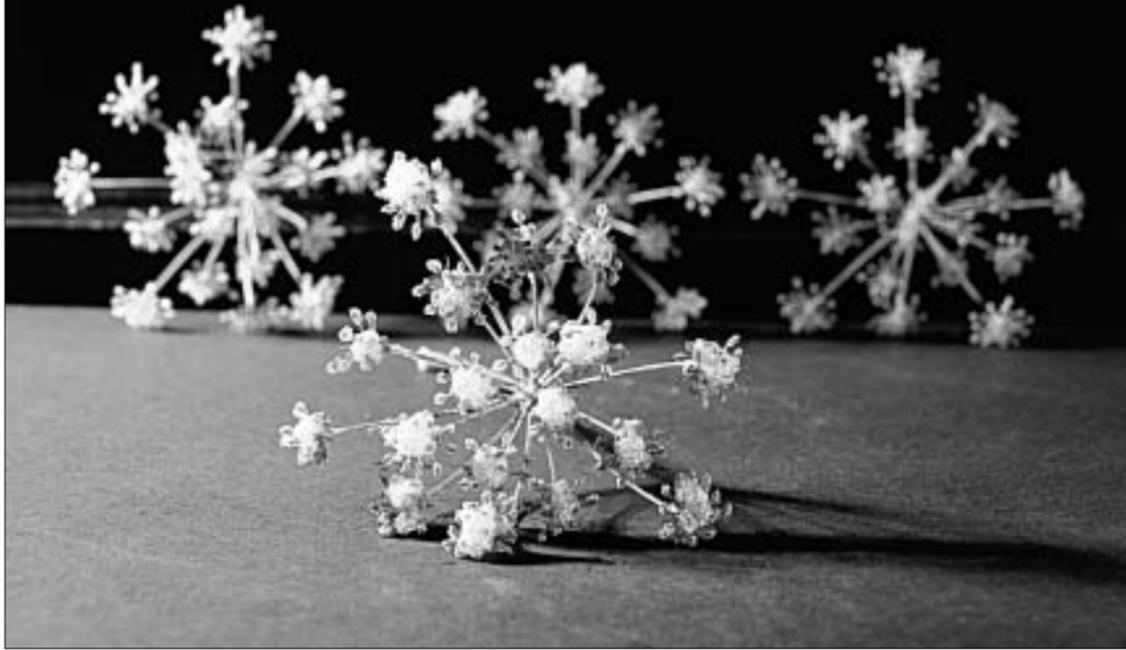


Sandra Bullock's

huge fan base and girl-next-door image have made her a potent fashion seller. Here, she arrives at last month's Golden Globes in a Bottega Veneta gown.

Photo illustration by Angela Calderon/The Wall Street Journal
Photos: Associated Press

The state of molecular cuisine



BY JAVIER ESPINOZA

FOR YEARS, so-called molecular gastronomy, an avant-garde culinary movement best known for its gels and emulsions and its wild chemical experiments with food, has teased the palates of diners.

With Spain's Ferran Adrià—often regarded as the founding father of the movement—announcing recently he will shut down his restaurant El Bulli in 2012 for a couple of years to revisit his approach to cooking, the state of molecular cuisine is once again brought to the forefront. To be sure, Mr. Adrià isn't closing down the restaurant for lack of demand. El Bulli continues to receive more than one million requests for its 8,000 reservations annually; all bookings for the year are snatched up in one day in mid-October when reservations are opened.

But will freeze-dried foie gras and atomized martinis establish themselves as a lasting trend?

Both Mr. Adrià and his British counterpart Heston Blumenthal, have distanced themselves from the term molecular gastronomy. In a joint statement a few years ago, together with American restaurateur Grant Achatz, the chefs said: "The term 'molecular gastronomy' doesn't describe our cooking, or indeed any style of cooking."

Their efforts to reject the term hasn't deterred critics, and fans alike, from voicing their opinions. "The type of cooking that is based on experimenting with chemicals to produce meals is merely part of an industrial process in a time when people are looking for quality products that have an intimate relation with their surroundings, with the earth," said top Catalan chef, Santi Santamaría, one of the most vocal opponents of molecular gastronomy.

"The way I see it, [molecular gastronomy] is a byproduct of a sick society," said the three-star Michelin chef, who has been in the industry for almost three decades. In his view, those using chemicals to experiment with food are just "playing with food."

But Mr. Adrià is dismissive. "If you don't like a certain type of cuisine, then pursue your own," he says. "At the end of the day, a restaurant is a democratic place. If you don't like the food they serve, then don't go there."



Top, fennel flowers in tempura from Ferran Adrià's El Bulli; above, roast bone marrow and parsley salad from Fergus Henderson's restaurant St. John.

The celebrity chef explains that he is now in a "rupture period" and is working on developing "a new format" in modern cuisine. "I want to create something more beautiful," Mr. Adrià adds without going into much detail. "If I knew what it is that I am creating, then it wouldn't be new," he explains.

For designer Rabih Hage, Mr. Santamaría's views couldn't be further away from his own experience after trying Mr. Adrià's food twice. "Adrià's cuisine is all about originality of the taste and authenticity as an experience," he says. "His food has humor; it tells you a story."

Hélène Darroze, a two-star Michelin chef, who is now working at the Connaught in London, also believes Mr. Adrià's cuisine has high-standard culinary merits and others shouldn't be too dismissive of it. "I don't know if molecular gastronomy is here to stay or not. But even if it's not your own way of cooking, there is a lot of creativity and a lot of work involved," Ms. Darroze adds. "You can't just say that this is nothing and it's too chemical."

Fergus Henderson, a chef and founder of the St. John restaurant in Central London, is another outcast of the gastronomic movement. "My approach to cooking couldn't be more different. Once you kill an animal, the gastro possibilities are huge. There is a great deal of things you can do with a pig's tail or head, with tripe or kid-

neys," says the author of "The Whole Beast: Nose to Tail Eating."

Some have, however, found a middle ground. Simon Rogan, a one-star Michelin chef and owner of L'Enclume in Cumbria, in the North West of England, says his restaurant has seen "crazy times" during the past, referring to his experiment with chemical processes. But since the spring of 2009, Mr. Rogan took the conscious decision to take his cooking to a more "natural form."

"We still use certain pieces of technology and ingredients [such as transglutaminase, and Xanthan gum] in our foods, but there is less mocking around. We are going back to the focus of being able to use an ingredient in its purest form," he says. "With molecular gastronomy we were trying to be too clever and were starting to be out of touch."

Jun Tanaka, a British Japanese chef, thinks molecular gastronomy has acquired a poor reputation among some because of bad imitations. "To do it properly, you have to understand the science behind the food," says Mr. Tanaka, who is the executive chef at Pearl Restaurant & Bar in London.

But will molecular gastronomy define the new generations of chefs? Mr. Tanaka doesn't think so. "Chefs will move away from molecular gastronomy. Things will go back to being more about the produce, about things being natural."

A frosty night for Eiswein

FOR ERNST LOOSEN the call came at 3 a.m. "It was my chief viticulturalist," says one of Germany's most talked about winemakers. "We knew from the forecast that the frost was coming, but that night the temperature had dropped sufficiently. 'This is it,' he told me on the phone. 'We start picking in an hour.'"

Wine

WILL LYONS

By 4 a.m. on Dec. 17, Mr. Loosen had raised his team of pickers. Their destination was Erdener Prälät, a south-facing vineyard planted on a step of red slate soil whose vines stretch steeply down toward the banks of the Mosel in Germany.

Together, under the artificial glow of generator-powered lights, the team agloves to avoid frostbite and clutching secateurs they began harvesting the compact bunches of tiny, frozen Riesling grapes. By 10 a.m. they had finished. By that time, Mr. Loosen admitted, it had become too foggy to continue and the temperature wasn't cold enough.

If you have ever wondered why the price of vintage Eiswein can cost as much as £50 for a small bottle—now you know. Welcome to Germany's Eiswein harvest of 2009, where picking starts in the middle of the night at temperatures around minus 9 Celsius. This is winemaking in the extreme, where the effort that goes into making it probably justifies its eye-wateringly high price. That, and the unusual, scintillating experience one feels when sipping a chilled glass of Eiswein.

Sweet wine is still hopelessly unfashionable. In Sauternes, the appellation to the southeast of Bordeaux, where chateaux such as Yquem, Raymond-Lafon and Rieussec produce gloriously thick, heavy wines with dried-fruit flavors and earthy notes, they complain that "everyone loves sweet wine but nobody buys it."

Perhaps we have forgotten the delights of a glass of chilled sweet wine with a Roquefort salad, spiced shrimp or steamed salmon and ginger. With Eiswein the experience is even more intense. The frozen grapes impart a clean, pure, racy characteristic as the acidity darts down the tongue, refreshing the palate.

