Our major fall exhibition in the Tisch Family Gallery, *Empire and Its Discontents*, was conceived as a tribute to the influential post-colonial theorist, comparative literature scholar, and Palestinian rights activist Edward Said (1935-2003) on the 30th anniversary of the publication of his watershed book *Orientalism*. Two generations of artists have come of age since its publication in 1978. This exhibition and publication explore Said’s legacy in the work of ten emerging contemporary artists (most of whom were born in the 1970s or 1980s) who have familial and other ties to the “imagined geographies” Said identified as the Orient. Although Said did not explicitly include Iran, India, or Pakistan in his terminology (since he was primarily engaged in an examination of European colonialism up through the 19th-century), my co-curator, Rhonda Saad, and I have included artists with ties to these countries as well as to North Africa, the Middle East, and Hong Kong.

Many artists working trans-nationally today are wittingly or unwittingly embracing Saidian values of polyphony (the simultaneity of multiple, contradictory voices) and counterpoint – both musical metaphors – and his ideal of cosmopolitanism (moving comfortably among disparate cultures) into the 21st century and into the realm of contemporary art, neither of which was his chosen discursive arena. *Empire and Its Discontents* embraces Said’s insistence on the coexistence of multiple voices and on counterpoint (and the musical metaphor of contrapuntal voices) as leitmotifs. Said noted to an interviewer in 1994 that “my whole method is really about close, scrupulous attention to each case, put . . . in its historical context, and above all trying to show how contradictory, both politically and aesthetically, these documents are. Because the nature of culture itself is diversity and hybridity and mixture, rather than one thing.”

*Orientalism* and subsequent publications by Said have given artists and other cultural practitioners permission to question and critique the gap between representation and lived experience, between official and unofficial histories, between the embrace of cosmopolitanism as an ideal and the disconcerting reality of moving among, and living in, different cultures. The artists in this exhibition explore all of these tensions in funny, serious, witty, and provocative ways.

–Amy Ingrid Schlegel, director, Tufts University Art Gallery
The Circle launches in New York....

Hosts Ken and Ellen Aidekman welcomed art lovers at the Lotos Club, a beautiful mansion on the Upper East Side of Manhattan that is now an arts club. Film producer and Gallery Advisory Board member Loretta Harms Cooper is a member of the Club and introduced the program. Advisory Board Co-Chair Ken Aidekman and Board member and Tufts First Lady Adele Fleet Bacow spoke eloquently about the increasing prominence of the arts, especially the visual arts, at Tufts.

Left column (top to bottom):
① Maury Solomon, Loretta Harms Cooper, Michael Josephs, and Donna Nield
② Heidi Wirth
③ Hope Barkan and Ruth Fields
④ Nancy Dawson, Michael Curtis, John Adams Griefen, and Judy Brodsky
⑤ Rachel Nackman, Teri Volpert, and Adele Fleet Bacow

Right column (top to bottom):
① Teri Volpert, Ken Aidekman, and John and Lois Coleman
② Ben Kaye and Shirley Aidekman - Kaye
③ Gary and Susan Aidekman
④ L. Parker Stephenson, Michael Josephs, and Donna Nield
⑤ The Aidekman family with Adele Fleet Bacow
⑥ Ellen and Andrea Aidekman
...and Boston

Art lovers converged on June 18 at Gifford House, the President’s residence at Tufts and home to a beautiful selection of work from the Tufts Permanent Art Collection. Guests were treated to hors d’oeuvres and cocktails, while being regaled with stories from Adele and Larry Bacow about their favorite “children” in the collection.

Ken Aidekman, Mel and Hope Barkan
Kate Wheeler, Julia Haines, Peter Haines
Nina Bozicnik, Kristen Heintz-Perkins, Julie Lonergan
Amy Schlegel, Mel and Hope Barkan

① Barbara and David Slater
② Gallery Advisory Board Member Adele Fleet Bacow
③ Listening to the presentation
④ Joanne Bendetson, Tom Winkler, David Winkler
⑤ Leah McIntosh, Elizabeth Port, Mindy Nierenberg
⑥ Larry Bacow talks to the crowd
⑦ Gallery Advisory Board Co-Chair Laura Roberts
⑧ Pauline Harrell and John Griefen
⑨ Margery Bendetson, Randi and David Zussman
⑩ Adele and Larry Bacow
Jeanne Koles graduated from Tufts in 1998, majoring in Art History and French. Her interest in art history began long before college: her grandfather was an architect and her great-grandfather, Frank von der Lancken, was a noted painter and teacher. Having grown up with his paintings, Jeanne knew early on that she would study art history. At Tufts, she became particularly interested in late 19th- and early 20th-century French art, and traveled to France with Columbia’s Reid Hall program to study architecture and urban planning.

