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Belt Tightened, Prospect.2 Releases Pared-Down Artist List for Second New Orleans Biennial



Courtesy of the artist

Ivan Navarro's "Death Row," 2006-09

By [Julia Halperin](#)

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Courtesy of Murray Guy, New York

An-My Lê's "Patient Admission, US Naval Hospital Ship Mercy, Vietnam"



Courtesy of the artist

Dan Tague's "We Need a Revolution," 2011

In 2008, New Yorker art critic **Peter Schjeldahl** visited the inaugural "Prospect.1" — a sprawling contemporary art biennial in New Orleans — and pronounced it his "favorite biennial since the nineteen-eighties." Despite positive reception, the biennial closed in January 2009 with almost \$1 million in debt and was forced to postpone the second edition for one year. Now, Prospect is finally ready to transform the city once again — this time, in a more introspective and affordable way, founder **Dan Cameron** says.

The organization provided **ARTINFO** with an exclusive peek at the 26 artists who will show at "Prospect.2," running from October 22 to January 29. The list of international, national, and local artists includes France's **Sophie Calle**, Italy's **Francesco Vezzoli**, and **William Eggleston** and **Nick Cave** of the United States, as well as **Dawn DeDeaux** and **Bruce Davenport Jr.**, who are New Orleans locals.

The inaugural show featured 81 artists from 34 countries spread across 30 locations and was widely credited with putting New Orleans on the art world map. But lingering financial debt and fundraising challenges made it impossible to mount a full show two years later; instead, Prospect put together a small, locally-focused placeholder exhibition called "Prospect 1.5."

This time around, Cameron is committed to remaining in the black. To this end, "Prospect.2" will be "a bit more streamlined" than the first biennial. "We don't really have the same monumental outdoor

projects we had the first time," he said. In addition, Prospect will have a much smaller roster of artists (26, down from 81), charge an admission fee for the first time (\$10, and \$30 for a season pass), and cut back on expensive services like free shuttles and a glossy catalogue. In selecting artists, Cameron also kept belt-tightening in mind: he abandoned plans to exhibit five photographs by **Cindy Sherman**, which he said would have cost "hundreds of thousands of dollars" to insure and transport.

The final budget weighs in at just under \$2 million, less than half that of "Prospect.1." So far, the organization has raised close to \$1.5 million, according to Cameron, and expects the rest to arrive in revenue from ticket sales and donations at the opening night gala. The largest percentage of funding for Prospect.2 has come from foundations and individuals, but Cameron estimated that foreign governments with artists in the biennial provided 15 to 20 percent of the funding, and galleries with artists in the show provided five to 10 percent. He is also in negotiations with the city and state governments. "We certainly hope they're going to be forthcoming," he said.

Though this biennial is undoubtedly leaner than the first, Cameron notes that participating artists are concerned with much broader issues: "Prospect.1 responded so much to the urban fabric of New Orleans," he said. "This biennial is more about the larger environmental issues that are woven into our experience of New Orleans." New York-based artist **Alexis Rockman**, for example, known for his vivid, surreal landscapes of genetically altered flora and fauna, will create a new mural focused on the birds and plants of Louisiana.

A number of the artists in "Prospect.2" have been inspired directly by the Crescent City. Italian filmmaker Francesco Vezzoli will create an intervention at the postmodern **Piazza d'Italia**, a widely acclaimed but now somewhat neglected public plaza downtown, highlighting the historically unacknowledged but strong presence of Italian immigrants in New Orleans. Dawn DeDeaux, one of seven local artists in the show, will create an environmental installation inspired by the 1980 New Orleans novel "Confederacy of Dunces."

While most biennial host cities market themselves to visitors as up-and-coming hubs of contemporary art, New Orleans's reputation as a cultural incubator long predates Prospect, though it was never recognized as a center for visual arts. "There's this aesthetic sense that defines all aspects of life in New Orleans," Cameron noted. "How many curators are still getting emotional fan mail from someone two and a half years after a project is over?"

The list of artists participating in Prospect.2 is: Sophie Calle (b. France), Nick Cave (b. USA), Jonas Dahlberg (b. Sweden), Bruce Davenport Jr. (b. USA), Dawn DeDeaux (b. USA), R. Luke DuBois (b. USA), George Dunbar (b. USA), William Eggleston (b. USA), Nicole Eisenman (b. France), Karl Haendel (b. USA), Ragnar Kjartansson (b. Iceland), William Pope.L (b. USA), An-My Lê (b. Vietnam), Ivan Navarro (b. Chile), Lorraine O'Grady (b. USA), Tsuyoshi Ozawa (b. Japan), Gina Phillips (b. USA), Ashton T. Ramsey (b. USA), Alexis Rockman (b. USA), Joyce J. Scott (b. USA), Jennifer Steinkamp (b. USA), Dan Tague (b. USA), Robert Tannen (b. USA), Grazia Toderi (b. Italy), Francesco Vezzoli (b. Italy), and Pawel Wojtasik (b. Poland).

[Correction: A previous version of this article stated that the biennial would include 60 artists, when in fact, the 26 artists listed here are the entire roster.]