

# 'Greater' Visions of Contemporary Art



Radhika Chalasani for The Wall Street Journal (2)

Ismael Randall Weeks prepares his mixed-media installation at MOMA PSI for this weekend's opening of the 'Greater New York' exhibition. Below left, an example of the artist's work.

By Pia Catton

Site-specific work is a hallmark of MoMA PSI. For the museum's new "Greater New York 2010" exhibit, which will present 68 local artists beginning Sunday, Ismael Randall Weeks has settled right in to his own room.

"I like that it's somewhere between a show and a studio," said Mr. Weeks. "It has the energy of a studio."

At the center of the artist's installation at PSI is a working table, lit by a desk lamp, and a grouping of plants on the floor. Lining the walls are examples of his work: intricate carvings made from stacks of books or magazines that have been glued together. Mr. Weeks intricately carved the layered pages to look like the sides of mountains or coastlines, some of them topo-

graphically accurate.

Some of the shapes bear a resemblance to the terraced hillsides of Ollantaytambo, Peru, where Mr. Weeks grew up on a commune. "It was an international upbringing. There was a Canadian family, American, Danish and British families," he said.

Mr. Weeks attended Bard College and now resides in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn, in an old factory that he renovated with two other artists, Gandalf Gavan and Nicola Lopez. "A re-creation of communal living, so to speak," he said.

The theme of utopian societies runs through the room. A bright, colorful picture of a building in Brasilia hangs like a personal snapshot. On the walls are images—photocopied and transferred onto aluminum sheets—of grand structures,

## By the Numbers

On Sunday, MoMA PSI will unveil the third edition of its 'Greater New York' exhibition, where some 68 local artists and collectives will present work created within the past five years. Assembling such a show is no small feat. Here are just some of the materials that have come through the museum's doors.

**50** poles fitted at the ends with wind-surfing joints for 'Pole Dance,' by Solid Objectives-Ideburg Liu, located in the PSI courtyard

**60** black bookshelf speakers in Naama Tsabar's 'Speaker Wall'

**84** pink and yellow helium-filled balloons in Sharon Hayes's 'Revolutionary Love: I Am Your Worst Fear, I Am Your Fantasy'

**300** brown glass bottles affixed to the underside of a table in 'Chère Maman' by Zipora Fried

**68** (at least) vinyl records appropriated from an undisclosed Ivy League institution after it refused to return 200 Inca artifacts from Peru that it borrowed in 1994, in William Cordova's 'Laberintos (after octavio paz).'

such as Buckminster Fuller's dome for the 1967 International and Universal Exposition in Montreal. One group of carved books—the spines are untouched—combines subjects such as urbanism, design of urban highways and utopia.

Though the lived-in look of Mr. Weeks's room suggests that items were randomly left laying around, the artist placed everything quite deliberately. As the exhibit goes on, he says he'll move things around. "I have until October. It will change. Care has been taken with the plants, but they will change. As I read new books, I'll carve them."

And if viewers stumble through wondering what it's all about, they don't have to overthink it. "As long as someone gets a feeling of the space, that's enough for me," Mr. Weeks said.