



ALFREDO JAAR WORKS



MUSEUM

NOVEMBER 7, 1991 - MARCH 29, 1992

**HIRSHHORN MUSEUM AND
SCULPTURE GARDEN**

Photographs: The White House; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution (photo by Lee Stalsworth).

In Hirshhorn WORKS—a special exhibition program—invited artists choose a site in the building or on the grounds to create a temporary work of art. The Hirshhorn believes that having artists work on site, using the museum as both studio and medium, not only enlivens and transforms this environment but sheds light on some of the motivations and issues underlying site-specific art—an important aspect of contemporary artistic expression.

In his installations, Alfredo Jaar highlights the unequal but interrelated economic and power relations between different segments of society, in particular the disparities between the “First” and “Third” Worlds. Jaar’s installations are formally elegant arrangements of photographic light boxes showing pictures of the disenfranchised, at times combined with other sculptural elements. He often places these images high or low on the walls and at the margins of a room to reflect their subjects’ peripheral status in society. Borrowing an advertising strategy of presenting an arresting image in high-key color, back-lit for optimum glow, Jaar depicts these normally invisible victims in a paradoxically refined manner, simultaneously emphasizing our detachment from them and calling this disengagement into question. His statement delineates his reasons for choosing the Abram Lerner Room as a space in which to work.

Amada Cruz
Assistant Curator

I have chosen the Lerner Room because of the large windows overlooking the city. They are the only break in the exterior surface of this imposing bunker structure, the only crack in the skin of this defiant, self-contained, monolithic monument. Ada Louise Huxtable wrote of the Hirshhorn’s “monumental absolutism so unyielding that the environment crumbles before it,” but I think she missed the point entirely. We have here a perfect metaphor for culture’s place in this society—as isolated as possible, as safe as possible. Let’s keep the real world outside. So, in a way, I had no other choice: that small fissure is my only chance to connect culture with the real world, where it belongs.

Alfredo Jaar

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Santiago, Chile, Alfredo Jaar has lived and worked in New York since 1982. He was educated in Chile and began showing in South America and Europe. His exhibitions include an installation at the Spring Street and Avenue of the Americas subway station in New York City (1986) and solo shows at the Lannan Museum (1987), the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania (1988), the Brooklyn Museum (1989), the La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art (1990), and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (1991). His work has been seen in many international group shows, including the *São Paulo Bienal* (1985, 1987), *Venice Biennale* (1986), *Documenta 8* in Kassel, Germany (1987), *Magiciens de la Terre* at the Musée National d'Art Moderne and Grande Halle de la Villette in Paris (1989), and the *Biennale of Sydney* (1990). Among his awards are: John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship (1985), Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation (1987), Visual Artists Fellowship, National Endowment for the Arts (1987), and Berliner Künstlerprogramm, Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, (1989).

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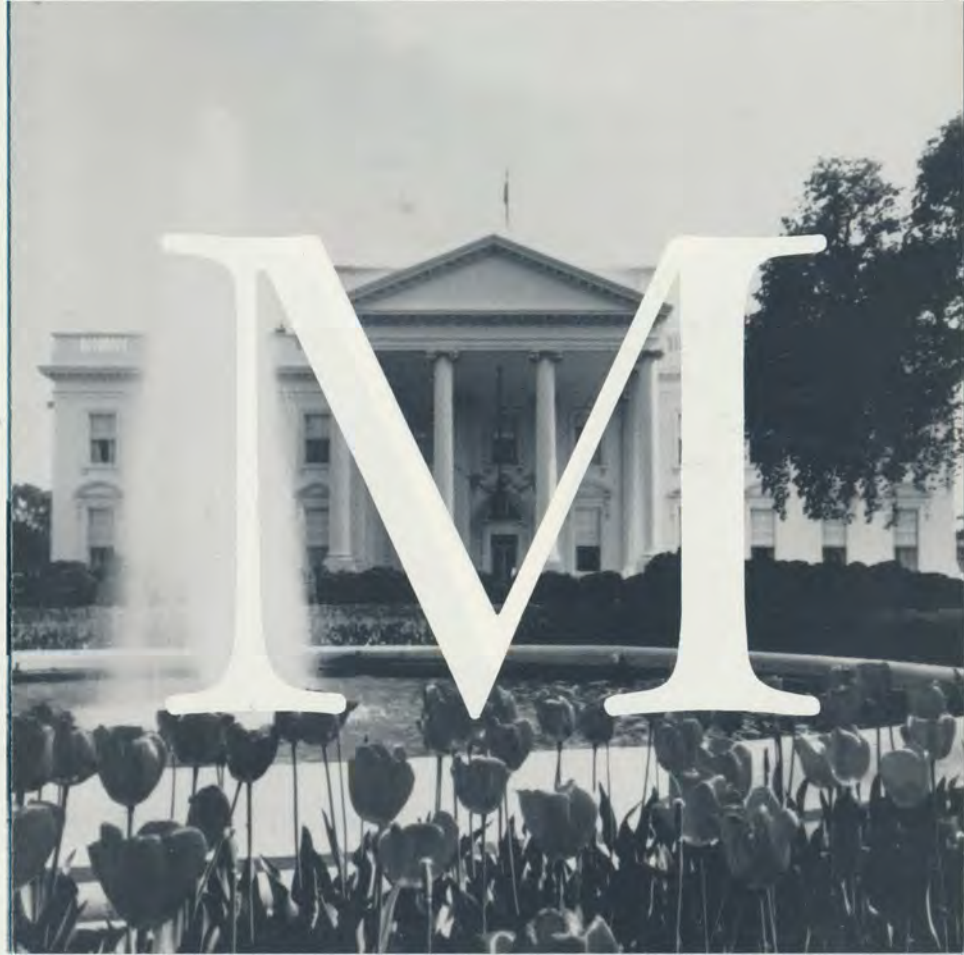
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