

DEQ Spect

Paul Villinski constructed his *Emergency Response Studio* installation out of a FEMA trailer.

ARTS BIG EASEL

Prospect.1 is an international art biennial — and neither New Orleans nor the United States has seen anything like it before.

BY D. ERIC BOOKHARDT

Not the least of the unprecedented ideas behind Prospect.1, the international art biennial opening this week all across New Orleans, is that the United States' first such major exhibition is happening in a city brought to the edge of ruin just three years earlier. In fact, that led to founder and curator Dan Cameron's inspiration.

"There has never been a major art event like this in response to such a large-scale catastrophe," Cameron says. "One of the goals of Prospect.1 is to reposition New Orleans as a high-end visitor destination. The city already has a vibrant art community and it could be very beneficial to build on it in a way that inspires direct philanthropic investment in our cultural institutions. So far 46 museums, including major ones like the Whitney, the Guggenheim and the Art Institute of Chicago, are sending groups to attend the opening."

Still, many New Orleans residents and visitors may be unsure what to expect from this far-flung spectacle with some 81 artists and 100,000 square feet of exhibition space, spread out over two dozen venues plus site-specific outdoor installations. Exhibitions open Nov. 1 and will be on display through Jan. 18. Shows are free to the public, a condition Cameron insisted on

