



1606 PASEO DE PERALTA SANTA FE NM 87501 505 989 1199 FAX 505 989 1188 WWW.SITESANTAFE.ORG

a contemporary art space

**SITE SANTA FE TO PRESENT SIXTH INTERNATIONAL BIENNIAL
CURATOR/CRITIC KLAUS OTTMANN TO ORGANIZE EXHIBITION
Still Points of the Turning World
July 9, 2006 - January 7, 2007**

February 21, 2006—Santa Fe, New Mexico—Intensity, experimentation, and visceral presence are the hallmarks of the thirteen significant one-person installations that constitute SITE Santa Fe’s Sixth International Biennial. Curator Klaus Ottmann’s exhibition, entitled *Still Points of the Turning World*, both concentrates and amplifies these singular works, empowering them to speak for themselves without the common filter of a prescriptive curatorial theme. As Ottmann explains, “I want this Biennial to be about the artists, not about the curator.” The exhibition’s manifest commitment to direct experience is designed to elicit a unique personal response from each viewer.

Although one of the intentions of this Biennial is to put the visitor “in the realm of the senses,” the senses aren’t meant to be overwhelmed. Ottmann has envisioned a bold concept for this timely, groundbreaking biennial. Eager to steer away from the now ubiquitous mega-biennials, he has dramatically reduced the quantity of artists to 13 and the exhibition to approximately 40 works. Most of the artists will have separate rooms, designed to encourage as well as seduce their audiences with a purer, unmediated experience. Furthermore, Ottmann’s exhibition reaffirms the ephemeral power of performance art—several of the artists in the show will create performances as part of their work— which, at its very essence, demands a direct engagement between the artist and the viewer. In this manner, the exhibition also intuitively nods at visual art performance’s timely resurgence in the current market-driven artworld.

“SITE Santa Fe’s Sixth International Biennial exhibition confirms our ongoing commitment to provide the Santa Fe community and its visitors with opportunities to engage with the world’s most important contemporary artists and their work,” stated the museum’s director Laura Heon. “I am honored to be able to work with Klaus, whose deeply philosophical perspective on art I admire, as well as his willingness and commitment to step back and to let the artwork stand on its own.”

The exhibition will cover the full spectrum of contemporary art media, comprising photography, installation, painting, performance art, soundscapes, sculpture, and video. The majority of the works have been made in the last two years, and four artists have been commissioned by SITE Santa Fe to create works expressly for the Biennial.

The participating artists are:

MIROŚŁAW BAŁKA*
JENNIFER BARTLETT
PATTY CHANG*
STEPHEN DEAN
PETER DOIG
ROBERT GROSVENOR*
CRISTINA IGLESIAS*
WOLFGANG LAIB
JONATHAN MEESE
WANGECHI MUTU*
CARSTEN NICOLAI
CATHERINE OPIE
THORNS LTD* (Snorre Ruch, Finn Olav Holthe, Jon Wesseltoft,)

* indicates works created specifically for the Biennial

The Artists

1. MIROŚŁAW BAŁKA (b. 1958 in Warsaw, Poland. Lives in Warsaw; works in Otwock, Poland)

The grandson of a sculptor of funerary monuments, Bałka grew up in small house in Otwock, a town on the outskirts of Warsaw. Since 1992, the house has become Bałka's studio and occasionally the subject of his installations and sculptures. Their highly autobiographical character, often relating directly to the dimensions of the artist's body or his studio, is also strongly affected by personal history (such as his grandfather's occupation) and collective memories of death (8000 Jews from Otwock were dispatched in cattle cars to the death camp of Treblinka in 1942), bestowing on his art an underlying aura of lamentation. Over the years Bałka has shifted from a realist representation of the human body to a more minimalist conception, frequently using architectural methods and video to stage his sparse works. The artist's most recent installations, which prominently feature video footage filmed by the artist at the Majdanek concentration camp, are often projected onto floors covered with salt or soap, indicating rites of passage and renewal.

