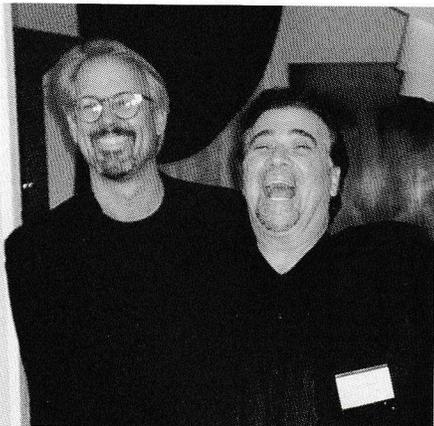


## L.A. Dealers Go International

**LOS ANGELES**—While plenty of contemporary art lovers are traveling to this summer's festivals in Europe (the Venice Biennale, Kassel's Documenta X), next month this city will be bringing international artists to the West Coast with the third Absolut L.A. International Biennial Art Invitational, which promises to include some 50 L.A. dealers hosting exhibitions brought from leading galleries around the world. Although there is no general curator, some L.A. museums have also agreed—a first for the city—to coordinate their own international exhibitions with the galleries' activities.

The L.A. Biennial kicks off on July 9, with a vernissage coordinated with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's retrospective of photocollages by German Dadaist Hannah Höch. Nightly receptions and tours of the galleries continue through



**Behind the Biennial: William Turner (left) and Robert Berman.**

July 12, also the opening date of Canadian Conceptualist photographer Jeff Wall's retrospective at the L.A. Museum of Contemporary Art. And that is just the first week. Over the subsequent five weekends, an abundance of panel discussions, museum tours and receptions are planned, until the closing-night bash at Santa Monica's Bergamot Station gallery complex.

As far as individual gallery shows are concerned, PaceWildenstein is bringing the work of Italian Spatialist artist Lucio Fontana from the Galleria Giò Marconi in Milan. The modern and contemporary dealer Manny Silverman shows works by Franz Kline, Matisse, Picasso, Giacometti and Dubuffet imported from Galerie Jan Krugier in Geneva, while Louis Stern Fine Arts has scheduled the work of painter Jacques Villon (Marcel Duchamp's brother) from the Galerie Louis Carré & Cie. in

Paris. L.A. Louver Gallery in Venice, California, shows photographic self-portraits by pioneering German photographer Katarine Sieverding from Berlin's Galerie Franck & Schulte.

Ballast to such high-modern offerings comes in the form of cutting-edge contemporary art at Rosamund Felsen Gallery, with a show from the lively Mexico City OMR gallery. Upstart gallery LASCA (L.A.-Seoul Contemporary Art) brings artists from W139 gallery in Amsterdam, and Richard Heller shows Daniel Laskarin and other Canadian artists from Winnipeg's Plug In Inc. Although the majority of artists in this year's biennial are European, a group show of Korean art organized by the Seoul-based Galerie Bhak is to go on view at Remba Gallery. Well-known Mexican painter and printmaker Jose Luis Cuevas shows his work at the newly opened Tasende Gallery in West Hollywood. Conceptual sculptor Roland Brener and nonrepresentational painter Rob Youds, both Canadian, are to show with the William Turner Gallery.

The biennial has emerged, phoenixlike, from the ashes of the L.A. Art Fair, which ran annually from 1986 to 1993 and fell victim to the downturn in the market. The president of the Santa Monica-Venice Art Dealers Association, William Turner organized the biennial with Santa Monica contemporary dealer and association vice president Robert Berman. "The dealers in L.A. value the exchange of ideas that comes when you visit international art fairs," says Turner. "When the L.A. Art Fair closed, it looked as though we were going to be passed over." Choosing to turn the liability of the city's urban sprawl into an advantage, the biennial now includes galleries located around L.A., from the eastern environs of downtown to the west side beaches of Santa Monica and Venice.

Some remain skeptical. For instance, *Los Angeles Times* art critic Christopher Knight says the biennial "was an interesting way to keep an international dialogue going in the galleries," but deplores the fact that economics dictated that the art brought from abroad would be "crammed into a suitcase," limiting "the range of what's done." Nonetheless, Turner insists, "We are well on our way to establishing this as an event that has gained international recognition. Everyone seems to know about it, and there is an excitement and momentum that is pretty infectious."

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP

### TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Summertime, and it's off to the Hamptons, the rustic *mas* in Provence, or even less usual destinations. And what will dealers be reading on their holidays? "A stack of trade and general-interest magazines that have piled up over the year," says New York decorative arts dealer Bruce Newman of Newell Art Galleries. Catching up on periodicals as well will be Peter Schaffer, vice president of New York's A La Vieille Russie. "I'll spend the summer reading such magazines as *Forbes*, *National Geographic*, *Nature*," he says. "And, of course, the art publications." For Chicago contemporary dealer Richard Gray, it will be Philip Roth's new book, *American Pastoral*, while Frederick Schultz, an antiquities dealer in New York, will be rereading works by P. G. Wodehouse. "When you get old, you read for the scotch and Wodehouse," says Schultz. New York-based Richard York, a 19th- and 20th-century art dealer, will be delving into John Julius Norwich's *A Short History of Byzantium*. "I'm going out on a cruise to Turkey and Greece," Gray remarks. "I thought I'd better learn about the area."

Across the Atlantic, London Impressionist and modern dealer Ivor Braka will be working his way through Joseph Conrad. "I like to spend my summer catching up on all the great novels I haven't had time to read," Braka says. Meanwhile, Axel Vervoordt, the noted Antwerp antiques dealer, will be plumbing the depth of *Corpus Hermeticum*, a 3rd-century Latin classic by Hermes Trismegistus recently translated into Dutch. "During the summer I like to read philosophy to learn how to be more a part of life," explains Vervoordt. Reading an instructional manual of a different sort will be recently retired Paris art and antiques dealer Yves Mikaeloff, whose son just had a baby boy. "I'll be reading a work by Victor Hugo," Mikaeloff says. "*The Art of Being a Grandfather*."

STEVEN VINCENT