Biennials:
Prospect and Perspectives.

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BIENNIALS

PROSPECT AND PERSPECTIVES

Introduction
Peter Weibel

Many centrisms are ruling the world, even the art world. Western culture is partially a product of ethnocentrism and eurocentrism. It is a kind of NATO of the arts. Globalization can be understood as a globalization of Western culture, as a global dissemination of Western values. The effects of this expansionist policy can be seen in the many crises in Africa, the Near East, Arabia, etc., provoked by globalization of Western standards. Therefore the world becomes more and more divided into archipelagos, disconnected islands, nationalistic revivals, reluctance and opposition to Western civilization, and even counteralliances.

The aim of the research center Global Studies, or GAM (Global Art and the Museum), directed by Hans Belting and Andrea Buddensieg since 2006, is just the opposite of the conventional strategy of globalization. The idea is not to expand or exclude, but to include and to integrate; not to disseminate, but to congregate. Our diagnosis is not the clash of civilization, but the confluence of cultures: resilience instead of aggression. Our principal proposition is: One Earth unites many worlds. Therefore since 2006 the ZKM has organized several symposia on the question of globalization and invited experts from all over the world. The aim was not to design a new cartography of culture, a new map of art, under the augury of Western conceptions of art. Our aim is to discover new forms of art, to show the multitude and multiplicity of art that is being produced worldwide. This global production of art, seemingly at the periphery of Western centers, seemingly marginal to Western metropolises and monopolies of art, unfortunately and typically is not presented in Western museums, galleries, auctions, and fairs. Most prominently these works can be seen at biennials, which multiplied approximately in the last twenty years from ten to one hundred biennials. The reason for this growth of biennials from South America to China, from Arabia to Asia is based on the fact that the

global production of art has massively expanded, but that Western institutions for the presentation of art have not equally expanded in number and above all in mind. The classical art system, from museums to markets, has therefore become the bottleneck of art. In museums and marketplaces the same names are shown and repeated again and again. The art system of today acts like a stock market. Former collectors have become stock exchange speculators. They buy works of art as options in an early stage for a good price and hope to sell it fast at a much higher price. Not many artists and artworks are capable of following these rules of capital. Therefore 90 percent of the global art production is waste under the perspective of the art market and its subcontractors and suppliers like museums, galleries, and private collectors. All the new museums built by signature architects for luxury brands like Prada, Gucci (François Pinault), and LVMH (Bernard Arnault) demonstrate that a certain kind of art has become structurally and systemically part of the luxury and finance industries. Therefore biennials became the predominant platform of the arts, which are not part of the market and the museum, of the finance and luxury industries. The number of biennials has grown exponentially as a means of offsetting the pressure of selection produced by the art market. The striking spread of biennials has brought about a multiplicity of concepts and discourses. While the biennial system is frequently criticized as a purely marketing instrument, it also provides a space for the critical encounter with political and social issues, for which existing institutions often provide no space.

To encounter and explore this critical space which is offered by biennials, ifa (Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations) and ZKM (Center for Art and Media) have organized for many years conferences on the biennialization of the art world, which record and reflect seismographically the process of transformation triggered by globalization. The event's objective is to sound out the potential of such large-scale events following almost three decades of biennialization. This conference, with approximately forty curators, forms part of the series Biennials in Dialogue, which ifa has been realizing in cooperation with partners since 2000. Previous conferences took place in Kassel, Frankfurt am Main, Singapore, and Shanghai. As one of the leading actors in international art exchange, with this series of events ifa gives impulse to the scientific encounter with biennials, as well as to the international discussion around the modes of contemporary exhibition formats.

The conference focuses on five core themes: the opening panel, entitled "Biennials and Public Space," discusses art as public sphere and new public conceptions. The panel "Biennials as Motor for Social Change" seeks to examine the potential influence of biennials on the transformation of society and politics, and to investigate whether this question

can be adequately answered. A further panel is dedicated to the theme “The Dynamics of Biennials and the Role of Its Actors (Curators, Artists, Organizers, Audiences).” In the past, for example, the increased spread of biennials has decisively strengthened public perception among curators. Have there been similar effects on other actors, such as artists or the public? The panel “Chances and Limitations of Biennials in the Context of Marketing and Policies” is given over to the question as to the way in which biennials deal with demands, such as urban development, location, marketing, and political ambitions. The concluding discussion, “Alternatives and Open Spaces,” is concerned with alternative biennial models, which point to new visions for the future of biennials.

Foreword
Ronald Grätz

What is the potential power of biennials nowadays? What are the limits and challenges? The global success of the biennial concept has led to an enormous increase of the format during the last decades and, at the same time, has initiated a lasting discussion on the subject. Biennials have become multilayered places for the production of and the public discussion on contemporary art. As important international art events, biennials are not only a platform for artists and curators, they further develop discussions on international biennial culture between identity-defining location marketing and self-promotion of countries through their foreign cultural policies.

As a major agent in the context of biennials, ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen) sets impulses in the discussions on the effects of current exhibition formats. It is our crucial mission to promote the international exchange of art and culture. Since 1971 ifa has been in charge of the coordination of the German Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. Until 2009 the administration of the German contributions at the biennials in São Paulo and Sydney was also part of the institute's duties. With its biennial and exhibition funding programs ifa still supports artists presenting their work at international art biennials. Taking the current debate on biennials as a starting point, ifa initiated the conference series *Biennials in Dialogue* in 2000. So far, conferences have been organized in Kassel, Frankfurt am Main, Singapore, and Shanghai in cooperation with their respective partners. When Andrea Buddensieg and Peter Weibel of the ZKM | Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe came up with the idea of realizing the fifth *Biennials in Dialogue* conference in the content of their exhibition *global aCtIVISm* and of our exhibition *Weltreise* (*Travelling the World*) at ZKM, we were very happy to connect these two major exhibitions. The ZKM seemed to be the perfect place and partner for the conference *Biennials: Prospect and Perspectives*.

Due to ifa's commitment to a peaceful and enriching coexistence of people and cultures worldwide, we are proud to contribute to new biennial networks. Since 2012 ifa has been a partner of the World Biennial Forum, an international network of global biennial agents, jointly with the Biennial Foundation and several other partners. The first meeting took place during the Gwangju Biennale in 2012; the second was held during the São Paulo Biennial in November 2014. Based on the idea of *Biennials in Dialogue* and as a final outcome of the first World Biennial Forum in Gwangju, several partners decided to found an International Biennial Association (IBA) to organize and to professionalize an international network that offers information exchange, fellowships, research, and many other topics in the field of biennials. The interim board of the IBA has participated in the *Biennials: Prospect and Perspectives* conference at the ZKM, including the interim president, Yongwoo Lee, president of the Gwangju Biennale Foundation; Bige Örer, director of the Istanbul Biennial; and Marieke van Hal, director of the Biennial Foundation–and thus contributed to jointly developing perspectives for the biennials of the future. On behalf of ifa, I would like to express my deep gratitude for the cooperation with ZKM, especially to Peter Weibel. I would also like to warmly thank Elke aus dem Moore, head of Visual Arts Department of ifa, who, together with Andrea Buddensieg, developed the concept of the conference. Special thanks also go to Sabiha Keyif and of course to all participants of the conference *Biennials: Prospect and Perspectives*.

You may find the results of the conference in this book.

Preface
Biennials: Challenges and Opportunities, Widening and Limitations
Elke aus dem Moore

The *Biennials: Prospect and Perspectives* conference was jointly held in February 2014 by ZKM | Centre for Art and Media Karlsruhe and ifa, Institute for International Cultural Relations. It aimed to provide an overview of international developments in what is probably the most successful exhibition format: biennials. Biennials are temporary exhibitions that address topical trends and formulate socially relevant questions. They thus work as seismographs of their time. Because biennials are temporary and flexible, they can create open processes and serve as a platform for initiating socially relevant discourse. Biennials often present counternarratives to existing representative structures in museums and other cultural institutions. As Yongwoo Lee said during the Karlsruhe conference in response to a question from the floor on the roles of biennials and museums: "Museums are about clarification and history, biennials are about practice and realization." The biennial, presently the most popular exhibition format, is undergoing continuous development in line with local conditions and needs. Looking more closely at these processes, it is possible to see the global trends and developments that will be significant.

