

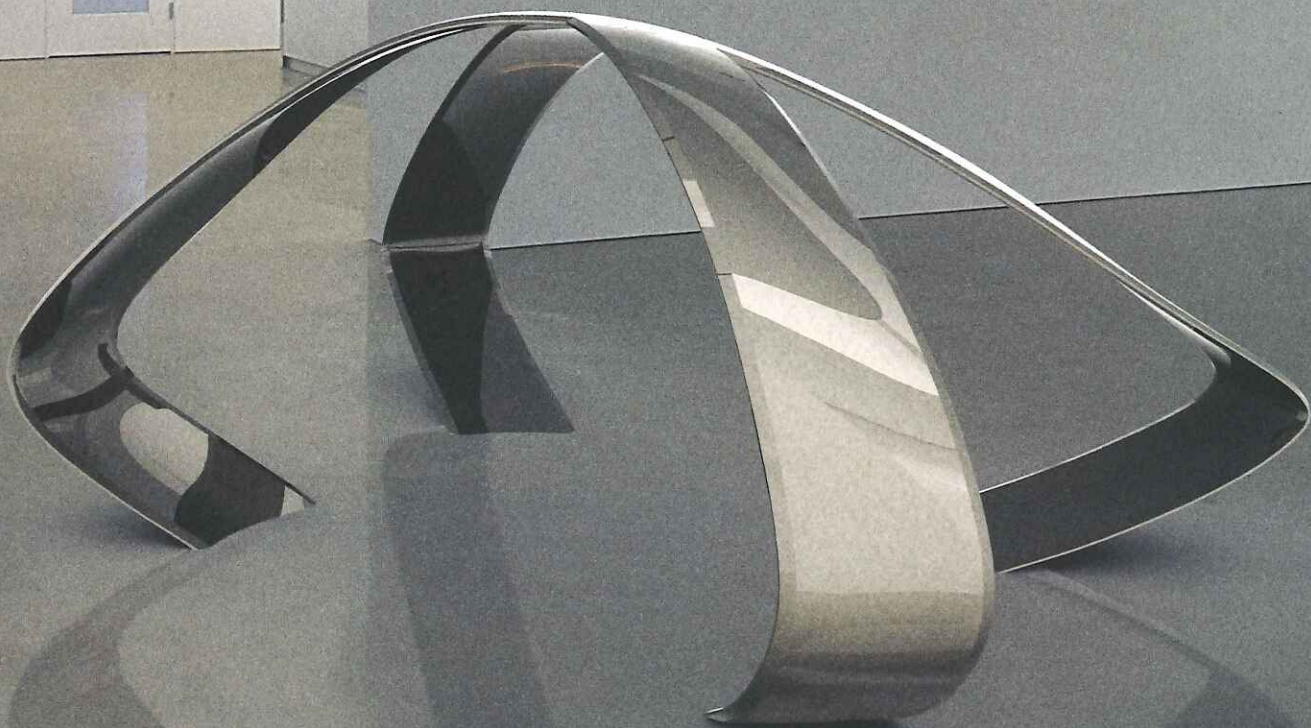
# PATRON

ART / CULTURE / DESIGN

2ND ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

**NASHER XCHANGE EMBRACES  
A DECADE OF ART** by Lee Cullum

Into The Garden: Crow Collection's Sanctuary  
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*GRACIOUS ENTRY: Piano Pavilion at the Kimbell*  
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**Plus:**

