

BEN MALTZ GALLERY at Otis College of Art + Design, Los Angeles
PRESS RELEASE

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September 11 – October 30, 2004

***Panopticon* (neural architecture no. 4): an installation by Deborah Aschheim**

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***Waiting for the End of the World*: photographs by Richard Ross**

**Gallery tour with the artists on Saturday, September 11 at 4pm,
followed by a reception from 5-7pm.**



***Panopticon* (neural architecture no. 4): an installation by Deborah Aschheim**

Panopticon is part of Deborah Aschheim's "Neural Architecture," series of nervous systems for buildings: site-specific installations that consider the intersection of surveillance, electronics, neural sensing and architecture. "Neural Architecture," imagines the automation of buildings by "smart technology" as an emerging organic network. She creates nervous systems for buildings to suggest a fragile new organism, a hybrid of surveillance electronics, neural sensing and architecture that emerges out of our heightened post-September 11 embrace of security technology.

Aschheim links clear vinyl tubing, light bulbs, and hundreds of "nerve cell" sculptures (hand sewn out of plastic bathmats) to home security motion detectors, infrared monitoring devices, baby-cams, miniature monitors, and small spy cameras to create a sprawling, sensing and reactive sculptural network. These electronic sensory devices infiltrate and react to the building's daily functions like heating/cooling and seeing/recording. It also reacts to the human inhabitants of the building. The result is an unearthly, beautiful and slightly ominous entity as the sculpture is "aware" of the viewer and its environment at all times.

For the Ben Maltz Gallery, Aschheim's organism is taking the form of a Panopticon. The installation references both Jeremy Bentham's physical prison design by creating a core observational center and Michel Foucault's metaphorical structure of controlling space and the oppressive use of information to enforce self-censorship and discipline. This project is fourth in a series of five and each organism grows smarter with each evolution. In addition to sensing and seeing, this particular hybrid actually becomes self-aware and develops memory. Aschheim's kinetic sculpture bridges technology, biology and architecture to create a thought provoking and visually stunning installation that challenges our notions of safety, privacy and consumption.

Deborah Aschheim received a BA in Anthropology from Brown University and a MFA from the University of Washington. During the past decade, Aschheim has created installations for solo and group exhibitions across the US and Europe. She has received numerous awards and grants including the prestigious City of Los Angeles Individual Fellowship in 2003. She teaches in the studio art department at the University of California at Irvine and lives and works in Los Angeles.

(more)



Waiting for the End of the World:
photographs by Richard Ross

The Ben Maltz Gallery is pleased to debut this new body of work by Richard Ross. In his book entitled “Waiting for the End of the World,” published by Princeton Architectural Press in April 2004, Richard Ross has captured the global and futile concern for safety since the dawn of nuclear destruction. He has photographed bomb shelters in the US, Russia, England, China, Turkey, Vietnam and Switzerland. The shelters range from private family dwellings to enclosures large enough for small cities to occupy during an attack. Some are new and active while others are decrepit and defunct.

Bomb shelters are supposedly a symbol of a bygone era, but private family “panic” or “safe” rooms are being built at an increasing rate. Switzerland has a law calling for access to a shelter for every Swiss citizen and the government can put 110% of its population underground within 2-6 hours. Quoting from an interview with the artist by Sarah Vowell—best-selling author, social observer, and contributor to *This American Life*—Richard Ross eloquently explains his perception of the meaning of these places:

Shelters are the architecture of failure—the failure of moderation, politics, communication, diplomacy, and sustaining humanity. They represent the ultimate in optimism and belief in the individual survival and paradoxically the ultimate in pessimism—the expectation of the destruction of humanity.

Richard Ross has been teaching at the University of California at Santa Barbara since 1977. He has photographed for *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Los Angeles Times Magazine*, *Discover*, *Vogue* and the *San Francisco Examiner*, among others. He is the principal photographer for the J. Paul Getty Museum and the author of many books including *Gathering Light* and *Museology*. For more information, please visit www.richardross.net or www.papress.com.

Location: Otis College of Art + Design, 9045 Lincoln Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90045

Parking: Free visitor parking inside gate at the La Tijera entrance and on the street

Gallery Hours: Tue – Sat: 10a – 5p / Thu: 10a – 7p. Closed Mondays & major holidays.

Gallery Office Hours: Mon – Fri: 10a – 5p

Gallery Admission: Free

Information: 310.665.6905, gallerinfo@otis.edu, www.otis.edu

Gallery Tours: 310.665.6909 to schedule tours for school, museum or other groups.

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