



F-111 (1964), by James Rosenquist.

Antony and the Johnsons Croon at Radio City

MEANWHILE, AS ANDREA FRASER CHARTS A LIFE OF INSTITUTIONAL CRITIQUE AT MOMA ...

Its chief curator reconceives a James Rosenquist masterpiece

ONE NIGHT ONLY

It was Thursday night at Radio City Music Hall, before the Museum of Modern Art's massive Antony and the Johnsons show, and MoMA PS1 director Klaus Biesenbach was busy showing the famous people to their designated seats, stage right of center. Apparently there'd been a slight miscommunication when it came to David Blaine's comp tickets.

"I sent you five emails!" said Mr. Blaine, in the aisle, his date just behind him.

"But only in the last hour!" the svelte director responded, turning away from Jerry Saltz and Roberta Smith, exasperated. "Not before! Not before!"

"I bought these two tickets!" The magician held them displayed.

"You should present them to someone on the street," chimed in Leele Sobieski, whose aisle seat made her a de facto usher. She waved her hands in front of her face. "This is magic, poof!"

Once everyone was settled, the performance began and it was, of course, terrific. Antony Hegarty took the stage with a single microphone and white robe under a giant sculpture that resembled Chinese kites in a heart-shape arrangement. Some of the kites were foil-coated, but the bounding lasers made it difficult to tell which sections were truly reflective. The singer performed with a 60-piece orchestra, and the dancing Nico Mulhy arrangements drew attention to how many angles already exist in Antony's voice and lyrics, even without such accompaniment. The early songs were front-loaded with a rising, never breaking, never pleading hymnal sound and turned the Art Deco palace into an outer-space temple to transexualism.

"Every thing is new," he sang in one of the songs and you believed him, since the lasers offered a different stage

with each track. At one point Antony was trapped in two isosceles laser triangles, and for his cover of "Crazy in Love," a laser pendulum swung back and forth, hitting a reflective patch at his feet so that when it came to him, it shattered out onto the crowd.

"Well, that's the bulk of the show," Antony said in his soft accent, near the end, his first spoken words to the audience. "I'm so fucking glad. It was so ambitious, this project!"

The rest of the show wound down and everyone prepared to leave. Matthew Barney put on his leather jacket and Björk donned her veil.

Lady Bunny, a cross-dresser from Antony's days at the Pyramid Club and who hardly needed her beehive wig to be one of the largest people in the audience, sat in the back row. Antony had arranged a comp ticket for her in the beautiful people section, though she'd graciously moved to the back because her wig would have transformed the seat of anyone behind her into a partial view. She couldn't really say what Antony's performances were like back at the Pyramid.

"I really didn't go. I worked other nights. I worked the weekends and he was on Tuesdays." Bunny glanced around the packed house theatrically. "Look how times have changed!" —Dan Duray

INSIDE THE WHITE CUBE

"When I moved to New York at 16, as Sabine mentioned, I encountered the great museums of New York—the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan, the Whitney, the Guggenheim," the artist Andrea Fraser told a crowd last night. "I found them absolutely terrifying. I found them incredibly intimidating, with their overwhelming le-

gitimacy, their overwhelming authority."

Clad in a black pantsuit, Ms. Fraser, who will participate in the 2012 Whitney Biennial in March, was standing at a podium in one of the basement theaters of MoMA, and she had just been introduced by the museum's media and performance curator, Sabine Breitwieser, an old friend. There was a sold-out crowd to hear her lecture about her work inside one of the institutions she has spent her career prodding and critiquing.

Ms. Fraser told stories from her journeys. Visiting Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao about a decade ago, she picked up an audio guide. "I started doubling over laughing," she said. Later, she returned with a secret cameraman and shot a film, *Little Frank and His Crap*. She stars in a short lime-green dress, wandering the museum's soaring atrium, audio guide to her ear.

"In the great museums of previous ages, rooms are linked from one to another, and you must visit them all, one after another," a haughty male voice intones over the video. "Sometimes it can feel as if there is no escape." Not so at the airy Guggenheim Bilbao, he explains. The space is also filled with curving stone blocks. "Go right up to it," he says, as the artist follows his orders. "Rub your hand over them. ... Feel how smooth it is." She lifts her dress, begins stroking herself. A small audience of men watches her from behind. And then the film ends.

Around the time she made the film, museum commissions had dwindled, and she said that she realized she was going to need to work with the market again, where the art world's attention was focused. Her voice broke and she appeared to choke up. "It felt like, for me, that I was betraying something that I stood for during much of the 1990s—developing an alternative to the market model and the commodity form. And then that emotion disappeared and she immediately became confident. "I thought, if I'm going to have to sell it, I might as well really sell it."