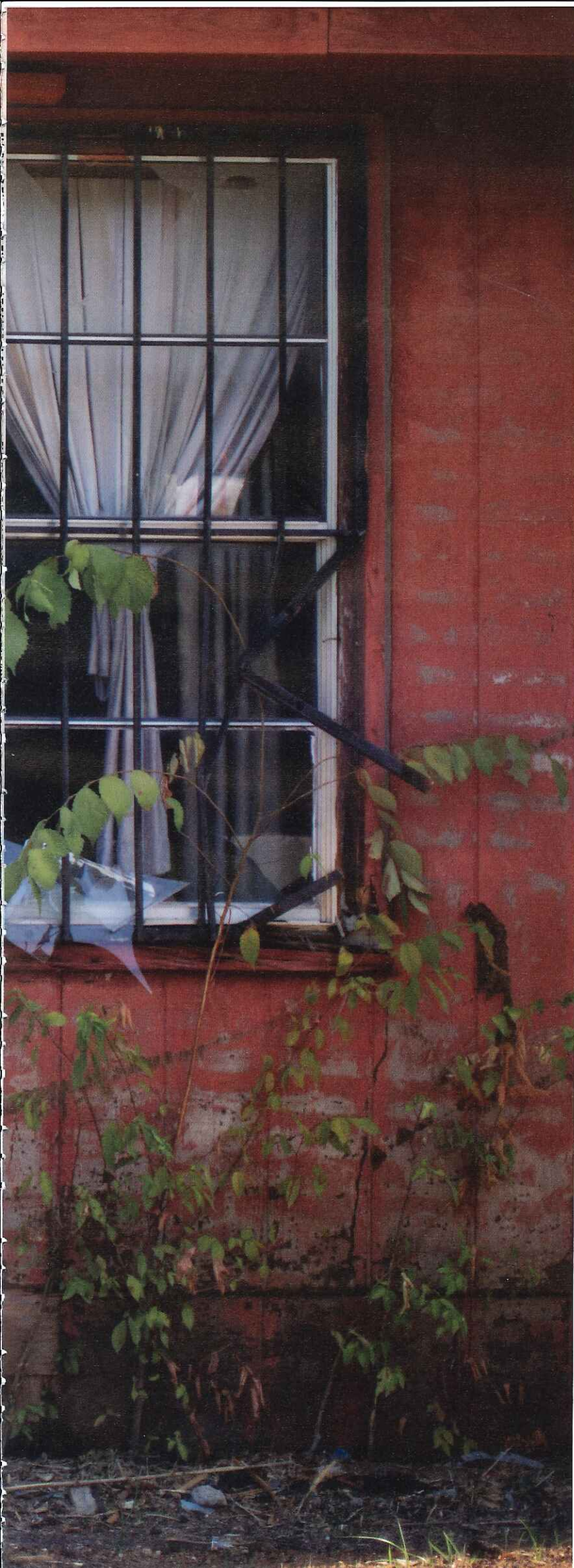
JFK Symposium with Jim Lehrer  
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Jeremy Strick, Director of the Nasher Sculpture Center, at the site of *Buried House* by Lara Almarcegui.  
Opposite: House slated for demolition for *Buried House* by Lara Almarcegui in Oak Cliff Gardens.

# XCHANGE RATE

THE NASHER CELEBRATES 10 YEARS WITH 10 ARTISTS AS DIVERSE AS ITS OWN COLLECTION.





