

Draft: Global Biennial Survey 2018

Editors

Ronald Kolb, Shwetal A. Patel

Contributors

Alkisti Efthymiou, Ronald Kolb,
Shwetal A. Patel, Jörg Scheller

Interviews with

Andrea Bellini, Alexandra Blättler,
Adam Caruso, Jean Kamba,
Mi Lan, Yongwoo Lee, Julia Moritz,
Rafal Niemojewski, Alisa Prudnikova,
Qudsia Rahim, Hajnalka Somogyi,
Wato Tsereteliis, Misal Adnan Yıldız



Content

02

Editorial

Ronald Kolb, Shwetal A. Patel

09

Extracts from *How to Biennale! (The Manual)*by Shwetal A. Patel, Sunil Manghani &
Robert E. D'Souza

15

Survey review and considerations

by Ronald Kolb, Shwetal A. Patel

35

QUESTIONNAIRES with

36

Yongwoo Lee

on International Biennial Association

38

Rafal Niemojewski

on Biennial Foundation

40

Alisa Prudnikova

on Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art

43

Andrea Bellini

on Biennial of Moving Images

45

Misal Adnan Yıldız

on Istanbul Biennial

49

Julia Moritz

on dOCUMENTA (13)

51

Jean Kamba

on Biennale of Kinshasa (Yango)

53

Qudsia Rahim

on Lahore Biennale

55

Alexandra Blättler

on Klöntal Triennale

57

Wato Tsereteliis

on Tbilisi Triennial

59

Hajnalka Somogyi

on OFF-Biennale Budapest

61

Adam Caruso

on Venice Architecture Biennale

63

Mi Lanon Bi-City Biennial of Urbanism/Architecture
Shenzhen

66

**How to Take Care of Your Voice:
Exhaustion and Other Habitual
Affects When Working Within
Large-scale Art Institutions¹**

by Alkisti Efthymiou

81

Globannials or: The Sublime Is Wow

by Jörg Scheller

83

#biennale

by Shwetal A. Patel

103

Directory of Biennials

108

Imprint

Editorial

by Ronald Kolb and Shwetal A. Patel

This (draft) edition of *OnCurating* began life through a series of discussions and workshops between a group of scholars and researchers asking questions about the nature of art production today and what role, if any, biennials play within this paradigm. The underlying assumptions and factors that are generally attributed to the rise in the number of large-scale recurring exhibitions were examined and questioned and a draft-working document that may spur further research and analyses by practitioners and scholars in the field was created in the process. Some of the questions we began this project with include: Is the biennial format really a worldwide phenomenon, and if so, to what extent? Do biennials look the same everywhere because mostly world-renowned curators are in charge? To what extent is the local context important to the hundreds of biennials that operate today? What kind of audiences generally sees these kind of globally connected exhibitions and who profits in the end? Is the rise in biennials foremost a symptom of the neo-liberal economics of an unregulated art market? Are there narratives of our colonial past still at work and to what extent? Have biennials shaped exhibition making practices and the discourse surrounding contemporary art? Clearly some of these questions are beyond the scope of this initial research and require a great deal of further study and analyses and it is not our intention to provide all the answers. At this stage we simply wanted to begin studying these questions in more detail through greater empirical research into the field.

The last major survey of biennials and perhaps still the most current overview is *The Biennial Reader*¹, edited by Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal, and Solveig Øvstebø published in 2010 following the Bergen Conference of 2009. The *Biennial Reader* is an in-depth discursive and theoretical investigation into this global phenomenon, although very little empirical research was conducted at the time. Charles Green and Anthony Gardner's publication *Biennials, Triennials, and Documentas: The Exhibitions that created Contemporary Art*² from 2016 also deserves mention. The well-researched publication shows the historical development of certain biennials – from the first biennials, in the context of the Cold War until today and problematizes today's major exhibitions within this historical framework.

The recent history, display, and shift in contemporary art is increasingly observed through the lens of *biennialisation*, linked in part to the surge in the number and growth in popularity of biennials over the past two decades. Today, over three hundred large-scale, perennial exhibitions exist globally. These recurring exhibition formats have been widely considered to have come to define contemporary art and art history³. The biennial has come to be regarded as one of the most ubiquitous and celebrated models across the globe, with biennials now regularly taking place in all major continents.

Biennials operate without an authoritative, supra-national body imposing rules of functioning or common practise. There are no commonly accepted minimum standards and/or procedures. Whether as result or cause of this, the biennial as a model may in fact evade definition: the sole common thread being their cyclical, recurring and event-based features, i.e. being temporary. Collective discourse of the

biennial's apparent professionalisation has recently crystallised around the emergence of the International Biennial Association, yet the body's influence on practice has remained limited. Arguably, it is the very lack of any supra-national oversight or minimum requirements which acts as a significant driver of the propagation and multiplication of this typology in modern and contemporary exhibition-making, allowing for open interpretations, rapid evolution (especially since the 1990's) and organisational autonomy, in an increasingly globalised, standardised and interconnected cultural sphere.

Despite this, the appearance of a new 'Biennale or Biennial' elicits certain expectations with regards its characteristics and modalities. As became so clear in the initiation of the Kochi-Muziris Biennial, confusion often arises amongst the uninitiated as to how artistic activity was solidified into such an apparently prestigious format. Anyone, anywhere, can start a biennial in a diverse range and mode of avatars, though this remains somewhat underappreciated. Certainly, for a new biennial to gain international prominence, critical validation on the global biennial 'circuit' (read, Western artistic agents) is necessary. Yet there is a level of confidence apparent – in terms of definitional flexibility - in the instigation of these recurring exhibitions in such disparate and frequently dislocated sites. This suggests such post-colonial dynamics are not the inevitable parameters through which biennials can come into being. Indeed, the drive and desire to mount successive waves of these 'mega-exhibitions' has led to their becoming crucial to a reasonable definition of 'global contemporary art'. This constitutes a reversal, from geographical relations defining art practice relations, to art practice relations defining geographic relations⁴.

Over the last 20 years, intense critical and theoretical debate has surrounded this exhibition format. A growing number of scholars and researchers as well as professionals in the field have organised conferences and symposiums, and published books, journals and articles documenting their popularity and growth, as well as their increasing prominence within the discourse of a 'global' history of contemporary art and culture (Enwezor, 2003). In concert with this, several organisations have sought to provide international thought leadership in the field. Broadly speaking, two primary positions have emerged. One, as argued by art historians Charles Green and Anthony Gardener, purports that biennials' enduring popularity may be attributable to their becoming 'structural' to the 'artworld'. They thus become essential to negotiating 'contingencies' and urgencies which in turn lead to forms of 'contemporaneity' and 'world-making'. In contrast, the Nigerian poet and curator Okwui Enwezor – in the vein of Guy Debord – has posited that biennials (as well as museums, commercial galleries, fairs, academies and residencies) result from the neoliberal market logic of 'spectacular capitalism.' I would suggest that these positions are not mutually exclusive. Their elision may in fact elucidate the enduring appeal of biennial-making in the contemporary age. Despite the spectacular desirability of the biennial format, new biennials often reject institutional hallmarks or fixed parameters and orthodox structures, using precarity as a means of allure, sustenance and drive. That new museums of contemporary art such as London's Tate Modern have built multiuse spaces that mimic the malleability and nimbleness of biennials in their master plans is a telling result of this new institutionalism and biennial mantra in the international artworld.

Throughout this report, we will place emphasis on biennials within the visual arts paradigm, though biennials of architecture, design, graphics, photography, music, dance and other disciplines have also flourished. Biennials have arguably emerged as one of the key markers and drivers of modern exhibition-making and are increasingly important for an understanding of post-war, late 20th century, and early 21st century art history⁵. If museums and gallery exhibitions have for the past century been ‘the medium through which most art becomes known’, then today it is perhaps the biennial exhibition that is the ‘medium’ through which new forms of art and artistic practice are introduced⁶. Despite increases in intercultural dialogue and understanding that have emerged in the field, and the rising number of visitors and audiences that encounter contemporary art through biennials and related formats, there is a growing sense of creeping homogeneity and normalisation. If, arguably, the art history of the early twentieth century was written in Moscow, Paris, Zurich, New York and London (i.e. Europe and America), then the art history of the late twentieth and early twenty first century has also been written in cities including São Paulo, Havana, Gwangju, Istanbul, Johannesburg, Sharjah and Kochi, as well as the traditional power centres of Europe and America.

Given the vast amount of discursive and theoretical literature related to the field, we felt that an empirical analyses of global biennials may help inform trends and decipher tropes that have emerged as the format has proliferated around the world. Therefore, unlike previous art-historical studies into biennials, our goal with this project was to primarily conduct an empirical study on biennials, hopefully giving rise to a new set of questions and considerations. Alongside the empirical research, we conducted a series of interviews with curators, organisers and practitioners in the field to get a better understanding of the motivations and rationale behind their work.

We are aware that our research reflects a certain point in time and that the field is rapidly evolving. Some biennials may have ceased to exist since May 2018, whilst new ones may have appeared. Despite this flux, we all strongly felt that this research was both timely and could be helpful in understanding what was going on in this fecund and fast-moving global scene. We therefore consider the outcomes of this research as a starting point for our wider investigations, and we hope it will develop over time, with a broader set of data points, including more in-depth interviews and analyses from different regions around the world. We also hope that others may take some aspects of this research and develop areas that we either missed or did not have sufficient time and resources to pursue for this current edition of OnCurating.

Survey

We began this survey by creating data points for approximately 300 biennials we found in existence. On the one hand—we hope—you can observe the sheer increase in the number of biennials over time, and on the other, you can compare certain regions geographically and draw new inferences from the data we have captured.

In addition to biennials, we also considered annuals, triennials (held every three years), quadrennials (held every four years), documenta (held every five years), and even Skulptur Projekte Münster (held every ten years) as recurrent exhibition formats of contemporary art. We collectively refer to these forms of exhibitions as ‘biennials’, though their periodicity may vary. We have not, however, included a number of yearly recurring festivals of film, theatre, dance and other forms in our

research. We hope that this form of selection focuses our research to the contemporary art field and more acutely towards the nature of contemporary art production today. We are primarily interested in the question of what is happening to art production within this context of global biennialisation. It could be argued that the kind of art being propagated curatorially, including how art and art history are taught around the world, has increasingly homogenised and is converging to singularity. Biennials may therefore form part of a larger hegemonic system of influence and that is why we are especially interested in conducting this research at a time of hyper-globalization and increasing digital connectivity.

The basic parameters for our data points are defined below.

1. Country of Origin - In which country does the biennial take place?

Note: There are a few biennials that take place in more than one country and some countries that are not fully formed or internationally recognised nation states.

2. Location of Biennial - Where is the biennial located relative to each country's geopolitical setting: i.e. capital city, second-tier city, and peripheral locations.

3. Founding Year of Biennial - In which year was the biennial founded?

4. Main Discipline of the Biennial - Architecture, design, film, sculpture, etc.

5. Cycles and periodicity – What is the cycle and periodicity of the biennial?

6. Frequency of Biennial – Have these biennials sustained their cycles?

7. Founding Team – Who founded or initiated the biennial?

8. Funding of biennial – Who primarily funds the biennial?

Note: Although most of the biennials we surveyed display their sponsors and partners transparently, we could not find all of the relevant information and hence we could not provide sufficient data at this stage.

9. Venues – Are the biennials held primarily in permanent, temporary, or outdoor venues?

10. Digital Presence – Does the biennial have a website and is the biennial active on social media?

The vast majority of biennials we surveyed all seem to display the urge to be visible to a worldwide Internet audience and for most of the data points we surveyed, we were able to find the relevant information online. Although biennials tend to be very distinct from each other, and comparing biennials is a fraught and complicated task (not only in a cultural and historical context, but also in their embeddedness in a specific society and economy), most organisations displayed the need for connecting and disseminating their activities and output to a global Internet audience.

This “will to globality,” as Okwui Enwezor puts it, may have many different motives: displaying cultural prowess and soft power (often initiated by the government as a self-representation of a country/city/regional identity), or raising awareness in a globalized art market (i.e. establishing artists and their markets), or bringing together local and international artists on a common platform. These motives lead one to assume that biennials aspire to be visible and relevant to local, regional and global audiences – if this may be possible at all.

At this point, we should also address the fact that although we proofed our research at least twice, we cannot guarantee that all the information provided is completely accurate. We are confident that the data is approximately accurate, and we hope that peers and scholars in the field can help us fill in the gaps and make corrections where possible.

Disclaimer

The editors of OnCurating have undertaken this research to enhance our understanding about the diverse range, geographical spread and formats of biennial-type exhibitions operating in the world today and to provide information about their location, founding bodies and funding sources amongst other measurable parameters. The research was carried out with the help of students and faculty at the Postgraduate Programme in Curating at the Zurich University of the Arts, Switzerland and we have been limited by time and resources to conduct more in-depth research at this stage. We hope this work will spur others to continue probing and asking new questions about the field, as it grows in size and importance in the coming years.

Our goal from the outset was to keep the information presented within this draft edition of OnCurating as timely and as accurate as possible. If errors are brought to our attention, we will try to correct them. The research is by no means comprehensive, complete, accurate or up to date; it is simply what we could find through sources such as Biennialfoundation.org, a non-profit organisation that primarily exists online. The results of our survey are primarily meant to be of a general nature and are not intended to address the specific circumstances of any particular biennial or organising entity.

It has been our goal to minimize errors caused by our group research methods and by using online sources, however some data and information in this edition may have been sourced from sites that are not error-free and we cannot guarantee that our analyses will not be compromised by such errors.

The Biennial Foundation, a primary source for the list of international biennials in existence, does not accept any responsibility in connection with the content presented in this draft edition of OnCurating. We therefore urge scholars, researchers and journalists to use the information presented here only as a broad indication of trends and not as a definitive survey. We urge caution when directly citing the findings of this research, as the data presented is time, definition and context specific and may invite misinterpretation. The editors and publishers accept no responsibility or liability whatsoever with regard to the information contained within this draft edition and recommend independent verification of all data points presented.

Questionnaires

In addition to the empirical analyses and surveys, we developed a questionnaires which was sent to people working (or having worked on) biennials in different positions in different parts of the world. We want to understand their motivations, learn about their working conditions and other specific insights into how their biennial functions and sustains itself. We all strongly feel that it is one thing to seek information related to general empirical data, but another to be “inside” an operating structure such as one that establishes and sustains a biennial project. We are grateful to these interviewees and their willingness to contribute their time and share their insights with us for this survey.

In the Questionnaires section, you will find short interviews (a questionnaire based on seven questions) from **Julia Moritz** on dOCUMENTA (13) (conducted by **Camille Regli**); **Mi Lan** on the Bi-City Biennial of Urbanism/Architecture Shen-

zhen (conducted by **Christine Kaiser**); **Wato Tsereteliis** on the Tbilisi Triennial (conducted by **Elena Setzer**); **Adam Caruso** on the Venice Architecture Biennale and **Andrea Bellini** on the Biennial of Moving Images (conducted by **Kristina Grigorjeva**); **Jean Kamba** on the Biennale of Kinshasa (Yango) (conducted by **Nkule Mabaso**); **Adnan Yildiz** on the Istanbul Biennial (2010), **Alisa Prudnikova** on the Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art, **Alexandra Blättler** on the Klöntal Triennale, and **Hajnalka Somogyi** on the OFF-Biennale Budapest (conducted by **Ronald Kolb**); and **Yongwoo Lee** on the International Biennial Association, **Qudsia Rahim** on the Lahore Biennale, and **Rafal Niemojewski** on the Biennial Foundation (conducted by **Shwetal A. Patel**).

Collaborative research

The impetus for this issue of OnCurating was initiated by **Shwetal A. Patel**, PhD scholar at Winchester School of Art, and conceptualized with the help of **Damian Christinger**, **Ronald Kolb**, and **Dorothee Richter** from the Zurich University of the Arts, ZHdK. The research and articles were planned and compiled by **Shwetal A. Patel** and **Ronald Kolb**, with the help of students and faculty following two workshops at the Postgraduate Programme in Curating (www.curating.org), held on March 24 and April 14, 2018 in Zurich.

Field work and research was carried out by ZHdK students, including **Christine Kaiser**, **Kristina Grigorjeva**, **Oliver Rico**, **Camille Regli**, **Giovanna Bragaglia**, **Miwa Negoro**, **Franziska Herren**, **Heike Biechteler**, **Elena Setzer**, **Fabienne Ott**, **Swati Prasad**, **Yvonne Apiyo Brändle-Amolo**, **Ella Krivanek**, **Paul Toraiwa**, **Niyara Useinova**, **Rui Yuan**, and assistant to the programme **Max Heinrich**.

Additionally we would also like to thank Swati Prasad for helping with the design of the diagrams and graphs from the data we gathered—this has made it much simpler to make comparisons across parameters and geographical locations.

Notes

1 Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal, Solveig Øvstebø. eds., *The Biennial Reader* (Hatje Cantz, Bergen Konsthall, 2010). Text(s) by Milena M. Hoegsberg, Jakouba Konaté, Lawrence Alloway, Caroline A. Jones, Daniel Buren, Carlos Basualdo, Okwui Enwezor, Ranjit Hoskote, Gerardo Mosquera, Rafal Niemojewski u.a., John Clark, Bruce Ferguson. The Biennial Reader is an anthology of essays on the global phenomenon of art biennials and includes seminal republished texts collected from around the world, as well as newly commissioned contributions from the leading scholars, curators, critics, and thinkers of biennials.

2 Anthony Gardner and Charles Green, *Biennials, Triennials, and Documenta: The Exhibitions that Created Contemporary Art*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2016

3 Ibid, p. 3

4 Ibid, p. 3

5 W. B. Ferguson, R Greenberg and S Nairne (1996) “Mapping International Exhibitions” in Greenberg, Reesa, Bruce Ferguson and Sandy Nairne, (eds.) *Thinking About Exhibitions*, London & New York: Routledge.

6 Ibid, p. 2

Shwetal A. Patel is a founding team member of Kochi-Muziris Biennale (India) and PhD scholar at the Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton.

Ronald Kolb works as a designer (www.biotop3000.de), lecturer, and filmmaker in Stuttgart and Zurich. He studied Visual Communications (MA) at Merz Akademie, University of Applied Arts, Design and Media, Stuttgart, Germany and runs a design and research studio with an emphasis on publications and web design i.e. for Kunststiftung Baden-Württemberg, ifa (Institut for Foreign Affairs, Germany), Donaueschinger Musiktage, Badischer Kunstverein, ZKM. He was an Associate Professor at Merz Akademie, University of Applied Arts, Design and Media from 2009–2015 and is now Scientific Researcher at the Postgraduate Programme in Curating, ZHdK. He is Co-Publisher of the web journal On-Curating.org and honorary vice chairman of Künstlerhaus Stuttgart since 2014.

He is PHD scholar of PHD in Practice in Curating, a cooperation of ZHDK and University of Reading, supported by swissuniversities.

Extracts from *How to Biennale!* *(The Manual)*

by Shwetal A. Patel, Sunil Manghani &
Robert E. D'Souza

Biennales, of which today there are hundreds around the world, have become an important format or device for taking art out of the box, placing it in new contexts and reaching new audiences. “Biennial” is derived from the Latin word *biennium*, which designates a period of two years. Triennials are held every three years, quadriennials every four years. This framework can be applied not only to art exhibitions, but also to festivals and even conferences. Due to the influence of the first, most well-known exhibition of its kind, the Biennale di Venezia [Venice Biennale], the term is often used to refer to exhibitions of the visual arts – later it was also applied to film, music and architecture biennials when these were introduced in Venice and in São Paulo. When we use the term ‘biennial’ we are referring to a range of periodicities and formats that includes triennials, quadriennials and other recurring exhibitions.

This is how the art critic Sabine B. Vogel introduces the term in her book *Biennials – Art on a Global Scale*. Like her, we adopt the word ‘Biennale’ as an umbrella term, so allowing us to encompass a wide and heterogeneous range of visual art exhibitions, or more broadly visual art events. There is a history to biennales, even we might say a ‘biennale culture’, but equally they represent structures of constant change and adaptation.

The many and wonderful galleries and museums at our disposal around the world give access to all sorts of artworks, histories and archives. Rooted in the practices of the Enlightenment, which spurred not only our thirst for knowledge, but also the methods for unlocking, maintaining and regulating it, the ‘collections’ of today’s museums offer vital resource, helping us to relate to cultures, ideas and history; to maintain our cultural heritage; and simply to take pleasure and inspiration. Museums and galleries have come to be seen as important institutions within the broader fabric of our ‘public sphere’ – which is to suggest of a site or sites where we can think freely, exchange ideas and raise questions and issues. Yet, equally, it has long been known that the art world can be elitist, exclusionary and ‘difficult’ to understand. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, for example, has demonstrated how not only can we refer to economic capital, but also social and cultural capital. In his well-known book, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (first published in French in 1979), he argues that those with high ‘cultural capital’ are most likely those who determine the ‘tastes’ of society, which in turn can quickly exclude those with lower cultural capital (so prompting a self-perpetuating cycle of privilege). Such capital derives from non-financial social assets, such as education and social mobility. Regardless of whether or not two people may have the economic means to enter a museum, which can be made free to enter, for example, there is also required a set of habits and understanding that allow someone to feel able to enter such a space. Bourdieu argued how different educational backgrounds altered individual perceptions of art, with some expecting objects to ‘fulfill a function’ and others attuned to the idea of an aesthetic realm beyond everyday life. The formation of ‘dominant’ tastes, according to Bourdieu, amounted to ‘symbolic violence’, or a form of hegemonic power. Not only is the formation of good tastes a privilege, but also the

acquisition of good taste is a subtle means of dominance, ensuring the status quo. In Marxist terms, for example, Bourdieu argued that ‘the working-class “aesthetic” is a dominated aesthetic, which is constantly obliged to define itself in terms of the dominant aesthetics’ of the ruling class. Despite the fact his work relates back to empirical research conducted during the 1960s, the book, *Distinction*, according to the International Sociological Association, remains one of the ten most important sociology books of the 20th century. His work, and similar studies that followed, prompted a great deal of debate and controversy about the provisions of arts in society and the need for ‘access’ that goes well beyond simple economic considerations, but rather concerns deeper barriers based upon social and cultural grounds.

Today, biennales have arguably emerged as one of the key markers and drivers of contemporary exhibition-making, which by equal measure can be said to fall into the trap of the few setting trends and tastes for the many, as well as opening up not only new audiences for contemporary visual art, but also the very conditions in which we come to view art. If museums and gallery exhibitions have for the past century been the medium through which we access and receive art, then today it is perhaps the biennale exhibition that is the ‘medium’ through which new forms of art and artistic practice are introduced. The shift in influence from museum to biennale develops slowly in post-war Europe, shortly followed by a ‘second wave’ of biennales outside of Europe, notably with the advent of the São Paulo Biennial founded in 1951. During this period of economic growth and globalisation, certainly through to the 1960’s, artists were primarily shown in museums and galleries. Works were created in the knowledge that they would be displayed, consumed and contextualised in such institutional spaces. Yet, in parallel to this growing institutionalism of modern art, the avant-garde were becoming restless within the confines of the museum space and began to break away from ‘the static atmosphere of the museum’ by organising their own ‘happenings and concerns’. Speaking in 1971, Harold Szeeman, one of the first self-declared ‘independent curators’, observed that artists were working with a new purpose, principally engaging with social and political concerns. Szeeman stated (somewhat prophetically at the time) that ‘artists are no longer interested in getting into the museum, but want to conduct their activities on a wider stage, for example the municipality’. Today, with well over 100 biennales taking place across the world in any given year, we have become ever more familiar with this format. As Chris McAuliffe suggests in this ‘Explainer: what is a biennale?’ in *The Conversation*, ‘chances are you’ve heard of an art biennale, even if you haven’t visited one’. He goes on to outline the phenomenon as follows:

Biennales are large-scale exhibitions of contemporary art, named for their host city and typically managed by a combination of public art museums, government agencies and philanthropic supporters. As for the two- or three-year cycle, that’s simply a reflection of the time required to organise a large exhibition. Originally more of a specialised, art-world affair, biennales now figure in the cultural menu supported by state and local government tourism agencies. A successful biennale will draw tens, even hundreds of thousands of visitors.

McAuliffe goes on to suggest of the emotive powers of the biennale format: Because each biennale is a brief, one-off event (usually of about 12 week’s duration), visitation is driven by an intensive promotional ‘call to action’. Increasingly marketing strategies focus on emotive effects, emphasising the biennale as an ‘experience’ rather than as a formal cultural affair. [...] The titles of the 2014 Adelaide Biennial — ‘Dark Heart’ — and Biennale of Sydney — ‘You Imagine What You Desire’ — evoke emotional

states. The curator of the first promises ‘a moving experience’ and the second, ‘splendor and rapture’. Canny organisers amplify these emotional effects with unusual venues (abandoned factories are a favourite), hands-on and interactive art works, and the placement of striking sculptures or installations in familiar public spaces.

Systemisation of Culture

In the context of the Second World War, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno’s ‘Dialectic of Enlightenment’ (1944), offered its prophetic warning as to the damage wrought by unchecked ‘intellectual standardization’ and the ‘systemisation of culture’ upon mass society. The oppression that comes through what they termed the ‘culture industry’ is based on those very schemes it proposes and affirms as a source of freedom, resulting in ‘a canon of synthetically produced models of behaviour’. Since the time of their writing the critical significance of the ‘culture industry’ has only escalated, and always despite the apparent attempts of art to escape its incorporation. Ever in the shadow of this pessimistic prognosis, we might be forgiven for thinking every biennale, every art event, is just one of many, and only more of the same. Indeed, how can anyone operating within these sites of practice (which require a great deal of organisation, finance and partnerships) resist the clutches of standardisation and homogenisation?

If, in our contemporary, global circumstance, artistic practice is to be allowed to develop freely, to experiment and deviate from the norm, we must explore how collective, large-scale modes of operation might resist the self-propagating structures and forces of the culture industry, with its capitalist, imperialist antecedents. To consider, then, how we might be allowed to thrive on chaos, to allow for ‘better failure’ and uncertainty, with a view to produce the sublime, the spiritual and the transformational. We want to produce art, not institutions; to exchange, not transmit. And, if biennales are to ‘matter’ (to continue to recur materially, and to be of value to us socially and culturally) their mode of practice must be understood and indeed practiced. Rather than feel we must fulfil some pre-defined expectation or adopt some kind of ‘model’ of practice, we should look to who we are, where we are and who we want to be with, in order to make, curate and view art. Art is at its best when it is different and subversive, when it challenges the ‘now’ and when it offers the potential of resistance.

Biennial Fever

The first Biennale was held in Italy, the Venice Biennale, which was established in 1893 by the Venetian City Council. However, this was an exhibition of Italian Art only, in celebration of the silver anniversary of King Umberto I. It was a year later the council decreed to adopt an invitation system, to introduce the work of foreign artists too, with the first proper international Biennale in Venice being opened in April 1895, attracting up to 224,000 visitors. The event has been held ever since, every two years.

Subsequent biennales included the Corcoran Biennial in Washington in 1907 and the Whitney Biennial in New York in 1932, though these again had only a national focus. It was not until 1951 that the original, international model of the Venice Biennale was adopted again with the São Paulo Biennale in Brazil. Since then, the emergence of an apparent biennale model has proliferated, having now been popularised and multiplied around the world, redefining the political-economics and aesthetics of so called ‘international art’. Today, more than three hundred biennials exist in diverse (and often unexpected) locations. The format’s growth in the second half of the 20th

century, as exemplified by the creation of what has been termed ‘second wave’ biennales (from the 1951 Bienal de São Paulo to the 1968 Triennale India and the Third Bienal de la Habana in 1984), led to a ‘biennale boom’ in the 1990s with a marked increase in the creation of new biennales. In particular, at the turn of the new millennium, biennales has been appearing across the developing world, or what is termed as the global South by a generation of scholars invested in post-colonial, globalisation and developmental discourses.

Although some important biennales, such as in Tokyo (1951), Paris (1959), Johannesburg (1995) and Melbourne (1999), are now defunct, many new biennales have sustained, even if missing some editions, or vastly reconfiguring in scale, reach and scope. As Grandal Montero has argued, the success and longevity of the format is attributable to the ‘versatility, resilience and high degree of popularity’ of biennales, which hold the promise of things to come – in short the promise of the new. In just one year, Havana and three other new biennials were launched in 1984, and by the mid-1990s more than 60 were in existence, mostly in cities, and represented in all continents. Overall, the number of new biennials, triennials and the like have stayed stable and are still rising today, with newly created events vastly outnumbering discontinued ones.

Overall, then, biennales, and other recurring art events with close associations with specific sites and audiences, typically appear to strive for a balance between localism and globalism, artistic and cultural agency and cross-cultural difference, whilst asserting cultural prowess and soft power on the international stage. Importantly, the global proliferation of biennales has irrevocably challenged the ‘predominance of certain EuroAmerican art centres, such as Paris and New York – not as markets, but as [sole] art-producing localities’. This is how Terry Smith describes the situation in his essay ‘Biennials Within The Contemporary Composition’. Biennials can even appear as an antidote to severe social and political concerns. The first Colombo biennale in Sri Lanka, in 2009, for example, was themed in direct response to and indeed characterised by artists coming together in the immediate situation after the civil war. Biennales, then, have been related to ameliorating crises of post-conflict societies, as well as reviving depressed economic regions, which not only places one on the ‘global art map’ but also improves property prices, encourages inward investment for job creation and attracts talent and fosters innovation.

However, for all of the positive narratives we can attribute to biennales, there are significant issues at stake. The globalisation of the artworld is frequently seen in terms of postmodern relativism that sustained democratisation through the pluralisation of the art scene. As the art historian Charlotte Bydler has articulated in her dissertation, ‘The Global Art World, Inc.’, art and artists have long held a fascination and love affair with travel, cosmopolitanism and internationalism. Our cosmopolitan desires are bound up with an Enlightenment fascination with ‘other worlds’ and the promise of universality. International biennales have arguably become ‘spectacular arenas’ for the intersection of internationalism and nationalism. In the essay ‘The Black Box’, (in Documenta_11 Platform 5 exhibition catalogue, 2002), Okwui Enwezor argues that globalisation is linked to a ‘double move’ of post-coloniality: on the one hand it embodies a liberating strategy of decolonisation, while on the other it ‘exceeds the borders of the former colonized world to lay claim to the modernized, metropolitan world of empire by making empire’s former “other” visible and present at all times, either through the media or through mediatory, spectatorial, and carnivalesque relations of language, communication, images, contact, and resistance within the

everyday'. Enwezor goes on to argue that postcoloniality must at all times be distinguished from postmodernism, arguing that while postmodernism was preoccupied with 'relativizing historical transformations and contesting the lapses and prejudices of epistemological grand narratives, postcoloniality does the obverse, seeking instead to sublimate and replace all grand narratives through new ethical demands on modes of historical interpretation'.

Nonetheless, today, the proliferation of events around the world signals various shifts in the 'centres' of the art-world. Made clear, for example, in the number and diversity of locations hosting biennials, where an overwhelmingly local agenda is routinely intersected with the global. Although, of course, rather than decentralising the art world, globalisation may in fact further cement Western art history's hegemony, if the direction of the communication (and assimilation) is one way. Indeed, the 'globalisation of the art world' in recent years has also led to a growing sense of homogenisation in art production and discourse, supported by an ever growing 'art market' and itinerant globe trotting artists, cultural tourists, cultural producers, curators, corporate sponsors and media personnel. In coordination with rapidly expanding markets, fuelled through rampant and unregulated capitalism or the 'hegemony of industrial capitalism', standardisations have similarly spread across the art world with veracity and often scant concern for local and regional site-specificities. We must ask ourselves – not least in terms of the kinds of events we may wish to establish and propagate – do we risk a certain 'flattening' of contemporary visual art and its related discourses? If so, what can we do to mitigate homogenising forces? French curator and art critic, Nicolas Bourriaud, has argued that in fact a newly reconfigured modernity, which he labels 'altermodernity', has emerged as a direct result of globalisation. He posits that increased communication, travel and migration are affecting the way we live, and that a focus upon multiculturalism and identity concerns are being overtaken by creolisation and the changing 'public sphere'. He asserts that this new universalism is based on translations, and that today's art can potentially explore the 'bonds that text and image, time and space, weave between themselves'. In Bourriaud's world-view, artists are 'increasingly traversing myriad cultural landscapes saturated with signs to create new pathways between multiple formats of expression and communication', providing ascent to the emergence of a global 'altermodernity'.

Writing in 1993, at the beginning of the (global south-oriented) 'biennale boom', Thomas McEvelley suggested the postmodern shift of emphasis from 'centres' to 'margins', meant that any city could act as an international hub. As such, biennales in these cities could offer new audiences and cultural functions of their own. In the case of Triennale India of 1968, for example, he suggests that many artists of that era came to accept their multicultural heritage, and were interested in forging cooperation between East and West through incorporating elements of the other without losing a sense of selfhood. To quote the father of the Indian nation state, M.K Gandhi: 'I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any'.

It is observable that, increasingly, museums and art institutions around the world tend to have uniform appearances in their layout and administrative faculties – and in certain regards with the art that is displayed. Largely, in format and content alike, they cater to and follow 'Western' examples. Many biennales, like art fairs, can be said to be very similar too. Yet, equally the staging of biennales and other art events, which are

both defined by local circumstances and interest, yet also precarious and temporal, have allowed different propensities and perspectives to prevail.

