



ENTERTAINMENT

Parallax Art Fair returns to Kensington this October

12 October 2022

Lucianne Bell

Follow @SW_Londoner

Europe's largest art fair for independent artists is returning to Kensington later this month.

With 31 editions over the last ten years in London, the [Parallax Art Fair](#) on October 22 and 23 will be held at Kensington Town Hall.

With more than 10,000 products of art and design displayed, 9000 creative businesses and tens of thousands of visitors, Parallax is the most popular of its kind to date.

Founder of the fair Dr Chris Barlow said: "It is deeply humbling. We stuck to it and kept the vision on fire."

Parallax provide a platform and aims to help artists promote and sell their work, while supplying career development and practice, all without commission charges.

Dr Barlow said: "We try to give artists good advice and we also stop artists from taking space if we sense they may go into debt."

This enables artists to experiment and try unconventional ideas, without financial risk often associated with more commercial fairs.

Entry is free for visitors and due to cheap exhibit space artists are able to keep prices low but the quality of work high, Parallax views the artists as creative entrepreneurs and provide marketing handbooks to help their sales skills.

Unlike traditional exhibitions the art displayed has not been selected by a committee to create a particular theme or mood, instead encouraging visitors to be confident when selecting art they like.

This egalitarian approach aims to remove stereotypical expectations often associated with the art industry, there's a certain refusal to let commerce and intellect dictate an artist.

According to Dr Barlow: "Freedom. That is what artists need. But for that they need good advice and an environment where they can develop selling skills."

The fair developed from a research exhibition called 'Parallax' questioning the objectivity of artwork curated by Dr Barlow in November 2010 at the Royal Opera Arcade in London.

Dr Barlow also developed a keen understanding regarding the entrepreneurial nature of artists in the 18th century and difficulties for artists including unaffordable gallery space and his personal experiences of this 25 years prior.

Dr Barlow said: "My own experience, then, is what drove me to start the fair, which I actually consider to be a conceptual work of art critiquing the art industry. In this sense, I am still an artist."

Parallax also produces their own music which can be found online and is played at the fairs creating a playful combination of art, music, and technology including LED screens and cinema.

In July 2021 the Parallax Club for returning exhibitors was launched, it includes member benefits such as 20% discount on any exhibit space regardless of returning annually or consecutively.

The fairs website launched in February 2011 and received over 500 applications, since then the fair has travelled across Europe to New York, Miami, and Los Angeles.

In March 2020 The Parallax Fair TV was launched, it includes interviews the most recent with Paul Michael Glaser, Parallax music, and information such as guides to buying art.

Since then 'Shop Parallax' was added as part of its fully e-commerce website, this is the first automated shopping-cart-style application for a fair worldwide.

At the most recent fair in July 2022 the American actor Paul Michael Glaser exhibited alongside 300 international exhibitors, and it was the first time music was incorporated into the fair.

From the initial exhibition the fair has evolved and adapted in many ways, communicating the fair's message in fun relatable ways, it has grown in size and scale, and has developed a better understanding of the difficulties for artists.

Dr Barlow said: "The one thing I would definitely like it to impact is the university system of Fine Art, which has failed thousands of young artists for decades."

The Parallax Art Fair intends to remove privilege and enhance curiosity, ultimately aiming to change the way art is viewed in the future for both artists and audiences.

Featured Image Credit: Tom Moore, Parallax Art Fair