BY LEE CULLUM

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALLISON V. SMITH

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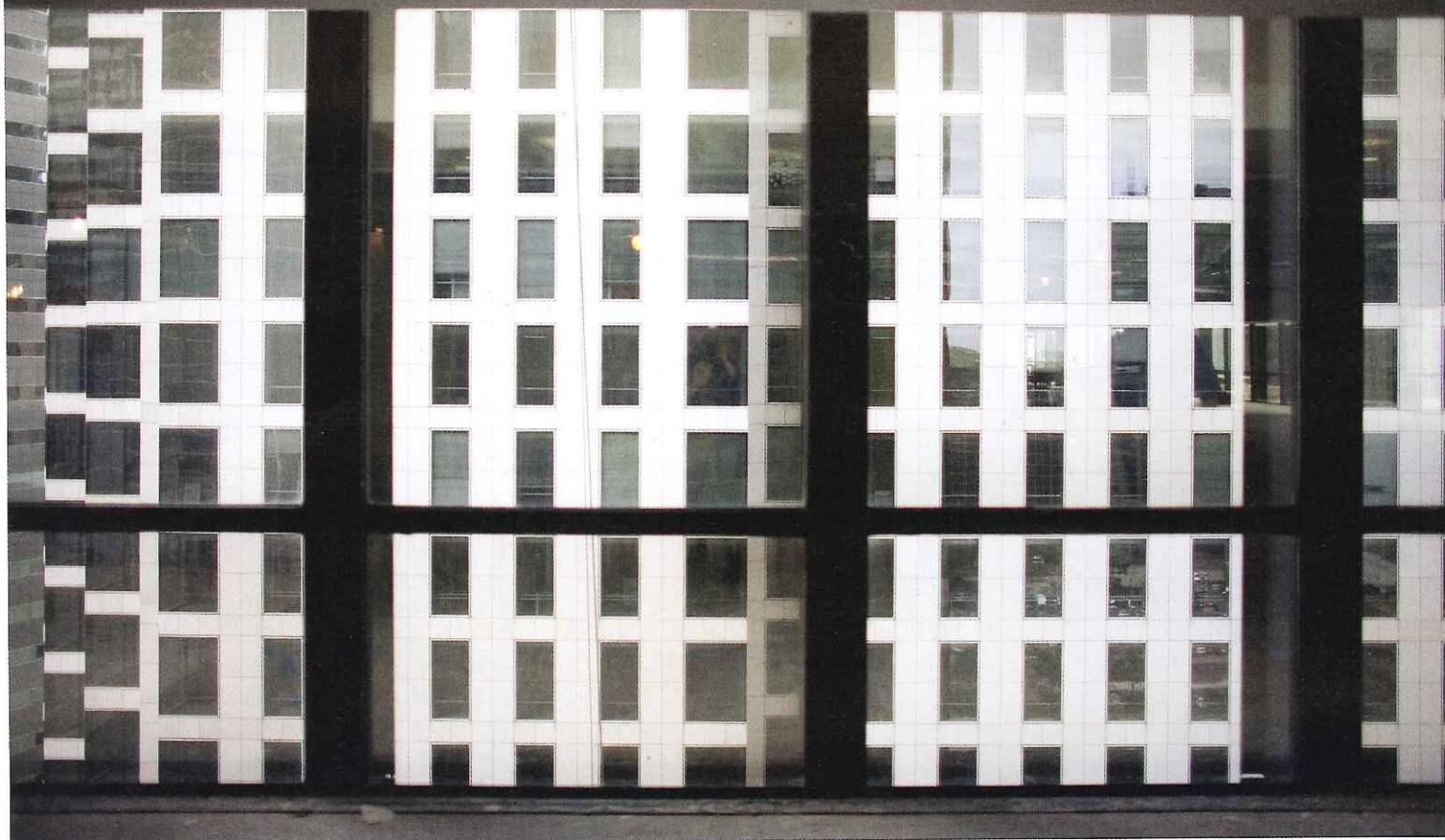
**T**he Nasher at 10 years! How extraordinary, now, to trace its beginnings back to the house that Ray and Patsy bought long before they built the collection that made them famous in the annals of 20<sup>th</sup>-century sculpture.

Enter through the front door in those days and what greeted you was a formidable, overwhelming female figure by Gaston Lachaise, the woman who bowled over Nanuli Schevardnadze when she saw it at Washington's National Gallery. The wife of the Soviet foreign minister loved it because she thought it looked like her—ample. Turn left, and there was a graceful Jean Arp, said in one account (*Épitome of Desire* by Robert A. Wilson) to be the Nashers' first great acquisition.

Then, on the other side, the magic of the place revealed itself in full: the Giacomettis, tragic in their implications that could not be foreseen in the early *Cubist Head* by the Swiss master, much less the elegant male figure by Auguste Rodin that gazed ahead in 1876 and saw nothing but beauty in the anatomy of the century to come. It would be a world compatible with the blissful *Kiss* by Constantin Brâncuși that rested happily on the dining room table.



Inside Bryan Tower in downtown Dallas, the site of Good/Bad Art Collective's CURTAINS project.



There was a time when Ray considered creating a museum and sculpture garden at his house, with its spectacular setting, stretching in evergreen ecstasy in every direction. But he worried about the neighbors and the opposition they could bring to bear at City Hall.

When Ray finally settled on the site of the Nasher, he also settled on Renzo Piano as the architect who could make the project sing. It was a brilliant choice. Enveloped by the calm of good proportion, the Nasher Sculpture Center, seemingly, was born perfect. Every decision, however arbitrary at the time, appears now to have been inevitable.

Anchored in the order of the Greek imagination, however Genoan its disposition, the Nasher is suffused with unalloyed joy. Piano is so attuned to tuning out the cacophony of life in Italy, from Versace to Berlusconi, that his walls absorb the follies of those who fail to grasp their inner meanings. Endowed with the ancient poise of olive trees that know their indispensability, the Nasher today exudes a world of youthful beauty, wit, and resonance, a world where it is always afternoon, as Tennyson once

wrote. Take the show of Katharina Grosse, with its fantastic forms and colors deliciously fresh from Berlin—geological, anthropological, psychological, and more fun than a Ferris wheel and rollercoaster rolled together. Or the sounds of Soundings, new music at the Nasher, willing to be weird, strangely affecting, or dangerously serious.

