

Czech Republic

Prague The **Prague Biennial 2** in the Karlin Hall (26 May-15 September) has been organised by Giancarlo Politi, the Italian publisher and editor of the contemporary art magazine *Flash Art*, and his wife, Helena Kontova, an editor at the publication. The exhibition was first held in 2001 in Tirana, Albania, and organised on a shoestring budget, but was moved to Prague in 2003.

"We wanted to invite people to a place where they wouldn't normally consider going, to a country that needed to improve its self-confidence...Prague was a continuation of that idea," says Czech-born Ms Kontova. The show is designed as an alternative to the Venice Biennale, with which it runs concurrently. The organisers say its purpose is to highlight artists of eastern Europe and the developing world which are marginalised by the art world, but this year the focus is on new painting in Europe, particularly the very fashionable, highly sellable and now widely seen Leipzig School; and political action art in Latin America. Eigen+Art, the German gallery based in Berlin and Leipzig, is sending work by Matthias Weischer, whose work will also be on show in the Italian pavilion at this year's Venice Biennale. There will also be sections on Czech and Slovak art; Polish art; Chinese painting (another increasingly popular area of the market); a show organised as a "tribute" to the Italian painter Marco Montesano; and a central exhibition of 100 contemporary paintings by artists who included Damien Hirst and Maurizio Cattelan, as well as Stella Vine, the artist who garnered tabloid fame last year when Charles Saatchi included her painting of a bleeding Princess Diana in his "New Blood" exhibition. **Above:** Martin Eder's *Burn the bridges*, 2003, from his series *Images du corps humain*, on show at the biennial's exhibition of paintings by the Leipzig School.

