

PRESS RELEASE

First ever UK artist exhibits at prestigious gallery in Spain

British people-painter, Ken Maharajah, announced today that his Flamenco paintings were chosen for a solo exhibition at the famous Museo del Baile Flamenco in Seville. Not only is he the first ever UK artist to have a major exhibition there but also the first watercolourist.

Ken Maharajah is a figure artist who is known for atmospheric and dynamic movement within his watercolour paintings. The internationally renowned Museo del Baile Flamenco (Museum of Flamenco Dance) has selected Maharajah's work for a solo show starting in March 2018.

Maharajah's figurative series "Flamenco - Spark and Fire" was chosen through his repeated visits to the Museum's Flamenco workshops in Seville, sketching the dancers. When his drawings were noticed, he was approached to produce a body of work to exhibit at the Museum.

The International scope of the Museo's exhibition is seen by previous exhibitors from countries such as China, Korea, Japan, Italy, Spain and France. The dates for the exhibition are March 22 through to April 22 2018.

Living and creating his art in his studio in Devon, UK, Maharajah has been an artist for more than 25 years. Although life has got in the way for much of that time - raising a family and working as a BT engineer for 15 years - he has now been a full-time artist since 2013.

From humble beginnings, being raised in the East End of London, Maharajah, now 65, is finally realising his dream of being recognised as an artist.

Regarding this art show Maharajah states "I am very pleased and gratified to be chosen by the Museo del Baile Flamenco for this solo show. Because of the Museum's cultural significance, it is a great privilege, as the first ever UK artist, to be offered an exhibition there. Since the Museum has an international reputation for promoting genuine Flamenco, I am honoured that they want to exhibit my paintings, recognising they represent those values."

Maharajah has spent the last two years studying and painting Flamenco dancers in Cuba, Seville and at his local dance studios in Devon. He has produced a body of work consisting of around 40 watercolour paintings for the exhibition. His work shows a great deal of skill in capturing the dynamic movement and passion of Flamenco. His loose painterly style and use of colour is his recognised signature.

Brad Bernhard, US Journalist said of his work "somehow you always seem to capture the essence and tension in a single moment" and Simon Gomes MA, graphic designer/illustrator of Independent Design and illustration tutor at University of Hertfordshire said "... (the paintings) emit a highly emotive and animated story that captures the passion and energy of each performer ... For frozen moments in time, we

are transported into a world where we are invited to emotionally connect with each performer's uniqueness and expressions of liberty...".

Marco Torres, Executive Assistant Manager from the Flamenco Museum in Seville, says "Ken's work is so dynamic and yet beautiful and we are very privileged to be able to host his exhibition here at the Museo."

Cristina Hoyos, the celebrated Flamenco performer who danced at the opening of the Barcelona Olympics, is attending the exhibition. Joe Cooper, the former Director of the UK Department of Trade and Industry, and Honorary British Consul based in Seville, as well as attending the launch, is writing the forward of the catalogue.

The Museo del Baile Flamenco is located at Manuel Rojas Marcos, 3, 41004 Sevilla, Spain. They are open daily from 10.00 AM to 7:00 PM.
Tel. +34 954 34 03 11.

ENDS

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Ken Maharajah



Painting example

Ken Maharajah lives and works in Devon, UK. His artwork is represented by private commissions. Ken is currently concentrating on painting Flamenco dancers, capturing the enthusiasm, movement and colour of this passionate, cultural dance tradition. Ken also teaches Life Drawing classes.

His website can be found at www.kenmaharajah.uk.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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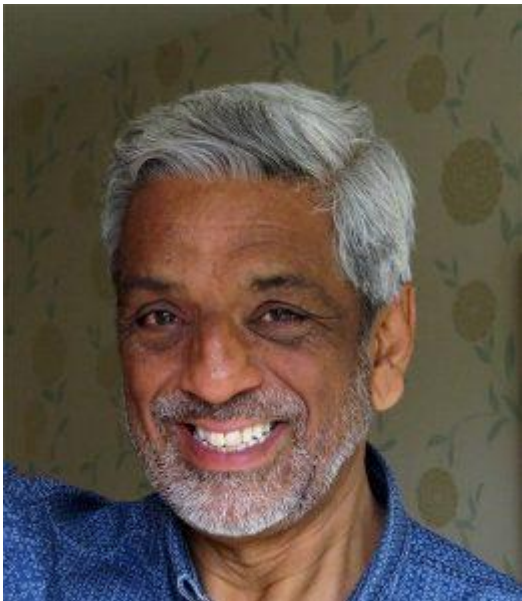
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Telephone and Skype interviews can be arranged.

