



A close-up of one of the pieces of “Gesture” by the artist Manju Shandler.

Art Joins Artifacts At Museum Of Sept. 11

By COLIN MOYNIHAN

For two years, the National September 11 Memorial Museum, built at ground zero, has presented visitors with a collection that reflects the moments of horror and heroism 15 years ago when terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center.

Now the museum is moving beyond its array of mainly historical items to include for the first time an exhibition of artworks created as a response to the attacks of Sept. 11.

The show, “Rendering the Unthinkable: Artists Respond to 9/11,” opens Sept. 12 in the special exhibits gallery, the inaugural use of that space. It will include “Tumbling Woman,” a bronze sculpture by Eric Fischl, a nearly 3,000-piece painting installation by Manju Shandler representing each victim of the attacks and two pieces by Ejay Weiss that mix ash from the site with black acrylic paint and that are meant to evoke the collapse of the towers.

The exhibition is evidence of the museum’s interest in complementing its collection of artifacts and archives and an acknowledgment that expanding its scope could add visitors.

“There was always the idea that the museum would have a series of temporary exhibits,” Alice M. Greenwald, the museum’s director, said by phone on Tuesday. “It’s a way to bring people back to the museum for a second time, and it’s a way to bring in people who might not choose come otherwise.”

It is also, she added, a way for the museum to present a new perspective of Sept. 11. Although the museum included one commissioned work, by the artist Spencer Finch, when it opened in 2014, it has functioned mainly as a repository for material that documents the attacks on the World Trade Center.

More than 11,000 items, including surveillance footage of the hijackers passing through airports, homemade posters seeking missing people and a fire truck with a burned-out cab are displayed in the almost entirely subterranean museum, built where the foundations of the Twin Towers were carved into the earth. That material, sometimes resembling evidence presented in a criminal trial, can have an overwhelming effect on visitors.

The pieces in the new exhibition are meant to invite a quieter, more contemplative experience, Ms. Greenwald said. They show how individual artists reacted to events on that day and include occasional notes of optimism along with reflections of un-

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INSIDE



Americans in Paris
New York City Ballet is wrapping up a three-week season at Théâtre du Châtelet. Above, Mary Elizabeth Sell, a company member, PAGE 5.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES



Above, Belvedere Castle. One aim is to restore the original Central Park vision of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, much of it inspired by the Adirondacks and the Catskills, as depicted in art like “Kindred Spirits,” top.

A \$300 Million Quest To Restore Central Park

Countering Heavy Use With a 10-Year Effort

By ROBIN POGREBIN

Belvedere Castle in Central Park looks indestructible, a fortress of stone presiding over the Great Lawn. But the 144-year-old-building leaks like a sieve.

“Rain pours into the building,” Douglas Blonsky, the president and chief executive of the Central Park Conservancy, the park’s private custodian, said on a recent tour.

The Conservatory Garden on Fifth Avenue still blooms with flowers, but the cracked paving hasn’t been touched since the 1930s, and its elegant geyser fountain requires constant repairs on plumbing that dates to the Robert Moses era.

The Ravine near 104th Street, with its rushing waterfall, has pools clogged with sediment and needs dredging.

Central Park this summer may seem a bucolic oasis, and it is widely considered one of the nation’s most successful urban parks. Yet beneath the surface, experts say, it is suffering the debilitating effects of time and

modern use, and it will decay further unless its historic structures and landscapes are restored. On Thursday, the Central Park Conservancy is set to announce an ambitious 10-year, \$300 million fund-raising and improvement effort.

The conservancy’s plan, “Forever Green: Ensuring the Future of Central Park,” might sound excessive, an effort by rich New Yorkers to spruce up their backyard when other neighborhoods are in dire need of better open spaces. Only four years ago the conservancy received \$100 million from the hedge fund manager John A. Paulson. But others argue that the park has been a victim of its own success. As it has been improved over the years, the number of annual visitors has mushroomed to 42 million, from 12 million in 1981.

“It’s being trampled to death — visitation now is heavier than ever in its history,” said Adrian Benepe, the former New York City parks commissioner who is now the director of city park development at the nonprofit Trust for Public Land. “This is America’s great work of art of the 19th century because it set a standard for what a great urban park should be that has been copied all around the world.”

