

Your black horizon Art Pavilion
Olafur Eliasson and David Adjaye
Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary

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When I look back to remind myself what first gave me the idea to ask Olafur Eliasson and David Adjaye to create *Your black horizon / Art Pavilion* as a joint commission, I am comforted to see the principles that guided me then as still very relevant today. The fascination with *Your black horizon / Art Pavilion* never ends for me as I find it stimulates my imagination, layer upon layer, with different experiences. By placing it in different locations, I realize that I also become a protagonist in this commission, and I derive so much pleasure from the difficult challenge of finding the perfect landscape that somehow adds value to the work and reciprocally receives something valuable from it in return.

On Lopud, near the historic city of Dubrovnik, I have been involved in numerous conservation as well as contemporary art projects. Much in need of revitalization, this island has become the location of a series of pilot projects that could perform an important role in the process, the pavilion project being one of them. The T-B A21 pavilions are intended as spaces searching for new models of artistic and architectural engagement with specific sites, which involves partnerships with existing local contemporary art NGOs or ICAs. In the Dubrovnik area, I am very happy to have developed over the years a very successful working relationship with Slaven Tolj who has been working tirelessly to bring contemporary culture within the historic fabric of this jewel in the Adriatic. His efforts to revitalize the Lazareti, the renaissance quarantine of Dubrovnik, with multi-disciplinary projects are another reason we are proud and grateful to have him as our partner for this particular pavilion project, also hosting our symposium “Patronage of Space”.

It is important to us at T-B A21 to promote the importance and value of contemporary art projects in “remote” environments — places not as easily accessible as regional centers, communities with sparse and unlikely exposure to contemporary art. But we are just as committed to generating a stimulating ripple effect rather than a destructive shock-wave. We all witness an ongoing and ubiquitous process of shifting and transforming identities. In a world driven by market economy, the complexity and fragility of a local social and cultural fabric is quickly

forgotten. How do we avoid patronizing, colonizing and globalizing features ourselves? How do we ensure a mutually beneficial integration of the project and the site? Any effort to go beyond the “dropping of a building into the lap” of a community should include an attempt to address and answer those questions, which is what I am trying to do through a series of talks, symposia and the simple experience of starting this project on Lopud and sensitively reading the “ripple effect” that it has on the local community of the island.

Most importantly, this project celebrates impermanence, which is a driving force in my decision-making process. I do not want to allow something that is inherently private and fluid to freeze into a structure that can only be institutionalized and/or nationalized. When this happens to a collection, a certain chill sets in that never existed before and it begins to distance itself from the intimate realm of the private which should remain its essence. Something very important is lost in that process as one can experience visiting the old masters of the Frick museum or the contemporary positions at the Flick collection. Regardless of the mere scale, the very spirit of what was once a passionate vision becomes rigid and lifeless.

Beautifully housed in Madrid’s Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, which has become one of Spain’s most visited museums, my own family’s art legacy is something I am extremely proud of, but I would prefer to create a very different momentum with mine. It is my hope that in the future the legacy of my collection and commissioning work, wherever it travels to, will continue to form part of a lively art community, rather than embellish a monument in my memory! This is my exit strategy! Without presuming that I am in a position to give advice, I dearly encourage all those who are considering becoming collectors to think very hard about what they really want out of their relationship with art. Today, straightforward collecting in the old-fashioned sense remains very seductive for a number of reasons, but I find myself exploring alternative relationships with art, more altruistic in essence than creating an inventory of possessions.

Maybe finding new ways of sharing art and providing means to facilitate projects that otherwise would never see the light of day is the task for the private sector to undertake in the art world as it is presently evolving. Museums today allocate more and more space and resources to increasing their revenue streams. It seems that they have distanced themselves from their role as commissioners of new work and their responsibility to challenge instead of entertaining their audiences, focusing their programs on safe and profitable blockbuster exhibitions dictated by a strong marketing strategy. Maintaining a vibrant art subculture and supporting innovation has been falling off their radar screen for some time now. In my mind, on the other hand, that remains clearly the most exciting relationship one can have with art — a close second being watching one’s Picasso’s value leap from seven to eight or nine digit figures...

The intrinsically private altruistic discourse with art is most compelling, maybe more because of the complexities and risks involved than despite them. Through this approach, we can allow and encourage our own creativity as collectors and philanthropists to evolve. Hopefully, generosity overcomes our egos, creating a comforting and stimulating environment for artists to work and develop their practice, apart from the commercialization of the art world. Achieving this through site-specific projects that benefit local communities on a larger scale is a true challenge. If artists, curators, architects, producers as well as philanthropic donors could make such projects possible, united by their commitment to share their participation in the creative process, with an altruistic purpose for the common good and prosperity of the community, would this not benefit the art world as much as it does the local communities? Could it not help open a dialog between the practitioners of sustainable development and those of the contemporary art movement? To me, it seems needed just as much as the shift from market-driven to project-driven paradigm in the art world itself. I hope that the pavilion project and the thought process it triggers can bring these changes a small step closer to the realm of possible.

