

FAIR

Organised by twelve second-year students on the Royal College of Art's MA in Curating Contemporary Art, FAIR was something of a hybrid between an exhibition and an international art fair. Max Andrews reports on this pioneering project and profiles some of the participants.

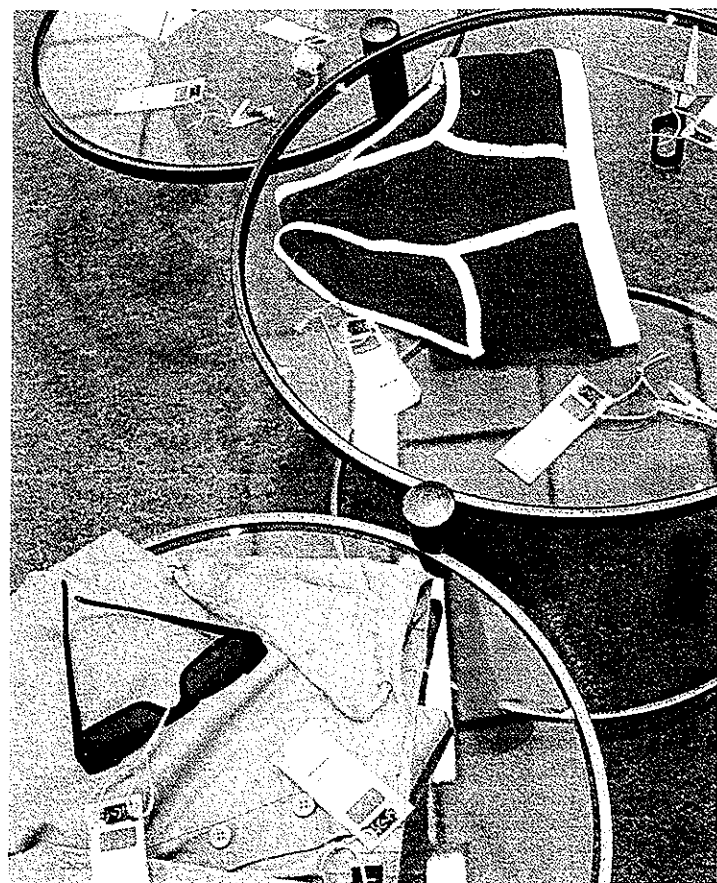
IN MANY WAYS THE CONCEPTION of FAIR grew out of the particular circumstances of the post-graduate course – the broad range of its students' nationalities and the atmosphere of global participation which it fosters. Throughout the course students have the chance to meet with a wide range of curators, artists and critics from around the globe. Taking advantage of London's renewed international importance since the opening of Tate Modern, the curating course often provides a stop-off for professionals from different countries and backgrounds. FAIR responded to both the particular circumstances of London – a city that has no international contemporary art fair – and to the programming of the college's galleries (which are often used for commercial presentations). Fourteen organisations were invited to participate, some – including Espacio Aglutinador from Havana and BQ from Cologne – were galleries that the students had visited on course research trips. The choice of invited organisations was based on those that seemed to engender particularly imaginative and engaged relationships between artists and gallerists – representing working methods that might provide new flexible models within the mechanisms of the art market. Rather than curating artists, the students curated organisations that included artist-run spaces and non-profit projects as well as commercial agents. By bringing a commercial-style venture into the realm of a publicly funded institution – and course – FAIR paradoxically presented an art fair situation where the galleries did not necessarily have to only think about the commercial viability of their 'stands'.

Espacio Aglutinador is the only alternative space in Havana, and was set up in 1994 in a single room of the home of Cuban artist Sandra Ceballos as a response to censorship of artwork by the Cuban state. Aglutinador's policy is to highlight work by native artists who they feel have been overlooked or excluded from debate in the country. They received no funding from the government, yet were committed to gaining recognition for their activities internationally by participating at an 'art fair' for the first time.

