

PRO ARTE FOUNDATION FINLAND LAUNCHED

Last autumn, a new contributor to the visual arts scene was founded in Finland, Pro Arte Foundation Finland. The Foundation sees art as an essential resource in contemporary, democratic society. It focuses on the visual arts including new, critical art. It aims to promote the status, visibility and accessibility of visual arts, and to explore the relationship between art and its audience. Its activities are international and cater for everyone with an interest in art.

The Foundation will regularly produce and organise projects in contemporary art, either independently or in collaboration with partners. The nucleus of its operations will be an annual cluster of events known as the IHME Productions.

Each year, the Foundation will invite an internationally recognised visual artist or artist group to realise a temporary public work, the IHME Project, in the Helsinki Metropolitan region of Finland. One criterion for selecting the work is the way it can engage the local community.

The artist selected to carry out the Project will also publish the IHME Edition one year prior to the project. The form and medium of the Edition are to be determined by the selected artist and it will be distributed to the public free of charge. The first IHME Edition is being created to accompany the launch of the Foundation's operations at the end of March 2008.

The "days for art", the IHME days, aim to generate wider discussion on themes and topics surrounding the Project, and will be accompanied by lectures, publications and art education.

The first cluster of IHME Productions will take place in 2009.

THE ARTIST SELECTED TO MAKE THE FIRST IHME PROJECT

The artist selected to make Pro Arte Foundation Finland's first IHME Project is Antony Gormley, the British sculptor (b. 1950). His work will be unveiled in spring 2009.

Over the last two decades, Antony Gormley has shown exceptional talent in working in public space. He is not only capable of working on a large scale, but also has subtlety to touch the social dimension of a place with his work. His work investigates the nature of collective space, and can catalyse it, creating communities of interest through collaboration and confrontation. Proof of this are many of his large-scale installations such as *Allotment* (1996, Malmö Konsthall), *Another Place* (1997, Liverpool), *Domain Field* (2003, BALTIC, Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead) and *Inside Australia* (2002-2003, Lake Ballard, Australia).

In Helsinki, Gormley's challenge will be to create a temporary work in a collective space.

The first IHME Edition, devised by Antony Gormley, will be a full-page newspaper announcement made in accordance with the artist's ideas by the Kokoro & Moi design consultancy and published in major Finnish daily newspapers.

IHME 0 – FILMS AND VIDEOS BY CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS

The Foundation will present its first production at the Bio Rex cinema in Helsinki on Saturday March 29th. The *IHME 0 – Films and videos by international contemporary artists* programme includes a number of works not previously shown in Finland from artists like Francis Alÿs, Jeremy Deller & Mike Figgis, Matthew Barney, Runa Islam, Christian Marclay, Deimantas Narkevičius and Anri Sala. Participating from Finland are Lauri Astala, Elina Brotherus and Hanna Brotherus with their joint work *Minun onneni on pyöreä* (My Happiness is Round, 2007).

The Foundation's activities are being planned by a team which is led by Museum Director Emerita, Doctor of Visual Arts Tuula Arkio and it includes art researcher Hanna Johansson, Ph.D.; art historian Kaija Kaitavuori, MA ; critic and curator Timo Valjakka and Foundation's Project Manager, Paula Toppila.

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