It's as if the wine has imbued the anxiety and tension manifest in its production. Making Eiswein is fraught with difficulties. The condi-

tions have to be just right and the temperature has to fall to as low as minus 8 Celsius, which means that in Germany, it can't be made every year.

The process is relatively straightforward. After the main harvest a small percentage of Riesling grapes are left on the vine until they shrivel into small parcels of soggy, brown mush. Then the waiting game begins. Long-range weather forecasts will be studied and lucky charms consulted while the winemakers sit patiently, waiting for the temperature to reach the right level. What the winemakers are hoping for is a punishing frost to freeze the grapes. As a rule of thumb, the colder the temperature during the harvest, the higher the final sugar concentration can be obtained at pressing. As water freezes at a higher temperature than grape juice it encapsulates the golden, sweet goo into a frozen pellet.

Once picked, the frozen grapes are transported to the winery where they are gently pressed. The sweet juice, high in sugar and acidity, is then run off and fermented.

Fortunately, 2009 for the Mosel, as for most wine-growing regions throughout Europe, is shaping up to be a very good year.

"It was really a great Eiswein harvest because we got just the right mix of frost and temperature," says Mr. Loosen. "For me the perfect Eiswein is always harvested before Christmas and this year everything worked out perfectly."

Despite Germany's historical association with Eiswein—it is said the technique was discovered in its valleys in the late 18th century after an early frost caught many winemakers by surprise—the unreliability of its harvest has opened the door to a major competitor.

Canada now produces more Eiswein (they refer to it as ice wine) than any other country in the world as its winters are reliably long and cold. Stylistically, they are a little more forward than their counterparts in Germany with more tropical fruit on the nose and a fuller flavor. This is because unlike Germany, where most ice wines are made from Riesling, in Canada they are made from a grape variety known as Vidal. There is still limited availability in Europe but Inniskillin, Jackson Triggs and Mission Hill are all worth seeking out.

Meanwhile, of the Eisweins made in Germany, Helmut Dönnhoff, Dr. Loosen and Weingut Künstler are welcome in my cellar anyway.

DRINKING NOW

Künstler, Hölle, Riesling

Vintage: 2002

Price: about £55 or €63

Alcohol content: 6.5%

For the uninitiated the first sip of Eiswein can surprise, with its scintillating acidity. This example has a powerful citrus kick that gives way to a burst of stunning, fresh acidity with notes of honeyed apricot.



Stockholm's 30,000-island smorgasbord

BY J.S. MARCUS

Sandhamn, Sweden
ANDERS ANDERSON IS in a good position to judge when to visit the Stockholm Archipelago: The economist bought his own small island in 2004. "I think winter is the best time," he says, invoking the iridescent sea and reflective snow cover. "You have light everywhere."

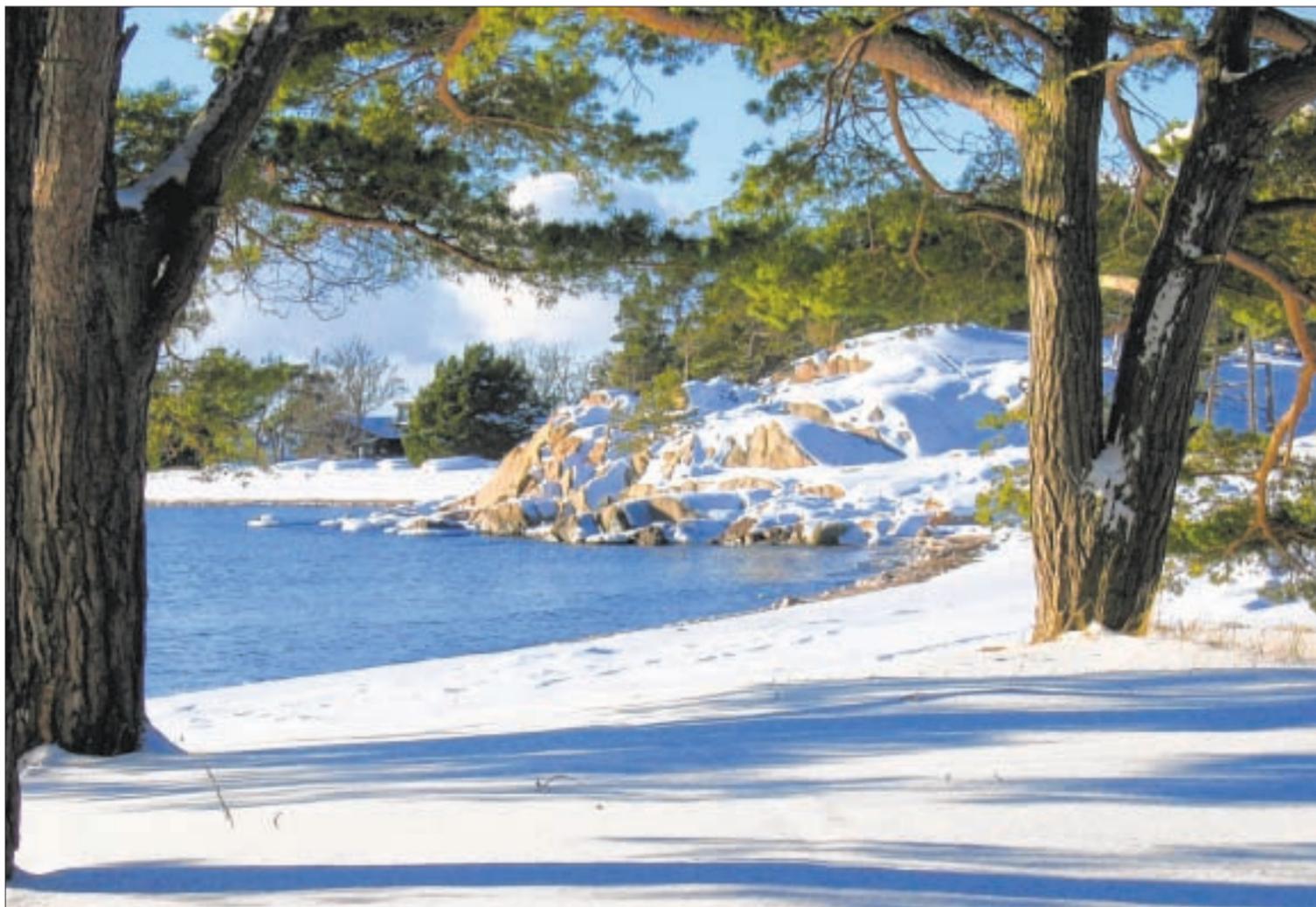
Others might prefer the summer and the 12 extra hours of daylight, but Stockholmers and a growing number of foreign visitors are finding the chain of 30,000 islands just as intriguing in winter, when outdoor saunas, ideal ice-skating, hiking and pervasive quiet more than make up for the unavoidable darkness.

With some islands just big enough to stand on and others nearly as large as the center of Stockholm, the archipelago was once a rough and remote home to farmers and fishermen. Long an inspiration to Swedish artists and writers, the area changed in the middle of the last century, when tens of thousands of ordinary Swedes began to summer here. Now, as expensive year-round homes replace seasonal shacks, Stockholmers are discovering the area's off-season pleasures and property values are skyrocketing.

For Mr. Anderson, a 43-year-old Stockholmer, the archipelago is full of ABBA memories. He's the son of Stig Anderson, the Swedish rock impresario and the music group's lyricist in its crucial early years, and he spent his childhood summers on Viggso, a small island where many ABBA songs were composed. In cold winters like this one, he says, he takes a ferry to a nearby island called Grinda, and enjoys making the rest of the journey on foot.

ABBA fans closely associate the archipelago with Viggso, where all four members of the group summured in the 1970s. "The first version of 'Dancing Queen,'" recalls Mr. Anderson, "was performed on a few pots" in the kitchen of his family's summer house.

There are no significant tides in the Stockholm Archipelago, and only



Seglarhotellet

the barren outer islands are exposed to rough sea winds. During a visit this January, the wooded hills above Sandhamn, an upscale village harbor on the island of Sandön, shimmered white; days' worth of snowfall enveloped towering evergreen trees. With hardly a boat to disturb them, the calm waters between the nearby islands were like mirrors, and, once you left the village behind, you could hear only your own footsteps.

Sandhamn, considered by many Swedes as a symbol of the area's recent makeover, is about two hours from Stockholm by bus and a year-round ferry. Home to the Seglarhotellet, a 79-room year-round hotel and harborside spa, Sandhamn is also the perfect base to enjoy the islands' unique winter atmosphere. More cozy than luxurious, the hotel's hodgepodge of charming buildings, constructed around a century-

old yacht club, includes a grand upstairs bar with views over the water. The hotel offers winter weekend spa packages starting at 2,245 Swedish kronor (€220) per person, per night (meals and spa treatments included), and some rooms have saunas. There are also suites and apartments.

