FRIDAY-SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3-5, 2010

Weekend Journal.

EUROPE

Meeting of minds

The architectural world comes together at the Venice Biennale

Travel: The allure of Karpathos | Wine: Choosing the right glass

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WEEKEND JOURNAL
EUROPE

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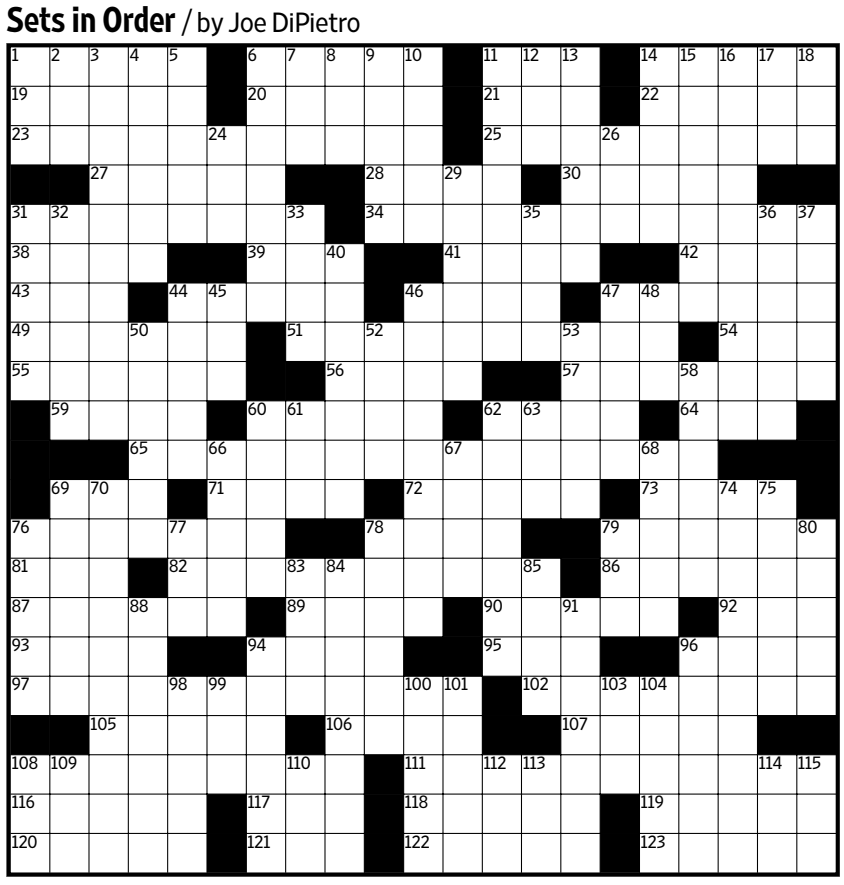
Sets in Order / by Joe DiPietro



Last Week's Solution

A	S	B	I	G	■	■	■	C	O	L	A	■	C	C	C	I	■	B	I	B
M	O	O	L	A	■	F	E	A	R	E	D	■	A	A	A	S	■	I	N	A
P	U	B	L	I	C	E	X	P	E	N	D	I	T	U	R	E	■	O	S	T
E	C	U	■	N	A	M	E	R	■	T	I	N	H	A	T	■	I	N	C	H
D	I	P	L	O	M	A	T	I	C	E	N	V	O	Y	■	L	A	I	R	S
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R	I	L	L	■	■	P	R	A	Y	■	P	H	E	N	O	M	■	E	B	B
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T	O	R	S	O	S	■	E	U	R	O	■	■	U	L	M	■	O	S	S	A
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C	H	A	S	■	R	V	S	■	■	R	O	M	P	■	O	U	T	I	E	S
C	A	M	A	C	H	O	■	T	R	A	G	I	C	E	N	D	I	N	G	S
C	R	A	D	L	E	■	P	R	O	M	■	■	■	F	E	E	L	F	O	R
P	E	T	■	O	R	D	A	I	N	■	S	P	O	T	■	■	L	O	S	S
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O	P	C	I	T	■	A	R	C	T	I	C	E	X	P	L	O	R	E	R	S
B	A	E	R	■	A	D	O	R	E	D	■	S	A	V	E	S	■	R	A	T
E	N	L	■	S	T	A	T	I	C	E	L	E	C	T	R	I	C	I	T	Y
S	T	L	■	E	R	I	E	■	H	O	S	T	A	S	■	T	A	K	E	N
E	S	O	■	W	A	R	D	■	S	S	T	S	■	■	■	A	B	A	S	E

Tiffany puts its signature blue on handbags

By Elizabeth Holmes

TIFFANY & CO. now has bags to match its little blue boxes. The jeweler launched an expansive collection of handbags, ranging from clutches to totes to satchels, in a dozen of its U.S. stores this week. Every piece bears an element of Tiffany's signature robin's egg blue, whether on a clasp, in a lining or all over a dyed-crocodile purse. Prices for women's handbags start at $395 (€310) for a small suede tote and rocket up to $17,500 (€13,690) for a large crocodile handbag.

Handbags have enjoyed sparkling sales in recent years and are in some ways easier for a retailer to move: Women are more likely to splurge on bags for themselves than on jewelry. "Unlike jewelry, which sometimes feels extravagant, handbags always serve a purpose," says John Long, a retail strategist with consultancy Kurt Salmon Associates.

Tiffany is joining a crowded field of retailers selling handbags. According to market-research firm NPD Group, dollar sales of handbags that cost $200 or more rose 15% in the 12 months that ended in June from the year-earlier period. And Tiffany continues to walk a thin line as it tries to drive sales through accessibly priced goods, while maintaining its upmarket image.

The designers of Tiffany's new bags, Richard Lambertson and John Truex, say the biggest challenge in designing handbags for Tiffany was coming up with a way to identify the product. "We wanted to have something recognizable about the bags so that people would say 'Oh! That must be a Tiffany bag,'" Mr. Lambertson says. "It's really hard to do that."

The two men are well-known among handbag enthusiasts, having designed leather goods and sold them at luxury department stores for a decade under the Lambertson Truex label. After the recession drove their company into U.S. bankruptcy court in spring 2009, Tiffany bought the trademark and hired the designers.

The pair eschewed the heavy use of logos in their Lambertson Truex work and didn't want to go that route with Tiffany. Instead, they decided to play with Tiffany's eye-catching blue. The strap on the black leather Blake tote (which costs $995) includes a Tiffany-blue stripe. The clasp and rivets of many bags also include a bit of Tiffany-blue enamel, along with the words, "Tiffany & Co."

For those who want more, some of the bags are saturated in the shade. The Holly clutch ($595) comes in a Tiffany-blue satin, as does the snakeskin Hadley shoulder bag ($1,495).

"The color can be kind of frightening," Mr. Lambertson says. "It's not subtle."

Both designers say Tiffany's strong brand helped to guide them. "Here, we're restricted—in a very good way," Mr. Lambertson says.

Mr. Truex adds, "What would not be Tiffany is a bag that is too avant-garde or extreme, or too hard-edged and not feminine enough."

Tiffany has tried small collections of handbags before, most recently in the mid-1990s with a line created by in-house designers, but this will be its first full assortment. Jon King, Tiffany's executive vice president in charge of merchandising and marketing, says the new line was sparked by the availability of Messrs. Lambertson and Truex.

The new bag collection will take up display space in stores that has been vacated by tabletop china and silver. Tiffany says it has been trimming down its selection of tableware, which also includes crystal, for a "number of years."

Bryan Derballa for The Wall Street Journal

The Tiffany Bracelet bag comes in 25 colors, including the jeweler's famous blue.

Arbitrage

American Express Platinum card membership fee

City	Local currency	€
New York	$450	€352
London	£300	€365
Paris	€490	€490
Frankfurt	€500	€500
Rome	€550	€550
Brussels	€570	€570

Note: Prices of annual membership fee for the charge card, plus taxes, as provided by retailers in each city, averaged and converted into euros.

A clear difference

Wine
WILL LYONS

I USED TO have a bit of a glass fetish. Don't get me wrong, there was nothing sinister in my appreciation of glassware, it's just that immediately after university, when I was first getting into wine seriously and had a bit of money in my back pocket, I went out and bought a number of Georg Riedel wineglasses.

For those of you who haven't heard of Georg Riedel, he is by far the most influential man in wine glass design. When he inherited his father's glassware factory in Austria, the young Georg decided to design a range of glasses suited to various styles of wine. The premise was based on what Riedel describes as the tongue map, whereby by directing the flow of the liquid toward a specific area of the tongue, a glass can actually alter the flavor of the wine. The Riedel portfolio is huge, with glasses for young Bordeaux, old Bordeaux, Chardonnay, Chianti, Burgundy, Riesling and so on. The prices can also be huge, ranging from £15 for a basic tasting glass to £100 for the Burgundy glass. At various stages during my glassware fad I owned most of the major examples, including the Riedel Sommeliers Burgundy Grand Cru, whose elaborately ballooned bowl has earned it a place on permanent display in New York's Museum of Modern Art.

But my relationship with very expensive wineglasses ended when they began to break. One by one, my collection disappeared as the rough and tumble of living in a shared flat took its toll. Whether it was breaking them during washing-up, knocking them off the table or even on one occasion cracking them under hot, running water, I came to the conclusion that drinking wine from handmade lead crystal probably wasn't for me. I went out and bought six boxes of ISO (International Organization for Standardization) wine-tasting glasses, the approved size and shape—a tapered tulip bowl—for wine judging and competitions and I have used them for tasting, bar the odd exception, ever since.

And I must say that, for critically evaluating a wine, they have served me well. But lately I have been rethinking my stance. I have been to a few dinners of late where the wine in question was, in no uncertain terms, ruined by the glass. Moreover, on other occasions when I have been served wine in Georg Riedel glass I have found it immeasurably improved.

It reminded me that perhaps it was time to restock the glass cabinet. So, with an open mind, an empty notebook and a bottle of wine, I visited Around Wine, Britain's largest glassware retailer, for a tasting.

Back in the days when I was buying serious wineglasses, Georg Riedel had the field to himself. Now I am delighted to say there are several considerably cheaper suppliers that are worth tracking down. Most notably, Schott Zwiesel, Zalto Glasmanufaktur, Dartington and Eisch. Before we get on to the tasting, it is also worth bearing in mind that it isn't necessary to spend a fortune on your glass. As long as you follow a few basic principles when choosing, most glasses will suffice. The three guiding principles are: The glass should be as thin as possible; it should not have a rim that interrupts the flow into the mouth; the bowl should also be as fat as possible, with the widest part a third of the way up—this is the level up to which you should pour the wine.

