

MAYFAIR AND ST JAMES'S BOAST A HEALTHY 89 ART GALLERIES, BUT WITH REDEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA, AND COMPETITION FROM OTHER ART CENTRES, IT CAN'T REST ON ITS LAURELS. TO DISCUSS HOW MAYFAIR CAN RETAIN ITS ART CROWN, WE GATHERED EXPERTS IN THE FIELD FOR THE FIRST OF OUR BUSINESS LUNCHESES, AT MICHELIN-STARRED RESTAURANT MURANO ON QUEEN STREET

Working lunch

Cork Street concerns

Louisa Guinness: What is happening with Cork Street?

David Rosen: Native Land, the owners and developers of Cork Street through to Old Burlington Street, have commissioned [architects] Rogers Stirk Harbour & Partners to build a new building in Cork Street [work is expected to begin in January 2014]. There will be up to 25,000 sq ft of ground floor and lower-ground floor gallery units of various sizes – not one big space, but a cross section of small, medium and large spaces. I wouldn't have got involved in this project if I hadn't genuinely known that the developers are legally obliged to provide art gallery space, as opposed to more upmarket clothes shops. I think one of the units may have a general retail use – I would love to think this would be someone like a Miuccia Prada or Paul Smith, who would fuse art with clothing. I think this new building, with the art galleries coming in, will revitalise and regenerate Cork Street.

Johnathan Messum: I think now there is a lot of focus on Mayfair and Cork Street in particular. We have invested in it in the past and we're investing in it for the long-term future as well. I think the question mark in everyone's head is: Is the West End still going to be an art centre? From our point of view we would definitely want to stay there – it would take a lot for us to move.

Richard Nagy: I am quite sceptical of the future. How can you be sure that the smaller galleries won't be driven away and not come back?

David: Native Land and The Pollen Estate are restricted by a legal agreement with Westminster and the planners.

Johnathan: The Save Cork Street Campaign [representing galleries on Cork Street, formed in response to The Pollen Estate and Native Land's planning applications to redevelop the central section of Cork Street] played a large part in that outcome.



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CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: GUESTS AT THE CHEF'S TABLE AT MURANO;
RICHARD NAGY WITH LOUISA GUINNESS; AND CHARLES SAUMAREZ SMITH

Participants

Mat Collishaw, artist of the YBA (Young British Artists) set, represented by Blain Southern in Hanover Square, who recently installed a glittering 3D digital diamond into the London Edition hotel on Berners Street to celebrate its launch.

Charles Saumarez Smith, secretary and chief executive of The Royal Academy of Arts.

David Rosen, senior partner at property consultant Pilcher Hershman, which finds spaces for galleries.

Anne-Sophie Villemin, senior sales associate at New York gallery David Zwirner, based on Grafton Street.

Johnathan Messum, director of Messum's, the Cork Street gallery founded by David Messum in 1963.

Georgina Hepburne-Scott, works in art management at Stonehage Limited, taking responsibility for art collections around the world.

Andy Somerford, manager at Albemarle Gallery, which represents artists from Korea and Pakistan, amongst others.

Richard Nagy, founder of Richard Nagy on Old Bond Street. Richard is a specialist in the works of Egon Schiele and Gustav Klimt and has been based in Mayfair for 35 years.

Olyvia Kwok, founder of Willstone Management and Olyvia Oriental Gallery and an expert in art and jewellery investment.

Louisa Guinness, founder of the Louisa Guinness Gallery, which has recently opened a space at 45 Conduit Street. Louisa has both historical pieces of jewellery made by artists and commissions contemporary pieces.

Kate Gordon, director and founder of London Art Studies, who formed her company after working at Sotheby's and as an arts producer at CNN.

Lorna Davies, arts correspondent at Mayfair Times.

Selma Day, editor of Mayfair Times.