Sandhamn, like so many towns in the archipelago, has a literary connection—this one to the frequent summer visitor Stieg Larsson, the late author of the "Millennium" crime trilogy, which begins with "The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo." Mr. Larsson gave Mikael Blomkvist, one of the trilogy's main characters, a summer house in the village. A colleague, Stockholm-based journalist Kurdo Baksi, recalls that Mr. Larsson, who suffered from insomnia, would stay up all night in Sandhamn, working on all three books at once.

The writer most closely associ-

ated with the archipelago, the pioneer of modern drama August Strindberg, infuriated Kymmendö islanders after he "poorly disguised" them in a novel, says Erik Höök, senior curator at Stockholm's Strindberg Museum. Another Strindberg haunt, the resort of Dalarö, is reachable by commuter train from Stockholm and is a convenient place to get a taste of the archipelago. An excellent 62-room year-round hotel—The Smådalarö Gård, situated around a restored 200-year-old manor house—offers winter weekend packages, with quayside sauna facilities, allowing for rapid cool-downs in the Baltic, as well as an outdoor Jacuzzi. The January-March packages are 2,395 kronor for two people (including some meals).

Stockholm has had an especially cold winter this year, and on weekend winter mornings, archipelago ferries have been filled with day-trip-

ping ice skaters. Armed with ski poles, used to test the stability of the ice, and with long-distance skates that strap onto hiking boots, the skaters usually plan their trips at the very last minute, says professional guide Ylva Schöldberg. She leads groups out to the archipelago during skating season, which lasts into early March. Conditions change, she says, even hour to hour, due in part to the salt in the water—which can cause the surface to melt. Falling through the ice is quite common, Ms. Schöldberg says, and her backpack, always filled with an entire change of clothes, also acts as a flotation device. (On the Web, friluftsförbundet.se offers information in Swedish on archipelago day-trips from Stockholm for experienced skaters.)

The cold will long outlast the darkness, as the winter daylight grows by around 30 minutes every week. In April comes the reopening of Oaxen Krog (oaxenkrog.se), a restaurant on the small island of Oaxen, near the chain's southernmost edge. Amphibious plane and €95 taxi rides are favored ways to reach the eatery, a bastion of seasonal organic cuisine and the first Swedish restaurant to win a regular place on the S. Pellegrino World's 50 Best Restaurants List, sponsored by the mineral-water concern. A few years ago, Oaxen Krog's owners, chef Magnus Ek and his wife, Agneta Green, refitted an antique Dutch canal boat that now serves as one the archipelago's best hostels.

After Christmas the restaurant shuts down and the boat, which stays open as an inn, comes into Stockholm, but the pair don't entirely abandon the archipelago. Winter is one of the best times of the year on the islands, Mr. Ek said on a sunny January day in Stockholm's inner harbor. "The snow, the ice, the calmness," he said. "It's so beautiful."

—J.S. Marcus is a writer based in Berlin.



Alamy

GETTING AROUND:

Year-round ferries with terminals accessible by bus and commuter train reach most popular islands. Call the tourist office at ☎ +46-8-100-222; on the Web, visitskargarden.se

HOTELS:

Seglarhotellet, ☎ +46-8-574-504-00; www.sandhamn.com. Smådalarö Gård, ☎ +46-8-501-551-00; www.sjonaramoten.se/smadalaro



Skaters exploring the Stockholm Archipelago; top, the beach at Sandhamn; right, Seglarhotellet.

Staffan Dahlstrom



Ethan Hill for the Wall Street Journal

The art of the sell

Asher Edelman, a former corporate raider, is shaking up the market with brash tactics

BY KELLY CROW

Just before the most prestigious U.S. art fair, Art Basel Miami Beach, opened in December, an energetic 70-year-old man named Asher Edelman marched through the local convention center to the booth of a Zurich gallery. He was accompanied by a dozen U.S. marshals. As onlookers whispered, the marshals seized four paintings by Yves Klein, Fernand Léger, Joan Miró and Edgar Degas worth around \$15 million (€10.75 million).

Mr. Edelman goes to great lengths to protect his art interests. He had gotten a U.S. federal court order to confiscate the Zurich gallery's inventory as potential compensation for a \$750,000 Robert Ryman painting that the gallery, called Gmurzynska, had borrowed from him and, he says, accidentally damaged.

Within 48 hours, Mr. Edelman got his money and the gallery got back its art. Peter R. Stern, a lawyer for Gmurzynska, says that the gallery's insurer had been in the process of disputing the claim for the damage and the gallery didn't know that a court order had been issued for the work in the meantime. "Asher uses unusual tactics, but he gets it done," Barrett White, director of New York gallery Haunch of Venison, says of the incident.

Mr. Edelman, the former corporate raider who helped inspire the character of Gordon Gekko in the 1987 film "Wall Street," has taken up a new position: art financier. After navigating the art world for decades as a collector, museum director and gallery owner, Mr. Edelman recently set up his own firm, Art Assured Ltd., to arrange art investments.

The field of art backing is a financial Wild West these days. When the recession upended the art market a year ago, a number of traditional institutions like banks and auction houses pulled back from loans and other financing deals based on the expected selling prices of fine art. An aggressive set of boutique lenders and financiers have stepped in to fill the gap. The most prominent art lenders operate as blue-chip pawnshops, doling out quick cash to collectors, dealers and artists in exchange for the right to sell the borrowers'

artworks if their loans aren't repaid.

These lenders provide some much-needed liquidity in a market where art values have plunged and credit has stalled in the past year. But this arena can be bare-knuckled, with interest rates on one-year loans sometimes topping 20% and defaulted payments sometimes leading to public court battles—as was the case last year when New York-based Art Capital Group sued photographer Annie Leibovitz for defaulting on her \$24 million loan. The two sides later reached an agreement to extend the loan.

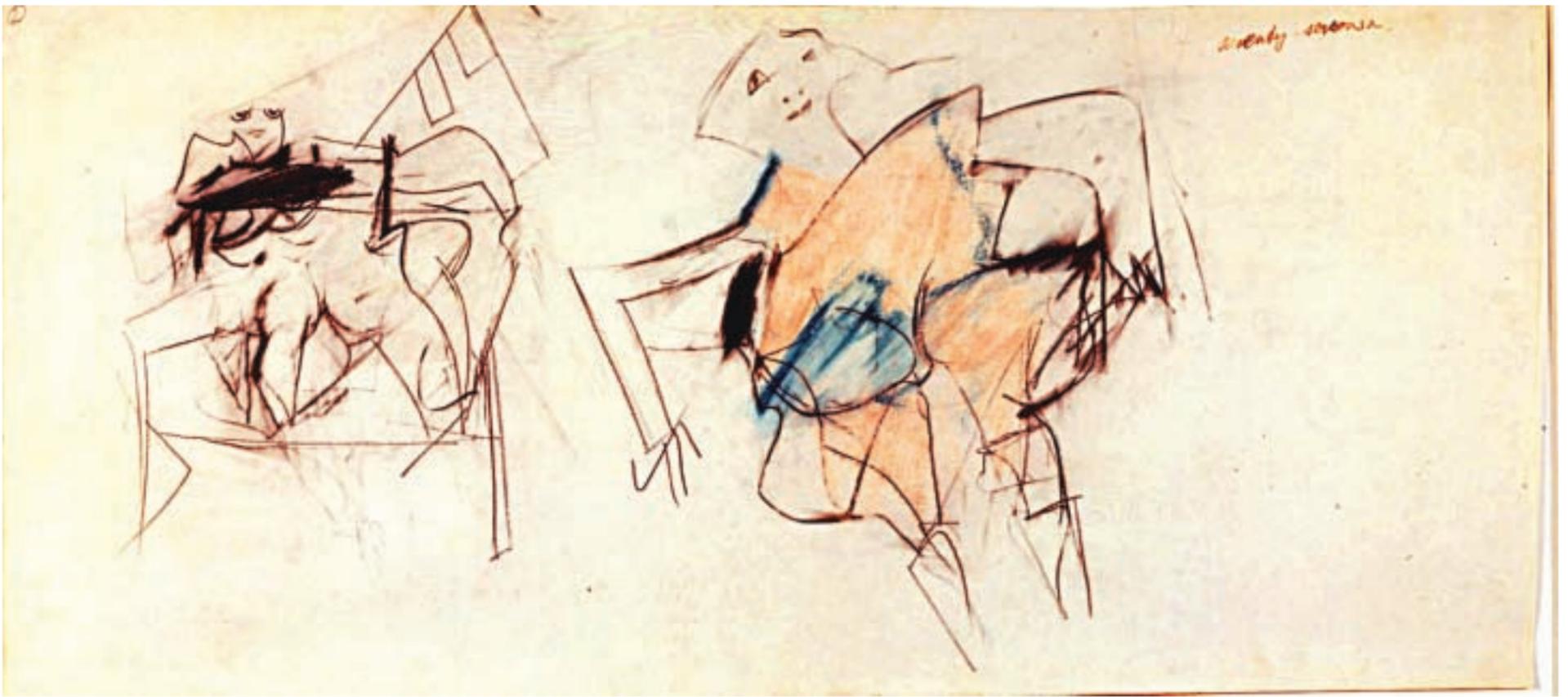
Mr. Edelman is a new player in the field of art finance, but his plans are ambitious and his brash approach is drawing attention in the tight-knit art world. Going beyond art lending, he says he intends to stake money on artworks bound for auction, a niche only a few financiers have even explored.

