

4-5/10

# UNIVERSAL COLONERS

THE MAGAZINE FOR PROFESSIONAL MIGRANT ARTISTS

## *The Curator*



Sometimes I find  
a place to sleep

But I never dream

UNIVERSAL COLOURS



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By Uzi Varon

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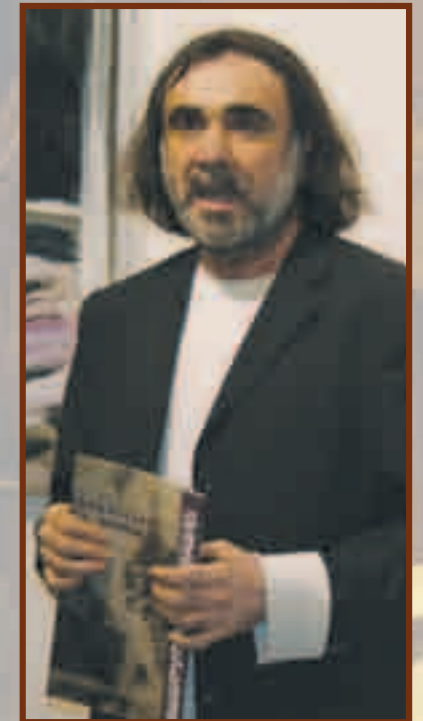
**W**E LIVED IN AN ERA OF MULTICULTURALISM that lasted from the 1980s until the events of September 11, 2001. This tragic event came suddenly into the world and for a moment the world seemed ready to forget everything about multiculturalism, ready to forget even the world's population as a whole and only focus upon that incident.

However, it is as though something inevitable happened and it was inevitable because all the indications showed that the world has become a huge village where something happening on one side of the globe affects the other. What seems inevitable is that there is only one solution and that is multiculturalism. Lately, in Helsinki's Cable Factory, a very interesting seminar about multiculturalism was organised during which there was talk about migrant art and artists, as well as their connection to contemporary multiculturalism. It was an excellent opportunity to see who participated and who was there talking about what matters.

Officers, researchers and artists participated in extended monologues, with each of them presenting views that shared nothing common and that was because each participant was too interested in presenting their own personal problems, their own personal struggle, occasionally even showing "muscle" by turning a seminar about multiculturalism into a gathering about multi-problemism.

The audience hoped to get some information or insight into what will happen and how multiculturalism is going to work, waiting for some answers regarding multicultural art and the co-existence between all the cultures in Finland but, most of all, the audience wanted suggestions and solutions. What we heard was anything other than that.

"Finland is a newcomer to the migrant phenomenon" is something I have been hearing for the last 20 years, but do we have any kind of plan to move beyond this? All we know is that at every election all politicians discuss migration, bringing migration to the main stage and turning multiculturalism into a problem, but do they have the will to change anything or search for the necessary solutions?



Questions such as these were asked during a series of interviews EU-MAN had with its members in London and Helsinki. The plan was to produce a documentary film and to show it at the seminar but some unforeseeable technical problem arrived on time so we lost the chance to show the film. You can check here: [www.monivision.fi/multi](http://www.monivision.fi/multi).

Everything is all right because this is life; when you lose one thing, you can just enjoy the next surprise that comes to you. The answer to the riddle is not to lose your smile so you will be rewarded by the power of the hidden God - believe me, that smile has the biggest power ever.

In order to keep your spirits high you have to be patient and that's what we did with the help of the good people's heart and with their support. We submitted a project to the City of Turku, the 2011 European Cultural Capital; the project was very nice and we worked it out with those people so we could take the space we wanted and our project would be realised on time. Last but not least, our plan for the magazine for the year 2011 it is for six issues - 3 print & 3 digital.

As we lost the hope of implementing multiculturalism during the war years from 2001 till 2009, we still believe that we are still inventing, creating and giving what we can as our participation in building society. We know that we exist because we are creating.

*Amir Khatib*

## PEEKABOO

Current South Africa  
Helsinki Art Museum Tennis Palace  
20.08.2010 - 16.01.2011

South Africa has in the past fifteen years developed into a major centre of contemporary art, with several artists in the international limelight. Peekaboo is Finland's first major review of the artists and themes in contemporary South African art.

The key theme shared by the featured artists is society in a constant state of flux. Apartheid was abolished in 1994, but its scars are still visible. In addition to historical traumas, the artists are concerned with present insecurity, the changed role of religion and the possibilities offered by new kinds of identities. Some works explore personal experiences and others comment brutally or poetically on the surrounding reality, sometimes using humour or satire. The history of European art and modern life in South Africa converge in unexpected ways.

Peekaboo is produced and curated by the Helsinki Art Museum. In addition to the artists, the South African partners in this venture are the Goodman Gallery, the Michael Stevenson Gallery and the Brodie/Stevenson Gallery.



## Johanna Vgismnen

Installations and coal drawings on plywood  
**Galleria Jangva**  
Uudenmaankatu 4-6, Sisäpiha, Helsinki  
06.10 - 24.10.2010

My works are based on recycling. Instead of material from households I use material discarded by industrial companies, material hidden from the general public. I am not trying to transfigure them into something else, they are not ready made sculptures. What I am trying to do is to transform the content.

The enormous packing box for a bottling machine, which I found in the dumping ground, was sent from Parma Italy to the company Lignell & Piispanen in Kuopio. Nothing is ever respected in a dumping ground. That is why, for practical reasons, I had to add Finnish plywood to my artwork. The fine grain and fine knots tell a story of an extremely slow growth process. This parallel is interesting and gains a wider meaning as you relocate production even further down south from Italy, leaving behind here empty carcasses of production buildings. I recorded a sound material in The Duomo of Florence and I have digitally packed the sound material into this box. Produced in Italy.

I have filmed Itkonieni in Kuopio, the abolition of the plywood factory. Now they have started to bulldoze it. My artworks with frosted windows and plywood come from the factory. Both of them bear signs of their own life, a little hesitant on the glass walls of the offices, more rough on the plywood from the production lines. In the dumping ground I found old logs from the torn-down buildings of the prison in Kuopio. These logs build the foundation of my works.

## Mark Me

Performance and video installation  
**Galleria Jangva**  
Uudenmaankatu 4-6, Sisäpiha,  
Helsinki  
27.10 -14.11.2010

Time and life are leaving us marks all the time – we don't always notice them or even want to. Or how we influence other people – is this something what we don't notice either.

The performance installation "Mark me" concretizes this situation, it condenses and is seen also in real time from different angles in the mirror and video.

Visitors are allowed to make their own marks and signs on my white dress as I am sitting blindfolded in the front of a large mirror.

I am present at the installation daily as much as possible.

The videos in my exhibition are also related to the same theme, the theme of being a human.



## Art and Design Students Display Their Creative Flair

A group of budding artists and designers turned Kensington and Chelsea College in to artistic playground packed with paintings, sculptures and fashion creations. The stunning End of Year Art Exhibition took place at the college's Hortensia Gallery, in Hortensia Road and brought together collections of work from students who've never picked up a paintbrush before to graduating students ready to make their professional mark on the art world.

The creative crowd puller attracted more than 200 people on its opening night including the distinguished and established painter Victor Kuell. Officially opening the exhibition was Zida Ardalan de Weck, founder and curator of the prestigious Parasol Unit Art Foundation - an

independent educational charity devoted to promoting contemporary art and showcasing the work of leading and young artists.

Among the pieces being debuted was an exclusive collection produced by HNC Fine Art students which explored the different approaches to contemporary art. Guest painter Victor Kuell also presented two students, Shaima Al-Juburi, HNC Fine Art and Paris Thompson, Diploma in Foundation Studies Art and Design, with a special memorial award for the two most outstanding pieces of work at the event. The award was made in memory of Peter Stanley, the former Head of the college's Art Department who tragically died in 2006 following a skiing accident.



## GERALDINE GLIUBISLAVICH MOST OF THEM

7 October / 14 November 2010

Private View: Thursday 7 October 18:30 - 21:00



## Art exhibit transforms college

Budding artists and designers turned Kensington and Chelsea College into an artistic playground, packed with paintings, sculptures and fashion creations.

The end of year art exhibition was held at the college's Hortensia Gallery in Hortensia Road, and brought together work from students who have never picked up a paintbrush before, to those graduating and ready to make their mark on the art world.

The creative crowd puller attracted more than 200 people on its opening night last week, including distinguished painter Victor Kuell and founder of the Parasol Unit Art Foundation, Zida Ardalan de Weck.

Mr Kuell also presented two students, Shaima Al-Juburi and Paris Thompson, with a memorial award in memory of Peter Stanley, the former head of art who died in a skiing accident in 2006, for the two most outstanding pieces of work.

Shaima said: "I'm incredibly happy about winning, especially as it took a lot of time and energy to finish the piece."

"My art work is about love and how life without it would be black and white. I want people to see the colour in life."

## Michelangelo, The Drawings of a Genius

Albertina Museum, Vienna, Austria

08.10.2010 - 09.01.2011

In a major exhibition scheduled for autumn and winter 2010, the Albertina will present around one hundred of the most beautiful drawings by Michelangelo. Precious works from the Graphic Arts Collection of the Albertina, as well as important loans from museums and private collections in Europe and the United States, will offer a hitherto unparalleled overview of the great Florentine's entire oeuvre.

The focus will be on the figural drawings by Michelangelo, who will be introduced here as the genius of a period of change, with his versatile talents as a draftsman, painter, architect, and sculptor.

The show traces Michelangelo's career from the artist's juvenile works and designs for The Battle of Cascina to the world-famous frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, the ingenious drawings he presented to Tommaso de' Cavalieri, and the

Crucifixion scenes dating from the artist's late period, when he was almost eighty years old. At the same time, new clues as to the dating of individual works will be provided. Projections of the monumental ceiling frescoes, the incorporation of plaster casts of Michelangelo's sculptures, as well as paintings by other artists based on the master's designs are meant to illustrate the dimensions and impact of his art. New paths of didactic presentation will be forged through a documentation of contemporary history and the artist's environment.

The Albertina will extend its opening hours for its major autumn shows Picasso: Peace and Freedom and Michelangelo. The Drawings of a Genius. The exhibitions will be accessible from 10 am to 7 pm from Thursday to Tuesday and from 10 am to 9 pm on Wednesdays.

## LOUISE BOURGEOIS AND HANS BELLMER DOUBLE SEXUS

Stichting Gemeentemuseum Den Haag

11 September 2010 - 16 January 2011

Although Hans Bellmer (1902-1975) and Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010) were both in touch with the Surrealists in the 1930s, the two artists never met. Despite this, their work displays striking similarities. In both cases, the human body plays a major role. Bodies are deformed, limbs are missing or duplicated, and male and female characteristics are melded together to produce androgynous beings.

In Double Sexus the oeuvres of Bellmer and Bourgeois are brought together for the first time ever in an intriguing dialogue. Shared themes like female fantasies, male angst, sexual ambiguity and the search for personal identity correspond to the concerns of today's world, where the emancipation of women

has undermined the traditional gender roles of both sexes. The social relevance of the exhibition will be heavily underscored by an accompanying programme of lectures and debates.

This is an exhibition of international stature, being held in close cooperation with the Nationalgalerie Berlin - Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg - Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. The expanded version to be staged at the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag will include a multitude of extra items on loan from private collections and from the Louise Bourgeois Studio. In addition, one of Bourgeois' celebrated spiders will adorn the museum pond for the duration of the exhibition.



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*Basher Mahdi:*

# Qualifications of Narration by Painting

By: **Salah Abbass**

Editor-in-chief Tashkeel magazine /Baghdad

Translated by: Salah AL-Saeed

**T**HE IMPORTANCE OF ART GROWS THROUGH ITS CONNECTION with life and its dynamic relation with new the elevation of art. Its glitter is connected with the actions of life and understanding the riddles of existence. These questions seek logical answers to the meanings inserted in human nature or the surrounding environment in which we live in by which we are affected.

When we receive promoted arts, with its highly advanced technical performance, we pay utmost importance to all details entered in the structure of the work. We may borrow the wings of the artist's imagination and fly in his different worlds which do not resemble our world and our actual life. The artist Basher Mahdi has established his own kingdom, which prepared him for the freedom of releasing his thoughts and imaginations about existence and conflict, rotating in it since the beginning of creation.