The questions we asked at the Karlsruhe conference seem all the more topical and all the more controversial today. They are questions about public space, about the role of art as an engine of social transformation, about the dynamics of a large exhibition and its protagonists, and about the challenges and limitations that a biennial faces under specific circumstances.

The Karlsruhe conference *Biennials: Prospect and Perspectives* can be seen as an organic continuation of a long-standing discourse about biennials. Back in the year 2000, ifa began a series of conferences entitled *Biennials in Dialogue* in Kassel that has now taken place five times–with the subsequent issues in Frankfurt, Singapore, Shanghai,

and Karlsruhe. The Karlsruhe event was the fifth edition in the series of ifa biennials conference, and for ZKM a kick-off event for GLOBALE, and thus it brought together the interests of two large internationally active institutions in Baden-Württemberg in the south of Germany, with the aim of exploring biennials as a global phenomenon and looking at the rationales, challenges, and questions inherent to this popular global exhibition format. It could not have been foreseen that this conference would take place during a period of transformation that witnessed a number of key events in the history of biennials, all of which shaped the discussion at the conference.

The conference series not only facilitates the exchange of experiences of directors, organizers, and artists of biennials, but also grants access to discussions to an interested audience.

The first conference took place in the year 2000 in Kassel and was initiated by René Block and Ursula Zeller. The discussion continued in 2002 in Frankfurt with the provoking question *Exchange or Global Incest?*, 2006 in Singapore and in 2008 in Shanghai–both took place as parts of their respective biennials. The discussion was about the criteria of success or failure of a biennial and the politics behind it. Central topics were raised, such as regionalism versus internationalism. And of course the issue of cultural education came up.

The *Biennials in Dialogue* conferences are just one expression of ifa's involvement in international biennials and network building. As the leading organization in international art exchange ifa initiates dialogue through exhibitions, artistic workshops, and conferences on the arts worldwide, and also offers funding programs and grants.

Since 1971 ifa has been responsible for the German Pavilion at the Venice Biennale; ifa also provides support for the contributions from Germany at international biennials and generates academic discourse, for instance through a collaboration with the Biennial Foundation; ifa has set up a biennial archive, a database and several publications. In November 2012, in the frame of the Gwangju Biennial, the first World Biennial Forum took place, initiated by the Biennial Foundation and organized by the Gwangju Biennial in cooperation with ifa. This World Biennial Forum was and still is an important platform to stimulate communication between the various biennials and to allow the institutional widening and discoursive concentration on global dialogues in this field.

René Block said once, introducing the first *Biennial in Dialogue* conference in Kassel fourteen years ago: "When we started this conference yesterday with an internal

meeting, it was about getting to know each other, exchanging experiences, dealing with the general problems. And it is not without reason that the delegates decided to set up some kind of Biennial Association, an international biennial network, yesterday." An international biennial network–that was the pressing idea articulated in Kassel fourteen years ago. Today I'm proud to announce that after long-lasting developments, this network is now established. In June 2014 the IBA–International Biennial Association–was founded in Berlin. Following a long time of preparations, the IBA, a nonprofit art association composed of institutions, individuals, and associates of the biennial community, was created to expand and share activities of curatorial and artistic creation and knowledge production through cooperation and exchange among biennials and their institutions, contributing to the development of cultural and artistic production by providing strategies, methods, and visions through a platform for collaboration and support among a network of professionals.

In recent years the number of biennials around the world has increased, as has the significance of biennials for the social systems in which they are embedded. This is clearly shown by events that took place during the conference in Karlsruhe in early 2014 and subsequent months. These events highlighted how important the freedom of art is, and that the relationships between art and political systems can be very fragile. These events made it necessary to take sides, to speak out, to form alliances, and to work on strategies against censorship and restrictions of artistic and curatorial freedoms. Events that have had effects and consequences that will write the history of biennials–whether as a history of successful resistance by artists and those working in culture against critical structures of financing at biennials (Sydney) or against direct censor interventions in the process of selecting artworks for biennials (Gwangju). These developments show how important it is to protect artistic freedoms. This requires international vigilance and the solidarity of biennial organizers and networks.

A biennial is not just an exhibition format. Rather it offers the potential for exchange and can reach new audiences, shape new artistic values, and trigger dynamics that lie beyond the art markets. The participation of diverse perspectives plays an important role in the culture of biennials, as does reflection on biennials themselves. ifa devotes its attention to the differing viewpoints concerning the influence and effects of biennials. Whereas the first conferences were strongly shaped by the perspective of the organizers and curators of biennials, Karlsruhe also looked at the views of artists. How do artists

experience the social discourses that biennials initiate? How do they see their own roles within these dynamics?

Are biennials still places of imagination, places of free discourse, or places where surprising new alliances are built? Places where local neighborhoods meet an international audience, and where connections are forged? Can biennials change perspectives, behavior, the social or even the political situation? Are biennials acting on behalf of or respectively for artist communities, an international audience, or society?

How can biennials be strengthened and also embedded into the marketing interests of the city or region? Are limitations created in this way? Which strategies can be developed? Which options of resistance are chosen by artists or curators when facing limitations?

Given the biennial as a model has gained popularity–what is the promise of this label? For whom and why? Can these exhibition models grant free space reaching beyond the diverse interests? Can they offer new perspectives, think the unthinkable, forge unimagined coalitions? Do biennials guarantee a better life?

ifa continued this series in late 2015 with a look at the perspectives of audiences. In November 2015 ifa and the Goethe-Institut worked with further partners in New Zealand to hold the conference *Curating under Pressure*, which considered ethical issues in making exhibitions, the role of art under difficult circumstances–whether political or other factors, such as environmental pressures like natural disasters. This conference also sees itself as the organic continuation of a debate that kicked off in Karlsruhe.

I would like to thank all the protagonists, panelists, moderators, and guests, and above all ZKM for their outstanding cooperation.

Research on the Topic of Biennials at ZKM

Andrea Buddensieg

The conference *Biennials: Prospect and Perspectives* took place at a moment when the number of biennials had reached a climax. In fact, it was our aim to rethink the importance of biennials as institutions which have spread worldwide. The conference was organized in five different panels, which covered the most urgent aspects of this new development: “Biennials and Public Space,” “Biennials as Motor for Social Change,” “The Dynamics of Biennials and the Role of Its Actors,” “Chances and Limitations of Biennials in the Context of Marketing and Policies,” and “Alternatives and Open Spaces.”

The conference had a long prehistory at ZKM. In 2006 Hans Belting and Peter Weibel initiated the project GAM–Global Art and the Museum, whose subject was the present state of the arts in the global age.[1] In the beginning the art museum in a moment of change was our first concern. In this respect we organized in 2006 the conference *The Global Challenge of Art Museums*, followed in 2007 by a conference with the question *Where Is Art Contemporary? The Global Challenge of Art Museums*. In this conference we invited museum directors from all over the world, mostly of museums with a very different scope, such as university museums and national museums, corporate museums, and former colonial museums to describe their present situation. One of the inspiring outcomes of the conference was an exchange of colleagues who were far from each other in terms of geography and cultural traditions but who discovered similar challenges of creating new publics. After that we started a series of platforms, which took place in São Paulo, New Delhi, and Hong Kong with the help of the Goethe-Institut. With the kind support of the Fritz-Thyssen Stiftung a further step was reached by a grant program and seminar of ten days, which we prepared with a call for papers addressing young scholars, curators, and cultural practitioners. Already then, the attention shifted from the museum to the spread of biennials, which in many respects took over what had been

the role of the museum.[2] The biennialization of the world was finally addressed in the exhibition *The Global Contemporary: Art Worlds after 1989*, which took place in 2011/12 with the support of the Kulturstiftung des Bundes and was followed up by a different presentation at the Academy of Art in Berlin titled *Nothing to Declare?* (2013).

