

PRESS RELEASE

Invasive Alien Species

1335 Via Garibaldi, Castello, Venezia

1st - 12th June 2011

opening reception: Saturday 4th June 6- 9 pm

Biological invasions by non-native or 'alien' species are one of the greatest threats to the ecological and economic well-being of the planet. (Delivering Alien Invasive Species Inventories for Europe)

10961 species of plants and animals are currently classified by the EU as alien species, a significant minority of which are dangerously invasive. Without the usual constraints of their native ecosystems to keep them in check they have become established and spread out from their point of introduction, frequently out-competing the local species, sometimes to the point of threatening their extinction. And once established eradication is virtually impossible.

Venice, too, is invaded every two years by a tide of artists, curators, connoisseurs and culture vultures. Are they welcome? Are they invited? Do they make a useful contribution to the life of the city? Do they leave a lasting effect?

The Venice Biennale has for over a century been one of the most prestigious cultural institutions in the world. Established in 1895, the Art Biennale has an attendance today of over 300,000 visitors and the opening weekend is the most important event in the year's international art calendar. The Biennale takes place in two official sites in Venice: the Arsenale, which hosts the international exhibition, and the Giardini di Castello in the east of the city, which houses the national pavilions including the British Pavilion.

Liz Sheridan, guest curator for London-based TangentProjects, has brought together 10 artists from the UK and mainland Europe in a group exhibition, in a prominent location close to the Giardini site, in response to the idea of the invasive aliens.

And like the alien species in the natural world, the artists compete to find their place in the compressed space of a small empty shop.

The artists - Karen Ay, Vanya Balogh, Tracey Bush, Cedric Christie, Forge & Cutter, Helene Kazan, Toni Parpan, Danny Pockets, Liz Sheridan, Steve Smith and Karen Winzer - have in common that their practices are highly responsive to the contexts and situations in which the work is developed. Although they can all be described as "up-and-coming" they are generally at a stage in their careers where they are already beginning to achieve a significant reputation; for example Danny Pockets is a recent Jerwood prize winner and Cedric Christie has shown work in solo exhibitions worldwide. Most have work in national and international collections and have exhibited widely across many continents.

The exhibition is a British Council recognised collateral event and coincides with the opening of the Art Biennale.

For further inquiries contact Liz Sheridan +44 7812 104 126 or e_a_sheridan@yahoo.co.uk. More details, including opening times and information on visiting the exhibition are available on: www.invasivealienspecies.wordpress.com

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