We face a number of paintings perfectly created from different technical sides. Their basic elements in form and content are an application between the aims of the artist and his mechanical work on the surface of the tablet. This forms two dimensions and grants a third dimension, but the huge ability of the artist in incarnation grants him the right of a direct effect on the receiver. The receiver will react with the atmosphere of the tablet and will interfere among its pictorial units and symbolic vocabularies and will create another form of new understanding, a new acceptance in spite of the imagination of fright and tolerance.

Basher intended to draw the details and parts of the parts by an actual drawing he maintained, in order to nominate the vocabularies of the tablet and its pictorial units through a category of usual test of human knowledge. Basher works on putting on opposed points and arranging the pictorial units, organising them in a way of separation or crossed with the actual view, so the one tablet represents an open visual text bearing many areas of reading.

The receiver may get steady satisfaction on an advanced level, in planning colouring and deep un-

derstanding of the fixed rules in the final plan of one tablet. Among the skills of incarnation and plastic, where the artist's targets hide, his doubtful questions about the cruel human nature emerge, which stir up fright and sad destiny. The aim is not to introduce a documentary or recorded painting about the bad nature of life, but to announce forecasts and guesses probable to happen in any time or place on earth.

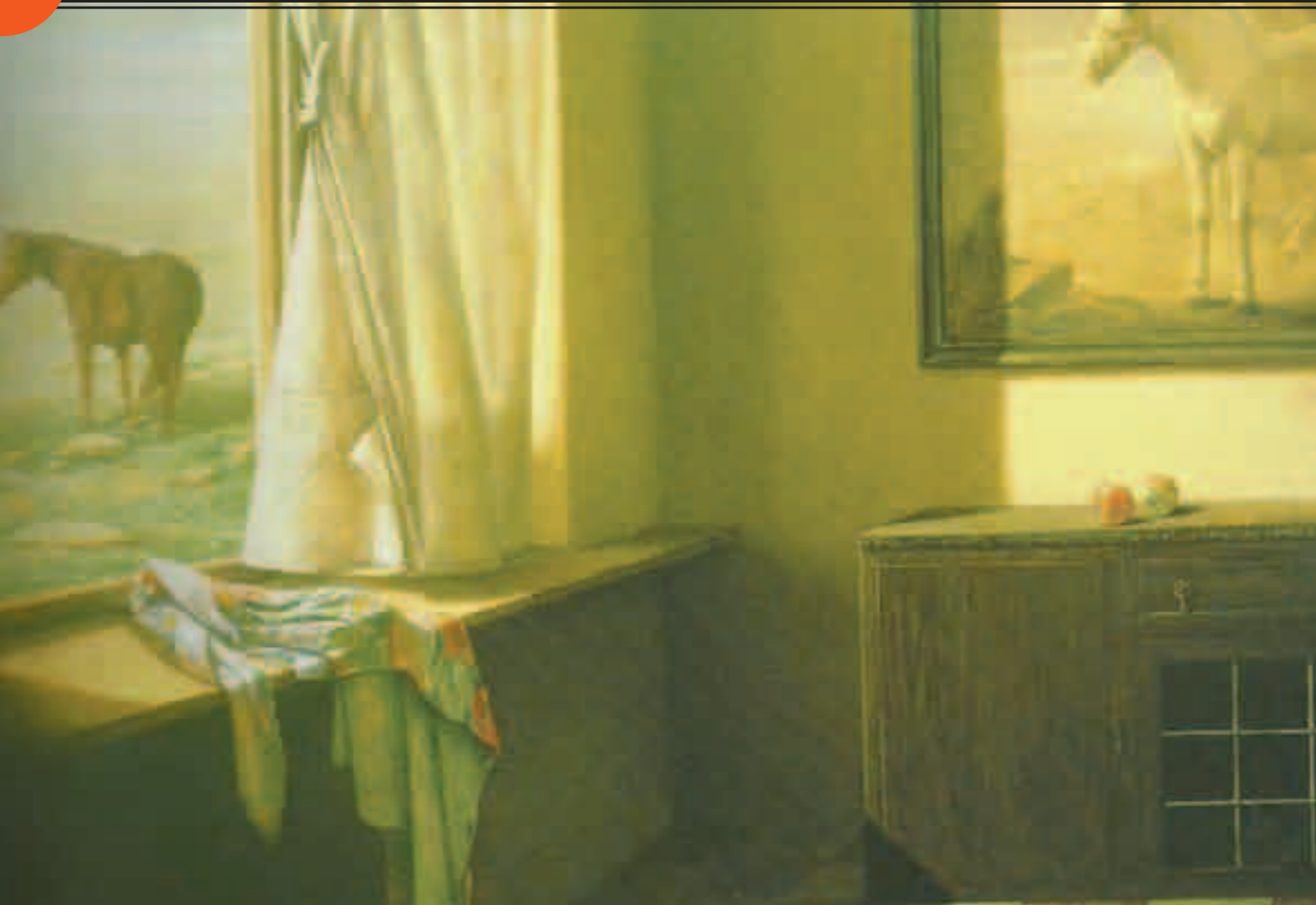
The pursuer of Basher Mahdi works may expect an observation of different sorts of ideological views. Every tablet has its individual notions and the receiver should notice the date of the tablet's production. Every date owns its beat, effect and personal pressure on the artist. The points of meeting and the mutual elements in most of the tablets reveal the stylistic aspects of the artist.

These mutual elements are:

1. Working on resemblance and the fine creation that comes from the artist's ability to challenge the crude material and create visual illusions, yet not in the style of the group. The artist submits what he likes and wants, so the receiver can get the visual feeling by touching the cloth made of silk, crystal glass, ceramic, iron and others.

2. Paying the visual view on exceptional importance supported by incarnation of light projections, shadow slopes and the sense of extents near or far, big or tiny, but in criteria of actual painting.

3. Confirming the participation of nature elements with environment which is of human deed, the artist is mostly concentrated on open pictorial composition, not from the ultimate aims of the artist's imagination, but through the open doors, windows and curtains, to create a harmonic atmosphere between the inside and outside - inside and outside the picture, inside and outside the human being. This grants him additional values that allow him to combine the aesthetics of the natural view and its fantasy with the values of visual text as a sort of human tragedy involved with pain and sadness.



What will we see in the picture?

In his tablet "Two Horses and Two Apples" from 1998 (oil on canvas, size 100x100 cm) the artist incarnates the marks of a small room dominated by an external atmosphere through a glass window and open white curtains. On one of the room walls hangs a tablet with a picture of a white horse staring at a red mare stood quivering with perplexity in the nature outside the frame of the tablet. Here, we find Basher Mahdi investing in the power of symbols and implying pictorial vocabularies. The hanging tablet seems to send life to the small room through releasing the vital sense of the solid, and its participation of the dramatic act in front of the sense of desire and intercommunication.

This tablet reminds us of the famous story of the Russian novelist Dostoevsky which he showed to Leo Tolstoy; the story is about a horse eating inside a stable. Tolstoy commented on the story, addressing the young Dostoevsky: "I doubt that you were a horse". The tablet also has a harmony with the artist Faiq Hassan's tablet "The Waiting", which incarnates a lean horse staring at a dead horse. Basher Mahdi has worked with cultural tablets that read the

literal texts of poetry, short stories, novels, myths and philosophical ideologies, interfering with the conceptions of modernity and after.

In another tablet, "The Triumph" from 1999 (size 120x130 cm oil on canvas), the artist incarnated a marvellous myth, showing his imagination ability, hovering out of expected frames. The tablet shows a wide palace yard of Gothic civilization marked by its marble columns, curved arches and high ceilings.

The tablet has three visual dimensions. The first one is a large wall, occupying three fourths of the tablet drawn on the marble columns, ornate with sculptures and carvings. The second part represents an open straight door, showing successive steps stretched at the far horizon. The third part represents the opening of what is seen on the horizon, confirming the accord and subsistence among the contents of interior and exterior signposts. On the horizon appear green trees, a palace covered with red tiles and a horizon stretched towards infinity with thick clouds.

Attention is drawn to and the mastery confirmed by the existence of signs hinting of a lost human presence signed by two staffs. The first one leans on the wall inside a spot of light, sneaking into the room through the open window, and the other one is thrown on the floor. These two staffs must be tools used by a handicapped man, but his presence is confirmed more through traces of damp urine and drawing on the wall. On the second third of the tablet we can see the urine flowing on the marble floor, we may read in this visual text that the handicapped man expressed his



displeasure in a rebellious and rejected behaviour to paint a provoking picture of his feelings. He decided to escape from life and get a solution to his existence problem by throwing himself from the balcony dominated to the outside. Who provoked this handicapped man and stirred up his feelings that made him commit suicide? If we look at the right bottom of the tablet, we can see a king in the shape of an ape, frowning, putting his crown, ornaments and jewels in front of his testicles. The signals and pictorial units give the pictorial composition an active dramatic tale.

The ape king, the handicapped man and the stretched horizon of the steps and walls, drawn on the marble columns; the carvings, high ceiling, the open view dominated toward the outside, the signs of staffs, and the urine - it all shows that Basher Mahdi hunts the live symbols as if he wants to say that he is a witness of a historical, horrible doubtful accident.

How do you read the visual text?

The importance of the tablet comes from the importance of the released subject, taking into con-

sideration the date of execution and the measurements of the tablet. My interpretation of this tablet is an Iraqi reading that the roots of this artist come from his birthplace (Iraq), the staffs represent a sign of a handicapped man, the reason, perhaps, is the assassin wars that the country suffered by the decisions of the kings who disfigured into apes.

The king does not care about anything else but his agitated animal instincts. Instead of being in human feature, the artist suggests another hypothesis; he disfigured him into ape, playing with his crown and jewels near his eunuchs. This was a clear sign to the tyrants of Iraq who contribute with their spendthrift and who destroy the life meaning of the country and devastate its development. The act of the urine on the wall was a better form of denying and rebel, in spite of the tablet's vocabularies, its pictorial units and the general atmosphere displays European features. But the symbols in this open visual text own us the right of receiving with multiple and different interpretations.

In another tablet, "But Remained Perplexed" from 2000 (oil on canvas, 90x140 cm), the artist drew an open visual horizon, and there is a bed for two persons with two pillows. The bed is situated on the half left of the tablet front with collared bed sheets and a blue silky brush. The common atmosphere incarnated this subject inspired by the stretched horizon in the very far distant, and there are mountains and a confused sky at the horizon.



We did not see specific persons, but there were signs of their false presence. The bed must be occupied by three persons, not two. Basher Mahdi took the chance of their disappearance out of the scene because he dreaded their assault. But on the same time he owns a brave heart and a challenged soul and he was able to pursue their traces in this cloudy atmosphere which was isolated from the world he documented their behaviour in a very restrict moment. He drew their existence traced by three stones signed to them; in the half right of the tablet there were remains of flamed fire.

What happened?

The atmosphere warns of bad luck signed by the destruction and the existence of the bed. I think the interpretation of visual text is permitted by the hints of the huge destructive action, this action comes from fate or nature or the terrified wars which did not leave anything behind. Basher may be influenced by the bloody actions in his country Iraq. The starting mechanism explains the contents which submitted to a series of objective and subjective procedures and that related to the specialisation toward art view and its changes. This goes with the new methods in painting in the stage of post modernism because the understandings of painting differ completely and implies multiple techniques. The personal paintings and the high

ability of acting doesn't necessarily represent a presence of the artist. The attitude of the artist clearly looks towards the deadly actions in his country and his technical and artistic level grant him domination and fertile image to bear the creative form and confirm through common subjects.

The active presence of the artist indicates that every artistic work implies three basic elements:

- 1: The artistic work
- 2: The artist
- 3: The receiver

Whenever the artistic work is inspired by itself and to itself, it will be close to the art and interference with one of the aesthetic theories. When the work is appreciated for the self of the artist, he will be set between two contradictory things. The first expresses the ranges of the artist's falling, and this is a weak side because it will separate unlovely sides like gloomy or sick trends; the second shows the artist's high ability to introduce a pattern of visual challenge, crowned with skill act on a high level. The subject of receiving is very difficult to understand or to estimate for aesthetic and artistic values. This part does not represent the artistic critic's point of views or the devoted aesthetic studies.

When the artistic work approaches the receiver self it will be ornamented with pictures or sort of composition easy to understand. Whether it expresses the artist self or the receiver self, when we stand in front of Basher Mahdi tablets we grasp a new consciousness added to chains of new changing of the post modernism in the history of painting. There will be a clear confirmation of the artistic work pres-



ence, it relates to the first element we explained before. Some will inquire: how can we describe the genre of the artistic relationship of the artist Baher Mahdi?

Were his tablets able to offer loyalty to the selected realism, symbolic or the magical?