Acknowledgements

There are so many people who have contributed to this project starting of course with David Adjaye and Olafur Eliasson who worked under great time pressure on this collaboration. I was struggling to secure a valid and appropriate location for it just one month before the opening of the 51st Venice Biennial and they really delivered a masterwork to the island of San Lazzaro degli Armeni. For letting us have this superb location, I still owe thanks to Padre Elia who gave us his blessing. On Lopud, I have to thank the local community for being the first to give us their support, followed by the Mayor of Dubrovnik, Mrs. Dubravka Šuica. I am especially grateful to the Minister of Culture of Croatia, Mr. Božo Biškupić, and particularly to the Assistant Minister, Mrs. Branka Šulc, for having accorded this project official patronage of the Ministry of Culture.

On the T-B A21 front, we have a wonderful team that consists of Daniela Zyman, the chief curator, Philipp Krummel, our chief architect, Eva Ebersberger, Barbara Horvath, Alexandra Henning, Gabrielle Cram, Samaela Bilic-Eric, Saša Cvijetić, Evelyn Wysoudil, Sandra Pfeifer, Elisabeth Mareschal, and Stefan Breuer, all of whom worked really hard to bring this project to Croatia, as did our ARCUS partners, Vesna Čelebić, Igor Borić and Katarina Trojić and the Lopud production team, Saša Lazić, Dario Crnić and Miroslav Tomić. They moved mountains! I have to mention Michel Cuculić and Dobrila Carić for the good food and hospitality, which kept us all going through the installation! The Berlinger construction team and all the local workmen, the wall builders who helped pull the landscaping together, the horticulturalist, Mr. Mato Kortizija, who planted all the cacti, all of whom contributed to the site, I am extremely grateful to. The landscape is an important part of this project.

I am also very grateful to Slaven Tolj for being our partner in Dubrovnik and integrating this pavilion project into his activities for the next few months and helping us revitalize much of the creative spirit on the

island of Lopud as well as hosting the symposium “Patronage of Space” in his headquarters at the Lazareti in Dubrovnik. I am grateful to Crist Inman from Cornell University for all his support and advice as well as to the Cornell students that are working on the internship program that we have agreed upon. And Ranko Vučinić, my thanks go to you for masterminding the press in Croatia.

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Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Pavilions:
Home to Contemporary Statements

Speakers

David Adjaye Architect, Adjaye/Associates, London

Olafur Eliasson Artist, Berlin

Jude Kelly Artistic Director, South Bank Centre,
London

Hans Ulrich Obrist Co-director of Exhibitions and Pro-
grammes and Director of International
Projects, Serpentine Gallery, London

Andreas Ruby Architecture critic and theorist, Berlin

Francesca von Habsburg Chairman, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art
Contemporary, Vienna

Moderated by

Daniel Birnbaum Director and Professor, Städelschule
Art Academy and Portikus Gallery,
Frankfurt am Main

Island of San Lazzaro degli Armeni, Venice, 9 September 2006

Daniel Birnbaum Welcome, everybody. I would like to start with a very general question to the panelists to see what they find interesting about pavilions. Maybe Jude could say a little bit about what pavilions mean. I know you have a special story about your own institution and what pavilions have meant to the South Bank.

Jude Kelly Some people will be very familiar with the South Bank, and some people won't. I am responsible curatorially for twenty-three acres, if you think of yourself as being a curator of soil and land. After the Second World War, this place was the site for the Festival of Britain, and it was made up almost entirely of pavilions. And the pavilions in a sense were to suggest to people that everything was up for change, everything was up for debate. There had been so many gorgeous palaces bombed to smithereens during the war. Was it buildings that we needed to honor, or was it the imagination? I believe that cultural palaces need to continually dissolve because they're only containers, and actually it's the ideas inside, bursting forward, that are most relevant. There's something about temporary pavilions that can be joyful and interesting, and I think this is something you should pursue.

Daniel Birnbaum Thank you. Pavilions can be great tools to trigger new developments, new institutional models, new starts. David, maybe you'd like to say a few words about what this commission meant for you, why you found it interesting and how you arrived at your own result?

David Adjaye Traditionally, pavilions have been used in landscapes. In the twentieth century, there was a precedent of pavilions being used to promote lots of things, including nations. What was interesting for me about Francesca's invitation to Olafur and me to work together to make a pavilion was the idea of being able to work as an architect in a situation where the notion of function was put aside. It was exciting because it was not the idea of a pavilion as a folly, but the idea of a pavilion as a complete artwork which I found fascinating. As an architect, one is working always with briefs and programs and documentation and reg-

ulations and systems. In a way, here I was still working with systems, but also with the added value of a relational discussion with an artist.

Daniel Birnbaum Olafur, was it the first time that you have been involved in a project in which you were able to play a major role in deciding what the space for your work would look like? Normally if you put an art piece in a museum or a gallery, you have to just work with the space that is there, but this time the way the space was going to look was dependent on you and your discussions with David.