All this can be traced to the masterful direction of Jeremy Strick, whose breathtakingly original and strategic intelligence has made the Nasher flourish as a bastion of the new. “The unique setting and collection of the Nasher allows us to create resonant conversations between masterpieces of modern sculpture and the most advanced expressions of contemporary artists,” says Strick. “The exceptional beauty and intimacy of the building, garden, and collection fosters innovation and experimentation and helps us to see things in new, fresh ways.”

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of this icon of high spirits unconstrained, Strick has commissioned 10 works of sculpture to enlighten the landscape of Dallas and show its people something about themselves they may never have known before. This

project he calls the Nasher XChange.

One of the first artists summoned was Liz Larner of Los Angeles, perfect for the project since X's were already central to her vocabulary (as seen on the anniversary cover). The site she chose was ATEC, the confluence of art and technology at the University of Texas at Dallas. It made sense for Larner, since the models for her sculpture are developed on a computer. Then, with 3-D manufacturing, she makes a mold into which stainless steel, in the case of UTD, is poured.

"It's very large," Larner explains, describing the Nasher piece. "You enter into the center of it...deep inside ATEC." She cautions viewers not to be misled by the digital aspects of her work. "I am very much about the real."

Larner is also very much about Texas, in her California way. She made a grand tour in the mid-1990s, from Marfa to the home of Ray Nasher in Dallas, where she saw the collection for the first time. She fell in love, as everybody does, with Brâncuși's *Kiss*, but also with *For Dolores* by Tony Smith, a

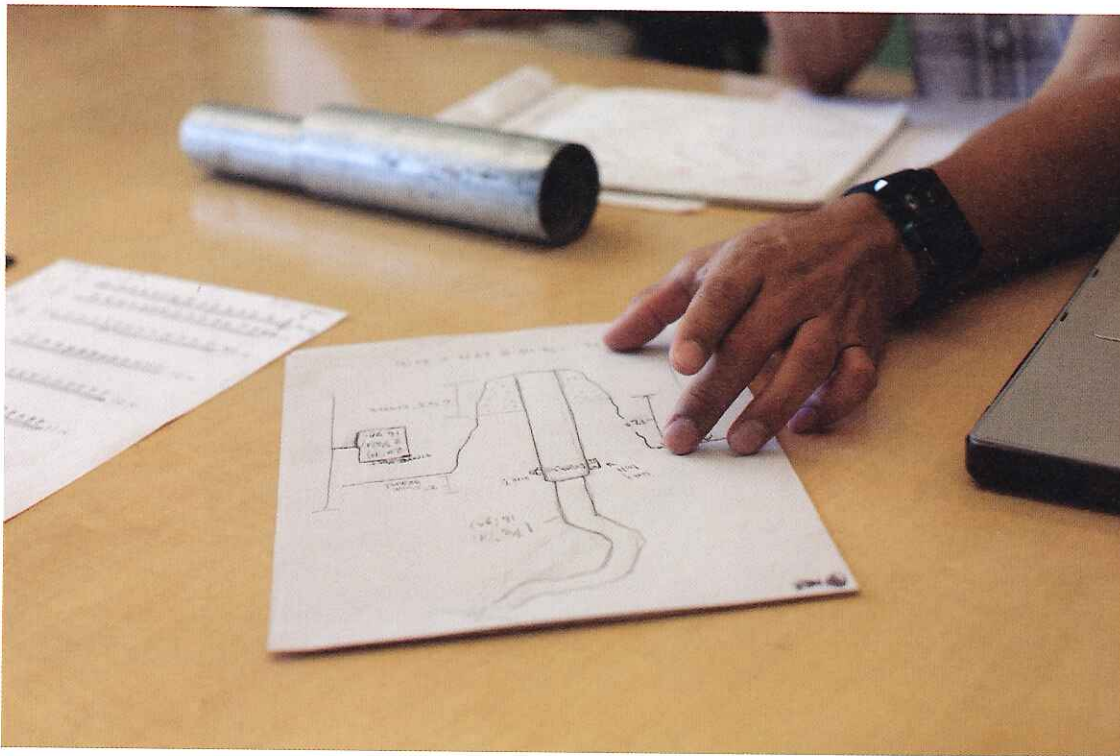
complicated, geometric work in Carrara marble.