A particular part of this exhibition was a documentary show divided into seven sections including topics such as: *Documents: 1989 and the Global Turn*, *Art Spaces: A Museumscape in Transition,* and *Branding: New Art Markets and Their Strategies*. One of the sections addressed the expansion of biennials under the title *Mapping*: *The Biennials in the Geography of Art*. We introduced it with the observation that globalization has also created a new world map of art. The biennials that have proliferated across the globe serve as relay stations in a cartography unprecedented in modern Europe. The spread of the biennial system has given rise to a network of institutions and curators who seek cultural identity in regional art and its position in a global exchange of artists and art concepts.

The scope was also to analyze these processes by data. For this project we commissioned the artists Stewart Smith and Bobby Pietrusko in cooperation with Bernd Lintermann and the ZKM | Institute for Visual Media to develop a work that depicts the dynamic temporal and spatial development of the biennial system and the global art markets in a cinematic projection on the Panorama Screen: *trans_actions: The Accelerated Art World 1989–2011.* A wealth of statistical data (places, prices, the presence of artists, the career itinerary of curators) was processed in such a way that it could be visualized. Clare McAndrew, an international expert on the art market, participated in this project along with a research group working on the GAM project, and they evaluated the extensive material available at the ZKM (more than 100 biennial catalogues) and established contacts to various biennial organizations. The visualization of this data on the Panorama Screen conveys a direct impression of the process of globalization that can be followed year by year. At the same time it presents a picture of the dense network that these newly established art worlds have spanned across the globe. The documentation was conceived as a work in progress which needs further research to complete.[3] But we have started to build up an archive of the relevant materials depending on the archives of the biennials themselves. Thus the conference *Biennials: Prospect and Perspectives* added a further milestone in dealing with the topic. But this time it was the curators, organizers, and makers of the worldwide net of biennials themselves who discussed the potential of the biennial system. In this context it was a special honor and great pleasure to welcome the IBA (International Biennial Association) for one of their preparatory meetings

at ZKM. This is also the occasion to thank Elke aus dem Moore and the ifa for the good and fruitful cooperation in conceptualizing and preparing the conference, and of course all the speakers who came to Karlsruhe.

1 The project website includes the information on all the activities of GAM: http://www.globalartmuseum.de. Since 2013 GAM is followed up as Research Department Global Studies: http://zkm.de/en/institutes-research-centers/research-center-for-global-studies.
2 Our activites have been published in the following volumes: Peter Weibel and Andrea Buddensieg, eds., *Contemporary Art and the Museum: A Global Perspective* (Hatje Cantz, 2007); Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg (eds.), *The Global Art World: Audiences, Markets, and museums* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2009); Hans Belting, Jacob Birken, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel, eds., *Global Studies: Mapping Contemporary Art and Culture* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2011); Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel, eds., *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of the New Art Worlds* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013).
3 Stewart Smith, Robert Gerard Pietrusko, Bernd Lintermann, *trans_actions* (2011), http://zkm.de/en/media/video/stewart-smith-robert-gerard-pietrusko-bernd-lintermann-transactions-2011, accessed August 20, 2015.

Biennials: Prospect and Perspectives
February 27 — March 1, 2014

As part of the theoretical foundations of GLOBALE, ZKM, in cooperation with ifa (Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations), has organized a large-scale conference with approx. 40 curators who seismographically record and reflect the process of transformation triggered by globalization. The event's objective is to sound out the potential of such large-scale events following almost three decades of biennialization. The conference forms part of the series "Biennials in Dialogue", which ifa has been realizing with cooperation partners since 2000. Previous conferences took place in Kassel, Frankfurt am Main, Singapore, and Shanghai. As one of the leading actors in international art exchange, with this series of events ifa gives impulses to the scientific encounter with biennials, as well as to the international discussion around the modes of contemporary exhibition formats. The striking spread of the biennial structure has brought about a multiplicity of concepts and discourses. While the biennial system is frequently criticized as a purely marketing instrument, it also provides a space for the critical encounter with political and social issues, for which existing institutions often provide no space. Clearly, the number of biennials has grown exponentially as a means of offsetting the pressure of selection produced by the art market. A multiplicity of art is produced worldwide, the platform of which is not the market and the museum, but the biennial.

The conference focusses on five core themes: the opening section entitled "Biennials and Public Space", discusses art as public sphere and new public conceptions. The selection "Biennials as Motor for Social Change" seeks to examine the potential influence of biennials on the transformation of society and politics, and to investigate whether this question can be adequately answered. A further section is dedicated to the theme entitled "The Dynamics of Biennials and the Role of Its Actors (Curators, Artists, Organizers and Public)". In the past, for example, the increased spread of biennials has decisively

strengthened public perception among curators. Have there been similar effects on other actors, such as artists or the public? The “Chances and Limitations of Biennials in the Context of Marketing and Policies” is given over to the question as to the way in which biennials deal with demands, such as urban development, location, marketing, and political ambitions. The concluding discussion, “Alternatives/Open Spaces“ is concerned with alternative biennial models, which point to new visions for the future of biennials.

27.02.2014 / 7.00 p.m.
Shifting Gravity – Force Fields: Biennials Today Ute Meta Bauer

Ute Meta Bauer

Thank you so much, Roland Grätz, for this very kind introduction. First of all I would really like to thank Peter Weibel for joining us today. I find it amazing that you are here with us, although you have an important event tomorrow–you will receive the Oskar Kokoschka Award–you're here to welcome and host us all so generously at ZKM this weekend. Please join me in congratulating Peter Weibel for receiving this well-deserved prize. I mention this because Peter, an important avant-garde artist himself, took up the torch as a curator at a time where there was no curatorial training–people then might not have even known what the term *curator* meant. In my experience artists-turned-curators keep their deep commitment and respect for artists and rarely lose the ambition to be very closely involved with artistic production. This approach shapes the institutions they run, and ZKM under Peter's directorship is a true example of that.

I also want to thank Elke aus dem Moore, representing ifa, and Andrea Buddensieg, from ZKM, for inviting me to speak at this biennial conference.

World Biennale Forum no. 1
Postscript

For this lecture, I decided to present some images of the World Biennial Forum no. 1 (WBF no. 1) that took place in October 2012 in Gwangju, South Korea, and was initiated and organized by the Gwangju Biennale Foundation, the Biennial Foundation, and Germany. Many of its participants are here tonight, reminding me that it is such a privilege and always a great opportunity to meet each other, to continue to deepen our understanding of globalization and its impact on art and culture. Those debates are quite important, as the global economy and the development of biennials go hand in hand.

The mayor of Gwangju, Kang Un-tae, and Yongwoo Lee, director of the Gwangju Biennale Foundation, provided the grounds for the WBF no. 1, which Hou Hanru and I were invited to direct and which took place at the Kimdaejung Convention Center in Gwangju City. This location was chosen deliberately, as the name of Kim Dae-jung is commemorative of the civic uprising for democracy of May 1980, following the violent student crackdown that took place in Gwangju earlier that same year. Hanru and I wanted to add a hopeful element to this choice of location, so we proposed to invite the South Korean artist Choi Jeong-Hwa, who turned the "conventions" of a convention center upside down. Choi Jeong-Hwa, with the help of many volunteers, installed an array of national flags from different parts of the world arching over the center of the conference hall in which our meeting was located. Speakers and audience shared round tables, with no division between those who spoke (usually at a podium) and those who listened–we all shared the same space and a camera traveled around to the speakers to transmit their contributions onto a screen. This setup created a different atmosphere, an open situation in which everybody was on the same level, sharing the same floor.

The model, the format of the biennial, is currently being reconsidered in various parts of the world for different reasons. In search of its identity, the biennial has attempted to maintain distance from the pressures of the globally operating art market and the commercially driven criteria of evaluations. But with more and more biennials emerging, the resources for support and public funding of biennials are becoming more limited. At this moment–and Marieke van Hal, director of the Biennial Foundation, can give us an update–there are more than 200 biennials dedicated to contemporary art, and the number is still increasing. The biennial model itself has shifted from bringing contemporary art to places that were lacking infrastructure in this field toward being part of the cultural portfolio of "global" cities. Biennials now serve city branding campaigns and have become fixed parts in the calendars of tourism boards.

