

ARTS & IDEAS

I sell well also. may be slightly easier to seat at the Geshar The-bilingual (Russian and w) production of Isaac vis Singer's "The Slave," y about forbidden love en a Jew and a Christian r-Poland, but maybe not. ector Rezo Gabriadze's idden Christmas: The r and the Patient" is de- as an absurdist drama. ore important to know ikkhai Baryshnikov, the dancer, is appearing in

pens Friday, continuing 3h July 17.

**'MEDIA 'BIRTH'**

ie Birth of a Nation," Griffiths 1915 silent epic? ooky? There's a connec-

d out when spinmas- hilosopher's version, rth of a Nation," arrives y 23 and 24. rt up is "Tone Test" on 23-24. Oddly enough, las Brooke's chamber , originates in the same s the Griffiths film, 1915. :ore DJ Spooky: World gives way to global in "Transmetropolitan," :ore DJ Spooky effort on 1. But for some reason so using his given name, iller, and the often ap- phrase that subliminal on the author/creator

o on the "Transmetro- n" bill: Guest guitarist il Bernard Roumain, s Colson Whitehead, m Quraishi and Beth an, musicians DJ i, Ryuichi Sakamoto and artist Electric Method, g others.

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1st season's festival, returns

haps a million photographs. "But I'm impressed with Christ and I have great respect for people with faith. They buy it, they live with it and they love it. I had no idea it was going to become this big."

Gordon honed his craft during World War II with speedy charcoal sketches of soldiers lying wounded in U.S. hospitals or cloistered in weather stations and military posts in Iceland, Greenland and Baffin Island. Gordon attached a north-facing studio to his home in this Rochester suburb near Lake Ontario and taught art in college for 25 years. Between doing 10 to 20 commissions a year for well-to-do clientele, typically in

political, religious and cultural personalities he spotted in magazines, newspapers or on television.

Loren sat for Gordon during a visit to Rochester in 1982 and he said she took the portrait away to her ranch in California. But in nearly all cases, his paintings of well-known people were based on photos or TV footage or other images.

Many of his works hang in museums, churches or private collections. One of President Carter, who considered an official portrait a waste of taxpayer money, went to the Jimmy Carter Library and Museum in Atlanta.

Gordon, whose wife died in 1983, surrounds himself with

H.W. Bush but, so far, not George W. "He has a lot of problems that maybe he can't overcome," he answered coyly.

It was the 15th of his 16 portraits of Jesus that drew worldwide attention. Dan Morgan, a resort developer and longtime friend, bought it from Gordon and got it displayed on the QVC shopping channel in 2000. All 2,000, 16-by-20-inch color prints sold out in five minutes at \$49.99 a pop.

Sustained by rekindled interest in all things spiritual since the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks, Morgan is still selling thousands of prints a month through QVC, Avon, infomercials and the Internet.

from the Cross, Gordon stuck to a postwar trend of removing Jesus from a biblical scene and giving him a human as opposed to a divine feel.

His vision has unfamiliar and traditional elements — clipped brown hair, a medium-length beard, a slightly olive complexion and unusually striking blue eyes. Brown eyes wouldn't allow for as much expressiveness, he said.

"It has gentleness, it has passion and it has that steely eyed look like he's saying, 'I'm here to lead the world to the righteous way of living,'" Gordon said. "People seem to connect with it. There's the feeling he's pulling you toward him, combining your mind and his mind."

MICHAEL FRESSOLA / Backstage

# Art and money; enter the Wafoo (clan)

**Banks exhibit Island artwork; Wafoo ensemble performs atmospheric Asian jazz**

Someone who sails into a bank just to look around is liable to attract the interest of security.

And yet, that is exactly what people were encouraged to do during June-fest, which concluded a couple of days ago.

Originally, this useful, admission-free undertaking by the Council on the Arts and Humanities for Staten Island (COAHSI) was strictly a performing arts event, i.e. concerts, dancing, storytelling. Until recently.

Then COAHSI enlarged the funding umbrella to encompass visual art, awarding modest fees to painters, photographers and printmakers interested in hanging their work for the month in various places, bank branches included.

Makes some sense. Art and money have been dancing the love-hate tango for centuries. Why not throw them together in a semi-public place and see what happens?

(As it happens, last week's famous-for-10-seconds-in-New-York work of art addresses the art and money nexus. It's a video of conceptual artist Andrea Frazer making love to one of her collectors, from whom she collected \$30,000.)

This June, in JP Morgan Chase branches, COAHSI funded "Sheryl Humphery: Paintings" in Tottenville;

"Willie Chu: Photographs" in New Dorp; "Sage Reynolds: Paintings" in West Brighton; "Tattfoo Tan: Paintings" in New Dorp and "Kira Yustak: Paintings." Two other shows had non-fiduciary venues: "Vincent Verdi: Photographs" at the Port Richmond Library and "Malin Abrahamsson: Paintings at the Temple of Art and Design" in Tompkinsville.

Of this crew, Sage Reynolds, a Livingston-based artist/designer/bookmaker, has been out of sight for years. He and partner Colman Ruskin were in a memorable 1989 show at Snug Harbor's Newhouse Center for Contemporary Art. Reynolds showed beautifully crafted works he called tapestries woven out of hand-painted paper.

Six or eight were shoe-horned into the bank branch where they held their ground amidst the noisy visual barrage of advertising and signage. Coincidentally, Reynolds' palette and the bank's were amazingly sympathetic. He also showed paintings that have dominant, clearly drawn, softly geometric forms (mountains, halos, shields) drifting in a shimmer of Byzantine gold.

**WAFOO JAZZ**

The minute that flutist Yuuki Koike of Wafoo, the jazz octet, began to play a rainstick — it had rained only hours earlier — it was clear that the band's Island debut gig was going to go very well. It did.

The setting contributed. It was the garden of the Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan

Art, which is ravishingly verdant and unbelievably picturesque. Butterflies flit about. The waterlilies are in bloom (again) and the huge snapping turtle who lives in the fish pond actually surfaces on command.

The rainstick was for "Spring Thunder" a pretty much straightforward piece, organized and performed with a kind of clarity that seemed distinctly Japanese in the context. Another piece "Sakura, Sakura" ("Cherry blossom, cherry blossom") had a Japanese flute solo. But a vocal line, sung by Sanae Asai, in "Toryanse," was fully "western."

Wafoo's amalgam of jazz and traditional elements is very, very easy to love. It shouldn't surprise anyone. Japan has the most ardent jazz listeners on the planet and had developed great home-grown musicians. Fifty listeners at Wafoo, the final June-fest gig last week, were all on

the same exhilarated plane when the music stopped.

Michael Fressola is the arts editor for the Advance. He may be reached at fressola@siadvance.com.

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