I think that Basher Mahdi, who lived many decades in Europe, was well acquainted with the general history of painting, from cave paintings up to this date, passing the Econie arts, classics, Romantics, impressionism and other modern arts. It is not strange for him to combine all these methods to summarise his distinctive, unique style. The close pursuer of his experience can see that there is a logical combination between the creative ideas and the stylistic trend which allowed him to send forth his riddles and his imaginative narrative ciphers in a narrative style. We are in front of adequate critic scheme, and the ways of artistic estimation for the works of Basher Mahdi, who forded realistic painting in all its trends and schools. He added a dreamy glitter which reminds us of surrealist arts, but he is not a surrealist.

He used selected realistic subjects (the realistic of essence) which added pictorial suggestions after gracing the scene from its superfluous and flabbiness. He made clips to the picture taking into consideration the domination of the form which drew our attention. So he was not a selective realistic painter, in addition he

used magical realistic methods. The realistic was used to draw our attention and select the actual lively subjects, but it was symbolic on a thinking level combined between poetry and pictures and depending on simple acting. Basher Mahdi is not like that. The artist works with the help of the Romantic courses since the time of Baroque and Rococo, so the tablet owned reverence because it was built strictly with perfection; this trend to Romantic was not supported with the presence of individuals, fashions and buildings.

The artist satisfies with basic hints, which the lofty technical act is the most important one, towards the reacted subject with life in the most dangerous historical time confirming his deep philosophical and theoretical view.

The culture of the tablet is displayed to the public not as a review or challenge, but implies heaps of sadness and anxiety about the fate of isolated man, and the condition of expatriation inside the homeland or in bed. Everything flows according to an optimistic view of the future. Because there is a combination between the opposites and this is the meaning of vital existence because the receiver would like to see these tablets, that they have objective harmony, unity and freedom to select the contents without any pressure by others. The artist does not paint according to needs or wills.

The vital experience of Basher Mahdi puts us in front of an art question. Does the artist introduce himself in the project of profit of art or art of profit? The answer will certainly be that he is working on the base of profit of art in the time of violations and destructive wars and terrible crimes, I say: "Really, it is art!" ●



# The Curator

**A** **ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPERVISORY CURATORIAL** work in a museum differs from that of the Senior Curator.

Curatorial Professionals plan and direct curatorial programs, exhibits, historic restorations/recreations, and research projects, or develop and manage educational and interpretative programs for a museum or a historic site. Curatorial work involves all facets of collections in the management of museums or historical sites, including developing and implementing proper storage techniques, developing acquisition policies and procedures, and cataloguing and conserving artefacts.

Exhibit curatorial work involves planning, developing, budgeting, and overseeing installation of exhibits. Education/Interpretive curators are responsible for planning and directing the development of a museum, or historic site education and interpretative programming and outreach programs for a variety of school and public audiences. They also plan and develop teacher-training

programs and history curriculum materials.

An employee at this level also organises and implements programs and policies initiated by the department or site director/manager; conducts or supervises complex research programs for the management of museum holdings, development of exhibits, or the development of educational and interpretative programs. He/she supervises professional and technical staff and volunteers engaged in museum or educational activities. This employee works independently under the general direction of a division manager who reviews work through conferences and reports.

Examples of work performed (any one position may not include all of the duties listed, nor do the examples cover all of the duties which may be performed):

Organises and implements programs and policies initiated by a museum or historic site director/manager.

Supervises complex research projects connected with collections and exhibits for the management of a museum or historic site holdings, or develops educational and interpretive programs.

Supervises professional and technical staff and volunteers engaged in museum or educational activities; trains staff in collections management techniques; develops and implements acquisition policies and procedures; participates in the prioritising of conservation needs; manages various facets of the operation of a conservation/preservation program.

Develops a comprehensive inventory, catalogue, and storage program for the artefact collections; coordinates participation in overall security measures for the museum or historic site; provides curatorial instruction and preservation management techniques to the staff.

Develops and/or coordinates programs such as museum or historic site tours and outreach programs such as supplementary curriculum materials to involve school

children and the general public with the museum purpose or subject matter; develops orientation materials for visitors and instructional programs for educators and visitors in the use of the resources of the museum or historic site; designs teacher programs on using museum or site archives, or materials to supplement established curricula related to the purpose and subject of the museum or historic site and serves as liaison to educational systems in the state.

Gives speeches to professionals and other groups interested in history of the museum or historic site, and organises educational and interpretive programming.

Oversees the planning, development, fabrication and installation of all permanent and temporary exhibits.

Participates in grant application preparation for the museum or historic site.

Prepares reports and correspondence. ●



# About Curatorial work

By: Achi Kanamal

**A**RCHIVISTS, CURATORS, AND MUSEUM TECHNICIANS WORK FOR MUSEUMS, governments, zoos, colleges and universities corporations, and other institutions that require experts to preserve important records and artefacts. These workers preserve important objects and documents, including works of art, transcripts of meetings, photographs, coins and stamps, and historic objects.

Archivists and curators plan and oversee the arrangement, cataloguing, and exhibition of collections; they also maintain collections with technicians and conservators. They acquire and preserve important documents and other valuable items for permanent storage or display. They also describe, catalogue, and analyse valuable objects for the benefit of researchers and the public.

Archivists and curators may coordinate educational and public outreach programmes, such as tours, workshops, lectures and classes, and may work with the boards of institutions to administer plans and policies. They also may research topics or items relevant to their collections.

Although some duties of archivists and curators are similar, the types of items they deal with differ: archivists mainly handle records and documents that are retained because of their importance and potential value, while curators

usually handle objects with cultural, biological, or historical significance, such as sculptures, textiles, and paintings.

Archivists collect, organise, and maintain control over a wide range of information deemed important enough for permanent safekeeping. This information takes many forms: photographs, films, video and sound recordings, and electronic data files in a wide variety of formats, as well as traditional paper records, letters, and documents.

In accordance with accepted standards and practices, archivists maintain records to ensure the long-term preservation and easy retrieval of documents and information. Records may be saved on any medium, including paper, film, videotape, audiotape, computer disk, or DVD. They also may be copied onto some other format to protect the original and to make the records more user-accessible. As various storage media evolve, archivists must keep abreast of technological advances in electronic information storage.

Generally, computers are used to generate and maintain archival records. Professional standards for the use of computers in handling archival records, especially electronic,

are still evolving. However, computer capabilities will continue to expand and more records will be stored and exhibited electronically, providing both increased access and better protection for archived documents.

Archivists often specialise in an area of history so they can more accurately determine which records in that area qualify for retention and should become part of the archives. Archivists may also work with specialised forms of records, such as manuscripts, electronic records, web sites, photographs, cartographic records, motion pictures, or sound recordings.

Curators administer museums, zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens, nature centres and historic sites — the museum director often is a curator. Curators direct the acquisition, storage, and exhibition of collections, including negotiating and authorising the purchase, sale, exchange, or loan of collections. They are also responsible for authenticating, evaluating, and categorising the specimens in a collection. Curators often oversee and help conduct the institution's research projects and related educational programs. Today, an increasing part of a curator's duties involves fundraising and promotion, which may include the writing and reviewing of grant proposals, journal articles, and publicity materials, as well as attendance at meetings, conventions, and civic events.

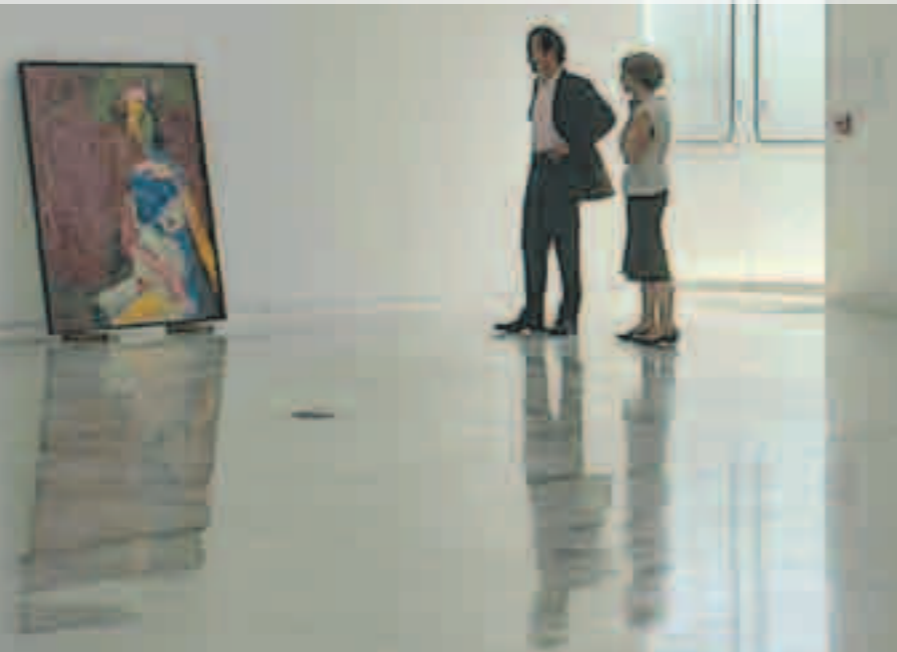
Most curators specialise in a particular field, such as botany, art, palaeontology, or history. Those working in large institutions may be highly specialised. A large natural history museum, for example, would employ separate curators for its collections of birds, fishes, insects, and mammals. Some curators maintain their collections, others do research, and others perform administrative tasks. In small institutions with only one or a few curators, one curator may be responsible for a number of tasks, from maintaining collections to directing the affairs of the museum.

Conservators manage, care for, preserve, treat, and document works of art, artefacts, and specimens — work that may require substantial historical, scientific, and archaeological research. They use x-rays, chemical testing, microscopes, special lights, and other laboratory equipment and techniques to examine objects and determine their condition and the appropriate method for preserving them. Conservators document their findings and treat items to minimise their deterioration or to restore them to their original state. Conservators usually specialise in a particular material or group of objects, such as documents and books, paintings, decorative arts, textiles, metals, or architectural material. In addition to their conservation work, conservators participate in outreach programs, research topics in their area of specialty, and write articles for scholarly journals. They may be employed by museums or work on a freelance basis.

Museum technicians, commonly known as registrars, assist curators by performing various preparatory and maintenance tasks on museum items. Registrars may also answer public inquiries and assist curators and outside scholars in using collections. Archive technicians help archivists to organise, maintain, and provide access to historical documentary materials.

The working conditions of archivists and curators vary. Some spend most of their time working with the public, providing reference assistance and educational services. Others perform research or process records, which reduces the opportunity to work with others. Those who restore and install exhibits or work with bulky, heavy record containers may lift objects, climb, or stretch. Those in zoos, botanical gardens, and other outdoor museums and historic sites frequently walk great distances. Conservators work in conservation laboratories. The size of the objects in the collection they are working with determines the amount of effort involved in lifting, reaching, and moving objects.

Curators who work in large institutions may travel extensively to evaluate potential additions to the collection, organise exhibitions, and conduct research in their area of expertise. However, travel is rare for curators employed in small institutions. ●





# On Duality, Cultural Identity in Uzi Varon Photographs

By Dr. Shlomo Lee Abrahamov 2009

**T**HE CONCEPT OF DUALITY IS AS OLD AS HUMAN HISTORY. When referring to duality we usually think about opposites, black and white good and bad. In human relationship no better narrative illustrates this concept than the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis:

*And the man (Adam) had intercourse with Eve his wife, and she got pregnant and gave birth to Cain, and she said I received a man from God. And she continued and gave birth to his brother, to Abel; and Abel was a sheep herder and Cain was a farmer:*

*After many days Cain brought from the fruit of the soil an offering for God. And Abel also brought from the best of his cattle and their milk. And God accepted Abel and his offering, and Cain and his offering He ignored. And Cain got very angry and agitated and his countenance had fallen.*

As we can observe opposites are created in this story and since we know the continuation of the narrative, we know the moral value of good and bad is attributed to the brothers. It seems that ever since we are constantly conditioned to classify and identify with the common duality of contrasting opposites. In fact one can argue that western thought is predicated on the narrow concept of duality and that we are conditioned to evaluate the world accordingly.