Now, on to the tasting. I selected a 2003 Chambolle-Musigny, in a bid to test the capricious Pinot Noir grape variety. I tasted it in five different glasses. An ISO, a Schott Zwiesel standard white wineglass, Riedel's Vinum Bordeaux, Zalto's handmade burgundy glass and Riedel's famous burgundy glass. In each glass, the wine's taste changed dramatically. In the ISO, it was very intense, with overpowering notes of baked cherry. In the Schott Zwiesel standard white wineglass, spicier notes were highlighted, while the Vinum Bordeaux revealed an earthy character. The latter two glasses were the obvious stars, making the wine taste more refined, pure and balanced. In short, they took all the heat out of it. The Riedel was by a margin the winner, drawing out more nuanced flavors. But at a £100 a glass compared with Zalto's £28, I know which I would prefer, especially considering my breakage record.

DRINKING NOW

Les Monts Damnés
Sancerre, France

Vintage: **2008**

Price: **about £25 or €30**

Alcohol content: **12.5%**

Loire's village of Sancerre makes some of the world's most glorious Sauvignon Blancs, and this is a classic example. With time, it opens up in the glass to reveal plenty of fresh citrus flavors, underneath which lies a rich texture.

Julien Hekimian for the Wall Street Journa

Savoring fouée

A taste of the puffy, delicacy-stuffed bread offers a mouthwatering trip into France's distant past

By Jacqueline Friedrich

"EAT WITH YOUR fingers. It's more practical."

That seems shocking advice from the owner of a French restaurant. Etiquette is so hardwired into the French brain that its well-bred citizens attack chicken wings with bold knife and fork. We are, however, in La Grange à Dîme, a fouée restaurant in the French town of Montreuil-Bellay, a breed of eatery known by few travelers. And fouée-restaurant fare practically defies cutlery.

Fouée is an ancient bread. History tells us that it was born as a way for bakers to test the heat of their wood ovens: they'd rip off a piece of dough, roll it out and stick it in the oven. Minutes later, out comes a puffed-up bubble of hot crust filled with air. Its closest relative may be the pita. But your standard pita is burlap to the fouée's gossamer.

Nature abhors a vacuum and so does a fouée. You prick it open and fill it with various stuffings, most of them dictated by local tradition, to wit: rillettes (unctuous pork spread called "brown marmalade" by novelist Honoré de Balzac), mogettes (the Vendée's celebrated dried white beans), Loire goat cheese and lightly salted butter.

Here you have the mainstays of the honest-to-God fouée restaurant, a style of eatery pretty much limited to the Saumurois in the western stretch of the Loire Valley. The set menus vary little from one place to another and are usually fleshed out with mushrooms, a meat preparation, salad, dessert and serviceable regional wine.

Killjoys might dismiss these as "theme" restaurants, but their foodstuffs are based on ancient foodways—many known to Rabelais—and are resolutely home-grown.

Your meal at La Grange à Dîme, for example, starts with a glass of sweet Chenin Blanc from the Coteaux du Layon to accompany a galipette, a large (locally cultivated) mushroom, stuffed and baked to melting crunchiness in the hearth.

Next the fouées are brought from the hearth to be filled with rillettes, butter or, better yet, both. And along comes a lightly chilled Anjou rouge, in this case, a forthright Cabernet Franc.

The main course, confit de canard and mogettes, cooks in the hearth in a big casserole to lip-smacking crustiness. I stuffed everything into the fouées, which I had already smothered with butter. Disgustingly delicious. Then came salad and tangy goat cheese, followed by the first strawberries of the season and topped with the best whipped cream I have ever eaten.

> Fouée is an ancient bread—history tells us that it was born as a way for bakers to test the heat of their wood ovens.

La Grange à Dîme, a 15th-century structure, was once the storage place for "gifts" (taxes, really) that commoners were obliged to give local lords. The heavy wood beams, the magnificent chestnut eaves all date from the building's origins. From time to time musicians perform medieval music, and the staff, at all times, wears period dress.

This, at first, made me fear terminal corniness. What the staff was actually wearing, however—long skirts, embroidered vests and smocks—was no different from what they wear during the numerous local fairs and reunions of wine brotherhoods. This is Plantagenet country. There is always a reason to don medieval garb and cue the local Jordi Savalls.

What's more, it fits the setting. Montreuil-Bellay, an enchanting town on the river Thouet with an 11th-century château, invites strolling—around the fortress, the narrow streets, the lush river banks. And most of the other fouée restaurants are located in similarly captivating settings such as troglodyte caves—enormous, hydra-headed labyrinths created when the stone was quarried for building the local châteaux, churches and homes. Many now serve as winemaking or mushroom-cultivating cellars.

About 21 kilometers west of Montreuil-Bellay you'll find some of the Loire's most remarkable troglodyte caves, among them Dénezé-sous-Doué, its walls completely covered with enigmatic 16th- and 17th-century sculptures, and La Rochemenier, a 20-room troglodyte village, with farms and a chapel, of more than two acres. La Genevraie is, blessedly, part of this ensemble.

La Genevraie's setting is enchanting: A path curves down to the entry, bordered with flowering rosebushes. The main room is surely as close as a troglodyte cave can ever get to evoking a proper English tea parlor—with its candles and vases filled with fresh roses, its window sills lined with antique dolls and its walls hung with old kitchen utensils.

Chopped mushrooms, cooked with carrots and seasonings, come stuffed into fouées. Then rillettes followed by rillauds, large cubes of pork which have been salted and simmered in water until fork-tender. These have been sliced into glistening little strips and piled onto superb mogettes. There is a break before cheese and dessert (excellent pear-and-chocolate tart) to tour the caves, see the oven and chat with the owner-baker.

Julien Hekimian for the Wall Street Journal (3)

Clockwise from left page: foueés are prepared and cooked in a traditional oven by Jean-Pierre Hay, chef of 'La Grange a Dime'; foueé stuffed with mushrooms and carrots, a speciality at 'Les Caves de la Genevraie'; a view of 'Les Caves de la Genevraie', a famous foueé restaurant; foueé restaurant 'La Grange a Dime'.

The authenticity and the quality of the products served at both La Grange à Dîme and La Genevraie have been guaranteed by the Parc Naturel Régional Loire-Anjou-Touraine, which supervises activities associated with the Loire since it has been recognized as Unesco's largest World Heritage site. Two other restaurants are also recommended: Le Cave aux Moines, where fouées are served with mushrooms grown on the spot, and Le Moulin de Sarre, a working flour mill with a fouée restaurant adjunct.

Many of the ever-increasing number of fouée restaurants don't make the grade. Le Clos des Roches, deep in the fields of Grezille, however, is every bit as good as the best.

You might want to bring a flashlight when dining here. From the parking area you must descend a rocky path to a dirt road, past a private home, before getting to the troglodyte that houses the restaurant. The fouées here are oblong rather than round and might win the gold medal for quality. The young server keeps them coming and lights a candle under a serving dish for the mogettes—which follow the rillettes and butter, accompanied by slabs of smoky Vendée ham cooked in the wood oven. There's salad, excellent goat cheese from north of Angers and, for dessert, Tarte Tatin.

Each of these restaurants is cavernous. They accept tour buses. Fear not. You're likely to be surrounded by locals out for a down-home feast.

Jacqueline Friedrich is a writer based in Paris.

Where to stay

Château de Verrières
A 10-room gem in the center of Saumur, behind the National Riding Academy (Cadre Noir), with a dreamy park and a pool. Owner Yolaine de Valbray-Auger couldn't be more accommodating. Rates from €150 for a double and €290 for an apartment-size suite decorated with museum-quality Chinese pottery.
☎ +33-241-38-05-15 (from abroad)
contact@chateau-verrieres.com

Demeure de la Vignole
If the owner's froideur doesn't deter you, this 10-room semi-cave hotel overlooking the vineyards of Saumur-Champigny has a lot to offer: a charming site; thematically decorated rooms; and, above all, a dramatic heated swimming pool carved into the rock of its own troglodyte cave. Think Fellini. Rates from €95 for a double.
☎ +33-241-53-67-00,
demeure@demeure-vignole.com

The restaurants

La Grange à Dîme
open nightly in season and for Sunday lunch; open weekends off-season. Closed Mondays.
☎ 02-41-50-97-24;
grange-a-dime.com

Les Caves de la Genevraie
☎ 02-41-59-34-22;
http://genevraie.troglodyte.info

Le Clos des Roches
open for lunch and dinner with reservation; closed Mondays, Friday lunchtimes and Sunday nights except during bank holidays.
☎ 02-41-45-59-36,
lesclosdesroches.fr

La Cave aux Moines
☎ 02-41-67-95-64,
cave-aux-moines.com

Le Moulin de Sarré
☎ 02-41-51-81-32,
www.moulin-de-sarre.fr

Alamy

The alluring remoteness of Karpathos

Among the southernmost islands in the Dodecanese chain, the Greek island offers crystalline waters and endless bays

By Aaron Maines

Karpathos, Greece

SNORKELING A METER above the seabed, an excited 7-year-old is tugging on my ankle. I twist to see my son act out an aquatic pantomime of agitation, eyes bulging behind his mask, a finger stabbing down through the seawater to point at...What?

The water is so clear we can make out distant swimmers churning their legs on the opposite end of the cove. A school of blue-lined sardines sweeps around us, startled by my son's splashing to slip away over the rocks like a lady's scarf caught in the wind. A lone bright silver sea bream streaks off into deeper blue, its black half-moon tail slicing the water in a burst of energy. Dentex and rainbow-colored wrasse snuffle the white sand below, stirring up a meal, while tiger-striped gobies lay among the rocks, waiting to snap the smaller fish up in turn.

Any one of these could capture my attention. What, exactly, has captured his?

We were exploring a cove in Amoopi Bay, one of several limestone-lined turquoise pools of water on the Greek island of Karpathos, which feels as if it were destined to showcase them. Among the southernmost islands in the Dodecanese chain, it is deep in the heart of the Aegean Sea. There is no way to stumble onto Karpathos; you have to make an effort to get here.

The distance from the rest of the world, however, is part of the island's distinct charm. Karpathos has an international airport, but there is rarely more than one plane parked there at a time, and reaching the island by ferry from Athens is a 20-hour, 415-kilometer affair.

In addition to fewer tourists, more privacy and relatively low prices, there were few signs of the turmoil investing the rest of the country during our visit to Karpathos in August. When Greek Prime Minister George A. Papandreou set stringent economic austerity measures in place earlier this summer, the island has remained essentially free of the strikes, protests and widespread social unrest that have plagued other parts of Greece.

