



# Art News Now: Chuck Close Fall Out, Christo's New Project, Queens Museum Controversy, Herzog & de Meuron's New Building & More

February 3, 2018

by Pat Rogers

Have a minute? Get caught up with art news people are talking about. In this edition, Chuck Close sexual harassment allegations fall out, Oslo gets its first biennial, the resignation of the Queens Museum Director causes a stir and more art news to know.

**Artworld reactions went into high gear after the National Gallery of Art announced the cancellation of planned solo shows for Chuck Close and Thomas Roma in the wake of separate sexual misconduct allegations against both artists, [reported the New York Times](#).** Since then, Close's art has been alternately had exhibitions cancelled, his art removed from walls or made the center for dialogue on the issues raised by the allegations.

Close's solo show at the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC was planned for May 2018 and was to present around 24 paintings, photographs and works on paper. Roma's show had been planned for September 2018 and would feature his photography series portraying worshipers in African-American churches in Brooklyn, according to the *New York Times*. Roma is a documentary photographer and former Columbia University Director of the School of the Arts photograph program. He is accused of sexual harassment and assault by five former students at Columbia or the School of Visual Arts, [reported the New York Times](#). Close, who is known for his mixed media photography portraits, is accused of sexual harassment by models and women visiting his studio. He denies the charges. A separate story on Chuck Close's unfolding story publishes shortly at Hamptons Art Hub.

**The late generation Abstract Expressionist William Scharf died on January 15, 2018, [according to ArtForum](#).** He was 90 years old. Over the course of six decades, Scharf had solo shows at the Phillips Collection in Washington, DC, the High Museum in Atlanta and the Neuberger Museum of Art at Purchase College in Westchester, NY.

**Oslo will mount its first Biennial and will be set in public spaces, [reported The Art Newspaper](#).** Set for 2019, the Norwegian biennial will coincide with the 58th Venice Biennale with both opening in May 2019. Programming and artists for the Oslo Biennial are yet to be announced. It is curated by Eva González-Sancho and Per Gunnar Eeg-Tverbakk.

**Herzog & de Meuron's designs for the Royal College of Art Flagship Building in Battersea**

**in Southwest London has received planning approval, [according to World Architecture](#).** Site work is scheduled to begin in Spring 2018 with competition anticipated in April 2020. The expansion is part of a \$152.5 million expansion project and is the most radical transformation of the campus in its 181 year history, according to World Architecture. In the Hamptons, Herzog & de Meuron designed the Parrish's new museum building in Water Mill, NY.

**Christo will launch his next floating public project this summer in London's Hyde Park after receiving approval last week by Westminster Council, [according to the New York Times](#).** Christo plans to build a 65-foot tall and 500-ton mastaba, a trapezoid structure used by ancient Egyptians as a burial tomb. The piece will be composed of 7,506 oil barrels-painted red, white, blue and mauve-and will float in Hyde Park's Serpentine Lake. The installation is expected to open on June 20, 2018 and will coincide with the exhibition "[Christo & Jeanne-Claude](#)" at the Serpentine Galleries in London. The artist is planning to sell \$4.2 million of his art to finance the project, [according to Architectural Digest](#). The use of oil barrels can be seen in Christo and Jeanne-Claude's earliest major installations, unfolding in 1962 as a reaction to the Berlin Wall and also foreshadows a similar planned installation in Abu Dhabi that will use around 50 times more barrels, according to *Architectural Digest*.

**Museum directors and curators are voicing support for outgoing Queens Museum Director Laura Raicovich and others who take a stand on social and political issues by way of better representing their communities, [reported ArtNews](#).** Raicovich resigned after a disagreement with the board that included cancellation of scheduled programming to make way for the J20 Art Strike, that saw American arts institutions closing to protect President Donald Trump's policies, according to *ArtNews*. The disagreement follows an earlier programming discussion related to an event springing from the partitioning of Palestine from Israel, [according to ArtNews](#). After the event, some New York officials publicly denounced Raicovich in capacity as museum director.

In a recent letter signed by 38 art leaders, the signers claim Raicovich has galvanized the museum field and has demonstrated ways cultural institutions can embrace artistic objectives along with social and political matters important to the museum's local community while contributing to the field at large. The letter also stated that Raicovich's efforts will inspire similar philosophies in the respective institutions of the signers. Click [here](#) to read more.

**In related news, a Queens Museum Trustee resigned this week, citing political differences with the board, [reported ArtNews](#).** Queens Museum board trustee Kristian Nammack resigned in protest of the museum's hosting a "current Israeli Delegation to the U.N. who honored Mike Pence last November" and cited human rights abuses included in his motivator for his resignation, reported *ArtNews*. Writing that he stands in solidarity with Raicovich, the entire letter can be read by clicking [here](#).

**The nay sayers spoke first and now the production team behind Jeff Koons's *Bouquet of Tulips* memorial have issued a letter in support of the project, [reported ArtForum](#).** Calling Koons's *Bouquet of Tulips* a "message of hope" versus a memorial, production team members Jerome and Emmanuelle de Normont write that the Koons's commission was born from a generosity of support that sprung between the United States and France following the terrorist attack on the Bataclan theater on November 30, 2015, which resulted in 130 deaths. Continuing this generosity

of spirit, the de Normonts point out that Koons has promised all proceeds from the sale of postcards featuring the artwork will be donated to the families of the victims for the next 25 years, according to *ArtForum*. Click [here](#) to read the letter of support in its entirety.



“Bouquet of Tulips” by Jeff Koons, 2016. Polychromed bronze, stainless steel, and aluminum; sculpture dimensions: 34 ft 1 1/2 inches, width: 27 ft 3/4 inches, depth: 33 ft 4 3/8 inches. Image © Jeff Koons, courtesy Noirmontartproduction, 3D rendering of the work in situ.

**New York gallery Ameringer McEnery Yohe is changing its name to Miles McEnery Gallery when it reopens its Chelsea space this month.** The gallery has been expanded by 1,500 feet. The first group show in the renovated space “Belief in Giants” will open on February 17, 2018 and will present all of the artists on the gallery’s roster.

---

**2/5/18 EDITOR’S NOTE:** The column’s original version misidentified the organization cancelling solo shows for Chuck Close and Thomas Roma as the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery. The column has since been corrected to state it is the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC as the organization cancelling the pair of exhibitions.

---

Copyright 2018 Hamptons Art Hub LLC. All rights reserved.