Olafur Eliasson I had already been talking for a while with Francesca about the idea of a piece for which we would collect the light in a certain spot and try to place it inside a certain environment. I'd thrown that at Francesca a few times, and then she came back and told me that she had an architect who would be the right person to build a frame of reference for my project. I then got together with David, and we talked about how to do it, and actually David added a few elements to my piece, and I think I added a few elements to his ideas for the pavilion. And so altogether it was in a sense an overlapping dialog. Francesca started out talking to me, overlapping with me; I overlapped with David; David overlapped with me and went back and overlapped with Francesca. So the process was very collaborative in nature, not static. We had a lot of discussions about the flexibility of the pavilion as a dismantlable system that could be moved from one place to another, and even though we didn't come up with an exact solution, it seemed quite attractive at that time.

Daniel Birnbaum It may have to do with the fact that many artists work almost architecturally. With someone like yourself I have the feeling that sometimes your work verges on architecture, but we can leave that for later. Hans Ulrich is a curator who has worked in both fields and has written about and curated and interviewed lots of key protagonists within both architecture and art. He recently started to work for an institution, the Serpentine in London, which has become very well known for its pavilions. Hans, what is your take on this?

Hans Ulrich Obrist I actually agree with Olafur that pavilions very often offer the greatest possibility to bring art and architecture together. I spoke with Rem Koolhaas and Cecil Balmond, together with Julia Peyton-Jones, the Serpentine's director, about doing this year's pavilion project, which Julia has been realizing since the beginning of the new millennium. We discussed with Rem previous examples, and Rem mentioned Claude Parent, someone I have interviewed a lot, and his incredible collaborations with Yves Klein. I think that's a very interesting model to remember, the Yves Klein *Fire Pavilion*¹, which could not have happened without Parent helping Klein as an architect, and the other way round. It is a huge inspiration for younger architects working now. Another aspect of pavilions, which is very fascinating, is the idea of their limited life span, something the late Cedric Price always talked about. He was applying this idea to buildings and also to books, insisting that they should have a limited life span. In this sense, the pavilion allows a form of experimentation, which perhaps a permanent building doesn't. The Koolhaas and Balmond pavilion is a spectacular ovoid inflatable canopy, floating like a balloon above the ground. The content and form are inseparable in the sense that the architecture is a content machine for twenty-four-hour interview marathons. As Koolhaas said, "We are proposing a space that facilitates the inclusion of individuals in communal dialogs and shared experience".

I think it's interesting, the extent to which pavilions have actually entered architectural history. They are not maquettes, but something to be experienced on a one-to-one scale. In this sense the interest in pavilions is not new, but there have been an incredible series of models, of temporary one-to-one realities.

Daniel Birnbaum Some of them stand for quite a while though, as we know in Venice. Andreas, I believe you would like to say something about the relationship between landscape and these architectural structures.

Andreas Ruby If you understand what led Francesca von Habsburg to undertake this project, you will see that it is an initiative to provide an



Rem Koolhaas, Serpentine Gallery Pavilion
London, 2006



Yves Klein, Fire Column and Fire Wall installed in the garden of Mies van der Rohe's Lange House in Krefeld, Germany in a still from the 1961 color, silent film *Monochrome and Fire*.

alternative to the museum as the generic space for the experience of art. She wants to go beyond the museum and create a more immediate encounter between you, the viewer, and the work. Given these ambitions, the pavilion is a very interesting choice, precisely because it is not really a house. If I am not mistaken, its etymological origin is the word *papillon*, French for butterfly, and if we think about the life cycle of the butterfly, we remember that at some point it was not a butterfly but a cocoon. For me, architecture is the cocoon, and the pavilion helps to transgress this very clear boundary between the little animal inside the cocoon and the world outside. This dialectic harbors a great potential for a project that aims to create different modes of relationship between art and the viewer than the museum or other established art exhibition setups do.

However, at the same time it is very clear that the pavilion can also become a very fixed image. We have images of what a pavilion looks like in our head, which can be quite constraining. I believe that the potential of this project lies in the fact that it is not just one pavilion but many. I wonder how it is possible that the pavilion could also transform its own concept, its materiality, contradicting the clichés that we bring to it, so that the notion of a pavilion is transformed as radically as the butterfly is from the cocoon. I understand from Francesca’s concept that the landscape is another important issue, to go to places that are not within our established realm of experience, but that are a little distant or, I hope, uncanny. Maybe then the art pavilion becomes the generator of an exploration, of something that we wouldn’t have explored without it. For me this is probably the most important aspect of this project: its capacity to enact hidden or unknown conditions, thanks to this unlikely encounter of art and architecture.

Daniel Birnbaum So the question is: what do these thoughts about pavilions, their strengths and many possibilities, mean for an institution of contemporary art today? An institution that produces, an institution that collects, an institution that of course makes shows. We have a prototype here, a first, very successful example of a pavilion. What will it mean if this is to happen in many different places? Francesca, I come now to you, to ask you about the bigger picture. In your text about the inspiration for the art pavilion project you write of “a constellation of stand-alone art spaces dispersed across the world”. So would that mean numerous different pavilions, with many different takes on what architecture could be, probably by different architects, hosting shows by many different artists?

