

ELEPHANTS IN THE URBAN JUNGLE OF LONDON

250 life-size baby elephants which have been hand-painted by an assortment of established and emerging talent from the art and design world, including Marc Quinn, Diane Von Furstenberg and Lulu Guinness have been spotted around London as the Elephant Parade has taken place raising money for charity. One of these elephants is Taxi Elephant, and a handsome elephant he is too. Previous parades have been held in Holland and Belgium, raising over €1,600,000 in total.

Elephant Family, the only charity solely dedicated to ensuring the survival of the Asian elephant, has launched the Parade, London's biggest ever public art event. The elephants, destined to become highly collectible works of art, have been in various London landmarks, including Buckingham Palace, Parliament Square and the South Bank, from May to July. They are then set to be herded together and put on show in one of London's great green spaces for a magnificent exhibition, open to the public at The Royal Hospital Chelsea, starting on 23rd June. After going on display to the public they will be auctioned by Sothebys at a glittering event, which aims to raise over £1 million, benefiting more than 15 UK conservation charities working in Asia. Attracting a veritable who's who of London society, including the Duchess of York, Princess Michael of Kent and Joanna Lumley, this event is set to be the party of the season. Should you wish to own a Taxi elephant and do not have enough space for the full sized model baby elephant, there are



smaller versions available to buy online at www.elephantparadewebshop.com

Within only 100 years the elephant population has shrunk by over 90%, dropping from 250,000 to an estimated 25,000, placing this valuable species dangerously close to extinction. If current trends continue the Asian elephant will cease to exist in the wild by 2050. Elephant Family has been campaigning for conservation of the Asian elephant since 2002, and with this new project it aims to grow public awareness and gather signatures for a government petition and to raise vital funds for conservation projects in Asia, securing the Asian elephants a place in our future.



CITY OF LONDON FESTIVAL

This year's City of London Festival is set to resonate with music from the Portuguese-speaking world, get the Square Mile buzzing with bees and beehives and celebrate the 200th birthday of Chopin. It opens in the Guildhall Old Library on 21st June with the Portuguese Chamber Orchestra making its UK debut and with virtuoso Brazilian pianist Cristina Ortiz as soloist in Chopin's Piano Concerto No 2. This will be followed by an outdoor performance in Guildhall Yard, specially designed by Luke Jerram. 21 young pianists will play a newly commissioned work for 21 upright pianos by Richard Causton, drawing on all 21 of Chopin's Nocturnes. Chopin himself had made his final public appearance as a pianist in Guildhall more than 150 years ago. The pianos will then be dispersed throughout the City: Street Pianos, back by popular demand and available for all to play throughout the three Festival weeks.

The Festival will also 'commission' new honey through the installation of a number of beehives throughout the City. As part of the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010, bee-related events will include newly commissioned poetry and music, tastings, seminars and a lecture by the Bishop of London.

The Festival's dance projects include a new work commissioned from the Brazilian choreographer and capoeira master, Ponciano Almeida, set against the backdrop of some of the City's most historic and iconic places - Tower of London, Monument and Royal Exchange, and a week of performances by Deborah Colker's company at the Barbican.



CYCLING IN LONDON

The new Cycle Hire scheme is set to launch in London 30 July 2010. This is a public bicycle sharing scheme for short journeys in and around central London. Cyclists will be able to pick up a bicycle, use it as they like, then drop it off, ready for the next person. The bicycles will be available 24 hours a day, all year round. It will be self-service so just turn up and go, with no pre booking required.

There will be 400 special docking stations to choose from, where hirers can pick up and drop off. But for taxi drivers, the thought of more cyclists on the road may not be very welcome. Experiences with some cyclists have left taxi drivers with damaged taxis as the cyclists do not always abide by the rules of the road. So it is an appropriate time for the IAM to launch a new book, How to be a better cyclist, a practical guide to cycling.

For cab drivers who cycle in their leisure time to keep fit, the book is full of useful tips and information. The new guide provides comprehensive advice for safer cycling and is aimed at current and would-be cyclists of any level of experience. It also champions the



idea of cyclists taking up a primary position on the road. Duncan Pickering, IAM Cycling Development Manager, said: "Many cyclists are unsure whether to stick to the kerb or push out into the road when riding in towns. How to be a better cyclist advises cyclists to stay nearer but not close to the kerb on long, even stretches, but where safe and appropriate to do so, to assert themselves (such as when approaching a side road), pushing out into the road and making themselves visible to drivers."

Simon Best, IAM Chief Executive, says: "The IAM hopes that people of any age will use How to be a better cyclist to get the most out of their cycle journeys, whether in the town or the country, and that the book will reach those who could benefit from our knowledge and experience." How to be a better cyclist can be ordered online at the IAM website, iam.org.uk, at £9.99 plus postage and packaging.