

## WHERE THE ART HAPPENS

MUSEUMS ARE FINDING INGENUOUS  
WAYS TO CONNECT VISITORS WITH  
THE ARTIST'S INTERIOR WORLD

BY ANN LANDI

THE ARTIST IN HIS STUDIO HAS BEEN A SOURCE OF FASCINATION AT LEAST since Velázquez painted himself painting *Las Meninas*, his portrait of the Infanta Margarita of Spain and her companions. Painters (and, more rarely, photographers) have long depicted themselves hard at work—standing or seated at the easel, studying the model, or even entertaining collectors and dealers. Props and costumes, brushes and easels: all the accoutrements of the artist's livelihood might find their way into the finished canvas.



**LEFT** Detail of Joe Fig's miniature re-creation of Inka Essenhigh's studio, 2006.

**RIGHT** Francis Bacon's London studio reconstructed in the Hugh Lane Gallery in Dublin.

"The raw materials of art are on view in the studio painting," says Pepe Karmel, associate professor of art history at New York University. In canvases by Rembrandt or Delacroix, he says, "you get the sense of the studio as a place of the imagination, where people dress up in costumes and create fictive realities which are then recorded."

The studio painting was also a way for an artist to let an audience into his (or, very occasionally, her) world. It was a window into the creative process. That's why museums have organized shows around the theme of the artist's workplace, like "Lucian Freud: L'Atelier," for example, at the Pompidou Center in Paris (through July 19). It focuses on the artist at work, beginning

and ending with photographs and films of Freud in his London studio.

Today museums are using the Internet to connect visitors with the artist's interior world: point and click and you can pull up images, watch a video, or send comments. Even the nature of the

*Ann Landi is a contributing editor of ARTnews.*

and they see Pollock's work in it without appreciating the fact that his paintings are composed in a way the floor is not. They also see the energy, they feel the energy, and to me that is the most interesting aspect of it—the same colors and the ges-

miniaturized versions of artists' studios—scaled one inch to the foot—that meticulously re-create each detail of the originals. Fig, who chronicled his process in his book *Inside the Painter's Studio* (Princeton Architectural Press), replicated the

spaces of artists ranging from Johns and Rauschenberg to contemporary painters Ryan McGinness, Inka Essenhigh, and Dana Schutz.

Most museums, of course, can't offer a renowned artist's studio to the public, though many do offer space and residencies to qualified candidates. Few, however, incorporate the artist at work as a kind of "living exhibition," as does the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, which turns over part of its sixth floor to artists who toil there a few days a week for three or four months. In planning the layout for the two-year-old institution, explains director Holly Hotchner, "we wanted to have process embedded in the whole museum. So if you start your visit on the sixth floor, as we recommend, and work your way downward, you're likely to encounter art that's related to activities you've just seen." Of course, Hotchner adds, the artists chosen for the program must have a particular kind of temperament. "Many have been teachers or are people who like to interact with the public," she says.

A similar artist-in-residence project will be tested this July, when Anthony Campuzano takes over the second floor of the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania for four weeks. Campuzano, whose text-based images are generally on a small scale, will work at a desk and table, and has invited four friends and mentors to teach the public some of the lessons that were significant to him as an undergraduate. Campuzano calls the space "a little oasis in the museum," but he adds that he usually works at night, "when there's no one else around. This is going to be an adjustment."

An institution's Web site is another tool for connecting artists and the public. P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center

in New York, in the "Studio Visit" section of its site, invites artists to upload images or videos of their studios and work, plus a short statement and résumé. The only requirement for inclusion is residency in the New York area. As of this writing, more than 950 artists were featured on the site. The Drawing Center in New York has a similar program, although it is curated and does not display images of the studio or e-mail addresses.



**Joianne Bittle at work on *No Man's Land*, no. 7.**

tures that are reflected in the work. From that point of view, it can be very invigorating. People who are familiar with his work can make out where individual paintings were lying when he was working on them."

A dollhouse-size version of Pollock's work space, meanwhile, was shown three years ago at the Parrish Art Museum in Southampton, New York, in Joe Fig's exhibition of his