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Le saviez-vous? L'Artocarpe est le nom scientifique de l'arbre à pain!
Did you know? L'Artocarpe is the scientific name of the Breadfruit tree!

PRESS RELEASE

Young, Russian, Lana Kustova might take the reins of L'Artocarpe as from January 2016!



L'Artocarpe is to present Lana, 29, to its members in consideration for the post of Interim Chair of L'Artocarpe for the year 2016. The nomination will have to be confirmed by vote, by the members of L'Artocarpe at the next Annual General Meeting (AGM), which this year, will take place in Ford-de-France.

Although L'Artocarpe is based in Guadeloupe, in the rural town of Le Moule, the next AGM is for the first time scheduled to take place on the sister island of Martinique, to better reflect the presence of artist members living there.

Therefore on Saturday 23rd January 2016, members will decide whether or not to confirm the board's proposal to have Lana Kustova as new Chair of L'Artocarpe.

If voted, Lana Kustova will take over for Joëlle Ferly's position, held since

the launch of L'Artocarpe, back in 2009.

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Lana is Russian. She is young and currently completing her art studies in New York where she now lives. Quite an unusual profile, you might think! Her link to Guadeloupe? Heart of course! Her husband is from Guadeloupe. They both live and work in Manhattan, New York.

In her own words, Lana introduces herself and gives us a clear insight on how she views her contribution to L'Artocarpe.

I am a student at Hunter College majoring in Studio Art. I've done a bit of painting, but photography and drawing is something I've been working with for quite a while. I am residing in New York, USA, and fluent in English and Russian (native language). I can read and understand spoken French, but my speaking is rather slow. My Creole starts at "zouk se le seul medicament nous ni" and pretty much ends right there:) As of now, I have been to Guadeloupe twice because my husband's family is from the island.



I've learned about L'Artocarpe through my cousin-in-law, Joelle Ferly. Working with L'Artocarpe would be a great opportunity to learn about the functioning of a non-profit artistic collaboration platform. I am looking forward to meeting the members of the group and getting to know what drives them and how they see the future of the organization. I think that I could provide an unbiased opinion on the structure, goals, and internal processes of L'Artocarpe. I could help the collective to get in touch with the Art Department of Hunter College and potentially organize artist exchanges or course enrollment for L'Artocarpe members. I could also seek new members for the residency program.

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Besides that, I will be able to research the U.S. opportunities for L'Artocarpe to apply for grants, residencies, and other programs which would be beneficial for the collective.



I believe that a contemporary artist is a thinker and a "mystic", to quote Sol LeWitt. I strongly relate to the work, which requires visceral perception and interpretation. Tapping into the subconscious in its postmodern interpretation is a major point of interest for me. Some of my favorite artists include Mike Kelley and Ann Hamilton. I enjoy some of Mona Hatoum's work, such as "The Light at the End". I think that Felix Gonzalez-Torres's work is strikingly poignant, bold, and revealing. Besides that, I enjoy Conceptual art with a strong sense of irony, such as David Shrigley. I could also name Vito Acconci, Nan Goldin, and Diane Arbus among my favorites....

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In choosing Lana, Joëlle Ferly, the founder of L'Artocarpe decided to acknowledge three main things:

- First: her own incapacity to continue to occupy her post as Chair, while working on her personal art project. Joëlle Ferly was already too busy in 2015 and could no longer cope having lost the assistance of two volunteers. Joëlle's project should launch in September 2016.
- Second: the need for fresh blood to ensure the good running of L'Artocarpe at the pole position of artist organisations worth considering throughout the Caribbean. Cashing on 7 years of art activities, the present Chair will present the 2015 report at the next AGM, which confirms the success of L'Artocarpe as an independent platform fully run by and for artists. Members' demand was to draw more links with the US. No doubt that Lana's own network could prove to be a real asset to L'Artocarpe's members. Lana is a very dynamic person, hard-working and already geared into the mind of business. She and her husband run their own flat rental company. Lana may come with fruitful ideas as to better find a sustainable model of economy for L'Artocarpe, as suggested by the Audit report (DLA) taken in 2013. L'Artocarpe has always tried to link up with the young generation. A proposal to receive in residence, newly graduated students from the art school of Martinique, has been aborted despite the approval of the then school director, Mrs Valérie John. It is therefore hoped that Lana may have suggestions to create links between students from the US and L'Artocarpe, through art residencies.
- Third: by having someone from a different culture assessing L'Artocarpe, is rather an exciting experience, as it can only bring interesting new form of development that we may not have thought about...concludes the actual chair, Joëlle Ferly.

