

Acropolis Museum Delayed

Dashing any hope that the Elgin Marbles would be returned to Greece for the Olympics, the Greek government recently announced that the Acropolis Museum, designed by Bernard Tschumi, would not be ready in time for the August games. Construction of the museum has been seriously delayed by legal actions taken by nearby residents and others who claim that work on the site would destroy ancient artifacts and structures not yet uncovered. Tschumi's design calls for a 250,000-square-foot elevated structure that would provide views of and access to the ruins below. Though the architect expressed doubts last year that the museum would be ready in time, it was hoped that at least a temporary space would be complete [see "Front Page," May '03]. The British government has remained steadfast in its refusal to return the marbles.

Making matters worse, a lawsuit was filed in March charging nearly all the former officials involved in the \$115-million project, as well as the judges who chose the plan and Tschumi himself, with breach of duty for having approved the project. That suit was thrown out by Greece's highest court, and construction on the museum is continuing, though a new completion date remains uncertain. The political quagmire followed general elections, after which several new government officials unsympathetic to the project began their terms. The new deputy minister of culture, Petros Tatoulis, while still a member of the opposition party, filed a complaint protesting museum construction. At the time, then culture minister Evangelos Venizelos accused him of undermining the project. Tatoulis has since assured the local press that the museum will be built.

News of the museum's delay was an embarrassing blow to the country, which is also struggling to complete construction on major Olympic infrastructure and venues, some of which are seriously over budget. The Parthenon itself is undergoing major conservation work and will be partially hidden by scaffolding during the Games, and the Temple of

Athena Nike, which has been taken apart for conservation, will be only half restored by August.

—Stephanie Cash

Contemporary Art at the Games

One of the centerpieces of the 2004 Cultural Olympiad program of the summer games is "Monument to Now," a contemporary art exhibition organized by the Deste Foundation. The show, on view June 22 to Dec. 31, will be installed at the foundation's permanent space and in a specially renovated building near the Games' headquarters in the Nea Ionia neighborhood. Drawn from the collection of Dakis Joannou, the show was organized

by a group of international curators, including Dan Cameron of the New Museum, Alison M. Gingeras of the Centre Pompidou, Massimiliano Gioni of the Fondazione Trussardi, Nancy Spector of the Guggenheim Museum and New York dealer Jeffrey Deitch, who has collaborated with the Deste Foundation on several projects.

The Athens exhibition features works by such high-profile artists as Maurizio Cattelan, Rineke Dijkstra, Olafur Eliasson, Robert Gober, Douglas Gordon, Jeff Koons, Liza Lou, Mariko Mori, Tim Noble and Sue Webster, Chris Ofili, Matthew Ritchie, Tom Sachs, Gregor Schneider, Kara Walker and Nari Ward. It is the first exhibition of Joannou's collection in Athens since the 1996 show "Everything That's Interesting Is New."

Ballroom Marfa Launched

Ballroom Marfa, a contemporary arts center in Marfa, Tex., was officially launched on Apr. 23 with an ambitious group exhibition, "Optimo: Manifestations of Optimism in Contemporary Art," on view through June 27. Selected by New York-based curator Alexander Gray, who has been an advisor to Ballroom since it was founded in spring 2003, the show includes works by Polly Apfelbaum, Martin Creed, Karen Finley, Forcefield, Emily Jacir, Beatriz Milhazes, Adam Pendleton, Leo Villareal and Takashi Murakami, whose 30-foot-tall *Eyeball* helium balloon is anchored in the building's 6,000-square-foot open courtyard. A whopping 1,000 people—many of them art-world

tourists—were on hand for the opening party, in a town with a population just barely twice that size.

With two interior exhibition galleries totaling 4,500 square feet, the nonprofit space on Marfa's main drag occupies a 1927 building that was first a silent-film house and then a dance hall during the town's mid-century boom years. It was purchased in 2002 by Ballroom co-founder and Austin heiress Virginia Lebermann; she joined forces with Fairfax Dorn, an artist

The newly opened Ballroom Marfa with Takashi Murakami's *Eyeball*, in Marfa, Tex.



who previously worked at Exit Art and the Whitney Museum in New York, where the two met.

Tiny Marfa, with its main attraction still the Chinati Foundation, is turning into something of an art-world magnet. Artists are buying homes and studio spaces, and young entrepreneurs (including Lebermann) are transforming seedy real estate into upscale lodgings. With a focus on younger art, Ballroom is set to host four exhibitions a year: a two-artist show each summer; a solo show in the fall; a traveling exhibition, organized by another institution, in the winter; and, in spring, a thematic group show organized by a guest curator. There are also plans for performances, film series and concerts.

This summer, Ballroom will host installations by Franco Mondini-Ruiz and Sarah Morris [July 2-Sept. 20]; all of Morris's film projects to date will be shown together for the first time. In the fall, Ballroom will mount the U.S. premiere of Isaac Julien's three-screen film installation "The Ice Project" [Oct. 8-Dec. 31].

—Faye Hirsch

Goldsworthy Atop the Met

Two monumental works by British sculptor Andy Goldsworthy are currently on view on the roof of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Constructed by the artist on-site, *Stone Houses* consists of two 18-foot-tall, open-frame domes, 24 feet in diameter, made of split white cedar rails. Each dome surrounds a 13½-foot-tall column of balanced granite stones, the largest weighing 1½ tons. Though the stones are



Andy Goldsworthy's *Stone Houses*, during installation at the Metropolitan Museum.

from the beaches of southern Scotland and the rails from New England, Goldsworthy intends the structures to have a more local reference: the stones and trees in Central Park, as well as the surrounding architecture. The works are on view through Oct. 31.

New Art Center for Hudson Valley

The Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art is set to open its doors to the public on June 12. Located in Peekskill, N.Y., south of Dia:Beacon and less than an hour by train from Manhattan, the center was founded by collectors Marc Straus, an oncologist who served as board president of the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art from 1990 to 2000, and his wife Livia, a theologian and university professor. The couple provided most of the initial funding but