Before the recession, Sotheby's and Christie's routinely secured commissions to auction works using a financial bet called a guarantee: The house would promise to pay a seller an agreed-upon price for an art work unless bidders offered more. In exchange, the house got a sizable chunk—up to 40%—of any added profits if the winning bidder paid more than the guaranteed price.

By the time art prices reached their peak in 2007, some auctioneers had guarantees on up to half the works in their priciest sales of modern and contemporary art. When the crisis hit just over a year ago, Christie's and Sotheby's lost a combined \$63 million from guaranteed art that went unsold. Today, the auction-house guarantee has all but disappeared, the auction houses say, though a handful of dealers will occasionally stake a single painting at auction.

Mr. Edelman plans to step into that void. When a seller consigns a work to auction, Mr. Edelman's firm, Art Assure, will pledge to buy the piece if it doesn't sell for an agreed-upon minimum price. In exchange, the seller will pay the firm a fee of about 5% to 10% of the work's guaranteed price.

Unlike the auction houses, Mr. Edelman says he is willing to stake a vast array of lower-priced objects—a \$55,000 Modernist work on



Left, Asher Edelman in his home in New York with art he is selling; above 'Untitled (Two Women),' (c. 1955) by Willem de Kooning; right, 'Widow's Watch' (1995) by George Condo.

paper, say. Auction houses have traditionally focused on guaranteeing their sales' big-ticket lots, which are most likely to be bid up. Mr. Edelman says that smaller-ticket items represent an untapped market—opening up many more potential clients to him—and he expects to profit from the greater volume of works.

Some in the art world say the plan has the potential to lubricate the entire market by convincing more collectors to funnel art into auctions without fear that their pieces will go unsold and lose value. "Businesses like Asher's could be tapping into a new leverage business based on a potential collateral pool worth tens of billions," says Marc Porter, Christie's chairman. The plan is also creating some controversy in the art world. Auction houses disclose in their catalogs when they've provided a guarantee for a particular work, because they have a stake in its sale—in a sense, they are partial owners.

But there is no disclosure process for a work that has been privately guaranteed, and Mr. Edelman says he wouldn't rule out bidding on a work he had guaranteed if a client other than the seller asked him to buy it. Collectors could wind up bidding against him, not realizing that he stands to profit from the piece selling well. Mr. Edelman says that he wouldn't bid up a work simply to inflate the sale price.

Rival lenders say Mr. Edelman should disclose which works he may be staking and also bidding on. Disclosure would help to "keep the playing field even," says Andrew Rose, presi-

first guarantees by May.

"I used to do options conversions tables as a kid," he says. "So anyone who competes with me on this has to know I'll take it to the razor's edge."

Mr. Edelman has set up shop in the New York Upper East Side brownstone he shares with his wife, Michelle, and the youngest of his four children. The setting is cozier than the black-lacquered corner office in Manhattan where he spent the 1980s buying and breaking up companies ranging from Canal-Randolph to technology companies like Telex and Datapoint. Art, then as now, pops up everywhere. He has hung a red and orange abstract by Peter Halley in his double-height dining room and positioned a Greek marble gravestone fragment in the living room beneath a silvery cardboard wall relief by Frank Stella. He also runs a gallery out of his home, Edelman Arts, where he shows artists like Jackson Pollock.

Gmurzynska isn't the first business partner he has dueled with over matters of art and money. When a gallery he ran with dealer Heidi Neuhoff went bankrupt a year ago and the court needed to divide their assets, Mr. Edelman, through his lawyer, told U.S. bankruptcy court judge James Peck that he suspected Ms. Neuhoff of hiding gallery assets that should be used to pay off creditors, according to court transcripts. Ms. Neuhoff denied any wrongdoing. When Mr. Edelman's lawyer pressed the matter in court again last spring, court transcripts state that Judge Peck said Mr. Edelman's claim appeared to be

"motivated by pure vindictiveness." Mr. Edelman says he didn't act out of spite. Ms. Neuhoff has since paid off her portion of the debts in the bankruptcy case, according to court documents; Mr. Edel-

man's bankruptcy case is still proceeding.

Born in 1939 in New York, Mr. Edelman split his childhood between the wealthy suburbs of Long Island and the Las Vegas Strip where his father owned real estate. His introduction to art came through monographs of Impressionist and Old Master artists that he bought at age 12 and still keeps in his library. After college, Mr. Edelman worked at Carter Berlind Potoma & Weill, an investment bank. In 1969, he struck out on his own and began to scour for sagging companies, proposing ways to boost their value by selling off their less profitable parts. By the 1980s, he was considered a pioneer of leveraged buyouts, acquiring companies largely through borrowed money. He also began cultivating his passion for art. Art dealer Mary Boone says Mr. Edelman's chauffeur-driven Jeep was regularly spotted outside SoHo galleries in the mid-1980s.

When Stanley Weiser, the screenwriter of Oliver Stone's "Wall Street," caught a glimpse of Mr. Edelman's living quarters in a magazine in the 1980s, he retooled his script so that the 1987 film's corporate raider collected art as



Edelman Arts (2)

'Asher has unusual tactics, but he gets it done,' an art dealer says.

dent of Art Finance Partners, so that collectors know when a rival bidder is also a seller with a vested interest. Mr. Edelman says his idea is legal, doesn't require any public disclosure and could benefit the entire market by convincing more collectors to trade works.

Marc-André Renold, the director of the Art-Law Centre at the University of Geneva, says that offering to guarantee works across a range of lower prices and qualities is "a risky venture." To succeed, Mr. Edelman will need a steady supply of cash to cover his bets. And if he has to step in and buy art that he's guaranteed, he'll have to find a way to offload those same pieces in the private marketplace—offering goods that have already been widely shopped.

Mr. Edelman says he can't discuss the particulars of his financing while he's still securing investors, but people familiar with the matter say his new firm has raised \$12 million from American and Swiss investors and hopes to double its backing by year's end. Moreover, Mr. Edelman says he hopes to offset some of his risk by asking a bank to cover part of his stake. Mr. Edelman plans to roll out the firm's

well. "The sophisticated part of Gekko, his home and the auctions and that veneer of culture—I modeled all that on Edelman," Mr. Weiser said. Director Oliver Stone and actor Michael Douglas also shadowed Mr. Edelman at work when preparing for the film.

Mr. Edelman's life took a turn the same year the movie was released, when he, together with the Montreal-based Dominion Textile Inc., made a bid to take over the textile group Burlington Industries Inc. In an unprecedented ruling, a federal judge in Greensboro, N.C., halted the takeover, ruling that a former Burlington executive had probably passed confidential financial data to the bidders. Mr. Edelman denied that he had done anything wrong and was never charged with insider trading, but the takeover was blocked.

In another case, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission complained that he hadn't divulged his growing stake in another company, Datapoint, quickly enough. He settled the matter without admitting or denying wrongdoing by paying the commission around \$484,000. In 1988, he resettled in Switzerland, because he had "virtually given up on Wall Street," he says.

It was in Lausanne on the shores of Lake Léman, that Mr. Edelman realized he could realign his career in the art world. He rented an empty dye factory and hired a local curator, Chantal Prod'Hom, and for the next five years his Museum of Contemporary Art produced

shows featuring work by Robert Rauschenberg, Damien Hirst and Matthew Barney. Mr. Edelman says he helped fund the museum by auctioning off a third of his art collection, including a \$3 million Jasper Johns.

