

FRANZ WEST

TO BUILD A HOUSE YOU START WITH THE ROOF:
WORK 1972-2008

BALTIMORE
MUSEUM OF
ART **BMA**

GIANT PINK SCULPTURE LANDS ON BMA TERRACE

Dorit Heralds Upcoming Exhibition of One of Europe's Most Talked-About Artists

BALTIMORE, MD (September 8, 2008)— The Baltimore Museum of Art today installed a giant pink sculpture by acclaimed Austrian artist Franz West in front of its neoclassical building. This playful object, *Dorit*, a 20-foot tall column with four spherical orbs resembling pink gumballs on a pole, is one of several large-scale installations featured in the landmark exhibition **Franz West, To Build a House You Start with the Roof: Work, 1972-2008**. On view October 12, 2008 – January 4, 2009, this is the first comprehensive survey of the artist's work in the United States. Admission is free.

Considered one of the most important living artists today, Franz West's interactive sculptures, surprising collages, and giant outdoor installations have captured the imagination of an international audience for more than three decades. The nationally traveling exhibition organized by The Baltimore Museum of Art features 117 objects that explore West's extraordinary innovations in sculpture, design, and on paper—from his early interactive works in the 1970s to two enormous aluminum sculptures created expressly for this exhibition.



Franz West. *Dorit*. 2002. Installation at BMA. Collection of Amalia Dayan and Adam Lindemann. ©Franz West.

Dorit was commissioned by New York's Public Art Fund in 2002 and exhibited at Lincoln Center in 2004 in the first major U.S. outdoor survey of West's sculpture. It is made of lacquered aluminum and weighs approximately 1,150 pounds. With its combination of whimsy and monumentality, *Dorit* is meant to directly engage the viewer. "I like art in the streets," West has said. "It doesn't demand that you make a special journey to see it, it's simply there."

Two other painted aluminum sculptures by West are also currently on view at the BMA. *Swimmer* (2005) and *Violetta* (2005), both recently added to the Museum's collection, are on the lawn in front of the BMA's West Wing for Contemporary Art. These candy-colored biomorphic forms invite touching or even sitting, part of the artist's intent to redefine the possibilities of sculpture as a social and environmental experience.

"*Dorit's* irregular shape and vibrant color enliven the Museum's façade and beautifully offset the classical symmetry of John Russell Pope's design. This is a great example of contemporary art renewing a historically significant building," said BMA Director Doreen Bolger. "Now we are looking forward to the rest of Franz West's engaging art—just a month away."

EXHIBITION SPONSORS

Generously sponsored by Howard Brown, The Alvin and Fanny Blaustein Thalheimer Exhibition Endowment Fund, and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Generously supported by Constance R. Caplan, Suzanne F. Cohen and the Suzanne F. Cohen Exhibition Fund, Stiles Tuttle Colwill and Jonathan Gargiulo, Nancy Dorman and Stanley Mazaroff,

Ellen W. P. Wasserman, BMA Friends of Modern and Contemporary Art , Sandra Levi Gerstung, an anonymous donor, Amalia Dayan and Adam Lindemann, Sylvia Cordish, Andrew and Christine Hall, Monroe Denton, Aaron and Barbara Levine, and Lin Lougheed. Additional support provided by Austrian Airlines and The Austrian Cultural Forum, New York.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Franz West lives and works in Vienna, where he was born in 1947. He began his career in mid-1960s Vienna when a local movement called Actionism was in full swing. His earliest sculptures, performances, and collages were a reaction to this movement, in which artists engaged in displays of radical public behavior and physical endurance meant to shake up art-world passivity. In the early 1970s, West began making a series of small, portable sculptures called *Adaptives (Passstücke)*, awkward-looking plaster objects that were only completed as artworks when the viewer picked them up and carried them around, or performed some other inherently slapstick action with them. In many ways, his large-scale aluminum sculptures are simply overgrown versions of the *Adaptives*, but they also relate to his furniture installations. The artist's comfortable and colorfully upholstered couches and chairs transform galleries, museums, and public spaces into lounge-like, sociable environments for viewing art.

West has exhibited internationally for more than three decades in museums and galleries, and at major festivals including Documenta IX (1992) and Documenta X (1997), Kassel, Germany; Sculpture Projects in Münster (1997); and the Venice Biennale (1988, 1993, 1997, 2003, 2007). In 1997, The Museum of Modern Art presented a solo show of his work. More recently his work has been exhibited at the Museo Nacional de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (2001); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2003); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2003); The Gagosian Gallery, London (2006); and Gagosian Gallery, New York (2008).

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

The Baltimore Museum of Art is home to an internationally renowned collection of 19th-century, modern, and contemporary art. Founded in 1914, the BMA's outstanding collection encompasses 90,000 works of art, including the largest and most significant holding of works by Henri Matisse in the world, as well as masterpieces by Pablo Picasso, Paul Cézanne, and Vincent van Gogh. An expanding collection of contemporary art features iconic post-1960 works by Andy Warhol and Sol LeWitt, as well as exciting acquisitions by artists such as Kara Walker and Olafur Eliasson. The BMA is also recognized for an internationally acclaimed collection of prints, drawings, and photographs from the 15th-century to the present; grand European painting and sculpture from Old Masters to the 19th-century; distinguished American painting, sculpture, and decorative arts and Maryland period rooms; one of the most important African collections in the country, and notable examples of Asian, ancient American, and Pacific Islands art.

VISITOR INFORMATION

General admission to the BMA is free; special exhibitions may be ticketed. The BMA is open Wednesday through Friday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m.–6 p.m. The Museum is closed Monday, Tuesday, New Year's Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The BMA is located on Art Museum Drive at North Charles and 31st Streets, three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. For general Museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit artbma.org.

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