Shifts in national or regional governments have placed previously independent biennials and triennials under the parental roof of local art museums. As a matter of fact, biennials, which so far have been more raw and experimental in their approach, are now presented like any other large-scale museum show. What do we make out of that? Did biennials become mature? Or is it a sign that in certain locations the biennial as a format may have become obsolete?

Biennials have been seen at times as spaceships that arrive from other galaxies with no connection to the local cultural fabric, as an interrogation, irritation, and disturbance of local art settings and agendas. Or they've landed in areas without art communities.

But even so, the great thing about biennials is that they steer debates, spice up local discourses and, at times, silently disappear. But that's exactly the beauty of a temporal model: it does not always fit the bill, it does not always satisfy expectations; nevertheless, in most cases, biennials have contributed to widening our horizons, forcing us to take a position.

For better or worse, we've recently experienced a focus of biennials within their own regional contexts, as in Singapore, rather than looking globally. Some see it as an arrival of the local, respecting what is occurring in the region, rather than favoring the usual global players. Others have expanded their criteria to increase visibility, such as the Whitney Biennial, acknowledging that the United States is home to artists from all over the globe. Alternative biennials occur at less audience-attracting places, such as Land Art Mongolia (LAM 360°), which is actually not geared toward an audience at all. It rather allows artists to focus solely on their works out there in the nature of the vast Gobi Desert. Another example of this would be the Project Biennial of Contemporary Art, D-0 ARK Underground, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, situated at the previous military bunkers of Tito, a challenging venue for both artists and audiences alike. Some biennials have responded toward the criticism of appointing well-known curators from outside to determine what is new and relevant in the arts with a legion of local curators who investigate from within.

LAM 360°, Dolgor Ser'od, Natural Link (2010) Image courtesy of the Mongolian National Modern Art Gallery

The biennial model still represents the continuous efforts to invent alternative spaces beyond the conventional institutional system and outside of the mandate of a collecting

museum. However, increasingly biennials that in the past occupied various temporary sites that would change from edition to edition, are now put under the wings of museums, as recently occurred in Singapore and Yokohama. Why did this happen? What does this actually mean for the biennials? Do biennials, as a matter of fact, benefit from the existing infrastructure of those institutions? Can biennial curators therefore focus more on artistic production, rather than reinventing the wheel of logistics and infrastructure each time anew? Does it help to secure spaces for biennials in times of exploding costs for real estate? Or is it to be seen as an act of governmental funding policy to situate nonbehaving biennials under the parental supervision of the museums? Or might this be an attempt to rejuvenate aging museums by reaching out to younger audiences? Does it ultimately help to consolidate shrinking budgets in the cultural sector by giving museums new attention and an audience boost? The pros and cons are obvious, as are the motivations.

Advocated into the new millennium, the global art scene has been swallowed in the spiral of entertainmentization: Life is staged as a spectacle, and both contemporary art and culture are excessively commodified and mediatized. Contemporary art is increasingly absorbed into the mainstream global market with a selected group of established artists and curators joining the global circuit of highly visible media celebrities. In addition, politicians see the opportunity for soft diplomacy in art and culture, utilizing culture as the door opener in the pursuit of global economic interests. And like it or not, most of us are part of this expansion of the arts into society. Don't we all enjoy working for a certain period of time beyond our home turf, getting infused with new energy by diving into other contexts and cultures?

Once cities and regions have discovered biennials as new tools to demonstrate openness and worldliness as well as their support of contemporary art, biennials tend to become part of the lifestyle portfolios of the city, a means to put themselves on the map as global players. Yet in contrast to the globalization of the art market's development in recent years, with new art fairs in Mexico, Istanbul, Hong Kong, Singapore–just to name a few–access to the means of production and dissemination still vary dramatically from country to country. Being situated in Singapore, I witness this especially in the Southeast Asian region. One might ask: Does the wider acceptance of contemporary art as part of mainstream culture indicate that the autonomy of art is actually in crisis? Beyond the established biennials of Venice, São Paulo, and Sydney, the biennial format was often understood as a site of free expression, a site of resistance against hegemonic powers, whether political, ideological, or economic. Biennials have been echoing and in some cases even preceding intellectual and social movements in certain countries and

regions. The establishment of the Gwangju Biennale in South Korea–in a working-class city and not in the thriving capital of Seoul–derived from the history of the struggle for democracy. This is a telling example. The Biennale is a gift to the people of Gwangju for the loss of more than 200 citizens, many of whom were young students when they took part in the civil uprising in 1980 against the ruling military government. And Yongwoo Lee, the president of the Biennale, was a part of this generation.

The Biennale in Gwangju took its inspiration from documenta, established by Arnold Bode in 1955 to show a different and open Germany after World War II and as an attempt to apologize for art declared as "Entartete Kunst," or "Degenerate Art," by the German fascist regime. Many biennials have been initiated with a similar political impulse for freedom of expression, for voicing critical, creative, and attentive claims. This is particularly true in regions living through political transitions, notably in the non-Western world. But once the international art circuit arrives, the tension between a local scene considering itself indeed as part of the international and those who seek a vision from outside can mark the end of an international biennial–just as we experienced with the disappearance of the Johannesburg Biennale, which ended with its second edition.

It's timely to investigate biennials with their diverse visions and missions as particular formats to present new art. Therefore, it was a logical step to create a continuous platform, like the World Biennial Forum (WBF), for in-depth discussions and reflections. But we also need to reflect on the experience of being co-opted by governments or politicians with their agendas or by corporations that may need some whitewashing of their public image. This week, we've received a public letter from artists of the upcoming Sydney Biennale who withdrew their contributions due to the fact that the board of the Sydney Biennale would not distance themselves from Transfield Holdings, a corporation that runs the lucrative business of detention centers for refugees on Manus Island and Nauru, under contract by the Australian government. Biennials are highly visible entities and this is exactly their potential.

Although Elke aus dem Moore asked me to focus on biennials in general, I nevertheless want to come back to the World Biennial Forum (WBF) no. 1, a format that has been established to address the need to reflect upon questions that arise out of the biennial phenomenon, but also out of the need of the various biennial organizers to discuss and exchange what is shared, what is different, and what is at stake.

The WBF was initiated by Marieke van Hal, director of the Biennial Foundation, together with Yongwoo Lee, president of the Gwangju Biennale Foundation, and Elke aus dem Moore, head of the Visual Arts Department at the Institute of Foreign Cul-

tural Relations in Germany. These three institutions organized the first edition of the Forum in Gwangju, South Korea, during the ninth Gwangju Biennale entitled *Round Table*. The forum is followed by this meeting at ZKM in Karlsruhe and during the next São Paulo Biennial there will be another edition of the WBF directed by Charles Esche, Galit Eilat, Nuria Enguita Mayo, Pablo Lafuente, Luiza Proença, Oren Sagiv and Benjamin Seroussi.

World Biennial Forum No 1: Shifting Gravity (2012), Gwangju, South Korea
Image courtesy of the Gwangju Biennale Foundation

It's important to reflect upon what the platform of the WBF actually entails. The objective of the WBF is to provide a regular meeting point to address the intellectual, political, as well as economical and logistical aspects inherent in these recurring exhibitions. As co-directors, Hou Hanru and I invited René Block to the inaugural edition of the WBF, which included biennials from around the world, to give a keynote. In 2000 Block himself had initiated one of the first global meetings addressing the new phenomena of global art biennials in Kassel, and his mandate in Gwangju was to engage with the current state of biennials and to continue the critical reflection set in motion more than a decade ago in Kassel. The Kassel meeting, called *Biennials in Dialogue*, coorganized by then deputy director of ifa, Ursula Zeller, continued in Frankfurt as *Austausch oder globaler Inzest? (Exchange or global incest?)*. The phenomena "biennial" has also been addressed during many editions of ARCOmadrid, the Spanish art fair, continuing at the Bergen Biennial Conference in Norway, which also culminated in *The Biennial Reader*, a significant publication that assembled the voices of many who actually founded biennials or are critical toward them. It's the most comprehensive anthology on global biennials to date.