Since his return to the U.S. in 2001, Mr. Edelman has operated two galleries; Edelman Arts, opened in 2008, is the latest. Mr. Edelman is joining a rare segment of the art industry—art financing—that hasn't slowed down. Art Capital Group expects to dole out as much as \$300 million worth of new art-backed loans this year, up from \$120 million last year and \$60 million five years ago. Citi Private Bank said its top clients also increased their borrowing against their collections to as much as \$100 million last year, up from a typical maximum loan of \$20 million a decade earlier.

Mr. Edelman, seeing an opportunity, says he began approaching investors last fall about starting his own art-financing firm. Unlike the other firms already in the art-financing arena, he plans to make private guarantees on auctioned works a centerpiece of his business.

Mr. Edelman's confidence in the art market is unflappable. Some of his ideas filter into the memos he regularly sends to 3,000 finance and art mavens. In a January memo last year, he wrote, "Art, like gold, has an intrinsic value...I cannot identify a time in modern history that has not served as a store of value when no others have been available or sustainable."

—James Oberman contributed to this article.

The perceptions and politics of golf

A YEAR AGO this month, you may recall, the celebrity Web site TMZ blew the lid off a major, golf-related scandal—or so it thought. Under the headline “Bailout Bank Blows Millions Partying in L.A.,” it breathlessly revealed that Northern Trust, despite having accepted \$1.6 billion in U.S. government

trible,’ but when they peeled back the layers of the onion and started asking the right questions, they saw how this thing benefits business and how it benefits the community.” The company attracted “millions of dollars” in new business as a result of last year’s event, Ms. Mannard said, and couldn’t accommodate all the ticket requests it received from clients wishing to attend this year. (Northern Trust repaid the TARP loan last summer, providing taxpayers a profit of \$133 million. The company always maintained it never needed the funding but took it as a kind of confidence-building favor to regulators.)

The Northern Trust Open’s mini-resurgence in a still-dicey economic environment may be something of a special case. The sponsoring company’s clients, primarily high-net-worth individuals, would presumably not be the types to be dissuaded from enjoying a golf tournament by populist ranting about the game’s supposed elitist values. There is also the matter of Jerry West, the former Los Angeles Laker’s star, now 71 but still a local hero, who agreed last spring to become the event’s executive director. By all accounts his energetic efforts, including a recent publicity stunt hitting wedge shots through one of the “O”s in the famous Hollywood sign, have been effective.

But Mr. West’s involvement speaks directly to one of the key arguments that both the PGA Tour and the broader golf industry have been making recently in their stepped-up battle to counter the game’s perception problem:



John Kuczala

Golf

JOHN PAUL NEWPORT

Troubled Asset Relief Program funds three months earlier, was entertaining clients at the PGA Tour event it sponsors, the Northern Trust Open. Within hours, pundits from Bill O’Reilly of Fox News to Maureen Dowd of the New York Times were decrying such excess, particularly the party at which Sheryl Crow sang, in a time of financial crisis. Members of Congress released letters demanding recourse. Golf in general, already suspiciously regarded by many, was stigmatized.

The Northern Trust Open returned this week to the Riviera Country Club in Los Angeles, and guess what? Advance ticket sales were up 35% and hospitality sales—that would be those big tents used for corporate entertaining—are up 50%. The golf isn’t bad, either. Phil Mickelson, Padraig Harrington and Steve Stricker are in the field.

“Some of the maelstrom around the tournament actually helped it grow,” said Kelly Mannard, Northern Trust’s chief marketing officer. “People read the headlines and said, ‘Oh, that’s ter-

the positive economic impact golf has on local communities. Mr. West’s oft-stated motivation for taking the gig, and working as hard at it as he has, is to boost the money it raises for Los Angeles charities. The tournament historically has channeled more than \$1 million each year to Southern California philanthropies, but it has underperformed tournaments in other cities like Dallas, which last year raised \$4.4 million. Mr. West wants to change that.

Last week at the PGA Merchandise Show in Orlando, a coalition of golf organizations opened another front in the perception wars. The group, called “We Are Golf,” represents club pros, course superintendents, course owners and club managers, and aims to convince U.S. policy makers in Washington that golf is an important, job-creating industry that ought to be supported, not denounced. “Right now, it’s considered politically risky to raise your hand in Washington and say that you support the golf industry. That shouldn’t be,” said Joe Steranka, chief executive of the PGA of America, one of the coalition partners.

Golf’s politically toxic status is a long time in the making. The low point, Mr. Steranka said, may have come during the Jack Abramoff lobbying scandals five years ago, with widespread reports of lavish, mostly free golf trips to Scotland arranged for Congresspeople and staffers by the subsequently convicted Mr. Abramoff. The bad vibes surrounding the Northern Trust Open last year revived the negative image. “Emotions were running high because of the economic situation. In the heat of the moment statements were made that brought back old stereotypes of golf as an elitist undertaking, but nothing could be farther from the truth,” said Mr. Steranka. Among the fig-

ures golf leaders like to trot out is that 70% of rounds played in the U.S. are on public courses and that the median cost per round in 2008 was \$28. Most golfers don’t wear fancy pants.

But the We Are Golf initiative’s central point is that golf is responsible for roughly two million jobs in the U.S. paying \$61 billion in wages. Most of those jobs are working-class. PGA-certified professionals at golf course typically earn in the high five-figures, Mr. Steranka said, but the 40 or so other employees at a typical course—the maintenance workers, the shop assistants, the cooks and waitresses in the grill room—earn much less. Then there are the local small businesses that provide goods and services to golf courses: the painters and plumbers, the beer truck drivers, the florists, vending-machine operators, the golf-cart repairmen.

The golf industry first realized it had a political problem in 2005 when, after Hurricane Katrina devastated the gulf coast, golf courses were lumped with massage parlors and casinos as businesses explicitly prohibited from receiving disaster relief funds. Golf’s power elite, led by PGA Tour Commissioner Tim Finchem, converged on Washington in April 2008 for the first National Golf Day, to lobby for better treatment. But when the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, a.k.a. the stimulus bill, passed last year, it included most of the same exclusions for golf that the Katrina bill had.

“There are many members of Congress who absolutely love golf, but as of today, the industry lacks a bench of champions,” said David Marin, a principal at the Podesta Group in Washington that We Are Golf has hired to make its case. Mr. Marin said the strategy will focus on “changing the narrative” about golf by introducing new sto-

rytellers: instead of golf legends, men and women whose jobs depend on the game even if they themselves don’t play. He also hopes to better organize the economic information about golf so that politicians can more easily justify supporting the industry to their constituents.

“Golf needs a seat at the table when legislation that affects it is considered,” Mr. Marin said. “But for the time being we’re playing defense. Perceptions that are this deeply rooted won’t change overnight, or in a month, or even in a year.”

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Note: Prices of a round-trip business-class air ticket to Vancouver, plus two nights at a four-star hotel (Feb. 11-13, per person, double occupancy) and opening-ceremony ticket, plus taxes, as provided by agents in each city, averaged and converted into euros.
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❖ Top Picks

Vast offering of De Stijl art in London



Theo van Doesburg's 'Simultaneous Counter-Composition' (1929-30).

LONDON: Tate Modern has a whopper of a show, with a title to match its size: "Van Doesburg and the International Avant-Garde: Constructing a New World." Though this is the first major exhibition in the U.K. dedicated to the Dutch artist Theo van Doesburg (1883-1931), its early Modernist scope is larger than the one man, who worked in practically all the art forms extant in his lifetime. His real importance was as the founder of the magazine and movement called De Stijl.

Examples are exhibited of van Doesburg's contributions to painting, architecture, design, typography, poetry, art criticism and publishing. But more important, and often artistically superior, are the exhibits of work by others he influenced. Van Doesburg believed in an abstract, geometric art, dependent on horizontal and vertical lines, at first shunning the diagonal—to the point that this became a matter for arguments that were almost theological.

He also went through a period of excluding all but the primary colors. This of course brings to mind Piet

Mondrian (1872-1944). Mondrian's paintings, scattered through the more than a dozen rooms of this vast show, leap off the walls, despite being hung with many painters who adopted the same format, geometric means and media.

To my eyes it is obvious that Mondrian is better than other, similar De Stijl artists, such as Vilmos Huszár, Karl Peter Röhl, Walter Dexel, Peter Keler and van Doesburg himself. But there is more to this exhibition than these paintings—breathtaking compositions in stained glass, Bauhaus designs, and wonderful De Stijl furniture, especially the large group by Gerrit Thomas Rietveld. There are examples of terrific commercial and popular art, and excursions into Dada, Constructivism, film and musical composition; also some sensational models and interior designs—even a lip-smacking menu for the Café Aubette cinema-dance hall in Strasbourg, on which van Doesburg collaborated with Sophie Taeuber and Hans Arp.