While the turmoil has taken a toll on stores and supermarket shelves, nearly everywhere want was met with a shrug and a smile. On an island where almost everyone speaks workable English, a rapid-fire "it's O.K." has become a sort of island mantra. There's no coffee on the shelf? "It's O.K. It's O.K. It's O.K.," responds a clerk in a single breath. "Next week."

Geographically, Karpathos comprises mostly coastline—a thin, 47-kilometer long sliver of mountains jutting up out of the Mediterranean like an exclamation point. Fewer than a dozen small, brightly painted towns dot its arid hillsides, and none is more than a few minutes' drive away from a beach.

In Pigadia, the island's capital, only a handful of small fishing boats are docked at the port, as well as bigger vessels, with names such as "Vasily's Love Boat" and "Private Karpathos Pleasure Cruise" that for €7 to €20 will take you on a day tour to popular beaches.

Part of the reason so few boats berth in its waters is the meltemi, a constant summer wind so strong it bends pine trees over permanently into bonsai-like sculptures. This strong wind makes mooring along the island's coast difficult at best, but keeps temperatures generally lower than on other Greek isles. During the third week of August, when most of Greece was in the grip of a heat wave, the meltemi died down and temperatures on Karpathos promptly shot above 40 degrees centigrade during the day. "We never have heat like this," complained Nina Ekizoglou, owner of Nina's Studios, a restaurant and hotel complex in Amoopi. "Without the wind, we're all suffering!"

The coast itself is a collection of water-worn escarpments, creating an endless succession of individual coves and bays. There is a beach for every flavor, from the small, rocky and abandoned for people in search of privacy, to broad, sandy and serviced for sunbathers who like to people-watch. Our tourist map showed 68 official beaches. Adding the unmarked and unnamed beaches would easily push that number into the hundreds.

But whether deep and craggy, smooth and sandy, level and rocky, or vast and shallow, these beaches all have one thing in common: extraordinarily crystalline water. Snorkeling the coast of Karpathos is like swimming in liquid glass.

Sabrina Locatelli, 39, a tourist from Monza, Italy, and an experienced scuba diver, was on her first diving trip to Karpathos. "There are some marvelous rock formations here, including underwater caves and grottoes," she says. "You don't have the variety of sea life you'd find at a tropical destination, but the water is crystal-clear and there's still plenty to see. Best of all, there are so few tourists that most of the time you're alone."

Despite its beautiful waters, Karpathian culture is concentrated on land rather than the sea. Evidence of this can be found in the food served in its restaurants, where meats such as lamb, chicken and pork play a leading role. Tender spiced skewers called *souvlaki*, feta-cheese-stuffed hamburgers called *bifteki* and a range of oven-roasted meats with potatoes, green beans, eggplant and tomatoes can be found on every menu.

Seafood dishes are walk-ons, limited to the rare grilled octopus, fried calamari, tiny Karpathian shrimp or sardines, and occasional fish fillets, more often than not accompanied by little asterisks that lead to small print reading "some ingredients may be frozen."

During our two-week-long stay, we ate several meals at Nina's Taverna, which specializes in traditional Karpathian meals. We enjoyed classic Greek salads, tzatziki, a traditional dish made with yogurt, cucumbers and garlic, as well as tender pork roast lined with grape leaves and filled with fresh sweet Karpathian goat cheese. Like at almost all restaurants on Karpathos, there were *makaraounes*, a whole-wheat pasta dressed with fried onions, olive oil and aged feta, and *saganaki*, a pan-fried fresh goat cheese.

Nina's Taverna is run by Apostolis Ekizoglou, 30, while his brother Leftekis, 26, oversees the kitchen. Both moved back to Karpathos after studying and working in large hotels in Athens. "I like it much more here. Life is easier, no stress," says Apostolis Ekizoglou, gesturing out from the restaurant terrace to the vast blue Amoopi Bay below. "We serve the traditional foods, but my brother studied as a chef in Athens, and he likes to surprise people." The surprise that evening was a delicious lamb stuffato, cinnamon-flavored roasted lamb served on a bed of pinoli-shaped pasta.

Two days later we took an afternoon to drive up to Olympos, a mountain town in the north of the island, where centuries-old traditions still reign supreme. The 27-kilometer road leading up to the town was all dust, gravel and potholes, but cranes and massive construction machines parked along the roadside spoke of asphalt to come.

In the town square, Massimo Oneglia, 39 years old, a lawyer from Milan, Italy, mused about the changes he'd seen the island make in just a few years. He returned to Karpathos this summer with his wife after an initial visit in 2005, and found it surprisingly modern-

Clockwise from top left, Getty; Gijs de Kruijff; Aaron Maines (2)

Clockwise from opposite page: A quiet harbor on Karpathos; whitewashed windmills overlooking the sea; a priest walks through the town of Olympos; 7-year-old Michelangelo Maines builds a sandcastle on Michaliou Kipos beach.

ized. "You can drive almost everywhere now," he said. "When we first came here none of the secondary roads were paved. We had to rent a motorbike just to get to beaches like Apella and Agios Nikolaos."

In Olympus the surroundings remained reminiscent of a time long ago with its whitewashed cement walls—common to many of the Greek isles—and an elegant bell tower cupola outlined in blue, bright red geraniums and fuchsia bougainvillea. Elderly women dressed in traditional garb of black, billowing dresses with crisp white shirts and vests of colorful cloth, skillfully sold handmade olive oil and honey soaps that the island is famous for to interested tourists.

> Our tourist map showed 68 official beaches. Adding the unmarked ones would easily push that number into the hundreds.

A visit a few days later to Menetes, a hilltop town located at the center of the island, coincided with Panagia, an annual religious festival. In keeping with tradition, tourists were genuinely treated as honored guests and pressed by locals to accept thick slices of home baked bread, the crusts constellated with sesame seeds and fragrant anise, then roasted bell peppers, black kalamata olives, white wine and cloudy, iced glasses of ouzo. When we returned to the town the following evening to dine at a restaurant that had caught our eye during the festival, we found it still full of life, with children chasing each other up and down the town's narrow alleys, and old men drinking ouzo and arguing about soccer outside the café in its main square.

The streets leading to Menetes were all paved, and satellite dishes sat atop almost every house. For all its modernization, there was nothing cynical about Menetes, no hint of the commercialization of Karpathos we'd found in Olympos.

Nevertheless, the greatest delights lay down below, off the coast and underwater.

In the bay in Amoopi, my son finally managed to direct my attention to what he'd seen: a dark green, black-speckled Mediterranean moray eel coiled near the edge of a vast rocky plateau barely a meter beneath us.

We followed the moray as it swam out over the edge. The plateau dropped dizzyingly away to white sand and seabed at least six meters below, where every individual rock, urchin, seaweed and seashell was clear in the bright sunlight. With a kick of our feet we'd flown off a mountain's edge and out over a vast aquatic valley, no seatbelts required.

Returning to the surface to clean our masks, my son's face was radiant. "Dad!" he exclaimed, "it's just like flying, but in the water!"

—Aaron Maines is a writer based in Milan.

ON THE ISLAND

Where to stay

The Apolis features luxury accommodations including a beautiful terrace restaurant and pool overlooking the bay. During peak season, double rooms range between €100 and €120 per night, including breakfast.
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www.apolis.eu

Nina's Studios provides studio apartments with kitchenettes—traditionally a popular solution across Greece—and is located just above picturesque Kastelia Bay. Double rooms from €50 per night, including breakfast at Nina's Taverna, which serves a variety of Greek and Karpathian specialties.
☎ +30-22450-81006 studios
☎ +30-22450-81044
tavernatavernanina@hotmail.com

The Aegean Village provides both full hotel services and independent suites with kitchenettes, and is located directly above Amoopi Bay. Double rooms start €90 per night, including breakfast.
☎ +30-22450-81194
www.aegeanvillage.gr

Where to eat

Rina, a restaurant located on the main road between Amoopi and the airport, is famous for its excellent Karpathian dishes such as makarounes and roast lamb.
☎ +30-22450-91051

In Menetes, **Pelaga Taverna** serves excellent Karpathian fare at tables set up outside on the main square.
☎ +30-22450-81135

What to do

In Pigadia, the **Karpathos Diving School** provides training courses, tours and equipment to divers.
www.diveinkarpathos.gr

On the southern tip of the island, **Club Mistral Karpathos** provides windsurf stations, training and equipment.
www.windsurfing-karpathos.com

A plate of makarounes, a traditional Karpathian whole-wheat pasta dressed with fried onions, olive oil and aged feta at Nina's Taverna.

Meeting in space

The Venice Biennale brings together architects

By Andrew McKie

"THE TITLE SEEMS simplistic, but it can be interpreted in many ways," says Kazuyo Sejima, the first woman to direct the Venice Architecture Biennale, at the news conference to open this year's exhibition, "People meet in Architecture."

If people meet in architecture, architects meet in Venice. Not in the architecture of the imposing and venerable churches, museums and *palazzi* that line the Grand Canal; nor even, strictly speaking, in the abandoned warehouses of the Arsenale and exhibition pavilions in Giardini, which constitute the exhibition venues, the permanent structure of which the architects largely disregard; but in the temporary, imagined and potential spaces represented within them.

The 12th gathering of the most important show for those concerned with what is now usually called "the built environment," which runs until Nov. 21, may have an apparently less opaque subject than some previous years' themes—"Metamorph"; "Out There"; "Next"—but those attending are as determined as ever to interpret it in many ways.

And, indeed, as the architects, critics, engineers, urban planners, academics and design fans trudge from pavilion to pavilion through the dusty gravel and punishing heat, sweltering in their emphatic eyewear and their black designer suits so unsuited to the heat, their T-shirts emblazoned with the names of typefaces (in those typefaces), acquiring more and more cloth tote bags packed with catalogues and manifestos as they go, there is nothing if not variety.

Here, in the Arsenale's warehouses, Smiljan Radic and Marcela Correa of Chile have carved a hole, just large enough for one person, into a large stone. Matthias Schuler's Transsolar of Stuttgart and Tetsuo Kondo of Tokyo have filled a room with a cloud, through which one walks on a spiral gangway. Janet Cardiff has assembled a circle of speakers playing Thomas Tallis's 40-part motet "Spem in alium." Here, too, is Wim Wenders's 3D film of Ms. Sejima and her collaborator Ryue Nishizawa riding bicycles and Segways around the Rolex Learning Center they designed in Lausanne. "The building and the film needed movement," Mr. Wenders says. "They were courageous enough to try it and, by the end, I think they became stunt riders."