The concept of inner personal duality applies to any person who grows up in one culture and moves to live in another one. The vaster the difference between the cultures, the greater the inner demarcation and presence of this duality. It forces us to a constant comparison or longing which usually expresses itself in these expressions: "Where I grew up, we had the most wonderful pomegranates". So for a person living in one culture physically and in another mentally, there is a constant balancing act of reconciling these dual actualities. Relating to this issue Uzi Varon writes:

*"On the surface the geographical and cultural differences between my native country, Israel, and my current home country, Finland, seem obvious. As time goes by the psychological boundaries, however, are defined by experiences and feelings rather than physical realities. Sometimes the distance between the two disappears altogether."*

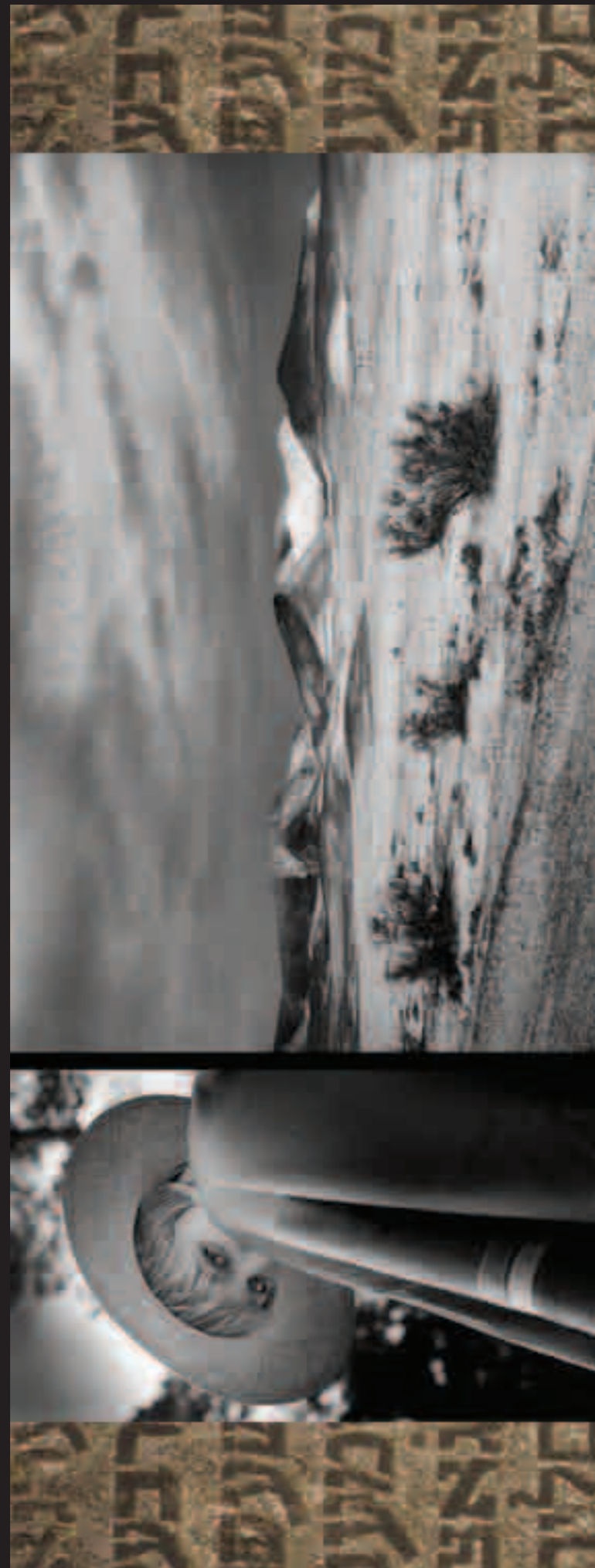
Uzi Varon's photographs display 'doubles' whether an individual next to a landscape or a double portraits of individuals who came



from very different cultures to have become Finn citizens. It draws our attention to a new make-up of European society which is much more multi-ethnic, much like a multi-coloured and patterned quilt. Varon's effort here symbolises a longing for a transformation from the concept of duality to the concept of polarity when two contrasting elements are merged to create one complete image. Unlike the above mentioned biblical story, the concept of polarity perceives opposites as defining one another and by existing one next to the other they create wholeness that is the result of a harmonious balance. If this is a simple concept to grasp theoretically, it seems that we still have difficulty in applying it in practice (George W. Bush words come to mind: "You are either with us or against us").

Regarding photography in general we have come to recognise that certain photographs happen because someone wanted them to exist in this world. If this is a blasé statement, what I mean is that we have to take into consideration the motivation of their creator and how the photographs relate to his personal beliefs and background. Uzi Varon's photographs express his great compassion towards people and his wonderful ability to be non-judgmental and his belief that he can benefit from interaction with any person of any culture in any location. Portraiture here goes well with Uzi Varon's ideas of having respect and dignity for all people without prejudice. It is this passion that had been guiding his documentary work for many years now. In a way it could be an example for all of us — Thinking not of 'We' and 'Them', but rather of 'Us'. ●





#### About the photographs

In Varon's work the theme of duality is most clearly expressed in the projects "Double Exposure - Images of Two Homelands" (2006) and "Finns" (2008).

The works of The Double Exposure collection are composed of two images, one photographed in Israel, the other in Finland. The photos were taken between 1980 and 2005. The point of the project was to make visible the double exposure of the mind that is the result of living in and between two cultures. It is the intuitive visual reflection of two worlds merging into one.

The photographs for the Finns exhibition were taken for a book that was published in 2008 by Lasten

Keskus. Journalists Anne Tarsalainen and Marja Airola came up with the idea of writing down and publishing the stories of new Finns and they asked Uzi to join in the project. As a result of their combined efforts the book *Suomalaisia* was born. In it a group of young immigrants tell about their life, experiences and thoughts.

Each one of them was born in a different corner of the world and in very different surroundings. The one thing they have in common is the fact that at a relatively early age and through various circumstances each one of them became a Finnish citizen. The double portraits depict a person of two homes and cultures. We are all defined by our personal history rather than our nationality or citizenship. Your passport does not even begin to tell your story... ●



# JUNK CURATOR

By: Amir Khatib

**C**URATORS ARE NOT GOOD NOR THEY ARE BAD, they are like fishes, we all love and enjoy eating them, but at the same time we hate their smell, they are smelly, so are the curators too?

I can write about my personal experience in this field, I have curated some 6 large-scale exhibitions and many of the small-scales as well, they were successful to some extent, some of them raise many questions among the intellectual people in Europe, and some of them were just normal, meaning they were just exhibitions.

The bad side of these kind of people "curators" is they are direct and want the best of what they think, because they create some theme and should follow the road map of the mind to fulfill the targets, and of course it makes clash with the wellness of the others and that creates some conflict between them and first the artists and then the rest of the team.

Curatorial work always reminds me of the end of the Titanic film, I mean the story of the film, so the captain became like a God when he saw that the ship was sinking and he had little boats, he should decide what kind of people should be taken, it is the same dilemma, curators should take some participants who meet the targets, but to be frank each artist thinks that her/his work meets the theme and the targets.

Curators are leaders and we as people hate leaders, of course not all of us but most of us, because always each one thinks that she/he can lead better, but how many of us have the real experience of leading, and how many of us can really lead?

Successful career of a curator should be in parallel with a phenomenon of tough decisions, and that unfortunately makes a reflex on the life at home so a curator should be the same person at home, at work at the parking place and totally everywhere.

Someone might ask a question, and comment that this is a work of sophism not curatorial work, or at least this is an autism, everything should be one, but it is the reality as I see it, I do not pretend that it should be with all but it is my experience as I said.

Once I set with some well-known curators in Helsinki the year 2000, in KIASMA, our main goal was to select participants to a show I mean an exhibition called Participation, we have had some 79 proposals with full information details, pictures, slides and other equipments which help us understand the pictures and their relationship to the theme.

We were only three, one was an artist and me and the other one was the curator of KIASMA, as said our goal was to select the artists and our categories were to consider the nationality, gender, modernity and many other, of course as individuals each one of us has her/his own taste, experience and art history knowledge, but since we were three we have to make politics I mean to make compromises towards good selection which satisfy all.

That experience I do not forget it at all, because you have to make politics as I said and not art, so I did not participate in any other curatorial team and I think it does not work, curatorial work is an individual work and no one can have an impression as another, so what remains one might say a curator is a dictator and that may be right.

So there is no appease, no democracy just it needs truth, but I have the big question, is there some truth in our junk life now, I think yes there is but very little people know it and I assume that I am one of them. ●

# Keepers and Curators

By: Thanos Kalamidas

**E**VEN THOUGH COMMERCE IS THE MOTIVATION behind the curators, the truth is that these people specialise in seeing things before us and help us to see and discover what we rarely have time to do ourselves in art. And, like everything that has to do with the combination of the words art and commerce, this is a double-edged knife. But then again this is semantics because the real work of the curators, or traditionally the work of the curators, is keeping and preserving art and that's what they have done for centuries for museums all around the world.

Back in the late-eighties, in a small museum in Normandy, France, while visiting a very good friend and speaking in Greek, a very sweet man in his mid-sixties introduced himself to us in perfect Greek. Luc\*, as we later learned, surprised us with his comfort even with words that are difficult for us Greeks. Curiosity surpassed the art at that moment and we discovered that during his long research into Modern Greek Art he had visited Greece many times and had discovered that the best way to complete his research was to learn Greek in order to access everything possible.

Having already met some curators during my adventures with art, this sweet man totally changed my perspective on the curator's job. Actually, he preferred the word "gardien", guardian. He was the guardian of art, making sure that the visitors of the museum had the right and precise information, making sure that the paintings and sculptures were kept and appeared lighted in the best way and he was making sure that he was there to answer questions and make sure that we embraced this information.

Luc jokingly said later, when we had the chance to have coffee together, that he had no talent to draw a straight line with a pencil but he had the talent to see and feel art. During our tour through the rooms of the exhibition he showed us works of temporary local artists and I could feel his pride for being the one who discovered them. Actually Luc was the first person who helped me understand the connection between curators and anthropologists, however weird that might sound. Curators, like anthropologists, work with bones; it is just that in the anthropologists' case the use of bones is not metaphorical. Both cases have to be able to identify semantics, social and spiritual elements and value the importance of their foundlings in history and how much these foundlings can influence the progress of history. Actually writing about it I prefer the words 'keepers' and 'guardians' than the word 'curators'.

I suppose the mission to preserve and introduce art is where the knife with the two edges is hiding. Again, that is a sign of our times when the word 'value' has nothing to do with 'spirituality' and the words 'how much' take on multiple dimensions

when referring to art. Museums and galleries in the years of global recession cannot survive only with state funding and the good old times of billionaire donors and protectors of the art are probably dead. The ones who still make huge donations do it for tax reasons and not for the good of art. There are definitely no patrons any more to 'adopt' artists and their art. Instead there is the middle man, the negotiator, the man-in-between-the-money-and-the-creator and even though money doesn't make art or bring happiness it certainly helps pay for oil colours.

So how do these people decide what is worth showing when money is involved? Is it going to be red this year or green? Would Matisse survive under these circumstances and how would Van Gogh feel if he had to be in the market today? Would a bank invest in a Kandinsky? What about a person with artistic ambitions and money that can buy the middleman who can 'sell' the work?

It is amazing how the keeper becomes something totally different after a few questions. How the keeper or guardian becomes the predator and art is their victim. Of course art as a meaning, as a unique entity has the power in the long term to prevail and the work of the gifted will survive in the end, but - and this 'but' is huge - how many talents will be lost in the meantime?

Let's make one thing clear: I have nothing against curators and my personal experiences are anything

but negative. What scares me is human nature and the circumstances of the last few decades, especially the social and in extent the financial circumstances. Having met Luc, my personal opinion about curators/art guardians is definitely positive but then again the last few years I have visited dozens of exhibitions promoted and arranged by curators and stepped out witnessing the rape and murder of art. Visual art has been a special victim of all this turning a unique artistic wave into pulp art that provokes any kind of aesthetics.

I suppose the attitude depends upon the person that practices the work. Personally I prefer the guardians of the art from the managers of the art and I prefer people like Luc who, the next time I met him, told me that art demands very little yet also demands everything from you, such as loyalty and dedication. In an era where a car called a Hummer is considered a piece of art and people value art as a financial investment, curators' dedication and loyalty to art becomes a necessity and rightfully curators become guardians. ●

*\* Intentionally I didn't mention Luc's full name, respecting what he told me a few years before: "We are guardians not for the fifteen minutes of fame. We are here to promote art not ourselves." I hope curators around the world can understand this. Luc left us last year, happy to see his grandson following a tradition of guardians he started.*



I will be  
white when  
I grow up,  
won't I?

