

The Story behind the Obama's People Exhibition

To celebrate President Obama's inauguration, the New York Times photo director, Kathy Ryan, teamed up with Nadav Kander to photograph the administration of Barack Obama as it was being assembled. 52 photos later, today's leading figures of America have been captured in **Obama's People**.

The series was released online on January 15th, 5 days before Obama was inaugurated as president of the United States of America. The New York Times Magazine also ran a series of the images in a special magazine edition (published 18 January), which immediately sold out and is now selling on eBay for \$50. It's the first time in the magazine history that they have devoted an entire issue to one photographer.

The rights to hold the World Premiere of the Obama portraits were won by Rhonda Wilson, Creative Director of Rhubarb-Rhubarb, a creative development agency for image makers based at the Custard Factory in Birmingham UK. After seeing the images on The New York Times Magazine website, Wilson pitched a proposal to Flowers Gallery who represent Nadav Kander for print sales.

The project is being supported by an investment partnership including : Birmingham City Council; AWM; Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Staffordshire University, Heavy Object design, All Trade Printers, Genesis Digital, and PR company, Idea Generation, assisted by Marketing Birmingham, Arts Council England and a group of individual patrons – Jonnie Turpie, Cary Welling, Lesley Pinder, Noel Dunne, Ian Yorke, Roger Shannon and Glen Howells. On promissory notes from funders, Wilson raised an overdraft from HSBC to enable the exhibition prints and frames to be ordered, and paid for some of the project PR costs with photographs donated by Ferit Kuyas.

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery proved an enthusiastic partner, offering to host the show in Gallery 20, for an extended period, to cover the school holidays, tourist season and Rhubarb-Rhubarb's International Review, 30th July to 2nd August.

Internet technologies have proved invaluable in enabling the process of curation to happen very quickly, particularly with Nadav Kander traveling on assignment throughout most of the timeframe of the project.

"All of the curating has been done between the two parties, using state of the art technologies, including an E-maquette of the venue, with the final edit in place. This has allowed us to work as fast as we had to, in order to get the project made at such short notice.

"Though being first with this particular project is hugely significant, its about other things too – the fit with the diversity of the city and region, the power of photography to evidence possibility and political change at this historic moment and the opportunity for thousands of people to see this ground breaking aspirational project, furthering Birmingham's ambition to be an international centre for creative excellence', says Wilson.

www.obamaspeopleexhibition.com/www.rhubarb-rhubarb.net/
www.nadavkander.com