Over there, in the Giardini, the Czech and Slovak pavilion's opening appears to be impeded by Health and Safety officials trying to dismantle the timber structures hanging outside with chainsaws, though this turns out to be a performance. The Australians, in a remarkable day-glo orange exhibit entitled "Now and When," are showing an extraordinary rendering (also in 3D) of the country's western cities, contrasted with the ziggurats of quarries in the east that have provided the ore to build them. Belgium has pieces of flooring and plywood table-tops retrieved from redundant factories hung on their walls like abstract expressionist paintings. Philip Beesley, at the Canadian pavilion, is explaining how his strange, unsettlingly beautiful, fern-like structures, which react to light, heat and movement, may lead to responsive, breathing, perhaps even conscious, forms of architecture.

"Well, it is not just a trade fair," says Mirko Zardini, director of the Canadian Centre for Architecture. "The Biennale serves a different purpose from, say, London's Festival of Architecture, or the versions of it now reproduced elsewhere. The curatorial element gives it a different momentum. And though the national pavilions don't always follow the themes closely, at its best, the director is able to capture a moment, not just in visual themes, but underlying attitudes."

This echoes Paolo Baratta, the Biennale's president. "An exhibition of architecture cannot be like other exhibitions of knowledge," he argues. "Its intention is to provoke imagination and creativity—and it's also a meeting point. Sejima has given us the idea that clients, architects and citizens must share the capability of listening to the space in which we live; which is the starting point for building a better building, and a better society."

These sentiments may seem both lofty and vague, but the most successful exhibits here are, for the most part, those which have attempted to engage with this debate, whether conceptually or with fully worked-out models and proposals. The Golden Lion for the best national pavilion was awarded last Saturday during the official opening of the exhibition to the Kingdom of Bahrain, which triumphed over 52 other participating countries at its first participation in the event. Its entry consisted of three huts belonging to families involved in fishing, which had been dismantled and reconstructed in an Arsenale warehouse; each contained screens playing interviews with people from those communities.

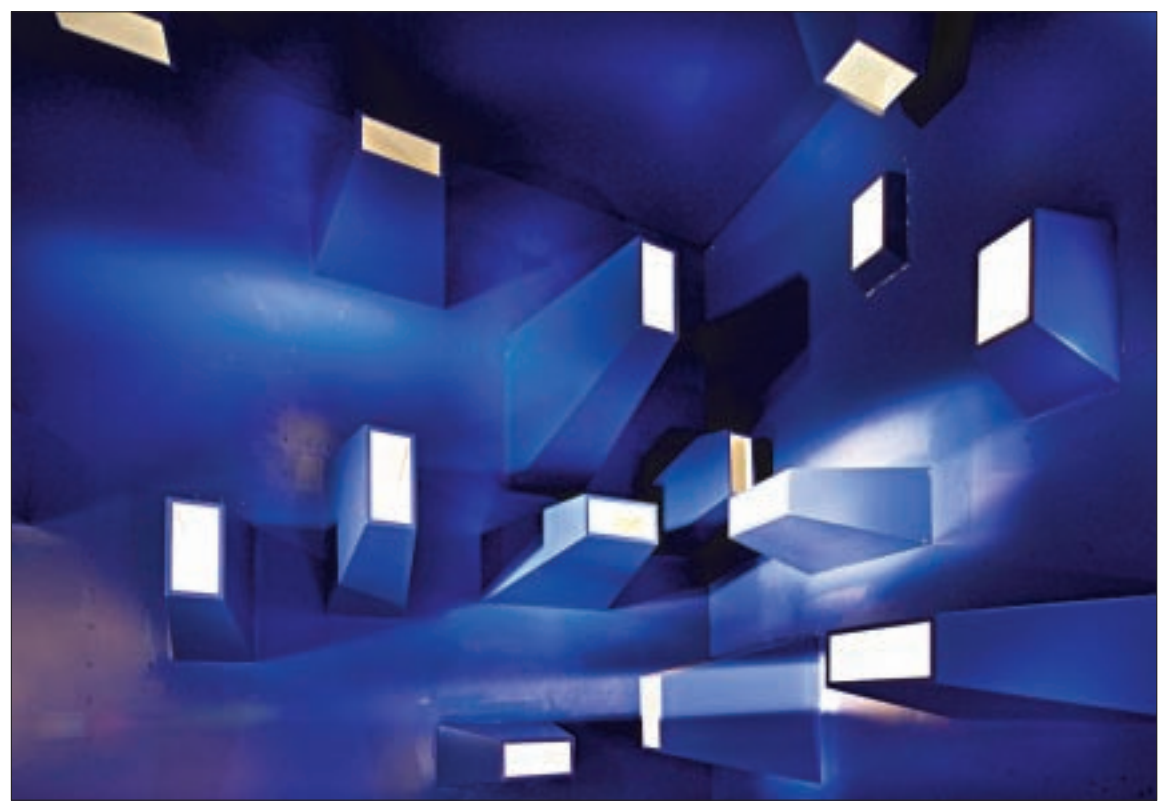
"Land reclamation in Bahrain has often seen people like these displaced," co-curator Noura Al-Sayeh explained. "In some cases, families from fishing villages have found their homes a mile and a half inland, and these huts have sprung up along the water's edge."

The prize for an individual project was given to Junya Ishigami for an almost invisible cuboid form, which appeared to be made of very thin white thread that, as could just be made out, was supported by even finer filaments; diagonal buttresses, which, like spiders' webs, could be seen only when the light and observer's angle were right. The explanatory notes explained that were this "Architecture as Air" to be built, it would be likely to fall like rope under the slightest external forces—something which, when I

The exhibition's intention is 'to provoke imagination and creativity—and it's also a meeting point,' the Venice Biennale's president explains.

Sergio Pirrone for The Wall Street Journal

Clockwise from top left: The gangway through the cloud made by Transsolar and Tetsuo Kondo Architects; large balanced struts by Antón García-Abril and Ensamble Studio; 'Matter/Antimatter' by Attilio Stocchi, as a part of the 'Italy 2050' exposition at the Italian pavilion; One of the three fishing huts on stilts presented by Bahrain, which won the Golden Lion for the national entry; the fern-like structures by Philip Beesley in the Canadian pavilion.



returned to inspect it again on the second day of previews, appeared to have happened to a section of it.

This concentration on the qualities of air and space in building environments, rather than on models of proposed *grands projets*, characterized many of the exhibits. Perhaps it is a response to economic circumstances. If actual construction is unlikely, virtual constructions have licence to be unlikely, too.

Malaysia offered models of conventional towers, but on closer inspection some were in trees, or under water. The popularity of Denmark's white miniatures of real construction projects (entitled "What Makes A Livable City?") may have been due not only to the country's enviable reputation for architecture but also to the fact that, unless one was prepared to climb into a jam-packed horizontal inflatable balloon, their opening was the only one that offered beer.

Only in the American pavilion, where the history of John Portman's Peachtree development in Atlanta in bar charts of profits, jobs and square footage, projected on the wall, rose like the perspex models on the table behind, was there the uncompromising number-crunching of dollars per brick.

Three pavilions above all share a theme relating to Mr. Baratta and Ms. Sejima's idea of "listening to the space in which we live" in a practical fashion, even when expressed in wildly different interpretations. The Dutch, Japanese and French national entries each examine the notion of the void in modern cities. The Netherlands pavilion does it in the most straightforward manner, simply pointing out that the building lies empty for almost nine months of the year. As you enter an empty room, there is a suspended blue foam ceiling that, when one proceeds to the upper level, turns out from above to be a model of a city. It provides a neat visual example of the percentage of empty space in European urban spaces.

Dominique Perrault, who curated the French pavilion, entitled "Metropolis?," says he believes, "The future of the city is to control the quality of that empty space." In a kinetic, vertiginous multimedia representation of several French cities, his presentation argues that these spaces mean that our notions of the territory of a city are bound to change. "At first I was concerned that the void would be commandeered by developers or the state, but it is simply too big—85% or more. It's impossible now to imagine expansion continuing," he says. Mr. Perrault is so cheerfully enthusiastic that I hesitate to mention the Japanese entry, entitled "Void Metabolism." He roars with laughter. "I know, they are arguing exactly the opposite."

Yoshiharu Tsukamoto of Atelier Bow-Wow, which designed the elegant domestic models in Japan's pavilion, uses a film of the rapidly changing layout of Tokyo to make his point. "During the 20th century, architects could test different expressions and techniques, but the house was always particularized by consumers. Especially in Tokyo, where the ownership of small plots means that the average life span of houses is only 26 years," he says. "But there is no real connection with neighbors. We feel that the Internet and social networks have changed those dynamics, and that there is now the opportunity to create a new typology; to make a house as generous as possible and at the same time begin to use the adjacent spaces to create new community frameworks."

Looking at Mr. Tsukamoto's spare, graceful wooden model of an ordinary townhouse is a reminder that the end purpose of this huge gathering, these dozens of installations, models, films, meetings, discussions and different approaches is, after all, as simple as the theme suggests: providing a pleasant room to sit in, an agreeable place for people to meet.

—Andrew McKie is a writer based in Cambridgeshire, England.

Sergio Pirrone for The Wall Street Journal

Top to bottom: 'Decay of a Dome' by Amateur Architecture Studio; (from left) Ryue Nishizawa, Kazuyo Sejima and Wim Wenders at a talk about Mr. Wenders's film of the architects' Rolex Learning Centre at Lausanne; the townhouse in the Japanese pavilion, created by Atelier Bow-Wow; the pavilion extends through the floor with a further story below.

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Farmer's Frankensteinian fairies

British artist crafts minuscule insect sculptures that embrace the grotesque with a zeal that sets her apart

By Melissa Goldstein

London

"IF WE MET in a bar, I would say 'I'm an artist,'" Tessa Farmer says, sitting in her East London studio and giggling softly. "You would say 'Oh! Do you paint?' And I would say, "No, I make small stuff." To illustrate her point, she gestures to the disembodied insect wings that lie strewn across her work surface—a tabletop resembling an entomological Guernica of miniature proportions.

Since the late 1990s, Ms. Farmer, 32 years old, has been populating the art world with a species of fairies she meticulously crafts from composites of insects, leaves and root materials. The fairies are the central characters in the artist's sculptures, each of which comes packaged with a macabre narrative that sees the undetectable beings wreaking all sorts of Darwinian havoc.

Born in Birmingham, England, Ms. Farmer attended Oxford University's Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art. It was during an anatomy class that inspiration struck, and the artist's ensuing "ah-ha moment" took the form of a 1.5 meter skeleton constructed from twigs and bark. Her species "evolved" from there, shrinking down to its current eye-straining measurements (each fairy measures between 7 millimeters and 10 millimeters), though the artist hopes to further whittle the size, "perhaps toward the microscopic," she says.