Francesca von Habsburg I founded Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary in 2002, at a very exciting time in the art world, which I was seduced by, and I went about art fairs shopping like a lot of people do today. I realized in time that that wasn’t in fact very satisfying, and while I took the opportunity to develop friendships and professional relationships with a number of artists that I greatly admire, like Olafur,

I also discovered that my talent and what I really wanted to achieve in my life was to create a production of artworks based on commissions and a direct relationship with artists. These represent a large amount of work, it is very involving, engaging and exciting, and the result is incredibly impressive. This collaboration here on the island of San Lazzaro is an example of that. It is not simply the pilot project for a broader pavilion project. It was my learning curve, and taught me how to combine the talent of both an artist and an architect.

So, as a collector, a philanthropic producer of projects, I find myself building up a collection of projects, not of framed paintings, and the obvious questions arise: what’s next, what is the museum that’s going to contain this, how am I going to handle this? I realize that what I must do is work on these art commissions and at the same time address the future. I think that the traditional layout of the museum, which I’m familiar with from the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid and a number of other museums that I visit on a regular basis, this room-to-room encyclopedic approach to exhibiting, is not at all suited to the type of artworks that I am interested in. Again, that produced another challenge, and I’m asking myself a great deal of questions, integrating personal passions such as landscape, view, the environment that we live in, whether it be urban or the middle of Patagonia, or here by the side of the lagoon in Venice. Incorporating the light, the place, the sounds, the water, you enter the pavilion but can still hear the water lapping against the façade of the island. I like integrating all of these elements into one piece.

Jude Kelly I would like to talk for a moment about the impact, the effect that the pavilion has on the other participant, the viewer, the audience, the person who walks through it. I suppose it depends how far you can stretch the word *pavilion*. Is it necessary to keep it within an architectural framework? I was thinking about the elephant that came to London recently, which one and a half million people turned up to follow within a day and a half with no publicity. It was what could be described as a walking pavilion, in the sense that it renegotiated city space; it took up a vast, energetic zone for itself; and it kept

forcing people to make new choices, relationship choices about strangers, about how they would navigate, about what they felt about this elephant and the little girl and everything that went with it. I don’t know if anyone here is familiar with what I am talking about, but in some respects it was a huge piece of living art walking about. When I watch people at fairgrounds and circuses and all kinds of temporary spaces, there’s something about the energy and risk-taking of the maker—the artist, the constructor, the group of people who made it temporary, and therefore have that fear about whether it will work—that somehow allows the audience to enjoy that fear and that risk. That is such a challenge for arts institutions. Arts institutions are very risk-averse, and their spaces solidify into ruled spaces, ruled not just by Health & Safety but also by their mental idea of how you “do” art, and that doesn’t help the audience to continually rethink who they are, which of course it is supposed to do.

Daniel Birnbaum I was thinking about the issue of collecting and in what way this model of smaller buildings, pavilions across the globe, can help. What are the most interesting options right now, what would you say people are struggling with, and what would be your suggestions?

Olafur Eliasson For me as an artist it is obviously exciting to be involved with someone who is engaged in collecting, on the one hand, but who is also interested in the responsibilities in terms of what form this collecting actually takes, on the other hand. By this I mean the dialog with the person collecting, a dialog about the consequences for this artwork, this project, in the future. Of course a museum, or in the case of a classical institutional system such as the Pinault Collection here in Venice, is duplicating a more traditional format. As an artist, I obviously have an interest in trying to challenge the future life of the projects that I do, and I would like to see the works being integrated. Somehow I am willing to risk not being entirely certain whether the work will live on for another five, ten, or even a hundred years, just to have a good dialog for one moment, as we have here in Venice.

Whether this is successful or not is up for discussion of course, but I would prefer at least to be part of that dialog. This is why I am very happy about the dialog with Francesca. The issue here is that I as an artist am trying to come across with some sort of message. The question is, to whom am I handing over the responsibility for this message? There is the whole market, the gallerists who take the idea and sell it, and it then goes into an institution that doesn’t really own it because it’s on loan from someone who might then sell it again later. It’s very convoluted. It is important to talk about not only this system, or the structure around it, but also what happens to the message as it’s being carried through these various systems.

Francesca von Habsburg I think collecting is about taking risks, it’s about pushing the margin a little further, not just finding another thing to collect because art is already “done”. The pavilion offers you unknown conditions because you are going to place it in a location that is not permanent. You are not promising anything in the long run; it’s there as long as it is really great. That dialog really needs to be challenging; we need to take risks and be ready to make mistakes. I think the advantage that I possibly have as a patron is that I am working under my own guidance. As Olafur said, “Damn it, make mistakes, and don’t be so afraid of making them!”

Daniel Birnbaum Just to be clear, and for us all to understand, in what way will this pavilion project—say you had ten or even twenty-five of them—help you as a collector? It seems to me that it’s much more about display, and possibly production, but in the end you will need some place to keep all the things. Recently an answer to that big issue was built in the form of the Schaulager in Basel², which I think many people in the audience will know of, a new kind of institution that is really about collecting and storage facilities of the highest level. How will the pavilion structure help you as a collector?

