

The New Museum

OF CONTEMPORARY ART

583 BROADWAY NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10012 (212) 219-1222

Contact: Robert Blanchon, Public Affairs Assistant
212/219-1222 FAX: 212/431-5328

ALFREDO JAAR'S FIRST MAJOR NEW YORK MUSEUM SHOW TO OPEN AT THE NEW MUSEUM

1 + 1 + 1: Works by Alfredo Jaar, opening at The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York on January 15, 1992 and remaining on view through April 19, will present new works by this Chilean-born, New York-based artist, whose sculptural installations examine the inextricable links that tie the so-called "First World" to the "Third World." 1+1+1, the first major New York museum exhibition of Jaar's work, is a special presentation and the last stop of a traveling exhibition circulated by the San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art.

1+1+1 is comprised of works from three major series by the artist, each focusing on a different region of the globe. In the first, Jaar addresses the struggles experienced in Latin America, particularly as manifest in the 1980s gold rush at Brazil's largest open-pit gold mine, Serra Pelada. Images of impoverished miners and their harsh working conditions are transformed into a stark metaphor for disenfranchisement and power. In the next and most recent series, Jaar turns to Asia, examining the situation of Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong, whose lives are enmeshed in the turbulent history of Southeast Asia. More broadly, Jaar raises troubling questions about immigration and the entrenchment of national borders in today's global context. The exhibition includes, as well, a work from the artist's series on Africa. Investigating the impact of multinational capitalism on less developed countries, Jaar comments on the effects of dependency and domination.

Working primarily in the format of large-scale light box installations, Jaar culls his images from literally thousands of photographs and videotapes, most taken by the artist himself during research trips. The photographic portraits incorporated in his work focus on individuals whose lives are trapped in the social, political, and economic oppressions established by a colonialist legacy. Yet, through the use of mirrors, reflective pools of water, and unusual framing devices, Jaar's installations refuse to posit closure or conclusiveness. In his work Untitled (Water), for example, twenty-five small mirrors are hung in alignment with five double-sided light boxes. As the viewer approaches and moves through space, portraits of Vietnamese refugees on the back of the light boxes are partially glimpsed through reflection. By engaging the viewer physically and conceptually, Jaar's dramatic installations seek to undermine our preconditioned ways of looking at images and call attention to the bias of a partial view.

Looking to Latin America, Africa, and Asia, Jaar presents a vision of the global system as a fragile

- more -

ALFREDO JAAR AT THE NEW MUSEUM 2/2/2

network of interdependent parts--thus 1+1+1--subject always to the clash of competing forces. The exhibition at The New Museum utilizes the spatial configuration of the site to examine global power struggles, as well as the relationship between artist, viewer, and the museum itself. 1+1+1 will introduce a number of new works produced by the artist in 1991.

In conjunction with the exhibition, The New Museum will present "Global Histories and Contemporary Legacies," a high school teachers' seminar offering interdisciplinary approaches to contemporary global history. The seminar will include discussions with historians, artists, and community activists, as well as video screenings, viewings of contemporary art, and distribution of classroom resources. The seminar is organized by artist/educator Simon Leung in collaboration with Elyse Rivin, artist and English-as-a-Second Language teacher at International High School at Laguardia Community College. Guest speakers include artist Alfredo Jaar; Avon Drake, Director of African-American Studies and Professor of Political Science at Virginia Commonwealth University; Ward L. Kaiser, former executive director of Friendship Press and author of "A New View of the World," a handbook to the Peters Projection Map; Nkiru Nzegwu, Professor of Philosophy and Art History, SUNY Binghamton; and others. Scheduled for three consecutive Saturdays, March 7, 14, and 21, with a one-time registration fee of \$25, "Global Histories and Contemporary Legacies" is open to high school teachers of social studies, art, communications, media and other related subjects. To register, please call the Education Department at 212/219-1222.

1+1+1: Works by Alfredo Jaar was organized by The New Museum of Contemporary Art as a special part of the touring exhibition Alfredo Jaar, organized by the San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art. The New Museum's project is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with additional assistance provided by the Friendship Press, National Council of Churches, New York. The touring exhibition Alfredo Jaar was made possible by the generous support of Colette Carson Royston and Dr. Ivor Royston, the Lannan Foundation, the Metropolitan Life Foundation, and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

The New Museum of Contemporary Art is located at 583 Broadway between Prince and Houston Streets in Soho. Hours are Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday, noon to 6 PM; Friday and Saturday, noon to 8 PM; closed on Monday and Tuesday. Admission is by suggested contribution: \$3.50 general; \$2.50 artists, students, and seniors; members and children under 12, free.

Recorded information on events and programs may be obtained by calling 212/219-1355.