COLO  
URED  
WITH  
CULT  
URE

Jani Toivola's workshop/lecture focuses on the themes of intercultural encounters and intercultural communications. The touching and dynamic story takes us on a journey from the suburbs of Helsinki to the jungles of Kenya. Languages: Finnish and English.

Thu 11<sup>th</sup> Nov, 10 am-2 pm,  
15 € /person or 20 € /family  
Registrations: maria.gajitos@hel.fi

## Melodie Italiane!

An evening of Italian music. Tenor Luca Cannavò returns to the stage by popular request! On this occasion the singer will be accompanied by pianist Arto Huhtanen and guitarist Danilo Trovato. The performance will also feature a troubadour from Naples, Roberto Zambrano.

Fri 29<sup>th</sup> Oct, 7-9 pm, 7/5 €,  
Tickets from the door one hour before  
showtime or by booking from 050 412  
0481.



COLO  
URED  
WITH  
CULT  
URE

# Cultural Week of Mexico

18<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> Nov

5 Classic movies about  
the Mexican Revolution

Directed by: *Fernando de Fuentes, Juan Bustillo Oro, Matilde Landeta, José Antonio Bolaños, Ana Cruz and Christian Floers Aldama.*

Films in Spanish  
with English subtitles.  
Free entrance.





# How to be a curator

By: Ali R. Mussawi

**A** CURATOR IS A MUSEUM EMPLOYEE WHO COLLECTS, studies, interprets and displays a museum's collection. Curators receive extensive training in their field and have higher degrees, which include, but are not limited to: art history, history, arts administration, museum studies, museum management and curatorship.

Large museums often have many curators, one for each exhibit or subject area. There may be a Curator of Paintings, a Curator of Drawings, and a Curator of Photographs. Curators are also in charge of departments of the museum. A museum may have a Curator of Education, a Curator of Collections, and a Curator of Exhibitions.

At the James A. Michener Art Museum, located in Pennsylvania, USA, there are three Curators, including a Senior Curator, a Curator of Education and Public Programs, and a Curator of Collections. There is an Associate Curator of Education who works with the Curator of Education and Public Programs, and an Assistant Curator of Exhibitions who works with the Senior Curator.

The Director, Senior Curator, Curator of Collections and the Assistant Curator of Exhibitions decide what objects should be displayed, and they arrange the displays so that visitors can understand and appreciate what they see. Sometimes the Museum hires guest curators for special exhibitions. The Assistant Curator of Exhibitions also assists the Senior Curator with research, planning and production of exhibitions.

The Director, the Senior Curator and the Curator of Collections find new works to add to the Museum's collections, and they organise special exhibitions. To help interpret the exhibit, the Senior Curator and Curator of Collections design and produce signage and printed materials for exhibits including the labels that will be displayed. Both the Senior Curator and Curator of Collections plan and manage the exhibitions at the Michener.

There is an exhibitions committee at the Michener that discusses the "nuts and bolts" of exhibits. This would include information such as: how to handle a special piece of artwork, how to hang/display a certain object, and the loan requirements of an object.

The main focus of the Curator of Education and Public Programs is educating the public about the museum's exhibitions and collection, as well as exploring wider themes in art. This curator organises a wide variety of educational programs for all ages, including special lecturers, gallery talks, workshops and artist demonstrations for the public organised in conjunction with the special exhibitions at the museum. She manages the museum docents and summer interns. This curator arranges special programs such as music concerts, Jazz Nights, sculpture garden music series, and special events like Holiday Open House and Family Day.

The Associate Curator of Education manages the school tour program. Many students from different schools visit the Museum each year. This curator also creates many of the materials that go to teachers when they schedule a trip with their school, which includes information like activity sheets for students, and lesson plans for teachers to use in the classroom after their visit. The curator also organises classes and workshops for teachers, manages the traveling trunk program, and provides materials and training to the docents on the exhibits.

The Director of Educational Outreach at the Museum manages all of the after-school children's classes, summer art camps and the Children's Art Gallery at the Michener. The director of educational outreach is responsible for hiring teachers for the classes during the year and making sure the teachers have the proper supplies for their classes. This person also works with the Children's Programme Advisory group in organising and scheduling the exhibits for the children's art gallery. ●

# Rough notes

## A curator's perspective

By: Aisling Prior

**D**EPENDING ON THE NATURE OF THE BRIEF and the expectation of the commission, there are many different ways to make a submission for consideration. Typically, as a curator of a public art commission, I tend not to formulate a very tight brief; one with specifications, expressed aspirations and requirements (unless, of course where there are very pronounced objectives and parameters laid out by the commissioning body) and strict budgets.

I prefer to explicitly present the context and motivation for the commission/artwork and expect artists to decide whether these factors are of interest to them in terms of their on-going practice.

I would further allow the artist to nominate an approximate sum of money required to cover their fee and implementation costs. However, this is generally re-visited at great length when we have decided on the actual work to be produced, which happens sometime after the artist has been awarded the commission. The same applies to how a time scale is agreed.

This way of working can be difficult for artists as an actual proposal is not exactly being sought. What is being looked for in the submission stages is merely a CV, examples of previous work and an 'approach' - an enquiry into, and a logic as to, why and how a work will be produced through the commission. So the artist is being selected, not a proposal.

Upon being awarded a commission a reasonable period of time is worked out whereby the selected artist is paid a fee to carry out critical research which will ultimately result in the making of a new work.

This period of research is interjected with meetings with the curator, the client and the constituent community or audience if appropriate. At these meetings, we discuss other artists' work which may be referenced, or not, the nuts and bolts of the production of the work, how the work will be mediated and we fix a budget and timescale.

Since it is the artist and not the proposal which is being selected, the curator of the commission will obviously be researching the artists' practice, both nationally and internationally. Depending on the overall budget available, the curator may take into consideration factors such as the trajectory of the artist's career, and whether the artist is able or ready to work to the scale of expectation, large or small.

If an artist doesn't have a significant body of previous work to present, a curator can still appreciate potential and capacity from submitted images and a well thought out expression of interest.

I would suggest that artists consider having two versions of their CV; the comprehensive version which may run to several pages and a shorter two-page version, which highlights areas of commonality or relevance to the commission being applied for. Selectors simply don't have sufficient time to read through pages and pages of documentation.

Also, high resolution A4 prints of visual work (including stills from moving image work, or gallery shots of exhibitions) are extremely useful for selectors. Their simple physicality means they can be easily passed around a group, and, during discussions, images on paper can be reappraised far easier than say those on a CD or DVD. (When artists are submitting sound works, music, literature, it is important to provide accurate and simple instructions as to which excerpts to listen to/read and to indicate the duration of piece if it is imperative that an entire piece be listened to/read, being mindful of the demands this is making on the selectors, quite possibly at the expense of other submitting artists being given due consideration). Of course, every individual item needs to include the artist's name, title, date, dimensions of the work if applicable, place etc. Increasingly artists are setting up their own websites, which is a further useful tool of reference for selectors.

As a curator, I primarily look for an expression of a unique imagination, a demonstrable curiosity about, and a fresh perspective on the lives we lead and the world in which we lead them. Some of the qualities I am drawn to in an artist's practice are inventiveness, wit, iconoclasm, populism,



wilfulness, daftness, technical virtuosity (which is a bit old fashioned of me). When proposing to work with an artist I need to be assured of their availability, their self-confidence in terms of their ability to deliver a commission. I like to know of the technical expertise they can call on, and of their expressed and demonstrable enthusiasm and conviction for the project.

There is an inherent dichotomy for artists working on public art commissions, which is that their work is being sought precisely because it is assured, strong, unique, yet they will be expected to be open to negotiation, and possibly compromise! Intrinsic to the public art transaction is a level of expectation in an artwork performing some purpose which is not generally required of an artwork made for private collections, i.e. museums or galleries.

Artists should be aware of the binary nature of a public art contract and should be able, even eager, to work across professions, as all public art commissions require this type of collaboration. It should therefore be discernable to the selector from the accompanying statement of intent or expression of interest, that the artist proposing to be selected is amenable to working in an expanded way. ●

*Aisling Prior is a graduate of Philosophy and English at UCD and of the Masters in Visual Art Practices at IADT. She was director of the Breaking Ground art commissions programme where she produced 40 innovative projects in Ballymun, Dublin as part of that area's regeneration. Breaking Ground has been widely recognised as the flagship of contemporary public art projects in Ireland. While working in Paris, she co-organised a major retrospective of Irish Cinema at the Centre Georges Pompidou. She was the founder director of the Galway Film Centre and was the Director of the Sculptors' Society of Ireland, (VAI). Most recently, she curated the Art in the Life World conference and exhibition in Spring 2008. She is curator of visual arts, Kilkenny Arts Festival 2009.*



# The Beneficiary

By: Ali Najjar

**I**S THE MEDIA OUT OF POWER or is there some hidden hands moving it? The matter is not that simple; it might be both are a possibility. There's some greater possibility of the designed game, as it is in many art expos, especially the private and the institutional ones. There should be some power that has been hidden or has appeared to be moving along the main lines that we see continuously.

In a show by my artist friend in a Stockholm gallery, the gallery took 70 per cent of the value of the art works, yet the artist was satisfied. Who is the winner? Is it the artist who produces artwork that turn into a commodity? Is it the gallery owner or maybe even them both? Is the popularity divided between them? Does the artist make his own name or does the gallery make it for him? After all, I would say that this is the behaviour of the art market.

If art organisations a century ago had presented cultural and aesthetic products depending on the intellectuals who were free of marketing pressure, what would we have now? The aesthetic test of pressure is felt outside the civilised zone, so can these organisations remain faithful to their duty in the time of globalisation?

Sure it is not so because the world knows one sentence: "You pay, you say." Art is turned into money but that does not mean that by producing art you are printing your own money - the matter is not that easy, with millions of artists across only the USA and Europe. What can determine the art

work's high value or the fantasy level is the artificially selected group by the market that can limit the price of the artwork.

In the investment of art we have more than one player in our time. First comes the collectors (before they called them art sponsors) whom they have hundreds or thousands of artworks which give them the authority of controlling the market beside "already paid" suitable media campaign (collectors move to discover the characteristic and cheap artists at the same time) so between the selling and buying prices there are unbelievable differences which by the end is not on the benefit of the artist.

Some of the art venues, precisely the internationally well-known adapt same behaviour as the collectors do, Leo Cartelli for example, if we came cross its adapting to many galleries in the world, so its main gallery moves inside a closed circle supporting its own shows, under allegation of supporting an art movement or young artist (that interprets the secret of the published pictures on Google for instance) and supports the marketing efforts (unofficial beneficiary league).

The cultural artistic is here out of its regular nature for the administration of the gallery which does not go over the boss stocks, on the ground and through the behaviour of these contemporary organisations of the art marketing, the whole process is about moving the money, accept the rare behaviour of some organisations.

Often, these rare organisations should not follow the state political process or the official cultural boycott which is often vulnerable and any one can inter it because of the variable of the artistic decision makers, which is including the museum director, professional dealers and the collectors, so buying an artwork



or showing it does not depend on the quality but to the image that made by all these people, and that does not mean that all artworks are invaluable.

The museum directors and collectors have another role in the marketing process and limiting the price of the artwork after it crosses the marketing manufacturing, some of these are, Charley Saatchi, John Christoph Becouzi through their CV you can understand the outlines of making the artistic taste in limits that

they determine it and then they show it as market stuff in the price that they limit as well.

It is true that they discover the artist and the art movement, but also true that the do not do that humanistic cultural society sake, but on the sake of investment.

In the USA the organisations try to encourage the POP taste by the direct artificial, colourfulness of the art and easily digesting it, Andy Warhol, Jeff Koons, assorted art is okay for the market and its consumers.

These organisations as I see are embarrassing the cultural movement in general and I think that we should get rid of such organisations or in the best shape I ask is there new time that art and artists cut their obligations to that organisations that can be happened when the "other" artist can share or get chance to share the presenting their arts as it is in the "developed" would, and it is coming for sure because if you see the movement of the Chines and Indian in the field you understand very well, it brakes the monopolisation after the prices reached to 40 million or so, after all of that do we doubt that some change will take place in the tools of the art market, perhaps all will wait the own turn to put a step on the marketing organisations if they are not disappointed as now. ●



# What is a Curator?

By: **Kim Kenney**

BellaOnline's Museums Editor

Source: [www.bellaonline.org](http://www.bellaonline.org)

**G**ENERALLY SPEAKING, A CURATOR IS ONE who takes care of the collection at a museum, historic site, aquarium, or zoo. The word "curator" itself comes from the Latin word *curatus*, which means "care."