Biennales have been extremely successful in the last 120 years or so and more recently since the 1990's in producing and spreading awareness about art and engaging new audiences around the world. A number of mutations and divergent strands within 'biennial culture' and its discourses have emerged more recently. This is most apparent since the 1980's and the growth in global South biennales. A period which saw the emergence of a spate of new host cities in the Southern hemisphere and developing world, including, Havana (1984), Istanbul (1987), and latterly in the 1990's, Dak'Art in Dakar, (1990), Sharjah (1993), Shanghai (1994) and Gwangju (1995). According to research conducted by Grandal Montero, the majority of biennales, as of 2011, were still located in Europe (50+), followed by Asia (20+) and then the Americas (20+). What is revealing is the locus of growth in recent years being firmly in Asia, where numerous examples of high-profile new biennales have been created since the mid-1990s (Gwangju, Shanghai, Busan, Guangzhou, Beijing, Singapore), following wider economic and political changes. More recently instigated biennales exist in various stages of gestation and development in cities across Asia, include those in Kochi-Muziris (2012), Yinchuan (2016), Lahore (2017), Karachi (2017) and Srinager (2018). In the United Kingdom there are over 12 biennale-style events in existence, which points to the vitality of the art scene and its geographical spread into the provinces and sites outside of London (which typically dominates the art scene).

Given this complex, global phenomenon and its impact and influence on taste and culture more broadly, a closer empirical analysis of international biennials is both urgent and timely.

Shwetal A. Patel is a founding team member of Kochi-Muziris Biennale (India) and PhD scholar at the Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton.

Sunil Manghani is Professor of Theory, Practice & Critique and Deputy Head of School, Director of Research & Enterprise at Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton.

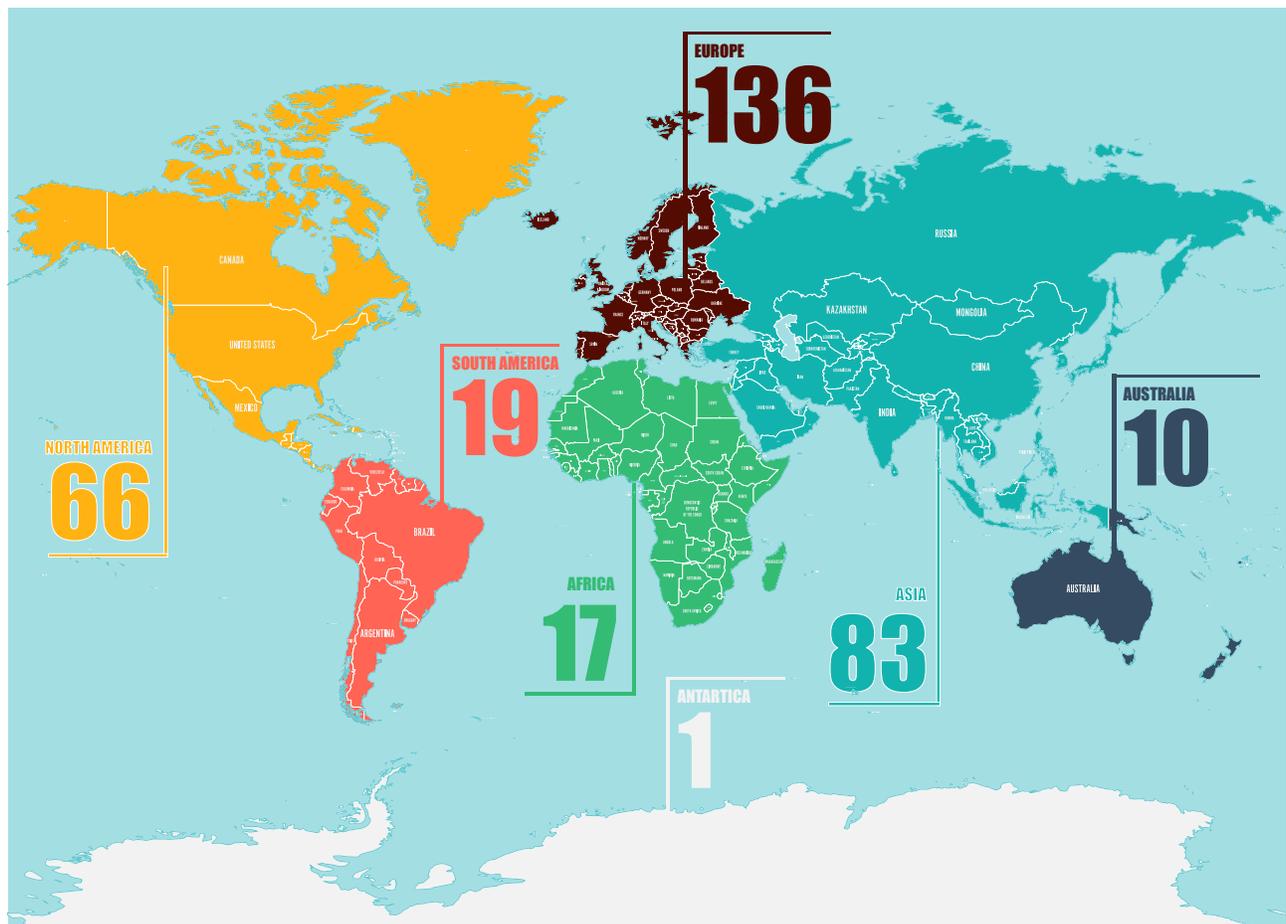
Professor Robert D'Souza is Head of Winchester School of Art at the University of Southampton. Ed is a designer, an artist and an academic whose practice brings together both the theoretical and contextual thinking about design and art.

Survey review and considerations

by Ronald Kolb, Shwetal A. Patel

For this research we primarily examined the websites of the Biennial Foundation (<http://www.biennialfoundation.org/home/biennial-map/>) and International Biennial Association (<http://www.biennialassociation.org/periodic-art-events/>), with only a few new biennials added to our list. From these sources we compiled a list of 316 biennial-type events in the contemporary arts, though perhaps many more exist for other fields that we did not include for this survey. We are aware that though there may have been some we missed and even a few that have been created since this research was conducted in April and May 2018, the list is as accurate as possible within our limited time and resources.

Of the total 316 biennial we researched, we found that most are taking place in Europe (136), whilst Asia (82) has the second highest number, followed by North America (66), South America (19), Africa (17), Australia (10), and even one new biennial planned to take place in the Antarctic.

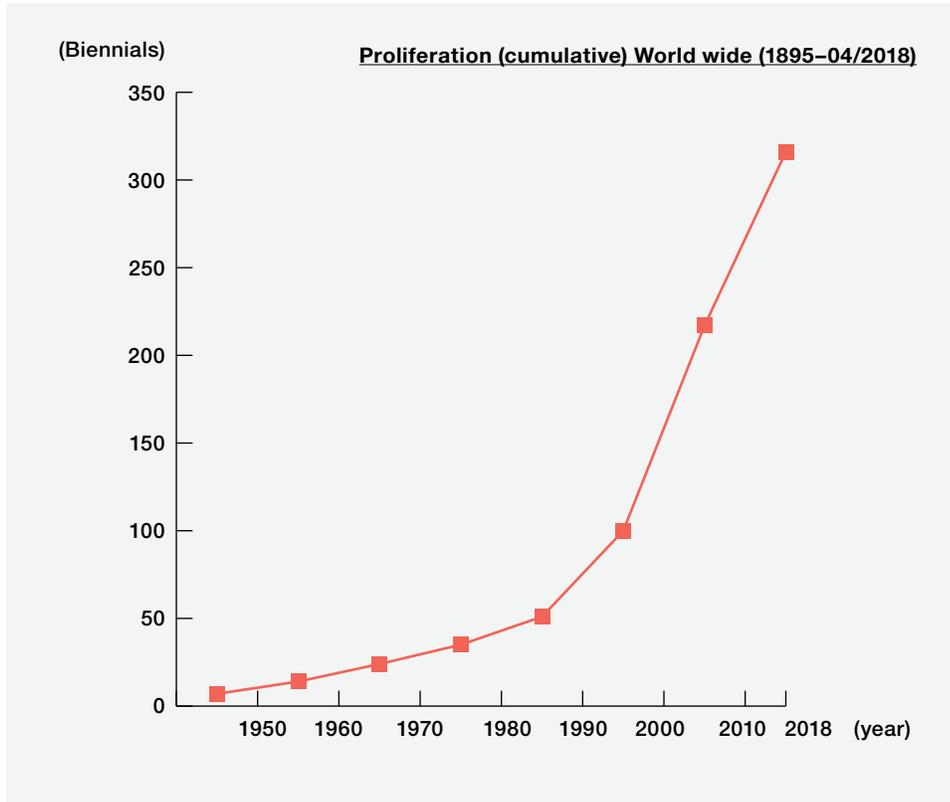


Distribution of Biennials on continents. Note: A few countries belong to two continents.

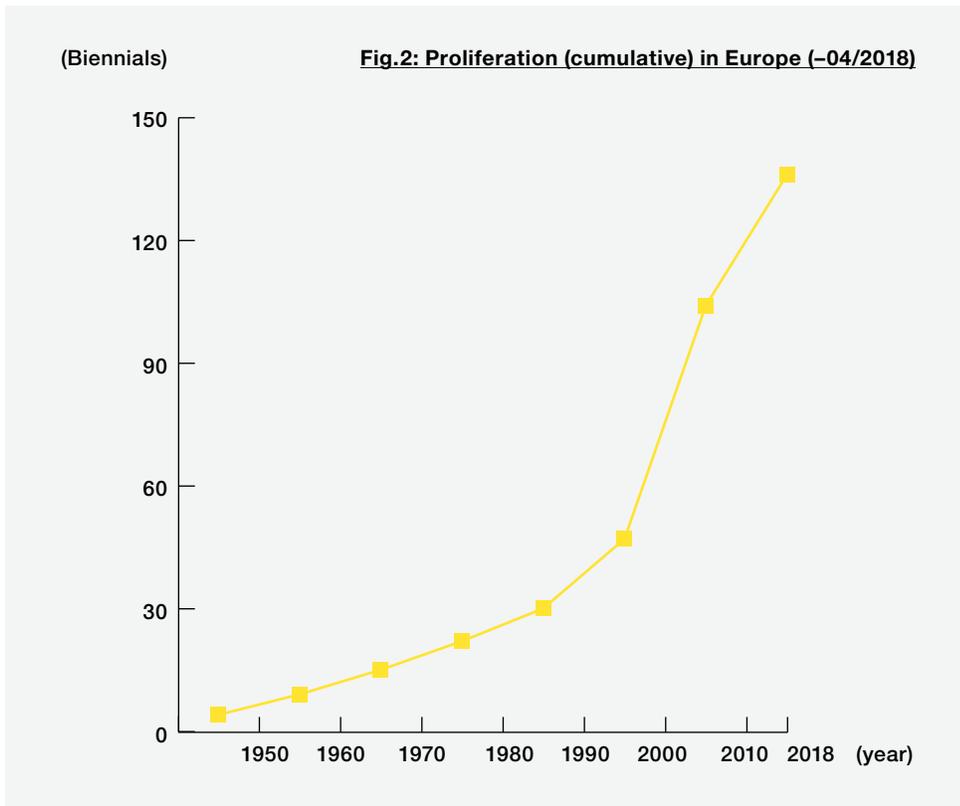
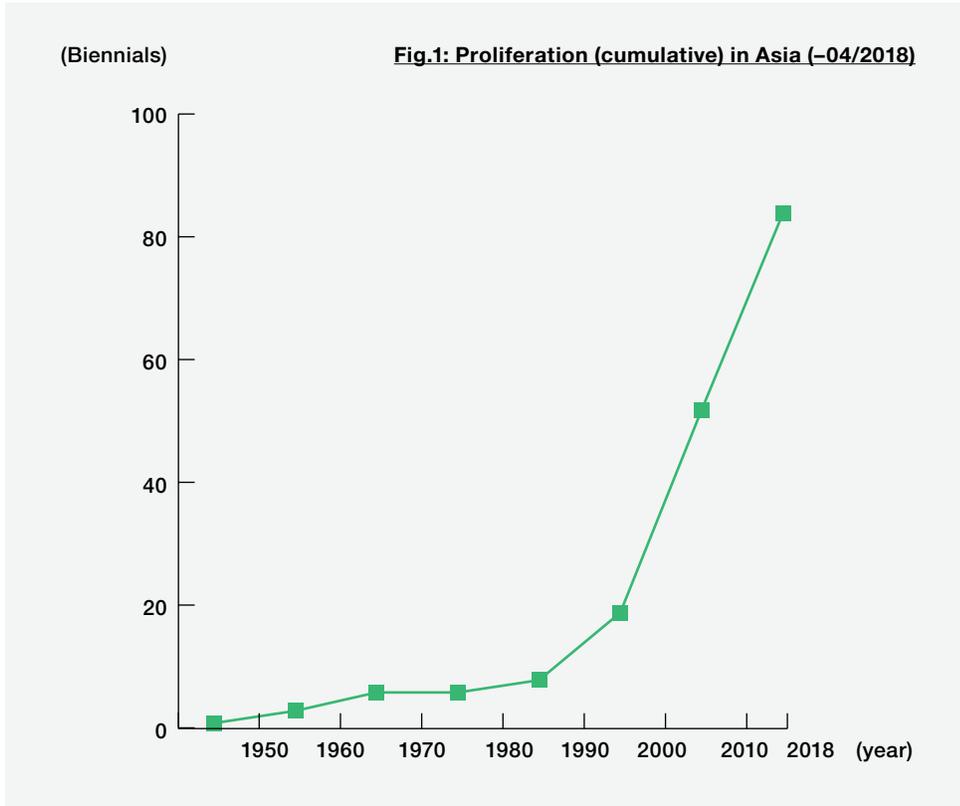
The world’s first biennial of art took place in Venice and it seems to have been the catalyst for the growth in biennials not just in Europe, but also around the world. In per capita terms, Europe also has the highest density of biennials, with Latvia launching its first biennial in June 2018. This continued popularity illustrates the enduring appeal of the format. The high number of biennials in Europe may be linked to not only the popularity of the format, but also due to the access in funding and other resources required to stage these often large-scale and expensive exhibitions on a regular basis.

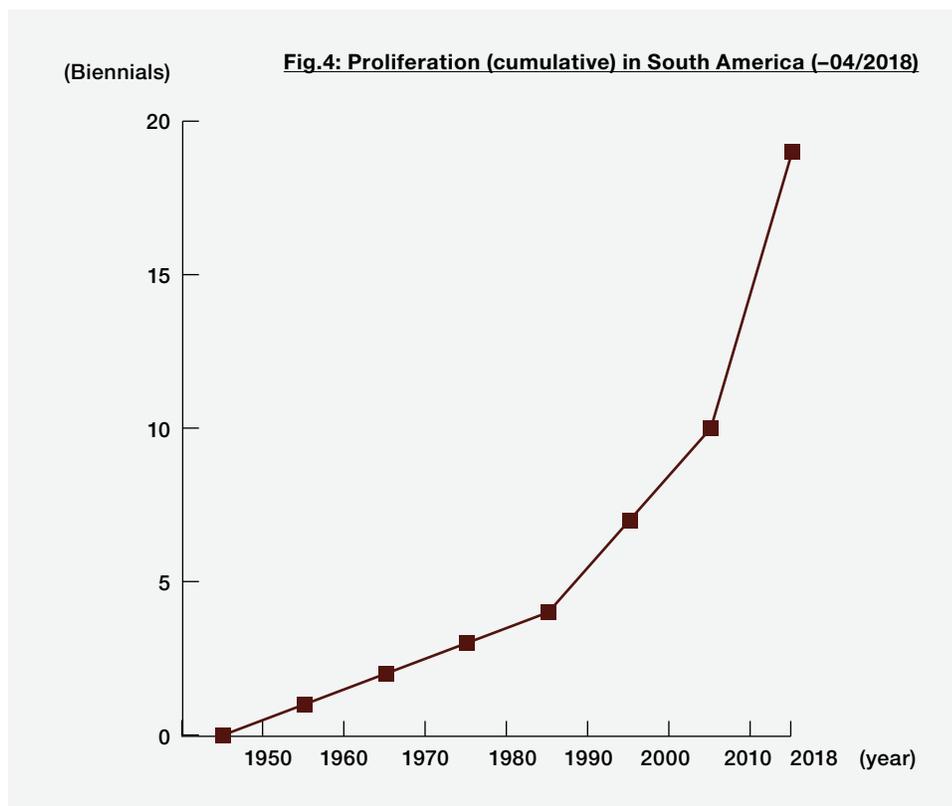
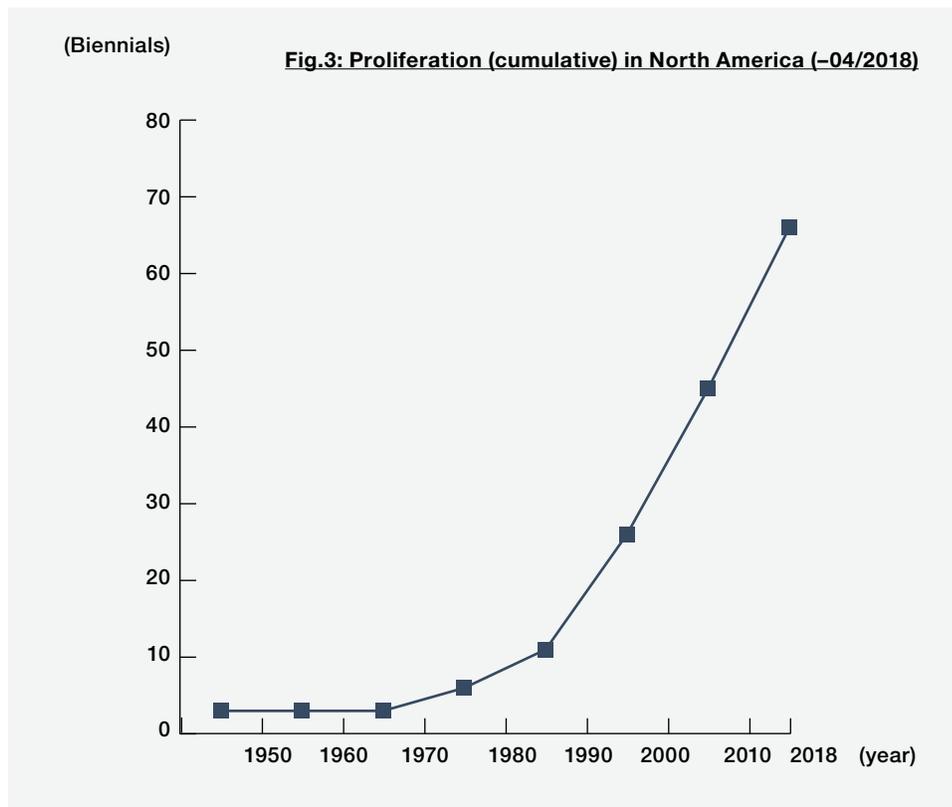
Proliferation of Biennales Worldwide

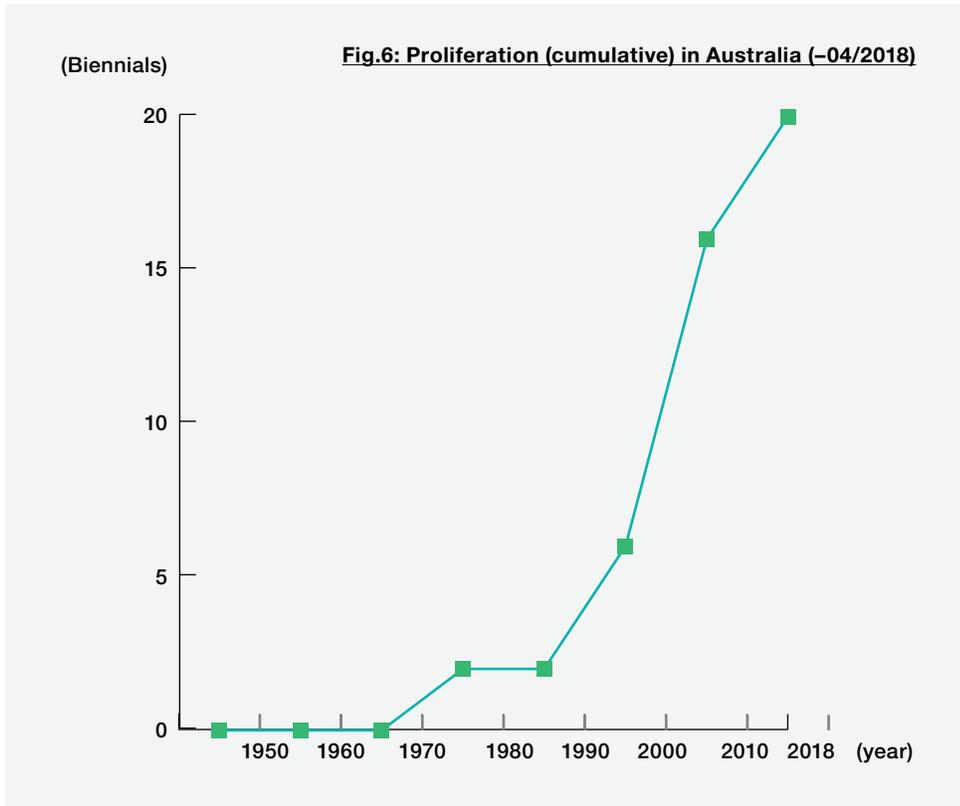
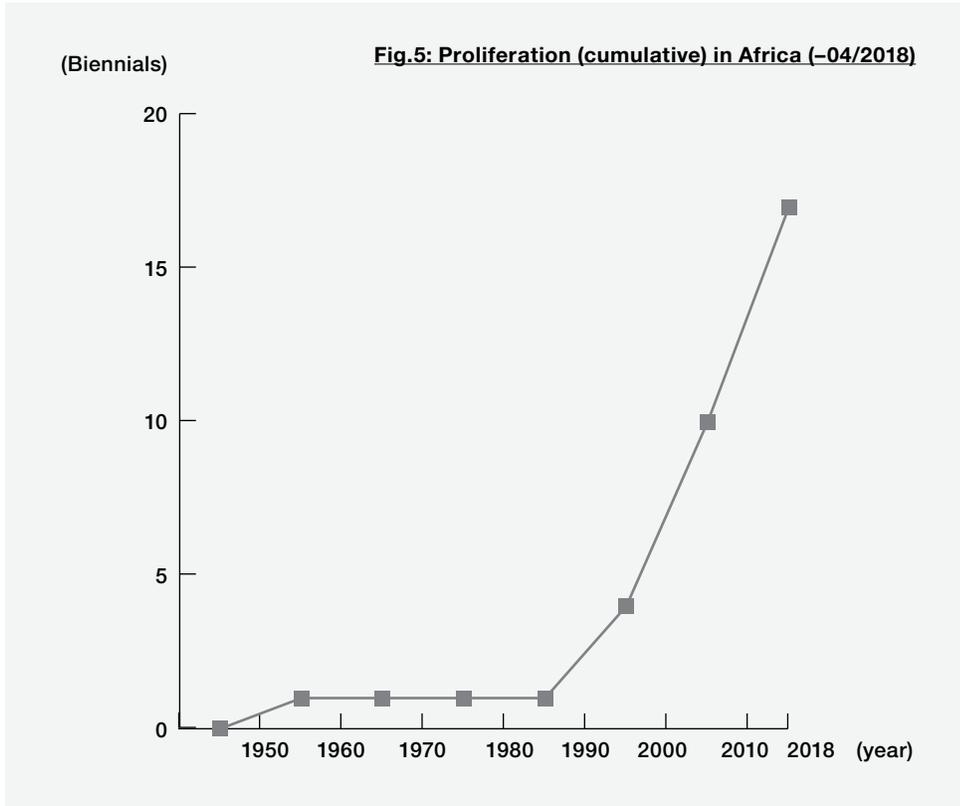
(see graphs; Foundation of Biennials Worldwide, by continent)



As we can observe from the graph above, the proliferation of biennials accelerated from the mid 1980s, in particular from the mid 1990s onwards. The faster pace in biennial growth worldwide may be attributed to the popularity of the format, which has also seen a rise in the number of museums, art fairs, and festivals during the same period.







As we can observe from the graphs, the proliferation of biennials in Asia accelerated from the mid-1990s, in particular from the mid-2000s onwards. In the mid-1990s, there were around 20 biennials operating in Asia and today that number is approaching nearly 100. South Korea, Japan, and China all have more than several biennials that are operating, perhaps signalling a link between economic strength, growing soft power and an expansion of arts infrastructure. As many Asian countries experience an economic and developmental boom, biennials may be linked to this growing confidence on the world stage. In Europe, we can observe that the increase in biennials starts to accelerate from the 1990s onwards, and the growth seems to have slowed slightly from the mid 2000s onwards.

In contrast, the African continent hosts the fewest number of biennials, with relatively few until around 2000 after which we can observe a higher growth rate. This may be related to a lack of funding and art infrastructure due to economic and policy factors, although one can expect more biennials to emerge in Africa in the coming years if current trends continue.

In North America, we can observe that biennials begin to flourish after the 1990s, with a steady growth that now totals nearly 70 biennial-type exhibitions. The “juried exhibition,” which is particularly popular in North America, and held on a biennial basis, has contributed to a cumulative increase over time.

Beginning with the establishment of the São Paulo Biennale in the early 1950s, there has been steady growth in the number of new biennials in South America and throughout the subsequent decades, with a marked acceleration from the mid-2000s onwards. In per capita terms, South America still has relatively few biennial-type exhibitions, though one may expect the growth to continue in the coming years.

Summary

If we observe the historical increase of biennials in each continent, we can see that biennialisation started more or less at the same time. The number of new biennials started to grow faster in Asia in the late 1990s, whilst in Europe it started in the early 1990s.

This “biennial boom” as it has come to be known started in Europe at the end of the 1980s; however, the boom in Asia and other continents started mainly in the 1990’s. Therefore the 1990s seem to be pivotal decade for most continents worldwide, and to a lesser degree in South America (which founded as many biennials in the 1980s as in the 1990s).

From a historical perspective, one tends to observe the end of the Cold War (1991)—starting with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989—as a crucial moment in contemporary art history. We can assume that only after the Cold War dissipated, and with it its canonical history writing of a binary code (“The East” vs. “The West”), art histories (in plural) emerged on a world stage. This was mirrored by the rise in postcolonial studies, which picked up momentum in the 1990s with Stuart Hall, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and many others preceded by Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Michel Foucault. This may not be a coincidence: only after the focus on geopolitical hegemony divided between “the West” and “the East” ended and with it the dictating of the shape of the world and the narrative of world history between one dichotomy (of “The East”/“The West”) could other regions’ identities, their histories, and contexts be inaugurated

perhaps. These new narratives emerging into the discourse establish themes of plurality, complexity, and a new formation of globalism (in detachment to an economic globalization). The proliferation of biennials may therefore be seen to support this wider trend towards the decentralization and fragmentation of historical grand narratives.

The Biennial boom

By comparing the gradients of each continent's graph, one can observe the steep and unbowed increase of biennials in Asia in the last two decades. During recent decades Asia, South America, and Africa show the highest increase in biennials (percentage-wise) during this period. Europe still hosts the highest number of biennials worldwide, with an astonishing 57 newly founded biennials in Europe between 2000 and 2009. However, if we look at the increase in percentage terms, one can observe that Europe's (total of 136 biennials) drive for the creation of new biennials stagnates somewhat, whereas there is a steep increase in Asia (total of 83 biennials), and South America (total of 19 biennials), and Africa (total of 17 biennials), and a constant number of newly founded biennials in North America (total of 66 biennials). From 2010 onwards, Europe and Asia have established the same numbers of newly founded biennials (32 in total). If we compare newly founded biennials between 2000–09 and 2010–present (considering there are two more years in this decade) in each continent, we can put the effects into perspective:

2000 – 2018 in numbers

Europe (total of 136 Biennials)

2000–09: 57 new biennials created

2010–18: 32 new biennials created

Asia (total of 83 biennials)

2000–09: 33 new biennials created

2010–18: 32 new biennials created

Africa (total of 17 biennials)

2000–09: 6 new biennials created

2010–18: 7 new biennials created

North America (total of 66 biennials)

2000–09: 19 new biennials created

2010–18: 21 new biennials created

South America (total of 19 biennials)

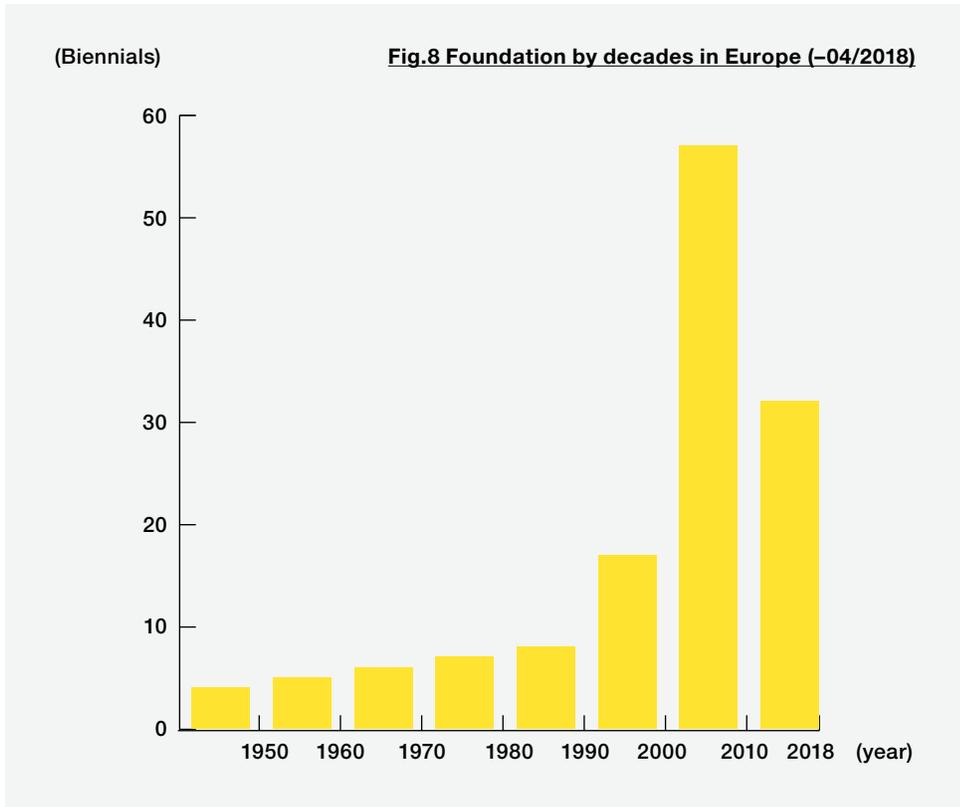
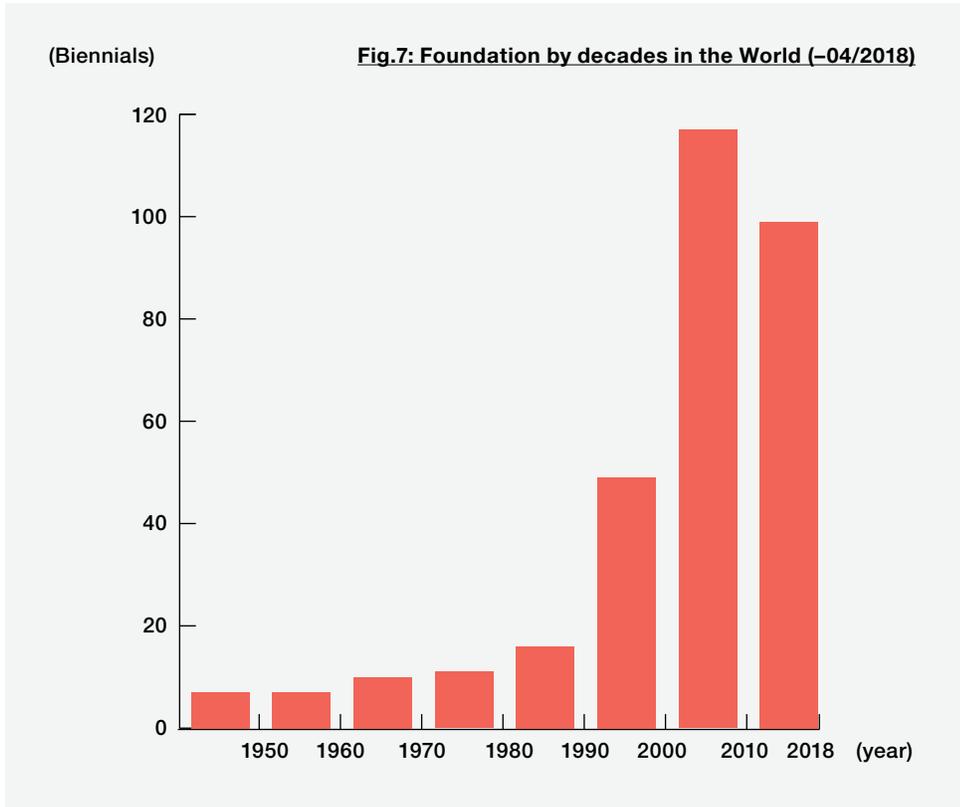
2000–09: 3 new biennials created

