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ARTS

Gallery as Museum, Art Dealer as Curator

By **DOROTHY SPEARS** OCT. 26, 2012

THE British artist Antony Gormley explores aspects of the human body through sculptures intended to electrify their surroundings.

The Turkish artist Kutlug Ataman addresses misconceptions that inevitably arise when the English-speaking world tries to export its culture through multichannel videos projected on walls. The Norwegian artist Bjarne Melgaard offers an immersive multimedia riff on his new novel.

Artists exhibiting today come from all over, and their works can take a mind-boggling variety of forms. Many are discovered at international biennials and art fairs, and because these installations have become increasingly ambitious in scale and production, commercial dealers have been scrambling to make space to show them.

Linda Blumberg, executive director of the Art Dealers Association of America, attributed a spate of gallery renovations and expansions over the last few years to a growing need among artists for larger spaces. “All kinds of sculpture relates to the architecture,” she said in a recent interview. “There’s a great deal of film and video. The work has gotten very large, and galleries are responding to that.”

With so many contemporary artists producing work that is either monumental or site-specific, dealers this season are assuming a role once deemed the exclusive right of museums, that of providing spectacular destinations for viewing art.

This weekend, for example, Sean Kelly is scheduled to unveil a 22,000-square-foot gallery designed by the architect Toshiko Mori with Mr. Gormley's exhibit "Bodyspace." Bisecting the main space of the gallery, a single sculpture, "Signal," presents what the artist has called "a drawing in sculpture," made of 6-millimeter mild steel line.

The work calls to mind the digitized contours of a semiabstract figure lying face up and refers metaphorically to "connective structures of electricity," according to an artist's statement.

Another sculpture, "Shore II," juxtaposing a 9.3-ton iron mass with the blocky shape of a crouched human form, evokes even more directly the body's relationship to architecture.

Asked how the scale and size of Mr. Kelly's new space influenced the work he made for the exhibition, Mr. Gormley replied in an e-mail, "The repeated thick columns give a sense of the stacked weight of the building and a rhythm to the length of the gallery. Through mass and line I want the two objects to act as catalysts for us to experience our bodies in this robust environment in a new way." ("**Bodyspace**" will be on view at the Sean Kelly Gallery, 475 10th Avenue, New York, through Dec. 22.)

Video art tends to find a fertile match in state-of-the-art architecture, as visitors to Sperone Westwater's two-year-old building, designed by Norman Foster, may find when Mr. Ataman opens his first solo exhibit with the gallery on Nov. 1.

Titled "Mesopotamian Dramaturgies," the show includes four video works and a suite of 11 photographs exploring what can be lost in translation as English-speaking culture is distributed around the world.

"It's basically pointing at the challenges of communication, and questioning whether or not true communication can really exist," Mr. Ataman said in a recent phone interview.

With the exception of a multichannel projection, "Mayhem" (2011), all of the works in the show were shot in eastern Turkey, at the northern tip of Mesopotamia, where Mr. Ataman said his family came from and where he owns land. "Journey to the Moon" (2009), for example, presents a faux

documentary about a trip to the moon by inhabitants of a remote Turkish village in 1957. Its installation in the gallery's moving room, or elevator, feels appropriate, Mr. Ataman said, because "people are getting into a very similar kind of structure to go to the moon." ("**Mesopotamian Dramaturgies**" will be on view at the Sperone Westwater gallery, 257 Bowery, New York, through Dec. 22.)

Farther uptown, an exhibit titled "A New Novel by Bjarne Melgaard" will open on Nov. 9 in a town house converted into a gallery three years ago by the dealers Amalia Dayan and Daniella Luxembourg. There, a succession of immersive rooms will present new paintings, drawings, wallpaper, dolls and mises en scène, some of which have been created in collaboration with Lazaro Hernandez and Jack McCollough of the women's wear brand Proenza Schouler, and a special effects designer from the West Coast.

The exhibit coincides with the release of "A New Novel," by Mr. Melgaard, published by H. Aschehoug & Company in Norway. While ascending from the basement to the top floor, viewers will encounter objects that track — and depart from — the novel's colorful and sometimes bleak narrative. ("**A New Novel by Bjarne Melgaard**" will be on view at Luxembourg & Dayan, 64 East 77th Street, New York, through Dec. 22).

Another much-anticipated exhibit by the late Swiss artist Dieter Roth, known for his innovative use of chocolate as an artistic medium, will inaugurate Hauser & Wirth's second Manhattan gallery on Jan. 22. The show was co-organized by Mr. Roth's son Björn, who collaborated with the senior Mr. Roth toward the end of his life (Dieter died in 1998).

It will include installations never before exhibited in the United States, as well as a reconstruction of one of Mr. Roth's bars, which will remain on permanent view at the new 23,000-square-foot gallery in the former Roxy roller-skating rink and discothèque, overhauled by the architect Annabelle Selldorf. (**Dieter Roth** will continue at Hauser & Wirth, 511 West 18th Street, New York, until sometime in April).