Francesca von Habsburg The Schaulager is indeed a great idea. It was the first time someone really rethought the museum concept in



Herzog & de Meuron, Schaulager
Münchenstein/Basel, 2003

Collection of Emanuel Hoffmann-Foundation,
View of storage room

terms of contemporary art today. The Hoffmann family already had a huge collection whose presentation needed to be addressed, and somebody actually bothered to figure out a new way to do that. In my case I'm doing both at the same time, a simultaneous search for the commissions and their ultimate vehicle.

I like the idea of satellite pavilions and an international program of rotation since one can share the broader resources and curatorial expertise with communities that would not otherwise have that type of exposure. It can provide a shortcut to creating independent institutes of contemporary art, by example and not by preaching. So it's about sharing and adding value to certain places and communities that otherwise wouldn't have that exposure.

Andreas Ruby But I'm wondering, is it really about collecting and the identity of the collector? Because for me, if I had not known about this context, I wouldn't have thought about the collector for a second. But I would have thought about this pavilion, this art object on an island that I wouldn't otherwise have gone to. For me the crucial asset of this strategy is to incite a displacement, to make people go out of bounds. Sometimes it's very healthy not to know the whole background of a project, but really to be hit in this very immediate way by an experience that is just beyond your imagination. I am of course grateful to

the collector and all those who made this happen, but the real value of the project is to make me go somewhere else, and this is where we should talk about how place is defined. Is it necessarily in this type of bucolic landscape, this ideal setting with a view we enjoy? How about having this pavilion in Mestre where all the garbage is being processed that is produced by us living in Venice? The setting would change the entire conditions: how do you place the piece, where do you place it, what kind of people would see it, and what kind of impact would the context have on the actual artwork?

The choice of place—the choice of the situation in which you intervene and where you set this piece—is absolutely crucial for whether or not this typology for an art space really succeeds in going beyond the traditional art space or whether it falls into its own traps. It is just as easy to do that. We could end up in ten years time with ten fantastic pavilions, all like these, which could have, however, become totally touristified. People would make the tour like religious pilgrims in the Middle Ages who made the tour to Santiago de Compostela, checking all the churches that they needed to check, and then it would be totally commodified. It is important to think about other questions too. Could this piece scare me? Could this really scare the shit out of me like some of the land art works? People recount their first experience of Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*³, for instance, and say, "Okay, I walked all this way, I made



The Rothko Chapel, paintings by Mark Rothko, 1965–66

Northwest, North apse triptych, and Northeast view, Houston, 1965–66

Robert Smithson, Spiral Jetty

Great Salt Lake, Utah, 1970

this damn trip, to see this pile of mud in the water? What was the entire meaning of this, am I nuts? Are they kidding me?" The installation, in its peculiar relationship to its site, made it necessary for those viewers to renegotiate their relationship with art. And that's exactly what could and should happen with your pavilions, when the butterfly flies off.

Daniel Birnbaum It really has to do with impermanence. The moment that it's a Rothko Chapel⁴ or a Matisse Chapel or an Eliasson Chapel, then we are close to the commodification you are talking about. If there is change, on the other hand, if there are transitory phenomena, the rotating shows and productions that you mentioned, then it becomes a big curatorial issue. How to do it, and why? I have a question for you, Jude. You come from the world of theater, and in the performing arts there's nothing strange about the idea of something happening in different places. Productions travel to many different locations, and each and every one of the performances is unique, and yet it's essentially still the same. It would be interesting to draw a comparison with that.

Jude Kelly If you set out with the idea that you are trying to break rules, and create something where there is risk in every context—risk of place, risk of dialog between different people, not quite knowing how the encounter with the audience will work through itself—you still

shouldn't turn that into a rule. If the result of all this risk happens to be something that is incredibly satisfying and beautiful, I don't see any reason then for not allowing it to become something permanent. If you decide to stick it in some outlandish spot, like a shepherd's hut or a hermit's cave, that you can arrive at and wonder why it's there, then good. But I also think Cedric Price—to mention him again—the detail that he wrote into his contracts that his buildings would be dismantled after twenty-five years if he so chose, and then he did dismantle them, is fascinating, because you can insist on impermanence, but then you can change your mind. So I don't think that having no rules when you set out should mean that you become religious about the way you approach everything. The thing about a touring story is that it is always about encountering a new audience and a new situation, and you are right in saying that if this pavilion went to a ghetto area, or to a barrio area, it would mean something very, very different. That is as much a part of the excitement as the dialog between the artist and the architect and the community it goes into.

Andreas Ruby I think Cedric Price's idea of temporality is also maybe a bit limiting, because it's so literal. He was very brave as an architect to claim that his buildings had to be taken down again. But there are also others ways of imagining how a space could be understood as

temporal and volatile. For example, its original idea or concept could be appropriated over time by another program, by another ambition, and then it's no longer the same thing. However, the physical structure still exists. I think your commentary, Jude, was very valuable, but the fact that something lives on as a structure, is not destroyed, is not taken down, is not taken to another place, does not necessarily mean that it is permanent. Imagine the thermal baths of the Romans, a place where liquid orgies were celebrated in their original program, which were taken over by monks in the Middle Ages and transformed into the total opposite: a place of seclusion for somebody who wants to come to terms with his relationship with God. And the body is viewed under totally different circumstances. Somehow the thermal baths have gone, as something new came into their place. But the structure is more or less the same, albeit partially demolished, added to and souped up. It would be fantastic to see that happen with T-B A21's art pavilions, and I don't think Francesca wants to have control over these things over their entire life span, but is instead interested in giving away and empowering contexts to appropriate them. That would be another interpretation of temporality of a built structure.

