



Jason Middlebrook

New York-based artist Jason Middlebrook's installation *Empire of Dirt* will be on view this spring at the Palazzo delle Papesse Centro Arte Contemporanea in Siena.

1 THE FUTURE OF LIFE (Knopf, 2002) Harvard-based sociobiologist Edward O. Wilson thrilled us with his up-close-and-personal investigation *The Ants* (1990); now he takes a wide view—on the scary future of our exhausted planet. I bought this book at Walden Pond, and it changed my life. Wilson describes the complex (and imperiled) ecological relationships on which our survival depends. His message is an urgent one: If we don't change the way we live on earth, we are doomed.

2 DEATH TO THE GALLERY, 2002 Transgression is still alive in the East End. Last spring artist Stuart Hudson teamed up with Kev Rice and Dave Smith, codirectors of Jeffrey Charles Gallery, to set fire to the London space and watch it burn. Well, it wasn't a real fire, but the smoke-machine puffs looked so authentic the local brigade sent three engines. Art wants so badly to be life. *Death to the Gallery* came pretty close.

3 THE ANSWER IS NEVER: A SKATEBOARDER'S HISTORY OF THE WORLD (Grove Press, 2002) I grew up in California, where skateboarding was all-defining, but I never really got it because I never did it. Jocko Weyland's book, a history of skateboarding—*cum*—memoir, explains everything, including its title: "Once outside the grocery I was stopped for skating on the sidewalk. The man wants to know when my type is going to learn our lesson. Skating away I knew, the answer is never." I'm homesick.

4 BARRICADE BENCH PROJECT, 2002 The first time I saw one of Tim Thyzel's benches—reconfigured orange-and-white-striped roadblocks—I didn't think art, I thought design solution. The second time I saw one, again on a New York sidewalk, I was with a group of artists, and we wondered why the city, which must have been mass-producing the benches for construction workers, wasn't concerned about their taking excessive breaks. When I finally discovered the benches were an art project, I hoped the City of New York would commission Thyzel to supply every borough with an

endless supply. The artist would be rich, and the labor force would have seats on which to discuss the progress of their work, the beautiful passersby, and sports, of course. City agencies rarely recognize the functional applications of art, so for now the benches are a temporary project—one I would love to see made permanent.

5 ADDISON GALLERY OF AMERICAN ART Adam D. Weinberg directs a dream museum on the campus of Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. The Addison Gallery emphasizes student participation, community education, and diverse programming. Artists are encouraged to explore site-specific possibilities and get to stay in an artists' suite designed by David Ireland. The apartment is in the attic of historic Abbot Hall, built in 1829. It's a great crash pad, but beware the low beams.

6 THE IRVING SANDLER ARTISTS FILE Artists Space's slide registry, which welcomes any and all emerging and unaffiliated artists, has long been an important resource for the art community. Now Letha Wilson, director of the file, has designed a user-friendly website (www.artists-space.org) hosting many of its 2,300 participating artists. Wilson applies democratic ideals to her curating as well. Last year she co-organized "Majority Rules," a two-part exhibition that began with the projection of 357 open-call slide submissions (from as far away as China and Russia) at the Free Gallery in Glasgow. Visitors to this and a virtual version of the show voted for their five favorite images. Then, for part two, the twelve winners' works were shown in the flesh. Art for the people, curated by the people.

7 WWW.FRANCISMCKEE.COM Francis McKee is head of digital arts and new media at the Centre for Contemporary Art in Glasgow. His weblog is a real treat. Science fiction, old-fashioned class struggles, good versus evil in the new-media business, contemporary art—no subject is outside his range. McKee has a sixth sense for the macabre, and he's witty, too. On the eve of Art Basel Miami Beach, McKee linked to an image of Sigmar Polke's *Two Palm Trees*, 1964.

8 WFMU In a city known for horrible radio, New York's free-form station WFMU (91.1) comes to the rescue. Don't miss Laura Cantrell's *Radio Thrift Shop*, with programming that spans the history of good country and classic steel guitar. Thursday night really cooks with Joe Frank and Alan Watts. Frank dazzles with his evocative voice and inventive narratives; Watts, whose recorded lectures keep his ideas alive a quarter century after his death, looks at the seductive qualities of Zen through Western eyes.

Two of my favorite Watts quotes: "Museums are places where art goes to die" and "There is a big difference between map and territory."

9 UNIVERSAL LIMITED ART EDITIONS ULAE has been turning out limited-edition fine art prints from its Bayshore, Long Island, studio since 1957, first under the eye of Tatyana Grosman, who worked with Rauschenberg, Johns, and, famously, Rivers and O'Hara on "Stones," 1958, their collaborative series of lithographs. Bill Goldston joined the crew in 1969 and has run the shop since Grosman passed away twenty years ago. Goldston and his staff of young printmakers use every tool imaginable to make art out of prints and prints out of art. They're a blast to work with, but best of all is lunch. Larissa Goldston, Bill's daughter, cooks specially for each artist who comes through. (Richard Tuttle loves mushroom risotto; Jane Hammond is a big fan of Mexican; Lisa Yuskavage goes for Larissa's pork tenderloin.) When the bell rings, computers are put to sleep, presses stop rolling, and a feast is served to all.

10 OAKLAND RAIDERS FANS The Raiders crowd has always been down and dirty compared with the across-town 49er yuppies. Now that the Grateful Dead are more or less dead the Raiders are the best live show in the Bay Area. Every home game, the nuttier Raiders fans dress up like it's Halloween and take over a section known as the Black Hole. Eat your heart out, Matt Barney! □



Stuart Hudson, *Death to the Gallery*, 2002. Exterior installation view, Jeffrey Charles Gallery, London.