

A birdcage and colored glass jars and vases with candles littered the scaffolding at Art Party.



purpose. "The entire decor was informed by the groundbreaking," she said. "We had shovels hanging from the ceiling, construction material in the centerpieces." The evening wrapped with a performance by Debbie Harry.

A few days later the Art Party, this year subtitled "The Groundbreakers," took over the Highline Stages space and eked out an industrial vibe via scaffolding wrapped in foliage, giant theatrical lights lining the front room, old medicine-bottle chandeliers, and a 32-foot bar made from reclaimed wood planks. "We really wanted it to feel as if you were discovering something, like the first time you walked into the Beatrice or the Ace Hotel," said Van Wyck & Van Wyck's Bronson van Wyck, who produced

the event with David Hawryluk. "It was meant to be authentic, a space where you'd be hanging out with artists—half of the people there were artists."

In all, the Art
Award dinner
reeled in \$2 million, and the Art
Party brought in
\$400,000, which
will help fund
the \$720 million
museum project;
\$508 million has
already been
raised. —Courtney
Thompson

## Whitney Art Party

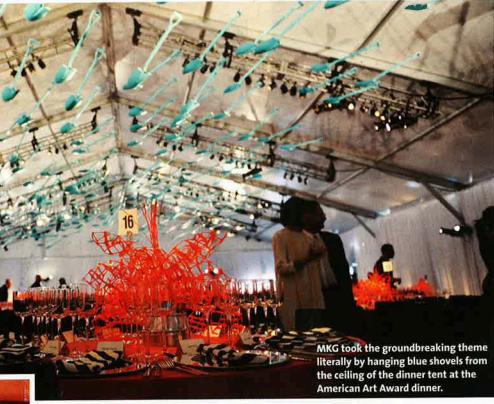
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Audiovisual Production, Lighting Bentley Meeker Lighting & Staging Catering Canard Inc. Decor, Flowers, Production Van Wyck & Van Wyck PR Nadine Johnson Inc. Security Elite Investigations Ltd.

## Whitney American Art Award Dinner

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## Building Connections

The Whitney celebrated its new location with groundbreaking-themed events.

The Whitney Museum of American Art celebrated the groundbreaking of its new Renzo Piano-designed, 200,000-square-foot location with a flurry of events in the meatpacking district in late May. Whitney director of special events Gina Rogak and senior manager of special events Rachel Arteaga oversaw the many parts: the American Art Award dinner and groundbreaking gala on May 19; a community outreach day on May 21; and a stable of events on May 24, including the actual groundbreaking, a lunch at the Standard, and the Art Party evening benefit.

"We were trying to make a statement that this is a very important turning point for the Whitney after years of trying to get this shovel in the ground," Rogak said. "We wanted to celebrate in as many ways as possible, and be as inclusive as possible, bringing in our younger supporters, our older supporters, our corporate members, and the community. We wanted to get everybody behind this occasion."

The 20th annual American Art Award cocktail party and dinner took place in two tents from Stamford on the exact site where the new museum will be. Arteaga worked with Tina Malhotra at MKG to produce the event for 400 corporate members, trustees, vendors, and benefactors, and one didn't have to look far to be reminded of the evening's