A museum curator has a variety of responsibilities, which vary from institution to institution, depending on the size of the museum, its mission, its budget, and the other positions on the staff. A curator can be an expert in a very narrowly defined field, such as 19th century furniture, or a "jack of all trades," doing a little bit of everything the job might require.

At a smaller museum, a Curator wears many hats. What might be several jobs at a large museum are usually rolled into one person. For example, while my job title is officially "Curator," I perform the duties of a Registrar, Collections Manager, and Director of Exhibitions. At some museums, the Curator might be involved in education programs, volunteer management, public relations, and grant writing, just to name a few.

So what does a Curator do all day?

\* **Acquisitions:** A Curator is in charge of building the museum's permanent collection. This might entail identifying gaps in the collection and actively seeking out items to fill it, or making recommendations to eliminate items that are duplicates or do not fit into the museum's mission. A Curator handles new donations and the paperwork that goes along with it. At a large institution, the Registrar would handle all of the paperwork, including signing the Deed of Gift agreement, assigning it an accessions number, cataloguing it, and physically numbering it.

\* **Collections Management:** In order to care for the collection, a Curator must be knowledgeable about the proper storage

conditions for several different types of artefacts. Essential skills include reading and maintaining a hygromograph (a machine that records temperature and relative humidity), a light meter (to regulate safe lighting levels both in storage and exhibition galleries), and a comprehensive understanding of safe storage materials for various kinds of materials. At a large museum, storage and all related issues would be the realm of the Collections Manager.

\* **Exhibitions:** What good is the collection if no one ever gets to see it? My favourite part of my job is exhibition design. At a larger institution, an entire department would be dedicated to exhibit design and fabrication. Sometimes, if the budget allows, an outside design firm is called in to develop an exhibition. In that case, a Curator and an exhibitions team made up of several different staff members would determine the contents of the exhibit, select artefacts, and write the labels and text panels. The design itself would be completed by someone else, with the Curator overseeing the conditions under which each object will be exhibited. At my job, I do all of the above myself.

\* **Research and Writing:** No matter where you work, a Curator spends a great deal of time doing research and writing. Tracing the provenance of an artefact involves real detective work, so you have to know how to research. The public also submits a variety research requests to the Curator. If part of your job is doing exhibitions, you have to understand the subtle art of "label writing" – believe me, it is nothing like any other kind of writing. Your audience has a short attention span, so you better get what you need to say out there in a clear, concise way or you'll lose them! This skill can take years to develop. Some Curators also write articles in scholarly journals or even books on their area of expertise.

\* **Community Connections:** It is not essential for every Curator to possess public speaking skills, but it certainly helps. A museum curator is often a respected member of the community, and may be asked to speak at various organisations about topics ranging from local history to antiques. It is important for a museum to remain visible in the community, and one way to do that is for the Curator to develop outreach programs. Many museum professionals often give presentations and participate in roundtable discussions at regional and national meetings and conferences. ●





# Creative Capital

By **Huang Liwei**

Photographs by Duan Wei and Chen Jian

**A** 3,000-YEAR-OLD CITY, NOW HOME TO a population of ten million people, Beijing has completed its evolution from an industry-based to a service-based economy. What's next for this ancient metropolis? What will be her next phase of economic transformation? One more recently developed segment of note: the creative industries. In recent years, creative industries have boomed in Beijing, serving as a new driver of economic growth, a new engine of social progress and a new symbol of the city.

## Concept and Cause

It's estimated that Beijing is home to about 900,000 practitioners in the creative industries. A newly-rising sector in China, in recent years the term "creative industries" has taken its place as a bona fide buzz word. Indeed, beyond China, the industry has expanded as a defined segment for more than a decade.

The term "creative industries" may refer to an industry by which individual creativity, skills and talent generate wealth, increase employment, and improve the overall living environment. The commercial genre generally includes advertising, architectural art, artworks, antiques, fashion design, films, interactive software, music, performing arts, publishing, and television and radio broadcast. Also in this category we find tourism, museums, art galleries, cultural heritage and sports.

China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Shanghai are longer-standing cradles of the creative industry, while in Beijing; the segment was officially recognised in December 2005, when the municipal government implemented the policy of developing creative industries on the basis of a thorough analysis of the social and economic development situation of the capital. In the past three years, thanks to governmental support, Beijing's creative segment has expanded at an impressive rate.

In 2007, the total asset value of Beijing's creative industries was estimated at 726 billion Yuan, up 17.9 per cent over the previous year; the income realised was 460.16 billion Yuan, up 27.3 per cent; the value-added realised was 99.26 billion Yuan, accounting for 10.6 per cent of the local output value of Beijing; the profit earned was 21.62 billion Yuan, up 50.7 per cent; and the tax revenue turned in was 21.67 billion Yuan, up 28.3 per cent.

According to international standards, an industry whose output value accounts for at least six per cent of the GDP may be considered a pillar sector of the economy.

## Culture and Consumption

Chen Dong, deputy director of the Publicity Department of Beijing Municipal Party Committee, believes that Beijing enjoys exceptional advantages in the realm of the commercially creative.

Firstly, the functional orientation of Beijing as the nation's cultural centre lends clear advantages to the city in the development of its industry of cultural creativity. Beijing is a world-famous historical and cultural city, boasting a 3,000-year history and a capital designation for 800 years. The development of the cultural creative industry will echo the present functional orientation of the national capital as an "international modern liveable city with cultural magnificence."

Secondly, Beijing is located at the core of the national cultural market, and its huge cultural consumption potential will serve as a powerful engine driving the development of the cultural creative industry. The development of this new sector is also an internal demand and inevitable



outcome of the enhanced diversification of people's cultural life and the upgrading of the consumption structure. In 2005, Beijing's per capita GDP topped \$5,000, and in 2006 this figure rose to top \$6,000. Concurrently, the consumption structure of the city's urban and rural residents changed greatly.

In 2006, the per capita expenditure of urban Beijing citizens in education, culture and recreation was 2,515 Yuan, accounting for 17 per cent of the per capita consumption expenditure, up by 15 per cent over the previous year. Influenced by the changing social demands, the cultural creative industry – largely represented by software, Internet, artwork transaction, tourism, and leisure recreation – has developed rapidly.

Thirdly, the abundant cultural resources possessed by Beijing are a clear advantage in the development of cultural creative industry. Beijing has complete cultural facilities and a great number of publishing agencies, while TV and film production accounts for more than 50 per cent of the nation's total. Of the 3,322 historical cultural sites scattered around the city, six have been inscribed to the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage list. By the end of 2006, museums registered in Beijing had come to 133. Boasting 77 institutes of higher learning and 353 scientific research academies, Beijing is an incubator for creative professionals.

Fourthly, after 30 years of reform and opening-up, Beijing has established a solid material foundation required for the development of creative industries. During the Tenth Five-Year Plan period (2001-2005), the local output value of Beijing grew by 12.1 per cent annually. In 2006, the city's local output value topped 772 billion Yuan; the per capita output value reached \$6,210; and the local revenue income increased from 45.42 billion Yuan in 2001 to 111.72 billion Yuan.

Riding the global wave of the accelerating creative industry, Beijing has set forth her industry orientation on the basis of her cultural and technological resource advantages. Such an orientation provides a guideline for growth, while creating channels for the inflow of new vitality to the ancient city.

“Beijing, as the national centre for politics and culture, is more suitable for developing cultural and creative industry than any other city,” says Prof. Chen Shaofeng, deputy director of Peking University Cultural Industry Institute. “Its cultural output value should be at least twice that of any other place.”

#### Cultivation and Cash

In April 2006, the municipal government of Beijing established a leading team for the development of the creative industries. The group's mission was to lay the groundwork for a supportive platform enabling the optimised development of the cultural creative industry and deliberating and formulating the development strategy, key policies, large investment and important projects for the city's cultural creative industry.

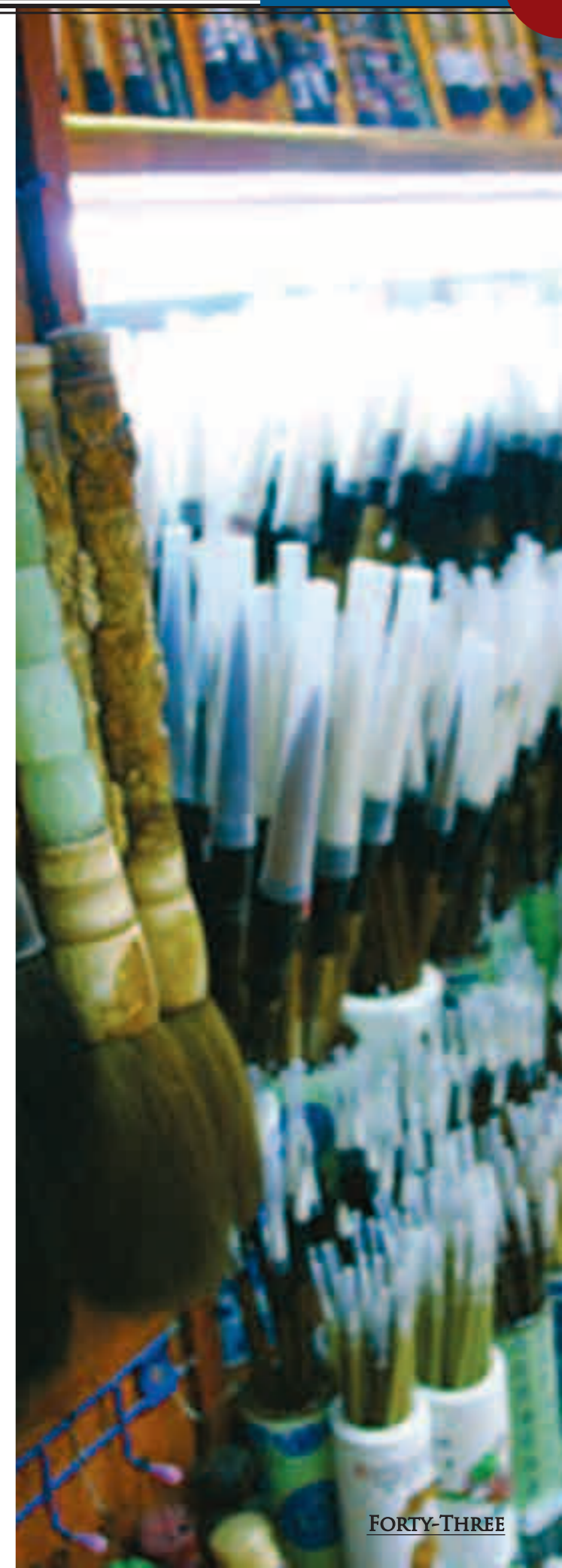
Subsequently, in accordance with guidelines established by the leading team, all districts and counties established leading organs in the industry. According to actual requirements, the municipal government has instituted the Beijing Development Planning for Cultural Creative Industry in the 11th Five-Year Plan Period, the Beijing Policies for Promoting the Development of Cultural Creative Industry, and a series of supporting policies. And the promulgation of the Beijing Direction for Investment in Cultural Creative Industry provides a clear and useful road map for investment from widely ranging sources of capital.

In 2006, the municipal government established a public-oriented fund for the development of cultural creative industry, which has since obtained an earmark of 500 million Yuan from the fiscal revenue annually; and a three-year special fund of 500 million Yuan was set for infrastructure construction in the congregation areas of cultural creative. In addition, since 2007, the government has promulgated a series of relative policies, providing financial support for the industry.

Meanwhile, the China Beijing International Cultural & Creative Industry Expo, an annual event initiated in 2006, has functioned in introducing key commercially creative projects, promoting information exchange, signing cooperative agreement, and providing a platform for domestic and international cultural trade. Collectively, the previous two expos concluded 404 agreements with a total investment and trading volume of \$7.59 billion.

Concurrently, a group of congregation complexes for cultural creativity was developed, offering a favourable condition for the expansion of the industry. During the 11th Five-Year Plan Period (2006-2010), Beijing plans to construct 30 such complexes, and so far 21 have been recognised as municipal-level complexes, including the now world-famous 798 Art Zone, a modern art district developed within a complex of renovated and retooled factory space, and the creative village in Songzhuang, probably the world's largest painters' village, with nearly 1,000 artists from around the country.

