

Panel Discussion: Cultural Identity (Reykjavík 9 Feb 06)

Dr. Christian Schoen

PANEL DISCUSSION

Cultural Identity in a Global Society

Thursday, February 9th 2006, 17 - 20.00

Listaháskóli Íslands / Icelandic Art Academy

Reykjavík, Iceland

Have we entered the age of cultural uniformity or do we have to expect the ultimate clash of cultures?

The world has seen great social changes in the last decades which are clearly reflected in the economy, in education, art and social values. Open international trade and communication have increased the participation and importance of so-called marginal areas in Europe. Relationships that seemed stable are being remade through ever-greater influence from other cultures and geographical areas, which in turn requires us to redefine our identity and our culture to adapt.

How important is identity in contemporary society? What role do history, language and the arts have in a global culture and what, specifically, can art bring to the debate?

These questions do not only apply to Icelanders, so obviously marginal in geographical terms and in their cultural and linguistic development. They are being asked with just as much urgency at the margins of the European Union, e.g. in Israel and Turkey. This panel discussion will seek answers to

these questions and attempt an examination of the role of art and cultural institutions in our new and ever-changing world.

The participants are: November Paynter who works for Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center in Istanbul (Turkey) and Sergio Edelsztein from the Center for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv (Israel). They will introduce their respective institutions and discuss the subjects at hand. In addition, author Sjón and Margrét Hallgrímsdóttir, head of the National Museum of

Iceland will speak and take part in discussion. The panel will be led by Christian Schoen, head of the Center for Icelandic Art, and Hannes Sigurðsson, director of the Akureyri Art Museum.

The panel discussion is the first step towards further cooperation between artists from Iceland, Israel and Turkey. Artists will continue the discussion in a series of exhibitions entitled *Heimþrá/Homesick*. The first exhibition will be in the Akureyri Art Museum in May 2006.

The panel discussion is a cooperative project of CIA.IS -Center for Icelandic Art, the Akureyri Art Museum and the visual arts department of the Icelandic Art Academy.

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