

# 48SHEET

A Project by **EC** arts 2-29 April 2012



## Birmingham launches first urban art gallery

### Up to 100 billboards across Birmingham will swap ads for art in April for a unique new art project.

Birmingham city centre will be transformed into an urban art gallery by ambitious new project **48Sheet** from **EC Arts** – the first of its kind in the UK.

From 2-29 April 2012 art will take on advertising by turning **100 billboards across Birmingham** into dramatic large scale platforms for visual art, the project aims to take art out of galleries and onto the city streets.

From April 2-29, 48Sheet will transform the billboards into public art, featuring local, national and international artists including world-renowned conceptual artists **MadeIn Company (Shanghai)** and **Raqs Media Collective (Delhi)**.

Created by EC Arts, the project has been named 48Sheet following the 2010 pilot project that explored using the 48Sheet traditional billboards as platforms for art. In April 2012 the project will transform the city's urban landscape, as featured 48Sheet artists will create work in response to the projects overarching theme of 'cultural curiosity'. The project has been sponsored by The Arts Council England and generously supported by outdoor advertising company JCDecaux and NEC Graph Fix.

EC Arts founder and creative director Claire Farrell explained: *"The project will challenge the repetitive rhythm of a traditional advertising campaign by creating a network of unique and distinctive responses that will raise levels of consciousness and arouse cultural curiosity. The sheer scale of 48SHEET promises to be a truly exciting spectacle of contemporary visual art brought out of galleries and onto the streets of Birmingham in an urban exhibition for the first time that aims to engage new and wider audiences within the arts."*

The billboards have been identified to specifically form advertising free 'clusters' of billboards, and will be accompanied by an online map, GPS google mapping and a printed version map so that people can navigate their way around the urban gallery via recommended walking, cycling and bus routes.

Professor Chris O'Neil, Executive Dean of Birmingham Institute of Art & Design said: *"Every major city in the world is dominated by advertising, the project has been created with the objective to transform the everyday into the extraordinary. We're delighted to have Xu Zhen and Raqs Media on board, who will undoubtedly produce some truly spectacular pieces of visual art for everyone to enjoy, whether they're walking to work, driving home or using public transport."*

Internationally renowned artists Madeln Company (Shanghai) and Raqs Media Collective (Delhi), famous for their innovative and inspiring artwork, have been selected to create new work for 45 billboards by the Fourth Guangzhou Triennial Co-Curators and 48Sheet project partners Jonathan Watkins, Director of the Ikon Gallery and Dr Jiang Jiehong, Director of Centre for Chinese Visual Arts and Birmingham Institute of Art & Design.

48Sheet is the first international project to feature within the Guangzhou Triennial, as work created by Madeln Company for 48Sheet will be exhibited via a different medium within Bennial Foundation's **Fourth Guangzhou Triennial**. Dr Luo, Director Guangdong Museum of Art will be welcomed to the city with a civic reception attended by Chinese delegates and city officials for the launch of 48Sheet.

Neil Rami, Chief Executive of Marketing Birmingham, the city's strategic marketing partnership, said: *"48 Sheet is a fantastic addition to Birmingham's already thriving culture scene, promising visitors a spectacular experience as they travel round and explore the city, cementing our growing reputation as a centre for innovation in the arts."*

*Birmingham has a special relationship with Guangzhou and the 48Sheet project provides a great opportunity to further strengthen our ties with the city."*

48 Sheet is also set to occupy Birmingham's major retail spaces with a temporary artist space taking up residency at The Mailbox for a series of workshops, talks, mini exhibitions and other public supported events throughout the project.





Claire Farrell added: “48Sheet will utilise the city as a canvas by delivering numerous interventions that intend to change peoples experience and perception of the built environment. The artist’s work aims to disrupt by creating opportunities for people to step out of their world or routine, if only for a moment”.

EC Arts has joined forces with key city partners across Birmingham to deliver 48Sheet including Big City Plan, Birmingham Institute of Art & Design, Glenn Howells Architects, Marketing Birmingham, Idea Birmingham, Ikon Gallery and The Mailbox.

For more information on 48Sheet, visit [www.ec-arts.com](http://www.ec-arts.com) or [www.48sheet.com](http://www.48sheet.com)