This led to what is undoubtedly her most infamous piece, *Untitled* (2003), a video in which she has sex with in a hotel room with a collector, who as it happened, had purchased *Little Frank*. The work is an edition of five, and the first one was given to the collector. "There were

four more to sell, and when it came to selling those I had my breakdown with this piece," she said.

Ms. Fraser explained that she realized at the time, because of the state of her prices, that if she sold the works, others would potentially be able to make more money on the video in the future. She began choking up again. The room was silent. "That price that was put on this piece was a price stamped on my head or my ass."

She continued. When the piece was first sold, she declined to reveal the price, she said, adding, "I'm able to admit now that that decision had a lot to do with shame ... knowing that however outrageous the numbers that were circulating in association with the piece might seem to non-art audiences, I knew very well that the painter having the next show at my gallery was selling works for much, much, much more than that."

In the question section, no one asked Ms. Fraser about

her apparent discomposure, though one woman in the audience thanked her for sharing her feelings about esteem being tied to prices. "You left that hotel room, and you could not fuck yourself into a Richard Phillips painting," the woman said. "You couldn't make something that was ever going to have that kind of value, and yet you were playing in that arena."

"With profound ambivalence," Ms. Fraser cut in.

At the end, Ms. Breitwieser thanked everyone for coming and turned to Ms. Fraser. "Sometimes we're not sure if you're performing, or if it's your," she said. "But we'll keep it open." —Andrew Russeth

LEOGRAPHY

Last Thursday, the Museum of Modern Art debuted its reinstatement of James Rosenquist's *F-111* (1964), a garish, 21-panel, 10-by-86-foot critique of American consumerism and the military-industrial complex designed to fill and consume the original 23-by-22-foot Leo Castelli gallery on East 77th Street. Though the work has seen its share of time in museums—it was billed by *The New York Times* as "the biggest Pop Art painting in the world" when it was installed at the Jewish Museum in 1965 (can't you see somebody saying, "Look we're never going to understand Pop art unless we see a lot of it, and this one is the biggest?")—MoMA has billed this permanent collection display as faithful

above all others and built a little room on the fourth floor to the exact, tiny specifications of the Castelli gallery, with the painting wrapped around all four walls of the interior.

Reached by phone, Mr. Rosenquist said he's a fan of the new installation.

"When you come out of the contemporary room right across the hallway and you look and you see part of my painting, it looks like it's avant-garde, or it's in the future, and the damn thing is 47 years old," he said. "It's in pretty good shape."

When you first walk through the doors, you notice a demented child under a domed hair dryer, engulfed in atomic bomb fire that curls from an explosion to the right, under an umbrella. Wrapping around the whole gallery is the outline of the eponymous jet, interspersed with props like a runner's hurdle, a Firestone tire, broken lightbulbs, thick, canned spaghetti and an angel food cake. Metal panels hug the entry.

The museum's positioned a handful of collages right outside the current Castelli installation, studies for the work taken largely from *Life* magazine (apparently we have Hollis Frampton to thank for the swirling spaghetti, not Chef Boyardee, as some viewers might have suspected). The bomb-haired girl really did look that hideous in *Life*, and Mr. Rosenquist seemed to have taken the dryer from a Coca-Cola ad in which two women in pink raincoats gossip over Cokes and fry their hair. Mr. Rosenquist attributed his painting's continued relevance to the end of history.

"If I was another person and had a show at the Museum of Modern Art in 1961 of a painting that was 47 years old, it would have been done in 1914," he explained. "What would have happened since 1914? Cubism. World War I. World War II. Tons of things happened. Wars and conflicts, and everything else. So here we are now from 1965 to 2012, and it makes me think about what's happened since then. The Berlin Wall came down, but that's about it. So this feels very recent."

In a time of ever-growing gallery sizes, though, the Castelli dimensions harken back to earlier days, and chief painting and sculpture curator Ann Temkin said it was an idea she'd wanted to try for some time.

"It's something we probably don't think about often enough, the changes that have happened during the last 40 years, in terms of the way we perceive and physically experience art," Ms. Temkin told *The Observer*. "Because it's not just about the objects themselves, it's about the settings, and to think that that was a place where so much art history was made—in today's terms it's just a single small room. It's important for people to know that." —D.D.



Antony and the Johnsons at Radio City Music Hall.