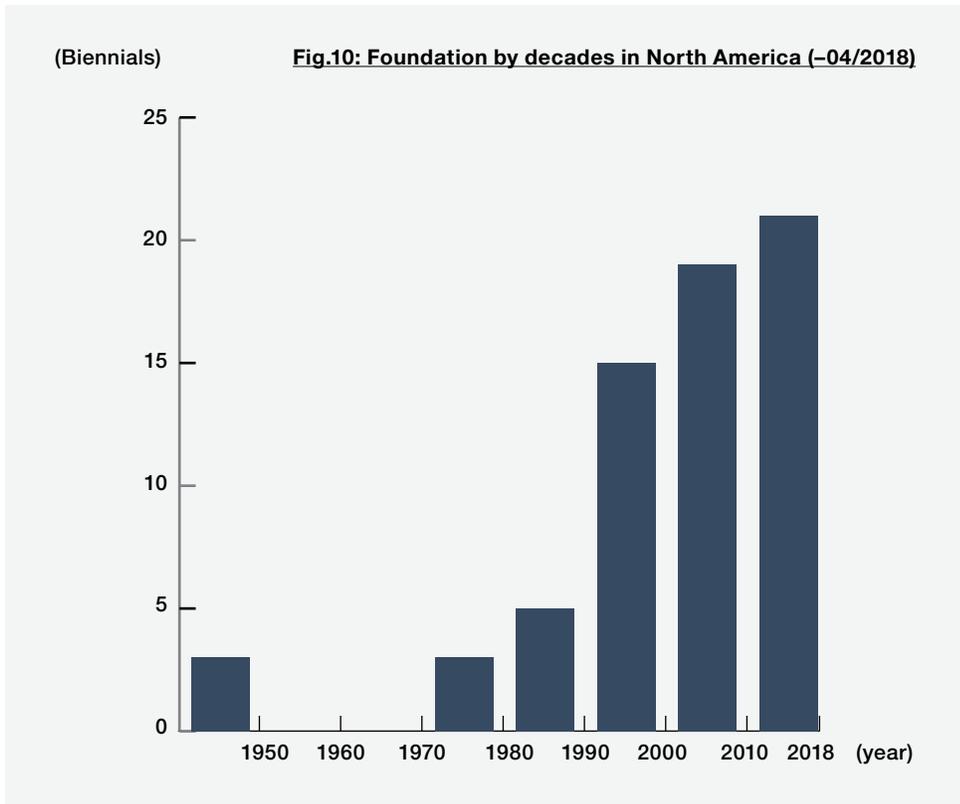
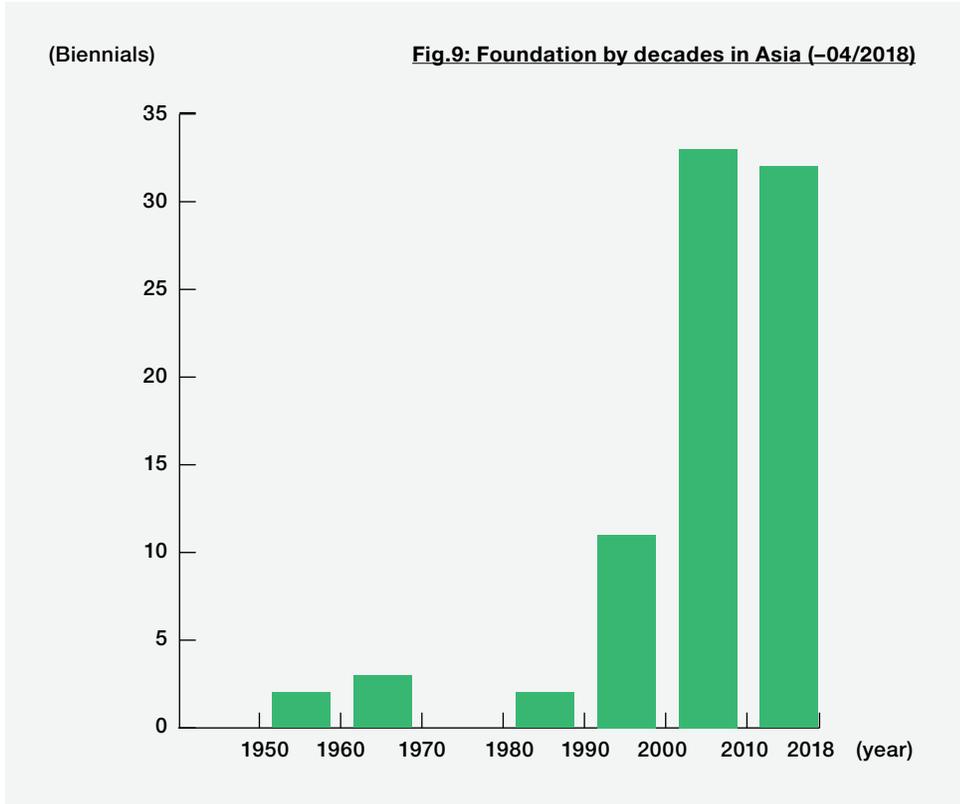
2010–18: 9 new biennials created

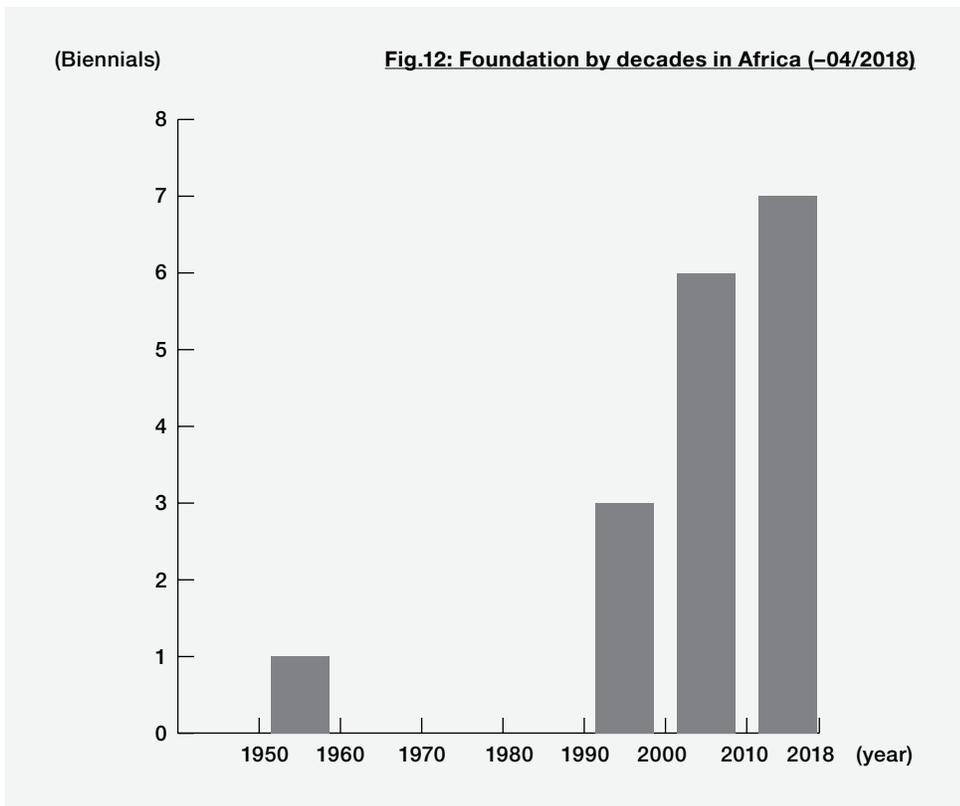
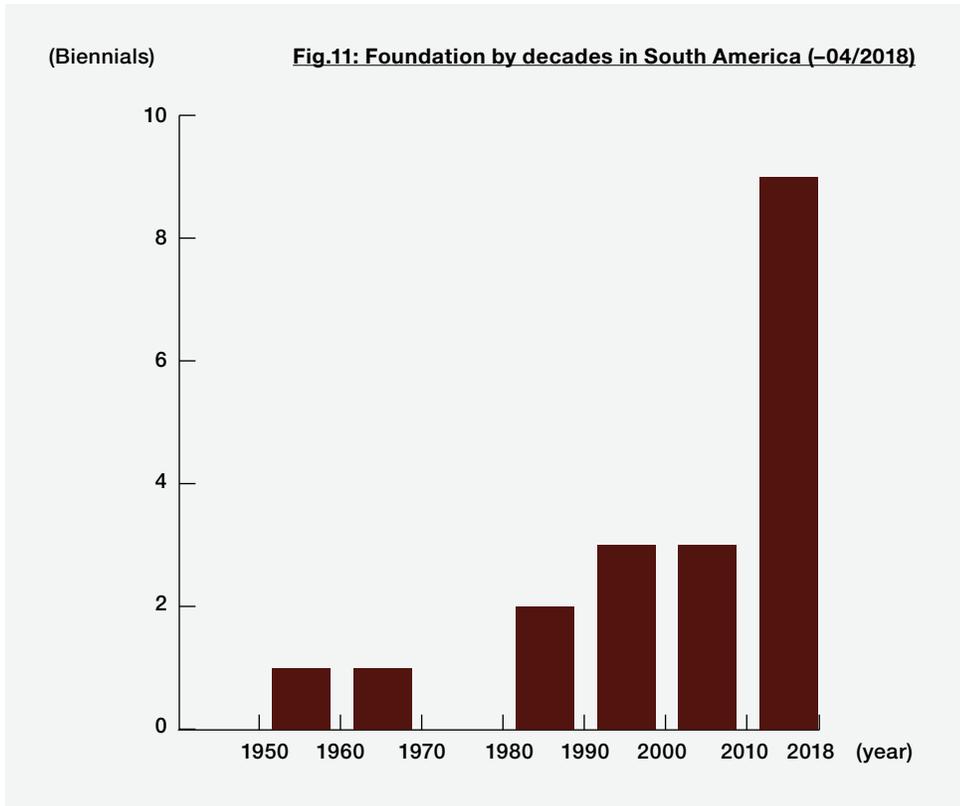
Australia (total of 10 biennials)

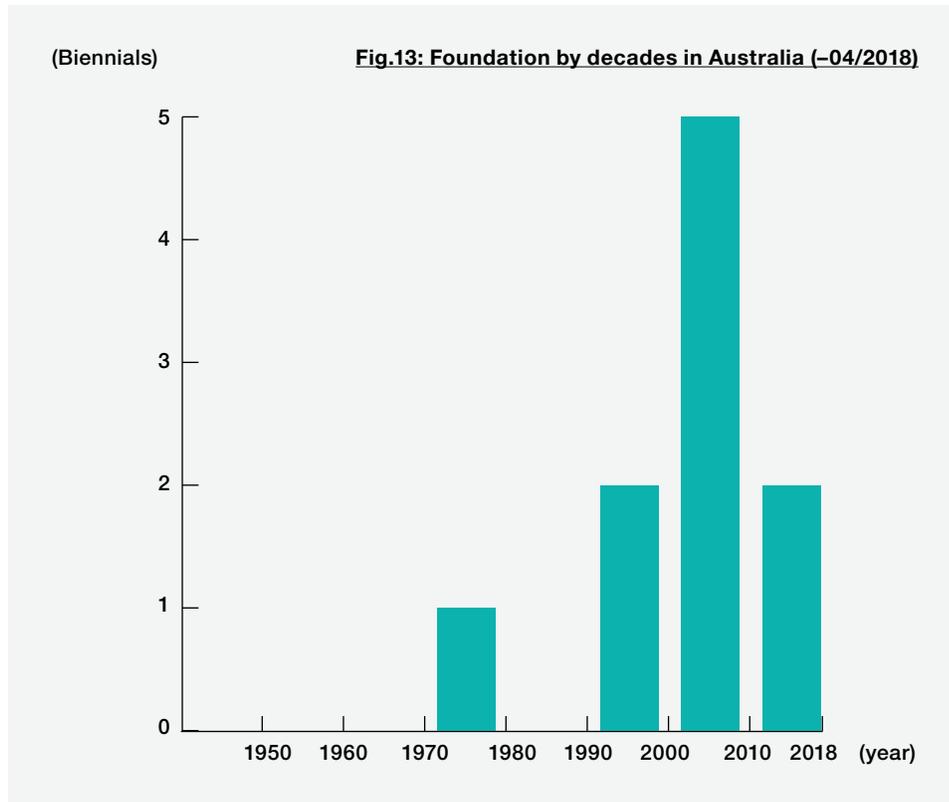
2000–09: 5 new biennials created

2010–18: 2 new biennials created









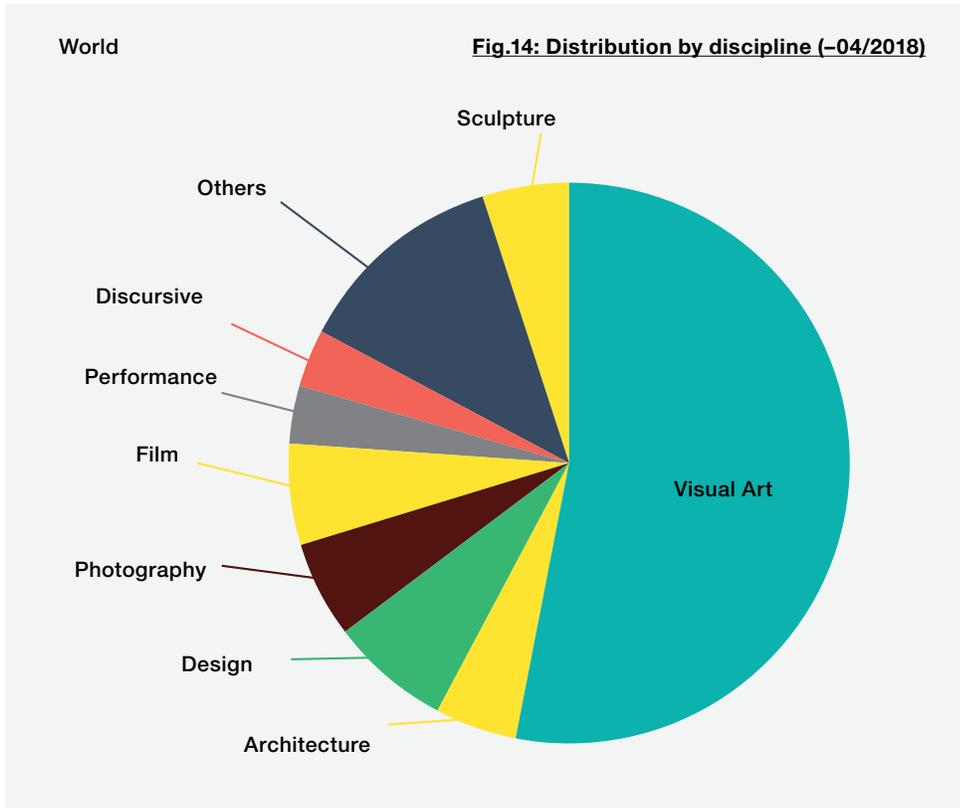
Disciplines

Furthermore our team researched the various art-related disciplines prevalent at biennials occurring today. It is clear from our research that visual art field practices are trans- and cross-disciplinary in nature. The survey investigated the main disciplines in each of the biennials we researched, e.g. the Venice Biennale and Venice Architecture Biennale are considered separately and are measured by us as a visual art and architecture biennial.

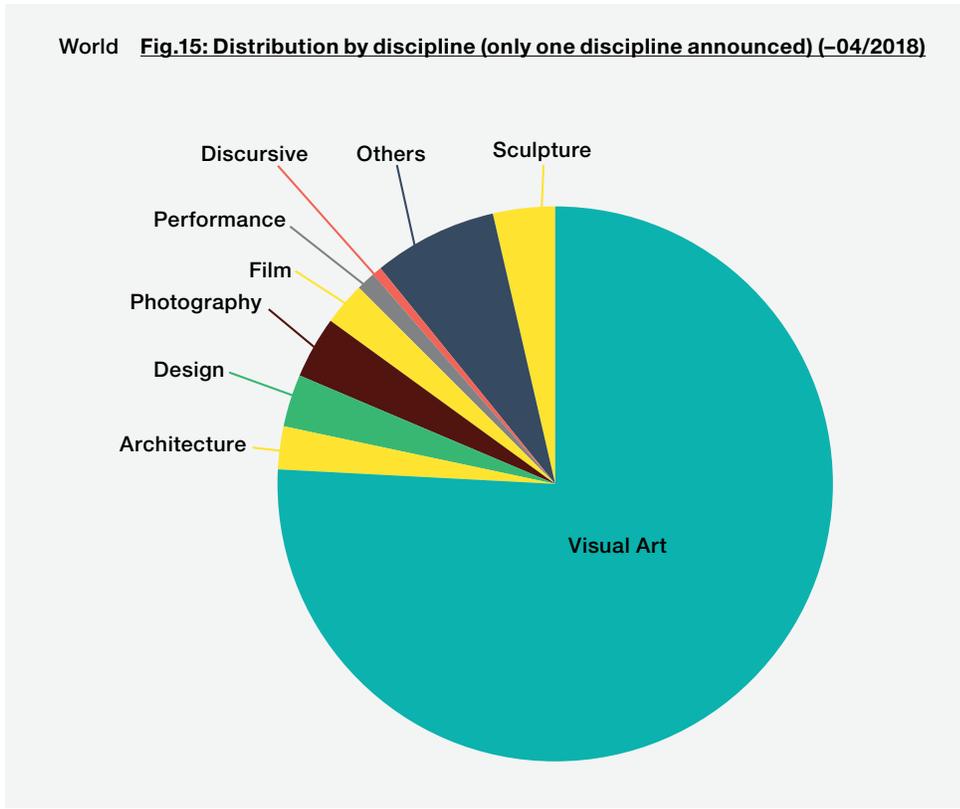
The parameters we used were: visual art, architecture, design, photography, film, performance, discursive, sculpture, and others (others including: art in public space, digital media and research driven events).

Our research into the primary artistic medium and disciplines exhibited at biennials showed that over 75 percent of biennials we surveyed are dedicated to exhibiting visual art. The research shows us that the biennial model is strongly rooted in visual arts first and foremost, and the condition has not changed dramatically over the last two decades.

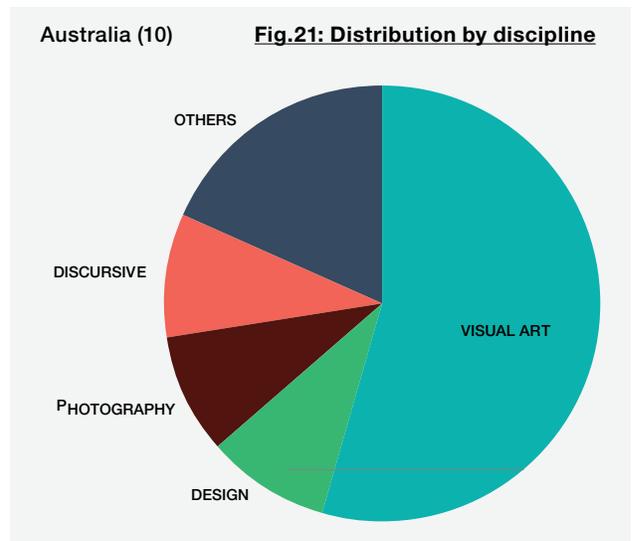
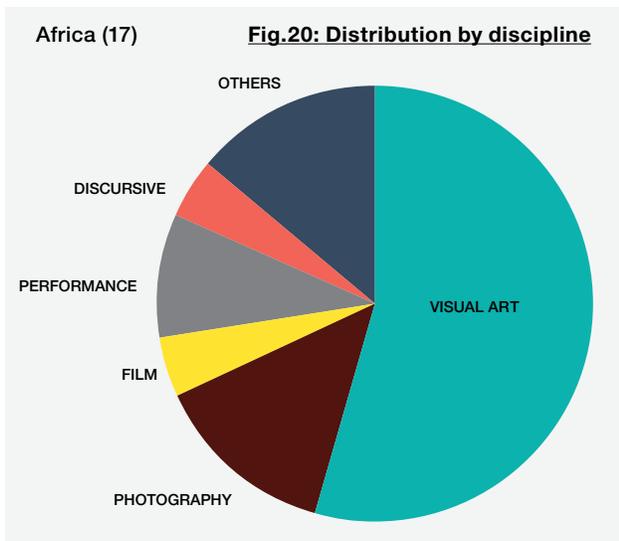
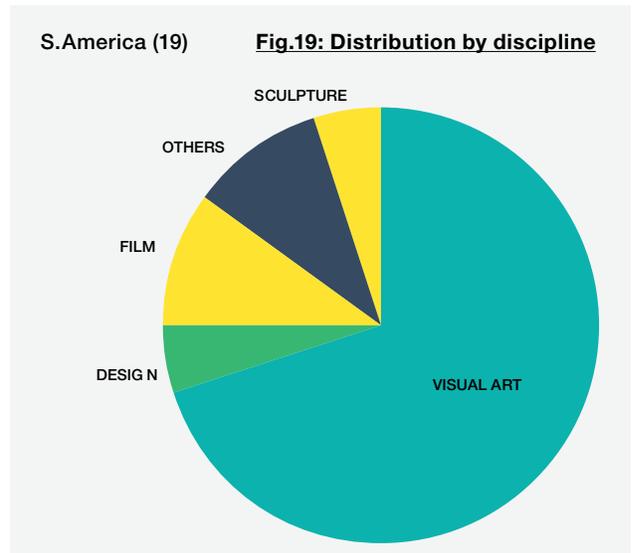
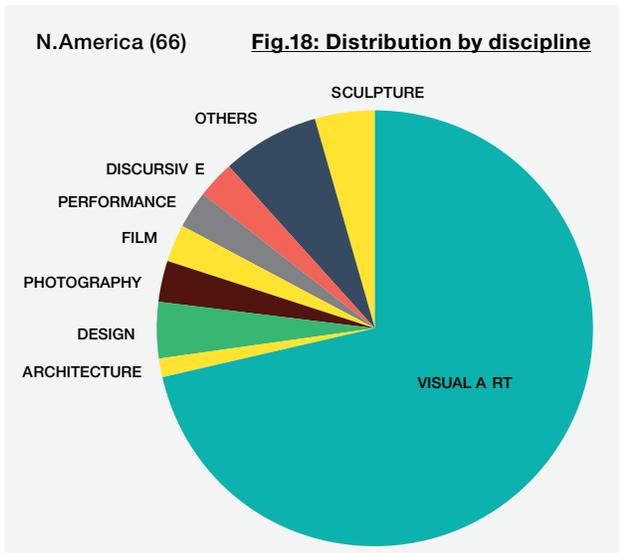
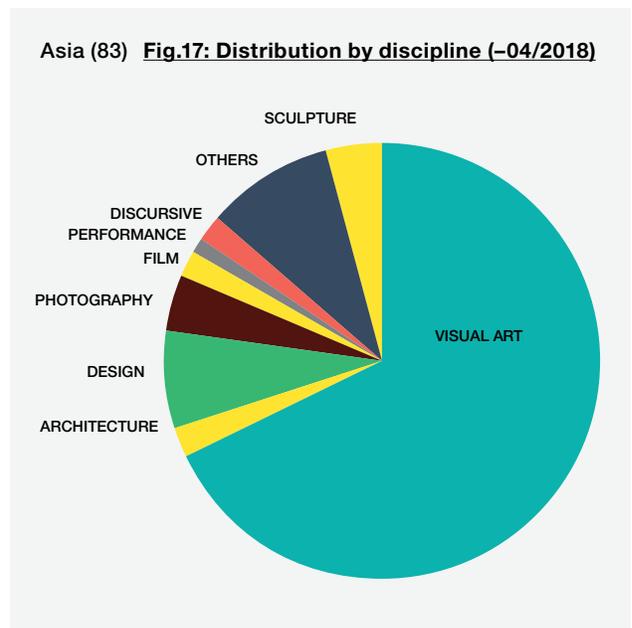
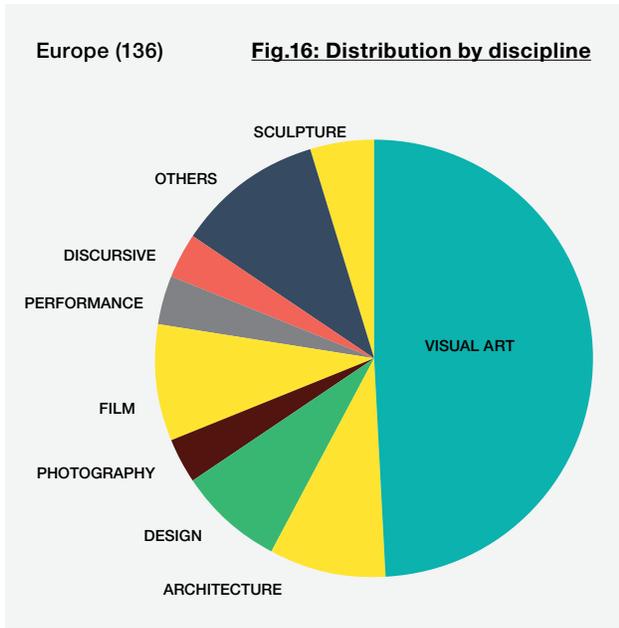
The share of biennials working within visual arts varies only slightly between continents. Biennials that mention other disciplines in their concepts have also increased slightly since 2000. North America has an overwhelming share of visual art biennials, followed by Asia and South America. Africa and Australia's share of biennials of visual art are slightly over 50 percent, followed closely by Europe. Unfortunately our data does not provide a sufficient examination into different art practices or their embeddedness within local and historical contexts. Speaking from a rather distanced "global"



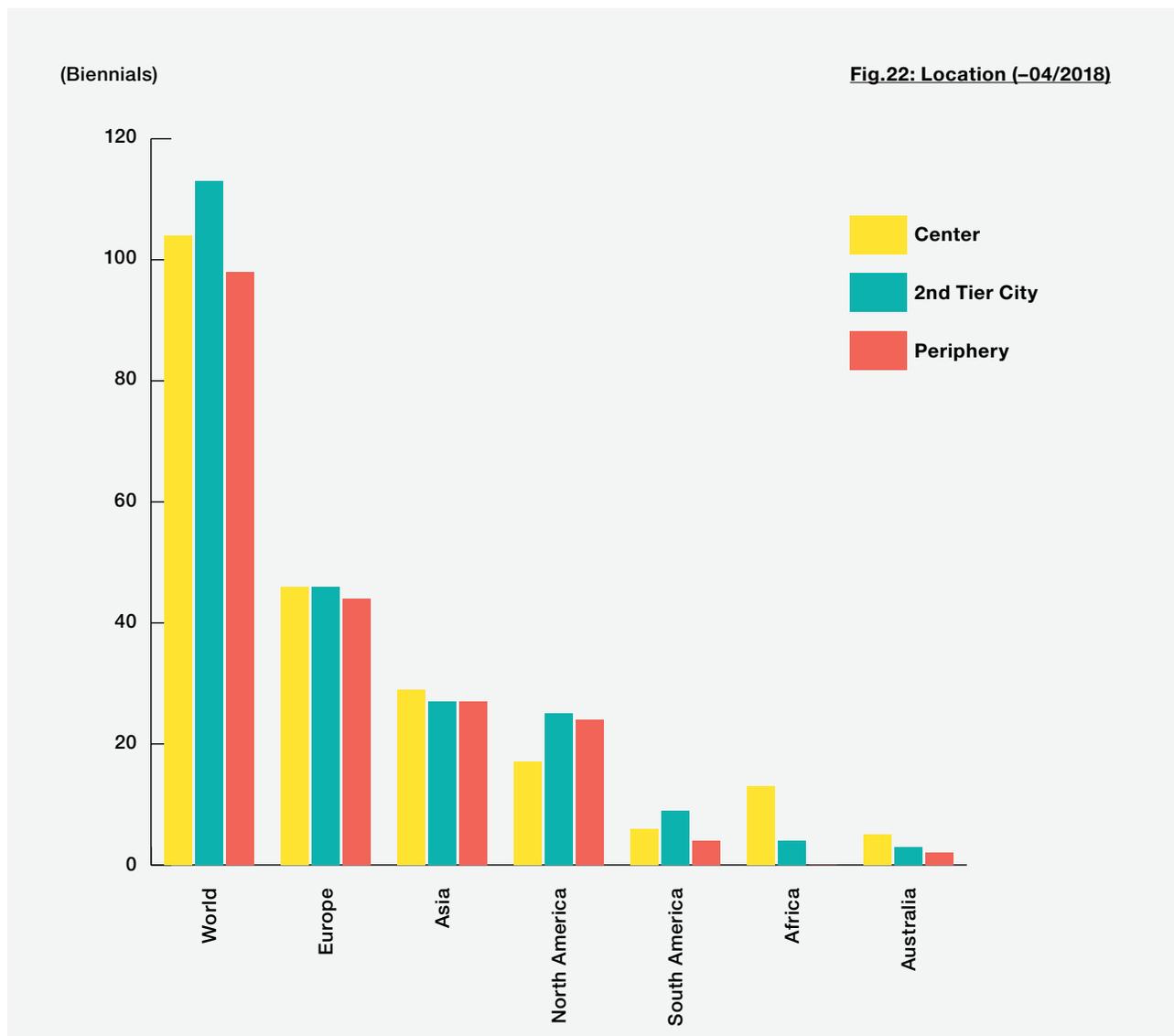
Occasionally Biennials name more than one main discipline in their self description.



This pie chart shows Biennials naming only one single main discipline in their self description.



perspective, one has to consider that there were different developments in artistic and curatorial practice in play in different regions at different times. As Patrick D. Flores remarked in a yet unpublished film project by Dorothee Richter and Ronald Kolb in 2017, “everyone is entitled to their modernity”. In that sense, speaking of “visual arts” could mean very different things, for example, in Europe and in Africa. Furthermore, Asia is still well known for teaching and promoting a crafts-oriented art education, whilst Europe—one could conjecture—has a more conceptualized view on art education and its subsequent production. However we believe these types of representation are mere stereotypes of a certain time and context, and cannot be logically applied to all continents over time. Even throughout different countries in Europe, there are discernable differences in the concept of modernity, postmodernity, and contemporaneity. The idea of disciplines, of what belongs to “art” or is *just* design, architecture, theatre, and so on, is very much related to the particular history of a region and its resulting “culture” milieu.



Center, Periphery, and the Urge to Go Global

Our research investigated the location of biennials in their host countries, within a geopolitical and economical setting. We discovered 104 biennials that are hosted in their nations capital or in one of its main cities (e.g. Istanbul is not a capital city, but it holds an important economic, cultural, and social position in Turkey), with 113 biennials in so-called “second-tier” cities (cities that are not as big as the capitals, but are on the rise and hold a prominent position within the country), and 98 biennials in remote and peripheral regions. One biennial in our survey also took place solely in an online form and was discontinued after its launch. The distribution between these parameters has remained quite similar since the first Venice Biennale in 1895. One may observe a shift to remote areas, if one looks at the period after 2000 and a marked rise in the number of biennials founded in peripheral locations. If we compare the location of biennials by continents in percentage terms, one observes that Europe, Asia, and Australia have a relatively even share of locations, whilst North American biennials can be predominantly found in second- tier and peripheral cities. This trend is even more pronounced in South America though it should be noted that the parameters we used for this first step of our research are bold in nature. There are certainly big differences in terms of center and periphery locations in different regions around the world. If we consider Shenzhen, for example, a second-tier city with its approximately 12.5 million inhabitants, the city can be seen—in its Chinese context—as still an up-and-coming, compared to Beijing’s population of 24 million and its status as a capital.

What is surprising however is Africa, where no single biennial takes place in remote areas. This finding may have multiple reasons, including an uncertain political backdrop and economic volatility, but also perhaps the incompatibility of a lot of contemporary art practices within a nascent art market. To have the impetus to found a new biennial, let alone organize and sustain one, clearly requires a certain level of resources and support from a broad group and actors within civil society.

Summary Location

Our research summarised that Great Britain (16) has the highest number of biennial-type exhibitions in Europe, followed by Germany (15), France (8), Italy (7), Poland (6), Norway (6), Romania (5), and the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland and Greece all hosting 4 each. In Asia, China (13) currently hosts the highest number of biennials, closely followed by the much smaller countries of South Korea (12) and Japan (12). Four of the twelve Chinese biennials are in centers, whilst six are in second-tier cities, and only three take place in peripheral locations. South Korea hosts the highest number of the biennials in rural areas (6), five biennials in second-tier cities, and only one in the capital. In Japan, this trend is even more pronounced, with no biennials taking place in Tokyo (founded in 1951 but since defunct), five in second-tier cities, and seven in remote and rural areas. In Japan, most newly founded biennials focus on art in public space or land art. These organisations are perhaps founded to help keep remote areas connected to a contemporary discourse and to attract urban audiences. USA is the country with the most biennials worldwide (43). We found that 20 of them occur in the periphery, 16 in second-tier cities, and six in state capitals or major centers.

Founding Bodies of Biennales

Our research also investigated which actors and agents founded biennials in various countries. We designated founding bodies to include: artists and curators; private foundations; museums; governments; tourism councils; and academics. Our research found that most biennials have more than one founding body, with sometimes up to four different parties involved in the creation of new projects.

From our research into founding bodies, we observed that 188 biennials can be traced back to one single founding party, with 51 biennials founded solely by private foundations or associations, which can include disparate organisations from private businesses to a group of artists setting up a legal enterprise for better funding opportunities. Our research showed that 46 biennials were founded by a group of artists and/or curators; 33 biennials were founded directly by the government (and tourism department); and only 3 biennials were founded by academics. For 16 biennials in our survey, we could not find any information on their founding status.

