

## art-st-urban

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**art-st-urban – “art exchange – east meets west”**

**Private view of the exhibition by Min Wae Aung**

**Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2009, 17.30**

**Welcome speech by Urs Peter Müller, Director Luzerner Psychiatrie**

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- Esteemed art lovers
- Esteemed curators Gertrud and Heinz Aeschlimann
- And of course most especially: Esteemed artist Min Wae Aung

Dear guests from near and far, welcome to St. Urban. In welcoming you in this monastery we do so in the tradition of the Cistercians. Their ideal, to live in “poverty and modesty” included just as importantly the cultivation of hospitality and the development of their monastery as a meeting place, a place of inspiration where art and culture were encouraged.

Let us revive that tradition today! We are inordinately pleased to encourage the cultural exchange between Burma and Switzerland or indeed between East and West.

For their enormous hard work and commitment Heinz and Gertrud Aeschlimann have earned a heartfelt thank you.

- The beautiful paintings and luminous colours of oriental art brighten our monastery and fill it with life.
- Exhibiting these paintings of Burmese monks in a monastery has a symbolism and at the same time underlines the connection between Switzerland and Burma.
- Monasteries are closely connected with the histories of both countries.

- Of course the difference is that here in Switzerland the great age of the monasteries is past; in earlier times they did indeed play a significant role.
- Today they are still places of spirituality, contemplation and cultural development. But less so in comparison with earlier times.
- It is quite different in Burma, where the monasteries still play a very active role.

Art presents an excellent opportunity for understanding between peoples, for cultural development and for progress towards peace. Art is a medium for reconciliation, communication and world peace.

In this regard, today – this exhibition – is a great moment of international significance for the “cultural centre” of St. Urban.

- Dear guests – I hope that you will come to understand the attraction of the canton of Luzern and the monastery of St. Urban and that you experience true hospitality.
- I hope, considering these paintings and the people that we meet at this private view, that you may experience new ways of looking at things and gain new knowledge of the eastern world in terms of cultural development.
- And finally I wish for us all that art may be a bridge between religions, cultures and worlds.

Urs-Peter Müller, Director of the former monastery of St. Urban