2. JENNIFER BARTLETT (b. 1941 in Long Beach, California. Lives and works in New York City)

Jennifer Bartlett emerged as one of America's most innovative artists of the 1970s and 1980s. When her monumental painting *Rhapsody*, executed in enamel on 987 one-foot-square steel plates, was first shown in 1976, it was instantly hailed as one of the most pivotal artworks of the era. *Rhapsody* was at once a postmodern commentary on the history of modern art—referencing a wide range of artists and movements, from Cézanne and Seurat to Expressionism, Pop art, Minimalism— and a major breakthrough in painting itself, treading a path for younger conceptual painters such as Peter Doig, Sherrie Levine, and Jessica Stockholder.

Rhapsody was just the starting-point of Bartlett's prolific artistic career and was succeeded by various bodies of work that exhaustively explored new methods and media, extending Bartlett's vocabulary into sculpture, drawing, and print-making, as well as theatrical and cinematic designs. She is recognized today as one of the most important painters of her generation.

3. PATTY CHANG (b. 1972 in San Francisco, California. Lives and works in Brooklyn, New York)

Patty Chang has cited the work of the seminal performance artist Marina Abramovic and the films of Jean Cocteau as inspiration. Chang is a performance artist whose roots can be traced back to the Surrealists' double-edged struggle with unconscious desires, which, as the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan once stated, are always the desires of another person's desires, whatever those desires may be. Where the Surrealists remained safely at a distance from their audience—whom they sought to amuse and shock—Patty Chang literally plays out the desires of the Other on her own body. While her performances, and the videos and photographs derived from them, deliberately elicit uneasy responses from viewers—ranging from dizziness and feelings of discomfort to shock and repulsion—they are clearly much more disagreeable to the artist herself. In these works, Chang dispels any ironic distance between herself and the objects with which—in her own words—she “interacts passionately.”

In her most recent works, she has reversed earlier strategies by slowly withdrawing her own physical presence, in favor of a community-based, participatory approach. In these new pieces, the viewers instead are meant to carry out these expressions of desire and interactions themselves.

4. STEPHEN DEAN (b. 1968 in Paris, France. Lives and works in Brooklyn, New York and Paris, France)

Stephen Dean is a painter and sculptor foremost known for a series of video works, that celebrate color in the midst of exuberant chaos. His videos, whether reveling in the intensely chromatic Indian festival of Holi or in the pandemonium of a Brazilian soccer game, transform the spiritual and sociological uses of color into purely visual and auditory experiences.

His sculptures function similarly, such as his columns of paperback books, stacked chromatically according to their colored page ends; his translucent screens of sliding colored beads that resemble grids of abacuses; or his aluminum ladders with dichroic glass that change color when viewed from different directions. Their references to the “ready-made” are both provocative and liberating, alluding to a heightened perception while retaining a societal context.

5. PETER DOIG (b. 1959 in Edinburgh, Scotland. Lives and works in Port of Spain, Trinidad)

One of the most accomplished artists of the last decade, Peter Doig has introduced a new spirit into the genre of narrative painting. His work emanates a quiet nostalgia. Rendered with unsettling perfection, they echo—despite their haunting beauty and magic realism—an impossible stillness within their timeless tranquility.

In Doig's paintings, perfection is an impossibility except for the fleeting moment where life and death, happiness and tragedy, are one. Working from film stills, found photographs, and references to art history, Doig layers his borrowed imagery in such a way that it asserts the primacy of the painting process. He fills the world of the familiar with uncanny presences by cunningly combining figuration with abstraction, reality with artificiality.

6. ROBERT GROSVENOR (b. 1937 in New York City. Lives and works in Patchogue, New York and Islamorada, Florida)

Robert Grosvenor's formative years coincided with those of the leading Minimalist sculptors Carl Andre, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, and Robert Morris. In the 1960s, Grosvenor, with fellow sculptors Ronald Bladen and Mark di Suvero, founded the artist-run Park Place Gallery in Soho, and his work was included in *Primary Structures*, the 1966 landmark exhibition at the Jewish Museum in New York that became a showcase for American minimalist sculpture. Unlike mainstream Minimalism, Grosvenor's sculptures dispense with the reductivism and intellectual gravity of that period. Grosvenor's objects are playful, capricious, or mischievously thoughtful. They are dynamic rather than inert.