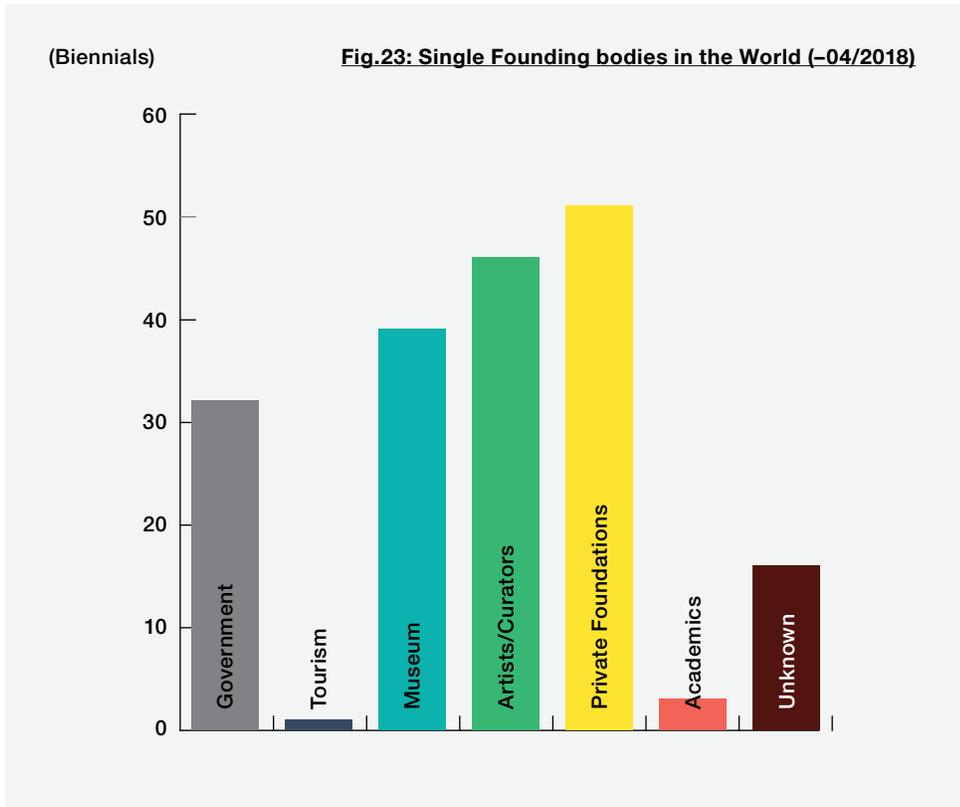
Clearly, establishing and maintaining a biennial is an immense endeavour, not least due to the financial resources required. In all regions of the world, help by governmental institutions is nearly unavoidable. However, the percentage of artists and curators involved in the founding of biennials is surprisingly high on every continent.

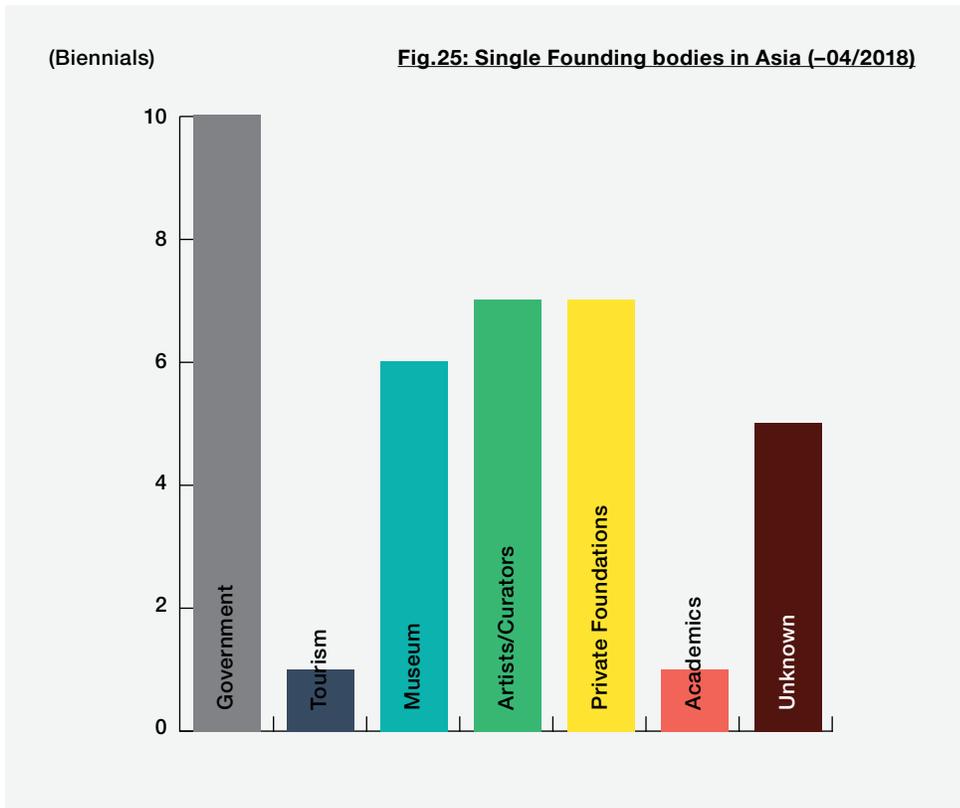
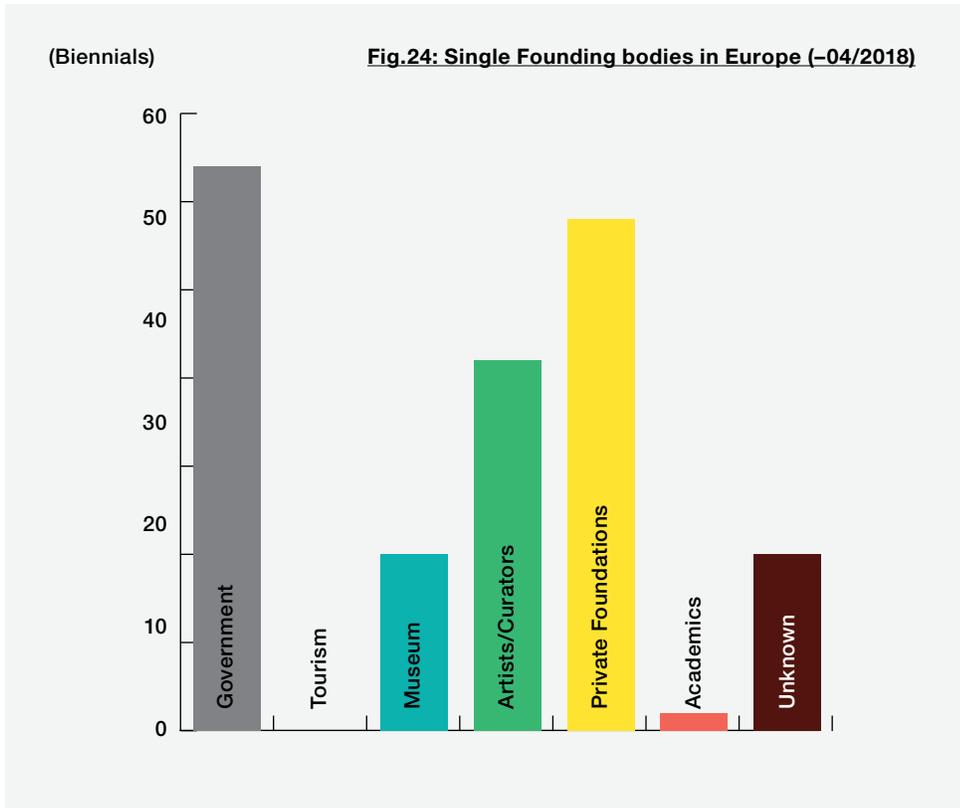
There seems to be visible differences between continental regions in the founding of biennials. If we concentrate on biennials only founded by one party, we find that in Europe the proportion is nearly the same for governments and private foundations, followed by artist-initiated biennials. The situation in Asia clearly shows more involvement of the government and even one biennial founded directly by a tourism ministry.

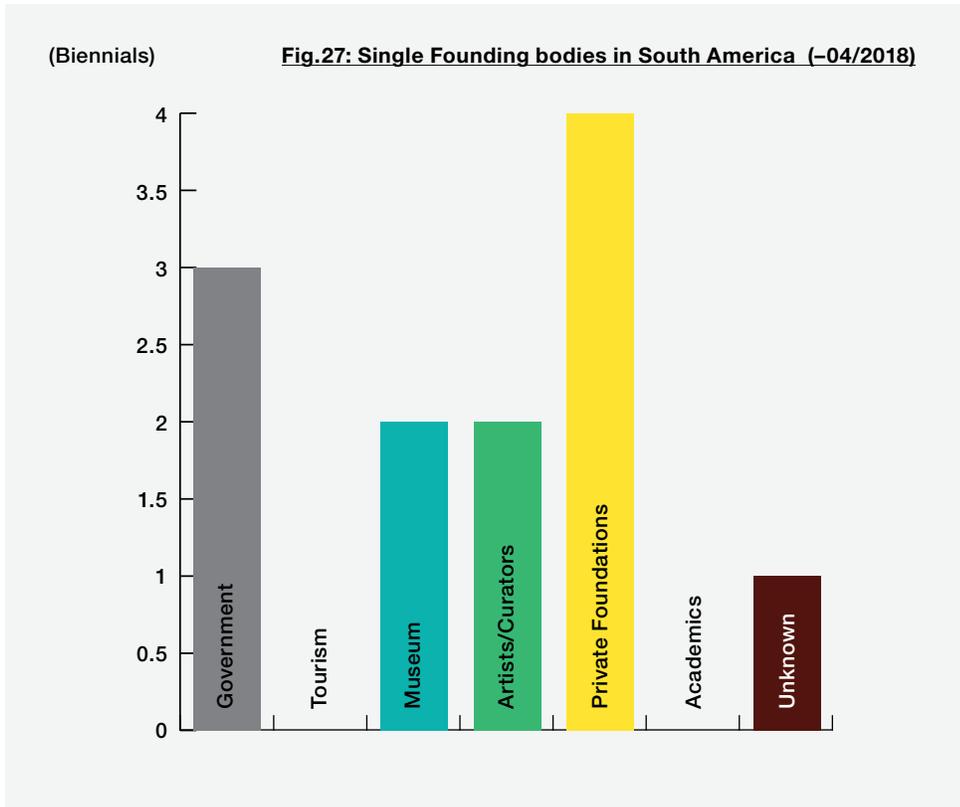
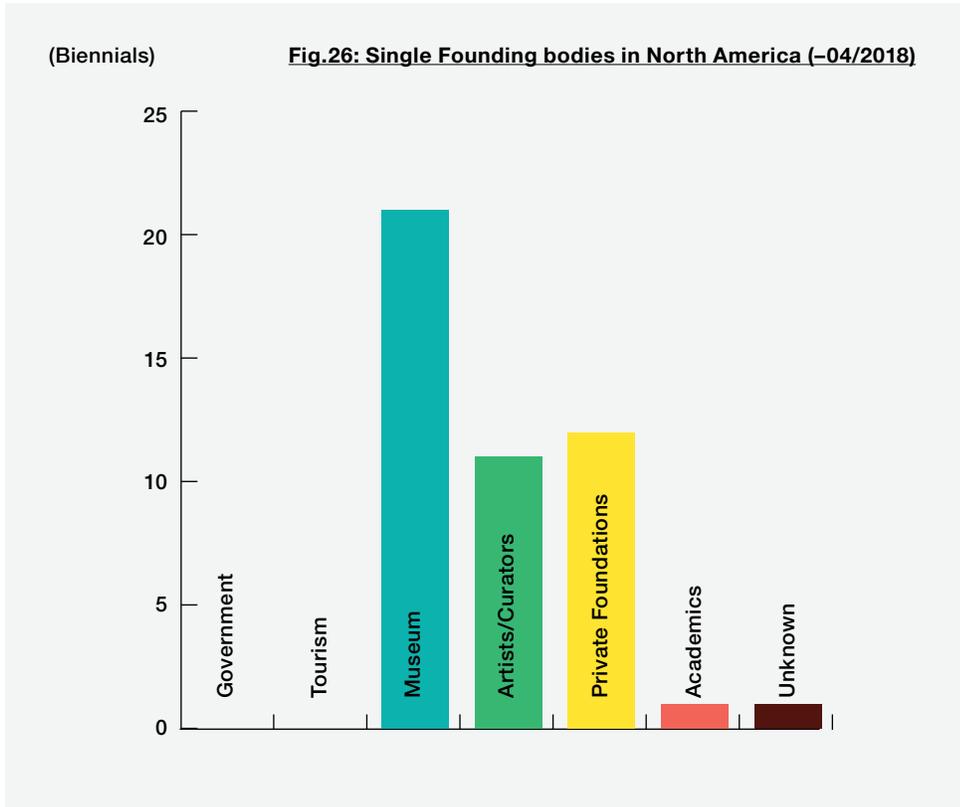
Cities, local governments, including state-owned corporations and philanthropists are partly funding the rise in biennial-making across China, and this reveals a lot about Chinese cultural policy and the Communist Party's attitude towards biennials in general.

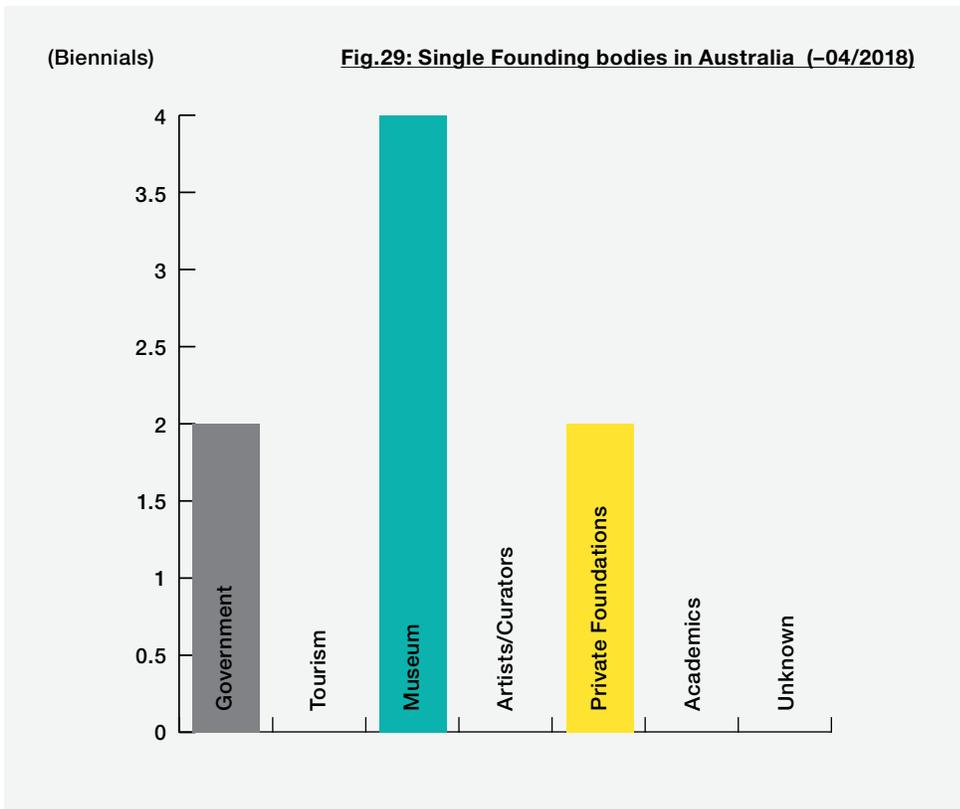
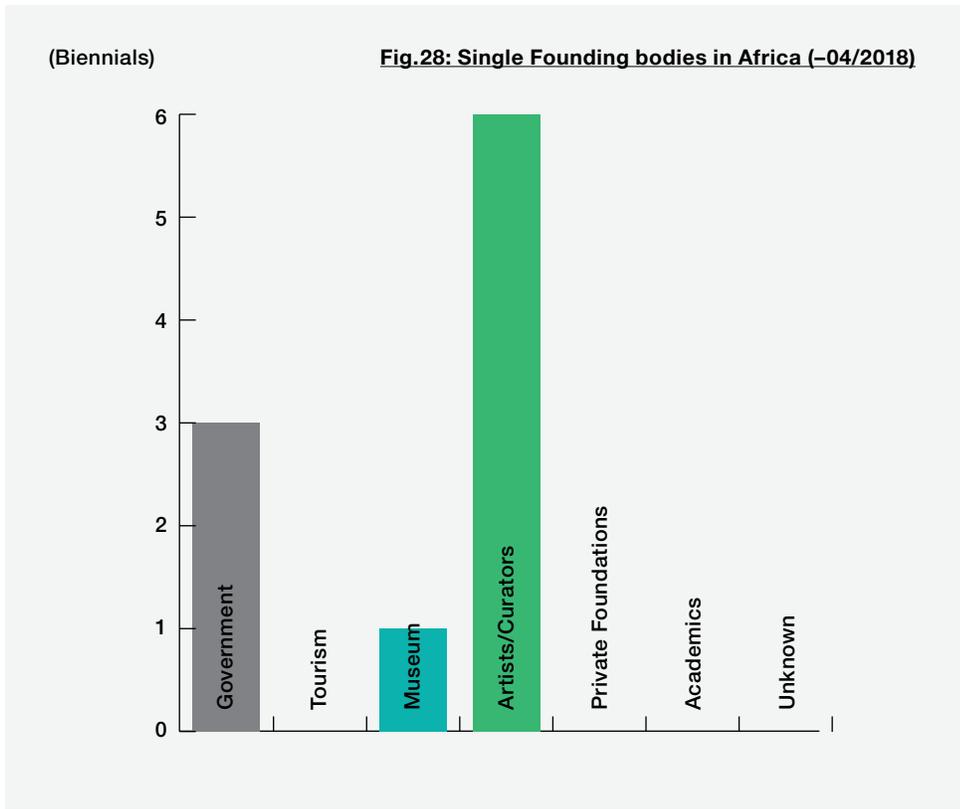
Biennials in Asia, including West and South Asia, highlight oft overlooked regions that want to showcase their art to a globally itinerant art world audience, supported by a slew of new public and private museums, galleries, and collectors, including new mega-institutions such as M+ in Hong Kong and the Louvre Abu Dhabi. As the contemporary art world reaches a mainstream audience, the biennial ecosystem acts as another layer of experimentation and market making, allowing institutions and collectors a peek into things to come.

North America stands out with nearly zero involvement of any governmental institution as a single founding party of a biennial. This shouldn't be surprising with the USA being the strongest country in North America, hosting 43 biennials where governmental funding for the arts is negligible. The funding models in the US place private donors at their center with incentives provided in the form of tax rebates and deductions. Largely due to the phenomenon of the "juried exhibition", museums are the biggest founders of biennials in the US, followed by private foundations and artists. Artists and curators have largely established recent South Asian biennials, with Kochi, Lahore, and Karachi all initiated by artists, similar to several African biennials that have emerged in recent decades.









Questionnaire

In addition to the empirical survey and analyses, we asked a series of questions to people working (or having worked on) biennials in different positions in different parts of the world. We wanted to understand their motivations, learn about their working conditions and glean other insights into how their biennial functions and sustains itself. We all strongly feel that it is one thing to research empirical data, but another to be “inside” an operating structure such as one that establishes and sustains a biennial project. We are grateful to these interviewees for their willingness to contribute their time and share their insights with us.

In this section, we present short interviews (a questionnaire based on seven questions) from the following professionals.

- Julia Moritz on dOCUMENTA (13), conducted by Camille Regli.
- Mi Lan on the Bi-City Biennial of Urbanism/Architecture Shenzhen, conducted by Christine Kaiser.
- Wato Tsereteliis on the Tbilisi Triennial, conducted by Elena Setzer.
- Adam Caruso on the Venice Architecture Biennale and Andrea Bellini on the Biennial of Moving Images, conducted by Kristina Grigorjeva.
- Jean Kamba on the Biennale of Kinshasa (Yango), conducted by Nkule Mabaso.
- Misal Adnan Yildiz on the Istanbul Biennial (2010), Alisa Prudnikova on the Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art, Alexandra Blättler on the Klöntal Triennale, and Hajnalka Somogyi on the OFF-Biennale Budapest, conducted by Ronald Kolb.
- Dr. Yongwoo Lee on the International Biennial Association, Qudsia Rahim on the Lahore Biennale, and Rafal Niemojewski on the Biennial Foundation, conducted by Shwetal A. Patel.

Introduction

We believe that biennials provide a point of convergence for the art world, expose large audiences to art (and other disciplines & mediums), and catalyse interest in cities and regions with global aspirations, their unique format allowing for an expanded outreach and influence. Why do you think they are still important in your case? How can such enormous events achieve impact and propose a strong curatorial and artistic point of view and what is your particular chosen model?

We would like you to answer the following seven questions. We are interested in talking to you more about it and getting your unique experience and view on why Biennales matter in the 21st century.

Questions

1. What was your motivation to work with a biennial? What was your position/task?
2. How can you describe the model of the biennial you worked for? Also how does this compare to other biennials in your opinion?
3. What goals/wishes are connected to your biennial? What should be achieved in your opinion? What were your personal goals?

4. Biennials have proliferated as the art world has scaled in size and global reach in recent decades however very little information exists about the exact number, geographical spread and funding and governance structures of these arts organisations. Can we compare biennials at all?
5. Biennials provide a point of convergence for the art world, expose large audiences to art (and other disciplines & mediums), and catalyse interest in cities and regions with global aspirations. Do biennials necessarily have a positive social and economic impact?
6. Can you describe the funding model and sources of funding for your biennial? How do you think this affects the biennial?
7. What sort of curatorial, institutional, or technological innovations can help ensure the vibrancy and relevance of biennials going forward?

Dr. Yongwoo Lee

IBA (International Biennial Association)

Dr. Yongwoo Lee is an art historian, critic, and curator. He was the founding director of the Gwangju Biennale, established in 1995, and served as president of the Gwangju Biennale Foundation for six years (2008-2014). He was the founding president of the IBA (International Biennial Association) from 2014 to 2017.

1. What was your motivation to work on the International Biennial Association? What was your position/task at the beginning, and what has it become over time?

Establishing a platform for communication and intervention between biennials and biennial practitioners is the most important reason for the establishment of IBA. Since the 1990s, the proliferation of biennials has been remarkable, but there have been almost no horizontal ties between biennials and no exchanges sharing the practical resources and issues of biennials. As the first elected president of IBA, I was focusing, with members of IBA and boards, on securing members, data administration, and a way to find new vibrancy for biennials.

2. How would you describe the model of IBA that you have worked towards and created? Also compared to other biennials' research centers and organizations, as well as university departments and archives you have visited?

IBA is a members' club. Individual members include experts such as curators, writers, administrators, theorists, and scholars who are related to creating biennials. The institutional members refer to all the biennials in the world, and if they have performed at least three biennials, they are eligible to apply. Other biennial centers, organizations, and colleges are related to the research on biennials at large, I think.

3. What goals/wishes are connected with IBA over the medium- to long-term? What should be achieved in your opinion? What were your personal goals at the beginning, and what have they become?

In 2000, a group of biennial experts from various backgrounds gathered in Kassel, Germany, and attempted to form an organization such as the biennial association. Kassel's documenta and the Fridericianum Museum hosted the meeting, which aimed to jointly respond to the information exchange and the contents that would impede the practice of biennials. The most important political challenge at the time was visa issues related to inviting artists and curators. It was not until 2013 that the goal was achieved. IBA is a member-centric gathering similar to CIMAM. The association for the members' interests is a very simple aggregation, but it has a wider existential reason and persuasive power when it acts broadly in the field of cultural discourse as a whole. IBA can be a real guide for biennials when it leaves the interest groups for only biennials.

4. Biennials have proliferated as the art world has scaled in size and global reach in recent decades; however, very little information exists about the exact number, geographical reach, and funding and governance structures of these arts organizations. Can we compare biennials at all?

It is the number of biennials for which we conducted research after the establishment of IBA. By the end of 2017, more than 280 perennial artistic events have been held under the name of biennial and the triennial and the like. It is much more than I thought. These numbers range from very small to global in size. These numbers are not related to the quality or contents of the exhibition, since they are the sum of exhibitions in the name of biennial and triennial conducted by the independent biennial foundations, museums, and art centers, and various artistic associations and members. The budgets are very different, and the sizes of exhibitions and projects are so diverse. At the IBA General Assembly, comparisons and distinctions between different member biennials are clearly presented and understood. We don't talk about the size of the budget and exhibition.

5. Biennials provide a point of convergence for the art world, expose large audiences to art (and other disciplines and mediums), and catalyze interest in cities and regions with global aspirations, would you agree? How does IBA's research activities, council, and leadership satisfy this promise? Do biennials necessarily have a positive social and economic impact?

The biennial is certainly a convergence model of artistic practice. The biennial had a reputation for politicizing all exhibition contexts, but it has changed a great deal in recent years. Biennial exhibitions show all kinds of experimental, radical, and political contexts of contemporary art, but the process of making biennials is very strategic and regional. Global aspirations and regional discourse always conflict. There is a desire for globalism in a particular country or region that they want to have at a biennial, but it is a huge burden for biennial makers. The biennial is to some extent an expression of a desire to advance onto a global stage packed with culture.

6. Can you talk about the funding processes and sources of IBA and its activities?

The IBA budget has so far managed to combine local government support, where the IBA office is located, with the IBA's self-developed budget. There is a General Assembly in which a certain fund is developed by a hosting institution (biennial) to hold an event or invite IBA members.

7. What sort of curatorial, institutional, or technological innovations can help ensure the vibrancy and relevance of art biennials going forward?

I often think about ownership of art festivals and exhibitions. Today, it seems that the time has come for art institutions such as art museum or biennial to hand over its ownership to the audience. The notion of acting like a power organ can no longer satisfy not only the audience but also the art community. Why don't artists come to biennials and museums? The space of institutions must be free from the old paradigm of power. We need a new reflection on capital, power, and audience, and we need biennials and museums that open 24 hours to breathe with the public. Art institutions should turn into a part of daily life of citizens.

Dr. Rafal Niemojewski

Biennial Foundation

Dr. Rafal Niemojewski is a cultural producer and scholar of contemporary art and its institutions. He holds a degree in history of art and curatorial studies from the Sorbonne and earned his doctoral degree from the Royal College of Art in London for his thesis on the proliferation of the contemporary biennial.

1. What was your motivation to join the Biennial Foundation? What was your position/task/vision at the beginning, and what has it become over time?

I see a continuous need for the discourse around biennials to be driven independently and without bias. Until the first World Biennial Forum, organized by Biennial Foundation in 2012, most of the conferences and knowledge-generating activities in the field were organized by particular biennials and often promoted their particular interests. The prospect of running an independent observatory and providing thought leadership to the industry was my main motivation. I have been involved with Biennial Foundation from its beginning, working on its research activities. I was honored to become the Executive Director in 2016.

2. How would you describe the model of the BF that you have worked towards and created? Also compared to other biennial research centers and organizations, or university departments and archives you have visited?

At the beginning of my tenure as Director, I worked with our Executive and Advisory Boards to reinvigorate the mission and organize the activities along the three main streams—Knowledge, Art, and Network. In this respect, our activities bring together various elements of a think tank, a commissioning agency, and a professional association.

3. What goals/wishes are connected with the BF over the medium- to long-term? What should be achieved in your opinion? What were your personal goals at the beginning, and what have they become?

In its early years, the Biennial Foundation focused on developing new connections and exchanges amongst biennials and biennial practitioners worldwide. This included the World Biennial Forum series and the professional association for biennial organizers (established in 2014). Over the years, our website has become a reference in the subject and a living archive for all things related to biennials. We regularly commission and publish critical texts, reviews, and reportages called "biennialgrams." The latest digital additions include an annotated bibliography and a dedicated platform for scholars

who research biennials. Offline, we offer consulting services, a commissioning program, and completion grants for artists. Our long-term goal is to progressively expand our horizons to include biennials of design and architecture.

4. Biennials have proliferated as the art world has scaled in size and global reach in recent decades; however, very little information exists about the exact number, geographical reach, and funding and governance structures of these arts organizations. Can we compare biennials at all?

The exercise of counting biennials presumes that we can clearly identify what is (and what is not) a “biennial.” Establishing norms or imposing definitions is the last thing we want to do. The Directory of Biennials on our website is intended as a guideline, not an exhaustive list. Browsing it, one can quickly notice that we are dealing here with a very complex dataset, where irregularities and idiosyncrasies are very common. Likewise, any comparisons need to take into account a great number of local factors, which are often completely incompatible on the global scale. Each biennial only takes its full meaning when inscribed in the local context.

5. Biennials provide a point of convergence for the art world, expose large audiences to art (and other disciplines and mediums), and catalyze interest in cities and regions with global aspirations, would you agree? How does the BF’s research activities and leadership satisfy this promise? Do biennials necessarily have a positive social and economic impact?

Our in-house research (including transversal reports and feasibility studies) clearly demonstrates that biennials can have a positive social and economic impact on their host communities. Paradoxically, the ones with the strongest impact are the organizations that organically grew out of the community, not the ones established following market research or policy actions. That is not to say that careful planning is not relevant, but it is important to not to over-engineer biennials.

6. Can you talk about the funding processes and sources of the BF and its activities?

We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization incorporated in the state of New York. Most of our funding comes from private donors and foundations. We also regularly receive in-kind support from private companies and corporations, like Google.

7. What sort of curatorial, institutional, or technological innovations can help ensure the vibrancy and relevance of art biennials going forward?

Biennials are very flexible structures and should be open to innovation by virtue. Their aspirational character and focus on the present moment also drives innovation. Biennials tend to explore the contingencies of contemporary art to imagine alternative futures rather than being driven by heritage (tangible or intangible) as it is the case for the majority of museums. I tend to believe that artists are the most prolific innovators. Ultimately, enabling them to play the central role is probably the best to ensure vibrancy and relevance.

Alisa Prudnikovaasked by **Elizaveta Yuzhakova**

Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art

Alisa Prudnikova is the Director of Regional Development of ROSIZO-NCCA (National Centre of Contemporary Arts), Commissioner and Artistic Director, the Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art. From 2005-2016, she served as Director of the Ural Branch NCCA; from 2013-2016, she was Director of the New Art-Regional Public Foundation for Contemporary Art Support and Development, where she was responsible for the New NCCA international architectural competition of building a new museum in Moscow. She has lectured at the Department of Art History and Cultural Studies at the Ural Federal University, curated numerous exhibitions in Russia and widely abroad. From 2002 to 2008 she served as the Editor-in-chief of ZA ART—an arts and culture magazine devoted to embedding the local cultural and art scene into an international analytical context. She served as an expert (2006-2008, 2011)2013) and a juror (2009) for Innovation, the first Russian national award in contemporary arts. She is a winner of the Silver Archer Ural (2014, 2015) and Caryatid (2013) Awards, and laureate of the Innovation in 2015. Most recently, she has worked to promote strategies for regional development through contemporary art practices in the framework of the national project of the Houses of New Culture. She is a member of the Advisory Board for the Minister of Culture, Russian Federation, for the Governor Of Ural Region, and a board member of the International Biennial Association (IBA).

Elizaveta Yuzhakova is an art historian, art manager, and editor. She is affiliated with the Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art: assistant to commissioner (2015— now), coordinator of the intellectual platform (2012—2015), coordinator of the main project (2015), editor of the catalogue (2017).

1. What was your motivation to work on a biennial? What was your position/ task?

My main motivation to work on our biennial was to create a big project that would integrate the region into a global cultural agenda. The format of a biennial seemed at that time the most appropriate in comparison to various festivals, forums, etc. At that moment, Moscow had the most famous—the Moscow Biennale (established in 2005)—and there were several regional biennial projects (in Krasnoyarsk, and in Shiryaevo) that were not so visible to the international community, while Yekaterinburg had some ambition to work with the local identity on a fundamentally different level compared to all other institutions before that. So, there was a clear academic demand on talking about the local identity on a global level, and out of this academic interest there appeared a project.

The regional institutions at that time faced a lot of problems related to their programming policies, their abrupt immersion into a global context, and the lack of exhibition spaces. So our biennial was born also thanks to several years of experiments of integrating contemporary artistic practices into industrial spaces within the Art Zavod festival held in Yekaterinburg in 2008. An interest from the public, local and international artistic and academic communities inspired us to make something bigger.

My initial task was initiating and creating the biennial. And the task was to create a project that would not just belong to a place due to its name (we didn't want just the Yekaterinburg biennial or the Ural biennial), but that would have a definition (the Industrial) as its identity, as a basis for working with the heritage and industrial practices of the region, so that it would be representative for the location, and globally, from the point of view of development of industrial and post-industrial society.

2. How can you describe the model of the biennial you worked for? Also compared to other biennials?

Structurally, the model we implemented was not new: it consists of the main project, special projects, and a parallel program, but there are two quite distinctive features. The first is the Artist-in-Residence Program, which from the very beginning made it possible to work with operating enterprises, and since then it has constituted an attraction for the artists from all over the world. It is difficult to find any other biennial project that would have the same specifics of working with various operating plants, from porcelain to heavy machinery, in the format of a residence. Second is the intellectual platform, which is a sort of umbrella program for all the other projects within the biennial. This is again a reference to the academic background of the project. Formerly, we would start the research part of the project (seminars, symposia, etc.) a year before launching the next biennial edition. But now the biennial team implements new research projects on a stable basis, and what's more important, it chooses the biennial theme. This is another distinction from the most common biennial model, when an invited curator brings her/his theme into the project, defining the rest of the program. The figure of the main curator is fundamentally important for our project as well, but here the format is more a collaboration with the team of the National Centre for Contemporary Arts, its organizer.

