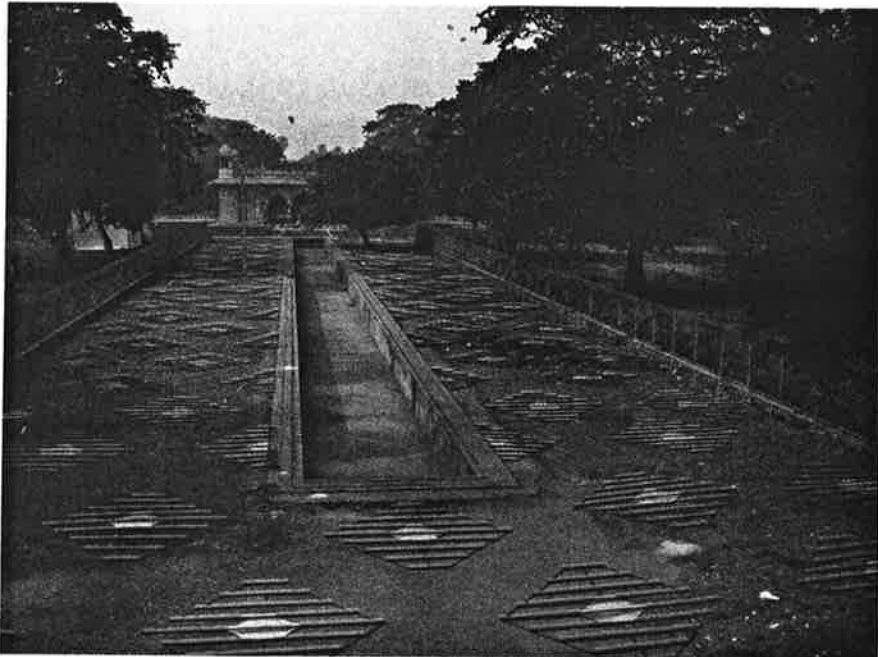


# INTERNATIONAL RECENT PROJECTS

## FEATURED FESTIVALS *compiled by Sophia Pogoff*

In the past six months, the international public art community experienced a flourish of festivals, each exploring the relationship between public space and community issues. The following six highlights may inspire flights of fancy, or even flights overseas.



In September, on the banks of Russia's Nera River, the **H2O: NORDIC AND RUSSIAN ART IN PUBLIC SPACES** at St. Petersburg's Peter and Paul Fortress drew artists from Finland, Sweden, and Russia to explore themes of water and romanticism. Among them were Tommi Gronlund and Petteri Nisunen of Finland, whose *Unnaturally Natural* consisted of a row of small, round pools set into the beach at the Fortress. From a distance, these ponds either reflected the sky above or appeared as black voids depending on the angle from which they were viewed. *Photo by Tommi Gronlund.*

**48°C PUBLIC.ART.ECOLOGY**, a multifaceted public art festival set within the capital city of Delhi, India this past December, brought together local and international artists to explore issues of sustainability, urban ecology, and community awareness. Referring to the exigencies of global warming, which can be felt in Delhi's continuously escalating summer temperatures, the festival presented new art projects, symposia, performance art, urban

ecotours, films, and concerts. One project, located within the abandoned archeological site of Roshanara Park, was *Roshanara's Net*, by New York-based artist Mary Miss. This massive installation featured a dizzying puzzle of diamond-shape sculptures formed by evenly spaced orange and blue pipes, and listed the names of medicinal plants and their uses, written in both English and Hindi. *Photo courtesy 48°C Public.Art.Ecology.*



The 13th **JAKARTA BIENNALE**, titled *Arena*, ended in March and was hailed as a "breakthrough," focusing on contemporary art across cultures rather than highlighting cultural differences. Significantly, women accounted for nearly one third of the participating artists, one of the highest rates among Asian biennials. The event was divided into thematic categories—Zone of Understanding, Fluid Zone, and Battle Zone—with projects in shopping malls, bus stops and parks. Choreographer Boby Ary Setiawan's dance project, *Z.C (Zebra Cross)*, utilized the crosswalk at a street intersection. The performance started while the cars and other vehicles were stopped by the traffic light. *Photo courtesy Jakarta Biennale.*



The **BRUSSELS BIENNAL** took place from October 2008 through January 2009, providing intuitive insight into the art scene of the highly urbanized region between the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Germany. With contributions from more than 40 international artists, the biennial also presented exhibitions by experimental art institutions in Brussels with more than 150 artists featured. Representing a first step in a larger project designed as a trans-national endeavor that will unfold in two steps until 2010, the biennial explored the notion of a space of encounters and sought to "lay down a porous line between context and practice, form and medium, artist and system, institution and locality." The oft-controversial German sculptor Olaf Metzel's bronze sculpture, *Turkish Delight*, was displayed in a public space in a Brussels park. The figure, depicting a female nude woman dressed only in an Islamic headscarf, explored the female figure within the context of contrasting world views of Eastern and Western culture. *Photo by Olaf Metzel.*