But it is the sparse works created since the 1990s that have proven him to be one of the most intriguing and most American of artists working today. Grosvenor's early sculptures dealt primarily with gravity and tension within given architectural structures. However, the artist's newer installations, assimilating influences from art history, everyday life, and commercial design, bring his work closer to the Las Vegas-influenced Postmodernism of Robert Venturi and may be understood, in their own idiosyncratic place, as abstracted archetypes of the American vernacular subconsciousness.

7. CRISTINA IGLESIAS (b. 1956 in San Sebastián, Spain. Lives and works in Torreldones, Madrid, Spain)

Cristina Iglesias's work evolved in the context of European and American sculpture during the 1980s and 1990s, whereby the object of sculpture was expanded into the realm of the installation.

Drawing on a combination of influences that range from film and the way it uses montage, to architecture and literature, Iglesias's architectural installations and invented spaces are defined by an acute sense of place and time. She is interested in the manipulation of perception and artifice. Iglesias's *Tilted Hanging Ceiling*, a series of works resembling gigantic finials, reverses the order of perception, while her *Vegetal Passages*, with its fiberglass walls covered with bamboo, eucalyptus, and decaying leaves, are actually cast from molds that can be endlessly copied. The navigation of space and time is a compositional factor in her work; as in any act of seeing and experiencing sculpture, her installations alternate between secular and sacred references.

8. WOLFGANG LAIB (b. 1950 in Metzingen, Germany. Lives and works in a small village in Southern Germany)

Since the 1970s, Wolfgang Laib has been creating objects and installations with such elemental materials as pollen, stones, marble, milk, beeswax, rice, and natural resin. He has established an artistic vocabulary of timeless forms that is characterized by a deep relationship with nature and a commitment to the purity

and simplicity he finds both in his native Protestantism and in Eastern philosophies.

Laib's work ranges from large sculptures and installations to smaller wax and pollen pieces, as well as drawings and photographs. Despite the fragility or small scale of many of his works, Laib constantly questions the notion of monumentality, central to traditional western sculpture, in his pursuit to seize the volatile, untouchable essence of life.

9. JONATHAN MEESE (b. 1970 in Tokyo, Japan. Lives and works in Berlin and Hamburg, Germany)

Jonathan Meese is known for his liturgical performances and his Dionysian installations of paintings and sculptures that create complex worlds of closely knit systems, whose references range from the works of Wagner, Nietzsche, Stalin, Hitler, and the Marquis de Sade to John Boorman's 1974 sci-fi cult film *Zardoz* and German actor Klaus Kinski. Meese's work is also inspired by the pictorial anarchy of Dadaism, the polyphonic semantics of James Joyce, and the archaic symbolisms of Ezra Pound and Richard Wagner.

In 2005 Meese performed his critically acclaimed *Jonathan Meese Is Mother Parsifal*, a five-hour event staged in the scenery storehouse of the Berlin Staatsoper. The event's accompanying music was piped in from the opera house's production of Wagner's *Parsifal*, which was being performed simultaneously in the main auditorium under the direction of Daniel Barenboim.

10. WANGECHI MUTU (b. 1972 in Nairobi, Kenya. Lives and works in Brooklyn, New York)

A native of Kenya, Mutu mixes her cultural heritage with Western sources that range from high fashion and pornography to the past and present history of violence on the African continent. Her intricate drawings made on translucent Mylar inscribe postmodern horrors onto African identity. Despite their often maimed appearance, Mutu's hybrid female figures are symbols of empowerment and aggression.

The massive relocations of populations on the African continent, its multilingualism, and the influence of the increasing globalizations of commerce and culture seem mirrored in Mutu's complex, multilayered images. But rather than historicizing Africa and blackness as a race, Mutu is envisioning the existence of African elements in a future culture; accordingly her works are both traditional and utopian.