Though countless biennials have been established over the last three decades around the globe, the present discussion is not only steered by the "biennial miracle" but also by a "biennial fatigue," especially in the in the Western art world. Nevertheless, there is a continuing potential in this adjustable format. Biennials are critical players that have entered the art scene and introduced a generation of artists as well as a generation of new curators whose practices have transformed the existing model of artistic production and dissemination. In so doing, biennials have shifted the artistic discourse to other fields of culture and have forged different forms of debate, addressing the potentials of art and culture and engaging these political and economic negotiations. Considering that in the early days, biennials were synonymous with the innovative and experimental nature of contemporary art, one wonders what might currently trigger politicians and art communities to have the impetus to establish new biennials or to put them back under the umbrella of museums. Three decades into the boom of biennials, a systematic evaluation and debate is imperative. Learning from the "Bergen Biennial Conference", the focus of the WBF no. 1 was to encourage such discussions through specific case studies that provide an understanding of the various contexts surrounding each biennial. What is indeed shared across biennials is actually that they are very different from one another. Thus, international forums like the one here at ZKM provide a framework that enables professionals to understand multiple local specificities in terms of access, funding, and infrastructure, and to explore the differences and similarities between the local context and the curatorial approach. Placing a focus on the Asian/Pacific region, where so many new biennials were initiated, the first edition of the WBF enabled a better understanding of their diversity and why there are still so many new biennials created.

What was important to Hanru and myself was to include other intellectuals, nonart voices, in those debates. The WBF no. 1 featured therefore three eminent academics: Wang Hui, professor in the department of Chinese language and literature at the Tsinghua University, Beijing, who was involved in the demonstrations at Tiananmen Square in 1989; Chantal Mouffe, professor of political theory and director of the Centre for the Study of Democracy at the University of Westminster, London; and Nikos Papastergiadis, professor for cultural studies and media and communications at the University of Melbourne. Complementing one another, these three intellectuals provided the theoretical foundation that stimulated and contextualized our debates about the roles that art, and more specifically, the important roles that biennials can and should play.

Just today I had an e-mail exchange with Nikos Papastergiadis. From the perspective of a local, he wrote a letter to the board of the Sydney Biennale, urging the president of

the Sydney Bienniale board to take a position toward Transfield Holding's engagement in managing refugees. Disappointed about the slow reaction of the board, he expressed that he supports the artists who took the courage to withdraw. If you prepare a contribution to a biennial–and the Sydney Biennale still is one of the most renowned biennials worldwide–and then remove and withdraw your artwork, it is a big step for an artist. We should respect and acknowledge that artists take positions, while sometimes, as organizers and curators who work within institutions, including myself, either they don't have the courage or are not in a position to actually do so. Therefore, we should applaud the artists who have the guts to take a stand.

It was therefore crucial for the WBF no. 1 to involve such critical voices from other disciplines in these debates, because biennials can steer controversies about freedom of expression and are subject to censorship; biennials are not only artistic, but also political terrain.

As Elke aus dem Moore informed me a few days ago, the debates at ZKM will focus on the increasing limitations of biennials, addressing also the freedom and limitations to show what curators and artists propose for a variety of reasons. For example, Kasper König is currently confronted with an increasingly homophobic and repressive climate in Russia while curating the next Manifesta at the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg.

I myself was part of a funding body for biennials as director of the Office of Contemporary Art in Norway, one quickly gets to unterstand the challenge: As public funders we cannot sufficiently support 200 biennales. It is just not possible. In the past, Norway provided core funding to support the biennials of Venice, São Paulo, and Sydney; then Manifesta, as a roaming European biennial, joined the ranks. But now, as we have to address the funding of 200 biennales–do not all those biennials and artists deserve our support? However, public funding for art and culture–at least in Europe–is obviously shrinking instead of increasing. We observe the stretch biennials have to make in order to secure funding. We all are confronted with the necessity to cooperate with partners and funding bodies that might not always be on our list of favor.

What can be done under these kinds of constraints? Rather than pointing fingers at those who accept financial support from corporations or individuals, which one should indeed find problematic, we should be transparent and open about the financial pressure we face. Sponsors in return have to live with the fact that they will be questioned about their motiviations. There are ethical borders that we should keep intact. But what might be a way out of this dilemma? We must address these matters together with the

curators and artists, while also supporting our colleagues who organize and run biennials in various parts of the world and who are facing a lack of resources and infrastructure.

The WBF no. 1, that we titled *Shifting Gravity,* not only marked the shifting of gravity toward contemporary Asia, but also the new agenda in cultural policies shifting toward temporal festival formats, away from year-round opening museums. Does this mean that we disembowel museums? Do biennials give way to our governments to avoid collecting art? It's great to have temporal formats and art for a certain time, but who collects all of this new production and who maintains it and gives access to researchers? Who is forming the archives? In the past, museums were not only places to show art, they were indeed places where art was catalogued and researched. We cannot replace this crucial mandate of a museum with a temporal format. It is not about an either/or, rather about finding out how those formats can complement each other. Often, biennials are the driving motor for new art production. The Asia Pacific Triennial (APT) of Contemporary Art, in Brisbane, is a very interesting model: They collect out of their own triennial, which has become the foundation of the APT Collection. I suspect that they wouldn't have been able to do so if they had to buy art on the global market, as the prices are too high. Instead they used the opportunity of the unique production by artists created for the APT and therefore allowed them to establish their own unique collection.

Asia and Africa have become very dynamic continents in terms of their rapid economic changes. They also have become locations of political change and uprising. It can be observed how this goes hand in hand with the impetus and involvement of the cultural sector, not only in contemporary art but also in writing and filmmaking as well. Forged with this new cosmopolitanism, a new identity is impacted by unprecedented and expansive organizations across Asia and the Gulf in recent years. One could indeed suggest the formation of a new aesthetic cosmopolitanism, as Nikos Papastergiadis emphasized in his keynote speech at the WBF no. 1. But we are also confronted with an increasing fundamentalism that has been triggered by globalization. This new cosmopolitanism is not an organized, but a dynamic, chaotic, multidimensional and also political one, blending various cultural traditions and modes of production, according to Papastergiadis.

The shift of gravity also becomes visible in the ways in which the players of the Western hemisphere are eager to keep their seats on this fast-moving carousel in order to participate in defining future directions elsewhere. It's no more the East looking toward the West, and it's no more those in the West just looking toward one another, it's much more complex than that dichotomy. Via colleagues and artists in Sydney, I hear how frustrating it is to experience how politicians fail to respond to what is actually at stake.

The dimension and scale of socioeconomic changes and (re)actions that are considered impossible in the West are happening in other countries and continents, which creates new alliances throughout global art and cultural scenes. Spanning from the Pacific to the Gulf, from Korea, China, and Japan to the Middle East via Southeast Asia and the Asia Pacific region, over the past thirty years Asia has experienced a vast increase of art institutions and events, such as biennials. It's stunning to see this movement, for example, in China and Hong Kong, South Korea and the Gulf. Galleries from Western art capitals are moving very fast into those countries and opening branches. I find it difficult to envision the long-term consequences of these rapid changes. At the moment we are more like a rearguard trying to catch up with all of these developments.

It's also important to support new biennial formats. The Emergency Biennale, for example, travels in a suitcase from location to location. It was developed out of the censorship experienced during the 1st Moscow Biennale that excluded artists from Chechnya as participants. Evelyne Jouanno decided to withdraw as cocurator of the Moscow Biennale and instead established this miniature traveling biennial to highlight the impact of national borders and the politics of representation and repressions. Although this can be seen as a small act, too small to gain attention, but for oneself, it can be very empowering to say no to such forced exclusion. In that respect, what might have been considered small was a big step.

