

Mustafa Hulusi

At a conference in Venice in 2001, the influential artist and teacher Jon Thompson bemoaned the loss of a potentially utopian cultural event free from commercial considerations. "All I hear in every restaurant at every table is people talking about doing deals," he said.

But, in a booming art market, the trend is only likely to continue. Last week London's Max Wigram Gallery opened an exhibition of paintings by Mustafa Hulusi, who has been selected to represent Cyprus this year. "It was scheduled to coincide with the Biennale," says director Michael Briggs. Hulusi is already in the notable British collections of Charles Saatchi and Anita Zabludowicz, but the gallery is hoping the work will attract bigger international collectors. "We will treat it as a selling platform," says Briggs.

Another London-based artist is the 32-year-old, Montreal-born David Altmejd, who will represent Canada. Altmejd is one of the hottest young artists at Venice this year. Represented jointly by Stuart Shave's Modern Art in London and the Andrea Rosen gallery in New York, Altmejd has spent a year working on two major installations for Venice. Both are inspired by a tree slap bang in the middle of the pavilion (which was built around the tree).

Colin Gleadell, *Art sales: Behind the Venetian party mask*, Telegraph.co.uk (www.telegraph.co.uk/arts), June 5th 2007