

artmap

Anthony Reynolds

The Curator's Egg, Altera Pars

03 Feb - 03 Mar 2012



THE CURATOR'S EGG. ALTERA PARS
3 February – 3 March, 2012

Back in 1994, a year in which the end of the world was confidently predicted by Jehova's Witnesses and the first women priests were ordained by the Church of England, a year which also saw the launch of the National Lottery, Anthony Reynolds Gallery organised a large group exhibition in a very small space and called it The Curator's Egg. Around 120 stalwarts of the London art world were invited to choose one work of art without restriction for exhibition in the gallery, and given four days to do it. The only condition being that it had to be by a living artist and that it would fit through the door. The idea was to present an instant snapshot of individual 'curatorial' preference, a clashing visual cacophony of catholic taste, good, bad or ugly, representing the personal likes of the art professionals of the time. 75 responded to the challenge, the works were duly delivered and we then displayed the lot. It was a remarkably cohesive if not coherent show, with many delightful and a few profound moments. It included sculpture, painting, drawing, photography, text, film, video and sound but strangely no performance (although perhaps the whole exercise was just that). One of the most surprising aspects was that no artist was chosen twice. Artists' ages ranged from 18 to 80. Many works were sold. It was a show which is still fondly remembered and which generates 280,000 links on Google.

As we enter 2012, a year in which the end of the world is also conveniently predicted by the calendars of the Maya, and in which the good scientists of CERN threaten to discover the particle at the centre of it all, it seems as good a moment as any to repeat our earlier exercise and see what will be thrown up by individuals working in the vastly changed UK art world of today. So, we have now recklessly sent out a virtual facsimile of the proposal we sent eighteen years ago.

Almost all the selectors last time round are still very active in the art world but we decided that none of them would be invited again. This year's list (available on request) contains 138 names. Always the optimists, we launched the hunt for our own Higgs Boson on Friday 13th

And the show will open on 2 February, Ground Hog Day.

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Edit Anthony Reynolds