Following graduation, Jeanne worked at the Pucker Gallery on Newbury Street in Boston from 1998 to 2005. During that time she focused on publications and marketing and eventually looked for a job to further hone those talents. In August 2005 Jeanne became the Gallery’s Outreach Coordinator, focusing on exhibitions, publications, and programming.

Jeanne says that one challenging area of her job can be establishing relationships with professors on campus and creating connections between the Gallery and the classroom. She works to bridge the gap between academics and art, encouraging professors to bring their classes in to benefit from the variety of programming and exhibitions available each semester. Jeanne finds working on printed materials and visuals fulfilling, and the creative process especially rewarding. Among her fondest moments at the Gallery she counts a visit from the “Today” show during the Steve Mumford exhibition, and also cites the Edward Burtynsky as a satisfying exhibition, because all of the Gallery’s programs were utilized to their best effects. Looking forward to a full year of programming at the Gallery, she counts among her goals an increase in participation in the Voice Your Vision! guided tour program.

Inspired by her own long-term interest in the arts, Jeanne chose to participate in the Contemporary Art Circle because she feels that alums need to encourage support for the arts at the University. Continuing her education in the art world, Jeanne is currently working on her Museum Studies Certificate through Tufts. She lives in Stoneham, MA, with her husband Scott, nine-month-old daughter Sophie, and dog Sugar.

-Kristen Heintz-Perkins

Jeanne at the Circle launch, in front of the Helen Frankenthaler painting Orange Shapes in a Frame, 1964
Art Vs. Architecture

MUSEUM DESIGNERS WRESTLE WITH AN AGE-OLD QUESTION: WHO’S THE STAR—THE BUILDING OR ITS CONTENTS?

Andrew McClellan is Dean of Academic Affairs and Professor of Art History. This article is excerpted from a longer piece originally printed in *Tufts Magazine* (Winter 2008).

If you have any interest in art or urban cultural life, you will have noticed that art museums are hot. In 2002, more than 100 million Americans visited an art museum, a fourfold increase since the early 1960s. New buildings are ubiquitous. Cutting-edge buildings designed by a cadre of globe-trotting architects have energized their host cities. Urban planners now speak of the “Bilbao effect,” referring to the remarkable success of Frank Gehry’s new Guggenheim Museum in northern Spain as an engine for urban renewal, economic expansion, and local pride. In the U.S., communities from Biloxi to Boston have turned to new museums in the hope of replicating the miracle of Bilbao.

Within the art world, however, there has been much disagreement over what constitutes good museum design. On one side, architects and city officials tend toward showpiece buildings that have drawing powers as bold works of art in their own right. On the other side, museum curators and art critics see splashy architecture as an unfortunate distraction from the art on display.

Though the controversy is very much of the moment, the tension between building and contents is as old as the museum itself. Beginning with the Uffizi in Florence and the Louvre in Paris, there has always been a desire to represent the idea of the museum as a repository of mankind’s greatest achievements through magnificent architecture. And for just as long, art lovers have insisted on the primacy of art and resisted the allure of the building.

As a rule, older museums with great collections favor restrained architecture; museums looking to gain a following or to revitalize themselves gravitate to spectacular buildings. In fact, most new museums reach for a compromise. Even Frank Gehry’s museums house neutral galleries, while sedate structures by art-friendly architects like Renzo Piano are much more than bland boxes. Nevertheless, remarkably few museums have pleased both sides.

“Though the controversy is very much of the moment, the tension between building and contents is as old as the museum itself.”
What is the Meaning of the Center of Cosmic Energy?

In the fall of 2007 the Tufts University Art Gallery and Ilya and Emilia Kabakov realized a “project” called The Center of Cosmic Energy. On November 1, Gallery Director Amy Ingrid Schlegel convened a multidisciplinary roundtable of Tufts faculty to discuss the meaning of this historic installation. I was in the audience and I’d like to share my recollections and insights from this stimulating event with fellow Circle supporters.

Monica McTighe (Art History) discussed the history of the installation in contemporary art. In installations, viewers are strictly guided to pay attention and pushed to engage in the space rather than react passively. The Kabakovs’ intention here is to make the viewer uncomfortable, aware and sensitive. Amy Schlegel commented that for the Kabakovs “the goal of the Total Installation is to create a sacralization of banal space.” The Gallery provided a blank space and the Kabakovs brought distinctive lighting, materials, and design to conjure meaning and a powerful sense of place.