What also appeals to Larner is "the elastic relation between the Nasher and the city," posing always the question: "What's the museum and how far does it reach?"

Certainly it reaches to Vickery Meadow, the small, urban land of 27 languages—African, Asian, and more—where Houston's Rick Lowe is creating a pop-up market (he calls it social sculpture) that will open to the public on the third Saturday of each month from October through February. Spaces there will be temporary—maybe white cubes designed by JHP, plus two other architectural firms in Dallas—but the products on sale, including arts, crafts, and foods created with guidance from Lowe, will be made to linger in the memory of all who encounter them.

"The thing that's exciting about the Nasher," says Lowe, "is that it's one of the most cutting-edge cultural institutions in the country." What's more, he adds, "I have never been in a situation where the museum is so supportive of the artist."

It was a short trip for Ruben Ochoa from Los



A drawing by Ruben Ochoa for his *Flock in Space* sculpture at the Trinity River Audubon Center.

Road sign at Fish Trap Lake, site of Ugo Rondinone's *descent* pier.



Natural landscape at Fish Trap Lake, site of Ugo Rondinone's dear *sunset pier*.

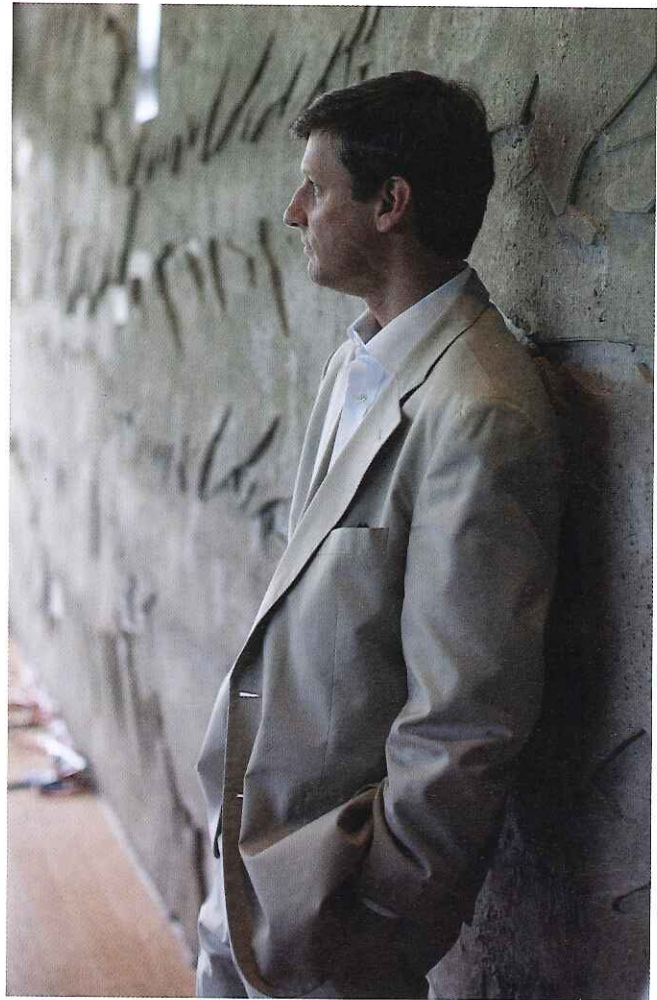
Angeles to the Trinity River Audubon Center, where the lawless dump it once had been seemed natural for his rough materials, ready or not, to be shaped into the sculpture he imaged for them. For the Audubon he ordered 100 galvanized steel fence posts, some 18 feet tall, and bent them into *Flock in Space*, designed to resemble in spirit Brâncuși's *Bird in Space*. Grounded in concrete, they might seem to some, he says, more like a "bolt of lightning."

Lara Almarcegui might seem like a bolt of lightning, too. A Spanish artist living in Rotterdam, she is one of the most provocative figures in the Nasher XChange, because she bases her work on the rubble of life, the tearing down and building up then tearing down again, and again, making landfill of dreams long lost and the Ozymandian ambitions of every generation.