Similarly spawned by the political and economic climate of their country, Moscow-based Escape operate a non profitmaking programme – a four-artist collective that realise their own events and performances. As they state: "It is interesting that the presentation of our latest projects were held at fairs and festivals, that is, at events penetrated by the market and a competitive spirit. Our own projects in these places tend to resist the transformation of artworks into commodities. We are going there to act as viruses in the organism of the art market". At Art-Moscow, Escape sold their belongings instead of art works. At FAIR founder Valeriy Ayzenberg acted as a 'shopkeeper', presiding over a video projection and bewildering selection of eclectic art works. Escape insist on a private, artist-centred practice as a response to the world of global economy and the political climate in Russia. Founded within the context of Bilbao's transformation with the opening of its Guggenheim Museum, consonni describe themselves as an 'art production organisation'. It works with international artists, as well as many from the Basque

region of Spain, and largely ignores conventional exhibition strategies. Their presentation at FAIR included a tongue-in-cheek promotional video; juxtaposing tourist video-style shots of the city with documentation of some of their projects, which have included a TV show for swapping goods by Matthieu Laurette and a provocative performance in the Guggenheim by Andrea Fraser, consonni offered a self-reflexive take on art marketing strategies. In a similar way www.centrodearte.com is committed to alternative ways of distributing and showing art. Operating from an office in Madrid, its most recent project 'Read*Write*Execute' was a workshop designed to introduce artists to a culture of free software exchange.

It could be said that China Art Objects and BQ operate with a more commercial bias, although in such a way that still allows them to remain flexible in terms of working with artists. In 1999 projects by established Los Angeles artists like Pae White and Jorge Pardo put China Art Objects on the map as a pioneering space in the then run down Chinatown district of Los Angeles. Attracted by a city initiative fund to lure potentially regenerative businesses into the area, the gallery emerged from a loose collective of artists and critics affiliated with Pasadena's Art Centre of College and Design. One of the original founders, Giovanni Intra, speaks of the motivation to open the gallery: "to avoid the conventional fates of academic teaching, museum curating and endless freelance writing". BQ, a name taken from the initials of gallery-owners Jörn Böttnagel and Yvonne Quirnbach, represents five artists and continues to develop projects with other



From left: Allora & Calzadilla, *Traffic Patterns*, 2001, M&M proyectos. Photo: Max Andrews. Espacio Aglutinador, installation view. Photo: Max Andrews. Boutique Escape, 2000. Courtesy: Escape.

venues, including FAIR co-participant The Modern Institute. Quirmbach's day job as a graphic designer has had a pervasive influence on the different paces of production that BQ's exhibitions often involve – multiples, poster editions and publications are all part of their remit.

Glasgow-based The Modern Institute approached the quandary of whether to establish a commercial or non-profit organisation by doing both. It is divided into two operations: the commercial side goes to fairs and produces in-house exhibitions, whilst the other (part funded by the Scottish Arts Council) work in a project-by-project way. As curator and visiting lecturer Alex Farquharson says of the invited spaces in the FAIR catalogue, "the autonomy they have been given is a recognition of the blurred roles of artist and gallerist in these organisations, which is symptomatic of an era when the context of artworks is often their content as well." By presenting people and galleries as exhibits, FAIR meshed together many of the elements of the art world that are often excluded from exhibition making – particularly the social, political and economic factors of art's production.

MAX ANDREWS IS CURRENTLY STUDYING ON THE FIRST YEAR OF THE MA IN CURATING CONTEMPORARY ART AT THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART.

FAIR took place at the Royal College of Art, 19 – 24 March 2002, W: www.cca.rca.ac.uk/fair.

For information about the MA in Curating Contemporary Art and application details for 2003/2004, contact: The Assistant Registrar, Royal College of Art, Kensington Gore, London SW7 2EU, T: 020 7590 4444, F: 020 7590 4500, E: admissions@rca.ac.uk

Contacts:

BQ

Jülicher Strasse 14
D-50674 Cologne
Germany
T: 00 49 172 787 9551
F: 00 49 221 240 9508
E: yvonne.quirmbach@t-online.de
Contact: Jörn Böttnagel, Yvonne Quirmbach

China Art Objects Galleries

933 Chung King Road
Los Angeles
CA 90012 USA
T/F: 00 1 213 613 0384
E: Giovanni1968@hotmail.com
Contact: Steve Hanson, Giovanni Intra

consonni

Calle Simón Bolívar 8B
E-48010 Bilbao
Spain
T: 00 34 94 443 2390/400 8067
F: 00 34 94 470 0192
E: info@consonni.org
W: www.consonni.org
Contact: Franck Larcade (projects direction), Arantza Pérez Hidalgo, María Mur Dean (projects production)

Escape

Nagornaia St 23
Korp 2
Moscow 113186
Russia
T: 00 7 095 127 0919
E: ayzen_escape@mtu-net.ru
W: www.escapeprogram.ru
Contact: Valeriy Ayzenberg

Espacio Aglutinador

Calle 6 No 602 e/ 25 y 27
Vedado 10400
Ciudad Habana
Cuba
T: 00 53 730 2147
E: aglutsan@cubarte.cult.cu
Contact: Sandra Ceballos, René Quintana