The boom of Beijing's creative industries mirrors similar rapid growth in recent years throughout the entire country. In his book *The Creative Economy*, Economist John Howkins points out that each day the global creative industry generates \$22 billion and the aggregate value is expanding at the rate of five per cent each year. China is now keeping pace. ●



# Contemporary art in Aphrodite's island

By Thanos Kalamidas

**T**HE DEEP ROLE OF ART IN LIFE had been examined in length long before terms like 'realism' and 'social realism' entered the artistic realm. For centuries, philosophers, more than historians, have often made reference to the unavoidable conflict between art and authority emphasising the artists' characteristic for anarchist individualism and little tolerance to pressure, especially when this pressure has political shades. It was Jean Paul Sartre who, in a very twisted way, said that the most creative periods for artists are the periods under pressure, such as France during its Nazi occupation. It is during these times that art actually projects the reality of life, as well as the dreams and hopes of the people.

Cyprus is a place we usually connect with vacations, especially as it is among the more popular summer destinations for central and north Europeans. The island is associated with Aphrodite and the ancient myths, history and politics, but we very rarely connect Cyprus with contemporary and visual art. Since this is an issue dedicated to curators, we should offer thanks to a few curators of Cypriot contemporary art that have supplied galleries from England to Germany, from Scandinavia to Iberia.

From the 1950s until today, Cypriot social, political and economic conditions have not only shaped the island's life in the 20th century but is also crucial to understand how idiosyncratically art has been produced and experienced, both internally and in relation to the international artistic landscape. During this time, Cyprus was disadvantaged by its remoteness from the continental centres of change and intellectual activity. It also handled the persistent effects of imperialism, colonialism, military occupation, as well as the total "insulation" of the two main local communities from each other.

Paired with the absence of a potent theoretical and critical environment, these circumstances may partially explain why the artistic vocabularies of modernity made a rather superficial and untimely appearance in Cyprus, and may also help to interpret the scarcity of socio-political references in Cypriot art of the last decades.

Cyprus has been divided since 1974, when Turkey invaded the northern part of the island; a buffer zone controlled by the United Nations runs right through the nation's capital, Nicosia. The Turkish-occupied side is not recognised internationally as a legitimate government and is one of the reasons Turkey has failed to gain membership in the European Union with obvious effect upon the cultural events held on the nation island, such as the European biennial Manifesta that had to be cancelled in 2006.

The Manifesta incident was one of a series of art-world blows around that time that also included the closure of the cutting-edge international gallery Archimede Staffolini, which Pavlina Paraskevaidou ran from 1998 to 2005, hosting solo shows with Hussein Chalayan, James Riley, and Polys Peslikas, among others. However, a recent visit showed there are still a number of notable venues for viewing contemporary art in Nicosia, the nation's cultural centre and crossroads.

The most high-profile commercial space and the only Cypriot gallery to attend the international art fair Art-Athina in neighbouring Greece last year was the Centre of Contemporary Art Diatopos, owned by Daphne Nikita, a poet; she also participated in Daniel Birnbaum's "Making Worlds" exhibition at the 2009 Venice Biennale as part of "Making Words," a project in which poets collaborated with visual artists. When ARTINFO visited in December 2009, Nikita had on view a captivating solo exhibition by a 35-year-old Greek-Cypriot artist Melita Couta called "I LAND" that filled the three-floor gallery. Included were Couta's detailed ink drawings, made on several sheets

of translucent paper, which resembled imaginary topographic maps and have an emotional resonance given Cyprus's history. Downstairs, several large sculptures dominated the room, including a kinetic piece that was essentially a large swinging pendulum.

The Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre, housed in a restored former electrical station featuring 12,000 square feet of exhibition space, a bookstore, and a restaurant, had on view a retrospective of the Cypriot architect Zenon Sierpeklis, a finalist of the Mies Van der Rohe Pavillion Award for European Architecture in 1997. Curated by architects Charis Christodoulou and Aggela Zisimopoulou, "Through a Broken Mirror" included photos and renderings of his private and public projects, as well as work in other areas like sculpture and photography. His buildings highlight spatial experience as well as materials and their properties, as can be seen in his modernist Kapakiotis residence in the village of Geri from 2009.

Angelos Makrides, who was born in 1942 and is considered one of the most important of the older generation of contemporary Cypriot artists, had a retrospective of sorts called "Elegies of Life and Death," curated by collector Nicos Chr. Pattichis and artist Savvas Christodoulides at the Cyprus Contemporary Art Museum. Or at least under its auspices: The recently founded, privately-funded museum does not yet have a permanent location, so its exhibitions are being held in Omikron gallery. Some of Makrides's art recalls that of Louise

Bourgeois, although from a definitively male and Cypriot perspective, so it was an eye-opener to see this large selection of work about the body using wood, stone, metal, and found objects and dating from 1985 to 2009, from an artist whom many outside of Cyprus may not be aware. Makrides was also part of a group exhibition at the traditionally more conservative Argo gallery and also curated by Christodoulides, whose title, taken from the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke roughly translates to "Tell me poet, what are you doing?"

At the opposite end of the age spectrum, Famagusta Gate, a public space that's part of the fortified medieval town wall of Nicosia, featured works by the eight 30-and-under Cypriot representatives selected for the 2009 Biennale for Young Artists from European and Mediterranean Countries in Skopje, Macedonia. Among the standouts were Omiros Panayides's framed posters, lit from behind and resting on the floor, which resembled futuristic conduits or a network of sorts mashed together with some art deco flair for spice, as well as the graffiti-inspired heat-transfer-on-canvas works by Evelin Anastasiou, which made for a funky juxtaposition with the brown stone walls.

The most prominent artist-run space in Nicosia is Stoa Aeschylou / Arcade, directed by Panikos Tembriotis and Demetris Neokleous, who renovated and expanded the premises over the summer to add more exhibition areas and a better sound system. Stoa is currently planning a project in collaboration with the municipality of Nicosia called the Caravan, where artists are invited to submit proposals for a series of roving exhibitions. The aim is to have the theme of each exhibition relate to a particular location's history, architecture, tradition, and politics, a subject near and dear to Cypriots, who live every day with geographic barriers and reminders of the island's tumultuous past. ●



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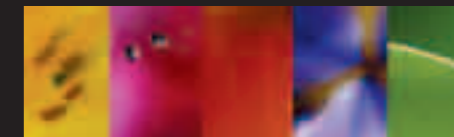
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# Curators training

## other qualifications and advancement

**E**MPLOYMENT AS AN ARCHIVIST, CONSERVATOR, OR CURATOR usually requires graduate education and related work experience. While completing their formal education, many archivists and curators work in archives or museums to gain “hands-on” experience. Registrars often start work with a bachelor’s degree.

Education and training. Although archivists earn a variety of undergraduate degrees, a graduate degree in history or library science with courses in archival science is preferred by most employers. Many colleges and universities offer courses or practical training in archival techniques as part of their history, library science, or other curriculum. A few institutions offer master’s degrees in archival studies. Some positions may require knowledge of the discipline related to the collection, such as computer science, business, or medicine. There are many archives that offer volunteer opportunities where students can gain experience.

For employment as a curator, most museums require a master’s degree in an appropriate discipline of the museum’s specialty—art, history, or archaeology—or in museum studies. Some employers prefer a doctoral degree, particularly for curators in natural history or science museums. Earning two graduate degrees—in museum studies (museum studies) and a specialized subject—may give a candidate a distinct advantage in a competitive job market. In small museums, curatorial positions may be available to individuals with a bachelor’s degree. Because curators, particularly those in small museums, may have administrative and managerial responsibilities, courses in business administration, public relations, marketing, and fundraising also are recommended. For some positions, an internship of full-time museum work supplemented by courses in museum practices is needed.

When hiring conservators, employers look for a master’s degree in conservation or in a closely related field, together with substantial experience. There are only a few graduate programs in museum conservation techniques in the United States. Competition for entry to these programs is keen; to qualify, a student must have a background in chemistry, archaeology or studio art, and art history, as well as work expe-

rience. For some programs, knowledge of a foreign language also is helpful. Conservation apprenticeships or internships as an undergraduate can enhance one’s admission prospects. Graduate programs last 2 to 4 years, the latter years of which include internship training. A few individuals enter conservation through apprenticeships with museums, nonprofit organizations, and conservators in private practice. Apprenticeships should be supplemented with courses in chemistry, studio art, and history. Apprenticeship training, although accepted, is a more difficult and increasingly scarce route into the conservation profession.

Museum technicians usually need a bachelor’s degree in an appropriate discipline of the museum’s specialty, training in museum studies, or previous experience working in museums, particularly in the design of exhibits. Similarly, archives technicians usually need a bachelor’s degree in library science or history, or relevant work experience. Relatively few schools grant a bachelor’s degree in museum studies. More common are undergraduate minors or tracks of study that are part of an undergraduate degree in a related field, such as art history, history, or archaeology. Students interested in further study may obtain a master’s degree in museum studies, offered in colleges and universities throughout the country. However, many employers feel that, while museum studies are helpful, a thorough knowledge of the museum’s specialty and museum work experience are more important.

Certification and other qualifications. The Academy of Certified Archivists offers voluntary certification for archivists. The designation “Certified Archivist” can be obtained by those with at least a master’s degree and a year of appropriate archival experience. The certification process requires candidates to pass a written examination, and they must renew their certification periodically.

Archivists need research skills and analytical ability to understand the content of documents and the context in which they were created. They must also be able to decipher deteriorated or poor-quality printed matter, handwritten manuscripts, photographs, or films. A background in preservation management is often required of archivists because they are respon-

sible for taking proper care of their records. Archivists also must be able to organize large amounts of information and write clear instructions for its retrieval and use. In addition, computer skills and the ability to work with electronic records and databases are very important. Because electronic records are becoming the prevalent form of recordkeeping, and archivists must create searchable databases, knowledge of Web technology may be required.

Curatorial positions often require knowledge in a number of fields. For historic and artistic conservation, courses in chemistry, physics, and art are desirable. Like archivists, curators need computer skills and the ability to work with electronic databases. Many curators are responsible for posting information on the Internet, so they also need to be familiar with digital imaging, scanning technology, and copyright law.

Curators must be flexible because of their wide variety of duties, including the design and presentation of exhibits. In small museums, curators need manual dexterity to build exhibits or restore objects. Leadership ability and business skills are important for museum directors, while marketing skills are valuable in increasing museum attendance and fundraising.

Advancement. Continuing education is available through meetings, conferences, and workshops sponsored by archival, historical, and museum associations. Some larger organizations, such as the National Archives in Washington, D.C., offer such training in-house.

Many archives, including one-person shops, are very small and have limited opportunities for promotion. Archivists typically advance by transferring to a larger unit that has supervisory positions. A doctorate in history, library science, or a related field may be needed for some advanced positions, such as director of a State archive.

In large museums, curators may advance through several levels of responsibility, eventually becoming the museum director. Curators in smaller museums often advance to larger ones. Individual research and publications are important for advancement in larger institutions.

Technician positions often serve as a steppingstone for individuals interested in archival and curatorial work. Except in small museums, a master's degree is needed for advancement. ●

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When the curator becomes artistic project

# I am a Curator

**I AM A CURATOR WAS A PROCESS-BASED EXHIBITION PROJECT** by artist Per Hüttner that took place at Chisenhale Gallery, London, UK, 5 November - 14 December 2003. During the period people or groups of people with no experience in exhibition making undertook 36 investigative exercises into the process of making an exhibition. They had artwork by 57 artists to interact with. The project stirred a lot of controversy in the art world at the time. The most common critique was that the project suggested that curation and exhibition making is easy Hüttner responded to this by writing: the goal of the project was to inspire a more diverse and profound discussion about the meaning of artworks, exhibitions and the role of the artist. Over the years, the project has gained recognition and has been hailed as being ahead of its time and has been widely appreciated for its visionary qualities in readers on curation and research on the subject of art and exhibition making.

Hüttner carried out a series of exhibitions that democratized or investigated the curatorial process in the late 1990s and in the early years of the new millennium. Many of these were collaborative and took place at the Gallery Konstakuten in Stockholm, The Hood Gallery in Los Angeles but also in galleries and public spaces in London, New York and Vancouver and involved artists from different generations and included Geoffrey Farmer, Brian Jungen, Lenke Rothman, Neil Goldstein and curators like Reid Shier and Tone O Nielsen. In 2001 he created the curatorial framework for an exhibition at Nylon in collaboration with Goshka Macuga and Gavin Wade. And in 2002 at Curatorial Market at Cuchifritos and various public venues including Essex Street Market in New York. In these projects he developed ideas and practices that pointed towards a new way of relating to the art object and exhibition making that eventually became manifest in *I am a Curator*.