—Paul Levy
Until May 16
www.tate.org.uk



'Agave Plant' (1999/2008) by John Baldessari. Price on request. Courtesy Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles

Madrid fair to spotlight L.A. artists

ARCO, WHICH takes place in Madrid Feb. 17-21, will kick off 2010's major international contemporary-art fairs and will spotlight artists from this year's guest city, Los Angeles.

Collecting

MARGARET STUDER

The first two days of the fair are restricted to professional visitors such as collectors and museums. They can buy before doors open to the general public Feb. 19.

"There is a lot of curiosity at this fair as Spain's art scene grows steadily, but without frenzy," says Victor Gisler of Zurich's Mai 36 Galerie. Mr. Gisler, a veteran participant, says he will bring along the works of artists receiving increasing attention in southern Europe, including those of technically versatile German photographer Thomas Ruff and American painter Glen Rubsamen with his mysterious, emotional landscapes silhouetting shifting trees and lamp posts.

Some 220 European, American, South American and Asian galleries with work from around 3,000 artists will exhibit at this year's fair.

ARCO usually features a guest country, but for the first time this year the organizers have invited a guest city—Los Angeles, described by curators Kris Kuramitsu and Christopher Miles as a "21st century metropolis" with a dynamism, energy and creative diversity that has situated it at the forefront of the world's art market.

Seventeen guest galleries from Los Angeles will be featured. The Margo Leavin Gallery will include works by 78-year-old John Baldessari, the Californian concept and mixed-media exponent who was awarded the Golden Lion for his life's work at the Venice Biennale in 2009 and whose major works now sell in the six digits. On display will be Mr. Baldessari's "Agave Plant," (1999/2008), a large print with colorful acrylic paint depicting the succulent plant that thrives in Mexico.

Meanwhile, the Steve Turner Gallery will include the work of 36-year-old Eamon Ore-Giron, whose paintings and installations mix South and North American cultures. His "Diana" (2008), made from a Diana Ross album sleeve, will be priced at \$3,500 (€2,507).

Revelatory Lundquist retrospective looks at ambiguity

STOCKHOLM: At first glance, "Torso," a 1961 painting by Swedish artist Evert Lundquist, seems to be an early modernist update on an old European tradition. With a centrally placed, sketchy motif—possibly a sculpture on a table, or a nude with her arms behind her—the painting has a haunting stillness that reminds us of Jean-Siméon Chardin. But our modernist eye deceives us. "Torso" has led a double life. Lundquist also exhibited the painting turned on its side, thereby seeming to create a different work, called "Still Life," with a different motif, this time of an apparent table setting. "Torso," in its upright position, is one of many ambiguous works on display in a revelatory Lundquist retrospective at Stockholm's Moderna Museet.

At the peak of his career in the 1950s and '60s, Lundquist (1904-94) was Sweden's best-known painter. But a rather old-fashioned view of the artist's work allowed many Swedes to dismiss Lundquist—or even forget about him entirely. The Moderna Museet show seeks to rediscover and reinterpret the artist's work by emphasizing the role that improvisation and randomness played in his technique.

Fond of thick applications of paint, Lundquist was capable of a spontaneity that recalls America's Jackson Pollock rather than Europe's Old Masters. The catalog recounts a story of Lundquist walking

around a museum show before an opening with tubes of paint, changing canvasses at the last minute with only the help of his fingers.

Lundquist is a near-abstract artist, and his best paintings maintain a tantalizing tension between a richly textured abstract background and a figurative motif. His best works—like "The Axe" (1974)—are variations on the theme of a figurative object trapped in an abstract canvass. Only very late in life, when he was nearly blind, did the motif itself emerge as dominant, like in his 1988 painting "The Cup," in which a white cup rises out from its sea-green surface.

—J.S. Marcus
Until April 11
www.modernamuseet.se



Evert Lundquist's 'The Axe' (1974).

Indian exhibit blends folk-art traditions with modern imaging

LONDON: The Saatchi Gallery, that perfect blend of art and commerce, has found its ideal theme in its current show, "The Empire Strikes Back: Indian Art Today."

As the mobile phone has spread across the Indian subcontinent and

PCs are common, an emerging high-tech culture has led to enclaves of wealth and entrepreneurship. This in turn has led to a lively art world, where folk-art traditions collide with the computer-generated image; religious icons fuse with new materials;

and the relationship between the economic climate and the art world is expressed in political, stereotype-busting, gender-conscious works of art.

The show's 11 large galleries feature works owned by Charles Saatchi and created by 24 living artists

of Indian or Pakistani origin, some of whom live and work in America or Britain. The quality is variable, but at its considerable best—as in Atul Dodiya's homage to the late painter Bhupen Khakhar—it has some of the resonances of great Indian art of the past.

I particularly enjoyed gallery 8, with Subodh Gupta's paintings and sculptures of stainless steel and brass kitchen utensils, and Bharti Kher's collage of candy-colored, felt bindis (the spot on the forehead worn by married women). Gallery 10 has three impressive, huge works and one small one by Jitish Kallat. The four-meter high "Eruda" is a black lead-covered sculpture of one of the boy booksellers who work at traffic lights on the streets of Mumbai. Though most have never been to school and are illiterate, they engage in authoritative conversations about the books they're selling.

While at the Saatchi Gallery, be certain to see Richard Wilson's masterpiece, "20:50," which floods part of the lower ground floor with a pond of reflective, used engine oil.

—Paul Levy
Until May 7
www.saatchigallery.com



Bharti Kher's 'An Absence of Assignable Cause' (The Heart) (2007).

More Than A Paycheck

Daniel Pink is one of the more energetic members of the growing tribe of business writers-speakers-bloggers who, like the ubiquitous Malcolm Gladwell, plunder the work of economists, scientists and psychologists to attack well-established business assumptions. Mr. Pink is known for public presentations in which he delivers a consistently upbeat message: that the miserable age of 20th-century management is over, that the tyranny of organizational charts and spreadsheets is behind us, and that we are now entering more sun-splashed climes, where creativity flourishes and businesses treat employees as human beings, not machine parts.

It is a message we would all love to believe. With "Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us," Mr. Pink tries to jolly us all along toward accepting it. He sets up the following history. First came Motivation 1.0, during which we were stirred by nothing but our urges—grunting, hunting and

procreating in caves. Next came Motivation 2.0, during which we made calculations based on reward or punishment. Economic development depended on manipulating our desires and fears to extract performance.

And now we are reaching Motivation 3.0, a higher plane where people write Wikipedia entries for the fun of it, go on "vocation vacations" to try out professions different from their own, and spend a lot of time thinking about the purpose of their work. Science, Mr. Pink says, has shown that we are motivated as much intrinsically, by the sheer joy and purpose of certain activities, as extrinsically, by rewards like pay raises and promotions.

The science that Mr. Pink is referring to rests largely on the work of Edward Deci and Richard Ryan at the University of Rochester and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi at Claremont Graduate University. These three researchers have found that we do our best work when motivated from within,

when we have control over our time and decisions and when we feel a deep sense of purpose. Under such conditions, we can achieve real mastery over whatever it is that we do.

The modern workplace, Mr. Pink laments, is too often set up to deny us this opportunity. Firms that hope to optimize efficiency by making their employees clock in and out, attend compulsory meetings, and receive pay for performance are demotivating through excessive control. What they should be doing, he argues, is giving workers the chance to do their best work by granting them more autonomy and helping them to achieve the mastery that may come with it.

Mr. Pink cites an Australian software firm, Atlassian, that al-

lows its programmers 20% of their time to work on any software problem they like, provided it is not part of their regular job. The programmers turn out to be much more efficient with that 20% of

their time than they are with their regular work hours. Atlassian credits the 20% with many of its innovations and its high staff retention. Companies as large as Google and 3M have similar programs that have produced everything from Google News to the Post-It note.

Relatedly, Best Buy has implemented a "results oriented work environment" at its corporate headquarters in Richfield, Minn., to improve morale and lower turnover. This means that salaried employees put in as much time as it takes to do their jobs, on their own schedule. If they need to duck out to take a child to the doctor, they don't have to ask. It is assumed that they will do their work in their own time. The hope is that, in such an environment, workers will feel more inclined to contribute to the company's well-being than they would if they were simply grinding out hours for a paycheck.

From these and other scattered data points, Mr. Pink rustles up his trend. Is it plausible? It is easy to find fault with some of his claims. Mr. Pink cites research showing that artists do better work for themselves than on commission. So much for the Sistine Chapel. He writes in favor of companies that allow employees more say in their firms' charitable giving. But why don't these firms drop the paternalism altogether and simply give the money to their employees as pay, trusting them to do their best with it? And one has to wonder whether Mr. Pink's flexible, meaningful-work model is widely applicable or something that only selected companies will be able to adopt.

