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Inside Art

See It, Feel It, Touch It, Climb It

CAROL
VOGEL
INSIDE
ART

In the 12 years that the Metropolitan Museum of Art has presented exhibitions on its roof, visitors have seen sculptures by Jeff Koons, Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein and Roxy Paine. They have glimpsed more unusual projects too, like miniature black smoke shells that resembled inkblots bursting into the sky every afternoon, the work of the Chinese artist Cai Guo-Qiang. Now for the 13th installation, Gary Tinterow, the Met's curator of 19th-century, Modern and contemporary art, has decided to try something more ambitious.

From April 27 through Oct. 31 the twin artists Mike

On the Met's roof garden, a towering bamboo installation.

and Doug Starn will be creating a site-specific installation that is part sculpture, part architecture and part performance. Called "Big Bambú" it will be a monumental bamboo structure in the form of a cresting wave rising as high as 50 feet above the roof. Throughout the summer the artists and a team of

rock climbers will lash together an intricate network of 3,200 interlocking bamboo poles with nylon rope, creating on the roof's floor labyrinthlike spaces through which visitors can walk.

"Big Bambú" is a perpetual work in progress — it will never quite be finished — that will evolve in three phases: first, the basic structure will be completed by the opening day; second, the eastern part will be built by the artists and rock climbers to a height of about 50 feet; third, the team will build the western part to about 40 feet high. Not only will visitors be able to watch the installation as it is constructed and

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walk through it, they will also be able to climb up the sides.

The project is similar to one the artists did in 2008 in a factory space in Beacon, N.Y. "When I saw it in Beacon I thought how great it could be for the roof," Mr. Tinterow said. So for the last five months he and the artists have been working on a plan to adapt the idea for the Met.

"It's our largest, most complicated endeavor and the only one that invites the public to participate," he said.

While anyone will be able to experience the project from the roof garden, timed tickets will be required for those who want to explore the upper regions of the installation, with trained guides leading groups of up to 15 visitors. "We have been working with the building department to conform to the proper safety standards," Mr. Tinterow said. There will be lockers for belongings because, he explained, visitors must have their hands totally free while climbing.



Top and above, digital renderings of Doug and Mike Starn's "Big Bambú," a site-specific sculpture made of 3,200 interlocking bamboo poles lashed together with nylon rope.