

Albright-Knox Art Gallery

NEWS RELEASE

1285 Elmwood Avenue

Buffalo, New York 14222

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ABOUT THE COMMISSIONER

Michael Auping, chief curator of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, since 1984, was born in Portland, Oregon and raised in southern California. He received a master's degree in art history from California State University, Long Beach, in 1975, and began his museum career as managing editor of the Journal of the Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art. In 1977, he became associate curator of the University Art Museum, Berkeley, California, where he organized exhibitions of the work of Richard Serra, Ed Kienholz and Susan Rothenberg, among others. Auping became curator of twentieth-century art at the Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida, in 1980, and originated exhibitions on Francesco Clemente, John Chamberlain and Marcel Duchamp. Since becoming chief curator at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Auping has organized a number of exhibitions including Abstract Expressionism: The Critical Developments (1987), and Abstraction • Geometry. Painting: Selected Geometric Abstract Painting in America Since 1945 (1989), both of which were accompanied by major catalogues co-published with Harry N. Abrams, Inc., and Hamish Fulton: Selected Walks 1969-1989 (1990), commemorated by a limited-edition artist's book.

COMMISSIONER'S STATEMENT

Every curator involved with contemporary art has a responsibility to present the art of his or her time and indeed, feels a personal mission to address the art of their own generation. To my mind, and that of many of my colleagues, Jenny Holzer's cool sensitivity, her assimilation of contemporary material and technology and her stern and unabashed honesty in expressing what she sees around her represents this moment in a unique and poignant way.

It has been my very good fortune to collaborate with Jenny Holzer on this exhibition, and through her become a small part of the distinguished history of the Venice Biennale. On behalf of Ms. Holzer and myself, I would like to thank the Federal Advisory Committee on International Exhibitions for their confidence in the proposal we submitted over eighteen months ago. To my knowledge, this is the first site-specific project to take place in the United States Pavilion. Clearly, Ms. Holzer's public project and profound transformation of the pavilion constitute one of the more ambitious and complex projects ever undertaken at the Venice Biennale. It is a vigorous moment for American art, and a time at which we can celebrate an artist who is, relatively speaking, at the beginning of what has been an already remarkable career.

Michael Auping, Chief Curator
Albright-Knox Art Gallery

Commissioner, United States Pavilion

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FACT SHEET

TITLE

Jenny Holzer: The Venice Installation

PLACE

United States Pavilion
The 44th Venice Biennale, Italy

DATES

May 23-25, 1990 Press
May 27 - September 30, 1990 Public

ORGANIZED BY

Michael G. Auping, chief curator
Albright-Knox Art Gallery

EXHIBITION

Jenny Holzer: The Venice Installation is comprised of a series of installations prepared specifically for Venice and the international context of the Biennale. The core of the exhibition is a series of four room-sized environments within the U.S. Pavilion. These chambers are being darkened to enhance the contrasting properties of stone and light. Two of the rooms contain Italian stonework benches and Italian marble tile floors that are inscribed with Holzer texts. The other two chambers include specially designed Italian marble tile floors as well as a series of light-emitting diode (LED) boards. One gallery contains 21 three-color horizontal LED signs which are translated into English, Italian, French, German and Spanish. According to Commissioner Auping, "Over the years, Holzer has become more focused on interior installations that are not only powerful in their psycho-social content but also very moving in terms of their sheer visual and physical effect on the viewer."

During the Biennale, all of Venice will be aware of Jenny Holzer; her texts are being presented in a variety of media in public spaces, such as the Marco Polo airport and Santa Lucia railway station; the citizens of Venice will have the opportunity to see Holzer's messages in their homes via television; and vendors along the Grand Canal will sell Holzer t-shirts, hats and other "memorabilia."

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

This is the first one-woman exhibition in the U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Biennale.

PUBLICATIONS

A poster and artist's booklet have been prepared specifically for the opening of the Biennale. The catalogue, which will be available in the fall of 1990, will include color plates of The Venice Installation, an essay by U.S. Commissioner Michael Auping, and a selection of Holzer's messages.

FUNDING

The official U.S. representation at The 44th Venice Biennale is made possible, in part, through support from the Fund for U.S. Artists at International Festivals and Exhibitions, a partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts, the United States Information Agency, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Pew Charitable Trusts, with administrative support from Arts International.

The Federal Advisory Committee on International Exhibitions provided curatorial guidance to the Fund Partners in selecting the Commissioner of the U.S. Pavilion and the artist representing the United States. The official U.S. exhibition at The 44th Venice Biennale is managed by the Arts America Office of the U.S. Information Agency, in cooperation with the U.S. Embassy, Rome; the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; and the Museum Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, DC.

Fact Sheet, cont.

ITINERARY

United States Pavilion
The 44th Venice Biennale, Italy
May 27 - September 30, 1990

Städtische Kunsthalle
Dusseldorf, West Germany
November 30, 1990 - January 6, 1991

Louisiana Museum
Humlebaek, Denmark
February 1 - March 17, 1991

Albright-Knox Art Gallery
Buffalo, New York
July 15 - September 1, 1991

Walker Art Center
Minneapolis, Minnesota
September 20 - November 20, 1991

For further information, contact the Public Relations Office at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, 1285 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14222 (716) 882-8700. Press contact in Venice from May 19 through May 27 is Cheryl Orlick, Hotel Londra Palace, telephone (041) 5200533 or at the United States Pavilion on press days.