3. What goals/wishes are connected with your biennials? What should be achieved? What were your personal goals?

The goals change over the years. Today, we are almost at the end of the ten-year cycle, and we can probably divide these goals into four levels: municipal, regional, federal, and international—each of them having their own agents and impact, defining further goals. Regarding the situation in the city, we'd like to achieve a total adoption of the biennial as a format of joint experimentation and a platform for new potential initiatives. Regionally, I'd like to achieve a strategic format of working with partners. The initial idea forming the basis of the biennial was that this format allows us to work with large industrial businesses as financial partners, and I'd like to reach a new level of budgeting and production, and see more ambitious projects realized. Federally, there is a demand on such a format from many regions besides Ural, which have an industrial background. And this proliferation of the Industrial Biennial in the regions seems to have a potential, so we have to think about the proper format.

Internationally, gradually we are developing an ambition to work with the top-notch curators. And reciprocally, for the international art community the Ural Biennial may become a sort of springboard for possible inter-biennial cooperation—this is what the International Biennial Association is currently aiming at. And regarding my personal goals, I am very much concerned with whether there is a possibility to create a network of cooperation among the institutions, or associations like the IBA, or ICOM, for working as sincerely interested counterparts.

4. Biennials have proliferated as the art world has scaled in size and global reach in recent decades; however, very little information exists about the exact number, geographical reach, and funding and governance structures of these arts organizations. Can we compare biennials at all?

There is no certain set of rules that would define whether one project could be called a biennial and another couldn't. This matter has been discussed many times by the IBA. But in the end, biennials emerge when the organizers call their project a biennial, and only thereafter do the communities decide whether it's true, or whether this naming does not relate to some biennial ambition.

The question is quite interesting in terms of why we should compare biennials at all. The main question asked by the biennial organizers is in what way it may have an impact on the territory, what it brings to the location where it is held, and how it changes the environment around it. To my mind, what's interesting to compare is what biennials can change around them. In many countries, it is either the museum format or the biennial format that drives cultural development. Due to different geopolitical conditions, in some places this role is taken on by the museum, in other places it is the biennial, while the museums are more traditional and conservative, not open to experiments. It seems to me that it is this aspect for which it would be interesting to make comparisons.

5. Biennials provide a point of convergence for the art world, expose large audiences to art (and other disciplines and mediums), and catalyze interest in cities and regions with global aspirations.

Do biennials necessarily have a positive social and economic impact?

I think that the biggest problem here is that not all the biennials can calculate this impact and work the results into the form of impressive marketing reports. At least in Russia, stakeholders still measure the result by the number of visitors. Yet, the biennial's impact is deeper than just that. We have just started to use methods that allow us to discuss the indirect effects of the biennial. But its effect in the Urals is hard to overestimate. We have already received three national Innovation art prizes—according to the assessment of the professional community and the international jury, we won the award for best curatorial project, best regional project, and the main award—Project of the Year—this year. The biennial develops the cultural environment of the region, and also it has become a platform for a big amount of new initiatives from all over the world integrating Russian and international artists and curators.

6. Can you talk about the funding processes and sources? How do you think this affects the biennial? Does it affect it at all?

This affects it in a huge way, of course. And as a public institution, we openly talk about our funding. Our basis is resources of the initiators—the Federal Ministry of Culture, the Regional Government and the Municipal Government—and we always specify these amounts. In the same way, we specify the amounts we get from other sources. In our case, we have a positive dynamic: at the first biennial, it was something minuscule like US\$300,000, while by the 4th edition we had US\$1.5 million. We always talk about funding, about its shortage, and about the importance of support of cultural initiatives by businesses. As a fundraiser, I can say that the biennial has been a format that more easily attracts money than the everyday activity of an institution. The biennial working with various audiences is more attractive to sponsors than some museum patrons program.

7. What sort of curatorial, institutional, or technological innovations can help ensure the vibrancy and relevance of biennials going forward?

In our case, we might need some curatorial innovation that would allow us to be less dependent on a venue—because one of our main dramas is the search for a new relevant venue every time, and turning it into an exhibition space. On one hand, it is the impulse of our biennial related to its industrial specifics—to find an industrial site, or a constructivist monument for the main venue. But on the other, it is a permanent struggle between the space and the art. So, it would be cool to find some curatorial move that would free us from this struggle.

In general, the biennial format itself is an ongoing innovation, an experiment with the newest trends, possibilities, and so on. Any biennial tries to apply everything new that appears and test it. In this way, a biennial can be called the main springboard for any kind of innovation, almost in any field.

Andrea Bellini

Artistic director of the Biennial of Moving Images
(Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement)

Andrea Bellini (b. 1971) is an Italian curator and contemporary art critic based in Geneva, Switzerland. Since 2012, he has been director of the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, and artistic director of the Biennial of Moving Images (Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement) in Geneva.

Between 2007 and 2009, he worked as a curatorial advisor at MoMA PS1, and from 2009 to 2012, he was co-director of the Castello di Rivoli with Beatrice Merz.

In 2014, with the support of the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, where he works at the moment, and with curatorial help of Hans-Ulrich Obrist and Yann Chateigné, he proposed a new format for the Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement in Geneva, a biennial that started from a workshop in 1985 and has grown ever since to become the only biennial of its kind in Europe.

1. What was your motivation to work on a biennial? What was your position/ task?

When I arrived in Geneva in late 2012, I was asked to re-think the city's Biennial of Moving Images (BIM). The Biennial was founded by André Iten in 1985, during a workshop with artists Silvie and Chérif Defraoui. It was initially called International Video Week and was one of the first events of this kind in Europe. For over 30 years, the BIM represented a very important platform for video art, especially during the '80s and the '90s, when it was not so easy to actually watch artists' videos and experimental films. The situation changed gradually over the last 15 years with the development of new technologies and the growing interest of the art world toward this medium. Today, we can see moving images everywhere, using low-budget personal devices like computers, smartphones, etc. I told myself it would have been anachronistic to ask an international audience to come to Geneva just to see existing artworks they could actually see everywhere, even at home. That's why I decided to focus on production, providing a budget for every artist, filmmaker, or performer, in order to create a new piece. In this sense our Biennial is a sort of strange hybrid: it's an exhibition, a produc-

tion platform, a film festival, and also a sort of happening with performances and live concerts.

2. How can you describe the model of the biennial you worked for, also compared to other biennials?

Our biennial model is pretty different from any other. We commission and produce all the artworks we present. We do not show existing artworks in order to illustrate the curators' concept, as it happens for almost all the others biennials around the world. We focus on the artworks, on their production, on their creation, on their diffusion.

3. What goals/wishes are connected with your biennials? What should be achieved? What were your personal goals?

We really try to consider the artwork as the ultimate goal of all our efforts. In this sense, the relationship with the artists is quintessential for us. Let's say that if other biennials exist thanks to the artworks they show, in our case more than 20 new artworks exist (every two years) thanks to the biennial we organize. It's really an opposite dynamic in a certain sense. Even if new productions are the core concept of our biennial, we also make an effort to give every edition a particular taste. For example, the next one (due to open on November 8, 2018)—which I'm co-curating with Andrea Lissoni, senior curator of film and international art at Tate Modern—it will focus on the installation aspect, so we'll try to create an immersive environment where the moving image will be projected everywhere, except on screens!

4. Biennials have proliferated as the art world has scaled in size and global reach in recent decades; however, very little information exists about the exact number, geographical reach, and funding and governance structures of these arts organizations. Can we compare biennials at all?

I guess we can compare everything. At the same time, I think we should resist the temptation to affirm that there's a model that's better than any other one. There's enough space to explore different ideas and directions.

5. Biennials provide a point of convergence for the art world, expose large audiences to art (and other disciplines and mediums), and catalyze interest in cities and regions with global aspirations. Do biennials necessarily have a positive social and economic impact?

Yes, in different degrees; that's why we've been witnessing the explosion of biennials everywhere. Of course, very few of them are interesting enough to participate in what we could call the "public debate around contemporary art." But this is fine as well: every biennial is also a mirror of one particular geographical and cultural place, so even if some of them might seem less interesting than others, very often they end up having an important role in any case.

6. Can you talk about the funding processes and sources? How do you think this might affect the biennial? Does it affect it at all?

For sure, it affects it. Having a good budget is always good, especially for those—like us—who produce artworks. It's also true that we are a relatively low-budget biennial, like the one in Berlin, and those are usually more interesting and prestigious than other blockbuster biennials. Then you have also the case of the Venice Biennale—that's a very low-budget one, but it continues to be prestigious because of its history, because of the city, because of its structure (with the National Pavilions), because of its glamour. Even if the Venice Biennale is not always a relevant event, culturally speaking I mean.

7. What sort of curatorial, institutional, or technological innovations can help ensure the vibrancy and relevance of biennials going forward?

Well, I guess you need many things. The most important one is a vision and a group of people able to pursue ambitious goals.

Misal Adnan Yıldız
Istanbul 2007-2013

Misal Adnan Yıldız is a curator, writer, and educator.

1. What was your motivation to work on a biennial? What was your position/task?

I have had several experiences within the context of working for/with biennials. During 2008, parallel to the preparation process of *Manifesta 7*, I was part of Hot-Desking, which was based on a collaborative work between Raqs Media Collective and CuratorLab. CuratorLab is an international curatorial study program in Stockholm located at the Konstfack Art Academy. Hot-Desking was formulated to engage young curators in the research and production process of a large-scale show. We connected different cities with a diverse program of events and publications in Istanbul, Rome, Paris, and Stockholm. The year before, in 2007, I was also one of the co-curators of *Nightcomers*, a mobile video program for late night for Hou Hanru's Istanbul Biennial (10th edition). In both cases, globally speaking or in a metropolis, collective curating, collaborative thinking, social change and mobility, networking, and public space were inevitable links in our discussions. My experience with working with/for the Istanbul Biennial was not only limited to that edition; I was also one of the curatorial collaborators for Fulya Erdemci's Istanbul Biennial in 2013 (13th Edition). That is completely another story...

During my tenure at Artspace NZ, Maria Lind invited us to take part in her project, Biennale Fellows for the Gwangju Biennale (GB11) in 2016. I visited the Biennale and had the chance to discuss the process with the participants, but John Mutambu, curatorial assistant from Artspace NZ at that time, represented our institution during the opening week. GB11 developed an alternative map of international art institutions that operate in relation to concerns around local engagement and global networks. In 2016, I was invited to take part in the 9th edition of SIART (International Biennial of Art Bolivia) as a curatorial collaborator by the curator of the biennial, Joaquín Sánchez, who is also a practicing artist. For the exhibition program, I produced two solo shows by Nilbar Güres and Fiona Clark, in close conversation with the artists. These conversations, my interest in understanding indigenous practices, feminist and queer history, and social change within another contextual experience coincided with responding to his show by linking queer stories with a question on human life span: How do we relate with our communities?

In all of these examples, I have had very different sorts of motivations, professional, conceptual, curatorial... In each case, the possibility of being able to be part of a process of a large-scale show becomes an advantage to understand our currency, the zeitgeist.

2. How can you describe the model of the biennial(s) you worked for, also compared to other biennials?

Even though I have experienced different cases through working for different biennial organizations, I have more or less had the similar role or position—I was a “curatorial” collaborator. In most of the cases, I was one of the researchers, practitioners, or curators who committed to the instructions, plans, and conceptual thinking processes of another curator, another curatorial mind, or let’s say author/über-curator. So yes, I brought my experience, knowledge, and ideas into a cognitive map that was predefined by someone else. Among all these experiences, for your question, I would like to focus on the edition from 2013, the 13th Istanbul Biennial curated by Fulya Erdemci. Rather than a model, it was totally a new set of knowledge and experience packaged to respond to the political facts when they were happening. That show not only included the existing political tensions of urban transformation, local dynamics, and public space-public time inside its research and discussion process, but will also definitely stay with us as an unresolved form. There is still no negotiation, or consensus, on its reception. It was not a celebration or a party event. Fulya managed to bring very important works from the history of public space and invite a close conversation with what was happening in Turkey.

Although I joined Fulya’s team pretty late, after she had almost chosen her participating artists list and venues, I actually still managed to support the production process of some specific projects, which were based on performative approaches. Fulya has a unique way of thinking about exhibitions, and she surely holds an intellectual position before many other concerns. So rather than a presenter, she is a game-changer. In my opinion, her Istanbul Biennial was dedicated to how the city Istanbul has been resisting the neo-capitalist Islamist economy, how the global neoliberal transformations change our environments and its actors. Especially her public program at the Greek School, which happened during the biennial, responded to all the questions and problems Istanbul was going through before and after the Gezi Occupy movement. The show was free of charge, and it was seen by a huge number of visitors.

Art history will acknowledge Fulya and her Istanbul Biennial edition in time—this is what I believe. It happened before, during, and right after the Gezi Occupy movement. It was about freedom of speech, the right to live, and resistance... Who cares about contemporary art and its illustrations in a state of emergency? In such a historical timing of events, her model was dedicated to being part of the street, the protests, the social awareness... We were experiencing a new state of mind regarding politics, and her challenge was to understand what was changing and to respond at the same time. Her show was happening at the very moment of change.

It is a unique form or model for me, because the 13th Istanbul Biennial tried to cope with the actual fact, the responsibility of being a “good” citizen; being part of civil disobedience and collective resistance against state violence and political repression. And so it paid the cost of its witnessing this historical moment. I think it is such a unique a biennial model for me, for which I will digest its conditions, consequences, and post-scriptum for the rest of my life. The model of dealing with what was actually happening in front of our eyes. We had to unite under the shelter of ethics, questions, and references of our practices. Our country, our constitution, and our citizenship did not function...

3. What goals/wishes are connected with your biennial(s)? What should be achieved? What were your personal goals?

My biennial? I never had my own, but can we own them at all? Who is the owner of any biennial? Curator, artists, the organization, the city, or sponsors? Your question formulates itself through referring to an exhibition, which is a form of public domain as “your biennial(s),” and this is why I am responding with these questions. Do biennials really need this much branding, marketing, celebration, establishment, networking, belongingness, authorship, and possessiveness? Maybe they could be more “chill-out” sorts of spaces, less controlled forms of gathering for complex systems of audience development? Exhibitions, especially biennials, which are kind of large-scale visual investments, are considered open structures for me. I would like to imagine more open space for audiences...

In a nutshell, I have not had the opportunity to curate a biennial myself yet, and I sometimes imagine, dream, or speculate when I see some biennial shows about what would I do if they were to be curated by me... Every exhibition inherits specific contextual references. These vary from its timing to its place, location, or context. Things happen, things move, and things change based on conversation, negotiations, renegotiations. I would like to take it from here. Every exhibition is a specific case, and a unique form.

4. Biennials have proliferated as the art world has scaled in size and global reach in recent decades; however, very little information exists about the exact number, geographical reach, and funding and governance structures of these arts organizations. Can we compare biennials at all?

Yes, and no. Yes, we need to develop some analytical tools. Without such tools like comparing and contrasting, how could we develop a proper critique and relevant conversations? But also, no to all sorts of rankings, hierarchies, and that sort of professional, art-ambitious, art-speak bitchy tone to list the best five biennials or highlights of 2018. First of all, before every other argument, biennials are still exhibitions, or at least based on ideas related to exhibitions. Not a city promotion, not a marketing tool or a PR event-ing, nor gentrification-friendly political tools...They are still and first of all, EXHIBITIONS. And I want a good narration when I visit a show. They do not need to show 1,000 artworks and invite 250 artists.

5. Biennials provide a point of convergence for the art world, expose large audiences to art (and other disciplines and mediums), and catalyze interest in cities and regions with global aspirations. Do biennials necessarily have a positive social and economic impact?

I think so. At least, I would like to see them still as potential places that risk, and that failure can happen in the art context. Where else can we see experimental works at such a big scale of production?

6. Can you talk about the funding processes and sources? How do you think this affects the biennial? Does it affect it at all?

Yes. It is urgent to talk about how collectors, galleries, art dealers, and the art market are involved into these structures, organizations, and conversations, which are supposed to be primarily defined as non-profit, public, and social spaces, but do we still believe their “non-profit-ness” or independence? After seven years of directing art institutions, one in the Northern and another one in the Southern Hemisphere, I could easily state that one needs to convince benefactors, sponsors, and state authorities to run any program of exhibitions, not only for producing art objects but also for

bringing people together in safe places... Like architects, we operate with other people's budgets, spaces, and resources, so the question becomes more critical at some levels: Who decides what we see at the galleries and museums, who pays for them, and who earns their living from it? This whole event becomes an economy that some people need to pay for and for which some others need to be paid.

7. What sort of curatorial, institutional, or technological innovations can help ensure the vibrancy and relevance of biennials going forward?

I do not have an answer, but I can add some more on top of your already existing questions with a few relevant points of discussion. First of all, I am very curious how digital learning will have an impact on exhibitions as places of education. This is also related to its consumption, deception, and recapture, too; so the question is also related to how the global art visitor is going to cruise from one biennial to another when there are hundreds of biennial shows opening all around the world every day, every week, every month.

I am also interested in talking about exhibitions and biennials as spaces of intimacy and unsafe places for all sorts of bodies... It is immediately followed by another one: How can a biennial function in a society without a state?



Fiona Clark, *Carmen*, installation at the Museo Nacional de Arte, SIART 2016, La Paz Bolivia, courtesy of the artist, SIART and Michael Lett.

Julia Moritz

is an art historian and curator with a focus on experimental public programming and education. She worked as “Curator of Theory and Programmes” at Kunsthalle Zurich, and headed “The Maybe Education and Public Programs” of dOCUMENTA (13), in Kassel (2012). Previously, Moritz taught contemporary art history at the University of Lüneburg (2012), where she organized exhibitions and event programs for the University’s art space, Kunstraum. In addition, she has worked on major exhibitions such as *Manifesta 7* in Trentino/Alto Adige (2008); the German Pavilion at the 52nd Biennale di Venezia (2007) and has independently curated several smaller scale projects such as the *Young Girl Reading Group Show* (with Dorota Gaweda and Egle Kulbokaite, 2016). Moritz also co-edited the volume *Question of the Day* (2007) in which she puts forward a dialogical inquiry into the formats used for art production and distribution that she further elaborated in a PhD dissertation (2010) on institutional critical practice in spaces of conflict, mainly written in collaboration with the Whitney Independent Studies Program, New York.

1. What was your motivation to work at dOCUMENTA(13)? What was your position/task?

I was hired by Chus Martínez (Head Curator of dOCUMENTA (13)) as the Head of the Department that we called “Maybe Education and Other Programs.” I was working as a curator and lecturer at the University Gallery in Lüneburg (near Hamburg) at the time; it was my first job after my PhD on Institutional Critique, which I started after two biennial jobs, as Curatorial Assistant for the German Pavilion of the Biennale di Venezia (2007) and Assistant Curator (a small but crucial difference) for Manifesta (2008). My motivation to accept this challenge was to merge these two rather distinct professional passions: experimental art education/theory and sustainable large-scale curatorial work, because I felt (and still strongly feel) that the two can greatly benefit from each other.

2. How would you describe the model of the biennial you worked for? Also compared to other biennials?

How to describe? In words, I shall say ;) Even though that’s actually harder than it may sound. Perhaps a diagram might be better suited, in fact, or a mind-map perhaps, a map of a multitude of minds, rather... Well, okay, let me try:

The main difference between dOCUMENTA and other biennials is that dOCUMENTA is technically not even a biennial, simply because it does not take place every other year but only every fifth year. This “larger” cycle of documentas allows for more in-depth research, planning, and fundrasing (in theory...). Yet, this also leads to a magnification of the biennial format, to some sort of an über-biennial—what began as a small annex to a local garden show in 1955 is now the world’s largest art exhibition in motivation and visitation. However, the growth of the host city, Kassel, does not match the growth of the biennial, or “the art world” for that matter, which means that the nearly one million visitors of dOCUMENTA(13) stampeded over only a fifth of the number of inhabitants (about 200,000) in 100 days—an unparalleled disproportion with a particular and growing responsibility for each edition’s specific education department.

3. What goals are connected with your biennials? Were they achieved?

To answer this question I must mention another crucial difference among biennials: the definition of the education department that varies or depends on the changing artistic directors and curatorial departments—or rather belongs to the permanent, more managerial team. There are lots of advantages and disadvantages for both scenarios, as always. In dOCUMENTA (13)'s case, my department was part of the edition's specific extended curatorial team. In short: I can only speak of the goals of this specific edition. And still, those goals were extremely diverse: from the managerial (visitation, budget, reputation), curatorial/educational point of view, to the hundred different artistic aspirations for each individual project. Overall, I would say, it was a rather successful and satisfying edition for most of the individuals involved. Creating a bit of productive confusion/tension (in the tradition of skepticism, or the speculative method of the question) on almost all sides (see the typeface) was part of the curatorial concept, so I would say that this overarching goal was well achieved.

4. Biennials have proliferated as the art world has scaled in size and global reach in recent decades; however, very little information exists about the exact number, geographical reach, and funding and governance structures of these arts organisations. Can we compare biennials at all?

Well, not being able to compare them would mean there is zero data available, which is not the case. My impression is rather the opposite: the growth of biennial studies seems proportional to the proliferation of the format itself. Basically, you just need to consider those proportions carefully, as with every site-specific and of course historically-specific cases, i.e. the number of editions in relation to the general growth of artistic production, presentation, and reception; the number of artists on view, staff, budget in relation to the city/region's funding, inhabitants, art institutions, and so forth. For example, an important aspect for comparing biennials' educational requirements is that a relatively reliable parameter to measure the local audience's position on the spectrum of «familiarity-alienation with contemporary art» is the existence, size, and quality (international teachers, gallery, etc.) of a local art academy and the resulting presence of art students in the city. In short: yes, a fairly complex but fairly rewarding comparative research.

5. Biennials provide a point of convergence for the art world, expose large audiences to art, and catalyze interest in regions with global aspirations. Do biennials necessarily have a positive social and economic impact?

Again, the definition of "positive" varies greatly with regard to the history and geography of a biennial's situation/situatedness. And, of course, it is a rather ideological term: who benefits from the definition of "positive"—for what and when? In most cases (I would dare say 'all'), biennials are products of an intricate cultural-political tissue, mostly of a broader infrastructural nature, such as the city/regional marketing you mention. And you say it rightly, being in close connection with the attribute "global"—and the "positive" narration of globalization's social and economic impact—is certainly and luckily a thing of the past, overcome by newer definitions of «positive,» such as "(trans)locality" and "sustainability." I do think that most biennials have understood this paradigmatic shift and adjusted their aims and means, like, for example, with growing education departments and budgets. The best model for studying this aspect of social and economic impact is certainly Manifesta, the biennial that changes its location for every edition, even though their data is rather hard to get, due to (as far as I know) an anxiety produced by one edition in its history that was entirely cancelled (Manifesta 6 in Cyprus).

6. Can you talk about funding processes and resources? How do you think this affects the biennial, if at all?

I will say this: everyone who answers this question negatively («no, the resources don't affect my biennial») is highly suspect—of a number of crimes, most importantly of naiveté. It is dangerous.

7. What sort of curatorial, institutional, or technological innovations can help ensure the vibrancy and relevance of biennials going forward?

If only your listed factors—“curatorial and institutional”—will be decisive for biennials' destiny, we should be pretty safe concerning the “vibrancy and relevance” of this format. If, in contrast, managerial and political “innovations” will pave the way for future biennials, they will function as just another artistically well-oiled marketing machine, like gallery or even museum franchises (see “The Bilbao Effect”). And this is not to play out logistics versus content (as is so often the case in biennial criticism). I believe that both elements are and must be intertwined to make things happen. However, the power play at stake in any organization's development is the pitfall: the bigger the pit, the bigger the fall—like the recent unfortunate aftermath of dOCUMENTA14. Technology today, always, and forever, figures as an instrument in the hands of the beholder (however animate it may be conceived of)—is this the saber for future enlightenment?

Jean Kamba

Biennale de Kinshasa (YANGO)

Jean Kamba lives and works in Kinshasa. He graduated with a degree (BAC +5) in information sciences and communication at the National Pedagogical University of Kinshasa (UPN), at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities in 2012. Writer, poet, journalist, and critic of art, he also organizes exhibitions. Assistant of research at the Kinshasa Academy of Fine Arts, Kamba is also one of the members of the Kinshasa-Africa cluster in the network “Another road map school.” He works in the management of artistic projects focused on contemporary art. He worked on the first Kinshasa Biennale: “Biennale de Kinshasa (YANGO).”

1. What was your motivation to work on a biennial? What was your position/task?

I was motivated by the simple fact of participating in an event of this magnitude—a first biennial held in Kinshasa by a young Congolese Kiripi Katembo. I worked on the writing of artists' texts, too, and I sometimes helped in technical terms.

2. How can you describe the model of the biennial you worked for, also compared to other biennials?

It was an artistic event different from what we were accustomed to seeing: a set of good quality exhibitions with various kinds of artistic expressions from elsewhere. Local artists were mixed with those of international fame, and the differences were not easily read. Compared to other biennials such as LUBUMBASHI, I would say that the Kinshasa Biennial was done according to the realities of Kinshasa.

3. What goals/wishes are connected with your biennials? What should be achieved? What were your personal goals?

The Biennale of Kinshasa (Yango) had the aim of disrupting the art scene in Kinshasa in particular and Congolese in general. The promotion of young local artists through the consideration of international professional artists was one of the objectives. On my side, I also aimed a positioning on the national and international scene through professional contacts.

4. Biennials have proliferated as the art world has scaled in size and global reach in recent decades; however, very little information exists about the exact number, geographical reach, and funding and governance structures of these arts organizations. Can we compare biennials at all?

Although there are multiple biennales, I do not believe that it is necessary to compare them because each one is done according to a precise context. For example, with the Biennale of Kinshasa, the workforce was local and almost everybody worked in technical terms. I remember how one day the curator told us that everyone (writers, artists, etc.) had to work and lend a hand to mount the exhibition... I believe biennials are subject to local realities that remain the peeper not to neglect.

5. Biennials provide a point of convergence for the art world, expose large audiences to art (and other disciplines and mediums), and catalyze interest in cities and regions with global aspirations. Do biennials necessarily have a positive social and economic impact?

In our country, the Biennale of Kinshasa was not in this logic. It is more the artistic community that could profit from this opportunity, but the general public was not interested in this event. It is a little difficult to quantify the impact of this event on the general public, but I believe that it is only the artistic community that benefited.

6. Can you talk about the funding processes and sources? How do you think this affects the biennial? Does it affect it at all?

I was not in the organization, but I know that the organizers had trouble with the funding because the partners who had promised to contribute desisted at the last minute, so the things were done in a pinch. Through the courage and determination of the initiator of the project cited above, and through the limited funding provided by some sponsors installed in the country, the Yango Biennale was born. I think that external funding greatly affects biennials, because they affect the conditions and the organization. Moreover, other partners do not give money but rather in material terms.

7. What sort of curatorial, institutional, or technological innovations can help ensure the vibrancy and relevance of biennials going forward?

I think it will take a curatorial logic focused on the interventionist conception of art in society and not one that advocates the pure and simple commercialization of works of art. I am often against the way that the curator promotes a sort of networking in the form of a coterie. The curator must design a project based on the realities of the city of the biennial and expect a structuring of visible impacts in the medium- and long-term—this artistically and socially because a biennial involves the identity of a city and a whole people.

Qudsia Rahim

Lahore Biennale

Qudsia Rahim is the co-founder of the Lahore Biennale and also served as a co-curator for the inaugural edition. She is a graduate of the National College of Arts Lahore and is a trustee of the Lahore Biennale Foundation.

1. What was your motivation to work on a Lahore biennale? What was your position/task at the beginning, and what has it become over time?

The motivation to work, and to set up this organization, has come out of numerous conversations that were gradually built amongst friends and professional colleagues since my return from New York about a decade ago. My first public arts project was an elective, Art for Humanity (2011), which I introduced between public-private partners in the form of an arts intervention during my time at the National College of Arts (NCA) where I was curator of the Zahoor Ul Akhlaq Gallery. Students from across disciplines worked at one of the largest community hospitals to see how, through a human-centered design approach, we could bring about the necessary changes for the various stakeholders to function better within their given conditions. After running through a couple of cycles of the elective, we realized that one program per year was not enough and that we needed to do more.

Meanwhile, the pre-existing conditions in the city, with a flourishing arts scene in terms of visual arts, literature, music, film, etc., was the perfect catalyst for an organization like the Lahore Biennale Foundation. The idea behind the Foundation has been to facilitate opportunities for creative practitioners in the field of art(s).

As Executive Director of the Foundation, I have had the great honor to lead multiple public art collaborations, the largest of which of course has been our flagship event, the multi-venue Lahore Biennale that wrapped up in March 2018, and for which I served as Director. Now, we are in the reflective stage, gearing up to plan the next edition.

2. How would you describe the model of the biennial you have worked towards and created, also compared to other biennials you have visited?

It has a very simple premise—to serve as a facilitator to the creative practitioner by providing opportunities for engagement in the field of the arts.

There was a lot of initial preparation. I undertook various study trips, and there was a period of intense study, awareness, and reflection in terms of goals that needed to be achieved and the vision that we had set out for the organization. Our vision for LB01 came from our working in the field for the last four years and was also shaped by what we have learned from our peers in the region and beyond. We consciously focused on issues that make sense in the local and South Asian context and for Lahore, at this juncture. For this purpose, staying true to a regional focus has been very important.

3. What goals/wishes are connected with your Biennale over the medium- to long-term? What should be achieved in your opinion? What were your personal goals at the beginning, and what have they become?

On a basic level, our goal is to create networks of partners and through them generate conversations and bring arts to the public. We have, and will continue to provide

grants, commissions, and opportunities either for the production of artworks, or for the creation of new research. In the long-term, our wish is that the Foundation is but one of many other active organizations, collectives, and entities, thus enriching the overall art scene in the city and country, and creating an environment that supports a thriving cultural life.

Overall we are encouraged by how much we have achieved in such little time. It has been four years since the inception of LBF, and we have carried out several successful public art projects in addition to the inaugural Biennale in 2018. We are also happy with the response from both local and international audiences and are in the process of learning from feedback we have received, and with self-reflection, we plan to forge ahead.

4. Biennials have proliferated as the art world has scaled in size and global reach in recent decades; however, very little information exists about the exact number, geographical reach, and funding and governance structures of these arts organizations. Can we compare biennials at all?

Possibly there are shared characteristics amongst some of the major biennials. However, it is perhaps not appropriate to compare biennials that are distinctive in addressing the specificity of their own location with others that are purely international, or very established biennials with emerging ones.

Most biennials do emerge from a strong local context. It is these local conditions that make them special. Since biennials are subject to interpretation, and exist in these conditions due to many factors, it is important that these conversations proliferate and are not simply classified by taxonomy.

5. Biennials provide a point of convergence for the art world, expose large audiences to art (and other disciplines and mediums), and catalyze interest in cities and regions with global aspirations, would you agree? How does the LB satisfy this promise? Do biennials necessarily have a positive social and economic impact?

While the convergence and exposure of the larger art world is important, one must remember to be true to the relevance of the local context. Biennials are celebrations or awareness of the local context in relation to the global. As conditions around the world are increasingly becoming shared, the need for a global dialogue is a necessity. We aspire that the LB will continue to develop meaningful conversations by means of engagement with the “glocal” arts community.

Given that Pakistan lacks public spaces such as museums of contemporary art, one of the aims of the Biennale was to create this type of exposure for local audiences, and to enrich conversation and dialogue within the local, regional, and global art environment. LB01 aimed to celebrate creativity, foreground diversity, foster coexistence and participation, and encourage a multiplicity of representations. In the future, too, we hope to build new conversations locally and within and beyond the region, showcase the rich context of Lahore and the immense creativity of its people and institutions, and through the artistic medium ask new questions about ourselves, our relations with others, our environment, and the urban condition.

6. Can you talk about the funding processes and sources? How do you think these affected the first edition of the Biennale?

We were fortunate to have had sustained relationships with major benefactors from various individual, institutional, and corporate sponsors, as well as governmental

partners. They all aided us prolifically in terms of providing support—both monetary and in-kind. In addition, there were several friends of the Foundation, and artists themselves who contributed in various ways to generously support the Biennale.

7. What sort of curatorial, institutional, or technological innovations can help ensure the vibrancy and relevance of art biennials going forward?

Technology is increasingly becoming an integrated part of our lives. As boundaries between the physical and the virtual worlds are redefined, we have so many more innovative ways of engaging with technology. Institutions and art platforms need to engage meaningfully with technology as an artistic medium, as infrastructure, and as enabling new possibilities for engaging with audiences. However, celebration of technology should never be an end in itself, at the expense of engagement with the human and the social world.

Alexandra Blättler and Sabine Rusterholz Petko

Founders and Co-Directors of the Klöntal Triennale

Alexandra Blättler (b. 1977 Lucerne, lives in Zurich) is an art historian and curator. Since 2006, she has been director of the contemporary photography room of the Volkart Foundation (Coalmine in Winterthur) and is also jointly responsible for cultural awards on the Board of Trustees. Since 2012, she has regularly curated for the Gebert Foundation for Culture and initiated, for example, an award for young Swiss design. In addition to her curatorial work, she sits on various committees and juries (Federal Office of Culture, Art Commission of the Canton of Schaffhausen, etc.). In 2014, together with Sabine Rusterholz, she initiated the Klöntal Triennale at Glarus, which was successfully staged for the second time in 2017. Since 2017 she has been a member of the Culture Promotion Commission of the Canton of Zurich.

Sabine Rusterholz Petko (b. 1973 Zurich, lives in Zurich) is an art historian and freelance curator. Between 2008–2015, she was director of the Kunsthaus Glarus. There, she was responsible for the exhibition programme and produced numerous publications, as well as solo and group exhibitions with international and Swiss artists. In 2014, together with Alexandra Blättler, she initiated the Klöntal Triennale, an exhibition project in the outer space of the Klöntal above Glarus, which was held for the second time in 2017. As a freelance author, she writes exhibition reviews, e.g. for *Kunstbulletin* and *Zuritipp*. Since the beginning of 2016, she has been a member of the Art Commission of the City of Zurich.