Bill Waller (Physics/Astronomy) looked into a theoretical basis of the installation, the “Noosphere” and the manipulation of so-called cosmic energy. It is a fact that electromagnetic radiation created by humans on earth can, and will, reach other galaxies and solar systems. Waller was impressed that the installation forced us “to focus on the Cosmos.”

Eric Hines (Civil and Environmental Engineering) observed that this exhibition combines archaeology with high-tech projections into the future. Technology is necessary to harness energy, but the message comes from old techniques and structures. He noted: “there is an intentional blurring of fact and fiction, the idea and creation of meaning, not with new technology, but an older, already mastered technology.”

David Guss (Anthropology) was struck by the slideshow at the entry portal to the exhibition of images of sacred places around the world, to prepare you for the experience within. Guss stated: “a primordial factor of human beings is the need to divine the profane from the sacred spaces.”

David Sloane (Russian) observed: “The Center of Cosmic Energy is a daring gesture. It is an attempt to answer the question ‘How do we become good custodians (of our planet)?’” Positing such a question implies that human behavior is meaningful. “Kabakov points to the heavens but beckons to the wisdom within us.”

Did our prestigious panel divine the meaning of The Center of Cosmic Energy? No. But, it did go a long way toward exposing the richness of the Kabakovs’ conceptual art. The depth of discussion among representatives of so many disciplines is a testament to the Kabakovs’ unique abilities and the wisdom of welcoming them to Tufts.

If you missed the exhibition, you can visit the website cosmicenergy.tufts.edu and purchase a copy of the publication through the Gallery.
Our newest Circle supporters—Welcome and Thank You!

Ken & Ellen Aidekman
Gary & Susan Aidekman
Ben Kaye & Shirley Aidekman-Kaye
Adele and Larry Bacow
Hope Barkan
Margery Bendetson
Michael Curtis & Judith Brodsky
Elizabeth Cutler
Samantha Diamond
Ruth Fields
Jeanne Koles
Ed Belove & Laura Roberts
Elizabeth Port
Michael & Patricia Rosenblatt
Nancy Schon
Barbara & David Slater
L. Parker Stephenson
Ricardo Viera
Thomas Winkler
Randi & David Zussman
No photo available:
Harold Greisman
Diana Lopez
Nancy Tieken
Circle supporters....

- Directly help the Gallery become a more vital resource for the greater Tufts community, stimulating lifelong learning in the arts.

- Enhance the Gallery’s exhibition program and the production of cutting-edge thematic and solo exhibitions.

- Enable the Gallery: to publish handsome, high-quality publications; to bring compelling speakers to Tufts; and to travel one of our exhibitions every three years.

- Are in the loop on what is current in contemporary art and have behind-the-scenes access to artists, collectors, curators, and other museum professionals.

- Will receive invitations to special preview receptions at Tufts in September and January, invitations to tours of art fairs and exhibitions, access to The Circle website, and a subscription to the biannual newsletter. See our brochure for a full explanation.

Fall Calendar of Events

Wednesday, September 17
6-8pm
Preview cocktail reception for the Gallery’s fall exhibitions; many of the artists will be present.
8 pm
Annual celebration honoring fall exhibiting artists ($1000 supporters only)

Friday, October 24
6 to 8pm
New York Event; details to come in September!

Saturday, December 6
Event in conjunction with

Art Basel Miami Beach
and concurrent art fairs in Miami, FL
Details to come in October!
Yes, I would like to become part of The Circle

Please complete the form below, enclose your donation, and return to: Contemporary Art Circle Administrator, Tufts University Art Gallery @ Aidekman Arts Center, 40R Talbot Avenue, Medford, MA 02155

NAME:

ADDRESS:

CITY: STATE: ZIP:

PHONE: FAX: EMAIL:

Are you a Tufts Alum?: ○ Yes ○ No  In what year did you graduate?: 

Level: ○ CONCEPTUALIST $250 ($190 tax deductible)
○ REALIST $500 ($380 tax deductible)
○ EXPRESSIONIST $1,000 ($750 tax deductible)

Enclosed is my check made payable to “Trustees of Tufts College”

Please charge my: ○ AmEx ○ Visa ○ Mastercard ○ Discover

NUMBER: EXP. DATE: NAME ON CARD
Tufts University Art Gallery
@ the Aidekman Arts Center
40R Talbot Avenue
Medford, MA 02155

Tufts University Art Gallery
@ the Aidekman Arts Center
40R Talbot Avenue
Medford, MA 02155

Address Services Requested