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Inside Art

Carol Vogel

Finalists Announced For Hugo Boss Prize

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation has chosen the six finalists for its 2010 Hugo Boss Prize. The \$100,000 award, given every two years and named for the German men's wear company that sponsors it, goes to an individual who has made an important contribution to contemporary art.

Unlike many art prizes, this one has no restrictions on age or nationality, so the finalists are often a mix of international figures, and that is true this year. "That there are artists from the Middle East and Asia reflects how we continue to learn more and more about art around the world," said Nancy Spector, chief curator of the foundation and chairwoman of the six-person jury that will select the winner.

This year's list, which was announced on Thursday evening, is an eclectic one that leans heavily toward conceptual and performance artists. It includes no painters. These are the finalists:

¶Cao Fei, 31, a Beijing artist whose work has been shown in many biennials. Ms. Fei explores the rapid evolution of Chinese society and cultural trends in her photographs, videos and new-media work.

¶Hans-Peter Feldmann, 68, a German artist living in Düsseldorf who appropriates everyday images for his carefully conceived installations. At a show at the International Center of Photography last year, he filled a room with the framed front pages of 100 newspapers — from Paris, Dubai, Sydney, Seoul, New York and elsewhere — printed on Sept. 12, 2001.

¶Natascha Sadr Haghighian, a conceptual artist in Berlin. (She refuses to give her age.) Her works have included video, performance, computer and sound pieces. A recent one, "Cut," involved projections of moving razor blades that seemed to be slicing the gallery walls.

¶Roman Ondak, 43, a Slovakian artist who lives and works in the capital, Bratislava, where he stages performances and installations. His work in his country's pavilion at the 2009 Venice Biennale involved an indoor environ-



VITAMIN CREATIVE SPACE, GUANGZHOU/BEIJING, AND LOMBARD-FREID PROJECT

"Cosplayers" (2004), an eight-minute video by Cao Fei, one of the six artists who are finalists for the 2010 Hugo Boss Prize.

ment that reproduced the greenery, bushes, paths and trees between other exhibition pavilions. Mr. Ondak also created "Measuring the Universe," at the Museum of Modern Art, an exhibition that closed last month, in which visitors' heights, first names and the date of the measurement were recorded on the gallery walls.

¶Walid Raad, 42, a Lebanese conceptual artist who lives and works in Beirut and New York. Last year, in a multimedia project at the International Center of Photography, he depicted the Lebanese civil war of the 1980s in graphic detail, through the voices of people who never existed, using details he invented. He has also created a video purporting to show sunsets supposedly recorded by a Lebanese surveillance-camera operator.

¶Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 39, a Thai filmmaker who takes politics and relationships as his subjects. His work was shown at the 2008 Carnegie International, where he won the inaugural Fine Prize for outstanding emerging artist.

The Hugo Boss Prize winner will be announced in the fall of 2010 and will also receive a solo show in 2011 at the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

Rousseau at the Clark

A new acquisition was recently

hung on the walls of the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Mass.: Théodore Rousseau's "Farm in Les Landes," a luminous landscape that many scholars consider one of the greatest Barbizon School paintings.

The canvas is from a set of three: one is in the Frick Collection in New York, the other in the Museum der Bildenden Künste in Leipzig, Germany. The Clark's painting had been part of a private Portuguese collection for more than 60 years until it appeared at the European Fine Art Fair in Maastricht, the Netherlands, in March, with a \$1.25 million price tag.

Richard Rand, a senior curator at the Clark, would not say how much the museum paid, but he did say that the work was purchased from Matthiesen Fine Art, a London gallery.

Rousseau worked on the canvases during the 1840s and '50s (and in some cases even longer) as a commission for Frédéric Hartmann, a Paris collector who was the artist's greatest patron.

The acquisition fills a gap in the Clark's collection. "We had been looking for a major Barbizon landscape," Mr. Rand said. "While we had oil sketches and smaller works by Rousseau, we didn't have a large, important painting by him."

The Barbizon School has been out of fashion until fairly recently,

but museums have started to take a greater interest, partly because such works are still affordable.

From a curatorial standpoint, Mr. Rand said, "people recognize that Rousseau is vital to landscape painting of the 19th century." And he explained that while the Clark has paintings by Constable and other artists in the British tradition, as well as Impressionist landscapes by Monet, Renoir and Pissarro — which are the great strength of the Clark's collection — Rousseau is "the perfect link between those two."

'Origins' Highlights

Although the Onassis Cultural Center in Manhattan has announced its big fall show — "The Origins of El Greco: Icon Painting in Venetian Crete" — few details have emerged about the exhibition, which will run from Nov. 17 through Feb. 27.

Anastasia Drandaki, curator of the Byzantine collection at the Benaki Museum in Athens, who has organized this exhibition, has secured some rare loans, including 11 icons from the collection of St. Catherine of Sinai in Crete.

Three of those panels have left Crete only once, and that was for an exhibition in Athens 16 years ago. Four other icons are coming from the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia, and have not traveled since entering the collection in 1930.

Also on view for the first time in New York will be a late painting by El Greco, "The Coronation of the Virgin," from the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation in Athens, the Onassis center's parent, established by Aristotle Onassis.

In gathering the loans, Ms. Drandaki has made some discoveries. Two panels, "The Adoration of the Shepherds," from Queens University in Kingston, Ontario, and "Baptism of Christ," belonging to the Municipality of Heraklion, could have been from the same triptych, she said.

"They have almost identical dimensions and have both been attributed by scholars to El Greco's Italian period," she explained.

The works will be shown together for the first time.