"One day, I gave them wings," she explains, then stops, correcting herself: "They grew wings." This is the way she often speaks, adopting the David Attenborough role of presenter and naturalist when discussing her Frankensteinian creation.

"I wanted to make a skeleton sort of fetus to go inside a bright red tulip in the garden—something I could fool my brother with," she confides. The impulse seamlessly links her to one of her professed influences, Victorian artists the Wright sisters, who were famed for the long-running artistic hoax begun in 1917, when they successfully convinced a segment of the public that fairies did indeed exist by manipulating paper cut-outs in photographs staged in their garden.

Of course, where the Wright sisters' fairies frolicked among flowers in a sweet, Hans Christian Andersen manner, Ms. Farmer's fairies are predatory things whose cunning grows in tandem with the artist's own studies of insect behavior. To date, the fairies have waged a war of terror against insects in battleships constructed from animal bones ("Swarm" 2004); adopted the stomach-turning behavior of parasitic wasps by inhabiting a fox as their host and filling its ears and fur with larvae ("Little Savages" 2007); and teamed up with the gray squirrels of Northumberland, England, to do battle with the endangered native red squirrels for commissioned installation "A Darker Shade of Gray" (2010), on view as part of Belsay Hall's current "Extraordinary Measures" exhibition until Sept. 26.

"Tessa's work takes concentration to unravel, says New York's Museum of Arts & Design curator David McFadden, who included her in the museum's current "Dead or Alive" exhibition. "The magic sets in as visitors begin to read the rather shocking narratives of violence and interspecies warfare. Tessa creates a parable of the worst in human behaviors—torture, imprisonment, etc.—and reminds us that we continue to do these things generation after generation."

But the artist herself shies away from linking her work to a comment on mankind. "I'm not trying to say something about humanity," she insists. "I'm trying to reflect the struggle of nature ... Darwin was quoted somewhere saying that he found it difficult to believe in God, because why would God invent the parasitic wasp, which eats the host alive?" She pauses for effect before commenting appreciatively. "It's really quite grotesque."

Though Ms. Farmer's work embraces the grotesque with a zeal that sets her apart from others, her choice of materials positions her at the center of an artistic zeitgeist. "There are an incredible number of artists using organic materials today," says Mr. McFadden. "I think it is part of a zeitgeist that is informed by issues of sustainability, our ambiguous relationships with the natural world, and a fascination with death and resurrection."

"People don't know whether taxidermy is good or bad, so often you throw it in a piece of art and it gets a lot of attention," says Melissa Milgrom, author of "Still Life: Adventures in Taxidermy," published in March.

What is clear is that Ms. Farmer has never been in higher demand. This summer alone, she has shown works in the company of Ron Arad, Mat Collishaw and Damien Hirst in exhibitions throughout the world. In October, her work "Swarm," which is composed of 120 suspended moving parts, will be included in the second installment of the Saatchi Gallery's "Newspeak: British Art Now" exhibition—a survey of contemporary British talent billed as the unofficial sequel to Saatchi's landmark YBA exhibition "Sensation," which previously opened at the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. Charles Saatchi, one of Ms. Farmer's early fans, snapped up "Swarm" in 2004 before the artist had a chance to finish the companion segment of the piece—once she had completed it, he promptly purchased that as well.

With no slowdown in sight, Ms. Farmer is prepping for a group exhibition next month at Bath Spa University and for a solo show in the spring at her London gallery, Danielle Arnaud. She also plans to begin work on a new sculpture incorporating a gift of a recently deceased chinchilla by the name of Yeti Polaszek, the family pet of an entomologist friend from London's Natural History Museum, where Ms. Farmer did a residency in 2007.

The gift came with conditions: a handwritten note from the entomologist's wife stipulating that the late Mr. Polaszek be represented "only as a good character recognizable for what he was." Ms. Farmer reads back the note. "I agreed to honor their wishes, so I will, but I don't know how. These people might not be happy if I cover their chinchilla in wasps nests," she says before adding wistfully, but diplomatically, "I think I can make it really beautiful, but my idea of beauty might not be their idea of beauty."

—Melissa Goldstein is a writer based in London.

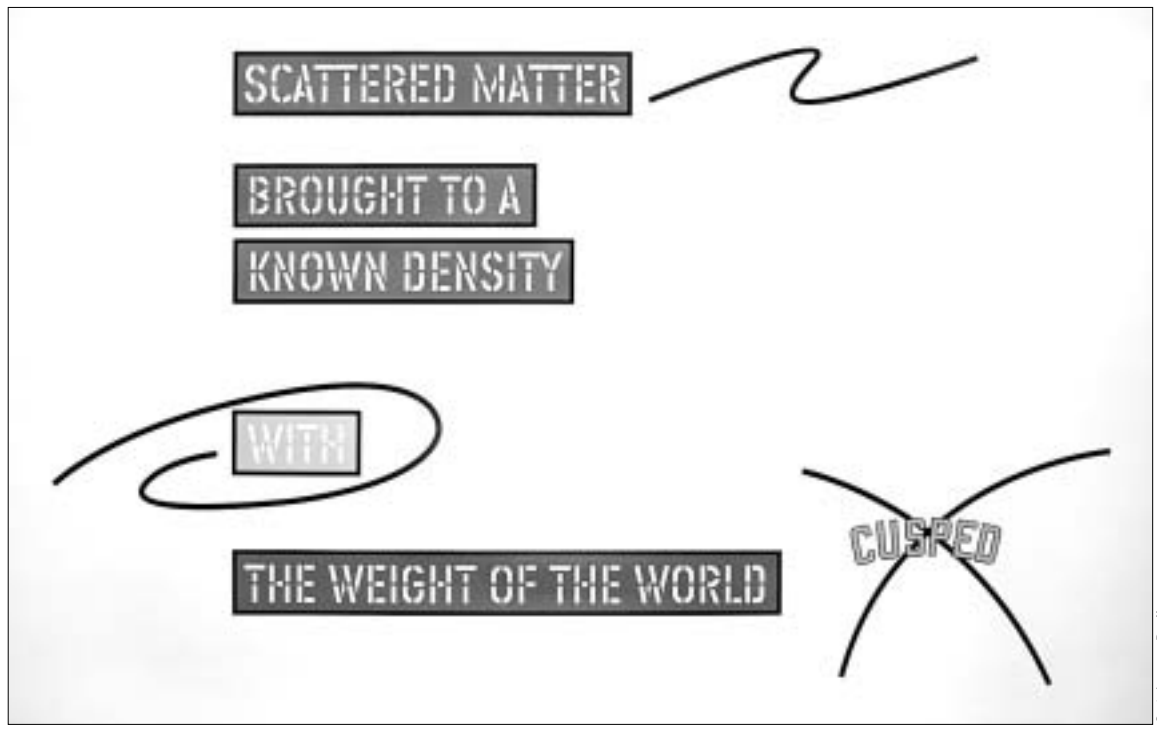
Above, 'Swarm' (2004); below, artist Tessa Farmer in her studio.

Courtesy of the Saatchi Gallery, London © Tessa Farmer (t); Domenico Pugliese for The Wall Street Journal (b)

A temporary peek inside the Stedelijk

AMSTERDAM: "If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever." George Orwell's doom-laden words from the novel "1984" dominate four walls of the "Hall of Honor" in Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum and welcome visitors to the museum's first exhibition since it closed for renovation six years ago.

Before it reopens fully next year, Amsterdam's flagship museum for contemporary art is inviting the public back with a pair of temporary exhibitions collectively labeled "The Temporary Stedelijk." Half the ground floor is dedicated to "Monumentalisme," an exhibition of video, photography and sculpture that reflects on the role of history and national identity in contemporary art. "Taking Place" occupies the rest of the museum, filling the newly renovated spaces with installations such as Barbara Kruger's "Past/Present/Future," with its wall-height Orwell quotation, and introducing the visitor to the museum room by room.



Gert Jan van Rooij

'Scattered matter brought to a known density with the weight of the world / Cusped' (2007) by Lawrence Weiner.

The installations in "The Temporary Stedelijk" range from the humorous to sharp social critique. Louise Lawler's voice installation "Birdcalls," a collection of warbles and whistles that turns the names of famous male artists from the 70s and 80s (think Andy Warhol and Gerhard Richter) into unique 'calls', while Marianne Flotron's "Fired," a scripted video sequence from 2007, riffs on the alienation of the individual in the corporate world, with its bloodless interactions and stilted language.

There is also the playful. Ger Van Elk's "The Well-Polished Floor Sculpture" is exactly what the title implies, and without reading the descriptive plaque on the wall, you have no way of knowing you're walking across the work on your way to the next room.

But perhaps the work that best illustrates the Stedelijk's reopening to the world is Germaine Kruip's "Daytime," a rotating set of interlocking mirrors installed in a window. Like a magic lantern, the merry-go-round of mirrors creates a shifting panorama of the historic buildings that surround the museum and visitors to the exhibition.

—Joel Weickgenant

Until Jan. 9
www.stedelijk.nl

25 Brook Street: Hendrix and Handel's London home

Experience Music Project permanent collection

Orange velvet jacket (late 1967), formerly owned by Jimi Hendrix.

LONDON: One of London's best-kept secrets is Handel House, a tiny museum commemorating the 18th-century composer who was the best-known occupant of 25 Brook Street in smart Mayfair. The upper floors of No. 23 next door have been incorporated into Handel House as the museum's offices; and an even better-kept secret is that one of the most celebrated musicians of the 20th century, Jimi Hendrix, lived there with his English girlfriend, Kathy Etchingham, in 1968-'69. It's a long way from George Frideric Handel's "Messiah" to Hendrix's "Foxy Lady," but both musician/composers were cutting edge in their own time.

The current "Hendrix in Britain" show marks the 40th anniversary of the great American singer/guitarist's death on Sept. 18, 1970. The top-floor flat was his home for long periods while he played in many venues across London, including the two great concerts "the Jimi Hendrix Experience" at the Royal Albert Hall in February 1969.

The show explores his London life, music, performances and legacy, in the rooms where he lived, wrote, played and entertained his friends during the particularly prolific period just before his untimely, still slightly mysterious death. There is a good deal of material never before seen in the U.K., including images, film clips and recordings. His autograph song lyrics, hastily scrawled directions for getting to the Isle of Wight Festival (where he made what was to be his last appearance in 1970), and concert programs and memorabilia are displayed alongside his outrageous costumes. The show traces Hendrix's rise to fame, his songwriting craft, his virtuoso electric-guitar playing, and speculates on his legacy for music and popular culture.