11. CARSTEN NICOLAI (b. 1965 in Karl-Marx-Stadt, (East) Germany. Lives and works in Berlin, Germany)

Initially an apprentice gardener, then a landscape architect, Carsten Nicolai began his activity as an artist in 1986. Nicolai's works generate perceptible and experiential audiovisual signals by exploring time, space, light, and sound. Often collaborating with scientists, Nicolai adheres to the Renaissance ideals of humanism: a profound interest in knowledge and experience in the fields of science, art, literature, and philosophy that combine to create a new understanding of the world.

Nicolai's art and music adhere to an overtly formalist aesthetic. He explains that growing up in East Germany, where everything was inscribed with political propaganda, made him move away from content, and instead focus on the purism represented by mathematics and physics. His minimalist installations create experiential spaces that are sustained by opposites: light/darkness; material/immaterial; visible/invisible; positive/negative.

In addition to working with video imagery, sound, and painting, Nicolai has created electronic music for many years under the pseudonym Alva Noto, and runs his own record label—Raster-Noton—together with Olaf Bender. It is a platform for innovative digital music and experimental projects in art and science.

12. CATHERINE OPIE (b. 1961 in Sandusky, Ohio. Lives and works in Los Angeles, California)

Catherine Opie is perhaps best known for an infamous series of self-portraits that put her homosexuality at center stage. In the first, she is dressed in leather pants, naked above the waist but for a leather hood, a collar, 46 steel needles in her arms and the word "pervert" cut into her chest; the second is taken of her bare back, exposing a fresh cutting on her skin of a child's drawing of two women holding hands in front of a house with the sun rising from behind a cloud; the third, and most recent, a portrait of Opie nursing her son Oliver, the scars from the "pervert" cutting still readable.

Opie considers her work to be a "kind of twisted social documentary." Her pictures of people and places are at the edge of normalcy: houses in Bel Air and Beverly Hills with enormous entrance doors have sexual connotations, while surfers photographed after returning from the water display post-climatic exhaustion. Opie's exquisite portraits of the children of fellow artists and gay couples whose innocence seems artificially exaggerated by the carefully chosen background colors show her as an adept colorist. Despite their "normalcy," which may at first distinguish them from her previous portraits, these images continue Opie's exploration of identity, sexuality, and privacy from her own perspective as a lesbian artist and mother.

13. THORNS LTD.

Snorre Ruch, Finn Olav Holthe, Jon Wesseltoft
(Based in Trondheim and Oslo, Norway; (www.thorns.no/ltd))

Snorre Ruch (b. 1972 in Trondheim, Norway. Lives and works in Trondheim)
Finn Olav Holthe (b. 1972 in Trondheim, Norway. Lives and works in Trondheim)
Jon Wesseltoft (b. 1973 in Tønsberg, Norway. Lives and works in Oslo)

Thorns Ltd. was founded in 2003 by the experimental musicians Snorre Ruch, Finn Olav Holthe, and Jon Wesseltoft. Its name is derived from Thorns, a Black Metal band founded by Ruch. Both Wesseltoft and Ruch are members of Thorns, and are currently recording a new album.

Thorns Ltd. is dedicated to creating experimental music and sound art. A collaboration with Norwegian artist Bjarne Melgaard for *Playlist*, a multimedia exhibition at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris in 2004 marked Thorns Ltd.'s debut. More recently, Thorns Ltd. worked with Banks Violette on his 2005 *Untitled* installation at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Violette's salt skeleton of a ruined church poised upon a shiny black epoxy stage evokes the "visual rhetoric"

of minimalist aesthetics, while it also comments on a series of church arsons that occurred in Norway during the 1990s. For this installation, Thorns Ltd. created a complex surround-sound score that alternates between ambient sounds and extreme music, resulting in an intriguing “doubling effect.” The sound becomes a metaphysical aural landscape that, at times, follows the sculptural installation and, at other times, constructs its own independent layers of meaning.

