

LEFT BANK

The symposium 'Push the Envelope' on July 19 at Beaconsfield will examine the geopolitics of the Left Bank, examining the onward march of regeneration in Vauxhall, the last bastion of non-gentrified society in a central London riverside location. Damien Hirst now has planning permission to open a complex of galleries in Newport Street, close to Beaconsfield; further down the road, Vauxarts, a local studio provider, is losing its space to developers. Downriver, Tate Modern has consolidated a new profile for visual art in London as an international tourist attraction. Speakers include Sheena Wagstaff, chief curator Tate Modern; artist Tony Carter principal of City and Guilds of London Art School; chief executive Space studios Anna Harding, and artist-curator Richard Grayson. The day will end with complimentary drinks to toast the new North Lambeth arts network, Leftbank Artists. For more info and advance tickets go to www.beaconsfield.ltd.uk/future_projects.html. ■

PECKHAM'S SKYRISSES

Fifty new studios were made available to artists at the end of June, as part of a partnership between Acme Studios and Barratt Homes. Situated in Peckham with a 155-year lease, The Galleria Studios will hopefully create an environment where 'artists can relax in the knowledge that this unique scheme allows Acme to offer affordable rents and long-term tenancies'. Part funded by Arts Council England, the new studio building is one of only nine permanent studio buildings out of 70 in London, four of which are owned by Acme studios. Acme Studios co-director Jonathan Harvey was 'proud that this scheme has not just provided 53 artists with a purpose-designed place to work, but has distinguished The Galleria as a new, exciting and unique place to live. Having proved the success of this scheme, we hope to work with developers and local authorities to help create the mixed-use planning gain developments of the future.' Whereas Clive Fenton, chairman of Barratt's south region, commented that 'It's already clear that our residential buyers at The Galleria enjoy the idea of having a colony of

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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working artists as their neighbours.' For more info go to www.acme.org.uk.

The Peckham Pier, designed by Will Alsop and situated opposite his award-winning Peckham Library will open this autumn. The building extends out into the nearby square and appears to float from a raised platform. It will be under the directorship and auspices of the all-consuming University of the Arts, and its gallery will showcase a variety of contemporary artworks and local events. For more info go to www.camberwell.arts.ac.uk. ■

PALLAS CLOSES

Pallas Studios faced double eviction at the end of last month and has been forced to close after ten years of work in Dublin. The studios and gallery in a semi-derelict 60s block of flats have been reclaimed by private landlords and Dublin City Council prior to demolition and redevelopment. That Pallas Studios closed in the same month that Dublin City Council announced its Arts Services Plan 2006-09, which outlines a commitment to develop with partners 'a range of innovative Arts Infrastructural Projects', begs questions about the council's commitment to its stated aims. Pallas has been in ongoing contact with the council since 1998, offering its expertise as a potential partner to enable the City Council to fulfil part of its commitment to emerging artists. Pallas Studios director Mark Cullen commented: 'Where is the value in top-down consultant-led strategies, if existing vibrant artist-connected, community-connected and artistically autonomous institutions such as Pallas are allowed to be squeezed out of the city by the twin pressures of private and municipal development'. For further details go to www.pallasstudios.org. ■

BATHS REOPEN

Following many public demonstrations concerning the March closure of the Ormeau Baths Gallery in Belfast and the dismissal of Hugh Mullholland and staff (see Artnotes AM295), Arts Council Northern Ireland has recently reopened the gallery with the temporary exhibition 'Collectors Collections' (June 9-22), followed by an exhibition of Irish Magnum photographers. Such an anodyne programme is quite clearly the antithesis of the former OBG's engagement with contemporary art, both on a local, national and international level. ACNI has formed an interim management for the venue until the OBG's board finds a new director. For further details go to www.artscouncil-ni.org. ■

COMINGS AND GOINGS

After five years as visual arts curator at Project Arts Centre in Dublin, Grant Watson is leaving Ireland this month to take up a curatorial position at MuHKA, Antwerp. Watson has said of his time at Project, that 'In the five years that I have been in Dublin the visual arts scene has changed considerably, reflecting a growing sense of confidence – and this is something that I believe Project has been able to contribute towards. I hope to continue my close connection with the Irish art scene and that the relationships that I have developed here will continue in a different context'. It is planned that a publication documenting Watson's exhibition programme over the past five years will be released in 2007. ■

BIENNALE WATCH

This month the Ligurian Riviera provides the beautiful backdrop to the 3rd Biennale of Ceramics in Contemporary Art, which runs from July 9 to September 10 under the title 'Undisciplined' – a reflection of the biennale's aim to present an 'undisciplined' hybridisation of ceramics, design and contemporary art. The biennale occupies the City Art Gallery in Savona, the Manlio Trucco Ceramic Museum in Albisola Superiore, the Villa Jom in Albissola Marina and the Parfiri Art Spaceo in Vado Ligure, as well as a number of outdoor sites. Among the biennale's selectors are Simon Groom of Tate Liverpool and Hans Ulrich Obrist of the Serpentine Gallery, London who have plumped for the likes of Liam Gillick, Richard Hawkins, Runa Islam and Goshka Macuga, Jonathan Meese, Michelangelo Pistoletto, David Robbins, among many others. For more info go to www.attese.it.

Alternatively there are the cosmopolitan bright lights of Sydney providing the backdrop to the 15th Biennale of Sydney (see Reviews p24) until August 27. Its director Charles Merewether has corralled 85 artists and collaborations from 57 cities, and included artists from countries and regions that are rarely represented in major international festivals and biennales. Merewether commented, 'There is a strong presence of artists from the Middle East, including Palestine, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt and Bahrain. There is an important representation from Eastern Europe, the Baltic and Balkan States – including artists from Russia, Latvia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro and Romania. There will also be a much stronger presence from the Asian region, especially India, Japan and China.' Despite the opportunity for clocking up air miles that such a selection demands, Merewether was