After moving to Brook Street in 1968, thrilled by the Handel connection, Hendrix bought all the recordings of Handel's music he could find. His rent, by the way, was £30 a week; when Handel lived next door from 1723-'59, he paid £60 a year. *—Paul Levy*

Until Nov. 7
www.handelhouse.org

Rediscovering the classic designs of Charlotte Perriand

ZURICH: French designer Charlotte Perriand was one of the rare women to establish herself in Paris's male-dominated art world in the 1920s, winning praise from stars such as Swiss architect Le Corbusier, who asked her to join his renowned office in 1927 after seeing her chrome steel design for a bar that reflected his own taste for clear lines.

A show in Zurich at the Museum für Gestaltung, called "Charlotte Perriand—Designer, Photographer, Activist," reminds us that furniture classics such as the B306 Chaise Longue and the LC2 Grand Confort armchair were in part developed by this French artist, whose other work remains unduly overshadowed by her former boss. The exhibition portrays a free-spirited, rebellious artist, whose interests and talents went beyond furniture design and included photography as well as politics, which in turn influenced her work as a designer.

Together with French painter Fernand Léger and architect Pierre Jeanneret, Perriand in the 1930s chased for so-called "objets trouvés" during long walks along the sea and in the woods, always on the lookout to photograph magic forms.

Her interest in politics and her sense of social responsibilty—she stunned the French public in 1936 with a huge photo wall depicting the plight of Paris's poor—led her to develop furniture such as the 1954 stackable wooden chair "Chaise Ombre" that speaks of her wish to produce affordable but beautiful household objects. *—Goran Mijuk*

Until Oct. 24
www.museum-gestaltung.ch

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'Pavillon de l'Agriculture: La France agricole' (1937) by Charlotte Perriand/Fernand Léger.

Courtesy of Christie's

Charlie Chaplin

Comedian's Lake Geneva furnishings

CHARLIE CHAPLIN, legendary gentleman tramp, will be in the auction limelight this month.

During a decorative-arts sale at Christie's Amsterdam (Sept. 21-22), furnishings will be offered from the famous comedian's home at Corsier-sur-Vevey on Lake Geneva. They include chairs, tables, beds, mirrors and other objects of everyday life.

Collecting
MARGARET STUDER

Chaplin (1889-1977) lived for the last 24 years of his life in Le Manoir de Ban, a 16-room mansion surrounded by a wooded park, with his wife Oona and their eight children.

U.K.-born Chaplin settled in Switzerland in 1953 after more than 40 years in the U.S. He left the U.S. after being caught up in the anti-communist witch-hunts of the McCarthy era. Accused of un-American activities, his work in the U.S. film industry had become virtually impossible.

Chaplin—known for such quips as "A day without a smile is a wasted day" and "I am one thing and one thing only—and that is a clown. It places me on a higher plane than any politician"—made his name in silent films. His first "talkie" was "The Great Dictator" (1940), a masterpiece satirizing Hitler and Nazism. Far from retiring after his move to Le Manoir de Ban, Chaplin continued to make films and compose musical scores.

Kicking off Chaplin's section of the decorative-arts sale will be an Italian red-and-black painted organ (estimate: €600-€800); and an oak and brass gramophone (estimate: €150-€250).

A set of 24 beech wood dining chairs and extending table, which Chaplin used for family dinners and entertaining guests, is expected to fetch €12,000-€18,000.

An opulent white-painted, four-poster bed in the style of Louis XVI is estimated at €4,000-€6,000; an English gilt wood mirror in the style of George III, at €1,000-€1,500; a Louis XV-style tulipwood and rosewood commode, at €2,500-€3,500; and an Edwardian mahogany writing table, at €400-€600.

Rediscovering Europe's war-time writers

By Tobias Grey

THE GREAT SOVIET-era Russian author Vasily Grossman believed it wasn't just a writer's duty to tell terrible truths but also a reader's civic duty to learn these truths.

Grossman initiated this pact in his newspaper article "The Hell of Treblinka," which he wrote in 1944 after witnessing the Red Army's liberation of Treblinka II—a Nazi death camp in occupied Poland, where approximately 900,000 Jews and 500 Gypsies were murdered in 13 months.

Grossman's unsparing, literary account of the horrific ways Nazi Germany implemented its ethnic-cleansing program at Treblinka was one of the first reports of a death camp anywhere in Europe and eventually provided prosecutors at the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal with crucial background information.

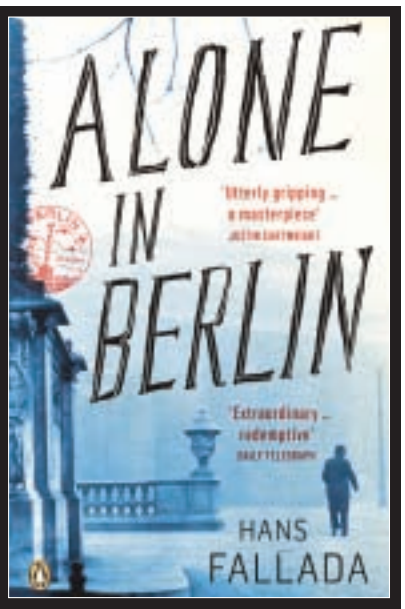
The surprise is that up until now an English-language translation of Grossman's lengthy article has never been published in its entirety. That will soon change with the publication of "The Road," a collection of some of Grossman's best short stories and war-time articles, including "The Hell of Treblinka."

"The Road," which is being published in the U.K. on Sept. 30 by MacLehose Press and in the U.S. on Sept. 28 by New York Review Books Classics, is translated from the Russian by Robert and Elizabeth Chandler, the husband and wife team also responsible for new translations of Grossman's later novels "Life and Fate" (2006) and "Everything Flows" (May 2010).

The coming publication of "The Road" has been made possible thanks to the commercial and critical success of "Life and Fate" in particular, but also because there is a growing demand for new translations of European fiction and nonfiction from the years leading up to and including World War II. The trend is most prevalent in France and Britain, where rediscovered European novelists from the 1930s and 1940s, such as the French writer of Ukrainian-Jewish origin Irène Némirovsky, the Austrian-Jewish writers Stefan Zweig and Joseph Roth, Hungary's Sándor Márai and Germany's Hans Fallada, have each sold hundreds of thousands of books over the past few years.

At the same time a growing number of war-time memoirs have begun to be unearthed by discerning French and British publishers. These include moving first-hand testimonies of the Holocaust like "The Journal of Hélène Berr," which came out in France and the U.K. in 2008, Chil Rajchman's "Treblinka: A Survivor's Memory," which will be published in the U.K. on Jan. 11 by MacLehose Press, and Zalmen Gradowski's Auschwitz memoir, which was published in France last year under the title "Au Coeur de l'Enfer" ("In the Heart of Hell"). Recent reissues have also included Frenchwoman Agnès Humbert's "Résistance," an intense memoir about the first tentative steps of the Resistance and Humbert's subsequent capture by the Gestapo.

The Paris-based English writer Alan Riding, whose cultural history of Nazi-occupied Paris "And the Show Went On" is published by Knopf on Oct. 19, says he believes that a changing mood in Europe has slowly brought about the translation and publication of literature and memoirs that were often shied away from in the past.



© ullsteinbild / TopFoto (portrait)

Left, Hans Fallada plays chess in 1934.

"I think the whole World War II question and particularly the Holocaust assumed fresh relevance with the end of the Cold War," says Mr. Riding. "Only when the communist bloc—notably East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Romania—disintegrated, did the extent of the persecution of the Jews become fully apparent. In a way the Cold War had frozen history."

It was not until after the collapse of the communist bloc that Hungarian-Jewish Nobel Prize-winning author Imre Kertész's most famous novel "Fatelessness," about his teenage years in Auschwitz and Buchenwald, finally got to be published in German and other European languages.

The German-born poet and translator Michael Hofmann—who was widely praised for his English-language translation of Hans Fallada's novel "Alone in Berlin," which was published in the U.K. in January and is expected to exceed sales of 250,000 copies there by the end of the year—believes that Fallada "was coming out of a Silver Age of German Letters" where the standard of writing was exceptionally high.

"In the early days of popular cinema in Europe, as well as America, writers had to learn to be very vivid," says Mr. Hofmann, who has also translated German-language writers like Roth and Franz Kafka. "Fallada's just a great and greatly gifted popular writer. 'Alone in Berlin,' which is based on the residents of this house, and what happens to them, is like a super, Dickensian page-turner, amplified because it's set in Berlin in the 1940s, in the civilian world."

In some ways the qualities of "Alone in Berlin" are reminiscent of those of Irène Némirovsky's novel "Suite Française," which was first published in France in 2004 and was subsequently translated into 38 languages, selling more than 2.5 million copies, as of 2008. Though "Alone in Berlin" was first published in Germany in 1947, whereas "Suite Française" was discovered years after the war had ended, both novels have a similarly visceral expressionistic sweep that could only have been the result of experiencing something dreadful at first hand.

"If you read not only 'Alone in Berlin' but other novels by Fallada, you will see repeating scenes, opinions and objects," notes Mr. Hofmann. "You see that all the people in Fallada's book—and it's a bit like Flaubert—really are him; that's the way it's supposed to happen in good books."

Just as the two novellas that constituted Némirovsky's "Suite Française" came out of her experience of the daily humiliations of the German occupation of Paris, so too did Fallada write "Alone in Berlin"(the first anti-Nazi novel to be published in Germany after the war) with the searing insight of one who had spent more than 12 years being hounded by the Nazis.

"It's a period that still fascinates people," says French writer Pierre Assouline, whose literary blog La République des Livres is the most popular of its kind in France. "The popularity of writers like Stefan Zweig and Joseph Roth, especially in a country like France, has a lot to do with an acute nostalgia for *Mitteleuropa* [middle Europe], a nostalgia for a highly cultured and diverse Europe, with its Jewish dimension, that existed between the wars."

The kind of following writers like Zweig and Roth have long had in France is now beginning to be replicated in Britain. "At least until a few years ago in Britain a writer like Zweig met with blank faces; now he is regularly 'book of the week'" says Will Stone, whose translation of Zweig's pre-World War II travel writing "Journeys" will be released in the U.K. in October under the independent Hesperus Press imprint. "The reason Zweig has caught on in the U.K. is because he is finally being marketed correctly, namely as a fantastic storyteller."

