

The Independent : 'Gavin Turk to bring hovering magic carpet to Bristol for Museums At Night', by Matilda Battersby, March 7th, 2013

Gavin Turk to bring hovering magic carpet to Bristol for Museums At Night



Gavin Turk, one of the famous Young British Artists of '90s, has won the most votes in a competition to bring ten major contemporary artists to regional museums around the country for a nocturnal festival. He will create a magic carpet at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery in two months' time. Museums At Night, which started last year, is a Lottery funded via Arts Council

UK initiative for which big name artists stay awake all night to create an experience for the public. Museums must encourage locals to vote to bring the artists to them and the winners were announced today.

Nick Stockman, project manager for Museums At Night, said: “Ten world-class artists have entrusted the public to choose which venues they go to for [the festival] and the people have spoken in resounding numbers!”

This year’s festival takes place on 16-18 May 2013 and will see Jake & Dinos Chapman producing work at the Jerwood Gallery, Hastings; Martin Creed at the Freud Museum in London; Mat Collishaw at BACKLIT, Nottingham; and will bring Julian Wild to the Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Telford.

Turk’s magic carpet which hovers using magnets won 1,907 votes for the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery. Speaking to *The Independent*, he said: “It’s an old Turkish rug which – to be honest I haven’t got it to fly yet – uses magnets, I mean magic. You rub it in the right way [laughs] and then it levitates.”

He is surprised that the public have been entranced by his vision. “I was very vague about what I would do. I thought it would maybe be something to do with the House of Fairytales project, a children’s arts charity who I work with. Starting with the younger children and moving into the older ones later as we’re staying up late. I had this project with a flying carpet that I was making. I thought maybe I could evolve that in it.”

Turk, who is a professor at Bath Spa University, is pleased to be undertaking the project in Bristol “as I can get my students involved”. The other museums pitching for his project were the Holburne Museum in Bath, the Foundling Museum in London and the Time Machine Funtington, Chichester.

Turk said the project is about motivating people to visit the museums and artworks that are in their towns and cities already, but in a different way. He said: “There is something absolutely brilliant about going to museums in off-times, when in theory you’re getting a special look. There’s obviously the fantasy of A Night At The Museum and everything coming to life. People are so lucky to have these museums. You just need a catalyst for being able to re-access the objects they’ve already got.”

The other museums which won were 20-12 Visual Arts Centre, Scunthorpe which is getting Cullian & Richards; the Discovery Museum, Newcastle which will get Julia Vogl; Manchester Museum is getting Richard Wentworth; Horniman Museum and Gardens, London won rAndom International; and Rochdale Pioneers Museum & Touchstones Rochdale will receive Susan Forsyth.