World Biennial Forum No 1, Case Study Emergency Biennale, Evelyne Jouanno
Image courtesy of the Gwangju Biennale Foundation

Although situated in different geographical regions, biennials share the common goal of fostering contemporary artistic creation; some have an interdisciplinary focus, while others address the political and cultural issues that are at stake in their particular re-

gion. In their openness, the majority of biennials serve as testing grounds for artistic experimentation and creation, but also of what might be possible in terms of freedom of expression at a particular site/locale. Most perform on an international stage, but they also operate beyond the conventional international art scene by introducing multidisciplinary artistic practices, new kinds of cultural production, and exclusive formats to a wide range of local audiences. Often it's the first time that local audiences can see contemporary art from elsewhere. And it's the achievement of these new biennials around the globe to shift parameters beyond the conventions of group exhibitions representing a nation or prepackaged traveling shows that tour the world.

Some biennials that were established to challenge this status quo, position themselves in the area of tension between the spectacle, the critical, the representative, and the performative, the international and the national, the global and local. Others were founded to claim international visibility, to become dots on the art map, and to attract the attention of a globalized world. Replacing large-scale internationally traveling exhibitions that often barely demonstrate their dedication to engage with the regional scenes beyond the limited time frame of their exhibitions, biennials cannot deny their locale. Indeed, serving as production machines where contemporary art equates to forms of expression, creation, and visions that are often new, avant-garde, and experimental, biennials are expected to generate new types of art and forms of presentation. Biennials situated beyond the Western hemisphere are often substitutes for museums of contemporary art, filling the gaps to present art from elsewhere to a local audience not necessarily familiar with the grammar of international contemporary art. These biennials mark rare interventions in a locale and can be crucial to encourage new communities to critically engage in art, as well as for generating or reviving the notion of a public, but they can also serve to lay the grounds for an ever-hungry art system. Therefore, biennials should maintain a degree of unpredictability while functioning as a productive challenge for those organizing and curating them, as well as for the participating artists.

To address and question the future of biennials, including this new challenge, should be at the core of debates that we should have over the next few days, during this gathering. What can the established format of the biennial contribute to a site? Can we look beyond the standard opposition of the local versus global? Instead of focusing on those dichotomies, we should seek a fresh perspective, to think again out of the box. Some of my curator colleagues directing institutions maintain their skepticism toward biennials. They view them merely in the service of the global art circuit and due to their limited

presence, refrain from engaging in an in-depth way with what might be at stake at a particular locale. The excitement around biennials does not necessarily generate a stimulus that endures for long.

I hope that we can recover what was once so inspiring about biennials and deepen the debates many of you initiated at the WBF no. 1 in Gwangju. Expanding our discourse involving the policy makers, politicians and other intellectuals, not only viewing biennials as a "gift" to the locals, but as a responsibility, biennials can offer different views on the world.

In Gwangju, keynote speaker Wang Hui discussed the decline of representation, commenting on its crisis in a contradictory political reality. He reminded us of the importance of the political status of contemporary creation and the question of representation as a crucial dimension inherent to the process of making biennials. Once borne and nurtured by a critical theory of postmodernism, postcolonialism, and the critique of globalization, biennials are yet again confronted with changed geo-political realities. Questions of community, a decrease of public space, privatization threatening the public sphere, the urgencies of multicultural coexistence, an increase of labor migration, and the need for economical alternatives are realities artists do address. Today many biennials focus on encouraging public participation, and they take education as a serious part of their mandate. With an emphasis on site- and context-specificity, biennials embrace an engagement of the performative, the immaterial, the ephemeral, the transdisciplinary, and thereby render art events all the more festive, alive, open to the everyday lives of their audiences. In that respect, they are still viable. We should also see how biennials adjust to what other cultural institutions produce today. As a catalyst for critical examination of historical documents, biennials claim alternative historical memory as a discursive resistance to the ideological control of the dominant, even though the question of how biennials confront the cultural hegemony remains open to further investigation.

But if biennials want to survive, they need to create, within the local context, a site for public engagement that is not only periodically erupting but is permanently anchored. Interaction with local communities is essential to the raison d'être of biennials, although such engagement is often deemed to be merely part of the public programs and pedagogy. Furthermore, if biennials at the time of their inception have the potential to respond to emergent social and political events, are they willing to further pursue this potential, even if it may lead to their end? Once they are established, do their priorities shift toward a stronger emphasis on their own survival and longevity rather than experimentation or even their disappearance? Trapped in a vulnerable funding structure contingent on

various political and local agendas, are biennials still a suitable format to resist hegemonic systems? Do biennials indeed have more freedom than other art institutions? Are they less subjected to forces of censorship? Biennials are complex structures at the crossroads of diverse interests. These are the questions we must address.

To paraphrase Chantal Mouffe, "only if we can have friendly disagreements and allow antagonisms, can we achieve what the ongoing process of democracy requires."

Thank you very much for your attention.

Andrea Buddensieg

Thank you very much for your inspiring lecture. I'm very happy that you brought in the World Biennale Forum no. 1 because thereby you built a bridge between those of us who were not present and those who were. So thank you for linking us together. Although tonight we are not sitting around round tables, you created such a situation with your speech and the pictures we saw in the background.

You already posed all the questions we'd like to post tomorrow. So if anyone from the audience has any questions, we would like to invite you to ask them. None right now? So maybe I will start.

Do you see a chance that biennials can develop the subversive power of changing anything? You mentioned the Gwangju Biennale and the uprising of students in the 1980s. But there are also plans to build a museum for the beginning of the democratization process. Do you think biennials did have some impact or influence on the awareness or even on the institutions of remembrance?

Ute Meta Bauer

Yongwoo Lee from Gwangju is more suited to answer that. I, of course, find it impressive and of course necessary that there are sites and archives dedicated to commemorate and support the study of such traumatic histories. However, as the city government of Gwangju, supported by the national government at the time, offered the Gwangju Biennale as a gift to the people of South Korea as a potentially healing event, it is a unique opportunity to investigate the capacity of the biennial as a model for an active memorial of political repression. With its founding moment after World War II, reconnecting Germany's art scene with the world, documenta although initially a one-off, served as a reference for Gwangju. Welcoming artists back to Germany after their work had been defamed by the fascist regime Germany was part of the motivation to initiate the documenta exhibition of 1955. Such an underlying mandate of a biennial can contribute

to widening our horizons, opening our minds, and encouraging agency. Yongwoo Lee, founding president of the Gwangju Biennale, always underlined that 1.6 million people, mainly Koreans, attended the first edition. That is quite amazing.

On the other hand, the Land Art Mongolia–LAM 360° Biennale–is a biennial which does not directly address an audience. There is actually no audience at all. Instead, invited artists travel into the Gobi Desert and produce new works directly on-site. Perhaps some nomadic tribes passing by might see it. I find this a refreshing approach, as these days we are often confronted with quantitative measurements: numbers matter. In this case, however, it's about the qualitative measurement, mainly from the perspective of the artist. Nowadays, we place so much emphasis on how to reach out to new communities, how to diversify our audiences. Of course it is important to grant wide access, but I also think we don't need to force each and every body into a biennial. It's okay if people don't like art and that artists produce without an audience in mind.

You also asked whether biennials have the potential to make a change. The current debate around the Sydney Biennale is telling. Artist Ahmet Öğüt sent an open letter of withdrawal to a number of people. A Turkish curator and academic questioned whether the moralistic tone of Öğüt's letter is the right response. I forwarded both letters to Melbourne, to Nikos Papastergiadis, who replied that it was crucial that there was a critical reaction by the artists, that the art world recognizes that this is not business as usual. The artists' intervention caused wider international attention and, as a result, change.org, an influential online petition NGO, became active. In the meantime, a Wikipedia page was created about the withdrawal of artists at this edition of the Sydney Biennale. Such actions do have an impact and in that respect, biennials, artists, and curatorial statements can matter, as more visible biennials create wider attention than other art events. Many biennials have global outreach, and they can also shed light on local issues that we don't necessarily see or know otherwise.