For those wondering whether a foreign person should be taking over the reins of L'Artocarpe, Joëlle Ferly has this to answer: "when I came back to Guadeloupe in 2008, I went to see pretty much every artists in Guadeloupe seriously engaging into their art practice. Likewise, in Martinique. I draw a very strong connection particularly with those who, like myself, were involved in doing things through their own organisation. Out of them all, very few took the time to come to visit projects run at L'Artocarpe. If they haven't found the time in 7 years, I do not see why I should

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show any concerns about keeping or not keeping L'Artocarpe for Guadeloupeans. I care much about satisfying existing members whose art practice is ready for the art market, for most of them.

Asked about the language barrier, Ferly carries on: "We were already bilingual on our website, which enabled us to attract big sponsorship in the past. Operating much more on the international level will help us to continue to run away from the national level, which tends to be very limited. I think the next step for us is to present ourselves fully in English, keeping the French only for administration purposes". Asked if making a fully English website platform might not be too deterrent, Ferly continues: "Artists are often trapped on the art market, because they minimize the importance of adopting English at a business level. Forcing members to change their habit will in the long run benefit them, as it has benefit me."

I very much like Lana's profile: having someone from Russia would no doubt intrigue at the beginning! Hopefully members and art professionals will only look at what is crucial here: her input! Up to now, her and her husband have been injected much more into L'Artocarpe in terms of advice and presence than most members themselves! That is what I am after: a person not only passionate about contemporary art, but willing to continue to bring in and to share. Unfortunately, it has taken me 7 years to come to the conclusion like most of my colleagues who run an organisation in Guadeloupe, that local artists are not very good when it comes to share information... L'Artocarpe's success relies on implementing another spirit and hopefully to restore more trust between artists. I like to see members working in pairs, over a project, going on residence with another L'Artocarpe's member, hosting one another in their place when they travel and of course, sharing opportunities between them. L'Artocarpe restricts most of its professional information (advice, opportunities and so on) to members exclusively. Artists are privileged to have a yearly meeting with our art director, who follow art practices, gives advice and recommend those to her network. Thanks to Regine Cuzin, our member Samuel Gelas spent a full year in residence in Paris at the Cité des Arts.

Today, top range curators are interested in us, ever since we have been adding Régine Cuzin, our Art Director on board. Mrs Cuzin is an independent curator who did the *Haiti* exhibition in Paris at the Grand Palais, which ended up in February 2015.

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She accepted to shoulder us as she believe in us. Other Art professionals and top artists want likewise to connect with us on projects, abroad or in Le Moule. That is the reward of seven long years of working hard on the quality of our events as well as our communication.

L'Artocarpe proves that with discipline, we can do serious work and conserve directly with top institutions.

In February 2016, L'Artocarpe shall be in Miami as the Perez Art Museum invited us to meet yet another important curator, and to take part of their symposium event. I do not know any other volunteering artist organizations out of both Martinique and Guadeloupe, that can claim having as much visibility and recognition. For the second time in a row, L'Artocarpe had one of its members who represented Guadeloupe at the Havana Biennale in May 2015.

L'Artocarpe is today quite strict on integrating new members. “some members have left to set up their own organization. I do not think they realise the amount of work involved in L'Artocarpe! To go solo is their choice, of course, says the founder of L'Artocarpe, but it is ironic to see that they choose the very moment when L'Artocarpe has so much to offer to do so. Perhaps it is a sign that they were not fully ready for the new standards that we now require from any new member wanted to join. L'Artocarpe is now known to introduce new artists and new art practices to Guadeloupe. Our members are not just artists, they can be researchers, art critics among others specialists.”

“L'Artocarpe is now focussing on planning its next move with a clearer direction”, adds Joëlle Ferly. “And today we decide to deport ourselves somehow! Let's hope the remaining members of L'Artocarpe will continue to trust my dearing and somewhat unorthodox decisions, which have led to the success of this platform.

My only focus is to keep L'Artocarpe at the forefront! I shall remain backstage to ensure that things run smoothly. And with Lana on board, that shall, no doubt be guaranteed. I can wait to see members welcoming her.”

December 2015

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