

PAX FAIR

The Concept

Planet Art eXchange is an annual art event, that capitalises on the light shed on the European capitals of culture, to feature undervalued or unreported contemporary art from a particular region.

The inaugural PAX edition is taking place in Liverpool in July 2008 and will stage Arab contemporary art. The scheduled events are (1) an art fair and (2) an artist-in-residence programme..

The Relevance

Western viewers have considered non-western art in general to be a curiosity or quite separate from western civilization, ignoring centuries of cross-cultural influences.

Arab art has been, and still is, seen from an anthropological, archaeological or purely aesthetic perspective.

Contemporary Arab art remains one of the least visible in Britain despite recent shifts in the reception and representation of non-Western arts.

The most familiar representations of Arab culture in Britain is linked to Islamic art, mostly from the 13th century. The perspectives that contemporary Arab art brings to bear are all the more important today.

This is in the context of the existence of 500,000 strong British-Arab communities, and even more substantial in the Arab diaspora in Europe and elsewhere, and the centrality of the Arab region in a global world.

Recent political turmoil has isolated Arab communities and cast doubt over their characters and values. In the absence of any direct experience of contemporary Arab cultures, the British public is unable to make up its mind on the basis of direct experience. The uncertainty cast over the possibility of harmonious co-existence within a multicultural Britain is unsettling to all.

The focus of British cultural establishments on ancient Islamic art only serves to reinforce perceptions of a spent cultural force. It also ignores the multiple dimensions of Arab cultures outside the Islamic context.

The showcase of the Arab contemporary art in the European capital of culture hopes to highlight its contribution to modern art.

The Venue

PAX FAIR 2008 will take place in 'The Blackie', an architectural landmark and one of the finest 19th century buildings in Liverpool.

The Blackie is in the heart of Liverpool's Chinatown and the vibrant art quarters, within which are located most of the city cultural institutions.

The venue for Britain's first community arts, The Blackie provides a prestigious space for art exhibitions.

Who can participate

The participation in the PAX Fair 2008 is exclusive to art galleries and dealers featuring renowned and up-and-coming talented Arab artists.

The participants are expected to present quality artwork that meets the expectations of the British public.

As for the pricing,, although there are no specific guidelines, we strongly encourage the participants to practice an affordable pricing policy to allow a maximum number of viewers the opportunity to collect Arab artwork.

Unique Opportunity

Art galleries participating in PAX Fair 2008 will benefit from a unique opportunity, thanks to a synergy created by many factors:

Location, location

- The UK is the second largest art market in the world, and is home of a large number of art lovers and collectors.
- Top UK auction houses have recently shown a great interest in Arab art by opening offices in Dubai and conducting successful art sales in London
- Liverpool is a vibrant art city with some of the finest art institutions in the UK.

The Timing

- The event of capital of culture is expected to bring to Liverpool a large number of visitors, In July, the, International Tall Ships Races is expected to be watched by over a million people .
- We have coordinated with The Bluecoat Arts Centre to make the fair coincide with the Arabic Arts Festival, the only one of its kind in the UK,
- PAX events are expected to receive a lot of coverage by local and regional media, mainly because they will be co-organised by Liverpool- based artist collectives, mainly Red Dot Exhibitions (www.red-dotexhibitions.co.uk), who will be hosting a number of Arab artists (within the framework of PAX Work) to create collaboratively works of art. Red Dot is run by photographer Colin Serjent and painter Sue Milburn. Their primary aim is to provide exhibition opportunities for visual artists on their books– they currently have 25 members – and to promote, market and sell their work via exhibitions, the Red Dot website and publicity derived from exhibitions.

The Marketing

- Being an event of Liverpool 2008, the fair will benefit from the large media coverage and the publicity that the city is organising.
- We are planning to undertake a large marketing and communication campaign to encourage collectors and other potential buyers to attend PAX Fair 2008

All these factors create a unique synergy and a rare opportunity for the participating galleries to sell and network.

Arab Contemporary Art

Contemporary art in the Arab world dates back at least to the turn of the last century. In the first half of the 20th century, Realism, Impressionism, Expressionism, and Abstraction all took their turn in a sort of cliffs notes version of Western art history.

In the mid-20th century, as many Arab countries gained independence, intellectuals

called for painters to create something regionally distinct, works that for better or worse could be labelled 'Arab.'

In recent years, contemporary art from the Arab world has started to carve out a distinct niche for itself on a global scale. Thanks to their huge investment in the art infrastructure, the success of events such as the Sharjah Biennale and the Gulf Art Fair, as well as the opening in Dubai of three major auction houses, the United Arab Emirates is leading the way to the rise of an Arab contemporary art golden age.

Buying art at PAX Fair

Just like Chinese art, contemporary Arab art is expected to be the next big thing in the global art market.

The interest in this art is growing at a fast pace, and the success of Arab art sales that were held lately in London and Dubai are reversing the perception of Arab art by art lovers.

Experts consider that Arab art is currently undervalued, and as such it's a good time to buy into this particular market.

PAX Fair will give art lovers the chance to view a comprehensive body of artwork from throughout the Arab world, and also show great deal of diversity that would leave you with one question - can we continue talking about 'contemporary Arab art,' or should we simply accept it as another form of contemporary art that we already know.

PAX Fair will bring you the best of the Arab art scene at affordable prices, and the Fair catalogue will help you make the choice of what you buy through the introduction of known and up-and-coming Arab artists.

Art is subjective, and no-one expects you to love everything you will be seeing, but we sincerely hope that you will enjoy having a look around amidst the wide selection of art on view, and hope that you will find a piece of art which you particularly like.

Liverpool's range of museums and galleries is extraordinary

Tate Liverpool, a modern art gallery, will celebrate its twentieth anniversary in 2008, offering the shock of the new with ingenious reframings of the classics in an historic wharfside warehouse setting.

The Bluecoat Art Centre is Liverpool's oldest building, as well as being the UK's oldest arts centre. It has always been a welcome home to emerging art and artists.

Following a major capital development programme, the Bluecoat will re-open in March 2008, and will once again be the cultural oasis in the heart of Liverpool.

Not far away from the Bluecoat, one of the newest additions to the Liverpool art scene is the Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (FACT), which is a stunning location for cutting-edge digital and new media.

The seven current entities of National Museums Liverpool and the neo-classical grandeur of St George's Hall are counterpointed by the streetwise fluidity of the Independents District. In this former 'shipping streets' area, organisations like the AFoundations, Liverpool Arts Biennial, loveliverpool and The Picket contribute to the rich cultural life on offer. As with Liverpool generally, the juxtaposition of the venerable with the modern makes for a special mix.

This rich seam of talent and invention lights up in 2008. The Liverpool Arts Biennial

casts an international spotlight on the city with a festival that will be even bigger and bolder than the previous four.

At the Walker Art Gallery, the 25th John Moores Exhibition of Contemporary Paintings will celebrate its 50th anniversary.

Tate Liverpool will hold the first comprehensive exhibition of Gustave Klimt's work in the UK.

The Bluecoat Arts Centre will bring together some of the finest artists working in visual, performing and interdisciplinary arts, including the Liverpool Arabic Arts Festival and the Liverpool Festival of Live Art . FACT will host Crossing Screens, a new film, video and new media festival, and the pioneering SK-Interfaces, which introduces the UK to sensational bio-technology tools and artists' materials of the future.