

by [Nicholas Forrest](#)



SPRING 1883



Vasili Kaliman, Geoff Newton, Vikki McInnes. Photo by Warwick Baker

When three of Australia's most proactive and progressive contemporary art world identities put their heads together, something interesting is bound to emerge. In this instance the result is an exciting new art fair that is set to give the grand dame of Australian art fairs (Melbourne Art Fair) a run for its money.

The brainchild of Melbourne gallerists **Vasili Kaliman** (Station), **Geoff Newton** (Neon Parc), and **Vikki McInnes** (Sarah Scout Presents), the new fair, entitled [SPRING 1883](#), will take place at Melbourne's historic Hotel Windsor from August 14-17, 2014.

The fair takes its name from the location of the Hotel Windsor (Spring Street) and the year it opened its doors (1883).

According to the dynamic trio, the fair draws on the traditions of New York's hotel-based Gramercy Park Fair and will present the best of contemporary art practice from Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and the United States.

"Providing a boutique site for dialogue and interaction between galleries, artists and collectors, the fair will create a new energy for the contemporary art market in Australia," states the press release announcing the fair.

The fair has already attracted an impressive list of 20 top galleries including the likes of Arndt of Berlin and Singapore, Foxy Production of New York, Murray White Room of Melbourne, Roslyn Oxley9 of Sydney, and Michael Lett of Auckland, to name a few.

The list of participants was "conceived by galleries for galleries," according to the founders, and was "developed through personal invitation, allowing the project to evolve through shared conceptual engagements."

To find out more about this exciting new initiative, **BLOUIN ARTINFO** got in touch with Vasili Kaliman (Station) and Vikki McInnes and asked them a few questions.

### **What prompted the launch of the Spring 1883 art fair?**

VM: The traditional art fair booth is a slightly depressing site for me, and has more in common with a trade fair than a gallery space. It's a difficult space to show art and an impossible context in which to have a meaningful conversation about art (or about anything, for that matter). I leapt at the chance to work with Geoff and Vasili – gallerists I have always admired and felt strong synergies with – to provide an alternative: a space that, as a gallerist, I would actually like to occupy and that, as a collector or as an art fan, I would like to visit.

VK: Spring 1883 stemmed from the desire to synergise a moment and create something new and fresh for the Australian art community. We felt there was a gap, the timing was right, along with the right list of galleries wanting to enter into a dialogue of being part of new art fair.

### **You describe the fair as promoting "dialogue and interaction between galleries, artists and collectors." How do you plan to achieve this?**

VM: At the most basic level, by providing a physical space that allows conversations to take place. However, the dialogue has already begun, and there has been a terrific collegiality demonstrated by the galleries involved and a willingness to participate in something together.

In terms of bringing artists and collectors together, the hotel suite provides a discrete and genial environment; many of our artists will be present in the Sarah Scout suite during Spring 1883.

**The project evolved through “shared conceptual engagements.” Does this mean that the fair will be curated around specific themes or lines of inquiry?**

VM: The shared engagements refer more to the galleries themselves rather than what they might present in Spring 1883. We invited the galleries with which we feel strong affinities (whether they might be conceptual, formal, philosophical etc) and I’m thrilled to be showing among the resulting list of participants – a list that is cross-generational, as well as cross-disciplinary. If I were a visitor, I’d be pretty thrilled, too, at the opportunity to see these incredible galleries (many of whom might not necessarily participate in a more traditional art fair) in the one spot.

VK: There is not so much a curatorial theme running through the art in the fair, more so a shared ideology in the galleries that are participating within it.

**Melbourne already hosts Australia’s longest running art fair. What will differentiate Spring 1883, other than the fantastic and unique location?**

VM: The high calibre of the galleries involved.

VK: The notion of a hotel fair is not new or different, they have been occurring around the world for many years. The most important thing that will distinguish us is the rigorous approach of the galleries and the exceptional artists they show.

**Can you reveal what some of the galleries taking part in Spring 1883 will be exhibiting at the fair?**

VM: Sarah Scout has asked five artists to each address one of the rooms within our hotel suite, for example Kate Daw will present work in the dining room and Veronica Kent will present in the bedroom, each teasing out conceptual concerns within their practices. Daine Singer is presenting a solo project of new work by Minna Gilligan in the bedroom of her suite and a group show in the living room. Different galleries will be dealing with the spaces in different ways, of course...

**Spring 1883 is a new and exciting project with great potential. What are your ambitions for the fair looking into the future?**

VM: I think it depends on the site and the context. Working in this collaborative way with Geoff and Vasili has been terrific and the response from other galleries so positive. It clearly indicates there is room for other models.

VK: A new take on just what the Australian art community can be.

## GALLERIES

[Arndt, Berlin – Singapore](#)

[Daine Singer, Melbourne](#)

[Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney](#)

[David Pestorius, Brisbane](#)

[Foxy Production, New York](#)

[Gloria Knight, Auckland](#)

[Hamish McKay, Wellington](#)

[Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland](#)

[Kalli Rolfe Contemporary Art, Melbourne](#)

[Michael Lett, Auckland](#)

[Minerva, Sydney](#)

[Murray White Room, Melbourne](#)

[Neon Parc, Melbourne](#)

[Robert Heald Gallery, Wellington](#)

[Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney](#)

[Sarah Cottier, Sydney](#)

[Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne](#)

[Station, Melbourne](#)

[Sutton Gallery, Melbourne](#)

[Utopian Slumps, Melbourne](#)