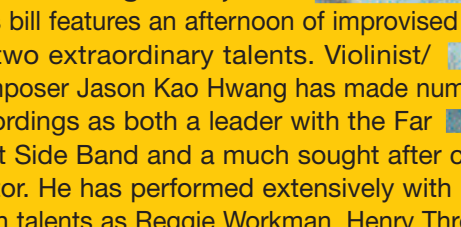


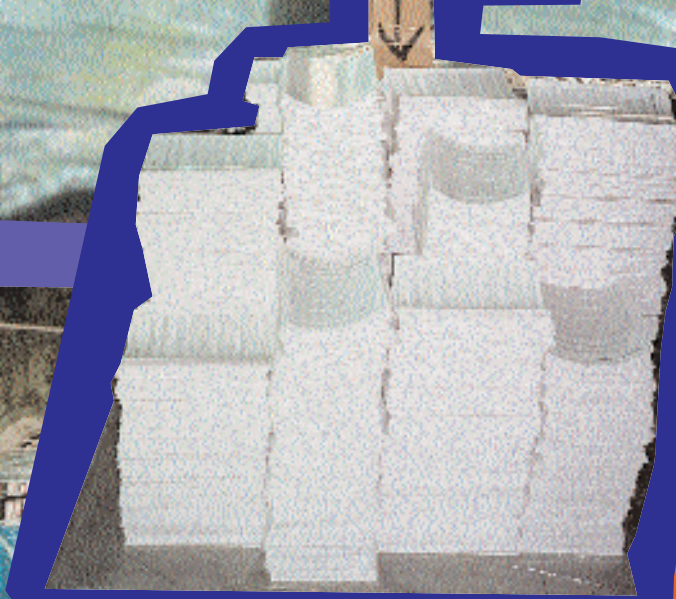
January 16 - February 24, 2000



Jason Kao Hwang, violin
Fred Lonberg-Holm, cello

This bill features an afternoon of improvised music by two extraordinary talents. Violinist/composer Jason Kao Hwang has made numerous recordings as both a leader with the Far East Side Band and a much sought after collaborator. He has performed extensively with such talents as Reggie Workman, Henry Threadgill, Borah Bergman and Butch Morris. Cellist Fred Lonberg-Holm defies categorization. In addition to several ongoing projects, this self-proclaimed anti-cellist has performed and recorded with some of free jazz and improvised music's most outstanding talents including the Peter Brotzmann Tentet, John Zorn, Anthony Braxton, and Georg Graewe. This concert is produced with Lampo, a non-profit presenter of new and experimental music. This event is free and will take place at The Society.

The Renaissance Society



WORLD AIRPORT has been made possible through generous support from Etant Donnes; Lewis and Susan Manlow; the Peter Norton Foundation; Pro Helvetia; the Arts Council of Switzerland; Howard and Donna Stone; the Swiss Benevolent Society of Chicago, Illinois; and Swissotel Chicago. Additional support has been received from the CityArts Program of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, a municipal agency; The Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; The Pritzker Foundation; The Sara Lee Foundation; The Siragusa Foundation; and Bank by the Sea, The Clinton Company; WPWR-TV Channel 50 Foundation and our membership.

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Thomas Hirschhorn
Jumbo Spoons and Big Cake
January 23–April 9, 2000
The Art Institute of Chicago
111 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60603

RELATED EVENTS

Gallery Talk
James Rondeau,
Exhibition Co-curator
Sunday, January 23 at 3:00 pm
and
Tuesday, February 1 at 6:00 pm
The Art Institute of Chicago
Gallery 262

Gallery Talk
Hamza Walker,
Director of Education,
The Renaissance Society
Friday, February 18 at 12:15 pm
The Art Institute of Chicago,
Gallery 262

The Renaissance Society
at The University of Chicago
5811 South Ellis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60637
Phone: (773) 702-8870
<http://www.renaissanceociety.org>

Museum Hours:
Tuesday - Friday: 10 am - 5 pm
Saturday, Sunday: 12 - 5 pm
Closed Mondays

The Renaissance Society

Gross National Product

How much should AZT cost in Swaziland? If only this were a trick question. For all of its seeming simplicity, it reflects a painfully complex reality involving negotiations between two governments and a multinational pharmaceutical corporation as thousands await much needed treatment. This episode is one of a thousand facets of globalization, a phenomena that minus examples, masks difficult questions regarding the relationship between industrialized and developing nations. For better and, or worse, this relationship is being mediated on a regular basis not so much through political channels as it is through an expanding free market economy. Whether it is the multi-year agenda of the World Trade Organization or the lending policies of the International Monetary Fund, globalization in an active sense has to do with the mobilization of capital. The Gross National Product of an industrialized nation is not simply a reflection of a country's ability to produce and consume within its own geographic borders, but also its ability to barter in the global market place. In addition to being political entities led by heads of state, industrialized nations are producing and consuming entities commandeered by the captains of industry and commerce. The body politic doubles as a work force and its citizens as consumers. The prosperity or stagnation of the economy and the availability of goods and services are linked to a larger network of global resources. If one is then willing to put aside Marxist alienation and growing class division, the commodity can certainly be given credit for bringing the world closer together, even if the terms are far from ideal.