Audience Member

Thank you, Ute, for your presentation. I'm glad you brought up the Chantal Mouffe quote underscoring the idea of democracy being something that biennials try to push; and also that you brought up the example of the withdrawal of artists as a response. But what are some curatorial models we can talk about for making biennials under non-democratic conditions? Of course there is China, there is Russia, we can think about the biennale in Havana. You mentioned Kasper König, of course he has already faced a lot of censorial situations. But as a curator understanding the power of freedom of expression

with access to ideas and so forth, what kind of curatorial position can we take under the conditions of nondemocratic countries?

Ute Meta Bauer

There is no general answer to that. What's important is not to shy away from it. On the one hand, we should keep our feet on the ground–we are curators, our knowledge and our so-called power has its limits. We should avoid political finger-pointing just for the sake of calling attention to something without knowing the local constellations and circumstances in depth. Indeed, it's more complex. After a project, leave a site and it's the locals who might pay the price for our "courage" that does not hurt us, but those, who live and work there. On the other hand, we have to avoid self-censorship and compliance, in getting the show going. It's crucial to have such debates that include artists, the curators, and the organizers as well as other local voices. There is no easy way out.

Royce Smith

Hello. I have to tell you that it's going to be 201 biennials, because Asunción, Paraguay, is getting its first biennial in 2015. And I will be curating that. So you can maybe take this question as a bit of advice. Paraguay is a difficult place to work. I feel on the one hand the pressures of the local. Johannesburg is a perfect example of what happens if you don't pay attention to the locals, as you should on the range of education, on the range of indigenous populations. And then on the other side the foundation I'm working with on this project also sees the looming clouds of critics who have been to Venice and São Paulo, with their glitzy Mylar-wrapped catalogues and expectations. And caught in the middle we're trying to make these changes you are rightly pointing to. So my question is for those of us who are starting traditions or wanting to build biennials in cultures that are lacking art infrastructure to begin with: Where do you see the world of critique and expectation that the world of biennials has produced for us, and the world of people who have been completely disenfranchised and are left out of conversations of the contemporary, can join? And where do you think this places someone like me, who has to mediate those two radically different worlds?

Ute Meta Bauer

There are so many biennial organizers present today and many of them are confronted with exactly the same issues you just mentioned. Sometimes the local scene is very pleased, sometimes there is frustration. For instance, exactly in that moment the inter-

national critics and the international art scene hits your streets for the big events you, as a local, cannot show your work, you are invisible. Then the global crowd disappears and you wonder how all of this actually benefitted you. One has to understand where these skeptical voices come from. As you said, the crucial point is: if you see an urgent need for a biennial at your locale, then just go for it. The authority to decide whether a biennial should happen or not remains a local decision. At the *Bergen Biennial Conference* the director of the Kunsthalle in Bergen, Solveig Øvstebø, explained that she was asked to organize a biennial by the local government at the time. And her response was to question whether Bergen in fact, needed a biennial, through the *Bergen Biennial Conference* and *The Biennial Reader*. Tourist boards and politicians around the globe discovered biennials as assets in their portfolios from which the local art ecosystem does not always benefit.

In Singapore, where I currently work and live, there was also tension between the local art scene versus the global players involved in biennials that can be experienced as a closed circuit. The recent Singapore Biennial focused on art produced in Southeast Asia. While part of the regional scene welcomes this, other local artists and people interested are disappointed not to be able to encounter art from other parts of the world, as not so many international exhibitions can be seen in Singapore. There are pros and cons either way.

So, there is a yes/no response to your question. Paraguay and many Latin American countries are in the midst of healing processes after long years of dictatorship. To deal with trauma might require different actions in different places. But it is important to involve the local art scenes, their respective histories, and expand through outside perspectives and reflections. A biennial can unfold a unique learning experience, so, yes: Go for it!

27.02.—01.03.2014
Panel Discussions
Elke aus dem Moore

Good morning dear friends, ladies and gentlemen. Good morning, Andrea Buddensieg, and all the guests coming over from so many places in the world. Today I also would like to welcome the audience in front of the computers, who are with us through live streaming. So everybody who watches us on screen: Welcome to this conference. I'm delighted to welcome you at ZKM for the conference *Biennials: Prospect and Perspectives*, which takes place in the frame of GLOBALE 2015, and the exhibition *Travelling the World: Art from Germany*, an exhibition on the ifa collection which will be on view at ZKM until Sunday.

Now let me come to our subjects: Biennials always have been seismographs of social and political developments. They are often instruments of the representation of nations and cultural identities of the region. But on the other hand, they can also serve as a refuge. In their ephemeral form they are counternarratives to museum structures and offer an alternative or visionary potential in urban settings, ruled by economic interests. Biennials can highlight complex sociopolitical questions and offer the possibility to reach attendance locally and internationally. Biennials are able to confront the audience with questions, raise new ways of thinking, and establish links in the international cultural field. Biennials have a high value of reflection and offer the potential of new forms of resistance. The conference *Biennials: Prospect and Perspectives* is the fifth edition of the ifa conference series Biennials in Dialogue with the aim of generating discussions in the context of international biennial culture. The series not only facilitates the exchange of experiences of directors, organizers, and artists of biennials, but also grants access to discussions for an interested audience.

But let me now move on to the conference today. As I mentioned before, biennials bear a highly symbolic power for sociopolitical developments, as can be seen at recent

events around biennials or triennials such as Marrakesh, Sydney, and Bucharest. These biennials often bear a delicate position for social changes. They resolve conflicts between politics and civil society, between institution and the art market with topics such as gentrification, participation, or biennials as an educational model, political interference, marketing-oriented management. How are the diverse actors behaving within this framework of different interests? Are biennials still places of imagination, places of free discourse, or places where surprising new alliances are built? Places where local neighborhoods meet an international audience and where connections are forged? Can biennials change the perspectives, the behavior, the social, or even the political situation? Are biennials acting on behalf of or respectively for artist communities, an international audience, or society? Are they digested by residents or audiences in an anthropophagic cultural strategy–as proposed by Paulo Herkenhoff for his recently opened museum in Rio de Janeiro, the MAR–the museum as an anthropophagic practice? Biennials have mobility. They offer the fluidity to act, to react, to muddle through and continuously develop new strategies in a cunning and resisting way, while facing the respective location. I was very impressed by the way Fulya Erdemci responded to the situation in Istanbul, abandoning her curatorial concept on the spot–a concept to carry out the Biennial in public spaces that had been planned out beforehand over a considerable amount of time in favor of both the Biennial and the people. You could argue–and I'm sure we will do that in this conference–whether an institutional resistance would have been more suitable here. Because with this wise decision she secured the Biennial's being held after all, and thus she provided both an open window and the debate to large parts of Istanbul's and the world's population on a vital and up-to-date question: Whom does the city belong to? Who owns public space? Which role is the economic situation playing? How can biennials be strengthened and also embedded into the marketing interests of the city or region? Are limitations created in this way? How does a biennial deal with that? Which strategies can be developed? Which options of resistance are chosen by artists or curators when facing limitations? Given that the biennial as a model has gained popularity, is a biennial attractive or sexy? What is the promise of this label? For whom and why? Can these exhibition models grant free space reaching beyond their diverse interests? Can they offer new perspectives, think the unthinkable, forge unimagined coalitions? Do biennials guarantee a better life?

In the final panel we will introduce open systems, exhibition models geared toward the idea of an exhibition that runs every two years, looked at from completely different motivations and perspectives. I would really like to thank Ute Meta Bauer for her lecture

yesterday evening, which was wonderful in its way of going back but also looking forward in the meanings, the potentials, and the challenges of biennials.