Thorns Ltd.’s influences range from Norwegian Black Metal, which emerged in the 1980s as an extreme form of Heavy Metal rock with bands such as Venom and Mayhem. Other major influences include: the pioneering electronic music of early Tangerine Dream, Klaus Schulze, and Iannis Xenakis, as well as the monotonal compositions of Morton Feldman and Gianlo Scelsi, the structuralist serialism of György Ligeti, the chromatic durations of Olivier Messiaen, and the soundscapes of Norwegian composer Arne Nordheim.

Biennial Curator Klaus Ottmann

Klaus Ottmann, an independent curator and scholar based in New York, is the author of numerous articles, essays, and books on art and philosophy, including *The Genius Decision: The Extraordinary and the Postmodern Condition*; *James Lee Byars: Life, Love, and Death*, and *The Essential Mark Rothko*. From 1996 to 1999 he held the position of Curator of Exhibitions at the American Federation of Arts in New York. From 1988 to 1995 he was Curator of Exhibitions of the Ezra and Cecile Zilkha Gallery, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut.

Ottmann has curated over forty exhibitions, including *Life, Love, and Death: The Work of James Lee Byars*, (Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, 2004); *Wolfgang Laib: A Retrospective* (Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., 2002-2004); *Mark Morrisroe: My Life. Polaroids 1977-1989* (Wesleyan University, 1996; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 1997; and the Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, Berlin, 1997), *Rotraut Uecker Klein* (Wesleyan University, 1989), and *The Broken Mirror: Installations by Jessica Stockholder, Eve Andrée Laramée, and Amy Hauff* (Wesleyan University, 1991).

He is currently working on a book on the philosophy of the French painter Yves Klein.

Opening Weekend Celebrations

The public opening of the Biennial will be surrounded by an exciting array of special events, scheduled to take place Friday, July 7 through Sunday, July 9, 2006. **The Press Preview will be held on Thursday, July 6, from 4-6 pm.** Weekend celebrations will include an exclusive preview for patrons, a festive opening cocktail reception, three art performances, a private preview for members, and a panel discussion with Klaus Ottmann and participating artists on Sunday, July 9 at 12 noon, among other activities. For more information on special events and tickets, please call SITE Santa Fe at 505-989-1199 or visit www.sitesantafe.org.

Education and Public Programs

In the spirit of curator Klaus Ottmann’s unmediated approach to the Biennial, SITE Guides will utilize a dialogue-based rather than didactic methodology. SITE Guides will offer free, in-depth exhibition tours at any time during public visits, as well as Fridays at 6pm, Saturdays & Sundays at 2pm. Visitors to the Biennial will be able to draw upon substantial exhibition guides and other printed materials to learn more about the participating artists.

SITE Santa Fe will present a line-up of public programs that will examine the concept, context, and key themes in the Biennial artists' work. Lectures, dialogues, and performances will be presented throughout the six-month run of the exhibition.

Exhibition Catalogue

Accompanying the exhibition will be a full-color, hard-bound catalogue in two volumes, each approximately 96 pages, to be published by SITE Santa Fe and distributed worldwide by Distributed Art Publishers (D.A.P.) The first volume of the catalogue, which will be available the opening weekend, will feature an introduction by Laura Steward Heon, an essay by Klaus Ottmann, and entries on each of the artists with images. The second volume will contain the transcript of the panel discussion featuring the curator and artists, held on July 9, as well as a complete series of installation views of the exhibition at SITE, and will be distributed as a companion to the first volume.

Exhibition Support

Still Points of the Turning World is made possible in part with generous support from an anonymous donor; Jeanne and Michael Klein; Linda and William Herrmann; UBS; and Sotheby's (as of February 14, 2006). Additional support is currently in formation.

Other funding and in-kind support for the exhibition has been generously provided by New Directions/New Donors for the Arts: A Ford Foundation Cultural Initiative. This announcement is partially funded by the City of Santa Fe Arts Commission and the 1% Lodgers' Tax.