Some have said that Central Park’s success in securing private support only highlights the need of parks all over the city for public dollars.

“It’s a reminder that the city should be investing Continued on Page 6

Waves of Dark History Break on an Olympic Pool



RENATO SETTE CAMARA

The Brazilian artist Adriana Varejão’s treatment for the aquatics center built for the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

By LAURA van STRAATEN

In a few weeks, as TV cameras swoop over the Olympic Park in the Barra da Tijuca neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro, viewers will glimpse what looks like a colossal seascape mural encircling the new aquatics stadium.

But what appears to be ancient, cracked decorative tile is actually a scrim of 66 panels of perforated canvas, each 90 feet high — the largest contemporary artwork commissioned for Rio 2016. And the blue-and-white work is steeped in a complicated provenance that is typical of its creator, Adriana Varejão, 51, the revered Rio artist.

“If you look closely, it’s not just a seascape,” she said recently, speaking via Skype from her Rio studio, “but parts of angels, and other historic Baroque motifs, all fragmented, reordered and turbulent.”

In some ways, Ms. Varejão (pronounced bah-ruh-ZHAO) is the perfect artist for the commission, given her long use of tiles, pools and water as visual imagery. Yet she is also a bold choice for the global Games because much of her work asks uncomfortable questions about the hidden, bloody stories of racism and subjugation — Portugal’s colonization of Brazil in particular, but also England’s and Spain’s of other parts of

the Americas. She puts the Baroque to work in service of those questions: “The beauty and grotesque are always like opposites in the Baroque — it’s an aesthetic that deals with contrasts,” she said.

The as-yet-untitled commission’s tiled appearance is a double trompe l’oeil, because it is composed of printed images from an older Varejão artwork called “Celacanto Provoca Maremoto” (“The Coelacanth Causes a Seaquake”). For that work, created between 2004 and 2008, Ms. Varejão encrusted with plaster 184 panels, each roughly 43 inches square.

Then she let the panels crack and

painstakingly painted onto them fragments of images from her digital inventory of more than 2,500 tiles. Until you are within inches of her work, you’d swear you were looking at tiles; you’re tempted to touch.

Ms. Varejão sat for two interviews, one via Skype last month and the other in 2014 at her studio on a residential street just outside Rio’s Jardim Botânico. In the earlier interview, she showed her delight in the layers of reality and trickery built into her work.

“It’s fake,” Ms. Varejão said, laughing, her brown curls falling forward on her

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Waves of History Break To Reveal Dark Secrets On a Rio Artist’s Seas

From First Arts Page

face. “I love the fake.” Both seascapes mimic the experience of being surrounded by whoring waves, as if from a swimmer’s point of view. “I was looking for the sensation of vertigo,” Ms. Varejão explained, “so someone can be totally immersed in a sea of Baroque waves.”

Carla Camurati, director of the cultural programs for Rio 2016, encountered “Celacanto” on a scouting trip to Instituto Inhotim, the expansive art park in the southeastern province of Minas Gerais, where she was seeking visual artists to round out the cultural programs for the Games.

Ms. Varejão’s is among Inhotim’s largest pavilions, which are scattered amid 2,500 lush acres and function as permanent solo galleries for contemporary artists. Ms. Varejão, who has two children, is married to Pedro Buarque de Hollanda, a film producer.

Adriana Varejão’s work is on view through September at Barra Olympic Park in Rio de Janeiro. She also has work in the group show “The Great Animal Orchestra” through Jan. 8 at the Fondation Cartier pour l’Art Contemporain in Paris and paintings opening Oct. 1 at Gagosian in Rome.

The pavilion’s upper floor is devoted to “Celacanto Provoca Maremoto,” whose faux tiles line all four walls. Ms. Camurati said the title resonated with her, as it does for most Cariocas (as Rio residents are called) of a certain age; the phrase started appearing as graffiti in 1977 in Rio’s Zona Sul and then throughout the city in the early 1980s.

Ms. Varejão, a Rio native, explained that “everybody thought it was a revolutionary slogan” since the graffiti began appearing during a dictatorship.