1. What was your motivation to work on a biennial? What was your position/ task?

The initiative was born from the occasion of working at Kunsthaus Glarus in the past. The interesting backdrop, in the middle of a stunning landscape close to the mountains, was one starting point for this initiative. Domiciled at the beautiful museum building, the step was self-evident, to work—once outside the safe walls of an institution—toward new horizons, new challenges. But our ideas weren't brand new. Another point of reference was a tradition of art events going far back into the past in the nearby valley of Klöntal. There was, for example, a colony of landscape painters in 1856

and a century later in the 1990s land art artists like Richard Long, Hamish Fulton, or Carl Andre and Balthasar Burkhard leaving traces in the region. The inspirational moments were manifold.

2. How can you describe the model of the biennial you worked for, also compared to other biennials?

After an institutional kickoff with Kunsthaus Glarus for the project, we are now legally constituted as an association, independent from an institution but very much interested in an ongoing collaboration with people and places in and around Glarus. The regional network is a very important tool to keep such an initiative alive. Right now, we are working with a very small group of people and with limited financial means.

3. What goals/wishes are connected with your biennial? What should be achieved? What were your personal goals?

Our goal was to connect people closely to art, to enhance art experiences, and to reach a broad public locally as well as globally (more virtually in this case). It has always been about challenging tolerances for cultural aspects and new perspectives. Another goal was to bring artists to special places and connect them to the everyday in order to outline possible new approaches and extraordinary strategies with new production specific to the sites.

4. Biennials have proliferated as the art world has scaled in size and global reach in recent decades; however, very little information exists about the exact number, geographical reach, and funding and governance structures of these arts organizations. Can we compare biennials at all?

We often visit biennials. In our case, we don't see the Klöntal Triennale as something similar to any other initiative. We are definitely a small-scale project compared to many other ones. And the project has quite a personal background. We don't really have to aim for either commercial or touristic goals, which is quite unique and a real privilege. We have a passionate and at times almost self-exploiting attitude towards it. Up to now, we have been able to maintain a very independent and experimental form of exhibition-making in a beautiful landscape. In 2017, for example, with a performative approach and a variety of ephemeral events (hikes, drone flights at night, performances and discursive programs), it was quite a risky experiment with open ends since we were taking things a bit far out, not knowing how the audience would react. We are quite dependent, though, on social media to expand into the rest of the world.

5. Biennials provide a point of convergence for the art world, expose large audiences to art (and other disciplines and mediums), and catalyze interest in cities and regions with global aspirations. Do biennials necessarily have a positive social and economic impact?

If not a concrete impact, then hopefully they can foster more philosophical or critical debates. Right now, our Triennale is too young to really demonstrate a concrete impact. It has been a challenge to connect to the local situation, and there are still many things to be achieved. The future will show how much impact art can really have in a rural context like this.

6. Can you talk about the funding processes and sources? How do you think this affects the biennial? Does it affect it at all?

Our Triennale is exclusively funded by public and private money we source from a number of cultural foundations. In our case, being in Switzerland makes things much easier, we would say. There are still plenty of possibilities to get funding. It is important to say that without the funding, the Triennale would not exist. And we have to admit that half of our energy goes into funding.

7. What sort of curatorial, institutional, or technological innovations can help ensure the vibrancy and relevance of biennials going forward?

We hope to get all this innovative energy from our network of artists from all over the world. One goal in the future would be to make the Triennale more stable in terms of finances and structures without losing our integrity and freedom with regard to the content. But after all, and this is very important: we see the Klöntal Triennale as a format that can change over time. And we try to keep it free from any expectations or obligations. It will be carried by a good amount of idealism, innovation, and experimental spirit. And, of course, in times of decreasing financial means for the cultural field, this is hard enough to maintain.

Wato Tsereteli

Tbilisi Triennial

Wato Tsereteli is an artist, curator, and creative administrator. He studied film in Tbilisi and obtained an MA from the Department of Photography at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp (Belgium). In 2010, he established the Center of Contemporary Art Tbilisi—an institution that occupies abandoned places in the city and transforms them into zones of urban creativity. In 2012, Tsereteli initiated the Tbilisi Triennial—a long-term project focused on education and research into self-organized and independent art practices worldwide. Tsereteli's artistic works are two, three, and four-dimensional objects with well-structured spatial organization, while his larger initiatives recreate public and private spaces into artistic and social settings.

1. What was your motivation to found/curate the Tbilisi Triennial?

In 2011, when CCA Tbilisi had already existed for two years, we invited about fifteen active curators, artists, and cultural managers in Georgia to discuss the international context and what Tbilisi could offer to international audiences. Unfortunately, this meeting went nowhere; there was no common result achieved. Then the team of CCA Tbilisi decided to initiate a new international project, the Triennial, that would not focus on city branding, but on developing long-term processes; it would brand, if you wish, the subject, which ultimately became Education. Internationally even today academic institutions have difficulties being time-responsive; we don't mention visionary any more. Luckily, we met Henk Slager, a curator and researcher who has already been doing extensive research for years on matters like the Bologna Process, etc. The dialogue with Henk actually created the Triennial as it is now.

2. How can you describe the model of the (first) Tbilisi Triennial you created, also compared to other biennials?

As Tbilisi, and Georgia itself, is quite substantially unstable, our Triennial resonated with that reality. Generally, the choice of the rhythm of continuity was also an issue—to not create a kind of marathon, but rather to have a broader view.

The Triennial grew into a larger event that was a compilation of independently curated and produced projects. It's rather a rhizomatic, horizontal project. So, there is not this classical big-name curator and placement of a work...Diversity equals quality. The Triennial very much vibrates together with the reality here in this place.

3. What goals/wishes were/are connected with the Tbilisi Triennial? What should be achieved?

There cannot be a final point in this process. It's always directly educative: we call it the "dramaturgy of education." No drama, please—but you need to know the ways in which things are being offered. So, education is always there, in many forms. And then we try to activate certain fields in reality that are oriented toward change.

A triennial or any other long term project should be re-born over and over again. Reassembled...but if the structure and people are responsive, it usually works well.

4. Biennials provide a point of convergence for the art world, expose large audiences to art (and other disciplines and mediums), and catalyze interest in cities and regions with global aspirations. Do biennials necessarily have a positive social and economic impact?

The potentiality of a positive effect is there. A negative effect is probably the most banal and boring result of something totally different. If one is not fully dedicated and does not understand the larger context, it can be matter of doing a project just to do a project.

5. Can you talk about the funding processes and sources? How do you think this affected the Triennial? (Does it affect it at all?)

Politics are what affect the Triennial the most for us. And it's about things like elections, or other political events. In this moment, no one from the governmental side is able to make decisions. We managed to build quite constructive relationships with both the Ministry of Culture and also the Culture Department of Tbilisi's city hall. I must say that it's a great pleasure and sign of optimism that in both institutions, and also other governmental bodies, there are very curious, nice, and also intellectual people working. There has been immense change from 15 years ago...The Triennial is recognized by the Georgian government like other large cultural programs, e.g. Georgia is the guest country at the 2018 Frankfurt Book Fair. This takes quite a lot of resources.

6. What sort of curatorial, institutional, or technological innovations can help to ensure the vibrancy and relevance of biennials going forward?

The formats, according to which we all live must be checked and updated—that's what social innovation can probably mean. Any format of an event should be re-thought and subject to experimentation. In 2015, we did *SOS—Self Organized Systems*; it was the second edition of the Triennial. Artist Gio Sumbadze made a sculpture that had the purpose of hosting a theoretical forum at the Triennial. The forum indeed had a completely different atmosphere, informal but full of responsibility.

7. What sort of curatorial, institutional, or technological innovations can help ensure the vibrancy and relevance of biennials going forward?

The main problem in Georgia and many post-Soviet countries is the tremendous gap between the potential and the consciousness of the society. The philosopher Merab Mamardashvili described this as the “infantile condition of the society.” It comes from the 70-year mutation process applied by the regime. For three generations, the individual initiative was punished and oppressed; collectivization also did not work. For the second Tbilisi Triennial, we initiated research into how self-organization worked before the Communist occupation. There are two volumes that were published with 20 case studies. Cooperatives, emancipated female associations, communes... these were very popular and self-sustained from the end of the 19th century right up until Communist rule. As the team at CCA, we do recognize the importance of those aspects. It turned out that, without really being aware of it, our study program is oriented to support leadership. Soviet education, like the colonial kind, did not focus or develop this aspect, which in the end is initiative and responsibility.

Hajnalka Somogyi

OFF-Biennale Budapest

Hajnalka Somogyi is a curator of contemporary art. Since 2014, Somogyi has worked as leader and co-curator of OFF-Biennale Budapest, the largest civil, independent international art project in Hungary that is based on Somogyi's initiative. In 2013-2014, she was editor of *artmagazin.hu*. Between 2009–2012, she was curator at Ludwig Museum—Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest, and between 2001-2006 at Trafo—House of Contemporary Arts, Budapest. She co-founded the independent art initiatives Dinamo and Impex, both in Budapest.

1. What was your motivation to work on a biennial? What was your position/task?

OFF came about in order to strengthen the local independent art scene and to participate in public discourse by the means of art in an increasingly authoritarian, anti-intellectual, and xenophobic political context. The goal has been to gather and amplify the energies and ideas of the local scene, to enhance visibility, to create a ground on which we can network internationally (and fundraise), to bring up issues that are underrepresented in the local discourse, to work in a democratic structure that we can identify with. I initiated the project by proposing the idea of a grassroots, collaborative biennale in Budapest that boycotts the Hungarian state-run art infrastructure, in 2013. Since then, I work as the leader of the project.

2. How would you describe the model of the biennial you work for, also compared to other biennials?

OFF-Biennale Budapest is a grassroots endeavor, organized by a micro-association with the participation of many local artists, curators, groups, civil society organizations, galleries, collectors, scholars, students, etc. There is no central curatorial mastermind; instead, the program is the total of contributions by all the abovementioned participants. However, there is a central theme, and there is a selection process to ensure the strength of the program. The structure and methods of the biennale are always adapted to the fast-changing cultural-political context and to the needs of the

local scene. Nevertheless (or, exactly for this reason), the program is very international, and the project itself proposes some commentaries to international biennales. One such commentary can be that this biennale is based on a boycott, and it turns this format into something constructive. Furthermore, while biennales in general are often criticized for their institutional amnesia, OFF certainly develops a memory trope: having a very committed, stable Board that works as a (para-)institutional think-tank, and building on an ever-growing network of local and international partners, instead of engaging in international headhunting, it nurtures good old friendships. Operating in a political environment that is increasingly hostile toward organized civil action and free thought, this biennale is not an official tool for city marketing; it is often perceived as a protest against the undemocratic tendencies in Hungarian state governance.

3. What goals/wishes are connected with your biennials? What should be achieved? What were your personal goals?

The goal, as stated above, is to strengthen the local art scene. We would like to contribute to the creation of projects by Hungarian artists that could not be realized within the institutional system, and to bring international artists into dialog with this context. We would like to encourage and promote independent work in the field of art and to ensure visibility for the projects that are born this way. Supporting critical thinking and promoting art as its agent, contributing to public discourse on important but underrepresented issues are very important, as are our international connections and the discourses and projects that these collaborations enable. Beyond all this, my personal goal has been to gather all my best colleagues and friends on the platform of one project so that we can keep on working together even after the institutional system ceased to provide sufficient ground for that.

4. Biennials have proliferated as the art world has scaled in size and global reach in recent decades; however, very little information exists about the exact number, geographical reach, and funding and governance structures of these arts organizations. Can we compare biennials at all?

If one looks at the local social/economic/political/historical context of each biennale (which is rarely emphasized, except for cases of scandals), one might be able to observe interesting patterns and similarities. In acknowledgement of this background, it might be more meaningful to talk about various models and policies.

5. Biennials provide a point of convergence for the art world, expose large audiences to art (and other disciplines and mediums), and catalyze interest in cities and regions with global aspirations.

Do biennials necessarily have a positive social and economic impact?

No.

6. Could you talk about the funding processes and sources? How do you think this affects the biennial? Does it affect it at all?

In case of the past two editions (that's what we have had so far), two-thirds of our funding came from international sources: some of these only supported elements of our program (e.g. the Kulturstiftung des Bundes, ERSTE Stiftung), some aimed to support the local civil society through grants (Norwegian Civil Grant, Open Society Initiative). We get a lot of support from the cultural institutes that work in Hungary (e.g. Goethe-Institut Budapest, the French Institute, etc.). Local support comes from a group of private donors and from companies that mostly help with in-kind support (office and exhibition spaces, security services, book-keeping, storage, wine, etc.). Ensuring local support is the work of many people (gallerists, collectors, artists, etc.),

and it generates many collaborations and a spirit of common stakes; international funding contributes to the internationalization of the biennale and, unfortunately, puts our organization onto a governmental blacklist: international funding is officially suspect as it is seen as a means of exerting foreign influence. Besides, not working with public money in a country where the scene's vulnerability to political opportunism is caused partly by the lack of alternative resources and infrastructures, has been quite a challenge and has necessitated a huge amount of pro bono involvement, especially in order to launch the first edition. Sustainability is still far away.

7. What sort of curatorial, institutional, or technological innovations can help ensure the vibrancy and relevance of biennials going forward?

For us, being rooted in the local situation and working from there in ever-widening circles of networks has given a meaningful answer to this question; I'm not sure there is a general answer to it.

Adam Caruso

of Caruso St John Architects, London/Zurich
Participants in Venice Architecture Biennale

Adam Caruso (b. February 8, 1962) worked for Florian Beigel and Arup Associates before establishing his own practice with Peter St John in London in 1990. He has been Visiting Professor at the Academy of Architecture in Mendrisio, at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University, at the ETH Zurich, and on the Cities Programme at the London School of Economics, before being appointed in 2011 as Professor of Architecture and Construction at the ETH Zurich. Over the years of its practice, the office of Caruso St John Architects has actively engaged in the art world through exhibition, gallery, and museum design, as well as participating in several editions of the Venice Architecture Biennale and the Chicago Architecture Biennale.

1. What was your motivation for working on the Venice Architecture Biennale this year and before?

Generally, one is asked to be in the Biennale, and if the situation seems promising, or a friend has asked you, you participate. The situation is different in connection with our involvement in the British Pavilion this year, since one needs to apply. Most years, I check on who is on the jury and how the British Council has framed the call. I did that this year, and as usual decided to do nothing. Then Marcus Taylor asked me if I knew anything about the architecture biennale, because he had an idea. It was a good idea, so we applied together, and we were chosen.

2. How would you describe the model of the Venice Architecture Biennale compared to other biennials?

Architecture biennials are different and more recent than art biennials. I can sort of understand art biennials, although their character and purpose has dramatically changed since the rise of the art fair. The biennials are now a part of the art fair and auction travelling circus. Architecture biennials are more difficult to justify. They are not like a fair, since it is mostly other architects attending (MIPIM would be the equivalent of a fair). So the only reason to participate is that someone you like and respect is curating the event, so you are pleased to be amongst the company. You get

to meet some of your friends at the opening. Venice is the best established and oldest of the biennials, and it still has a rather European bias, so at least some of the editions still focus on explicitly architectural themes.

3. What goals are connected with the biennials you worked on? Were they achieved?

The biennials we have been involved in, in Venice, and the recent one in Chicago, had very clear themes set by the directors, and we made proposals which were agreed upon with them, and then further developed. I guess I am not interested in illustrating someone else's idea with our work, but I am interested in engaging in the idea in a critical way, one that is connected to the other contributions as well as saying its own thing. Like writing, or making one's own exhibition, being in a biennial is an opportunity to participate and extend a discourse about contemporary architecture, a discourse that is rather underdeveloped and that has few opportunities to be aired. My primary goal is to talk to my peers and, if possible, to challenge or at least amuse them.

4. Biennials have proliferated as the art world has scaled in size and global reach in recent decades; however very little information exists about the exact number, geographical reach, and funding and governance structures of these arts organizations. Can we compare biennials at all?

As I said above, although architecture and art biennials have proliferated, they are very different with very different objectives. I cannot really say why architecture biennials have proliferated, except maybe because they are envious of the art world. In the art world, the biennial and the art fair is where the, predominantly, contemporary art world, galleries, artists, and collectors congregate, and where increasing volumes of art are sold. This explains the growth of Art Basel and Frieze. Venice, documenta, and Munster, are all somehow implicated in that; it is where the big collectors go to have big dinners.

5. Biennials provide a point of convergence for the art world, expose large audiences to art, and catalyze interest in cities and regions with global aspirations. Do biennials necessarily have a positive social and economic impact?

I think that biennials have a very limited impact on a more general consciousness; they are primarily for the architecture world, or the art world. They even have a negative effect on art currents, as they are distractions from serious exhibitions, which perhaps within a constructive institutional framework (say the Tate in London) can actually address broader social issues and try to engage and connect local and more international themes.

6. Can you talk about the funding processes and sources? How do you think this affects the biennial?

It seems that all architecture biennials are underfunded, so the participants are expected to pay for everything, or at least most things. I guess at a big art biennials, if you are an established artist with a gallery, the gallery would support your show. For the British Pavilion at Venice, the initial budget was about half of what we needed (and our project is pretty cheap), so the British Council had to raise the rest of the funding, mostly as support in kind. We were expected to support their fundraising efforts. As for Chicago, it seems to be a big deal in the city, so there were many corporate sponsors supporting the whole thing, and we got more money. We still had to spend quite a lot ourselves. I am not sure what this lack of funding means, other than maybe there should be fewer architecture biennials.

7. What sort of curatorial, institutional, or technological innovations can help ensure the vibrancy and relevance of biennials going forward?

I think the most important thing is who the director of the biennial is, and this is the case for both art and architecture. If they are smart and well connected, they will have a theme that both engages with contemporary issues in interesting ways, and has the potential to make a good exhibition. Making a good exhibition is the most important thing; otherwise, you can make a book.

Mi Lan

Project Coordinator of the Bi-City Biennial of Urbanism/Architecture
Shenzhen (UABB) (until 2015)

Lan MI graduated from Shenzhen University, majored in communication studies. Later she completed her master degree of cultural management at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. She was the office director of UABB Organizing Committee Office till 2016. Now she lives in Sydney, continuing doing event planning and management for private companies. Before she joined the UABB office, she worked for Hong Kong International Art Fair/ART HK 09 (now is Art Basel Hong Kong). As event planner and organizer, she also participated in many arts and cultural projects including: “UNESCO: The International Conference on Digital Books and Future Technology”, Shenzhen NanShan Clocks and Watches Museum renovation project, “one day of Shenzhener”. Before that, as a fresh graduate from university, she worked for Shenzhen Media Group bao’an TV station and took part in the Study of Media Ecology and The Community Culture” (No. [2007]--76) carried out by the Department of Education of Guangdong Province.

1. What was your motivation to work on a biennial? What was your position/task?

I worked for a media company before I took the job at the Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism\Architecture (Shenzhen) [UABB], because I found culture and arts are in a way much closer to reality, to life. At the same time, current situations and problems can be touched upon and changed via this platform.

I was the director of the Urbanism\Architecture Organizing Committee Office in Shenzhen, and my job was to make sure the exhibition run smoothly, to make it more accessible to the general public, and to maximize its influence.

2. How can you describe the model of the biennial you worked for? Also compared to other biennials?

Established in 2005, UABB sets out to be an “ongoing urban experiment.” Its name has already disclosed the uniqueness: “Bi-City” and “Urbanism.” It is the only bi-city biennial, and it originates from the Urbanism\Architecture Biennale (Seoul just launched its first Urbanism\Architecture Biennale in 2017).

UABB has evolved into a unique breed among its kind, in that it is held and is an interaction between twin cities, focusing on the unprecedented rapid urbanization in China and issues of cities and urbanization. Additionally, besides the participating projects worldwide, the venue itself is also an exhibition. An abandoned space is chosen for the Biennale venue, and the curatorial team work with the architect and

the owner to accomplish the transformation. The venue is revived and reused by the owner to regenerate more value.

3. What goals/wishes are connected with your Biennale? What should be achieved? What were your personal goals?

UABB considers itself a catalyst, a live consultation platform, and a tool to reactivate urban space. UABB travels around the city, and has successfully revived a warehouse (now the most popular art space called OCAT), the civic center plaza (now reused as a public plaza), a glass factory, and a flour factory (now transformed into creative industrial parks).

UABB situates itself within the regional context of the rapidly urbanizing Pearl River Delta, concerns itself with globally common urban issues, extensively communicates and interacts with the wider public, is presented using expressions of contemporary visual culture, and engages in international and avant-garde dimensions as well as discourses of public interest.

In 2013, the chairman of the art and design center, Mr. Huang Weiwen, and I framed and urged the establishment of a “UABB school” section, which is the educational program of the Biennale. It has developed into a carnival during the exhibition with over 200 events that suit people from different backgrounds.

And this is exactly my personal goal: to make it accessible to people and to have it connect with people. Through educational programs, we invite the public to join in, to get to know the current situations, to reflect on the problems, and to search for solutions. It is a Biennale for all.

4. Biennials have proliferated as the art world has scaled in size and global reach in recent decades; however, very little information exists about the exact number, geographical reach, and funding and governance structures of these arts organizations. Can we compare biennials at all?

Geography, culture, funding, etc., can sometimes set up boundaries, but these boundaries can also be overcome. Each biennial is unique. Besides the basic statistics, maybe we should try to figure out the effectiveness of the information, whether the exhibition is digested by the audience. One effective communication exceeds thousands of void passing-by views. Maybe we don't need comparisons; we need to learn from each other and to figure out how to make full use of biennials.

5. Biennials provide a point of convergence for the art world, expose large audiences to art (and other disciplines and mediums), and catalyze interest in cities and regions with global aspirations. Do biennials necessarily have a positive social and economic impact?

With approximately 1155 pieces of excellent exhibits and 900 events, UABB has attracted over 1.65 million visitors. It has become a marked event on people's calendar, they will discuss about the projects and share the ideas. The owners of the venues also benefit from UABB, since it re-introduces the venues to the public and gets them noticed and increases their popularity.

However, it might be impossible to measure if all the investments really generate an equal or bigger outcome, or to find out if everyone is content with the consequences or impact of the event. With all the resources put into the Biennale, we certainly hope it will always have positive impacts—that it is the goal—but still, we have a lot of work to do before we can achieve that.

6. Can you talk about the funding processes and sources? How do you think these affect the Biennale? Does it affect it at all?

UABB was originally conceived by the Urban Planning Bureau of the Shenzhen Municipal Government for the purpose of constructing a more influential, more professional, and more interactive exhibition. The funding comes from government sources and the private sector, mostly major developers and other service providers. Since UABB carries out an independent curator system, we try to minimize any unnecessary influence as much as possible. We stay connected with the curators and respect their decisions, and make sure the Biennale is on the right track.

7. What sort of curatorial, institutional, or technological innovations can help ensure the vibrancy and relevance of biennials going forward?

Interactive technology, social media, the independent curator system, and the international biennial network may help in a way—and most importantly, the people who have faith in it.



Within the Cross Street Arena: Common Meeting and exhibition spaces after the restructuring (Courtesy of UABB2017)

How to Take Care of Your Voice: Exhaustion and Other Habitual Affects When Working Within Large-scale Art Institutions¹ by Alkisti Efthymiou

I would like to start this text by sharing a short video on YouTube (<https://bit.ly/2lhBm93>), in the hope of slightly disrupting the convention of the essay format. In said video, Kerri Ho—international vocal coach and internet expert on vocal matters—provides advice on maintaining a healthy, rich voice. She suggests (1) warming up your voice every day, even when you are not singing, and (2) taking care of your body by exercising and getting enough sleep. “A free body is equal to a free voice,” she proclaims casually. But freedom is tough to grasp when neither your body nor your voice depend solely on your individual actions to remain “free.”

I am not a singer myself, but what I am trying to do here is to think otherwise, with you, with regard to voicing: voicing an opinion, articulating a position, uttering a stance, as a femininity in this still deeply patriarchal world. And I am wondering whether exercises like the one you saw in the video could be of any assistance, if taken non-figuratively and with a bit of lightness.

I must say here that I treat the concept of “the voice” both literally (as the sound that comes out of my vocal cords, and—more generally and inclusively—as the faculty of utterance) and metaphorically (in the sense of opinion or right of expression), pertaining to the perception that these modalities are constitutively interlinked. Functioning vocal cords are, of course, not the only means for one to “have a voice”—gestures, signs, and movements of the body are equally important media, at least in my mind. Even silence, when read *as such* (and not as speechlessness or censorship), can be another—an “other”—form of voicing a stance.

The illustration shows a woman with blonde hair in a purple shirt speaking "Mmmm...". A hand from the right points towards her. To the left, a vertical scale is shown with an upward arrow labeled "too high", a middle box labeled "natural", and a downward arrow labeled "too low".

2 Find your natural speaking voice placement. The placement and pitch of your voice should sit in the middle of your range. Be mindful of not speaking too low, too high, too nasal or with rasp. To find your natural dynamic voice, answer a few questions positively with "Mmmm". There you go! That is your natural pitch. Try to speak at that level most of the time.

One basic piece of advice that most of the websites I looked at give, websites about how to take care of your voice, is to “find your natural voice pitch,” your natural speaking voice. It means that the placement and pitch of your voice should sit in the middle of your range, not too low, not too high, not too nasal or with rasp. *To find your natural dynamic voice, answer a few questions positively with “Mmmm.” There you go! That is your natural pitch. Try to speak at that level most of the time.*

But how can I find my “natural voice” in the context of an art institution? Do I need to answer positively with “Mmmm,” and there I go? What is my “natural opinion,” and how can I express it? Or, rather, is there ever a “natural opinion,” a “natural voice” that is resting somewhere in me and could come forward? This insistence on “naturalness” is stressful, is in itself exhausting. It requires you to be constantly aware of how you’re speaking, as if you have an unlimited capacity for self-consciousness, regardless of social norms and pressures. But screaming and whispering are also exhausting, as many vocal training websites point out.

This issue of “finding your own voice”—which is also what they advise these days if you want to become successful in creative fields—has been bothering me a lot lately. I keep looking for it and have not been able to find it. Or at least, I have not been able to recognize it, to recognize a voice as *my voice*, within the art world, and more specifically within large-scale art institutions.

Let’s get back to the issue of naturalness for a minute. As Anne Carson stresses in her essay “The Gender of Sound,” “Very few women in public life do not worry that their

voices are too high or too light or too shrill to command respect.”⁴ She gives the example of Margaret Thatcher, who trained for years with a vocal coach to make her voice sound more like those of the other Honourable Members of Parliament and still earned the nickname “Attila the Hen.”

In 2018, long after Carol Gilligan published her seminal study *In a Different Voice*,⁵ masculinities and femininities continue to articulate themselves distinctively. Soundness of mind, moderation, self-control, and temperance in the use of sound and language are all virtues that produce “the voice of reason,” which is still the dominant (and masculine) form of public expression that organizes patriarchal thinking on ethical and emotional matters. Whatever utterance strays off from these virtues is considered less worthy of listening to. To quote Carson again, “What differentiates man from beast, male from female, civilization from wilderness is the use of rationally articulated speech: *logos*.”⁶



The Western art world, where I found myself working, is part of the larger patriarchal structures that still organize our societies and operates by the very same logic, even when it pretends not to do so. I find it, therefore, extremely difficult to locate “my natural voice” as if it *could* be different from the voice I am *called* (by society) to be talking in, in order to be heard, to be included, to be respected, to be recognized.

I wondered whether following such advice, like “take care of your body” or “warm up every day,” would help. And in some cases it did, but I couldn’t help but feel exhausted by the process of trying to articulate my thoughts in a way that they make reasonable, comfortable, appropriate sense to the institutional framework surrounding me. And the problem—or rather, the sentiment—remains: *why do I still feel muted?*

* * *

In light of this question, I will now try to share with you my experience of working within two art institutions, the Athens Biennale and *documenta 14*, and how this work shaped both my affective disposition and search for my voice.

I will start with a short overview of the activities of the Athens Biennale, to give a bit of context in case you might not be familiar with the institution.

The **Athens Biennale** was conceived by three individuals active in the arts, who wished to partake more actively in the emerging Greek contemporary art scene: Xenia Kalpaktoglou, a curator; Poka-Yio, an artist; and Augustine Zenakos, an art critic. Like many other peripheral biennials, the Athens Biennale responded to the city's lack of art institutions and the associated absence of a web of artistic production, development, and exchange. In 2005, they announced that they would curate the 1st Athens Biennale, titled *Destroy Athens*, which took place in September 2007. The directors/curators decided to start off this first edition with a bang, to make as loud a statement as possible and produce a biennial that could be compared to any other big international art event in terms of format, scale, caliber, and visibility.

The 2nd Athens Biennale was titled *Heaven* and opened in the summer of 2009. It was a very ambitious project, realized in a moment of transition, still too early for anyone to imagine the depth of the crisis that was to follow. As successful as it was in its over-identification with the biennial format (too many curators, too many artists, too many venues, too many events), it wasn't attended by that many visitors, and most parallel activities seemed detached from the stakes of the exhibition itself.

By the autumn of 2010, the Greek debt crisis had erupted and the country was to become the ground for an experiment of harsh austerity, rife with insecure state structures and a breeding ground for fascist tendencies. In the meantime, the Athens Biennale was gearing up for its third edition, *Monodrome*, which was curated by the two directors (as the third one had left) and Nicolas Bourriaud. Driven by the realization that producing *another* contemporary art exhibition just wasn't enough, this Biennale had to be fluid, non-linear, and collective. It was a very local project, hard to read at first instance without some understanding of the Greek context, yet an insightful contemplation on the condition from which it was born.

Since Greece was still—and remains to this day—in crisis, the Athens Biennale produced its fourth edition once again as a response to the situation. Titled *Agora*, it took place in the building of the Old Athens Stock Exchange and was curated by a team of forty-five artists, curators, theorists, and creative practitioners. Aiming to “explore creative alternatives to a state of bankruptcy,” it was structured around the pertinent question: “Now what?” It proposed the *discursive* exhibition model and unfolded less through the exhibited artworks and more through the one-hundred events that it hosted over a span of fifty-four days. It was the most heavily attended of all the Biennales.

Agora took place in 2013 and you might wonder what happens next, in 2015. Well, the 2015 (5th) edition of the Biennale, titled *Omonoia* (the Greek word for “concord”), is the most difficult to explain and talk about. Not only because this was the one that provoked in me, in the most literal sense, the feeling of exhaustion and not having a

voice, but also because, for a number of reasons, it was a failed project. And failure is difficult to come to terms with.

Let me start from where I started.

I wish I had hiccups.

I started working at the Athens Biennale in 2010, in my early twenties. I was full of aspirations at that time and hadn't worked in any art setting that sounded as big and as important. *Monodrome*, the 3rd Athens Biennale, was my first. I worked as a volunteer production assistant and then tour guide, doing mostly trivial yet necessary tasks that no one else had time to do. It was a formative period for me, amidst the general restlessness of "the crisis"—I wanted to believe that I had finally found something to hold on to.

Then came the 4th Athens Biennale, *Agora*, in 2013. I was curious about how it was going to work out and felt very excited to be part of such a large curatorial team and to meet new people and discuss and learn things. I stayed silent in most of the meetings because I was working non-stop at the office and had no time for research and didn't think I had anything to say... But still, I clung to the idea that this was something crucial for the local art scene and for my quest to find my own place in it. In the end, I missed all the fun because I had to go to London and start my master's degree.⁷

Then I came back from London and I spoke with the Biennale directors again about my potential involvement. The Biennale had won a prize by the European Cultural Foundation for *Agora* in April 2015, and they even paid us to travel to Brussels and meet with Dutch queens and princesses. That was a huge confidence boost. Adam Szymczyk, the Artistic Director of *documenta 14*, was also very keen to collaborate—he publicly said that *Agora* influenced him greatly in deciding to locate *documenta 14* in Athens. The collaboration never worked out in the end.

The team decided to continue working, even though it was quite clear that we were all burnt out and lacked a strong motivation to continue. We were only six people in the office. Most of us had second jobs to earn a living.

What to do next, after *Agora*? We couldn't really get back to the exhibition or festival format. We wanted to do something else, something more "ground-breaking": a biennial that was not a biennial anymore. Notice how I am starting now to use the pronoun "**we**" as I refer to my work in the Biennale—I find it impossible to avoid this type of identification when I am involved in something that I feel attached to, like it

has become an integral part of myself. This “we” will stay with me throughout the text on purpose, because any other pronoun may be more neutral but would have sounded too dishonest or detached.

Xenia, one of the directors, became a mother, and she needed some stability. We all wanted to feel secure and were too tired to keep up with working in the same precarious conditions. We decided to slow things down, to prolong the biennial time. Instead of producing an event in 2015 and another in 2017, we decided to stay open for two years and to finally try to transition from a *never-becoming-institution* to an *ever-becoming-institution*.⁸

It became obvious from the beginning, though, that it was impossible to do this without a plan, without a framework, without a team, without money, but none of us really had either the energy or the will to find all these missing elements. It looked almost suicidal to maintain a continuous public program under these circumstances. And we turned to our old habit, of loud appearance and silent disappearance, of moments of visibility and condensed activity, and moments of invisibility and recuperation. But even that felt too much to handle, and exhaustion very quickly kicked in.