But for some publishers, such as MacLehose Press's founder Christopher MacLehose, even the best storytelling doesn't do World War II, and the Holocaust in particular, adequate justice. Mr. MacLehose, who published "The Journal of Hélène Berr" in the U.K. in 2008 and is also responsible for coming titles like "The Road" and Chil Rajchman's "Treblinka: A Survivor's Memory," believes that publishers have a responsibility to bring out books "of real historical value."

"I think there has to be a real literary response to the tragedy of the Holocaust," says Mr. MacLehose. "In my view, you don't need 'Schindler's List,' you don't need 'Sophie's Choice,' but you do need Hélène Berr and Chil Rajchman.'

He believes that publishers must play their part. "The priority I think is to educate the next generation and their children," he says. "And the more that the books we publish are real and of irreproachable quality the more you can give them to be read."

Tobias Grey is a writer based in Paris

Blair's Journey

By Martin Rubin

It is now painfully obvious that Tony Blair—the man who led Britain for a decade, who transformed the country's dully orthodox Labour Party into dashing, moderate "New Labour," who faced down parliamentary opponents with brio and eloquently defended the invasion of Iraq—is no longer much of a hero in his own country. Indeed, he is intensely disliked, not least for his loyalty to the "freedom agenda"—the idea that, after 9/11, Western democracies had a duty to face down tyrants like Saddam Hussein and end the threat they represented.

Those outside the U.K., understandably, have less intense feelings about Mr. Blair. They may remember him most of all for articulating George W. Bush's foreign-policy ideas—especially the logic of the Iraq war—a bit more gracefully than Mr. Bush did. It was at such moments, in speeches and joint press conferences with Mr. Bush, that Mr. Blair made his greatest impression on the world stage—as a loyal American ally and gifted orator.

But the man himself, not to mention the arc of his career, is less familiar. "A Journey," his political memoir, is thus especially welcome. Luckily it is not one of those leaden bricks of official reminiscence. The tone is confiding, informal and forthright, though Mr. Blair has not given up his habit of handling certain matters in an on-the-one-hand/on-the-other sort of way.

Mr. Blair structures his book as the tale of a political journey that vaulted him at an astonishingly young age (43) to an unprecedented three consecutive terms as head of the British government. But "A Journey" is a deeply personal book, too, full of candid revelations. For all his seeming confidence and ease, Mr. Blair tells us, he desperately prepared for Prime Minister's Questions—where he excelled each week in the House of Commons, parrying the thrusts of opposition MPs—and confides that even now, three years after his leaving office, the hairs on his neck prickle just before noon on Wednesdays, when Question Time begins. In the minutes before plunging into that arena, he says, he would gladly have exchanged an equal amount of time under Laurence Olivier's sadistic dentist's drill in the movie "Marathon Man."

A Journey
By Tony Blair
(Hutchinson, 700 pages, £25)

Mr. Blair writes movingly of his mother's death from cancer when he was 22 and of his father's disabling stroke a few years earlier, which devastated the family. When it comes to less profound personal details, Mr. Blair does not sink to the level of revelation achieved by his wife in her 2008 memoirs, when she described how their son Leo came to be conceived during the couple's sleepover at Balmoral Castle, the royal residence in Scotland. But he sometimes does provide too much information—recollections of an eccentric relative's foul smell, his encounters with a childhood bully, his unhappy experience as a schoolboy boxer. All seemed designed to elicit empathy but may cause a reader to cringe.

Still, Mr. Blair has a pleasing capacity to take us with him into privileged places, whether it's upstairs at the White House (where, over dinner, he finds Mr. Bush "unbelievably, almost preternaturally calm" before his major speech to Congress after 9/11) or to Balmoral itself, where he must dash down long corridors to the toilet facilities, which are both remote and old-fashioned—Victorian water closets. He gives a frank account of how hard it was, in his early years as prime minister, to get on with Queen Elizabeth, who treated him with "hauteur."

Not surprisingly, Mr. Blair offers a robust defense of his role in taking Britain into the Iraq war, though he agonizes over the invasion's violent aftermath. To this day he sees the overthrow of Saddam Hussein as the one true course for his country. More surprisingly, he notes that his close relations with the U.S., despite the war's unpopularity, gave him increased stature with other world leaders, who assumed that he had Mr. Bush's ear.

As for the joint U.S.-British decision to seek (in vain) United Nations approval for the Iraq invasion, Mr. Blair has no apologies. He reveals that although Vice President Dick Cheney was adamantly opposed to involving the U.N., Mr. Bush did not take much persuading. In any case, the U.N. declined to authorize the use of military force, and the invasion went ahead anyway. Clearly, for Mr. Blair, it was better to have tried multilaterally and lost than never to have tried at all.


Associated Press

Mr. Blair's feelings about Mr. Bush are mixed. He calls him, backhandedly, a man with a "great intuition . . . about what he thought was right or wrong." Mr. Bush's intuition, moreover, "wasn't expressed analytically or intellectually. It was just stated." Mr. Blair confesses that, listening to the U.S. president at a press conference, he would think: "George, explain it; don't just say it." But over time, he says, he came "to admire the simplicity, the directness" of Mr. Bush's approach, "finding in it strength and integrity."

This back-and-forth quality is common in Mr. Blair's efforts at portraiture, where criticism is often followed by a softening compliment. Even Gordon Brown, Mr. Blair's successor as prime minister—with whom Mr. Blair often bitterly quarreled and whom he blames for the party's recent election lost—is said to be "brilliant" and indispensable. When it comes to Bill and Hillary Clinton, though, Mr. Blair's admiration is unalloyed. There is no doubt that he regards them as political soul mates.

Mr. Blair is perhaps proudest of his role in getting the Labour Party to shed its commitments to unilateral nuclear disarmament and the nationalization of Britain's industries. Both positions were ardently backed in the party's 1983 manifesto, a document that was later called, after Margaret Thatcher's second, landslide victory, the longest suicide note in history. By fighting so hard to transform his party, whether from genuine conviction or pragmatic calculation, Mr. Blair achieved, he believes, the long-sought aim of making Labour the "natural party of governance." "A Journey" provides a priceless glimpse into the mind of the man who devoted himself to that transformation.

Mr. Rubin is a writer in Pasadena, Calif.

Life in the Limelight

By Paul Genders

It is not surprising that fame should be on Daniel Kehlmann's mind. The Munich-born author's 2005 novel, "Measuring the World," about the 19th-century scientists Alexander von Humboldt and Carl Friedrich Gauss, was a surprise commercial hit. Selling more than 1.5 million copies to date, the book has made Mr. Kehlmann the most successful young writer—he is in his mid-30s—in the German language.

Fame
By Daniel Kehlmann
Translated by Carol Brown Janeway
(Quercus, 304 pages, £12.99)

In "Fame," his seventh work of fiction and the third to be translated into English, Mr. Kehlmann turns his attention to the present day and, one suspects, his own recent experiences. The results are dazzling, but in a manner that leaves you wondering if you haven't been hoodwinked.

At first glance, "Fame" comprises nine short stories. As you read, you discover these are not stand-alone narratives: bit-part characters in one story take center stage in another; someone blunders in one and the consequences are suffered in another by someone else entirely; you follow a character only to find she is the invention of a character from an earlier story, an author "of intricate short stories full of complicated mirror effects and unpredictable shifts and swerves that were flourishes of empty virtuosity." Mr. Kehlmann expects us to see the joke. The links between these nine narratives are intricately embedded, arise unpredictably and show their author is not short on technical flair.

The genesis of the opening story is the aforementioned blunder, a clerical mistake that leads to a white-collar family man, Ebling, being assigned the same telephone number as a film star, Ralf Tanner. This mistake is actually made, off-stage, in the eighth story, by the narrator of the seventh, an Internet-addicted telecommunications worker named Mollwitz.

When we meet Ralf Tanner, in the fourth story, he is ensnared in the bizarre chain of events that began when he suddenly stopped receiving telephone calls. But Tanner's phone has gone silent only because Ebling is answering his calls for him, back in the first story. Ebling, drunk on newfound power, repeatedly arranges late night liaisons with a female friend of Tanner's, and repeatedly stands her up; it is the actor who is eventually punished, violently attacked by the woman in a scene that is filmed by passersby and becomes an Internet sensation. From here, Tanner's decline only accelerates.

For all the cross-connecting panache with which Ralf Tanner's fall is achieved, and though Mr. Kehlmann offers amusing satirical details along the way, the final moral is unremarkable. Fame, the author informs us, is flimsy, easily counterfeited and no guarantee of happiness. Mr. Kehlmann's virtuosity looks here to be in the service of a sentiment too commonplace, surely, to deserve it.

A second narrative strand, concerning a Paulo Coelho-like author of New Age philosophy, similarly has satirical bite and technical sparkle, but again conforms to an ordinary, cautionary curve. The works of Miguel Auristos Blanco, "the writer venerated by half the planet and mildly despised by the other," reappear throughout "Fame," read and espoused by its characters. The book's sixth story finds Blanco contemplating suicide after realizing that his life's work is founded on a lie. The lie—that there is "an order in the world and life could be good"—has made him wealthy and famous, which tells you much, Mr. Kehlmann implies, about wealth and fame.

There are more famous writers in the book's third strand. On a lecture tour of Central Asia, the esteemed crime novelist Maria Rubenstein is cut adrift from her tour group; without money or a visa, she quickly descends into a hellish anonymity for which celebrity has not prepared her. No one in this strange unnamed land recognizes or understands Rubinstein, but were she not so feted in her own country she would not be here. Once more fame gets its comeuppance; but Rubinstein's story is told with such fairy-tale economy and eeriness you are inclined to forgive the predictability.

Rubinstein's friend Leo Richter, inventor of those "intricate," "empty" fictions, is also on a lecture tour, of Central America. Here he rages against the fame that has seen him invited across the world to speak to "brain-dead" admirers. It is tempting to see the neurotic, somewhat bipolar Richter as a self-portrait, however cartoonish, of the author; particularly so when he announces his wish to write "a novel without a protagonist . . . [possessing a] structure, the connections, a narrative arc, but no main character advancing throughout."

This, of course, describes "Fame." It also introduces a meta-fictional note to the book that swells into an intriguing theme. This theme—the powers and responsibilities of authorship—surfaces in a story about a terminally ill woman traveling to a Swiss suicide clinic. The story comes, we learn, from the pen of Richter, a point brought home arrestingly when the main character starts to plead with the author to let her live.

In the collection's final story Richter casts acquaintances from his Central American jaunt in another of his fictions. When his characters complain about losing their true identities, Richter decides to abscond from the story altogether, disappearing "above the sky and beneath the earth like a second-class God." "Fame" fools cleverly around its title subject, but is more puzzling and substantial when, as in these stories, it makes a subject of the author's power to fool.

