

delight



Photograph: Edmund Summer/VIEW

Those who thought the Winter Olympics were all about slithering rapidly across ice or snow wearing a condom or sequins, might be reassured by the more culturally refined caperings of this year's Snow Show staged in the Italian alpine resort of Sestriere, as an adjunct to (and possibly distraction from) the Games. Curated by New York-based Lance Fung, the show reprises the successful formula of previous years, staged in the more refrigerated climes of Finland (AR March 2004), in which teams of architects and artists collaborate to create temporary structures out of ice and snow. Within certain practical limits, imagination can take flight with extraordinary results. This time, the Torino Olympic Committee provided funding with Regione Piedmont and London's Albion Gallery.

Though the photographs here convey an appropriate sense of artistic serenity, actually bringing to life the vision of people such as Daniel Buren, Yoko Ono, Norman Foster and Arata Isozaki was fraught with difficulties. Fung's construction team of students working and local contractors was confronted with yo-yoing temperatures, varying weather conditions (lack

of snow, too much snow) and a cast iron deadline. One day's sun could melt three feet of snow, wiping out a day's work.

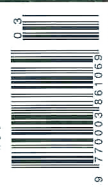
Ultimately human endeavour overcame nature to make a dramatic mark on the winter landscape. Lebbeus Woods, working with Kiki Smith, designed Looking Glass (main picture), a frozen pond with fibre optic cables which emit swirling trails of light, like the tracks of phantom skaters. Slide Meeting (bottom left) by Williams & Tsien and Carsten Holler is a geometric bunker penetrated by chutes for high speed sledging. Norman Foster's personal passion for cross-country skiing inspires Where Are You (middle), a sculpted snow dial with the global co-ordinates for his London office designed in collaboration with Spanish artist Jaume Plensa. By contrast, Yoko Ono's Penal Colony (far right) produced with fellow Japanese Arata Isozaki is an austere and oppressive grey labyrinth. From fantasy to nightmare, the Snow Show (www.thesnowshow.com) celebrates the creative potential of the white stuff and perks up the winter scene. It runs until 19 March. C. S.



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