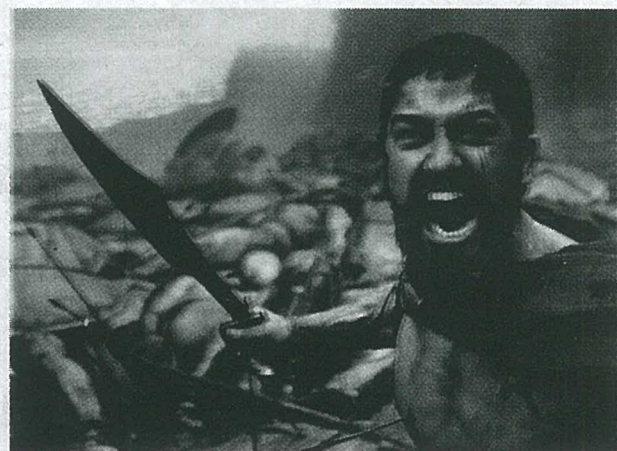


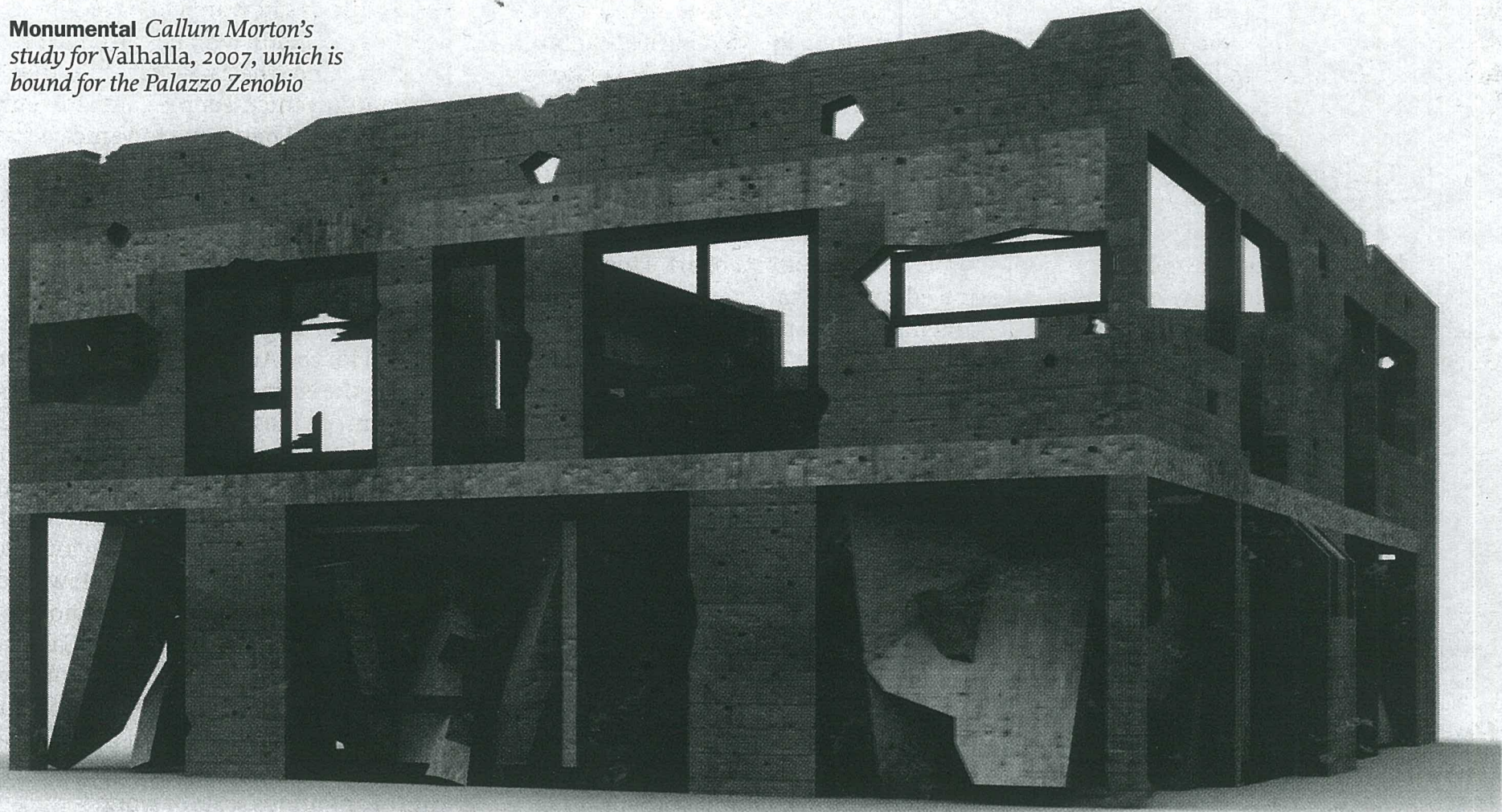
Arts



Spartans battle Persians in *300*
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ART PROFILE THE BIG PICTURE

Monumental Callum Morton's study for Valhalla, 2007, which is bound for the Palazzo Zenobio



ART

Making a splash in the canal zone. Australian artists are out in force—and in line for prizes—at the Venice Biennale

BY MICHAEL FITZGERALD

EVERY TWO YEARS IN JUNE, CONTEMPORARY ART and celebrities face off at the Venice Biennale. Last time around it was a victory for celebrity, with actress Cate Blanchett upstaging her compatriot artist Ricky Swallow in the Australian pavilion; rather than *Killing Time*, the name of his meticulously carved still-life centerpiece, it was more like paparazzi time. But this year, under the helm of Robert Storr, former curator at New York's Museum of Modern Art, the serious appraisal of art should win out. And for Australian artists, there's the best chance yet of a

coveted Golden Lion or best-pavilion prize.

The 30,000 curators, critics and collectors who flock to the Venice preview don't generally come in search of Australian artists; in 2005, only one was included (the late Leigh Bowery) in addition to Swallow, Australia's official rep. But come June 7, the art world will do well not to fall over an Australian. Storr has chosen to show Rosemary Laing's panoramic photos of the Woomera Immigration Reception and Processing Centre, a new *Mad Max*-inspired motorcycle video by Sydney's Shaun Gladwell and, perhaps most intriguingly, Melbourne conceptualist Christian Capurro's *Another Misspent Port-*

rait of Etienne de Silhouette, for which over 260 people hand erased each page of a 1986 copy of *Vogue Hommes*. Representing Australia, the pavilion will house New Zealand-born Daniel von Sturmer's quirky table-top kinetic sculptures; the elegantly epic ecological videos of Sydney's Susan Norrie will grace the Grand Canal's Palazzo Giustinian Lolin; and Callum Morton's demolished childhood home in Melbourne will be rebuilt three-quarter scale on a soccer field. It's not yet known who'll open the shows, but commissioner John Kaldor (*see story next page*) insists, "We won't have any celebrities." With any luck, art will be the star. ■