

Anny Shaw, 'Post-Brexit: Victoria and Albert Museum show imagines Europe 2,000 years from now', *The Art Newspaper*, January 2017

THE ART NEWSPAPER

NEWS

Post-Brexit: Victoria and Albert Museum show imagines Europe 2,000 years from now

Twelve artists have been commissioned to create works looking back on the present day from 4017

by ANNY SHAW | 6 January 2017



Imagine Europe 2,000 years from now, where citizenship can be downloaded on your smart phone, taxes are paid according to digital not geographical boundaries and Brexit is something you only read about in history e-books.

An exhibition opening at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) next month aims to do just this. The London institution has joined forces with the Goethe-Institut to co-commission 12 international artists to create works depicting the future, or works that envisage how our current situation might appear to people living in 4017.

Performed guided tours, musical interventions, sculptures made from sugar and pocket-sized publications, among other works, will be installed in various spaces throughout the V&A, including the recently opened Europe 1600-1815 Galleries, the British Galleries and the Medieval and

Renaissance Galleries. The exhibition is part of a week-long festival, Collecting Europe (1-7 February).

Many of the works respond to Britain's vote to leave the European Union, the election of Donald Trump to the US presidency and a general trend for nostalgic nationalism across the globe. Onkar Kular, a design professor at the University of Gothenburg School of Design and Craft, is collaborating with the London-based design collective Common Initiative to produce guided tours that envision a Europe determined not by land mass, but by daily changing borders dependent on the flow of data.

Tour guides will wear t-shirts emblazoned with slogans such as "Europe will Reboot in 5 minutes", "You are now following a Post Truth Guide" and "I Downloaded My Citizenship". "It's an alternative version of a tour that focuses on how borders and citizenship might be defined in the future, as a result of the increasing significance of personal data input," says Thomas Marriott, a co-founder of Common Initiative.

Europa, meanwhile, is a project conceived by two UK-based collectives—called IF and 00—that will offer visitors the chance to sign up to an imagined territory. Citizens of Europa will be granted rights and social security such as a form of universal income and can even leave with a provisional "European" passport.

"Brexit and Trump are the visible cracks of a more fundamental issue. We are facing a crisis of our basic democratic ideas, which were designed in a pre-globalised era," says Alastair Parvin, a designer and member of 00. "The main question we are asking with this project is: 'What will Europe 2.0 look like?'"

Nonetheless, Parvin is quick to point out that Europa is a "provocation, not a proposal" and that signing up does not constitute a legal agreement. "We hope to offer a wake-up call to people," he says. "Unless the democratic state wakes up, it's going to become obsolete."

Other artists include the Indian Raqs Media Collective, the Taiwanese artist Tu Wei-Cheng, the Italian-born artist Rosa Barba and Constant Dullaart from the Netherlands.