Ms. Camurati said, “No one knew exactly what was the meaning,” adding that “it was such a strong thing.” A celacanto, or coelacanth, is a rare order of fish thought to have died out with dinosaurs, until several specimens were spotted in 1938, causing what could be called a seaquake in evolutionary science.

Young Cariocas, however, also recognized the sentence as a recurring line from a Japanese TV series, “National Kid,” which featured a coelacanth and was a cult hit in Brazil.

“It is a sentence I think sounds very poetic,” Ms. Varejão said simply.

Such layering of referents is very much her style. Many works draw on Brazil’s traditional blue and white hand-painted azulejo



Adriana Varejão, a native of Rio de Janeiro, creates works steeped in a history of colonialism that is dark and complex.

VICENTE de MELLO

tiles, whose complex provenance through trade and colonization connects Brazil with the ceramic traditions of the ancient Islamic world, China, Holland, Spain and, most obviously, Portugal. The

azulejos traditionally decorated churches, monasteries, and residences of the rich and powerful in Brazil and function in her work as a metaphor for a mixing of cultures, by force or by desire. Ms. Varejão calls that mixing “mestizo,” which also refers to a person, like Ms. Varejão herself, of combined European, Amerindian and African lineage.

One can see how her trompe l’oeil technique might stand in part for the “fake” way that societies, through artistic traditions like decorative ceramics, cover up the horrors that made them possible. But in other series of her drawings and paintings, the violence is writ large: She often depicts blood seeping through the gridded tiles of a modern spa. Elsewhere, she builds free-stand-

ing ruins and fills the walls with simulacra of bloody guts.

“It’s confrontational, there is a level of repulsiveness to it,” said Louise Neri, a director at the Gagosian Gallery in New York. “There is an abject quality to some of Adriana’s work, which I find very bold. It connects her to the realm of political art.”

Ms. Neri is curating a show of Ms. Varejão’s newest and largest-ever paintings opening Oct. 1 at Gagosian in Rome, which features the artist’s abstracted azulejos. (Ms. Varejão is also preparing for two 2017 exhibitions: a solo show at her London gallery, Victoria Miro, and a project on the Talavera tiles of Puebla, Mexico, for the Amparo Museum there.)

Ms. Varejão’s work, in the collections of the Tate Modern and

Guggenheim museums, has engendered critical discussion about “cultural formation through violence,” Ms. Neri said. “She is actually talking about the colonization for financial or territorial gain that shaped many countries, including her own, that we would rather forget.” She connected Ms. Varejão’s preoccupations with the violence at Istanbul’s airport that took place just hours before the conversation. “The world as it is right now is a consequence of how certain parts of the world have divided other parts of the world,” the curator said. “That’s what we are looking at right now. Everywhere.”

“She is the iron fist in the velvet glove,” Ms. Neri added. “Even in the most seductive of the work there is this underlying tension.”

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Director Pulls ‘Hamlet’ From Polonsky, Seeking to Stage It at the Public Instead

By JOSHUA BARONE

It seemed to be a coup for Theater for a New Audience: Its first summer Shakespeare production would be “Hamlet,” with the much-lauded Tony-winning director Sam Gold at the helm, and the rising Hollywood star Oscar Isaac in the title role.

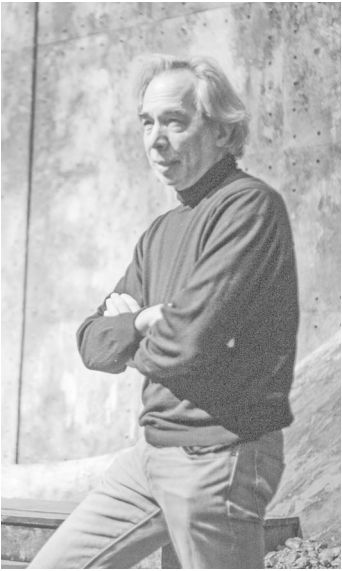
The play, announced in April and scheduled to open next June at the Polonsky Shakespeare Center in Brooklyn, had been in the works since 2014. Tickets were sold to subscribers, and a creative team was assembled.

But the production has fallen apart.

Last month Mr. Gold, citing insurmountable artistic differences, backed out and took the play — and Mr. Isaac — to the Public Theater, which is in talks to add the production to its 2016-17 season. Theater for a New Audience canceled its “Hamlet.”