What is more, the truths that Mr. Pink cites are not nearly as "surprising" as he claims. They are to be found in centuries of philosophy, in the Pre-Socratics, in Plato, in "Walden." Yes, indeed: Beyond serving our basic needs, money doesn't buy happiness. We need a greater purpose in our lives. Our most precious resource is time. We respond badly to conditions of servitude, whether the lash of the galley master or the more subtle enslavement of monthly paychecks, quarterly performance targets and the fear of losing health insurance. Work that allows us to feel in control of our lives is better than work that does not. Nonetheless, these lessons are worth repeating, and if more companies feel emboldened to follow Mr. Pink's advice, then so much the better.

Mr. Delves Broughton is the author of "Ahead of the Curve: Two Years at Harvard Business School" (Penguin).

A 'Rye' By Any Other Name

By Jan Morris

So that strange old genius what's-his-name has left us at last—you know who I mean, what was his name, you know, the man who wrote "The Catcher in the Rye"?

Ah, there we go. How often it happens, does it not, that we remember the name of a book when we momentarily forget the name of its author? It only goes to show what skill and artistry can go into the titling of literary works. Sometimes, of course, straightforward, self-explanatory titles are the most effective. Shakespeare never put a line wrong, when he named his plays, and Dickens didn't do badly either, when he plumped simply for "Oliver Twist." No book could be more graphically introduced than the book of the Apocrypha titled simply The Rest of Esther.

But sometimes the more obscure or enigmatic the title, the better it is remembered. When Alexander Kinglake called his ultimate masterpiece of travel writing Eothen, he must have realized that hardly anybody would understand what it meant, but it has kept his book in print for 166 years. Bruce Chatwin knew just what he was doing when he omitted a question mark from his title "Why Am I Here." And when it comes to obscurity, what about John Masefield's ODTAA (meaning "One Damn Thing After Another"), or "Seven Pillars of Wisdom," or for that matter "The Catcher in the Rye" itself? What Catcher did J.D. Salinger—that's the name!—have in mind? I am re-reading the book now, and I don't know yet...

Who can doubt for a moment that authors themselves chose all these canny titles? Hardly an editor on earth would have left out Chatwin's question mark. Most publishers, especially of the academic kind, are very heavy-handed title-writers, and go in for colonic things like "Fire and Destiny: Patrimonial Custom in Nineteenth Century Mongolia," or "Hungry Armies: Medieval Victualling Systems Reconsidered." It's fine when Isaac Walton subtitled "The Compleat Angler" as "A Discourse of Rivers, Fish-ponds, Fish and Fishing," but disastrous when the University Press of South Middlesboro tries to emulate him.

Publishers' instincts of salesmanship are certainly not infallible, as I know from experience. Fifty years ago I wrote a book about Venice. When it was published in London I named it simply "Venice," and it has been providing me with a modest private income from that day to this. In America they renamed it "The World of Venice," and for several decades it has not earned me a cent.

And to get back to "The Catcher in the Rye," with its unforgettable title and its still irresistible text. Yesterday I came across an examination paper about it. "Question One," it said. "What is the significance of the book's title?" Well, this morning I got to page 180 and discovered what the significance is; but I'm telling you, based as it is upon the misquotation of a poem by Robbie Burns, it's a very quintessence of obscurity.

"The Catcher in the Rye," I am told, has so far sold 65 million copies. It only goes to show. . . .

Ms. Morris is a writer in Wales.

Five Best / By Janice Y.K. Lee

Novels Set in the Colonial East

1 The Hamilton Case
By Michelle de Kretser
2003

Conflicted, painfully snobbish Sam Obeyesekere would rather be "under an imperialistic yoke than put trust in a fellow who went about in sandals." Sam, an Oxford-educated Ceylonese lawyer, lives in colonial duality: a privileged member of the local aristocracy in 1930s Sri Lanka who plays cricket and attended a school "founded in 1862 by an Anglican bishop on the pattern of Eton and Rugby" and yet can be called a "nigger" on the streets outside his club. He makes a name for himself with a local murder case involving a British (read: white) tea-plantation owner. All this against a complicated, almost gothic backdrop of family dysfunction: not one but two smothered babies, glamorous mothers and sisters slowly going mad in evening gowns, the deep jungle always just outside. "The Hamilton Case" is an extraordinary, dizzyingly evocative portrait of Sri Lanka's colonial past, where "the British had entered the country's bloodstream like a malady which proves so resistant that the host organism adapts itself to accommodate it."

2 China to Me
By Emily Hahn
1944

The people in Emily Hahn's frank and unapologetic memoir, "China to Me," seem like characters in a Noël Coward play, making an entrance, uttering their bon mots, then sweeping off stage. The palmy world of 1940s prewar Shanghai and British-governed Hong Kong is rendered in swish dinner parties and horse races attended by dashing expatriates knocking back champagne. Hahn, an American writer who cared not a whit for public opinion, kept gibbons for

pets and had a baby out of wedlock with a married British intelligence officer. ("I don't know why I have always had so little conscience about married men," she writes languidly.) Cut to the war and the horror; she describes it all with appropriate solemnity but never loses the tone of a supremely acerbic society gadabout confiding in you at a cocktail party.

3 The Necklace of Kali
By Robert Towers
1960

For a refreshing, refracted perspective on colonial India—that of a U.S. State Department officer in the days "when the weird old body of the British Raj was at last thrashing like some foundering dinosaur towards extinction"—read Robert Towers's "The Necklace of Kali." Consulate Visa Officer John Wickham is part of what is called the "Jungly Wallah" set: "a shifting population of rich Indians, Persians, Armenians, poor but ingenious White Russians . . . and assorted American and Britons," who take their name from the club they all frequent. Wickham is a complicated, principled man, whose dealings with people from all strata of society mirror the uneasiness of a country on the cusp of a bloody independence.

4 Sea of Poppies
By Amitay Ghosh
2008

Amitay Ghosh uses a vast and vibrant canvas for "Sea of Poppies," the first in a trilogy that is still being written. Set in the years before the Opium Wars in the mid-19th century, when Britain was making a fortune from poppy crops in India, the story opens in the port city of Calcutta and brings together char-

acters that include a low-caste giant who runs away with a widow; a mulatto sailor with "skin the color of old ivory"; and Paulette, a French orphan. These people will meet as they gradually make their way to the Ibis, a triple-masted schooner that is being prepped to take indentured workers to Mauritius, off the African coast. Ghosh revels in the joy of language—"as chuckmuck a rascal as ever you'll see: eyes as bright as muggerbees, smile like a xeraphim"—but he is also a splendid storyteller. In the last pages, the Ibis is being tossed by a mighty storm, the characters growing desperate. I was desperate, too, for the next book.

5 A Many-Splendored Thing
By Han Suyin
1952

"You can't be both east and west at the same time," says British foreign correspondent Mark Elliott to the beautiful Eurasian doctor Han Suyin. But of course she can, in roiling, postwar colonial Hong Kong, where people "circulate among the bridge and mahjong tables." In Han's semiautobiographical novel "A Many-Splendored Thing," the widowed doctor embarks on a doomed, short-lived affair with the dashing—and married—journalist. The starry-eyed quality of their infatuation leads to occasional sentimentality: "Mark and I had many friends, and one of them was the moon." But the book is an invaluable—and startlingly modern—record of a certain time and place, thanks to Han's razor-sharp eye for the hypocrisies of the colonial order, as when a society matron remarks that "Hong Kong would be a wonderful place if there were not so many Chinese."

Ms. Lee's novel, "The Piano Teacher," was recently published in paperback.

time off

Amsterdam

photography

"Hatra: City of the Sun God" showcases photographic documentation of the ancient city in Iraq.
Allard Pierson Museum
Until Feb. 28
☎ 31-20-5252-556
www.allardpiersonmuseum.nl

Antwerp

art

"Rubens Revealed—Fury of the Brush" presents findings of extensive research on paintings from the Rubens collection of the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten.
Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten
Feb. 13-April 4
☎ 32-3238-7809
www.kmska.be

Basel

art

"Fasnacht & Art & Tinguely" displays art and props from 100 years of Basel Fasnacht, a carnival celebrated to mark the end of winter.
Museum Tinguely
Until May 16
☎ 41-61-6819-320
www.tinguely.ch

Berlin

currency

"Strong Women-in Miniature Form"

explores the portrayal of women on coins from Antiquity to the present day.

