



Artists in a bid for success with different type of draw

Syndicate hopes a secret formula will help them raise funds with lottery jackpot wins

EXCLUSIVE

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IT may be the first national artistic movement inspired entirely by cold, hard cash.

With government cuts, standstill budgets, the financial crisis and the ongoing recession, many young and established visual artists are facing a bleak financial future unless they get a lucky break.

But a new collective of UK contemporary artists – led by Glasgow-based Ellie Harrison, pictured – have decided to engineer their own luck, with a scheme which maximises their chances of winning large amounts of money on the various National Lottery draws.

To be launched nationally in July, the Syndicate, as they call themselves, will “strategically” play the lottery games using a mathematical system they believe increases the odds for the 40 players to win large amounts of money, which will then be shared equally.

The group of artists – including Harrison, who graduates from Glasgow School of Art’s esteemed MFA course this summer, John Beagles, S Mark Gubb, who is representing Wales at the Venice Biennale, and the Becks Futures-nominated Hayley Newman – will purchase 44 lines on each of the two weekly UK Lotto draws, at £1 a ticket, and 36 lines on the weekly Euro-Millions which is £2 a ticket.

Each artist joining the Syndicate is therefore required to pay £4 a week for the duration of the year, or a total of £208 a year for each artist.

Each of the 44 lines they choose will use the same five Artists’ Lottery Syndicate numbers, which are secret, with the sixth number on each line being unique to that ticket.

The numbers on a lotto ticket range from 1 to 49, so the remaining 44 numbers available will be entered on the lotto lines filled in by the artists.

This system, the Syndicate said, hugely increases the chances of winning the Lotto or Euro-Millions jackpots.

Harrison said the system means they will try to utilise the idea of luck, which has always played an

important part in artistic careers, as well as a new way to access Lottery cash which has, since its start in 1994, been a boon for the cultural sphere.

She added: “I had the idea for the Artists’ Lottery Syndicate when it appeared that the glory days of arts funding which we witnessed under New Labour were drawing to a close.

“It seemed clear that artists would have to find new ways of funding their work and surviving in what was being referred to as a new ‘age of austerity’ for the arts.

“The Artists’ Lottery Syndicate aims to be a speculative new way of acquiring funds for artists. I thought it could be a fun collective activity, which would act as a gentle critique of artist’s relationships to the economy, as well as a potential money maker.

“It is a group of artists who are still aspirational, despite this time of economic doom and gloom, and who are coming together to support each other in their attempts to hit the jackpot. We’re using a specially calculated combination of numbers to maximise our odds of winning prizes. At the end

NUMBERS GAME:

Artist Ellie Harrison.

Picture: Colin

of the year, each of the artists will receive a cheque for one-fortieth of the money we accumulate.”

The Syndicate is being run by Harrison and its other members include MFA students and artists from Birmingham, Cardiff, Fife, Glasgow, Lancaster, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Nottingham, Plymouth, Preston, Stoke-on-Trent, Suffolk and Worcestershire.

It will initially run from July 1 this year to July 2011, but may be continued if it proves to be successful.

The GSA Master course has produced artists such as the Turner Prize-winning Richard Wright, Douglas Gordon and Simon Starling.

This year its graduation show is being held at the Glue Factory and the CCA in Glasgow, and runs from June 11.

The big winners

● The odds of winning the jackpot with a single ticket are nearly 14 million to one, but for a group running 30 tickets the chances are better, at 466,666 to one. The individual prize each person takes will fall in proportion to this, however.

● Around a quarter of all jackpot wins are by syndicates, according to the National Lottery, but organisers warn would-be syndicate managers that they should sign contracts beforehand to avoid disputes.

● Issues such as whether or not to go public in the event of a win can be divisive, and even close friends are advised to set out ground rules in advance.

● Seven IT workers from Merseyside shared a £45m lottery jackpot in November last year, taking home more than £6m each, just two months after another group of nine friends, based at the Doon Inn in Blantyre, shared £4.5m.

● Five years ago a syndicate of six women at the Morrison Bowmore’s bottling plant in Glasgow each won a £2.5m share of the total £15m jackpot.