Daniel Birnbaum Exhibitions and productions today travel to many places, both within the commercial world and in the world of museums. The Guggenheim is one model, a very strong one, but also some of the most powerful art dealers today are working in many places. So this is something that is not entirely new, but I am curious about your idea of rotation because it seems that you are really thinking about the local audiences and what you offer them and what in the long run they will get out of it.

Francesca von Habsburg I was approached eighteen months ago by Lebanese friends to help them set up an ICA in Beirut, a conversation that for obvious reasons has recently been put on hold. Building a pavilion that could have a five-to-ten-year lifespan for Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary's investment in sharing its collection and rotating every six months, changing the projects twice a year, is really interest-

ing. The rotation would be relatively slow, giving the artworks time to settle and the artists an opportunity to come back and revisit them. It is my intention to put the pavilions in very remote places to which one will really have to make some kind of pilgrimage. I am thinking of the journey, whether physical or spiritual, to reach a location such as the temples of Bagan in Myanmar or *The Lightning Field* by De Maria in New Mexico. People have traveled for centuries to go and see great monuments, and in some ways historical destinations are more of an attraction, for the reason that there are so many more of them than there are contemporary ones. Destinations into which one can be immersed and have an extraordinary journey to get there that is really part of my incentive.

Daniel Birnbaum Is there an application form for this? Can I apply? David, you wanted to say something.

David Adjaye I want to pick up on a point about temporality and art, and return to this question of how architecture operates. In a way, architecture always operates under this notion of temporality. The programs that we are usually given to make buildings always evolve and change, and in a way we as architects are always dealing with this issue of having to make buildings that have within them innately this idea of flexibility. I think we are fascinated by projects that resist that, that have a kind of entropic effect. We sometimes call them failed, brutal projects. But for me the interest comes when you work on a pavilion like this, and there is a kind of entropic effect that art creates, which makes the notion of making architecture really interesting. It goes beyond the slightly commercial, the economic strategy, and I don't think that enough of that happens for us to consider it something ubiquitous. The opportunity to make architecture engage with something that has this entropic effect is interesting, and obviously the idea is to get rid of the rules.

Daniel Birnbaum I was thinking that the relationship between the international and the local is something that turns up in every discussion

about contemporary art today, be it about museums or biennales or whatever. We are, after all, in Venice, a city with no museum of contemporary art. Is this model a new take on that, and if so, what is its potential and what are its problems? Maybe you want to say something about this, Hans Ulrich?

Hans Ulrich Obrist I wanted actually to mention something about that in relation to Edouard Glissant⁹. When Francesca first told me about this idea of her new institution, what I thought was completely fascinating was this idea of producing a different reality of artists and architects which otherwise wouldn't exist. That in itself is unbelievably rare in the current situation; there are very few similar examples. There is Francesca's initiative, there is Guang-Yi⁶ in China, who from a Chinese perspective develops another model in which he collects works by Chinese artists that don't fit into any building because they are too big or too complicated, and then he builds a building so that they can be shown. That's another kind of logic with which to approach it. That whole idea of allowing things to exist which otherwise wouldn't exist is essential, and Glissant has been talking a lot about this in relation also to your question of the local and the global. He believes that we live in a context in which homogenizing forces are also applied to the world of art and architecture, and it means that a lot of public and private museums all over the world start to look the same. At the same time we have defensive local initiatives that refuse global dialogs and in fact are a reaction to that. Glissant suggests that the answer is what he calls "mondialité", which is difficult to translate into English. This notion would be a difference-enhancing global dialog, a dialog that would not annihilate difference but rather augment it. I think that is somehow the great potential of such models. Something that relates Francesca to Glissant is this insistence that the future of the museum should be not as a continent but as an archipelago. If we imagine these pavilions—and I have no idea how it's going to evolve, and I think the unpredictability is somehow the beauty of it—one thing seems sure to me: it's not a continent; it's more like an archipelago. These pavilions might exist in different parts of the world, and they might come to-

gether at one point in time, or they might not. The idea of the future of the museum as an archipelago is something that Glissant is developing for his own museum which he is building in Martinique.

Daniel Birnbaum Andreas, is the local/global discourse that has tended to dominate such discussions talked about as much in the architecture world?

Andreas Ruby Yes, absolutely, and it has to do with the at times poisoning effect of Bilbao, which was entirely a marketing tool to feed places with an international audience in the first place. Which leads us to the question of the audience and what kind of audience these art pavilions would have. In the case of the Guggenheim Bilbao, for example, it was much more a media audience than an actual, local audience. Obviously people go there, but what was really important was the number of times that the building was photographed and published. This created an audience that truly was global and that by far outweighed any audience generated by the local context.