Pergamon Museum
Until Dec. 31
☎ 49-30-2090-5577
www.smb.spk-berlin.de

Bilbao

photography

"Schommer Retrospective 1952-2009" shows 100 images by Spanish photographer Alberto Schommer.
Museo de Belles Artes de Bilbao
Feb. 8-May 16
☎ 34-94-4396-060
www.museobilbao.com

Copenhagen

art

"Colour in Art" examines color systems used by 20th-century artists in more than 100 works of art, including eight paintings by Kandinsky.
Louisiana Museum of Modern Art
Until June 13
☎ 45-4919-0719
www.louisiana.dk

Hamburg

art

"Genuine Illusions: Illusion and Reality in Art" showcases drawings, paintings and sculptures devoted to tricking the eye, including work by Lucas Cranach, Claes Oldenburg, Jasper Johns and Janet Cardiff.
Bucerius Kunst Forum

Feb. 13-May 24
☎ 49-40-3609-960
www.buceriuskunstforum.de

art

"Pop Life: Warhol, Haring, Koons, Hirst, ..." explores Andy Warhol's statement that "good business is the best art" with work by Tracey Emin, Keith Haring, Damien Hirst, Takashi Murakami and others.
Hamburger Kunsthalle-Gallery of Contemporary Art
Feb. 12-May 9
☎ 49-40-4281-3120-0
www.hamburger-kunsthalle.de

London

theater

"A Man of No Importance" is a musical based on the book by Terrence McNally about a Dublin bus conductor with music by Stephen Flaherty. It is directed by Ben De Wynter.
The Arts Theatre
Feb. 10-Feb. 27
☎ 44-845-0175-584
www.artstheatrewestend.com

photography

"Deutsche Börse Photography Prize 2010" shows work by the four artists shortlisted for the prize.
The Photographers' Gallery
Feb. 12-April 18
☎ 44-845-2621-618
www.photonet.org.uk

music

"ABBAWorld" is an interactive exhibition about the Swedish pop band ABBA presenting 25 rooms of memorabilia, music, footage and images.
Earls Court Exhibition Centre
Until March 28
☎ 44-1159-1290-00
www.abbaworld.com

Luxembourg

art

"Everyday(s)" exhibits contemporary art on the theme of everyday life, with work by Bruno Baltzer, David Bestué & Marc Vives and others.
Casino Luxembourg Forum d'Art Contemporain
Until April 11
☎ 352-2250-45
www.casino-luxembourg.lu

Lisbon

art

"In the Presence of Things" displays 71 paintings from the 17th and 18th centuries, including work by Juan Sánchez Cotán, Pieter Claesz, Rembrandt and Francisco de Goya.
Museu Calouste Gulbenkian
Feb. 12-May 2
☎ 351-21-7823-000
www.museu.gulbenkian.pt

Madrid

photography

"Saved Art" presents archive photos and video projections documenting the fate of famous works of art during the Spanish Civil war.
Museo Nacional del Prado - Paseo del Prado
Until March 21
☎ 34-91-3302-800
www.museodelprado.es



Foundation E.G. Bührle Collection

Above, Jean Willi's 'OP-ART-ertieverkalkig,' (Pfluderli Clique) (1967) at Museum Tinguely in Basel; bottom, Lady Gaga will start her U.K. tour in Manchester.

Manchester

music

"Lady Gaga - The Monster Ball Tour" starts the U.K. tour of the Grammy Award-winning pop singer.
Feb. 18 M.E.N. Arena, Manchester
Feb. 20-21 The O2, Dublin
Feb. 22 The Belfast Odyssey Arena
Feb. 24 Liverpool Echo Arena
Feb. 26-27 The O2, London (continues into March)
www.livenation.co.uk

Munich

art

"Maharaja: The Splendour of India's Royal Courts" explores the culture of maharajas through Indian and Western works.
Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung
Feb. 12-May 23
☎ 49-89-2244-12
www.hypo-kunsthalle.de

art

"Peter Loewy: Drawings" presents portrait photography created from close-ups and distortions of drawings by the German photographer.
Pinakothek der Moderne
Feb. 9-April 11
☎ 49-89-2380-5360
www.pinakothek.de

Paris

photography

"Lisette Model" showcases 120 images of New York in the 1940s by the Austrian-born American photographer.
Jeu de Paume—Concorde
Feb. 9-June 6
☎ 33-1-4703-1250
www.jeudepaume.org

art

"C'est la Vie! Vanity, From Caravaggio to

Damien Hirst" displays 150 art pieces representing vanity objects, including early mosaics from Pompeii.
Musée Maillol
Until June 28
☎ 33-1-4222-5958
www.museemaillol.com

art

"The Image Factory" presents 160 original objects from different historical and ethnical backgrounds around the world, illustrating totemism, naturalism, animism and analogy.
Musée du Quai Branly
Feb. 16-July 15
☎ 33-1-5661-7000
www.quaibrany.fr

Rotterdam

art

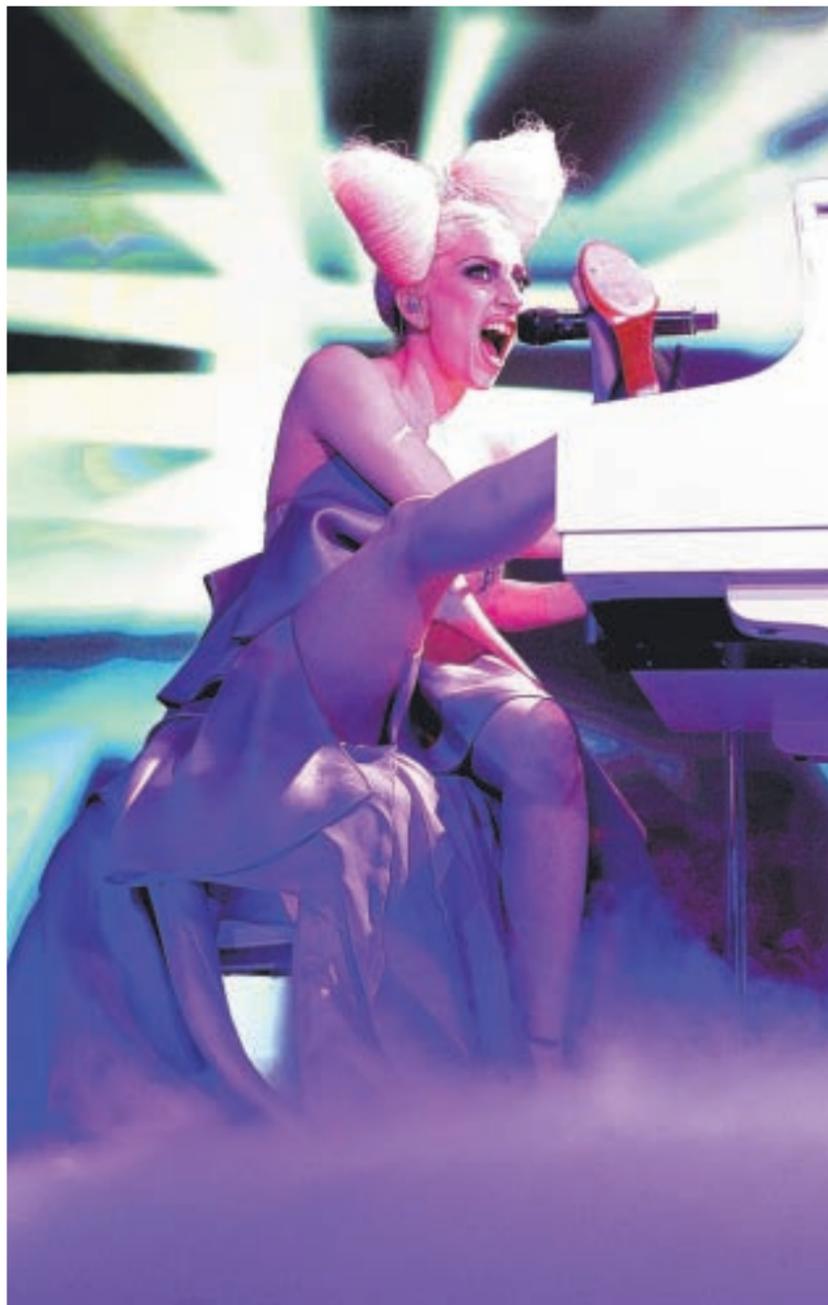
"Inside out: Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen on Show" showcases masterpieces by artists such as Frans Hals and Jacob van Ruisdael alongside modern work by Giorgio Morandi and Frank Stella.
Kunsthall
Feb. 6-May 24
☎ 31-10-4400-301
www.kunsthall.nl

Zurich

design

"Global Design" traces the effects of globalization on the world of design since the 1970s, following developments in architecture, graphics, media, fashion, product and industrial design.
Museum of Design
Feb. 12-May 30
☎ 41-43-4466-767
www.museum-gestaltung.ch

Source: ArtBase Global Arts News Service, WSJE research.



Getty Images