Please see Press Pack attached for more information and images. High res pictures are available on request.

PRESS PACK

Ken Maharajah Flamenco Art Exhibition Spain



CONTENTS OF PRESS PACK

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ARTIST STATEMENT

I'm Ken Maharajah, an artist passionately addicted to painting people. My current work features Flamenco dance culture with its explosive energy. I use the spills and splashes of watercolour to connect with something deep inside us. I have travelled to Spain and Cuba to study professional Flamenco dancers as well as sketching at my local Flamenco dance classes here in Devon.

My work is mainly watercolour as I like its fluidity and translucency and I would describe my artwork as loose and painterly

My art is about fascination with the human figure engaged in some form of action. But the actual inspiration comes from engaging with people's display of passion within their activities. It's this powerful feeling of enthusiasm, intrinsic to people throughout the world, I want to capture. This feeling energises something deep inside me that transcends material things. Enthusiasm is contagious and depicting people in this context might well encourage others to find their own passion and see its impact on the quality of life.

Although I continually experiment with different media, watercolour allows me to find my voice and reflects who I am. Its immediacy and unpredictability helps express movement with atmospheric mood. I construct this passion by use of bold colours to introduce energy and tension to the scene. This translates into excitement and allows brush strokes that are both loose and explosive.

MISSION, VISION AND FLAMENCO

MISSION

My sincere belief is that my paintings capture the raw emotion and passion of Flamenco and that these paintings connect with people on a deep level. The collection of paintings will hopefully become an inspiration for people to find out more about Flamenco and connect to its history, culture and passion.

It is a privilege for me to know that sometime in the day someone will look at one of my paintings hanging on their wall and be transported for a short time with their own private thoughts and feel some pleasure or even passion and enthusiasm from this art.

VISION

I would like to see my Flamenco paintings exhibited around the world. Interest in Flamenco tradition and dance is burgeoning in many countries, no doubt, in part, since it was recognised by UNESCO for its cultural heritage. I feel that my paintings would be a good contribution to spreading the interest in Flamenco.

FLAMENCO PAINTING

For me, capturing the essence of Flamenco is the avoidance of over-romanticised tourist depictions found in contemporary paintings. I'm happy to admit my addiction lies in Flamenco's deep displays of passion, where the practitioners perform with intense enthusiasm, pulling up 500 years of history lying in the sediment of their soul. This profoundly moving experience characterises the Flamenco spirit. This is what I seek to capture in my art.

I have travelled to Spain and Cuba and attended Flamenco studios, workshops, performances, and personal dance auditions. Now I've finally prepared this body of watercolour paintings which will be exhibited at the Museo del Baile Flamenco, the hub of all things Flamenco in Seville, maybe even the world. This highly prestigious venue is hosting up to 40 of my paintings from March 2018 to April 2018. This collection features a loose painterly style to interpret the raw energy, spark and fire, of authentic Flamenco.

Simon Gomes MA, graphic designer/illustrator of Independent Design and illustration tutor at University of Hertfordshire says about Ken's work:

"Ken Maharajah's paintings, when viewed together, emit a highly emotive and animated story that captures the passion and energy of each performer. Ken's dynamic and sympathetic use of colour contrast with the tension of the striking poses. The loose splashes of colour within each well-considered composition complement the more structured tautness of the models. Even when the subjects are not looking directly into the eyes of the viewer, they attract attention as they are completely immersed in their desire to perform and entertain their captive audiences. For frozen moments in time, we are transported into a world where we are invited to emotionally connect with each performer's uniqueness and expressions of liberty. It is a world that Ken has invited us to escape to and happily celebrate."

(Examples of the paintings are shown at the end of this document)

ABOUT FLAMENCO

Flamenco obtained World Heritage status in 2010 with UNESCO. Quoting the UNESCO website <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/flamenco-00363>:

Inscribed in 2010 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

"Flamenco is an artistic expression fusing song "(cante)," dance "(baile)" and musicianship "(toque)." Andalusia in southern Spain is the heartland of Flamenco, although it also has roots in regions such as Murcia and Extremadura.

"Cante" is the vocal expression of flamenco, sung by men and women, preferably seated, with no backing singers. The gamut of feelings and states of mind – grief, joy, tragedy, rejoicing and fear – can be expressed through sincere, expressive lyrics characterized by brevity and simplicity.

Flamenco "baile" is a dance of passion, courtship, expressing a wide range of situations ranging from sadness to joy. The technique is complex, differing depending on whether the performer is male (heavier use of the feet) or female (gentler, more sensual movements).