Fresh from the Venice Biennale, where she did the pavilion for Spain, dumping in it 700 pounds of brick, concrete, wood, glass, and steel that would have been needed to build it in the first place—ashes to ashes—Almarcegui has in mind for the Nasher a small house in South Dallas that has been empty for years. She will demolish it, collect what's left and bury it, leaving a small mound of earth to suggest that someone once lived there, perhaps with hope. This will be a collaboration with Habitat for Humanity, which will build another house on the lot in yet another cycle of a city on the edge.

As for the Nasher, what inspires Almarcegui there is the dedication to sculpture, which "often is forgotten."

No one, however, will forget Charles Long and the 14-foot-high happening he has in mind for NorthPark Center. It will be a giant inverted pyramid made of rock with three kiosks 10 feet away in three directions, each equipped with touchscreens inviting passersby to give a small token donation to the North Texas Food Bank, CASA (for kids on alcohol or drugs), or a library at the mall.



Jed Morse, Chief Curator, Nasher Sculpture Center.



Here: Celebrating cultures in Vickery Meadow, site of Rick Lowe's *Translation* project. Below: Artist Rick Lowe in the Vickery Meadow neighborhood.



If you do donate, says Long, a “goofy, cartoony coin” will appear on the screen. Swing it toward the fountain—that’s the pyramid—and you’ll hear a swishing sound as money, Gatsby-like, explodes on the surface creating, by projection, “a cascade of dollar bills.” The name of the work? *Fountainbead*. Ayn Rand lives on, but not in the way she might have expected. “I’m mixing up the value,” declares Long. “It seems like there’s all this money, but it’s an illusion.”

Long has the closest bond to the Nasher collection of any artist with whom I spoke. That’s because he’s a professor at the University of California at Riverside and teaches those sculptures. His favorites? The haunting wax-over-plaster heads by Medardo Rosso. Also Paul Gauguin’s *Tabitian Girl*, because this wooden talisman is “so strange and beautiful...The way it was shown at the Nasher [made it possible to see] the back of the piece...the big nails and wire that put head and body together...It demystifies things quite a bit.”

Mystery is what Vicki Meek was seeking when she chose Bishop College as the scene of her work for the Nasher XChange. Michael Sorrell, president of Paul Quinn College, which stands now where Bishop used to be, reportedly asked, “Why are you doing this?”

“It seems like there’s all this money, but it’s an illusion.”

—Charles Long, on his installation at NorthPark Center

“That campus vanished years ago,” he pointed out. “That’s exactly why I’m here,” retorted Meek. She wanted to understand how Milton Curry, as president of Bishop, championed the arts, in the unlikeliest of days, including the efforts of Ann Williams that led to the Black Dance Theatre.

Searching for the mystery of creative endurance, Meek is building 15 cultural markers of porcelain enamel, similar to what she used at the Hatcher Station for DART. Drawing on mythology, African imagery, old newspapers, articles, and yearbooks plus computer apps, the pieces will line the main drag all the way to the chapel. Appearing in each of them will be Curry, the “ghost image,” she said, “anchoring all these works.”

And what of the Nasher for Meek? “I’m drawn to Giacometti,” she says, “and always to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, [especially] Rodin.” She sees in this work a depth of craftsmanship too often missing today.

What better time than the 10th anniversary of

the Nasher for Martin Iles to reconvene the Good/Bad Art Collective of Denton? The group will hold forth on the 14th floor of Bryan Tower, turning it into a television studio on October 19, where those who stop by will be interviewed, taped, and edited into a documentary that is “more David Lynch than infomercial” and aired on various TV stations. It will celebrate not only the Nasher, but also the reunion of compatriots who admit to being “kind of radical [as well as] legendary.”

“To be picked up out of obscurity shows how involved Jed [Morse] and people at the Nasher are. They’re not afraid to take chances.” So says Iles, and he’s right.

May the Nasher always be the home of the free, of the brave, of the new, the bold, the daring, the unexpected, the unconventional, the unafraid, the unforgiven, the high order of art and life that, true to the two whose name is by the door, never, ever settles for second-rate.

Happy anniversary, Nasher Sculpture Center. **P**



Celebrating cultures in Vickery Meadow, site of Rick Lowe's Translation project.