

## JAPAN AT EUROPALIA

The Europalia International Foundation, successor to Europalia, which since 1969 has organised nine major national festivals comprising visual art, music, theatre, cinema, animation, photography and other aspects of the arts (the last being Austria, in 1987), is this year celebrating Japan from September to December. The Foundation is based in Brussels, and the events take place in Belgium. During the last festival more than 1,300,000 people visited the art exhibitions alone. Among the major visual arts events this year will be 'The Human Figure in Japanese Art' at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, 27 September - 26 November; Buddhist Religious Art from the 7th to the 19th century, 28 September - 26 November, at the Banque Bruxelles Lambert in Brussels; two major print shows, one historical at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Charleroi, 28 September - 10 December, which will include several rarely-shown collections, and 'Contemporary Japanese Prints' at the Maison de la Culture, Namur, from 22 October to 17 December, supplemented by 'Japanese Posters' at the Hessenhuis, Antwerp, from 1 October to 17 December; 'Nihonga- Contemporary Painting in Traditional Style' at the Provinciaal Hof, Bruges, 4 October - 18 November; 'Yamaguchi and Saito - Pioneers of Japanese Abstract Art' at the Musée d'Art Moderne, Brussels, 29 September - 17 September; a special showing of work by 15 contemporary Japanese sculptors, each represented by several works, at the sculpture biennial at the Middleheim Open Air Museum, Antwerp, now and until 29 October; video and technological art at the Museum of Contemporary Art; and 'Japan 1989', a group of about twelve contemporary artists 'whose work combines an acute feeling for matter with a

strong Eastern sensitivity', at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Ghent, 29 October - 17 December. In addition there are exhibitions of photography, (at the Provincial Museum for Photography, Antwerp, 1 October - 12 November), ceramics, textiles, calligraphy, design and architecture. Address of the Foundation: Rue Royale 10, 1000 Brussels.

### Book arts conference

The First National Conference on Book Arts in the U.S.A. is being organised by the Center for Book Arts, New York, 30 March to 30 April, 1990. There will be a wide range of panel discussions on criticism (Rose Slivka and Carl Little), conservation (Mindell Dubansky of the Metropolitan), dealing and collecting (Dr Edelstein of the Getty, Dr Sackner, and dealer Tony Swicker) and history. Other panelists include Kim Merker (Univ. of Iowa Center for the Book), Franklin Furnace founder Martha Wilson, and the editor of *Fine Print*. For info: Center for Book Arts, 626 Broadway, New York, NY10012.

### US \$130,000 could be yours

The Santa Fe International Art Festival is offering a \$130,000 Grand Prize and 339 other cash prizes to artists and photographers for the best interpretations of the festival's theme, 'Nature - the Environment We Share - the Interdependence of All Species'. Entries are sought in all media, including painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, printmaking, works in paper, works in fabric, and experimental art. Entries may be either representational or non-representational. Artists may submit up to five separate works per single entry. Entry deadline: January 15 1990. The Santa Fe Art Fest will be held 4 - 10 June, 1990. Exhibits will be toured. For info, contact Philip H. Green, executive director, ArtFest Partners, 535 Cordova Road, Suite 208, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501.

### Russian collectors get together

The Collector's Club set up at the Soviet Culture Foundation, Moscow, two years ago has already been responsible for sending Soviet collections

abroad to Finland, Denmark, Norway, Italy and Britain. The Club's agenda includes the preparation of an All-Union conference and the establishment of a national society of collectors.

### Vatican cover-up

Restoration of the Sistine Chapel frescos is nearing completion, but some parts of Michaelangelo's original will not be restored. The drapery added in 1564 to return modesty to St Catherine of Alexandria, St Blaise and other members of the heavenly hierarchy will be left as it is. This will be hard on the Japanese tv company which has put up US\$4m to pay for the restoration in return for being the first outfit to show pictures of the restored frescos, but the Vatican is adamant and argues that anyway de Volterra had removed the offending passages before he ever painted the drapery and they could never be replaced.


### Auction house records

Sales through Christie's International in the 1988-89 season topped US\$1bn. in the second quarter alone. For Christie's the season's takings represented a 62 per cent increase, and for Sotheby's 58 per cent. Best performers: Impressionist works, with gains averaging 35.8 per cent annually over five years, followed by modern paintings with 35.2 per cent.

### Maplethorpe in trouble again

Jesse Helms, Senator from North Carolina, in late July managed to slip in an amendment to an omnibus bill to the effect that no federal funds should be used to support 'obscene and indecent art'. According to reports the move was in part sparked by his wife. 'Lord have mercy, Jesse!' she had exclaimed on seeing the catalogue of the Robert Mapplethorpe retrospective, 'I'm not believing this'. As a result the House of Representatives voted to cut the federal grant (\$171m) by the amount of federal money which helped fund the retrospective. The amendment would stop federal funding of any project deemed to 'promote, disseminate or produce obscene or indecent materials... or materials which denigrate the objects or beliefs of the adherents of a particular religion or non-religion'. Mr Helms was particularly upset by a picture of a child lifting her dress and exposing herself. 'I'm embarrassed to talk even to my wife' (about this), said the Senator. Many people in the art world have expressed amazement at the amendment, but Walter Annenberg, paintings fancier, former Ambassador to the U.K., is reported as saying 'I'm sick of people expressing their artistic attitudes and talents in an unappetising manner'. The amendment is to be voted on by Congress, probably this September.

**M i c h a e l L e o n a r d**  
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