An anthropologist from London was invited to orchestrate the whole thing. Nobody was a curator—which seemed to be a way to horizontalize the content-producing process or another way to avoid responsibility. We didn’t know what art to show, and we had run out of ideas. We invited artists and socially engaged collectives to work together on fighting off precarity. But working together without a transparent structure to contain us, without a holding environment, was no longer enough. What we had in freedom we lacked in care. That’s where confusion kicked in.

In this state of confusion, we focused solely on the realization of projects, on the tedious everyday admin. We didn’t allow ourselves any room for reflection on the contents, on the direction things were going. Maybe we were scared to foresee a failure. We were merely trying to stay afloat. Boredom kicked in.

Meanwhile, I was very excited by this second master’s I had started, in gender studies at Panteion University in Athens. I had found something else to hold on to. I tried to understand what the Biennale meant to me at this point but couldn’t. Throughout its editions, gender and feminism were hardly ever discussed as issues worth addressing within the team—not that they were brought forward in any other Greek art institution, but the Biennale had always aspired to be the most political of all. When I brought up such issues, I was mostly ignored or frowned upon. The patriarchal sexist tendencies within the Greek cultural scene were not regarded as a topic interesting enough to be scrutinized. Although instituting *otherwise* was always at stake, feminist practices of instituting were never a reference point.

My dedication to gender studies was read as a “betrayal” to the promise of stability for the Biennale. I was clearly “not committed enough” to saving it. But I had searched for solutions; I had tried, for too long. And then I started wondering, how can I be so attached to this *almost institution*? It pushed me over multiple times. My work was taken for granted. My opinions were disregarded. My suggestions exploited. I wasn’t even getting paid enough. Bitterness kicked in, as a defense.

I realized all these feelings were not only specific to the Athens Biennale. Can there ever be a space of freedom and agency without co-optation and subjection? How could

I cope with this ambivalence around me? That was a moment when feelings truly became mixed. And when feelings become so mixed, words tend to lose their grasp. And when I have to talk about them, like I am doing now, I really wish I had hiccups.

I felt like this...



Marcel Broodthaers, *La Pluie (projet pour un texte)*, 1969, film still extracted from YouTube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3L6JO-U_ts8

... ..

... ..



Let's go back to the institution now and try to think of its predicament as a result of certain **habits**:

When **crisis** becomes a habit—when it looks like everything's falling apart and there is no way out, and you continuously find yourself adapting and adjusting to conditions that keep shifting beyond your grasp, like treading water but not drowning—and you get so attuned to working (or living) this way until it reaches the point where it feels like this is the *only* way to work or live.

When **precarity** becomes a habit—when life becomes a constant training in contingency management, and you get accustomed to working with no insurance, no stable income, no set responsibilities and time-schedule, and are forced to find creative ways of *coping with*, otherwise you fall.

When **ambition** becomes a habit—when you are persistently attached to an insatiable desire to grow bigger and succeed better, to try beyond the possible, to gain even more recognition, to draw even more attention on yourself—to the point where you completely lose touch with where you started from.

When **subversion** becomes a habit—when you are addicted to an urge to constantly re-invent yourself, in order not to become assimilated into the normative oppressive system that governs your being—when you are insistently trying not to settle into any identity and convention, to the point that everything seems like a mere exercise in words or gestures.

All these habits seemed to exist without the slightest attention to care, to process, to feeling, to listening to each other. A voice that asked for those things could not be heard, because it would compromise the habitual rationality of the patterns described above. A voice that asked for those things was the voice of **the feminist killjoy**, the voice that projects her insides to the outside, the voice that dares to say whatever should be better left unsaid. In Anne Carson's words, "By projections and leakages of all kinds—somatic, vocal, emotional, sexual—females [are considered to] expose or expend what should be kept in. Females blurt out a direct translation of what should be formulated indirectly."⁹

The dominant, oppressive reaction to this leakage is “Shut up!” or “Be quiet!” And I went quiet, until I decided to leave. The feeling of exhaustion, most of all, had become so urgent that the work-dynamic wasn’t capable of containing it anymore.



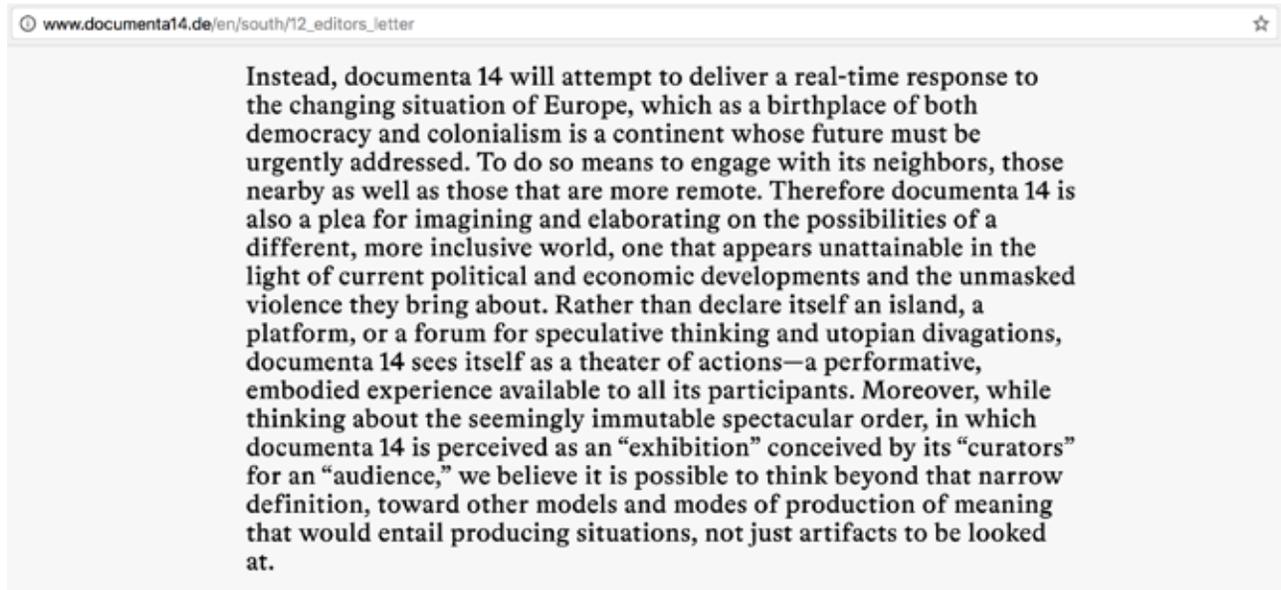
With hindsight, after months of reflection and analysis, I find it valid to describe my relation to the Biennale as **a relation of “cruel optimism,”** where the promise of institutional stability could never be fulfilled.¹⁰ A few of us held onto this promise for a long time, because admitting the impossibility of its realization, or admitting defeat, would leave us sort of hopeless. When I realized that the Biennale will not—cannot—offer me what I wanted, that’s when my attachment frayed, and all these negative emotions (exhaustion, confusion, boredom, bitterness) became something felt *as such*. They spilled relentlessly out of the insecure working conditions, the crisis as habit, the ambitious overdrive, and the smug subversiveness, which were no longer parts of an optimistic relation to my object of desire.

If you ask me what could have been done differently, I would say that, instead of going out full force for the 5th edition, we could have stopped the public activities of the institution, gotten some rest, and then worked thoughtfully on building up the proper framework for a more sustainable future. Or scale everything down and do a project on exactly this exhaustion that we were all left to deal with, as an attempt to embrace and come to terms with **failure**—which, for me, is a totally feminist project in its own right.

* * *

What happens to my voice when I haven’t gotten enough sleep? When, mentally and bodily, I’ve burnt up all my energy in operating the institution? “We can learn to work and speak when we are afraid in the same way we have learned to work and speak when we are tired,” says Audre Lorde in *Sister Outsider*.¹¹ Lorde seems to imply here that we have been socialized to keep on working and keep on speaking, even when our body is exhausted, in order to fulfill the capitalist demands for productivity and abledness. What she proposes is to hijack this logic and apply it equally to when we are stunned with fear. As much as we have been trained to still speak even when tired though, our voice comes out differently: worn out, trembling, restrained. It needs a certain type of treatment.

I hope I haven't tired you too much already. It's time for me to talk about *documenta 14*, and I will be much briefer—it's only been a few months since my contract has ended, and I haven't had enough time to recover.



I assume that most of you are familiar with the institution of *documenta* and there is no need for me to go into boring historical overviews. For those of you who aren't, the only thing I will say is that *documenta* is considered one of the most prestigious and trend-setting large-scale art exhibitions—at least in the Western world—and it has happened every five years since 1955 in the city of Kassel in Germany. In 2017, *documenta 14*, under the working title *Learning from Athens*, unfolded in both Athens and Kassel. The idea of a bi-located project, shared and divided between Greece and Germany, was an attempt “to deliver a real-time response to the changing situation of Europe, which as a birthplace of both democracy and colonialism is a continent whose future must be urgently addressed.” According to Szymczyk, Athens was chosen as the site where “the contradictions of the contemporary world, embodied by loaded directionals like East and West, North and South, meet and clash”—all quotes are from the editorial of the first *South* magazine, the main *documenta 14* publication.

I started working for *documenta 14* around October 2016 as an education producer, assisting in the planning and delivery of the educational activities in Athens. I got this job after I met one of my bosses in an elevator; we then had a coffee and shared thoughts on feminism and female writers that we like. This itself was motivation enough for me to try out this opportunity. The other huge motivation was a decent salary accompanied with health insurance.



In the education department, it felt particularly comfortable being in a team comprised mostly of women, including people from very diverse backgrounds who put forward issues of gender, sexuality, embodiment, and affect in both private and public conversations. In October 2016, we started a university module in the Athens School of Fine Arts that was followed by approximately twenty fine art students in their Bachelor's. Over the course of nine months we did Feldenkrais lessons, photographed the school, wrote poems with words from texts we had studied, spread gossip, sang pirate songs, took breathing lessons, and played with our echoes. We also developed another program for schools, where we asked *documenta 14* artists to contribute with objects related to their practice. We visited ten classrooms with these objects and knitted, danced, made maps of the city, and discussed many topics, from gender to ecology to migration.

All these might sound “cool” and “interesting” to you—to me they also sound important—but there was of course a downside. Big responsibilities and understaffing in our team led to prolonged working hours and produced a lot of stress. In Education, we worked in a circular scheme: avoiding aggressive angles, we focused on process and listening to each other's needs. But exhaustion could not be avoided, when the demands were so high.

The scale of the overall project was almost surreal—I felt like this...



Precarity was less of a materialized condition in *documenta 14* than in the Athens Biennale, and this allowed for my voice to sound more secure and assertive. I tried to step out of my quiet zone and there were moments when it worked. I was heard. But despite fantasies and aspirations of collectivity, the deep hierarchical order of things—even if there were attempts to break it—created conditions of depersonification. I had already been employed for months when I kept receiving emails asking who I am and what my title is. There were so many colleagues, so many artists, so many collaborators, that I couldn't remember their names, let alone their voices. I mixed up Lala Rukh with Lala Vula and with the son of Tracey Rose who was also named Lala. There were people in large team meetings whose voices I had never heard. And mine was often too shy to claim the mic.

Education itself as a department struggled to legitimize its existence in an institution that has been so traditionally focused on exhibition production. We did invest in programming that attempted to break with rigid hierarchies, but these same hierarchies struck us quite hard when negotiating salaries or justifying our budget. I felt like a tiny cogwheel in a huge machine that would continue to work with or without me, that would continue to work with or without all the marginalized, oppressed voices that the exhibition tried to put forward.

In several official *documenta 14* texts, there were mentions of “a multiplicity of voices,” “a chorus of voices,” even “hearing voices.” And I tried to understand why I still felt muted. I missed the voices of friends, of feminists and queers working in Greece, who were rarely invited to take part in the public program, even though its claims were directly referencing them.

Adam Szymczyk deployed and insisted on strategies of minimum disturbance in Athens—meaning that he wanted the presence of the project in the city to be as low-profile as possible and to stay away from grand public gestures. Whether this came out of respect, out of guilt, or out of lack of engagement and research is not for me to argue. But this stance was often locally interpreted, rightfully or not, as an arrogant or exclusionary silence. There was an inherent ambivalence in having an undisputedly hegemonic institution that makes radical political claims in public statements. Such a contradiction provoked a lot of protests... and posters.



documenta 14 declared itself a “theatre of actions” that “imagines and elaborates on the possibilities of a different, more inclusive world”—again a quote from the editorial of the first *South* magazine. Such statements sparked the interest of several radical

political groups, specifically in Athens, which heavily criticized the art institution in the streets and beyond. Other parties joined in this wave of reactions, from individual artists and curators who wished to build their own pseudo-politically conscious career to local agitated nationalists and ill-informed journalists, to shop owners who just wanted to attract the international art crowd.

This is to show how the presence of *documenta 14* (and of any documenta) in a contested city creates a particularly messy, chaotic, confused field of negotiation between art and politics. People that you thought were critical of nationalism made statements on how the exhibition was “disrespectfully” appropriating “symbols of Greekness”; friends who you hoped could express a nuanced view on processes of neo-colonization, now were talking about how “poor yet honorable” Greece was being colonized by the “rich and cold-hearted” Germans; colleagues that spent long dinners discussing revolution, horizontality, and de-colonial practices were first to exploit their employees when given the opportunity. I could give you many more examples, but I think I already made my point. Anyway, I really reached a moment where I had absolutely no clue where, and how, to stand: with or against the institution?

In and around such a large-scale structure, it seems like any form of **radicality** is either oversimplified, co-opted, or distorted. To the point where people thought that posters like the one above were produced by documenta itself.¹²

But I want to finish off with something else.

One of the main concerns of *documenta 14* was how to articulate the unsaid and unheard, how to communicate the silenced, the muted. What space is there, however, within an institution that is run by *logos*, to break the rational articulation of sound?

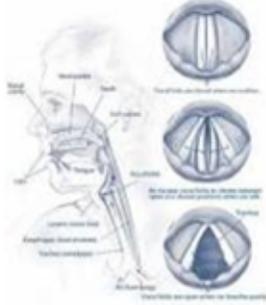
My exhausted self flirts with saying “there is none,” but still, I don’t think there is an obvious answer to this question.

Use your voice wisely:

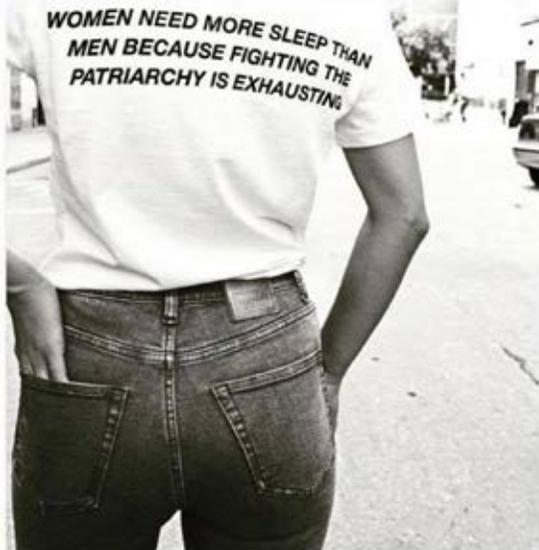
1. Try not to overuse your voice. ...
2. Rest your voice when you are sick. ...
3. Avoid using the extremes of your vocal range, such as screaming or whispering. ...
4. Practice good breathing techniques when singing or talking. ...
5. Avoid cradling the phone when talking. ...
6. Consider using a microphone when appropriate.

More items...

Taking Care of Your Voice | NIDCD
<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/taking-care-your-voice>



Let me get back to some vocal health tips. If you consider yourself a feminist cultural worker, my advice is to stay away from large-scale art institutions and focus on smaller situations built out of practices of partnering and friendship, seeking stability in relationships of both obligation *and* care. If you find yourself, however, working in structures like the ones I described above, take care of your voice, especially if you cannot find it.



Notes

1

2

3 This text was first written to be presented during the “Unsettling Feminist Curating” symposium, held at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna on December 1, 2017, and curated by Elke Krasny, Barbara Mahlke, Lara Perry, Dorothee Richter, the Department for Art and Education/Institute for Education in the Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, and *feminist Curators United* (fCU). Slightly adjusted, it later formed the basis of a lecture for students of the MAS in Curating, Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), taking place at the OnCurating Project Space in Zurich on March 16, 2018. I would like to thank the participants in both these events for the attentive, curious, and hugely valuable conversations we had that helped me feel a bit less exposed and without which this text would not have been published. I am forever grateful to my former colleagues in the Athens Biennale and documenta 14 for the experiences we shared, even in the hardest of times, and I sincerely hope that my words in moments of critique are not harmful to any of them. The sometimes informal style of my writing reflects the initial function of this text: to be read aloud for an intimate public.

4 Anne Carson, “The Gender of Sound,” in *Glass, Irony and God* (New York, NY: New Directions, 1995), 120.

5 Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

6 Carson, “The Gender of Sound,” 128.

7 Postgraduate programs on art and culture (e.g. curating, creative writing, cultural management, film studies, museology, and so on) are almost non-existent in Greece. One of the very few and ridiculously expensive options one has, if they want to further their academic engagement with such fields, is to study in the UK, as I did. I graduated

with a degree in Museum Studies from UCL, where with my classmates—an international group of very inspiring young women with feminist concerns—we formed close bonds of friendship and mutual support, and I worked at Cubitt Artists: Gallery and Studios, with curator Fatima Hellberg, to assist in the development of an exhibition program that presented mostly feminist art practices. Thus, (the shift in) my thinking around art and institutions, in their convergence with gender and feminism, has been strongly shaped by my UK education and experience of living and working in London.

8 Since its first steps, the Biennale aimed to never become an institution, in the sense that the people involved wanted to maintain a level of criticality against institutionalization but still work within a biennial format. This position created complex internal conflicts (e.g. horizontalism vs. hierarchy, precarity vs. stability) and became gradually more and more difficult to sustain, turning the Biennale into what Livia Pancu (Livia Pancu, “The Almost Institution,” in *Self-Organised*, eds. S. Herbert and A. S. Karlsen (London: Open Editions, 2013), 74-81) calls a static and suspended “almost institution” that ended up just summing up all our unfulfilled promises (for security, insurance, set salary and responsibilities). In 2015, the position shifted from wishing to be a *never-becoming-institution* to building an *ever-becoming-institution*, something that could, most of all, provide stability but still leave room for critical experimentation. But, as you will see, that didn’t work out either.

9 Carson, “The Gender of Sound,” 129.

10 Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

11 Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984), 44.

12 The poster was produced by an as-yet-unknown group or individual outside of *documenta 14* and was pasted in various streets of Athens a few months before the opening of the exhibition. The letter L in ‘Learning’ was carefully covered with white paint, in order for the slogan to be read as ‘Earning From Athens’.

Alkisti Efthymiou is a cultural worker and interdisciplinary researcher based in Athens. Informed by critical theory, queer/feminism and performance studies, she is interested in the intersections of gender, sexuality, art and affective politics. She has worked with several cultural institutions in Greece and abroad, such as *documenta 14*, Künstlerhaus Stuttgart and the Athens Biennale, in capacities ranging from Education Producer to Curatorial Assistant to Program Coordinator. She is just about to start her PhD candidature at Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, with a thesis on love in/as crisis, for which she is clearly not prepared.

Globannials or: The Sublime Is Wow

by Jörg Scheller

The term “biennial” is semantically empty. It refers, plain and simple, to exhibitions that take place biennially. That’s all. Biennials can be dedicated to any topic, can involve a great variety of artists and artworks, can take place in urban as well as rural environments, can be critical or affirmative or both at the same time, and so forth. Probably it is precisely this openness and blurriness that accounts for the success of biennials. Biennials are blank screens for all kinds of projections.

However, there is a certain semantic quality inherent to the structural dimension of those biennials that have become particularly prominent in the contemporary art world and in the humanities: biennials as paradigmatic sites of globalization. Already the Venice Biennale was founded with a view to linking Venice and the world, of creating a hub for international art and tourism. In the second half of the 20th century, the number of biennials of contemporary art grew exponentially after a lean period of about 50 years—in parallel to the acceleration and intensification of globalization. Since arguably most of the newer biennials are, or aspire to become, exhibitions with an international, global and/or glocal focus; since most of them are intended as instruments for increasing the visibility of localities on the global map and to attract visitors from all parts of the world; since most of them are situated on the intersections of art, politics, tourism, entertainment, research, science, and discourse; since most of them are, by implication, genuinely hybrid, biennials can be regarded as the aesthetic twins of globalization at large.

Globalization is not an orderly process that can be easily grasped. As Arjun Appadurai has justly pointed out, it is rather chaotic and disruptive. I would propose to go one step further and define globalization, in the context of aesthetics and art, as a newer form of the sublime. By “sublime” I mean aesthetic experiences that are too vast, too boundless to be grasped, to be summed up adequately in words, or to be (re)presented in another way.

Traditionally, the contemplation of mountains or oceans from a distance was regarded as a typical instance of the sublime: the aesthetic experience of the great, the powerful, and the infinite, as both inviting and abhorrent, as “negative desire,” in the words of Immanuel Kant. The experience of the sublime leads to overpowering but in turn—at least ideally—brings human beings to draw on their sense of reason, freedom, and morality.

Postmodern theorists of the sublime such as Jean-François Lyotard have extended the concept to cultural phenomena, for instance Abstract Expressionism (Barnett Newman, “The Sublime is Now,” 1948). For Lyotard, the sublime is connected to the unrepresentable, to the incommensurable, and to the boundaries of reason. Precisely in this regard, “globannials” can be considered as sublime exhibitions.

In attempting to localize the transgressive, chaotic process of globalization or to tame it synecdochally, as it were, biennials inevitably fail. Globalization is only conceivable and representable through amputation and abstraction, not in its sensory totality. Being able to contemplate a much heralded “global culture” with uninterested appreciation, as if looking at a pleasant landscape painting, remains a utopia. Globali-

zation has not led to it being possible to experience the world as one delightful entity. Thus, globalization is not merely a process of disinhibition and unfettering (of market forces, cultural and technical possibilities, identity options, etc.) as popularly propagated, but simultaneously a process of inhibition. Biennials, especially the large-scale hybrid ones that have evolved from the megalomaniacal world exhibitions of the 19th century, are the aesthetic twins to globalization, understood in this way. They attempt to show, (re)produce, and (re)present something that, in its entirety, cannot be shown, (re)produced, and (re)presented.

Just as globalization itself, today's typical biennials can be described as a "linking of localities" (Roland Robertson) insofar as they are metonymic with transcending confined exhibition sites and with temporal conjunctions of heterogeneous sites, among them often so-called "unusual" ones (art in churches, art in companies, art in ruins, art in restaurants, etc). Today's biennials invite us to perceive the world as a potential endlessly expandable network, as a correlation of correlations.

In general, hybrid large-scale exhibitions flirt with infinity and, for this very reason, call for finite reflection—that's their sublime side. "Negative desire" is their congenial after-effect—a sense of frustration ("Can't grasp it all!"), being overpowered ("It's simply too much!") on the one hand; fascination ("Wow!"), inspiration, and freedom, in the sense of a personal point of view that does not have to—and in fact cannot—tally with that of the curators on the other hand. Perhaps the discourse about biennials in particular and large-scale exhibitions in general gains importance in fact for this very reason. It campaigns with a minimum of commensurability, it thwarts the—potentially—boundless with discursive boundaries, thus mitigating the unsettling experience of the global sublime.

Jörg Scheller (*1979) is an art historian, journalist, and musician. He is senior lecturer (since 2012) and head of theory of the BA Art & Media (since 2016) at the Zurich University of the Arts. Since 2014, he has been guest lecturer at the University of Fine Arts in Poznan. In his research, he focuses, among others, on exhibition history, pop culture, bodybuilding, and contemporary art. His articles regularly appear in newspapers and magazines such as DIE ZEIT, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, frieze magazine, Camera Austria. Among his curatorial projects are the "Salon Suisse" at the Venice Art Biennale (2013) and the group show "Building Modern Bodies. The Art of Bodybuilding" (2015) at the Kunsthalle Zurich. Besides, he is singer & bass player of the heavy metal delivery service Malmzeit and the regressive rock duo The Silver Ants. www.joergscheller.de

#biennale

by Shwetal A. Patel

378,709 posts (6th June, 2018)

Instagram has in less than 8 years become the most widely used and popular image based social media platform in the world. Largely known for its 'selfies', bloggers and 'insta-famous' brand 'influencers', it is also being used by artists, curators and arts organisations (including galleries, museums and biennales) and audiences around the world to an ever-greater degree. The tech giant is being employed extensively to help launch biennales, keeping them relevant, and in the process changing the way arts audiences engage with art works and behave at art events.

We thought we would scour (publically available) images using the #biennale on Instagram and found that more than 378,000 posts had been captioned with this hashtag. In the following pages we have selected the typical and not so typical forms of 'interaction' from publically available posts, free of copyright (we hope).

Since its launch in 2010, Instagram, with its hyper-engaged audience and image focussed screen layout, has become a social media staple across the art world. For biennales the site offers another platform: archiving their work online, engaging & interacting and marketing themselves to the world. Many biennales, both in the Global South and developed West, are using 'Insta' to their benefit and in a lot of cases Instagram has become essential to their marketing and communication efforts. In turn, audiences (and art world professionals) are very diligently and routinely checking their Insta in an increasingly addictive manner, hoping to be 'part of the conversation' lest the dreaded 'FOMO' rears its depressing heads in our digital lives.

Biennale Instagram accounts are replete with 'progress' and 'making of' shots and offer abbreviated descriptions of the stages of evolution in a given biennale cycle. In turn many artists are aware of this and are ensuring to upload personal shots on their accounts, tagging their hosts and collaborators, creating excitement and anticipation along the way. Audiences gratefully respond to this 'up close and personal' relationship with artists and curators and a host of other actors and agents that make up such large-scale art events.

With this profound and sudden change in how audiences are connecting with biennales, some theorists are concerned about art works and art events losing their integrity and mystique. Whichever side of the debate you fall on, one thing is for certain: traditional ideas about how audiences and arts organisations interact and communicate have changed forever. The art world is moving towards unfamiliar territory, and with the rapid evolution of yet to be launched new technologies, only time will tell what the future holds for biennales and their audiences.

We certainly don't think that Instagram is the future of the art world, but it is a decisive step in a new direction, how these technologies develop is in the hands of you the users, so over to you. Enjoy! #biennalemirror #biennaleinstagram #instabiennale #instafomo #instanow

Shwetal A. Patel is a founding team member of Kochi-Muziris Biennale (India) and PhD scholar at the Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton.



ingaturczyn • Follow

ingaturczyn #chicksonspeed #biennale #riga #riboca



jamesfloriophotography • Follow
Venice, Italy

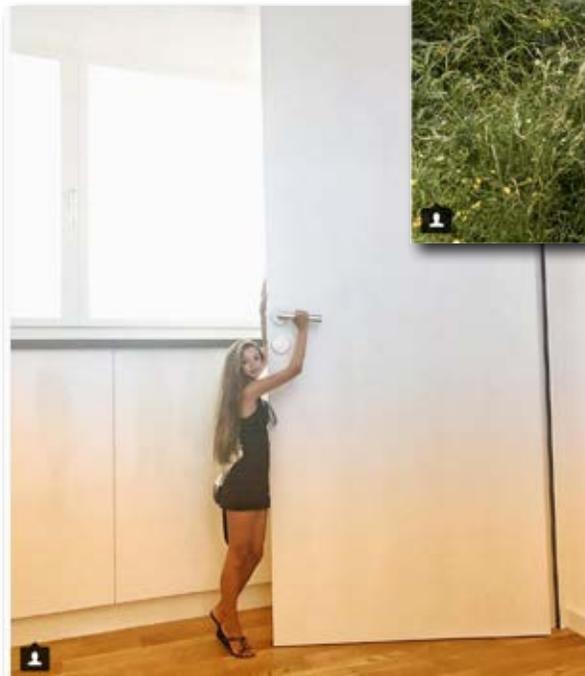
jamesfloriophotography "We have often struggled with our relationship as architects when considering the use of land – it's no small act. We believe there is a role for architecture to actively engage with the repair of the places it is part of."
-@baraccowrightarchitects on their exhibit in the Australian pavilion @labiennale. 'Repair' held over 10,000 endangered plants in its structure.
#biennale #venezia #venice #exhibit #design #interiors #architecture #australia #plants #environment #plantlife #endangered

jc_buck I'm loving this photo series!
jamesfloriophotography Thanks JCI! Some really spaces this year. I'll be sharing a few more this week.

90 likes

3 DAYS AGO

Add a comment...



24 likes

3 DAYS AGO

Add a comment...



rinatini • Follow
La Biennale di Venezia

rinatini Я на архитектурной биеннале в Венеции 2018. Первые впечатления, неожиданные сюрпризы, английский юмор от #greatbritain и разочарование от "нашего" павильона.

nika_myakinenkova Ринат, с Днём Рождения! В прекрасном месте, хорошо отметить 🍷

mikosha83 С Днём Рождения!!! Ураааа!

alexandradiz В следующем году чтобы ты оформлял павильон! С днём рождения!

bartoirina С днём рождения! Что там с нашим павильоном?

filippivanof Ринатини, с днём рождинки! 🍷

rinatini @bartoirina "Наш" (их) павильон должен рассказывать и отвечать на тему #freespace. И идея понятная- прошлое,

61 likes
4 DAYS AGO

Add a comment...



#art #artwork #fineart #drawing #drawingoftheday #illustration #characterdesign #digitalart #digitalpainting #conceptart #fashion #colour #biennale #contemporaryart



publicart_works • Follow
Cockatoo Island, Sydney Harbour

publicart_works Last chance to see Ai Wei Wei. Even more engaging second time absorbing more of the detail and profound texts surrounding The Law of the Journey. Other #biennale top picks #yasmminsmith and #yukinorayanagi. And don't forget the bars on #cockatooisland are so much fun. #biennaleofsydney ends next weekend. #lovesydneyharbour #riverofdreams #Installationart #whyweneedart #strangefuture

howardtweedieartist 🍷

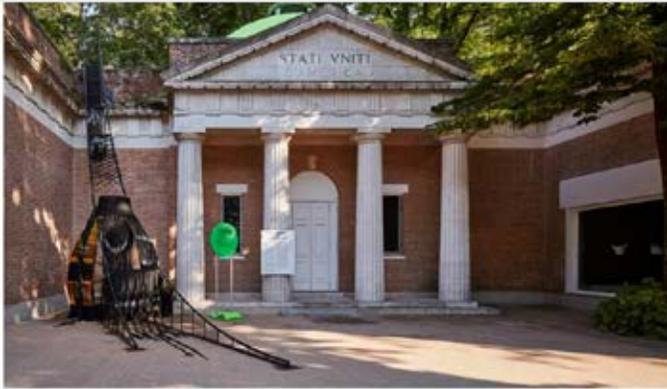
43 likes
4 DAYS AGO

"There is the house whose people sit in darkness, dust is their food and clay their meat. I entered the house of dust and I saw the kings of the earth."



22 likes
4 DAYS AGO

Add a comment...



 **sanmarco48** • Follow
Venice, Italy

sanmarco48 "Citizenship is an act between people." In @artnewsfriday, excellent article on the U.S. Pavilion at this year's Architectural Biennale, tackling citizenship and visibility. Influenced by the U.S. government's increasingly contentious actions on immigration and travel, it offers more proof Art is a viable source of opening much needed dialogues. #venice #biennale #uspavillion #immigration #artnewsfriday #art #architecture

"Thrival Geographies (In My Mind I See a Line)" by Amanda Williams + Andres L. Hernandez, in collaboration with Shani Crowe at the 2018 U.S. Pavilion.

©TOM HARRIS/COURTESY SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO AND UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Sociopolitical anxiety seemed to dominate the American presence at the 16th Venice Architecture Biennale, which opened last week with the charged theme of "free space."

15 likes
4 DAYS AGO

Add a comment...



thomasdnhr #biennale #architecture #france #padiglione francia #venezia #biennale2018 #encoreheureux #yeswecamp #lesgrandsvoisins #lieuxinfinis mcsalvanelli_press ❤️

25 likes
4 DAYS AGO

Add a comment...



lesmoussorsdeawa • Follow

lesmoussorsdeawa I am so honored & have the chance to see the #exposition #biennale Dakar #2018 @lebergerdeliledengor yalla na lokho bi weer Que ce soit le debut d'une sventure extraordinaire dans le monde de l'art #FRIDAY #traditionmsñ dress #art #paint #toile #moussor

lebergerdeliledengor Merci beaucoup adorable nièce

mcsalvanelli_press



iwona_sternal • Follow
Poznan, Poland

iwona_sternal A(rc)H!

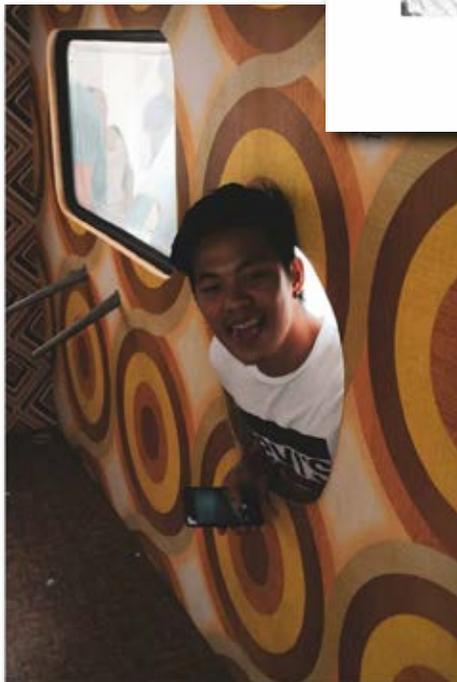
#concert #minimalism #pri #home #building #collage #my #drawing #ink #graphic #bw #black #minimalism #illustration #polish #art #artist #artwork #contemporaryart #study #architecture #work #poznan #poland #portfolio #gallery #exhibition #biennale

rhizom_e Super!

madziasadowska Bardzo fajowe

78 likes
4 DAYS AGO

Add a comment...



artwork, be the art yourself.

