

01/25/01

## **Maniefsta 4, Amsterdam**

"Manifesta 4  
European Biennial of Contemporary Art  
Frankfurt am Main 2002"

The International Foundation Manifesta has officially nominated the City of Frankfurt am Main in Germany as the next Manifesta 4 Host City for the period of 2000 - 2002.

The members of the Board of the International Foundation Manifesta are pleased that Frankfurt am Main has been able to meet all the necessary financial, organisational and infrastructural conditons.

Frankfurt has been selected to host Manifesta 4 on account of its excellent cultural infrastructure, the position of the city in the German context and the great willingness of individuals and institutions to support Manifesta.

The current atmosphere of innovation and renewal in many of the cultural institutions in Frankfurt is reflected in the appointment of a new generation of art professionals to a number of key positions. By selecting Frankfurt am Main to host the next edition of Manifesta, the International Board wish to reinforce the notion that this nomadic Biennial should develop a conceptual strategy not confined only to issues of European politics and geography.

## Manifesta

Manifesta, the European Biennial of Contemporary Art, was conceived after the fall of the Berlin Wall in the beginning of the nineties, as a nomadic survey of contemporary art, whose initial aim it was to establish a transnational dialogue between young artists and audiences in North, South, East and Western Europe.

After its successful launch in Rotterdam, in 1996, Manifesta passed through separate and quite distinctive phases of development, in Luxembourg (1998) and in Ljubljana (2000).

The International Foundation Manifesta now embarks on its preparations for the fourth edition of the event, a biennium from 2000 - 2002, with a new-found confidence and an eager sense of anticipation. In response to growing public recognition of Manifestas European mission, it feels able to relax the emphasis on specific geographical and political orientations, in favour of exploring some of the more complex and heterogeneous developments in contemporary artistic practice across the continent of Europe, as a whole. This shift in emphasis will inevitably be reflected in the selection of the new curatorial team for Manifesta 4 and influence the nature of their artistic programme.

## Process of Teamwork

Each edition of Manifesta is created by a changing team of international curators and a newly appointed Co-ordinator, who is orientated towards the host city and has an insight into its local structure and politics. Manifesta is the first recurrent international visual arts event to have explicitly emphasised the importance of the process leading up to the final exhibition. Thus, the theoretical and conceptual framework of each exhibition has been thoroughly prepared by activities such as open and closed houses, the accumulation of archival material, laboratories, workshops and symposia. The fact that many of these preliminary activities have taken place in an international context outside the host city has placed a strong obligation on the curators to work closely together and develop a sense of team spirit. The Co-ordinator acts as the prime mover for the curators, in initiating and developing such activities, in conjunction with and the local staff in the host city. There is also a strong potential for developing activities which span different editions of Manifesta and draw both on the support of the Foundation and on the network of earlier exhibitors, curators and outside contacts.

## Manifesta Archive

At the same time The International Foundation Manifesta will focus on creating a virtual platform, housing the extensive archive, and using this online basic structure for dialogues and interaction, linked and related to new sources, as well as existing international initiatives. The Foundation has delegated the structural development of Manifesta as a network organisation to the former founding director of Manifesta 1 and current Secretary General of the Foundation, Mrs Hedwig Fijen, who will be charge of acquiring funds for this task, and creating the Manifesta web-archive and supporting administrative structure over the next two years.

## Selection of Frankfurt am Main as Host City for Manifesta 4 in 2002

Faced with an exceptionally difficult decision, in the final stage of selecting between the two front-runners, Frankfurt and Warsaw, the Board have finally come down in favour of the former city. In reaching this decision, the Board have taken into account the timing of Manifesta 4, in 2002 and its coincidence with Documenta 11, in Kassel, which might be regarded as either a handicap or as an exciting challenge to the ingenuity of hosts and curators alike. Within the German context at a time of doubt and reappraisal, in traditional cultural centres such as Berlin and the Rhineland - this seemed to be a particularly apt moment for Frankfurt to reassert its role. Frankfurt has an extensive cultural infrastructure and a productive artistic scene and is characterised by its rich history and changing character, as the leading financial centre in continental Europe and a focus for large-scale immigration. In particular, the Board were impressed by the strong level of support for holding Manifesta in Frankfurt among all the principal political parties and the degree of interest expressed by the representatives of a wide cross-section of cultural institutions in the city.

## International Foundation

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Manifesta 4

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