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No Fair but NotFair: The Melbourne Art Fair's alter egos survives

GINA FAIRLEY

The demise of the Melbourne Art Fair has not put off the satellite art fairs which will go ahead in August.



Murray McKeich, Re. MT18, digital photomedia (detail), NotFair 2014 (Murray McKeich, Re. MT18, digital photomedia)

The art world reeled last week when Chairman of the Melbourne Art Foundation Anna Pappas announced the cancellation of the 2016 Melbourne Art Fair (<http://visual.artshub.com.au/news->

[article/news/visual-arts/gina-fairley/melbourne-art-fair-cancelled-in-shock-announcement-250564](#))(MAF).

The collateral fall out of the announcement has gone well beyond the event and its managing organisation. Two satellite fairs - [Spring 1883](#) (<http://spring1883.com/>) and [NotFair](#) (<http://www.notfair.com.au/>) - remain committed to showing in August and have been quick to reiterate their position.

NotFair Chairman Paul Guest said he did not believe the shock cancellation of Melbourne Art Fair would affect the the success of NotFair in 2016.

'We feel that the NotFair brand is now well enough known to stand alone as a major event and we intend to create our own momentum this year,' he said.

NotFair is a curated biennale that showcases emerging, unrepresented and independent artists whose work is awaiting discovery by collectors and galleries. It was established in 2010 by artists Sam Leach and Tony Lloyd and arts writer and curator Ashley Crawford, as a subversive and controversial alternative to the existing art fair model, which is reserved for galleries largely presenting established artists from their own stables. it will run this year from 16 to 21 August 2016 at corporate event space 524 Flinders St, Melbourne.

Spring 1883 began in 2014 and runs alternate years in Melbourne and Sydney. Galleries are presented by appointment only and displayed in the iconic Windsor Hotel rather than in a commercial fair environment. This year it will run this year from 17 to 21 August.

Pointing fingers

Pappas had cited the reason for dropping this year's edition of the MAF was that several major galleries had pulled out. She told [The Guardian](#) (<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/australia-culture-blog/2014/aug/18/melbourne-art-fair-paintings-perfume-rolls-royce>) that Tolarno Galleries, Roslyn Oxley and Anna Schwartz had withdrawn: 'We realised the fair would not be cutting edge without these major galleries, and we have no interest in becoming an affordable, mediocre art fair.'

It was news to Schwartz who [had not even applied](#) (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/melbourne-art-fair-cancelled-430490>) to MAF.

Speculation circulated that the cancellation had little to do with gallery withdrawals and more to do with mismanagement of the fair and its inability to complete with the blossoming Sydney Contemporary.

The *Australian Financial Review* (<http://www.afr.com/brand/rear-window/anna-pappas-and-gallerists-squawk-over-melbourne-art-fair-carcass-20160222-gn03b6#ixzz40xLfdcqR>) stated blankly: 'Clearly nobody is buying the line Pappas is selling. The only reason the Melbourne Art Fair has become a resting parrot lies in the Foundation Board's decision in 2014 to dump Tim Etchells' Art Fairs Australia as its producer.'

Adding to this week's speculation was the whisper that Sydney Contemporary is looking to becoming an annual event.

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