

Let's make it happen: Luxembourg at Huntenkunst 2017

The 2017 edition of the Huntenkunst Art Fair has chosen Luxembourg as its main guest country, or rather, artists and creative expression from Luxembourg.

Geographic environment and territorial narrowness favour openness in the larger regional, European and even global context. Diversity in creation is therefore today's main characteristic, rather than a specific *genius loci*.

Luxembourg has a tradition of openness, integration of newcomers, confrontation of styles, approaches and origins, making its art scene truly European and international. Be it its historic link all throughout the 19th century to the Netherlands, now enlarged to a Benelux cooperation context, be it its European orientation in the 20th century and its international character in the 21st century. Today almost half of Luxembourg's resident population can claim multicultural roots and contacts.

Since 2007 Luxembourg is promoting the so called Regional cultural cooperation, focussing on cultural cross-border links with Germany (Saar and Rhineland-Palatinate), the Lorraine region of France as well as Wallonia of Belgium, with the aim to support the cultural diversity of the larger region, and to enable the mobility and exchange among cultural creators and artists. This and next year, Luxembourg is presiding over the activities of the 'Grande Région' and has organized a ministerial conference of Cultural Ministers on February 9th, e.a. to coordinate activities for the European Year of cultural heritage 2018.

Presently some 800 young Luxembourgers pursue art studies outside their country, with a majority continuing their professional career abroad. During the 1980ies the growing success of the financial industry gave a boost to local cultural and artistic production, enabling in parallel the development of a local art market, which in turn encouraged further cultural projects as well as initiatives by public institutions, notably the construction of a national contemporary art centre, commissioned from the Chinese-American architect Ieoh Ming Pei. This museum finally opened in 2006.

Today's Luxembourg cultural scene, very vibrant indeed, is constantly facing several challenges: the reduced number of active artists and creators, the limitations of the local national and regional art market, too few private collectors to guarantee the sustainability of local national artistic activities and its continued dependency on public support.

All these considerations however shouldn't distract from welcoming the group of 6 photographers and painters from Luxembourg at this year's Huntenkunst, who all are, in their own right, also representatives of a larger regional and European creative inspiration. I would like to most warmly welcome Nathalie Noé Adam, Jean-Claude Berens, François Besch, Luc Ewen, Carine Kraus, Marie-Pierre Speltz, and wish continued success to the Huntenkunst initiative, now and in the years to come.

Pierre-Louis Lorenz, Luxembourg Ambassador