Although his work is executed in the spirit of play, Swiss born, Paris-based artist Thomas Hirschhorn has a healthy distaste for the term globalization. Two of his well known, early works feature enlarged recreations of a Swiss Army knife and Rolex wrist watches, objects that contribute substantially to the Swiss GNP. Glad, however, in aluminum foil and executed at a scale reminiscent of the work of Claes Oldenburg, these works are not part of a Gross National Product but are instead grossly national products whose kindergarten appeal playfully mocks their commodity status. Although Hirschhorn is usually referred to as a sculptor, his works do not revolve around discreet pieces as much as elaborate installations featuring dozens of components, notably makeshift walls featuring one of the most important commodities of all, information. This is in the form of hundreds of press and magazine clippings. The central sculptural components of these installations are linked to these walls through an elaborate system of aluminum foil tentacles that literally connect his objects—often fabricated with recycled materials—to the rhetoric of globalization. By this logic, globalization ceases to be an abstract phenomena and can instead be traced through the production of things that surround us no matter how large or trivial. Steel, plastic, clothes, labor—behind each of these is a narrative of social, political and environmental relations that extend well beyond the immediate context.

Born in Bern, Switzerland in 1957, Hirschhorn later attended the Schöle für Gestaltung in Zurich where he was trained in graphic design. After completing his studies in 1984, Hirschhorn moved to France where he joined Grapus, a Parisian collective of communist graphic designers! Despite, the power of graphic design to galvanize an audience for either commercial or political ends, Hirschhorn felt neither advertising nor propaganda allowed much room for creativity. By 1986, the year of his first solo exhibition at Bar-Floréal in Paris, he had altogether abandoned graphic design in favor of the visual arts. Among the influences on his work, Hirschhorn cites the Russian Constructivists and Kurt Schwitters. Needless to say, Hirschhorn, retained his political convictions, translating his leftist ideals

into works that in addition to culminating in museum and gallery installations took the form of public alters and souvenir stands on the sidewalks of several major European cities. The sculptural components, which consisted of cheap, tourist sidewalk wares —hats, scarves, banners, and plates featuring the names of a wide array of 20th century personages —were displayed in stands fabricated with cardboard, sheet plastic and plywood. Although Hirschhorn initially viewed the transition from graphic design to the visual arts as being motivated by frustration, in a recent interview, he cited Warhol as a significant precursor for allowing such a move to be seen as continuous. "Warhol remained faithful to himself. I look at these artists and try to do the same thing: I aspire to continuity." Under these circumstances, Hirschhorn is somewhat skeptical of being labeled a sculptor and even more so as an installation artist. According to him, his work remains two-dimensional. "My work remains two-dimensional, a very important point for me. Of course my work has taken on three dimensional aspects at times, I make objects that have volume but they are not thought in three dimensions."

Hirschhorn's solo museum debut will be held in two venues. For The Art Institute of Chicago, Hirschhorn has created a new work which takes its title *Jumbo Spoons and Big Cake* from its main components. At The Renaissance Society, he will exhibit *World Airport*, the piece he created for the 1999 Venice Biennale. In scale and garishness, both installations have something of a parade's vulgar charms. But Hirschhorn's flare for spectacle is offset by an itinerant aesthetic featuring his signature materials, cardboard, blue plastic and aluminum foil. Most of Hirschhorn's work has critiqued globalization from the vantage point of the cosmopolitan center. Hirschhorn, however, usually chooses to make work with discarded materials from sections of the city with a large immigrant population. The *Fifty/Fifty* sculptures, an earlier series of small works consisting of half-found materials and half-new materials suggest that centralization and marginalization are alternating pistons in the engine of globalization as metropolises simultaneously conglomerate capital and an immigrant work force. In *World Airport* and *Jumbo Spoons and Big Cake*, Hirschhorn has broadened his critique to include cultural tourism. *Jumbo Spoons* renders a wide assortment of figures, places, events and phenomena, from Rosa Luxembourg to the Chicago Bulls, from Nietzsche to fashion, from Malevich to the Moon, in the form of the collectible spoon, a gesture that eliminates any hierarchy in their importance. They are equally glamorous and equally tragic, able to offer but in no way fulfill the promise of a better life, promises made and broken as much by the shiny commodity as the cruel glints of hope put forth by many of modernity's utopian visionaries. *World Airport*, a homemade Fisher-Price like airport and lounge area, replete with a runway come parade of nation-states, will fill The Society's gallery. The airplanes sit prepared for take-off and are emblazoned with logos in national colors suggesting the airline's complicity in the brand management of the corporate nation-state. Business or pleasure; first class, third world—between the web of flight patterns spun by TWA and the WTO we have become starlings in the slipstream. This is not to say that Hirschhorn's critique is cynical. Far from the case, for his work is too elaborate to be of a singular sentiment. If anything, Hirschhorn's work is a state of the world equation whose facts and variables add up to the global portrait as painted in the next day's newspaper; a semblance, no doubt, to be savored over a cup of Seattle's Best.

FOCUS: THOMAS HIRSCHHORN has been made possible through generous support from Lewis and Susan Marlow, Swissôtel Chicago, Howard and Donna Stone, Pro Helvetia, The Arts Council of Switzerland, and Janice and Mickey Cartin.

Thomas Hirschhorn

Jumbo Spoons and Big Cake

January 23 - April 9, 2000

An exhibition in two locations

The Art Institute of Chicago