Foksal Gallery Foundation

ul Gorskiego 1a
00-033 Warsaw
Poland
T: 00 48 22 826 5081
F: 00 48 22 826 5081
E: einein@post.pl
Contact: Joanna Mytkowska, Andrzej Przywara, Adam Szymczyk

Galerist

Maçka Cad.
Berna Apt. 26 / 2
80200 Tesvikiye – Istanbul
Turkey
T: 00 90 212 233 6268
F: 00 90 212 219 2782
E: office@galerist.com.tr
W: www.galerist.com.tr
Contact: Murat Pilevneli

Kölnerstrasse

Kölnerstrasse 334
40227 Düsseldorf
Germany
T: 00 49 211 788 3814
F: 00 49 211 788 3816
E: alex@adelinemorlon.de
W: www.adelinemorlon.de
Contact: Alexander Jasch, Jens Ullrich

kurimanzutto

Mazatlán # 5 P-6 Col Condesa
Mexico DF 06140
Mexico
T: 00 52 5 5256 2408/5253 0665
F: 00 52 5 5256 2408
E: info@kurimanzutto.com
W: www.kurimanzutto.com
Contact: Monica Manzutto, Jose Kuri

the leisure club MOGADISHNI

Artillerivej 40
House 9, Stair b, Floor 4
DK 2300 Copenhagen
Denmark
T: 00 45 3254 3535
F: 00 45 3254 3545
E: mail@mogadishni.com
W: www.mogadishni.com
Contact: Christian Chapelle

M&M proyectos

PO Box 902 3697
San Juan
Puerto Rico 00902-3697
T: 00 1 787 722 1287
F: 00 1 787 723 1528
E: mmoffice@microjuris.com
michy@microjuris.com
Contact: Michelle Maxruach, Chémi Rosado Seijo, Francisco Rovira Rullán

The Modern Institute

Suite 6, 73 Robertson Street
Glasgow G2 8QD
T: 0141 248 3711
F: 0141 248 3200
E: mail@moderninstitute.demon.co.uk
W: www.themoderninstitute.org
Contact: Toby Webster

pas

Fricova 11
Praha 2
120 00 Czech Republic
T: 00 420 2 222 256 2031
F: 00 420 2 222 256 2031
E: pas@freemail.sk
Contact: Tomas Vanek, Vit Havranek, Jiri Skala

www.centrodearte.com

Alcalá, 35, 5º
28014 Madrid
Spain
T: 00 34 91 701 5490
F: 00 34 91 701 5495
E: egarcia@centrodearte.com
eregueira@centrodearte.com
W: www.centrodearte.com
Contact: Emilia Garcia-Romeu, Esther Regueira



an international art exhibition organised
by graduating students on the Curating Contemporary Art MA
at the Royal College of Art, London

Exhibiting organisations include:

BQ Cologne	Kölnerstrasse Düsseldorf
China Art ObjectsGalleries Los Angeles	kurimanzutto Mexico City
consonni Bilbao	the leisure club MOGADISHNI Copenhagen
Escape Moscow	M & M proyectos Puerto Rico
Espacio Aglutinador Havana	The Modern Institute Glasgow
Foksal Gallery Foundation Warsaw	pas Prague
Galerist Istanbul	www.centrodearte.com Madrid

In addition, Walther Koenig Books Ltd at the Serpentine Gallery will operate a bookshop within the show.

For one week only, FAIR offers London an exciting chance to participate in the activities of some of the world's most dynamic art organisations, who will show the work of more than 70 artists. The exhibition will take the form of an art fair to engage with the dynamic and often paradoxical relationship between art, the market and systems of cultural currency. The galleries at the Royal College of Art will be divided into separate spaces in which organisations will be invited to convey the spirit of their programmes.

These organisations have been chosen for their deliberate hybridity; emerging from a wide range of social and economic frameworks, each organisation has developed unique strategies for funding and presenting some of the most exciting and challenging new art internationally. Ranging from commercial galleries to young institutions, they each have an independence of vision, a commitment to artists, and a determination to do their own thing. FAIR offers a fluid, interactive environment that will encourage exchange, experimentation and critical reflection on the ways artists and galleries position themselves in the face of globalisation.

The new culture of hypercapitalism has had a crucial influence on the conception of FAIR. Writers like Jeremy Rifkin and B. Joseph Pine have described a new era of capitalism in which the commodification of lived experiences takes precedence