

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Coline Millard, "Going for the Gold," *Art + Auction*, July/August 2012.

DATEBOOK

JULY/AUGUST 2012 THIS SEASON'S CULTURAL AGENDA

LONDON

Going for the Gold

This summer in London, art may be the only thing more unavoidable than athletes. The **London 2012 Festival**, a 12-week cultural extravaganza opening June 21 and overlapping the **2012 Olympic Games** to run through September 9, will fill the city and points beyond with theater, dance, music performances, and all manner of fine-art events. Rather than promoting the safe and old-fashioned, organizers are placing the nation's leading contemporary artists at the heart of the enterprise.

Even before the launch, posters commissioned from the likes of **Martin Creed**, **Tracey Emin**, **Sarah Morris**, and **Chris Ofili** for the Olympic and Paralympic Games set the tone. And at 8 AM on July 27, for the official opening of the Games, Creed is inviting Britain to perform his *Work No. 1197: All the bells in a country rung as quickly and as loudly as possible for three minutes*. The Royal Navy's ships are already signed up, and anyone can join in for what promises to be both a very communal and a rather singular celebration.

Slated for a wide-ranging tour, **Jeremy Deller's** Stonehenge-shaped bouncy castle, *Sacrilege*, a tongue-in-cheek comment on the links between heritage and mass entertainment, will spread unpretentious fun throughout the country, while in East London, **Frieze Foundation**—the nonprofit branch of the eponymous art fair—has plotted projects with emerging artists such as **Can Altay**, **Nicholas Byrne**, **Anthea Hamilton**, and **Gary Webb**.

Most museums in London have saved their blockbuster shows for the Olympic period. **Damien Hirst's** midcareer retrospective is at **Tate Modern**, which will also be hosting a large performance-art commission by **Tino Sehgal**, as well as a 15-week performance series in the tanks that were used to hold fuel during the building's previous life as a power station. At the **Serpentine Gallery**, **Yoko Ono** will set up a filmic anthology of portraits, asking members of the public to record their smile in a custom-designed booth installed on the Serpentine's lawn. Soberly titled *#smilefilm*, the project coincides



The ArcelorMittal Orbit tower, designed by artist Anish Kapoor and engineer Cecil Balmond, affords Olympic Games-goers remarkable vistas but has met with mixed reviews.

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with a major show of the artist in the gallery, which will also unveil its 12th architectural commission: an excavated pavilion designed by **Ai Weiwei** and **Herzog & de Meuron**.

Despite its moniker, the London 2012 Festival won't be confined to the capital. In the northwest, **Anthony McCall** has devised *Column*, a spinning tower of cloud rising from the Wirral coastline; it will stretch into the sky and be visible from up to 100 kilometers away. New York collective **YesYesNo** is planning a light installation across the 73 miles of Hadrian's Wall, and **Antony Gormley** has designed a stage element for a production of **Samuel Beckett's** *Waiting for Godot*, to be unveiled July 2 as part of the **Enniskillen Festival** in Northern Ireland.

Back in England, perhaps one of the most breathtaking projects for the London 2012 Festival will be **Richard Wilson's** full-scale replica of the bus that dangles on the edge of a cliff in the finale of the iconic 1969 British film *The Italian Job*—transposed

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Anthea Hamilton's *Divers* poster for the 2012 London Olympics.

to the rooftop of the **De La Warr Pavilion** in Bexhill-on-Sea. This "cliffhanger of a work," to borrow the artist's own description, is a sculptural interpretation of the scene in which the characters are trapped in a vehicle full of gold but are unable to reach the treasure without risking toppling the bus into the void. Drawing parallels between his piece and the Olympic Games, Wilson told *Art+Auction*, "That structural daring is a metaphor for the absolute limit of being poised at a moment of everything either being lost or being gained, and that's exactly what these athletes are doing."

—COLINE MILLIARD