



READ NEXT: GUILTY VERDICT FOR CLIMATE ACTIVIST WHO...

SUBSCRIBE



NEWSLETTERS

ARTFORUM

SUBSCRIBE



NEWS DIARY VIDEO CRITICS' PICKS REVIEWS COLUMNS FEATURES CURRENT ISSUE ARCHIVE

artguide 艺术论坛



REVIEWS NEW YORK

“Rooms With A View”

Longwood Art Gallery @ Hostos

By Jean Fisher

“Rooms with a View,” curated by Fred Wilson and designed by Curt Belshe and Lise Prown, was a richly textured, seriocomic interrogation of the cultural and esthetic codes of three types of stereotypical museum spaces, installed, with fine irony, in the old P.S. 39 building in the Bronx. The views in question were those of the turn-of-the-century Salon, the Modernist “white box,” and the ethnographic museum, addressing “the struggle between culture, content, and the context of art.” What is particularly to the point is that in cross-referencing from one space to another, a politicized ethnographic incision was performed on our own cultural assumptions (an operation that we usually reserve for others under the fiction of neutral scholarship), providing an important distance from which to engage in a little self-reflection.

The turn-of-the-century Salon: a softly lit, comfortable room, lined and draped with regal plum velvet cord, furnished with period decor, and provided with the genteel



Claes Oldenburg, *A Bottle of Notes--Proposal for a Large-Scale Project in Middlesbrough, England*, by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, 1988, colored pencil on paper, 25 x 21 1/2".

MARCH 1988

VOL. 26, NO. 7

ARCHIVE

ADVERTISEMENT

You have 2 articles remaining this month. **Subscribe** for access to five decades of articles from our magazine archives. If already a subscriber, please **Verify**.

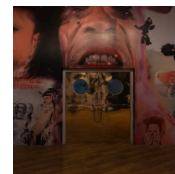
power and homogenize the world under the grand narratives of Western civilization.

The painting that legitimizes its status as painting through reference to an authorized version of the past is intrinsic to the concept of the Salon. Several works here manipulate this notion: Larry List's *Diamond Cuts Diamond*, 1986, a pictorial rearrangement of David's heroic equestrian portrait of Napoleon; Alexander Kosolapov's Baroque pastiche *Manifesto*, 1987, depicting the head of Lenin and a group of cherubs perusing the text amid broken columns; Peggie Yunque's *Amazon*, 1986, a Renaissance portrait of a girl superimposed on an armored male torso. The quotation as relic or ruin surfaces less obliquely in Barton Lidice Benes' *Miscellania*, 1987, a picture mount with ornate medallion windows presenting a collection of absurd "memorabilia" ("jelly beans from the desk of Ronald Reagan, 1984"; "fossilized feces 40 million years old"), questioning the value and legitimacy we give to museum artifacts, and bearing upon the problem of ethnography.

The museum as a repository of cultural fictions is satirically presented by the "Ethnographic Museum," with its scholarly display techniques: cabinets containing miscellaneous artifacts by persons unnamed; a natural history diorama ("old Jamaica Bay, Queens, New York, circa early 1900's"); and an anthropological reconstruction of a culture that turns out to be ours—more or less. We are in a kind of back-to-the-future, where the archeologist fabricates his own objects from the rubble of the past, or whatever shards he can fit together, as in the unattributed *Totem*.

If Eva Stettner's *Floating Fragments* appear as illegible in the "Ethnographic Museum," they become

MOST READ



NEWS

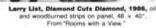
NONA FAUSTINE (1977–2025)



BEST OF 2024

TOP TEN

—*Jean Fisher*



B.C.A. LONGWOOD ARTS GALLERY
 "Rooms with a View," curated by Fred Wilson and designed by Curt Belshe and Lise Prown, was a richly textured, seriocomic interrogation of the cultural and esthetic codes of three types of stereotypical museum spaces, installed, with fine irony, in the old P.S. 39 building in the Bronx. The views in question were those of the turn-of-the-century Salon.

At a time in the post-Modern discourse when the political and the esthetic are all but separate, the window installation *Let the Record Show...* by ACT-UP (the

Taking advantage of its 24-hour-a-day accessibility and its prominent location—the window of a cultural institution on one of SoHo's busiest streets—its tactic was to draw in and then to educate a broad cross-section of people. Centered in the upper, arched part of the window

continuously ran AIDS facts and statistics from 1981 to the present. At street level the window was divided into six narrow, open cubicles, each of which featured a cutout of a photosilkscreened head shot

ANTHONY MARCH 1998 137

Register to receive our full menu of newsletters—*From the Archive, Must See, Video, In Print, Dispatch, and ArtforumEDU*—as well as special offers from Artforum.