"Toque" or the art of guitar playing has long surpassed its original role as accompaniment. Other instruments, including castanets, hand-clapping and foot-stamping are also employed.

Flamenco is performed during religious festivals, rituals, church ceremonies and at private celebrations. It is the badge of identity of numerous communities and groups, in particular the Gitano (Roma) ethnic community, which has played an essential role in its development. Transmission occurs through dynasties, families, social groups and Flamenco clubs, all of which play a key role in its preservation and dissemination."

FLAMENCO PAINTING

Ken Maharajah, the people-painter, was born into a working class family in London's poverty-stricken East End. A teacher saw his potential and enrolled Ken in life drawing classes at the age of 13. This one act of vision ignited his love of the human form.

Despite his wish to promote further his promising artistic career, lack of immediate opportunity required him to pursue the more stable future of engineering. While raising his family he continued to study life drawing and concentrated on the development of watercolour skills through commissioned portraiture.

Eventually he left engineering and Ken began preparations for his artistic career. He achieved foundation degree qualifications, earning distinctions in his grades which confirmed he had made the right decision. But it took another 15 years before the dream

was on track and he commenced BA (Hons) degree in Illustration. At this time he developed his painting skills and particularly enjoyed illustrating fashion models to understand the figure in action.

Now, at the age of 65, Ken has been given his big break of exhibiting a body of work depicting Flamenco dancers, in Seville, Spain. This exhibition is creating a stir in the Flamenco world and it is hoped that further exhibitions will take place around the world. His persistence with his art shows that it is never too late to achieve your dreams.

Ken is a charismatic person with an infectious smile, masses of enthusiasm and a gracious manner whilst retaining a large amount of modesty.

When asked, Ken will always confirm that what drives him is the expression of emotional connections within the human figure. His strength is his ability to 'see' and capture people in action. Strong mood and narrative, full of atmospheric feeling is the signature of his paintings. Ken continues to attend life-drawing sessions and run life drawing classes.

EXPERIENCE

- Artist, Devon, 2013-now
- Customer assistant, Retail, Devon, 2004 – 2013
- Communications engineer, Virgin Media, Devon, 2000 –2004
- Freelance graphic design and illustrator, Devon, 1996 – 2000
- Student: East Devon College, Devon, 1994 – 1996
- Communications engineer, BT, Wales, 1988 – 1994
- Factory operator, Wales, 1985 – 1987
- Domestic appliance engineer, Wales, 1978 – 1985

EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

- University Diploma, Illustration, University of Hertfordshire 2013 – 2016
- Advanced, General National Vocational Qualification, Art and Design, East Devon College, Devon, Distinction, 1996
- Advanced level, Art and Design, East Devon College, Devon, Grade A, 1996
- Vocational certificate, information technology, Exeter Business Centre, 1995 – 1997
- City and Guilds (part 1) constructional engineering, East Ham technical college 1968
- Daneford Secondary School, London, 1964 – 1967

ACCOLADES AND AWARDS

- Exhibition of Flamenco paintings, Museo del Baile Flamenco, Seville, March – April 2018
- East Devon College Arts Centre Prize 1995
- East Devon College Art Exhibition 1995
- Certificate of Achievement in Lifelong Learning – East Devon College
- Exceptional Achievement scoring 100% in GNVQ BTEC

CONTACT

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Telephone and Skype interviews can be arranged.

ART SAMPLES

Included in this press pack are four examples of watercolour paintings currently in Seville for the exhibition.



Title: Vuelta Quebrada (Broken Turn)

Story behind the picture

This movement, broken turn, is incredibly exciting to watch. Especially when you see it coming and know a surge of passion is just about to happen. I had to watch this a number of times to understand what is happening. This scene is the split second before it happens.



Title: Igniting the Soul

Story behind the picture

I was struck by the absorption of this dancer and that moment when the body explodes upwards with such emotional power. I like the garment sleeves. They seem to add to the suddenness of the movement.



Title: Listening for his entrance

Story behind the picture

Capturing his concentration was critical to the success of this painting. I saw him perform with a group and noticed there is an exact moment to enter the Flamenco routine based around the complex rhythms. This is the moment just coming up to his entrance. Its the mind working with the heart.



Title: Turning

Story behind the picture

This is about dynamic movement. When I was watching her, I saw that characteristic, so beloved of flamenco, the moment when they reach deep inside themselves and execute a phenomenal, heart moving position. I just had to paint this. Wow!

ATTACHMENTS

At work in the studio.



All images in Press Pack available in High Resolution by request.