The production’s move from one nonprofit theater to another is unusual. Even more of an anomaly is the response of Jeffrey Horowitz, Theater for a New Audience’s artistic director, who has decided to go public with the details of what happened.

“It’s a bad precedent for not-for-profits,” Mr. Horowitz said of the



RAMSAY DE GIVE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES
Jeffrey Horowitz, artistic director of Theater for a New Audience, sees “a bad precedent” in a play’s withdrawal.

play’s cancellation. “Creative artists should not take a production away. It hurts the field if that kind of thing can happen.”

Mr. Gold declined to comment and deferred to the Public, which said in a statement, “We are in early discussions with these Public alumni (Mr. Gold and Mr. Isaac) to see if we can help make their production possible next season.” (Mr. Gold directed “Fun Home” at the Public, which later went to Broadway and won him the Tony; Mr. Isaac, long before his recent turn in “Star Wars: The Force Awakens,” was in “Romeo and Juliet” and “Two Gentlemen of Verona” at the Public’s Shakespeare in the Park.)

The first apparent fissure in Mr. Horowitz and Mr. Gold’s collaboration came on June 1, when Mr. Gold met with Jonathan Kalb, a dramaturge with Theater for a New Audience, to discuss Mr. Gold’s editing of the text of “Hamlet,” which Mr. Gold described in a May 27 email to Mr. Horowitz as a “pretty aggressive adaptation/cut of the play.”

At first the meeting was cordial, Mr. Kalb later wrote in an email to Mr. Horowitz that was shared with The New York Times. At a Dean & DeLuca in Midtown, Mr. Gold talked about his “longstanding interest in simplicity, unpretentiousness and theater that travels unstable boundaries where fiction and reality blur into one another,” according to the email. They agreed that “Hamlet” would be an ideal play to explore from that perspective.

But Mr. Kalb was also there to figure out whether the play would be trimmed or radically adapted, because Theater for a New Audi-

ence does not produce Shakespeare adaptations.

“I raised questions of how and when Gold planned to do his work on the text, whether he understood that Jeffrey would want to be consulted, and whether he might want to postpone firm discussions until the workshop,” Mr. Kalb wrote. He described Mr. Gold’s response as “defensive.”

Within days, Mr. Gold met with Mr. Horowitz to withdraw from the production, saying he didn’t feel supported artistically, according to Mr. Horowitz. They agreed not to settle on a decision immediately, though. Mr. Gold waited a little more than a week to give official word of his departure.

What followed were two weeks of meetings, phone calls and emails in which Mr. Horowitz and Oskar Eustis, artistic director of the Public, tried to work out a co-production of Mr. Gold’s “Hamlet.”

Among the proposals was having the play preview at the Public but run at the Polonsky. Mr. Horowitz also offered to back off entirely, so that Mr. Eustis would be the only artistic leader Mr. Gold needed to speak with. “I have no ego here,” Mr. Horowitz said he remembered telling Mr. Eustis. “I just don’t want this to be canceled.”

But Mr. Gold wrote to Mr. Horowitz on June 20, “I’ve decided to no longer pursue a production of ‘Hamlet’ at Theater for a New Audience.”

Another option was to have the play run at the Public, with seats set aside for Theater for a New Audience’s subscribers. But if no proposal worked for Mr. Gold, Mr. Horowitz wrote in an email to Mr. Eustis, his theater would “vigorously defend its integrity and what we believe is unfair, damaging and an injustice.” The email ended nonetheless with his expressing a hope for a “creative outcome: Two theaters and two artistic leaders work together to support exciting artists working on a great play.”

By July 3, any chances of a co-production had been dashed for logistical reasons. The Public is also planning to present a different “Hamlet” as part of its touring Mobile Unit division. (The Public would not confirm those plans, which have not been announced.)

“There should have been a solution,” Mr. Horowitz said. “It’s just not right.”

Theater for a New Audience ended up quickly making arrangements for a “Measure for Measure” production, directed by Simon Godwin, for next June. Without a star like Mr. Isaac, the theater projected, “Measure” would make half the money that “Hamlet” would have.

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