



Rolldown Steel Murals On Bowery Storefronts

The steel roller shutters found on the front of commercial supply shops along the Bowery were once a playground for graffiti artists. But now, for a few months anyway, they are going to be used as canvases for a more upscale group of painters. There's a catch. The art will be visible only at the end of each day, when the stores have closed and the shutters have been pulled down.

The installation, "After Hours 2: Murals on the Bowery," starting April 25, has been organized by the nonprofit Art Production Fund. Well-known figures like Mel Bochner, Michael Craig-Martin, Laura Owens, Adam Pendleton and Dana Schutz have created works for it.

"They're all site-specific, and they all relate to the neighborhood," said Yvonne Force Villareal, co-founder of the fund. The project, on view through Sept. 29, is part of this year's Ideas City Festival, a series of arts and civic events that the New Museum and other downtown cultural institutions will conduct, May 1 to 4.

Thirteen of the 14 artists whose work makes up "After Hours 2" were invited by the Art Production Fund. One, however, was chosen from an open call for submissions that was posted last month on the Web sites of the New Museum and the Art Production Fund.

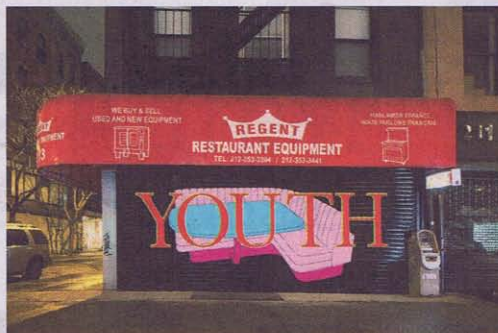
A jury of arts professionals whittled more than 100 entries down to 5. The final choice was made by a group of students aged 15 to 18 who are part of after-school programs like G: Class, at the New Museum; Groundswell, a community youth organization; and University Settlement, another youth group that works with the New Museum. They selected Nao Uda, a 29-year-old artist from Tokyo who has created a cartoonlike figure holding a string of paper-doll-like figures that echo its own shape.

Most of the murals are colorful and have strong graphic images or words or both. Mr. Bochner, for example, has created a bright blue background with "BLAH" scribbled over the entire surface in white lettering.

Colossal Media, from Brooklyn, is working from the artists' images to do the actual painting on the shutters. Next to each mural will be a telephone number that

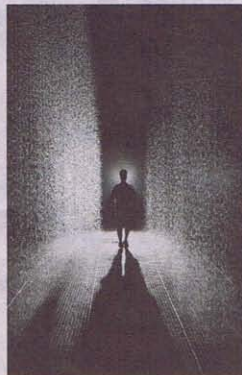
Inside Art

Carol Vogel



MICHAEL CRAIG-MARTIN/ART PRODUCTION FUND

Security gates turn into canvases for "After Hours 2: Murals on the Bowery," as in this rendering by Michael Craig-Martin.



FELIX CLAY

The "Rain Room" at the Barbican Center in London.

viewers can call to hear the artist talking about the project. "It's a cellphone audio guide," Ms. Villareal said.

Dry in a Downpour

Right before the "Rain Room" closed in March, crowds waited more than 12 hours outside the Barbican Center in London to see it. Visitors would walk into a space where it was pouring rain and not get wet. Created by Random International, three artists who met when they were students at the Royal College of Art in London in 2005, the installation became a sensation, attracting about 77,000 visitors in the five

months it was on view.

The Museum of Modern Art is bracing for the same kind of response when the "Rain Room" arrives at a vacant lot to the west of the museum's building on 54th Street and Avenue of the Americas from May 12 through July 28. Composed of a 5,000-square-foot field of falling water, the "Rain Room" is programmed digitally to create a carefully choreographed downpour that uses motion detectors to create a dry path for viewers.

Klaus Biesenbach, director of MoMA PS1 in Long Island City, Queens, and chief curator at large at MoMA, said the "Rain Room" was part of Expo 1, PS1's exploration of the current state of the environment. "The 'Rain Room' makes you feel the forces of nature," Mr. Biesenbach explained.

He is also initiating other projects at PS1 that deal with the environment. These will include "Your Waste of Time," by the Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson. That work, which will be on display from May 12 to Sept. 2, incorporates several blocks of ice harvested from a beach in Iceland after naturally separating from glaciers. The blocks contain traces of volcanic ash. Visitors will be able to walk through the installation, so they can examine them closely.

Art From the '60s

Spring at the National Gallery of Art in Washington isn't just