#asian#pinoy#italy#venice#biennale#art#landscape#travel#awesomeviews#instagood#instamood#mood#photography#creativity#editing#minimalist#likeforlike#like4like#dontfollowmeimlosttoo#but#still#followback#moreto come#MarquesMess#nikon#vivarteviva#lowkey#faith#love#hope

22 likes
5 DAYS AGO

Add a comment...



joycytown • Follow

joycytown We are part of the future!!! -
-
-
-
#love #wearethefuture #ricardo #biennale
#paris #passionricardo #experience
#semainetrestresbio #doubletrouble
danielle__danielle_ Le futur!!!!
danielle__danielle_ Super belle 🥰🥰🥰🥰
novlaine et t'es part de ton téléphone aussi
ou pas? 🥰🥰🥰
vadvad 🥰
madyne_c Belles 🥰🥰🥰
danielle__danielle_ @novlaine 🥰🥰🥰🥰
🥰🥰🥰🥰🥰

71 likes
4 DAYS AGO

I AM BLACK & WHITE HOME STAGING

NDOGU

FINISSAGE

A PARTIR DE 18H

2 JUIN

28 RUE ST. MICHEL, PLATEAU, DAKAR

Bonkounjiu Design • D&D Architecture. Design • Fallou Dolly • Fatyly • Guelewar • Lena Nian Photography • LupaLupa • Sirimai

iambblackandwhite2018 • Follow
Dakar, Senegal

iambblackandwhite2018 FINISSAGE - I AM BLACK AND WHITE

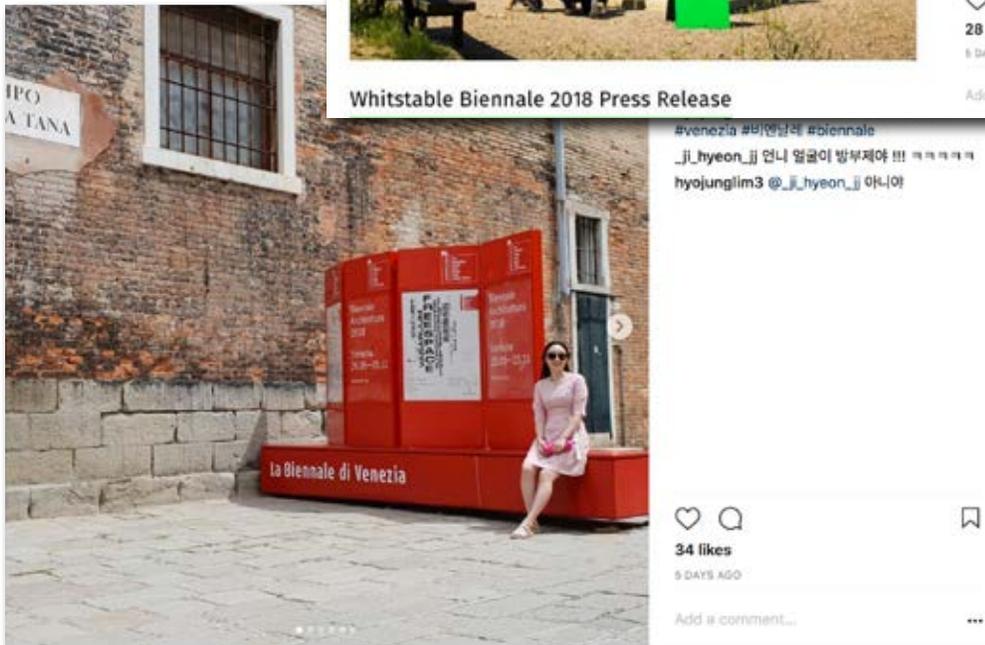
#biennale #dakart2018 OFF
SAMEDI 2 JUIN
28 RUE SAINT MICHELE, #dakar

martine_faye, fatylyceramics, malenebatelier, forever_gentle, lena_nian_photography, galsenshootout, nallahporter and sega_desiigner like this

4 DAYS AGO

Add a comment...







 **rocksprott** • Follow

rocksprott #biennaleselfie
rocksprott Ai Weiwei is immersive
interactive art, isn't it? Michael Sprott

michelle.chanique, ambersimonart,
jodypawleysculptures, mick_mccarthy and
rocksprott like this

MAY 21

Add a comment...



 **han.rose.rose** • Follow
La Biennale di Venezia

han.rose.rose #한로즈 온몸으로 앙큼함을 표현
해보았어요 #venice #biennale
#venicebiennale #venezia #art #artist
#sculpture #instadaily #instagood
#instagram #pretty #giant #giant_arts #arty
#arte #artsy #summer #holiday
#photographer #like4like #italy #italia
#travel #trip #베니스비엔날레 #베니스 #여행 #예술 #사진



 **samnoss92** • Follow
Venice, Italy

samnoss92 #venice #biennale
#architecture #mirrorselfie

24 likes

MAY 29

Add a comment...



archithese.ch • Follow
Zürich, Switzerland

archithese.ch Weissgold «Svizzera 240», der Schweizer Beitrag zur 16. Architekturbiennale von Venedig, wurde mit dem Goldenen Löwen ausgezeichnet. Der wichtige Architekturpreis geht zum ersten Mal überhaupt in die Schweiz. Mehr dazu im Blog auf archithese.ch

#archithese #architecture #architettura #biennale #biennaledivenezia #schweizerpavillon #schweiz #schweiz #schweizerarchitektur #schweizerarchitekten #swiss #wohnungsbau #wohnung #goldenerlöwe #svizzera #svizzera #svizzera240 #svizzera240housetour #prohelvetia fassadenagentur Gratulation!

110 likes
MAY 29



willoughbyadvisory • Follow
NAVEL

willoughbyadvisory Queer Biennial 2018 | Los Angeles
"What if Utopia" Opening reception: Friday, June 1 at NAVEL, LA
Queer Biennial kicks off with a cocktail party and book signing with John Waters and is a month-long series of events showcasing artists, performers, and writers from across the queer spectrum including cabaret, music, dance, visual arts, and literature. Now in its third iteration, this year's theme is "What if Utopia," challenging participants to consider the myriad possibilities of what an ideal world might look like.
NAVEL exhibition dates: June 1 - 16, 2018
Exhibition hours: Thursday - Saturday, 12 - 6 PM
1611 Hope Street, LA 90015
Stay Tuned and google "Queer Biennial" for

91 likes
MAY 28



bea.pero • Follow
Venezia, Italia

bea.pero Finally Architecture Biennale!!
#biennale #architecture #bienalearchitettura
ilonis_bairamidis Have fun ladies!

38 likes
MAY 26



matiradu • Follow
La Biennale di Venezia

matiradu 🇺🇿🇻🇮 #Uruguay #venezia #venecia #biennale #biennaledivenezia #biennalediarchitettura #uruguaypavilion #prisontoprison @prisontoprison #inaugurazione #venetia

rosario_aldabalde Allá vamos
juanpistrous ❤️❤️❤️ felicidades @prisontoprison !!!

66 likes

今天稍早

GMAIL 20 分鐘前

Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art
10th Berlin Biennale: Mediation, Vis...
(Ver-)Mittlung Was hat es mit Regeln, Vorbildern und Held*innen auf sich? Das (Ver-)Mittlungsprogramm der 10. Berlin Biennale schafft Anlässe für Be...

GMAIL 1 小時前

Manifesta
Invitation to Manifesta 12 Opening
Manifesta 12 Opening Invitation
manifesta12.org On behalf of the Mayor of Palermo, Leoluca Orlando, and the Director of Manifesta, Hedwi...

sunerictwet • Follow

sunerictwet Wish I could write these two @berlinbiennale and @manifestabiennale but lack of funding. Where is the sponsor! if you are in Europe don't forget to visit Berlin and Palermo! #summer #biennale #europe (the architecture one in Venice :-)

tara0_0 Me me! Berlin Biennale and Venice
sunerictwet @tara0_0 jealous
hylin222 要邀請你去寫嗎?
sunerictwet @hylin222 沒有呀只是資訊囉

21 likes
MAY 10

Add a comment...



monsieur_plantain Senegalese pool party!
#biennale #coupédécacalé #dakar #senegal

32 likes
MAY 15

Add a comment...







18 likes

APRIL 26

Add a comment...



hanbok89 • Follow

hanbok89 .
 멋진 배수영 작가님
 2018 다카르비엔날레 한국특별전에서 한복의 아름다움을 외국에 알리는 국위선양하는 모습~~~**♡
 고맙습니다
 화이팅 .
 《또 다른 언어들 - 2018 다카르비엔날레 한국 특별전》

2018년 5월 7일~ 6월 2일
 보리바나 미술관 (Musée Boribana, 다카르, 세네갈)

공동 주최
 주세네갈한국대사관, 한국국제교류재단(KF)

후원
 세종대압기념사업회, 국립한글박물관, 파주타이포그라피학교, 한국의정신과문화일리기회



23 likes

MAY 9

Add a comment...



2018 부산비엔날레 Busan Biennale 2018

2018. 9. 8 - 11. 11

부산현대미술관, (구) 부산문화회관



busanbiennale



lebiennali • Follow

lebiennali #Repost @busanbiennale with @get_repost

[2018부산비엔날레 '비록 떨어져있어도 (Divided We Stand)'] .
 (사)부산비엔날레조직위원회는 2018부산비엔날레 기자회견을 통해 오는 9월 8일부터 11월 11일까지 65일동안 열리는 2018부산비엔날레의 전시주제 '비록 떨어져있어도(Divided We Stand)'를 공개했습니다.

2018부산비엔날레는 전시주제 '비록 떨어져있어도 (Divided We Stand)'를 통하여 영토의 물리적인 부리가 어떤 심리적인 외상 후 스트레스 장애(트라우



24 likes

MAY 3

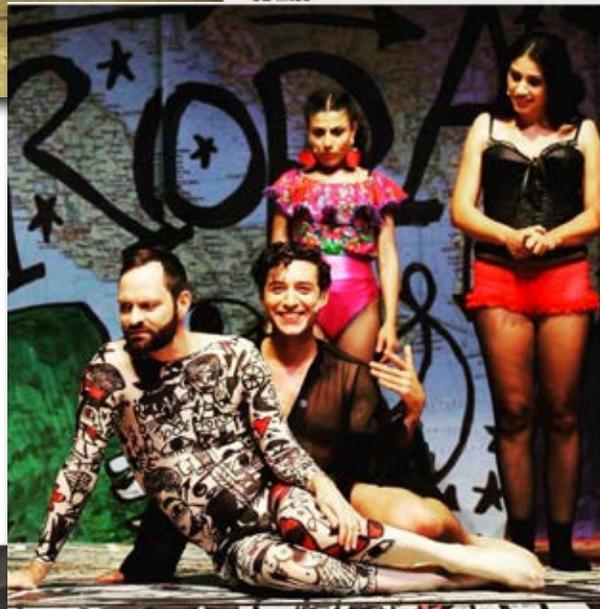
Add a comment...



denisnichifor • Follow
21st Biennale of Sydney - Cockatoo Isla...

denisnichifor Ai Weiwei at the Sydney Biennale - do not sit on the Art! #biennale #sydneybiennale #aiweiwei #sydney #art liv.love.woo 🍷
model_looks_by_trenna_austin Too cute

62 likes



GORM maxim_gorki_theater • Follow

maxim_gorki_theater Tonight we celebrate the very last day of the very 1st #ROMA #BIENNALE 2018! We're playing Yael Ronen's ROMA ARMEE again at 7:30pm. COME OUT NOW! if you haven't seen it yet. You won't regret it...🍷 #romabiennale 📄Check bio for tickets

maxim_gorki_theater #romaarmee @romabiennale #romaday #romatrial #gorki #gorkitheater

metellova.elena who is that artist which painting an actor ? or it makes himself ?..
robertschupp Das war ja wohl der Hammer! Großartig! Vielen Dank!
fefeher 🍷🍷

254 likes
APRIL 10

Add a comment...



cameraoscurastudio #biennale #biennalearte2017 #venezia #venice #biennaleVenezia #biennalevenezia2017 #streetphotography

17 likes
APRIL 9

Add a comment...



nadia_mori_sky • Follow
La Biennale di Venezia

nadia_mori_sky Modella alla Biennale di Venezia
serviziofotografico di
Ph Alberto Brusegan. Divas photo
#art #sexy#artecontemporanea
#biennale #nadiamori #artist #brunogrion
giovanniamartino Bellissima
giovanniamartino Non fai pesistica?
giovanniamartino Come stai ?
saeedazhdh 🇵🇰🇵🇰🇵🇰🇵🇰🇵🇰

32 likes
APRIL 5, 2017
Add a comment...



#exposition #art #martinediatale
#robotpop #tableaux #sculpture
#lunedemiel #collectionneurs #amateurdart
#curator #artistes #peintres

71 likes
APRIL 4
Add a comment...



destinationspk • Follow

destinationspk @destinationspk wishes powerhouse @qudsiarahim, Co-Founder of #LahoreBiennale a very Happy Birthday! Thank you for the incredible journey that was #LB01 and we look forward to bigger and better things to come! 🎉
#destinationspk #destinations #biennale #lahore #pakistan #hbd #birthdaywishes #specialday #asia #america #singapore #china #dubai #karachi #islamabad

38 likes
APRIL 4
Add a comment...



johnalf • Follow
Cockatoo Island, Sydney Harbour

johnalf "Since you cannot do good to all, you are to pay special attention to those who, by the accidents of time, or place, or circumstances, are brought into closer connection with you." Saint Augustine. Learning new lessons every day. This was I learned visiting the 21st Biennale of Sydney, at Cockatoo Island.
#Sydney #Australia #NSW #Art #Biennale #ScotsEnglishCollege .

#friends #classmates #Trip #Travel #Viagem #Voyage #Viaje #Intercambio #Viajante #Voyageur #Viajeros #Backpacker #Mochileiro #instatravel #travelgram #VisitAustralia #blogger #gay #gayboy #instagay #braziliangay ##Brasileiro

161 likes
MARCH 27



theyanfoundation • Follow
Duddell's 都爹利會館

theyanfoundation Launch of the #bangkokartbiennale2018 in #HongKong during #ArtBaselHongKong. Fantastic lineup of artists including #MarinaAbramovic and #elmgreenanddragset 🙌🙌🙌🙌

@abramovicinstitute
@elmgreenanddragsetstudio #artbasel #art #artist #arte #biennale #artofinsyagram #followme #follow #instaart #biennial #bangkok #thailand #artsy #curator

44 likes
MARCH 26



chloebaleofficial • Follow
Saltion Sea

chloebaleofficial If you don't like the way I drive ... get off the sidewalk #drivein #car #cars #banger #race #desert #bombaybeach #biennale #art #music #festival #style #california
linaloveproject I need a car like that lol

59 likes
MARCH 20

Add a comment...



artspacesydney • Follow
Artspace Sydney

artspacesydney Up close with Ai Weiwei and his crystal ball. #biennaleofsydney is now open!

@biennalesydney #aiweiwei #ai #weiwei #artspace #biennale #21BOS #sydneybiennale #crystalball #humanflow madeleinecoffey_ @eriphean @moniqueoliviarobinson @charlottemeakes @zoepatch pilpress @extrasilky vesilipappas @kspeppa @marinaccappas sophalicious_x @emilygraceturner charlottemeakes @madeleinecoffey_ let's go! a_r_c_h_i_e_ No Well! lilygrace_ @graceygirl24 nraamini194 @silvurana uel Can't wait

1,044 likes
MARCH 18



carlottanovello • Follow

carlottanovello #venice #biennale caterinaporcari Bellissima!! mariafiorella1950 @caterinaporcari come sempre bellissimaaaaaa 🌈🌈🌈 carlottanovello @caterinaporcari grazie!!:)

81 likes
SEPTEMBER 24, 2017



bodowins • Follow
La Biennale di Venezia

bodowins Be the rainbow 🌈 #rainbow #wall #art #biennale #venice #vacation #trip #italy #giardini #beginng #end #photography #moment #family #tradition zhuzhukatrina nice

44 likes
MARCH 6



andrea.dop • Follow
Venice Film Festival

andrea.dop Foreigners in Venice
#doplife #dop #venice #venezia #venise
#aliens #labiennale2017 #biennale
#lidodivenezia #traveling #travelling #travel
#labiennaledivenezia #инопланетяне
#realvenice #venicegram #venexia
#venicetaly #italy #italia #italie #Венеция
#venedig #sculpture #sculptures #statue
#love #live #instagood #instagram
#instagramers #instagramhub
photogr_a.effe_ Great pic!

37 likes
FEBRUARY 25

Add a comment...



sabin_sai Maharajas Holi 🇮🇳❤️

#maharajas #holi #fest #festivalofcolors
#colorful #jamm #it #unitedkingdom
#powerhouse #music #fire #terrorsquad
#water #empty #paint #ash #young
#childrenoftheworld #biennale #parthan
#sir #mass #celebrations
muhammedsayya 🙏🙏🙏
g_o__d_u_ 🙏🙏

144 likes
MARCH 3

Add a comment...



[9_oo 강원 국제 비엔날레 - "악의 사전" (A홀 작품들).
강릉 녹색체험센터에서 열린 이번 아트 비엔날레.
올림픽과 겨냥해서인지 더 풍성하고 좋았던 전시.
(~3.18까지)
#비엔날레 #강원국제비엔날레 #biennale #강릉 #
악의사전 #thedictionaryofevil #미술 #아트 #현
대미술 #전시 #art #modernart
#contemporaryart #exhibition
nana051400 감성살이있는 구아님..항상 행복하시
길♡
i.am26 강릉좋죠~~! 🙏
92_jongxx 강릉 비엔날레 저도 갔다왔어요 🙏방
문격들 평이 꽤 좋다고 하더라고요
wolfangelmoon Omg 🙏
youngka0095 으르르🙏
desire816 아 가고 싶다... 전시 관람아 보여요
jennijiminii 🙏🙏🙏

681 likes
MARCH 7

Add a comment...

Directory of Biennials

- Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art (Australia)
 Adelphi University Outdoor Sculpture Biennial (USA)
 AFiRlperFOMA Biennial (Nigeria)
 Aichi Triennale (Japan)
 Alabama Biennial (USA)
 Alberta Biennial of Contemporary Art (USA)
 Alexandria Biennale (Various)
 Americas Biennial (USA)
 Amherst Biennial (USA)
 Andorra Land Art (Andorra)
 Animamix Biennial (China)
 Annuale (UK)
 Anren Biennale (China)
 Antarctic Biennale (Antarctica)
 Anyang Public Art Project (Korea)
 Appalachian State University Art Biennial (USA)
 Arizona Biennial (USA)
 ARoS Triennial (Denmark)
 Arrowhead Biennial Exhibition (USA)
 ARS (Finland)
 Ars Baltica Triennial of Photographic Art (Germany)
 Art Encounters (Romania)
 Art Wuzhen (China)
 Arts: Le Havre (France)
 Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (Australia)
 Asia Triennial Manchester (United Kingdom)
 Asian Art Biennale (Bangladesh)
 Asian Art Biennial (Taiwan)
 Ateliers de Rennes (France)
 Athens Biennial (Greece)
 Atlanta Biennial (USA)
 Auckland Triennial (New Zealand)
 Bahia Biennale (Brazil)
 Ballarat International Foto Biennale (Australia)
 Baltic Triennial of International Art (Lithuania)
 BAM BIENNIAL (USA)
 Bamako Encounters, Biennale of African Photography (Mali)
 Bangkok Art Biennale (Thailand)
 Beaufort Triennial (Belgium)
 Beijing International Art Biennale (China)
 Benin Regard Biennale (Benin)
 Bergen Assembly (Norway)
 Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art (Germany)
 Bermuda Biennial (Bermuda)
 Bi City Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture (UABB) (China)
 BICeBé | Bienal del Cartel Bolivia (Bolivia)
 Bienal Centroamericana (Various)
 Bienal de Arte Paiz (Guatemala)
 Bienal de Artes Mediales (Chile)
 Bienal de Cerveira (Portugal)
 Bienal del Fin del Mundo (Argentina)
 BIENAL INTERNACIONAL MULI DE MURALISMO Y ARTE PÚBLICO (Colombia)
 Bienal Monterrey FEMSA (Mexico)
 Bienále Brno (Czech Republic)
 Biennale Cologne (Germany)
 Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement (Switzerland)
 Biennale de la céramique (Switzerland)
 Biennale for International Light Art (Germany)
 Biennale Internationale de l'Image (France)
 Biennale Internationale D'estampe contemporaine de Trois-Rivières (Canada)
 Biennale Quadrilateral (Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rijeka) (Croatia)
 BIENNIAL at the Peninsula Fine Arts Center, Newport News (USA)
 Biennial International Footprint Exhibition (USA)
 Biennial International Miniature Print Exhibition (Canada)
 Biennial of Hawai'i Artists (USA)
 Biennial of the Americas (USA)
 Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean (BJCEM) (Various)
 Blickachsen Sculpture Biennale (Germany)
 Bonavista Biennale (Canada)
 Borås International Sculpture Biennale (Sweden)
 Border Art Biennial (Mexico)
 Brighton Photo Biennial (United Kingdom)
 Bristol Biennial (Great Britain)
 British Ceramics Biennial
 Bruges Triennial (Belgium)
 Bucharest Biennale (Romania)
 Busan Biennale (South Korea)
 CAFAM Biennale (China)
 CAFKA – Contemporary Art Forum Kitchener and Area (Canada)
 California-Pacific Triennial (USA)
 Canakkale Biennial (Turkey)
 Carnegie International (USA)
 Carrara International Sculpture Biennale (Italy)
 Cartagena de Indias Biennial (Colombia)
 Central American Isthmus Biennial (BAVIC) (Various)
 Cerveira Bienal (Portugal)
 Changwon Sculpture Biennale (South Korea)

- Chengdu Biennale (China)
 Cheongju International Craft Biennale (South Korea)
 Chianciano Biennale (Italy)
 Chicago Architecture Biennial (USA)
 Chobi Mela (Bangladesh)
 Colombo Art Biennale (Sri Lanka)
 Contemporary Art Festival Sesc_Videobrasil (Brazil)
 Contemporary Iroquois Art Biennial (USA)
 Contour. Biennial of Moving Image (Belgium)
 Copenhagen Ultracontemporary Biennale (Denmark)
 Coventry Biennale (UK)
 Cuenca International Biennial (Ecuador)
 Curitiba Bienal (Brazil)
 D-0 ARK Biennial (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
 Daegu Photo Biennale (South Korea)
 Dak'Art: African Contemporary Art Biennale (Senegal)
 Dallas Biennial (USA)
 deCordova Biennial (USA)
 Desert X (USA)
 Dhaka Art Summit (Bangladesh)
 documenta (Germany)
 Dojima River Biennale (Japan)
 Dublin Biennial 2014 (Ireland)
 Dublin Contemporary (Ireland)
 East Africa Art Biennale (East Africa)
 Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial (Japan)
 Emergency Biennale (Chechnya)
 Encuentro Bienal Arte Lanzarote (Spain)
 End of the World Biennial (Argentina)
 Estuaire biennale in Nantes and Saint-Nazaire (France)
 Europese Grafiekbiennale (Netherlands)
 EVA International (Ireland)
 Evanston and Vicinity Biennial (USA)
 Experimenta International Biennial of Media Art (Australia)
 Feed: A 1708 Gallery Biennial (USA)
 Fellbach Triennial of Small-scale Sculpture (Germany)
 Florence Biennale (Italy)
 Folkestone Triennial (UK)
 FORMAT Festival Biennale of Contemporary Photograph (UK)
 Fort Wayne Museum of Art's Contemporary Realism Biennial (USA)
 Frestas: Art Triennial (Brazil)
 FRONT International (USA)
 Frontiers Biennial (Mexico)
 Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale (Japan)
 Gangwon International Biennale (South Korea)
 Garage Triennial (Russia)
 Geumgang Nature Art Biennale (UK)
 Ghetto Biennale (Haiti)
 Glasgow International (Scotland)
 Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art (Sweden)
 Graphic Art Biennial, Dry Point (Siberia)
 Great Rivers Biennial (USA)
 Greater New York (USA)
 Guangzhou Triennial (China)
 Gwangju Biennale (South Korea)
 Gwangju Design Biennale (South Korea)
 Gyeonggi International Ceramic Biennale (South Korea)
 Harlem Biennale (USA)
 Havana Biennial (Cuba)
 Helsinki Photography Biennial (Finland)
 Herzliya Biennial (Israel)
 Hollywood All-Media Juried Biennial (USA)
 Honolulu Biennial (USA)
 IDEAS CITY Festival (USA)
 Incheon Women Artists' Biennale (South Korea)
 Innsbruck International – Biennial of the Arts (Austria)
 International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (The Netherlands)
 International Biennale of Graphic Art Łódź (Poland)
 International Biennial of Casablanca (Morocco)
 International Digital Arts Biennial (Canada)
 International Experimental Engraving Biennial, Bucharest (Romania)
 International Print Biennale (UK)
 International Print Triennial Society in Cracow (Poland)
 International Sinop Biennial (Turkey)
 Istanbul Biennial (Turkey)
 Istanbul Design Biennial (Turkey)
 Jakarta Biennale (Indonesia)
 Jamaica Biennial (Jamaica)
 Jeju Biennale (South Korea)
 Jerusalem Biennale (Israel)
 Jogja Biennale (Indonesia)
 Johannesburg Biennale (South Africa)
 Kampala Art Biennale (Uganda)
 Karachi Biennale (Pakistan)
 Kathmandu Triennale (Nepal)
 Kaunas Biennial (Lithuania)
 Kenpoku Art (Japan)
 KLA ART (Uganda)
 Klöntal Triennale (Switzerland)
 KOBE Biennale (Japan)
 Kochi-Muziris Biennale (India)
 KölnSkulptur (Germany)
 Kuala Lumpur Biennale (Malaysia)
 Kuandu Biennale (Taiwan)
 KunstFilmBiennale (Germany)
 Kyiv Biennale (Ukraine)
 Lagos Biennial (Nigeria)
 Lahore Biennale (Pakistan)

Larnaca Biennale (Cyprus)
 Les Ateliers de Rennes (France)
 Lisbon Architecture Triennale (Portugal)
 LIVE International Performance Art Biennale (Canada)
 Liverpool Biennial (United Kingdom)
 Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts (Slovenia)
 Lodz Biennale (Poland)
 Lofoten International Art Festival LIAF (Norway)
 Long Island Biennial (USA)
 Luanda Triennale (Angola)
 Lubumbashi Biennale (Congo)
 Lyon Biennale of Contemporary Art (France)
 Made in L.A. (USA)
 Manchester International Festival (UK)
 Manif d'art – The Quebec City Biennial (Canada)
 Manifesta, European Biennial of Contemporary Art (Europe)
 Mardin Biennial (Turkey)
 Marrakech Biennale (Morocco)
 MDE Medellin Internation Art Encounter (Colombia)
 Mediations Biennale (Poland)
 Mediterranean Biennale (Various)
 Meeting Points (Lebanon)
 Mercosul Biennial (Brazil)
 Milan Triennial / La Triennale di Milano (Italy)
 MKH Biennale (Germany)
 MOMENTA - Biennale de l'image (Canada)
 Momentum (Norway)
 Mongolia 360° Land Art Biennial (Mongolia)
 Montevideo Bienal (Uruguay)
 Montréal Biennale (Canada)
 Moscow Biennale (Russia)
 Moscow International Biennale for Young Art (Russia)
 Mural and Public Art Biennial (Colombia)
 Mykonos Biennale (Greece)
 New Museum Triennial (USA)
 NGV Triennial (Australia)
 Nicaragua Biennial (Nicaragua)
 Oberschwaben Triennale (Germany)
 Odessa Biennale (Ukraine)
 OFF Biennale Budapest (Hungary)
 OFF Biennale Cairo (Egypt)
 Okayama Art Summit (Japan)
 Oku-Noto Triennale (Japan)
 Online Biennale (online)
 OpenART (Sweden)
 Oran Biennale (Algeria)
 Oslo Architecture Triennale (Norway)
 Oslo Biennial / Oslo Pilot (Norway)
 Pacific States Biennial (USA)
 Paris Biennale (France)
 People's Biennial (USA)
 Performa (USA)
 Periferic (Romania)
 PHOTOBIENNALE MOSCOW (Russia)
 Pittsburgh Biennial (USA)
 Pontevedra Art Biennial (Spain)
 Prague Biennale (Czech Republic)
 Prospect New Orleans (USA)
 Public Art Melbourne Lab (Australia)
 Pune Biennale (India)
 Qalandiya International (Palestine)
 Rauma Biennale Balticum (Finland)
 RIBOCA – Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art (Latvia)
 Riwaq Biennale (Palestine)
 Ruhrtriennale (Germany)
 Saigon Open City (Vietnam)
 San Juan Poly/Graphic Triennial (Puerto Rico)
 Santorini Biennale (Greece)
 São Paulo Biennial (Brazil)
 Sapporo International Art Festival (Japan)
 SCAPE Public Art (New Zealand)
 Screen City Biennial (Norway)
 Sculpture Quadrennial Riga (Latvia)
 SeMa Biennale – Mediacity Seoul (South Korea)
 Sequences (Iceland)
 Setouchi Triennale (Japan)
 Shanghai Biennale (China)
 Sharjah Biennial (United Arab Emirates)
 Shenzhen Sculpture Biennale (China)
 SIART (Bolivia)
 Singapore Biennale (Singapore)
 Site Santa Fe International Biennial (USA)
 Skulptur Projekte Münster (Germany)
 Socle du Monde Biennale (Denmark)
 Sonsbeek (Netherlands)
 SUD, Salon Urbain de Douala (Cameroon)
 SURVIVAL (Poland)
 Survival Kit (Latvia)
 Suzhou Documents (China)
 Sydney Biennale (Australia)
 Taipei Biennial (Taiwan)
 Taiwan Biennial (Taiwan)
 Tallinn Architecture Biennale
 Tallinn Print Triennial (Estonia)
 TarraWarra Biennial (Australia)
 Tashkent International Biennale of Contemporary Art (Uzbekistan)
 Tate Triennial (United Kingdom)
 Tatton Park Biennial (United Kingdom)
 Tbilisi Triennial (Georgia)
 Texas Biennial (USA)
 The London Open (UK)

The PRO ARTE, The Contemporary Art in Traditional
Museum festival (Russia)
Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art (Greece)
Tirana Biennial (Albania)
Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa (Portugal)
Triennale (France)
Triennale–India (India)
TRIO Biennial (Brasil)
Turin Triennial (Italy)
Turku Biennial (Finland)
U-Turn Quadrennial for Contemporary Art (Denmark)
UBE Biennale (Japan)
UNASUR Contemporary Art International Biennial
(Argentina)
Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art (Russia)
Vancouver Biennale (Canada)
Venice Architecture Biennale (Italy)
Venice Biennale (Italy)
Videonale Festival for Contemporary Video Art
(Germany)
Vienna Biennale (Austria)
VIVA Excon (Philippines)
Vladivostok Biennale of Visual Arts (Russia)
Werkleitz Biennale (Germany)
Western China International Art Biennale (China)
Whitney Biennial (USA)
Whitstable Biennale (UK)
WRO Media Art Biennale (Poland)
X-Border Art Biennial (Sweden)
Yinchuan Biennale (China)
Yokohama International Triennial of Contemporary Art
(Japan)
Young Artists Biennial (Romania)
ZERO1 Biennial (USA)

Imprint
Issue 39

Publisher
Dorothee Richter

Co-Publisher
Ronald Kolb

Editors
Ronald Kolb, Shwetal A. Patel

Contributions by
Alkisti Efthymiou, Ronald Kolb, Shwetal A. Patel,
Jörg Scheller

Interviews by
Andrea Bellini, Alexandra Blättler, Adam Caruso,
Jean Kamba, Mi Lan, Yongwoo Lee, Julia Moritz,
Rafal Niemojewski, Alisa Prudnikova, Qudsia
Rahim, Hajnalka Somogyi, Wato Tsereteliis,
Misal Adnan Yıldız

Proofreading
Stephanie Carwin

Infographic Design Concept
Ronald Kolb, Swati Prasad

Web Design and Graphic Design Concept
Ronald Kolb, Biotop 3000

Graphic Design Issue 39
Ronald Kolb, Shwetal A. Patel

Supported by

Postgraduate Programme in Curating, ZHdK
(www.curating.org)

PHD in Practice in Curating,
cooperation of ZHDK and University of Reading,
supported by swissuniversities

Institute for Cultural Studies in the Arts (ICS),
Department of Cultural Analysis,
Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK)



hdk



ONCURATING.org is an independent international journal (both web and print) focusing on questions around curatorial practise and theory.

ONCURATING.org
Toni-Areal,
Pfingstweidstrasse 96,
8005 Zurich
info@oncurating.org
www.on-curating.org

For advertising options please visit
our website and get in touch!

Supported by
Postgraduate Programme in Curating, ZHdK
(www.curating.org)

PHD in Practice in Curating,
cooperation of **ZHDK** and **University of Reading,**
supported by **swissuniversities**

Institute for Cultural Studies in the Arts (ICS),
Department of Cultural Analysis,
Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK)

Z

—
—
—

hdk