Daniel Birnbaum Olafur, you have appeared in many biennales, you are also participating now as part of the Icelandic Pavilion. You obviously work with lots of different audiences. What are your thoughts about this in relation to the pavilion project?

Olafur Eliasson While I was growing up, I encountered this same ongoing global/local discussion. What came of it was an art integrated to a greater extent into the local tissue than the current theory at the time allowed. So, the artistic and spatial practice transgressed the dogmatic nature of the global/local discussion. As I grew older, I regained faith in the potential of art, and hopefully it has not peaked yet. But then even biennales, if they are handled with sensitivity and responsibility, can actually work on a polyphony of levels. I don't necessarily think the polarized idea of global/local applies anymore in a situation like that which we have here in Venice. I think the Guggenheim story has proven to have been a nineties phenomenon; the Bilbao story doesn't

seem to work anymore. I can imagine hundreds of cities like Bilbao having already asked Guggenheim and wanting to repeat the success. I think we are in a different situation in which the brand economy is not just the one that Guggenheim represents. There is an issue of responsibility: if you want to present a work of art, you need to allow that work of art to be in front of the brand. I met a man yesterday who has taken it upon himself to educate new curators. How on earth does one take the responsibility to actually educate a person to curate art and yet be responsible within the market economy of a brand or collection or situation?

This brings me back to Francesca and the discussions we have been having. How does Francesca avoid making such a strong format that it closes itself off and creates its own system? How do we do this without becoming dogmatic? This is why I am open to any suggestions for this pavilion. I do think that there is an experiential potential and some quality in the experience that is also political and social, which is why this pavilion fits into different contexts very well. But it is different every time, just like it is different to everyone of us at any given time. Last year, it was different to me too. The relativity of this is its true potential.

Daniel Birnbaum How does one avoid becoming patronizing with a project like this if you send it out into the world, to places where there is not necessarily a sophisticated art world in terms of what we are accustomed to in Europe with all the galleries and museums and decades of big shows and biennales? What is the model there? Francesca, you have had this idea that you would suggest something, you would provide the tool, but at some point you would also pull back and get out of it, so to speak. Or at least hand over the responsibilities to the local population. Do you want to say something about this?

Francesca von Habsburg To avoid being patronizing, I think one has to begin by avoiding the Anglo-Saxon model. To avoid cultural colonization, I think you need to develop an exit strategy. Olafur wasn't very impressed when I spoke with him about this recently, because it

sounded as if I have too rigid a plan. But when you start something and you are excited, everybody is excited, and there's a great dynamic, it is a sign of respect to also at the same time present the way you foresee an exit. And to think about it, to plan it, and even in a way to set up an economic structure that can make that transition easier. If you consider the Soros Open Society Foundation⁷, it had the best intentions and did an incredibly good job, but it forgot about an exit strategy. So when the funding dried up, it created a lot of very difficult situations. Some of my thinking is going in this direction. I am not a patronizing person; I am too insecure. When I go somewhere I want to know what they want. It's only going to be successful if it's a win-win situation, like the discussions I've been having with friends in Iceland about doing a project not in Reykjavik but outside, in a more remote area of the kind that I believe people should really want to go to when they visit the country. How not to be patronizing? I think it has to do with one's own spirit, and one's own approach to people and asking the right questions and listening to the answers, as opposed to asking rhetorical questions.

Andreas Ruby The second part of the question is also interesting to think about. How to avoid colonizing a multitude of places with one particular understanding of art that we have grown up with? How could one leave an open space regarding the definition of art, or even architecture, in a very specific context, which might be totally different from our own? This is also important when it comes to the choice of people to work on the project, both artists and architects. It makes me think of a project that Rirkrit Tiravanija, the Thai artist, did in the north of Thailand, near Chiang Mai, where he bought a piece of land in the jungle⁸. There were these very weird structures that dealt with the fact that if you wanted to spend time there you needed to have some basic resources such as energy or gas to cook. So he invited artists such as Superflex, the Danish group, to think about the issue of energy resources. Suddenly it was no longer about looking at something; it was no longer about an artwork in the sense that we have come to associate it with the museum space, but with the question of actual subsis-



**Rirkrit Tiravanija,
The Land Foundation, 1998**

**Superflex,
The Land Foundation, 1998**

tence, of survival. Superflex made a small biogas plant that used natural resources to produce gas. François Roche and Philippe Parreno created something by which they could produce electrical energy from the locomotion of an animal, a buffalo. It would walk and lift a heavy weight, and after two hours that weight was released to drive a generator sufficient to power the batteries of the mobile phones of the people who were there. So it is clear that the very choice of that space, which was unplugged from all power and gas supplies and which lacked any kind of infrastructure, defined an agenda for all future artistic or architectural interventions. If we relate this back to the concerns expressed before about how to avoid patronizing a space or art itself, we could say that because the land represents such a specific condition, with a whole number of highly determining parameters, it was naturally resistant to any danger of patronizing, which would simply have been overpowered by the rules of the game defined by the place.