Mr. Genders is a freelance editor and writer based in London. His book reviews have appeared in the Times Literary Supplement.

time off

Amsterdam
art
"Amsterdam Heritage Weekend" lets visitors access major monuments around town, including some that are normally closed to the public.
Various locations
Sept. 11-12
☎ 31-20-2514-900
www.bma.amsterdam.nl

Basel
art
"Andy Warhol: The Early Sixties Paintings and Drawings 1961-1964" exhibits 70 paintings and drawings, including the "Star" series, featuring Elvis.
Museum für Gegenwartskunst
Sept. 5-Jan. 23
☎ 41-61-2066-262
www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch

Belfast
music
"Wilco" bring their Grammy Award-winning rock music to Europe, performing with support from Philip Selway, the drummer for Radiohead.
Sept. 10 Open House Fest, Belfast
Sept. 12 End of the Road Fest, Dorset
Sept. 14 Royal Festival Hall, London
Sept. 15 Academy, Newcastle
Sept. 16 Barrowland, Glasgow
Sept. 18 Take Root Festival, Groningen
Sept. 19 Leffingeleuren Festival, Leffinge, Belgium
Sept. 20 Tonhalle, Duesseldorf
More European dates at www.wilcoworld.net

Berlin
music
"Musikfest Berlin 10" presents soloists, choirs, ensembles and orchestras performing in 24 classical-music events, featuring a total of 60 works by 25 different composers, including Stravinsky, Prokofiev and Ravel.
Various venues
Until Sept. 21
☎ 49-30-2548-9244
www.berlinerfestspiele.de

photography
"Face/Project" showcases 30 collaborative works by artists Tina Berning and Michelangelo Di Battista, mixing elements of fashion photography with drawing and painting.
Camera Work
Sept. 4-Oct. 30
☎ 49-30-3100-773
www.camerawork.de

Cologne
photography
"René Burri—Das Werk" shows a retrospective of work by the Swiss photographer, known for his black-and-white depictions of historical and cultural events of the 20th century.
Museum für Angewandte Kunst
Sept. 4-26
☎ 49-221-221-2860-8
www.museenkoeln.de

Copenhagen
art
"Anselm Kiefer: Art and Myth" shows 90 works by the German sculptor and painter, ranging from his early years to the present day.
Louisiana Museum of Modern Art
Sept. 10-Jan. 9
☎ 45-4919-0791
www.louisiana.dk

Dublin
art
"Futures 10" exhibits works by emerging artists such as Oisín Byrne, Rhona Byrne and Fiona Chambers, presenting paintings, sculptures, prints, photography and architectural models.
Royal Hibernian Academy
Until Oct. 24
☎ 353-1-6612-558
www.royalhibernianacademy.ie

Düsseldorf
art
"Nam June Paik" presents 30 large sculptural installations by the Korean artist often considered to be the first video artist, including the German premiere of "Laser Cone."
Museum Kunst Palast
Sept. 11-Nov.21
☎ 49-211-8990-200
www.museum-kunst-palast.de

Frankfurt
music
"Auftakt" is a series that highlights works by contemporary musicians, this year featuring work by Swiss composer Beat Furrer and German pianist and conductor Christian Zacharias.
Alte Oper
Sept. 5-30
☎ 49-69-1340-400
www.alteoper.de

Leverkusen
art
"Bernard Frize: And How and Where and Who" offers a retrospective of the contemporary French artist, including photography and paintings.
Museum Morsbroich
Sept. 5-Nov. 7
☎ 49-214-8555-60
www.museum-morsbroich.de

London
photography
"Eadweard Muybridge" aims to present a full range of the art created by the British photographer and pioneer of motion photography.
Tate Britain
Sept. 8-Jan. 16
☎ 44-20-7887-8888
www.tate.org.uk

history
"Inventing the 21st Century" examines groundbreaking British inventions from this century's first decade with original drawings and designs, including the Dyson "Air Multiplier" and the Karbon Kinetics "Gocycle" folding bike.
British Library
Sept. 6-Nov. 28
☎ 44-193-754-6060
www.bl.uk

Manchester
photography
"The Gulf War 1990-1991: Photographs by John Keane" presents a collection of photographs by the British artist, some of which are on public display for the first time.
Imperial War Museum North
Sept. 18-Feb. 27
☎ 44-161-836-4000
www.iwm.org.uk/north

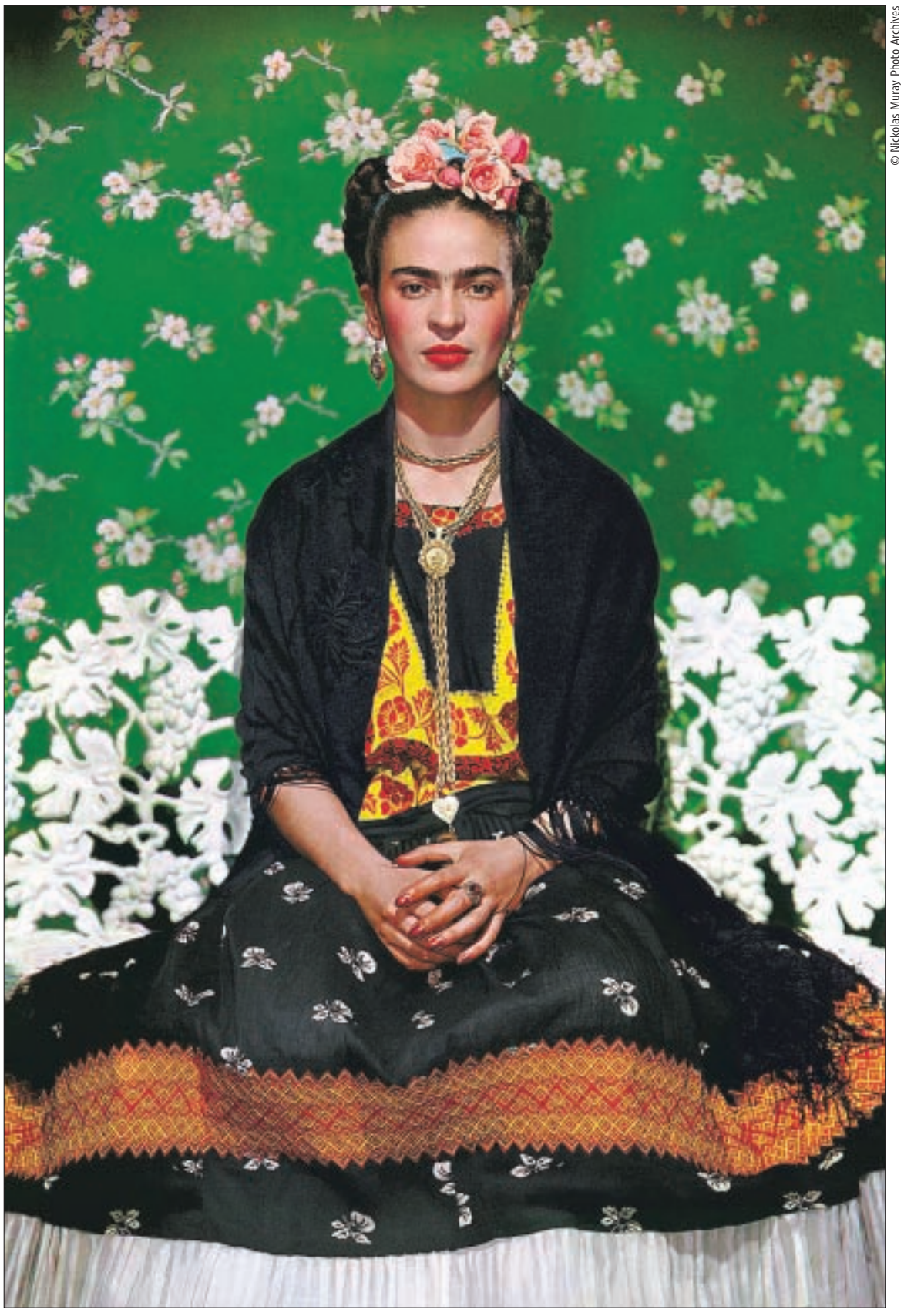
Milan
ballet
"Serata Forsythe" is a staging of three pieces by William Forsythe: "Artifact Suite," "Herman Schmerman" and "In The Middle, Somewhat Elevated."
Teatro alla Scala
Sept. 6-23
☎ 39-02-72-003-744
www.teatroallascala.org

Munich
art
"Open Art" offers a series of openings at 65 museums and galleries, introducing the new season of art in the city.
Various locations
Sept. 10-12
☎ 49-89-2920-15
www.openart.biz

Paris
music
Yo-Yo Ma, the acclaimed cellist and multiple Grammy Award-winner, performs J.S. Bach's complete cello suites.
Theatre des Champs-Elysees
Sept. 14-15
☎ 33-1-4952-5050
www.theatrechampselysees.fr

Vienna
art
"Frida Kahlo" shows a retrospective featuring 60 paintings, 80 works on paper and 20 objects, exploring the life and art of the Mexican painter.
Bank Austria Kunstforum
Until Dec. 5
☎ 43-1-5373-326
www.bankaustria-kunstforum.at

Source: WSJE research



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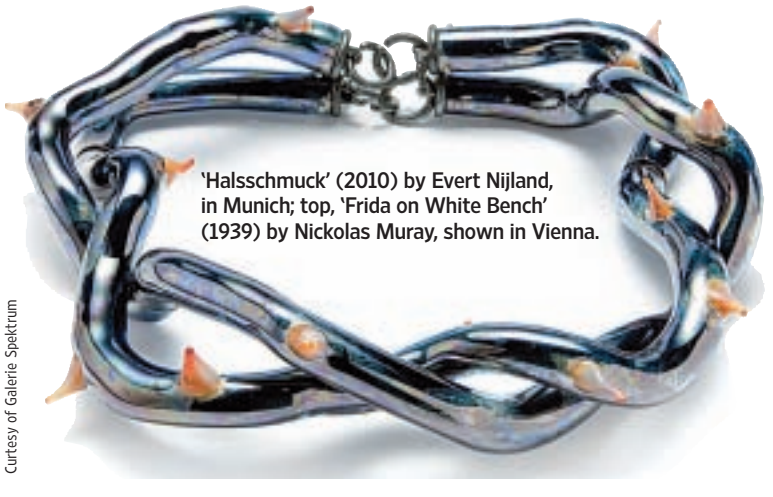

'Halsschmuck' (2010) by Evert Nijland, in Munich; top, 'Frida on White Bench' (1939) by Nickolas Muray, shown in Vienna.

Curtesy of Galerie Spektrum