

PRESS RELEASE

Contemporary Artists **Antony Micallef** and **James Ostrer** join the ***Journey*** against sex trafficking of women



10 December Madrid Launch

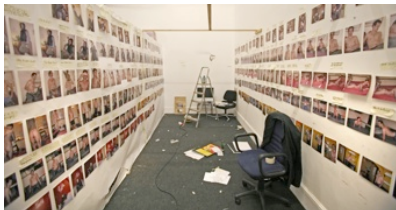
In support of the Helen Bamber Foundation

Antony Micallef and **James Ostrer** are the latest Artists to create unique installations for ***Journey***: a campaign against sex trafficking supported by Oscar-winning Actress **Emma Thompson**, Activist **Sam Roddick** and Human Rights Campaigner **Helen Bamber OBE**. ***Journey*** is a multimedia artwork comprised of seven shipping containers, designed to recreate the experiences of a woman who has become the victim of sex trafficking. ***Journey*** was conceived and curated by Emma Thompson and Sam Roddick. Each artist depicts one stage of this tragic journey into prostitution: ***Hope, Journey, Uniform, Bedroom, Customer, Stigma*** and ***Resurrection***.

People just don't want to know about this issue – it's hidden, it's criminal, it's perverse and yes, its happening right on your own doorstep. Journey is a remarkable piece of collaborative, creative and confrontational art that profoundly challenges people's perspective. Come and see it for yourself and then tell us if you agree...

Emma Thompson

Micallef and **Ostrer** join a stellar cast of contemporary artists and designers from a wide range of disciplines; Turner Prize-winning artist Anish Kapoor; Oscar-winning costume designer Sandy Powell; leading British graffiti artist MODE2; BAFTA-nominated Art Director Michael Howells; acclaimed playwright Simon Stephens; Leading graphic designer Mike Dempsey; V&A award-winning illustrator Laura Carlin; Elena Varga, and Lifetime Achievement Award-winner in Human Rights, Helen Bamber OBE.



Journey was launched in London's Trafalgar Square in 2007, when the installation brought traffic to a standstill. The latest incarnation of **Journey**, featuring the new container filled with photographs by Ostrer, and an exterior by Micallef, will be installed in Washington Place in New York from 9-15 November. The Mayor of New York, Michael Bloomberg, has given substantial financial support to the New York leg of the journey, and will personally unveil the installation.

Journey will be unveiled in Madrid on 10 December, funded by the Spanish Government's Ministry for Equality, and launched by the tireless figureheads of this campaign; Thompson, Roddick and Bamber, alongside Micallef and Ostrer. Significantly, 10 December is the 1st anniversary of the Spanish Anti-Trafficking Plan, and Human Rights Day. Every day, about 1.5million people pay for sex in Spain, and 80 per cent of Spain's 400,000 sex workers are thought to have been trafficked. Belen Garcia, of the APRAMP support group, said buying sex had widespread acceptance among Spanish men. (BBC News).

Journey will then travel to the USA, Italy and return to London in 2012, to highlight the problem of sex trafficking of prostitutes into the Olympics.

Antony Micallef is a critically acclaimed artist, who has exhibited as far a field as LA, Tokyo and Palestine. Recent exhibitions include; Kevin Spacey's *Tunnel 228*, a sell out autumn solo show *Becoming Animal* at London's Lazarides Gallery, as well as major group shows at the Royal Academy and Tate Britain.

For his first major public art project, Micallef was invited to take up the challenge of covering the exterior of the 7 containers that make up Journey, with his distinctive, figurative imagery. Micallef is passionate about the cause, explaining "This barbaric dressed up slavery is going on in the 21st century in our own civilised society". Despite the scale of the containers, his accomplished draughtsmanship translates effortlessly to the exterior, without losing any of the painterly quality. Micallef's women are bound and faceless, lending them a dark dimension, reflective of the pain and torment they have experienced as sex slaves.

The image *Come and get me boys* is an ironic twist on the infamous *Wonderbra* ads, here the woman lies face down, hands tied, her face half erased in the manner of a tormented Francis Bacon canvas. And don't be fooled by the Pop palette of *Slave Girls*, for the candy coloured bed and enticing poses of the females, are a mask for the inner terror felt by each trafficked victim.

Antony's work is brilliantly deceptive yet beautiful, and the colors decorative, seducing the viewer into a state of comfort, drawing them in...the closer you get the more uncomfortable you become. In truth, his paintings are deeply disturbing and horrifically sexy - there are not many painters who can bridge the contradictions between beauty and horror. He confronts a truth within desire and makes us ask the question 'at what cost'.... Sam Roddick

James Ostrer is an emerging photographer, whose recent exhibition *Death, Sex and Re-birth* exhibition at Coco de Mer Gallery caused a stir, and signified the beginning of an artistic exploration of the human emotion and vulnerability.

He conceived his installation **Customer** as a way of inverting the relationship between prostitute and client, and turning the Customer's voyeuristic gaze upon himself. Ostrer visited 6 brothels in 3 British cities, giving his camera to each girl, and paying her to take photographs of him in the kind of uncomfortable situations their clients usually place them in. Ostrer explains "This installation is one way for the customers to reflect on what the girls have to go through". This process resulted in some disturbing photographs accompanied by heart-wrenching quotes from the prostitute, which go some way to explain the sense of entrapment each trafficked woman experiences.

James's installation is brave and chilling – it is one of the most important pieces in the whole exhibit, and the only installation that is a true documentation. He used his art to immerse himself in the reality of what these girls are living. His photographs have a ghost like effect upon your psyche, raising a series of profound questions. James is a new artist on the block that I know won't remain unknown for long.

Sam Roddick

Notes to Editors;

The Roddick Foundation

The Roddick Foundation is an independent and progressive organization, dedicated to the support of voluntary individuals and organizations that show leadership and results in making this a more just and kind world. Inspired by the courage, activism, and philanthropy of the late Dame Anita Roddick.

Helen Bamber Foundation

The Helen Bamber Foundation was founded 1 April 2005, with the aim of supporting victims of human rights violations.

Websites;

<http://journeyagainstsextrafficking.blogspot.com/>

www.antonymicallef.com

www.jamesostrer.com

www.helenbamber.org

www.coco-de-mer.com

www.theroddickfoundation.org

www.38degrees.org.uk

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Gondage for Frædom