Hans Ulrich Obrist I just wanted to add something to what Andreas said a little bit earlier in relation to the Bilbao effect. Many things have been mentioned in terms of the pavilions, and there are obviously examples of things remaining for a long time inside such a pavilion. I think the idea of a pavilion functioning like Dia's New York Earth Room by De Maria is quite beautiful. But at the same time there's also

the opposite model, the pavilion as a very locally sensitive device, something that would absorb the local context and change. What both of those possibilities have in common is that they are not about exteriority; they are about something more interior, about interior complexity.

Daniel Birnbaum Thanks a lot. We heard briefly about the etymology of the word pavilion. I don't want anyone to leave here without a formal definition of what a pavilion is, so I will just read you two or three. It's "a usually temporary structure, erected at a fair or show for use by an exhibitor", according to the *American Heritage Dictionary*. It's "a large structure housing sports or entertainment facilities: an arena". Or, somewhat surprisingly to me, from the *Merriam-Webster Medical Dictionary*, it's "a detached or semidetached part of a hospital devoted to a special use, i.e., a nuclear medicine pavilion". That's where we end this discussion.

¹ In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the artist Yves Klein, working with the architect Claude Parent, proposed alternating columns of fire and water of equal height and volume. Although of contrasting temperatures, the fountains would have looked somewhat similar. For his exhibition at the Museum Haus Lange in Krefeld in 1961, Klein constructed a firewall with a grid of 50 Bunsen burner flames. Each flame was flower-shaped, its six "petals" whipped by the wind. Adjacent to the firewall was a fountain of fire gushing directly from the snowy earth.

2 Schaulager, built in 2003 by Herzog & de Meuron architects in the city of Basel, is the home for the works in the collection of the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation that are not on exhibition display. It is conceived as a new kind of space for art, neither museum nor a traditional warehouse. It is a pilot program that allows works of art to lead their own lives behind the curtains, a life that does not simply consist of an endless wait for public presentation.

3 Robert Smithson’s monumental earthwork *Spiral Jetty* (1970) is located on the Great Salt Lake in Utah. Using black basalt rocks and earth from the site, the artist created a coil 457 meters long and 4.5 meters wide that stretches out counterclockwise into the translucent red water. *Spiral Jetty* was acquired by Dia Art Foundation as a gift from the Estate of the artist in 1999.

4 The Rothko Chapel was the last and one of the most important endeavors founded by Dominique and John de Menil in Houston, Texas. Mark Rothko, one of the most influential American artists of the mid-20th century was commissioned by the de Menils and given the opportunity to shape and control a total environment to encompass a group of fourteen paintings he especially created for this meditative space. He worked closely with the original architect Philip Johnson on the plans, then with Howard Barnstone and Eugene Aubry who completed the building. As an institution, The Rothko Chapel functions as chapel, a museum and a forum. It is a place where religion, art and architecture intermingle.

5 Edouard Glissant (born in Sainte-Marie, Martinique in 1928) is a Francophone writer, poet and literary critic. He is widely recognized as being one of the most influential figures in Caribbean thought and cultural commentary. Glissant received his PhD, having studied ethnography at the Musée de l’Homme and History and Philosophy at the Sorbonne. He established the separatist Front antillo-guyanais party in 1959, which provoked his exile from 1959 to 1965 from his native island. He returned to Martinique in 1965 and founded the Institut martiniquais d’études. He now divides his time between Martinique, Paris and New York where he has been visiting professor of French Literature at UCNY since 1995.

6 Wang Guangyi (born in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province in 1956 or 1957) is a Chinese artist known for being the leader of the New Art Movement circles that erupted out of China after 1989 and most famous for his *Great Criticism* series of paintings. Using the images of propaganda from the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) and contemporary brand names from western advertising, Wang Guangyi was the founder of Political Pop Art in China. He currently lives and works in Beijing, China.

7 The Open Society Institute (OSI) was created in 1993 by investor and philanthropist George Soros to support his foundations in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Those foundations were established, starting in 1984, to shape public policy to promote democratic governance, human rights, and economic, legal, and social reform in the transition from communism. OSI has expanded the activities of the Soros Foundations network to other

areas of the world where the transition to democracy is of particular concern. The Soros Foundations network encompasses more than 60 countries.

8 Initiated by artist Rirkrit Tiravenija in 1998 in Chiang Mai, Thailand the land (more direct translation from Thai to English would be “the rice field”) was the merging of ideas by different artists to cultivate a place of and for social engagement. The land was to be cultivated as an open space, though with certain intentions towards community, discussions and experimentation in other fields of thoughts.

The artist group Superflex from Copenhagen has been developing their idea of the Supergas (a system utilizing biomass to produce gas). Parallel to the land as lab for self-sustainable environment, architectural ideas for living will be carried out alongside the cultivation of the land—all developed from collaborative discussions between the artists Kamin Lerdchprasert, Superflex, Tobias Rehberger and Rirkrit Tiravenija.

Pavilion looking across the laguna



Side view and entrance





Loggia and view through timber screen

End wall of Loggia



