“Despite its populist ideals, the Curatorial Market raises complex, insider issues about the relationship between artist and curator. ‘These two disciplines are beginning to mix and merge in ways that some people find appalling and others see as a powerful new development in the history of art making,’ Paul Clay explains. However, abandoning the idea of the autonomous piece of art can be problematic. ‘Having art that relates very strongly to the market context can fuck up the commodification process in an interesting way. It both points it up as an object to consume, and at the same time makes it harder to effectively remove from its context in order to be sold.’ Furthermore, ‘There is a danger that when curators have too strong an over-arching vision, the artists’ works can end up simply as building blocks used to construct the curator’s point. On the other hand if the curator’s point is weak then the works can get stranded totally out of context’.”

During six weeks people or groups of people with no prior experience in exhibition making undertook 36 investigative exercises into the process of putting together an exhibition. From the outset, the idea was to create an exhibition each day, but quickly the focus moved to investigate the 57 art-

works as a resource. In order to realize this strategy the artist developed some basic concepts:

**Curator of the Day:** The daily slots were administered through an application process through which we tried to give as many different people as possible, in relation to occupation, age, and sex, social and ethnic background. More often than not, the Curator of Day was a small group. Meaning that in the end roughly 70 people were curators.

**The Gallery Crew:** The Gallery Crew was the Curators of the Day’s aid in developing their ideas and the project that they wanted to realize during the day. The Curator of the Day was not allowed to touch the artwork, except in those cases when this was an integral part of the piece. All the handling and mounting of the work was carried out by the Gallery Crew. The crew was also responsible for informing the visitors to the gallery about the project and answering questions.

**Support Structure:** Support Structure hosted all the artwork. It was mobile and it was also used to display work, as well as change the size and appearance of the space. It incorporated two tables and chairs that could also be used as plinths to present work on.

**The Selectors:** To provide a dynamic collection for the Curator of the Day to choose from, six people were asked to select artwork for *I Am a Curator*. Each devised a different approach for his or her selection. They were Patrick Bernier, Melanie Keen, Lisa Le Feuvre, Tone O. Nielsen, Reid Shier and Per Hüttner.

**The Interface Cards:** A5-sized plastic cards were designed and realized by American artist Scott Rigby. For each artwork available for selection there was one corresponding Interface Card. The Interface Cards along with the website (which used the same design) were the main tools for the Curator of the Day to select artwork and devise their exhibition.

**The Website:** All the artwork available for selection could be browsed on Chisenhale Gallery’s website. There was also continually updated photographic documentation of the exhibitions created by the Curators of the Day.

Each of the 36 exhibitions realized within the framework of *I am a Curator* took on very different forms and used the artwork and the space in very different ways. Artist Hannah Rickards who was leading the gallery crew describes an exhibition that had great impact on the development of the project: “Embassy of Work With Me (å.b.ä.k.e /RCA), emptied Support Structure of all its contents, Jokers and artworks, and developed a chromatic scale around the walls of the gallery (the structure having been pushed to the corner). The colour of the individual group members’ clothes determined which works they had responsibility for placing. The process had a very easily achieved self-perpetuating logic that extended to colour coding drill batteries, masking tape, spirit levels, any tools that we may have set down for a moment. The colour coding also included the covers of the CDs bought from the local junk shop in order to complete Sam Ely and Lynn Harris’ Playlist, along with all the book covers from Céline Condorelli’s and Gavin Wade’s Joker selection



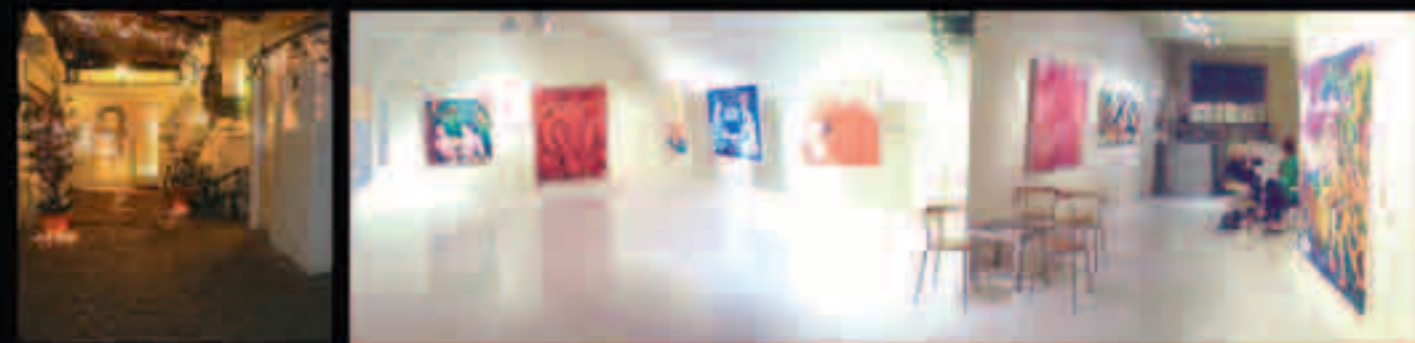
of books. This seemed the most natural and successful exercise in devolution and levelling democratization that occurred during the run of the show. The 'artworks' suffered less in this melee than they often did when not surrounded by a chromatic sea of things; they were scrutinized and investigated by the curating group."

Hüttner talks about a few of the key experiences among the 36 exhibitions: "I have to mention Anton Nikolotov's project (11/12/03). He wanted the work to be selected democratically. He thus devoted the whole day discussing with the visitors which works should be displayed. Each visitor who was present at a given moment was given some time to voice why a certain piece should or shouldn't be shown. When everyone had presented their case, the group voted and notes were taken on the different ideas and how many votes the different pieces got. In the end the only show that was presented was one made up of these notes shown in the massive empty space. This approach allowed I Am a Curator to be taken to another level. The boundaries between Curator of the Day and audience vanished entirely. It was wonderful to see how the process of democratization could be taken

one step further than had originally been foreseen. This democratic process was at once extremely rewarding, but also hugely tiring. Rarely have I seen the members of the Gallery Crew leave so happy and tired. It was also great to see how visitors tended to stay for hours to join the discussion. At one point 15 people were present for the vote."

At the time of the realization of the project there was some rather loud critique towards the project. It was suggested that it offered a very traditional approach to the idea of how an exhibition might be made. In an interview with Barnaby Drabble the artist says. "I do agree, when you are faced with the possibility of just selecting existing art work that is a very traditional take on what a curator is. But then again, I think that I Am A Curator tried to do something that goes beyond that. By using a very traditional approach it enabled us to do something that was extremely creative and which opened new ideas about how to put together exhibitions. In terms of selecting the works, It wasn't as if they had only five pieces to choose from. To consider the work of fifty-seven artists in one afternoon is a major task. Also, a lot of the work was not finished, it was up to the curator of the day to complete it, a lot was interactive, and a lot had different elements that needed to be put together. So there were many different approaches on offer, reflecting the working methods of the original selectors."

I am a Curator offered a new way for the audience to interact with artwork and the situation of being surrounded by an exhibition. They were forced to deal with art in a more intimate way than in a traditional exhibition. It meant that the art might have been visible to a smaller audience than in a normal situation. But at the same time the intimacy, reflection and constant change of context that the work was perceived in, meant that the audience was offered the possibility to understand the complexities and contradictions of artwork on a more profound level. ●



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# Stopping the World

By Avtarjeet Dhanjal

**T**IME AND MONEY ARE MOST PRECIOUS to the modern man, but have no intrinsic worth in itself; these are merely abstract devices for modern man's book keeping. Devices are very useful while living on this small planet 'Earth'; once you leave this planet alive or dead, both time and money lose their value.

Planet Earth has developed an atmosphere conducive to the development of life; its daily rotation creates a regular cycle of day and night. When the man was engaged in hunting gathering, the patterns of availability of different game and fruits made him to think about the seasons, lunar months and days.

The annual cycle around the sun creates an annual cycle that man called a year. All life on the planet adapted to the cycles of day and night and annual cycle of varying seasons. The daily and annual cycles regulated the waking and sleeping patterns of various species and in turn it affects the aging process also. Since different species survive only a certain number of annual cycles made the man to count the years.

Increase in human population created competition for resources, and the man had to be more efficient. It started to take note of the time in the day and in the year, when certain activities, such as hunting, planting and reaping, were more conducive. It also had to learn to make most of the day light for these activities.

## The arrow of time

The need, to keep track of the passing time, made the man device ways to measure time, initially using sun dials and that led to the invention of a mechanical clock.

The invention of writing made the man to record events. The earliest records available today are the clay tablets of Sumerians civilisation that lived in Babylon around 4,000-6,500 B.C. It's interesting, that it's very difficult to place these available tablets in a time sequence, since Sumerians had no sense of history.

History writing is the contribution of the Jews, those have been more meticulous in writing their own story in a time sequence using year 0 (zero) from the creation of Adam by God. According to the Old Testament timeline, all dates are taken from year zero; that's where the idea of arrow of time came in to being.

The Old Testament is a version of history only a story of a nomadic tribe, not a world history, it certainly has given birth to Christianity and Islam; two religions those cover more than 50 per cent of the planet. The Christianity also happened to be the religion of world dominating forces, so the idea of 'Arrow of Time' has been promoted as the only concept of time. The dominant forces always promote or rather impose their interpretation of reality.

While the Old Testament was being written, Hindu scholars in India had developed their idea of cyclic time. Having developed the number zero, Hindus could calculate time right from a fraction of second (Truti) to billions of years. According to Hindu philosophy the universe lasts for period of around 4.32 billion years, before it collapse, remains dormant for the same length of period and starts again completing a full circle. So the Hindus, time is not an arrow shooting in one direction, it is cyclic that turns around making a full circle.

On the other hand, no doubt the Jews were good in writing their history, but since they did not have the number zero, for them a period of thousand years was a long time. For the writers of Genesis 4,000BC was enough long time to mark that date of creation of the world and birth/creation of Adam.

It is same story, when man walked on foot, and it had never seen the planet from a distance; it believed that the Earth was flat.

If you believe the Genesis story that the Earth is only 6,000 years old, and sure events in such a short history do not repeat, it is obvious to imagine time only travels in one direction. In this context one can prove it, we never get younger than what we are today; we can only grow old and die, unless you believe in re-incarnation.

We need another interpretation of reality to allow us the possibility of stopping the time or even reversing it.

When I watched Peter Brooks' adaptation of Indian epic Mahabharata, at the start of the play, a young man is reading a large book the written form of Mahabharata; it is interesting that he is reading the same story in which he himself had played the role of a warrior. One wonders how it was possible to reverse the time sequence; he is reading his own story in which he acted as grown up warrior. It raises many questions, only if one sticks to the idea of one directional arrow of time. But Hindus were imaginative artists, who could play with the sequence of time.

For me having brought up in India this anomaly of time sequence was not an anomaly, but it is an anomaly for a Western viewer, who is brought up to think that time can only go in one direction.

As an artist, limitations of time of and space are a challenge to extend, expand and to stop/reverse the time.

Have you even been so much engrossed in your creative work, that when you stopped and looked at the day outside, you realised that what you thought you had spent only an hour in your creative work, but outside your room the whole day had gone.

I have the experience of stopping the time in a more magical event. About twenty years ago, I was visiting a place called Montserrat near Barcelona in Spain with my friend Marian.

Montserrat is a magical place; its landscape is not like other mountainous region, but mountains, if you like to call them, are single huge rounded boulders hundreds of meters high. Rock climbers love to scale these enormous boulders.

With my Spanish friend Marian, we walked around, and found a boulder that was lying flat and there were many other smaller boulders next to it. It encouraged us to find a way to climb the large flat boulder. When Marian and I arrived in the middle of this enormous flat boulder we naturally sat down. From here the view around turned absolutely magical. It was like sitting on the top of tall skyscraper, where you can only see the sky and the entire manmade world disappears.

It was such an experience; I felt that we were the only two people on this planet under the beautiful blue sky. The feeling of being so close to the sky itself was so exhilarating that we both felt like in different world. To celebrate this feeling we made love in this magical space and time.

The experience was such that we both felt the world had stopped for us, not a bird chirped to disturb our heavenly act. I don't know how long it took us to come back to this world again, but moment we both had put our clothes on, the world started to function again. There were groups of other visitors who had also made their way to the top of this boulder started to roam around.

Yes the world/time did stop for us on that afternoon on the top of this huge boulder in Montserrat.

TREAT THE  
EARTH WELL.  
IT WAS NOT  
GIVEN TO YOU  
BY YOUR  
PARENTS,  
IT WAS  
LOANED  
TO YOU  
BY YOUR  
CHILDREN



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