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Madrid

## **Manifiesta 8 presents in ARCO the European Biennial of Contemporary Art opening in October in Murcia and Cartagena**

The presentation at **el Salón de los Amigos de ARCO** of the next edition of **Manifiesta 8**, that will take place from **October 2, 2010** through **January 9, 2011** in the Region of Murcia in dialogue with **Northern Africa**, was the star parallel event during the opening of **ARCO 2010**.

The presentation was held by **Pedro Alberto Cruz, Regional Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia**, introduced by **Hedwig Fijen, Director of International Foundation Manifesta** and the representatives of the three collectives which make up the curatorial team of Manifesta 8: **Bassam El Baroni - Alexandria Contemporary Arts Forum (Egypt)**, **Khaled Ramadan - Chamber of Public Secrets (Denmark, UK, Lebanon)** and **Vit Havránek - tranzit.org (Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia)**.

**Mr. Pedro Alberto Cruz**, noted that **Manifesta 8** is a global project, built around the local realities related to each edition, in a sort of a weaving operation that ends in a newly constructed fabric for the region in which is located, a total rupture in the concepts of sender and receiver as one of the most relevant project derivations, and remarking that in this case, the Murcia region is an agent, and not a mere recipient, of the Biennale. Regarding the venues for Manifesta 8, Cruz was pleased to have succeeded in also getting unconventional spaces, which will allow visitors from **Murcia** and **Cartagena** to walk the existing urban landscape following the conceptual directions marked by **Manifesta 8**. Venues include **Museo Hidráulico de los Molinos del Río Segura**, the **MUBAM (Museo de Bellas Artes de Murcia)**, the **Espacio AV**, the **Parraga Center** in Murcia, and the **MURAM (Museo Regional del Arte Moderno)**, the **Parque Torres Auditorium**, the **ARQUA (Museo Nacional de Arqueología Subacuática)** and the **Former Autopsies Pavilion** in Cartagena.

In addition, emblematic spaces in both cities like the **Pavilion 2 of the Artillery Barracks**, the **Former Post and Telegraphs Office** or the panoramic restaurant **El Parque** are being recovered for the public and re-opened after years in disuse.

**Hedwig Fijen, Director of Manifesta**, explained that the Board of **Manifesta** had chosen the **Region of Murcia** for its eighth edition as part of its own nomadic nature, trying to pose questions around the current European situation and its relationship with its bordering areas, and specifically in this edition with **Northern Africa**. A key feature of **Manifesta 8** is collective curatorship. Its curatorial team composed of three collectives with different backgrounds and approaches, which will shape the entire project.

**Khaled D. Ramadan**, from **Chamber of Public Secrets (CPS)**, described their project as a series of 'transmissions' to critically utilise artistic, relational and media(ted) strategies to explore ideas about what Spain/Europe is today, focusing on its boundaries and relationships with northern Africa, encouraging viewers to question their perspective. By challenging artists and contributors to explore new terrains beyond their usual practice, CPS' focus for Manifest a 8 is on searching out and

engendering dialogues, placing them in the public realm through such practices as media production, documentary, artistic research and aesthetic journalism. CPS's curatorial approach encompasses the (mass) media platforms of television, internet, radio and newspapers, alongside other exhibition formats.

The representative of the **Alexandria Contemporary Arts Forum (ACAF)**, **Bassam El Baroni**, the third group component of the curatorial triad, talked about their approach for Manifesta 8. In response to the prevalent idea that art can be instrumentalised as a tool for social and political development and change, ACAF embraces the complex web of signs and signifiers that characterizes much of our experience of early 21st Century life. Using the *Theory of Applied Enigmatics* as a methodological tool to work with those dominant ideologies embedded in the collective unconscious of contemporary art, ACAF's exhibition and performance program is a solutions-based project wherein deeper beliefs and knowledge can be seen as signs pointing towards future, cultural innovations.

**tranzit.org**, a network of autonomous art associations based in central Europe represented by **Vit Havranek**, will experiment with the model of the exhibition as a *polis* which, as such, is seen as a multi-authorial space, an assemblage of installation, performance, moving image, text, sound, print and signage, a temporary space for negotiation. **tranzit.org** aims to invite the viewer to interface with a wide range of artistic narratives, experiences and specific art histories that explore the significance of the current, more closely related to the conditions of transformation which can be found in any society, rather than simply focusing on geographical factors.

These three curatorial agents have been asked the establishment of a dialogue as a continuation of a prior story of the biennale and as part of an attempt to reconsider the latest contacts between **Murcia, Spain** and the **European Union** countries, with the societies and cultures of **Northern Africa**.