

Press Release

8 April 2011

Asia Triennial Manchester 11 announces first wave of artists and commissions for 2011

The **UK's only Asian Art Triennial opens 1 October – 27 November 2011** in Manchester, with a vibrant and exciting showcase of current contemporary visual art from Asia. **Asia Triennial Manchester 11** is a festival of visual culture that features a series of exhibitions, commissions and interventions by international and UK artists exploring the theme of Time and Generation, presenting new site-specific work alongside work not seen before in the UK, and challenging stereotypical viewpoints of contemporary Asian artistic practice.

The artistic vision for ATM11 looks at one of the most important stories of our time: the migration of peoples from one place to other parts of the world. This continuous movement of people has radically changed our demographics, giving rise to new politics of identity focused on place, territory, belonging, global economic changes and community.

Lahore-based artist **Rashid Rana** was previously commissioned in 2007 for a trailblazer at the first Asia Triennial Manchester. Widely recognised as one of the most important artists of his generation from South Asia, Rana works across multiple media including photography, sculpture and video installation. This exhibition at **Cornerhouse** is Rana's first major public solo show in the UK. It includes new work which ambitiously cuts across conventional notions of the scale and status of the photographic object, opening up its potential to represent cultural, social and physical realities and relationships. The work's seductive materiality belies its sharp critical and political consciousness.

Cornerhouse is also curating the Asia Triennial Film Programme that includes a range of new films from across the region with a major retrospective of Philippine director **Brillante Mendoza**, recently named best Director at the 62nd Cannes Film Festival.

Indian artist **N S Harsha** will produce Thought Mala or “spiritual garlands” to be worn by visitors in the Victorian Gothic splendour of **The John Rylands Library**. The artist intends to transform the library into a spiritual place full of ritual, as visitors borrow the garlands as they would a book, wearing them, handling them or simply contemplating them.

Castlefield Gallery will present a project by Istanbul based collective PiST, looking at notions of contemporary ‘debt’ within a contemporary context, the project challenges notions of migration, political and cultural identity. Examining the growth of the VISA industry in Istanbul, PiST will transform Castlefield Gallery into an alternative VISA application and training centre for visitors to ATM11, replacing the obligatory language and cultural exams for emigration to the UK.

Institution for the future will showcase a group of young artists from China and other Asian countries, who actively engage with the local art scene and attempt to contribute to the development of an arts infrastructure in their country. Archives and projects from individual artists and collectives explore the notion of a future institution. Working at a local level the artists attempt to define new institutional models and methods of art production that work effectively on a local level but also make a contribution to the global dialogue. These individuals attempt to respond to the needs of the local artistic communities in Asia that have drastically changed over the last ten years.

Since Korea was formally divided in 1948 down the 38th parallel line, the Northern and Southern parts of the peninsula have followed very dissimilar temporal and spatial paths. The division of the nation has created subsequent generations of Koreans who are, in many ways, poles apart, both physically and ideologically. **MadLab**'s exhibition *Korea, Time and Generation: 38 ° of Separation* presents cultural reflections and experiences of DPRK through the eyes of North Korean, South Korean and Western artists, illustrators and photographers, presenting the practical and cultural aftermath of a divided nation, whose populations, separated since WWII, have spent their daily lives in very different ways.

Asia Triennial Manchester (ATM) is conceived by **Shisha**, the UK's international agency for contemporary South Asian crafts and visual arts, in partnership with Bury Art Gallery, Castlefield Gallery, Chinese Arts Centre, Cornerhouse, The International 3, John Rylands Library, MadLab, Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester Metropolitan University, People's History Museum and The Whitworth Art Gallery.

For the past 10 years, **Shisha** has championed new and dynamic visual cultures from South Asia and beyond to the UK, including new commissions by Subodh Gupta, Rashid Rana, Anoli Perera, Shilpa Gupta, Atul Dodiya, Imran Qureshi and Pushpamala N. For ATM11, Shisha continues to develop this, placing newly commissioned work and forging a dialogue not only with the selected artists, but also with the international arts community.

Further commissions, exhibitions and partner venues will be announced over the next 6 months. Visit www.asiatriennialmanchester.com for updates.

For further information please contact Catharine Braithwaite on 07947 644 110 or cat@we-r-lethal.com

Notes to Editors:

Shisha is the UK's international agency for South Asian contemporary craft and visual arts. Shisha Ltd is an independent registered charitable organisation (charity number 1088702), established in 2001 and based in Manchester. Shisha is at the vanguard of creative practice, programming landmark projects, which have pushed boundaries, opened up critical dialogue and challenged perceptions in current artistic, cultural and socio-political discourses. Shisha supports artists and curators of South Asian descent through partnerships, project management, professional development and advocacy. Visit www.shisha.net

www.asiatriennialmanchester.com



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