UBS, one of the world's leading financial firms, is the largest wealth manager, a top tier investment banking and securities firm, a key asset manager and the leader in Swiss retail and commercial banking. Headquartered in Zurich and Basel, UBS employs over 70,000 people and has offices in 50 countries. It is a Swiss public company listed on the SWX Swiss Stock Exchange, the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) and the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE). In the U.S., UBS is one of the biggest private client businesses with a client base of nearly 2 million private clients and approximately 7500 financial advisors in over 350 offices.

Artist Multiples

Three artists will create limited edition multiples for sale through SITE Santa Fe. All proceeds will support the Biennial. The artists are Patty Chang (sculpture), Peter Doig (etching), and Cathy Opie (photograph).

About SITE Santa Fe

SITE Santa Fe opened in 1995 as a non-collecting institution dedicated to presenting diverse, cutting-edge contemporary art to local, regional, and global audiences. The only contemporary art space of its kind in New Mexico, SITE has presented over 60 exhibitions and the work of more than 350 international artists to date. SITE's dynamic programming includes six to eight exhibitions per year plus numerous related activities such as lectures, film screenings, performances, catalogue publications, and award-winning education and outreach programs. SITE is known for mounting high-quality, thought-provoking biennial exhibitions that explore current issues and trends in contemporary art and draw large international audiences. Housed in a former warehouse, SITE has dramatic, flexible spaces that can accommodate many types of installations, including large-scale and site-specific works.

About SITE Santa Fe's Biennial Tradition

SITE Santa Fe has invited leading curators and critics to explore compelling issues in contemporary art for each of its International Biennials. Each exhibition has been an expression of the unique vision of its curator, as well as an impressively diverse showcase for the most exciting artists of our time. Kenneth Anger, Janine Antoni, Louise Bourgeois, Mona Hatoum, Jenny Holzer, Anish Kapoor, Paul McCarthy, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Bruce Nauman, Shirin Neshat, Susan Rothenberg, and Ed Ruscha are just a few of the artists who have participated in the institution's Biennials.

SITE's first Biennial exhibition, Bruce Ferguson's 1995 *Longing and Belonging: From the Faraway Nearby*, broke new ground in Santa Fe's contemporary art scene, opening the door for artists of global renown to exhibit alongside respected local artists. Two years later, Francesco Bonami's *TRUCE: Echoes of Art in an Age of Endless Conclusions*, expanded the meditation on place, addressing issues of individuality, isolation, and community. The third Biennial, Rosa Martínez's *Looking for a Place*, boldly pushed exhibition boundaries by installing works of art throughout the Santa Fe region that spoke to provocative, site-specific issues. In 2001, Dave Hickey strived to address universal notions of beauty with *Beau Monde: Toward a Redeemed Cosmopolitanism*. The Fourth International Biennial was the recipient of the prestigious International Association of Art Critics/USA 2001-2002 Award for Best Show in a Kunsthalle or an Alternative Space. In his 2004 exhibition *Disparities and Deformations: Our Grotesque*, Robert Storr explored the grotesque's many sources of inspiration and nearly infinite number of guises. He will serve as the director of the Venice Biennale in 2007.

SITE Santa Fe is located at 1606 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 10:00 am–5:00 pm; Friday, 10:00 am–7:00 pm; Sunday, noon–6 pm. Admission is \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for students and seniors; SITE members are free. Free admission is offered on Fridays, made possible by a grant from The Brown Foundation, Inc., Houston. Free tours by SITE Guides are available during public visits, and are also offered on Fridays at 6 pm, Saturdays & Sundays at 2 pm. SITE Santa Fe gift certificates are available. Call 505.989.1199 for more information. This announcement is partially funded by the City of Santa Fe Arts Commission and the 1% Lodgers' Tax.

For more information, please contact SITE Santa Fe at 505-989-1199 or visit our website at www.sitesantafe.org.

Press Contact:

Anne Wrinkle, PR & Marketing Manager
Tel. 505.989.1199; fax 989.1188
wrinkle@sitesantafe.org, www.sitesantafe.org

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