The sculptures of the 20th-century Minimalist masters Donald Judd and Dan Flavin generally look best in spare, elegiac spaces, and David Zwirner's

new 30,000-square-foot building, also designed by Ms. Selldorf, will have plenty of room. Opening in February, it will be LEED certified (for the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program), according to a gallery representative. For exact dates for “**Donald Judd and Dan Flavin**,” see the Web site for Zwirner, on 537 West 20th Street.

Yet another Manhattan show worthy of mention for its relation to a gallery’s earthly footprint, if not to its architecture proper, is Maya Lin’s “Rivers and Mountains,” opening at Pace on March 8. Titled after a poem by John Ashbery, the show will feature works in recycled silver, stainless steel and marble, some of which will directly reference the city’s natural history, including the original topography of 57th Street.

Referring to a stream system that used to feed all of Midtown Manhattan, for example, Ms. Lin said she was toying with making a wall-relief approximating the shape of the river landscape in stainless steel pins. A three-dimensional wire piece that visitors will be invited to walk under may also reference three former hills. “The show will be very focused on what was once literally right below our feet,” she said. (“**Maya Lin: Rivers and Mountains**,” Pace, 32 East 57th Street, through April 20.)

In London this fall, interplays between art and architecture have taken more traditional tack in the famous and elegant setting of Mayfair.

Michael Werner, who already oversees galleries in Germany and Manhattan, annexed a two-story space in a Georgian town house with recent paintings by Peter Doig of Scotland.

Mr. Zwirner, who is based in New York, opened with “Allo!” an exhibit of new paintings by the Belgian provocateur Luc Tuymans, based on the Somerset Maugham novel “The Moon and Sixpence,” also in a Georgian town house. (The art world’s architect du jour, Ms. Selldorf, redesigned both spaces.)

At a newly opened space in Burlington Gardens, Pace pairs gray and black paintings by the mid-20th century Modernist Mark Rothko with photographs by the contemporary Japanese photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto, in a moody show, titled “Dark Paintings and Seascapes.” (“**Peter Doig: New Paintings**”

remains on view at Michael Werner, 22 Upper Brook Street, London, through Dec. 22 . **“Allo!”** at David Zwirner, 24 Grafton Street, London, runs through Nov. 17. **“Dark Paintings and Seascapes”** at Pace, 6 Burlington Gardens, London, continues through Nov. 17.)

If the explosion of high-end galleries in well-heeled London speaks to increased market share and the relative ease of moving product between Asia, Europe, America and the Middle East, the visual art community in Los Angeles also seems to be thriving, for entirely different reasons. Over the last half-century, a closely knit network of artists, many of whom attended local universities where they later taught, have carved out a vibrant niche in the shadow of what is predominantly considered a movie town.

The installation artist Mike Kelley, whose work parodied both the reigning authority of macho Minimalism and the sentimentality of, say, Hallmark cards, was in many ways a product of this unique scene. And his room-size installation, “Deodorized Central Mass With Satellites,” opening on Nov. 2 at the Perry Rubenstein Gallery in Hollywood, addresses these themes, while promising an unruly engagement for the senses in a recently opened space designed by wHY Architecture, which is based in Los Angeles.

A reiteration of a 1991 work originally shown in Germany, the installation juxtaposes masses of sewn-together stuffed animals suspended from the gallery’s ceiling with geometric wall reliefs. The stuffed animals are grouped more or less by color — a black and white mass, for example, is composed of panda bears. A yellow one combines lions and tigers. Wall reliefs are rigged to emit a chemical pine scent. (**“Deodorized Central Mass With Satellites”** will be on view at Perry Rubenstein, 1215 N. Highland Avenue, Los Angeles, through Dec. 15.)

One of this season’s more intriguing exhibits — new large-scale paintings by Laura Owens, presented in a combination studio and exhibition warehouse — does not yet have an exact opening date. The exhibit is the latest venture of the insouciant dealer Gavin Brown, who is based in New York. Located in what was once a storage space for, among other things, Liberace’s pianos, it will be open to the public, and the paintings Ms. Owens makes there will probably be

for sale.

Still, viewers expecting slick private viewing rooms, or a lot of stiff suits, might be in for a surprise. The space will keep its barrel-vaulted ceiling, and although some walls will be whitewashed. “Some of them also won’t,” Ms. Owens said, adding that in addition to showing her paintings, she hopes to hold a bookmaking workshop and film screenings.

Citing a tradition of artists inviting visitors to their studios to see new work, Mr. Brown said, in an interview, “Laura plans to act as host of the space to her friends and peers, and anyone else.”

(“Laura Owens: Mission Road,” at 356 South Mission Road, Los Angeles, is expected to remain open for about six months.)

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