

# MODERN PAINTERS

INTERNATIONAL ARTS AND CULTURE FEBRUARY 2005

WHO CARES ABOUT  
**JOSEPH  
BEUYS?**

JERRY SALTZ  
VINCE ALETTI  
MATTHEW COLLINGS

**DAAN VAN  
GOLDEN**

WONG KAR WAI



JOSEPH BEUYS: MAMU, SPAIN; THE PICTURE: JAMES HAMILTON

In 1968 Sam Green was invited to be the sculptural advisor to the city of New York. At the time, the art scene was small but ideas of scale were expanding, and sculpture in particular was growing too large for the city's purposefully intimate art galleries. The uptown spaces, often the first or second floor of a luxury brownstone, could only exhibit proposals (at most) for large-scale sculpture. Since 1964, Green, in his role as Director of the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania, had been responsible for placing important sculpture throughout Philadelphia. And, though he was only 24, he'd already put Warhol (and himself) on the cultural map by giving Andy his first retrospective. Of course New York wanted him.

Green accepted the post and flourished there. Within a year he had placed an Olden-berg earthwork in Central Park, installed an enormous Tony Smith in Bryant Park and commissioned Barnett Newman to create the 26-foot-tall *Broken Obelisk* (now installed at MoMA) for the forecourt of the Seagram Building.

ED BAYNARD

# RESTORING THE REVERED

SAM GREEN'S MISSION TO PROTECT SACRED SITES

But despite all that activity, Green didn't focus his attention on New York alone. That same year, he discovered that the airlines Lan Chile and Air France were planning to create a mid-Pacific refuelling station on Easter Island and that its construction would involve the destruction of hundreds of stone Moai.

A visit to the island confirmed that only a publicity exercise of epic proportions could match the scale of this potential archaeological and anthropological disaster. On his return he secured enough private funds and influence to divert a cargo plane (en route from Vietnam) to fly the enormous head of a previously-decapitated Moai back to New York. It was installed on the plaza in front of the Seagram Building on a pedestal designed by Philip Johnson, the architect who had worked on the interiors for Mies van der Rohe's stunning building. *The New York Times* ran a cover story. The cognoscenti responded. The Moai were saved. And, having enjoyed collaborating with UNESCO on the project, Green decided to work for them.

He has since travelled the world obsessively in search of endangered sacred sites: 'The more remote, the more in need, the faster I have trekked to get there.' Green started by enlisting the help of friends and patrons to publicise sites in disastrous disrepair. In the early years 'marquee names'

such as Agnes Martin, John Lennon, Cecile de Rothschild, Cecil Beaton, Greta Garbo and Kerry Kennedy travelled with him to overlooked or disrespected religious relics and buildings. They attracted the attention of students, art collectors, artisans and CEO's who volunteered to support his endeavours.

But, by 1995, Green felt he 'could no longer stand by as development and erosion destroyed so many forgotten sites'; and so Landmarks Foundation was formed. He has always been clear that it 'exists with one purpose – to protect sacred sites', not palaces or fortresses or the vanities of nobility, but places that combine spiritual and aesthetic qualities. Similarly, the Foundation's criteria for supporting a project are not solely based on a site's degree of endangerment but the extent to which its restoration might relocate it as a focal point for the beliefs and rituals of a community or society.

These remote sites were once sacred to someone and what remains of our ancient artists must not be lost in the wake of our planet's expansion and unchecked development. In many cases, they remind us of the contemporary art we see in our galleries and museums. And perhaps it surprises us to see how these places of prayer, sacrifice, unknown and unknowable rituals are at once modern and ancient. ●

For further information visit [www.landmarksfoundation.org](http://www.landmarksfoundation.org)



(Photo Courtesy of Landmark Foundation)

Installation of Easter Island Moai on Seagram Building plaza, Park Avenue, New York City, 1968.



## The Stone Spheres of the Diquis Delta

### COSTA RICA

These mainly pre-Columbian orbs of solid granite, up to ten feet in diameter, accurate to within millimetres of roundness and weighing up to 16 tonnes, are being returned to their original site. There are many extravagant theories about their origins – involving everything from mythical giants to laser-wielding extra-terrestrials. I think they connect our contemporary earth artists' work – Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer, certainly Walter De Maria come to mind – to the unknowable past. What we do know is

that over the past 50 years many were stolen – carted away to sit by swimming pools and decorate front lawns. Landmarks Foundation convinced the Costa Rican government to consider the spiritual and historical importance of these pieces. Many have been returned, others are on their way home. Landmarks has proposed a plan to build a museum and reception centre for visitors who trek to this mysterious valley.

Photo By Gerald Forster

## The Gangteng Monastery

BHUTAN

Bhutan is the last intact Buddhist country in the world. One of its holiest sites is the 453-year-old Gangteng Monastery hidden in the Himalayas. This complex is truly alive and occupied by hundreds of practising monks but in 2002 it required extensive and complicated renovation. His Holiness, Gangteng Tulku Rinpoche, the monastery's spiritual leader, chose Landmarks Foundation to rescue and preserve this site. Structural studies were made and the Royal Government of Bhutan agreed to supervise the work, as well as to provide technical and architectural support. By last autumn, half of the main structure had been completed according to the complex plans, with minimum disruption to monastic life.

Right  
**Gangteng Monastery**  
Temple Paintings in Bhutan  
COURTESY LANDMARKS  
FOUNDATION

Below  
**The Cathedral at Ani, Turkey**  
PHOTO: PRINCESS ELIZABETH OF  
YUGOSLAVIA

Facing page  
**Stone spheres** in  
Costa Rica  
PHOTO: GERALD FORSTER



## Sajama BOLIVIA

These crossing lines are etched into the ground, with oxidized dark stones and earth scraped away, exposing a lighter surface. Up to two metres wide and ten kilometres long, they look like a vast Andy Goldsworthy seen from the sky. They operate as sacred roads, celebrating the worship of a celestial event. The geometric movement of the lines corresponded to the movement of stars, worshipped and viewed in the crux of the mountains by devotees who walked these paths for over 3,000 years. As the stars moved over time so the paths were moved, giving them the appearance of wings. Landmarks Foundation is supporting aerial surveillance and mapping, and hopes to develop the sacred networks for cultural and archaeological tourism in Bolivia to ensure that the lines remain and that impoverished villages will benefit from the visitors.



Above  
**Sajama lines**  
Sajama, Bolivia  
COURTESY THE UNIVERSITY OF  
PENNSYLVANIA ARCHIVES

## The Cathedral at Ani

TURKEY

This extraordinary proto-Gothic church has been abandoned since the fourteenth century. Ninth- and tenth-century crusaders once worshipped in it, returning to Europe with the true seeds of the Gothic. It is in fact Armenian but was annexed by the Turks, whose authorities recently had cement poured over the walls (in a misguided attempt to preserve them) and whose soldiers have used it for target practice. In 1997 Green coordinated a team of international engineers, archaeologists and preservationists to begin restoring it, having taken 'three days to persuade the Turkish Government how important this holy site is'. Returning this year, Landmarks found it well cared for and secured from desecration. Once surrounded by a village, this solitary cathedral stands on an island between rivers. The way that everything else has been removed reminds me of the art of Gordon Matta-Clark, but what remains is a structure that is pure Rachel Whiteread.