

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART PRESENTS THE FIRST PROJECTS EXHIBITION IN ITS RENOVATED AND EXPANDED BUILDING

Mark Dion Creates an Installation Based on Archaeological Excavations of The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden

Projects 82: Mark Dion—Rescue Archaeology, A Project for The Museum of Modern Art

Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 1 Lobby Gallery
November 20, 2004—March 14, 2005

NEW YORK, November 20, 2004—In 2000, The Museum of Modern Art converted The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden into a construction staging area for the most extensive renovation and expansion project in its 75-year history. During the process, artist Mark Dion (American, b. 1961) was invited to create a Projects exhibition based on a series of archaeological excavations of the garden and surrounding areas. Conceived as an installation about the Museum's foundations, ***Projects 82: Mark Dion—Rescue Archaeology, A Project for The Museum of Modern Art***, consists of Dion's findings, which include architectural cornices, moldings, shards of ceramic, wallpaper samples, and sections of fireplace mantels. This exhibition is organized by Roxana Marcoci, Assistant Curator, Department of Photography. The Projects series, which highlights the work of emerging artists, is coordinated by Laurence Kardish, Senior Curator, Department of Film and Media. The exhibition, located in the Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 1 Lobby on the lower level of the Museum, is on view from November 20, 2004, to March 14, 2005.

Beneath the Sculpture Garden lay the foundations of two townhouses: Abby Aldrich and John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s, former townhouse at 10 West 54th Street, where David Rockefeller, MoMA's Chairman Emeritus, grew up; and John D. Rockefeller, Sr.'s townhouse at 4 West 54th Street. Both townhouses were torn down in 1938 to provide the land for the Museum's first permanent building, designed in the International Style by Philip Goodwin and Edward Durell Stone and opened in 1939. The foundations of the Sculpture Garden have remained largely undisturbed, despite the Museum's subsequent renovations and growth.

In October and November 2000, Dion recovered a number of historical artifacts from the Garden, and from two adjacent brownstone buildings and the Dorset Hotel, which were demolished for MoMA's renovation and expansion. A pillar and fragments of the limestone foundation from Abby Aldrich and John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s nine-story townhouse as well as the remains of Bruce Nauman's *Audio-Visual Underground Chamber* (1972–74), which was installed in the Sculpture Garden as part of the artist's 1995 retrospective, were also recovered. *Rescue Archaeology* consists of a series of three fireplace mantels, one large-scale treasure cabinet holding cleaned and classified relics, a functioning laboratory, and a group of photographs recording Dion's behind-the-scenes archaeological "performance."

Dion has conducted a number of archaeological projects over the last decade. In each case his work was divided into three phases: the actual dig, the cleaning and cataloguing of the finds, and the display of artifacts in treasure cabinets.

The exhibition is accompanied by a brochure that includes an interview conducted by Roxana Marcoci and Mark Dion with David Rockefeller about his recollections of growing up at 10 West 54th Street.

Sponsorship

The exhibition is made possible by The Neuberger Berman Foundation, which is funded by Neuberger Berman, a Lehman Brothers Company; and by Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine G. Farley. Additional support is provided by Susan G. Jacoby, The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art, and Jerome and Ellen Stern.

About the Artist

Mark Dion was born in 1961 in New Bedford, Massachusetts. He studied at the School of Visual Arts and at the Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Program in New York. In 2003 he completed his Ph.D. at the University of Hartford, Connecticut. Since 1990 Dion has systematically used empirical and archaeological processes to realize his work. His artistic practice involves collecting, cleaning, identifying, cataloguing, archiving, and displaying historical finds together with photographs in multipart installations. His projects have been in many international exhibitions, such as *The Raw and the Cooked*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (1994); *Hybrids*, De Appel Foundation, Amsterdam (1996); *47th Venice Biennale* (1997); *Tate Thames Dig*, Tate Modern, London (1999); Carnegie International, Pittsburgh, PA (1999/2000); *Encyclomania*, Kunstverein Hannover (2003); and *Full House*, The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT (2003), among others.

About the Curator

Roxana Marcoci joined The Museum of Modern Art in 1999 as Curatorial Assistant, Janice H. Levin Fellow, in the Department of Painting and Sculpture, and became Assistant Curator, Department of Photography, in 2003. A member of Phi Beta Kappa, she holds a Ph.D. in 20th-Century Art History and Criticism from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. For MoMA, Marcoci was the curatorial assistant of *Alberto Giacometti* (2001) and curatorial coordinator of *Tempo* (2002) and *Max Beckmann* (2003). She was the curator of *Counter-Monuments and Memory*, part of *Open Ends*, the third cycle of MoMA 2000 (2000); cocurator of *Projects 73: Olafur Eliasson—Seeing yourself sensing* (2001); and curator of *Projects 80: Lee Mingwei, The Tourist* (2003). She also organized *Clockwork 2000* (Clocktower/P.S.1, 2000) and was curator of *Here Tomorrow* (Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, 2002). She is the curator of the upcoming *Thomas Demand* exhibition opening at MoMA in 2005. Marcoci has written widely on modern and contemporary art and contributes to *Art Journal*, *Cabinet*, *Trans*, and *Index*.

About the Projects Series

Created in 1971 as a forum for emerging artists and new art, the Projects series has played a vital part in MoMA's contemporary art programs. Initiated by representatives from all of the Museum's curatorial departments, the series has presented the work of close to 200 artists to date. For further information on the series, including a listing of all Projects artists, please visit www.moma.org/projects

Public Program

Conversations with Contemporary Artists

Friday, December 3, 6:30 p.m.

Titus 1 Lobby

Artist Mark Dion will engage the public in a discussion about his creative process and approach to collecting, ordering, and display in the galleries of *Projects 82: Mark Dion—Rescue Archaeology, A Project for The Museum of Modern Art*. Tickets are \$10, \$8 for members, \$5 for students with current ID and can be purchased at the Museum Lobby Ticketing Desk.

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