Now I'd like to thank our chairs who will accompany the panels with regards to their contents: Carol Lu, Christine Eyene, Marieke van Hal, Sabine B. Vogel, and Rafal Niemojewski. Thank you everybody for your big interest in this conference. My deep thanks goes to all the invited guest artists, curators, organizers of biennials, and the whole audience–they always act as analysts of or respondents to the panels. I'm very delighted about the productive and generous cooperation with ZKM, a cooperation of respect, joy, and the will to enable all that's possible and necessary to create a critical discourse on this subject. Thank you very much Peter Weibel, director of the ZKM in absence–congratulations on the Oskar Kokoschka Prize–and Andrea Buddensieg, curator and manager of the project Global Art and the Museum, who cocurated this conference with me. My deep thanks from the heart to you, it was a great pleasure working with you, Andrea. And also thank you to the whole team of ZKM, especially to Sabiha Keyif and to the team of ifa, Nina Hülsmeier and Valerie Hammerbacher. And last but not least, making a conference means to provide space, time, and atmosphere for encounter. Therefore we invited two DJs for the evenings. Yesterday we heard the sound of Sinethemba Twalo, from Johannesburg, and tonight we are expecting Konrad Kuhn, from Stuttgart. I would like to thank you all for coming, and I'm looking forward to a very productive, nourishing, and lively discussion. Thank you.

28.02.2014 / 10 a.m. — 12 p.m.
Biennials and Public Space

Chair: **Carol Lu**
Panel: **Fulya Erdemci, Yongwoo Lee, Katja Aßmann**
Respondents: **Blair French, Christoph Schäfer**

Elke aus dem Moore

The first panel is "Biennials and Public Space," maybe also discussing new definitions of public space. It's hosted by Carol Lu. Carol Lu lives and works in Beijing. She's a contributing editor for *Frieze* magazine, executive editor in chief for *Yishu*, the Chinese edition, and was appointed researcher for the Asia Art Archive from 2005 to 2007. She also writes frequently for international art journals and magazines. Carol Lu was jury member of the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale in 2011. In 2013 she presented together with Liu Ding the exhibition project *Little Movements II: Self-Practice in Contemporary Art* at Museion Bolzano. Since July 2012 Carol Lu is artistic director of OCAT at Shenzhen. A warm welcome to Carol Lu. She will introduce all the panelists and respondents later.

Carol Lu

Good morning. Can I please invite my panelists and respondents to come onstage to join me now.

Thank you, Elke and Andrea, for the introduction. A very warm welcome to everyone to the first panel today on biennials and public space. I am proud to be joined by our distinguished panelists and respondents of the first panel who are all makers, shakers, participants, or servants of biennials from all over the world. In October 2012 a conference was organized in Gwangju, as mentioned previously, dedicated to the discussion of the biennial as a platform for artistic and curatorial experimentation and social imag-

ination. I'm very sad to have missed that one but very proud to be part of the exciting debates and discussions unfolding over the three-day conference here at ZKM right now.

Having been involved in the curating, making, and discussion of several biennials as well as currently directing the Shenzhen Biennale in South China, I've become fully aware over the last few years of the importance and urgency of reflecting on biennials not only as a form of exhibition but particularly as a platform for social imagination and experimentation of artistic practice. And I realized that we have an urgent need to develop a more diverse discussion and literature about the biennial format itself.

Our panelists today have been asked by the organizers to reflect on the notion of art as a public domain and the notion of a new publicness in the context of biennials. I'll invite each of the panelists to give a presentation of about ten or fifteen minutes before inviting their colleagues to respond. I'll not read out their biographies from the very beginning. Instead I'll introduce each of them before they make their presentation so you'll not forget who they are during the course of the panel.

Unfortunately we are missing one of the panelists today, Sheika Hoor Al Qasimi. Due to certain travel arrangements she'll not be able to join us this morning. But having a few more minutes for the other panelists and respondents won't hurt; as is the case with biennial-making, having more time won't hurt.

Without further ado I'd like to introduce our first panelist, Fulya Erdemci. She is a curator and writer based in Istanbul. She was the curator of the 2011 Pavilion of Turkey at the fifty-fourth International Art Exhibition at the Venice Biennale. She was the director of SKOR|Foundation for Art and Public Domain in Amsterdam between 2008 and 2012. Erdemci is a veteran when it comes to biennial directing or making. She was director of the International Istanbul Biennial between 1994 and 2000, director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Istanbul, from 2003 to 2004, and temporary exhibition curator at Istanbul from 2004 to 2005. Erdemci was a member of the curatorial team for the second Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art in 2007. She cocurated the fifth SCAPE Public Space Christchurch Biennial (2008), together with Danae Mossman, and the Istanbul Pedestrian Exhibitions, a series of public art exhibitions realized in two editions (2002 and 2005). In 2013 she curated the thirteenth Istanbul Biennial, which I believe will be the focus of her presentation this morning. Fulya, please.

Fulya Erdemci

Hello and welcome. Today I'm very happy to be here. As Elke mentioned, I was one of the speakers ten years ago at the biennial conference, which I found extremely import-

ant, because the research is still continuing and getting deeper while biennials and their reception are in the process of change under the changing skies of political protests all over the world.

The title of the Istanbul Biennial last year was *Mom, Am I Barbarian?* The main focus of the biennial was the question of multiple publics and the notion of the public domain as a political public forum for debate. And it coincided, overlapped, with one of the most significant and most unique civic awakenings, the Gezi Resistance, which we experienced last summer in Istanbul. It not only coincided in time, but the questions posed by Gezi and the questions posed by the biennial also overlapped. This is why I'd like to give to you very shortly the story of the Istanbul Biennial.

I believe that biennials have the capacity to create public debates. In one of the interviews, Hou Hanru mentioned the biennial as public domain. I think so, too, but last year I wanted to focus the Istanbul Biennial specifically on this concept. Actually *Mom, Am I Barbarian?* is a quotation from the Turkish poet Lale Müldür. Under this title we constructed the biennial in three axes, or lines. The theoretical line was directly focused on the question of multiple publics and creating a public forum. Today we all know that we cannot talk about a homogenized single public unified under a general will. Departing from this point of view the theoretical line was asking the question of how these multiple publics, maybe diverse worlds, even the contrasting ones can come together, can act together and can live together. Certainly, all of us know that the concept of the public sphere of Jürgen Habermas has been under revision since the 1990s. Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt bring out proletarian public space, Nancy Fraser asks the question of multiple publics, Okwui Enwezor coins the new term of *civic space*, and Simon Sheikh the *post-publics*. So the theoretical line of the Biennial was focusing on this question of public domain while the biggest public protests were happening last year in Turkey.

The praxis site of the theoretical line was urban public spaces as the spatial component of the democratic apparatus. I tried to look at the ongoing assaults and the urban transformations in Istanbul (as well as in other geographies) as the praxis site and took the spatial manifestations of the concept of freedom and the acts of disobedience together with the concept of agoraphobia.

The third line is more related to the sphere of imagination. As I told before, I borrowed *Mom, Am I Barbarian?* from a Turkish poet, Lale Müldür. I found this very strong in the current context because it reintroduced the concept of the barbarian. Maybe some of you already know where it comes from. It originated in ancient Greece and is related

directly to language and citizenship. In ancient Greece people who couldn't speak the Greek language properly were called barbarians and thus considered noncitizens. So barbarians were not citizens but outsiders; they were not allowed to speak in the Agora. Here the public domain gets its reference. The public domain in ancient Greece actually always had exclusions–for instance, women were not included in the debates in the Agora; neither were slaves and children. As I mentioned before, Nancy Fraser tried to think about other exclusions of the public domain. In the Biennial we tried to ask Who are the barbarians in the city? Who are the most excluded ones? Who are the ones who don't take part in decision making? The extent I began to think about is that the barbarians are people who try to depart the seams of the system to show the otherwise, to change the system. They are like revolutionaries, anarchists, or poets or artists. So it combines both: the most excluded ones and at the same time the ones who try to change the system.

I also take it as an unorthodox language. Today through the demonstrations and protests we all know that we are looking for another world to come. If we want to call a new world, a different world, we need new languages to define it. So it also refers to the new languages that we don't know yet or that we need to invent.

With the Istanbul Biennial–very generally speaking–I tried to establish the exhibition according to these three lines. Part of my concept was to ask: What is public domain? I didn't use *public sphere* or *public space* but *public domain* in order to include social media or any place or medium that can create social engagement and public debates. It can be around an artwork, it can be social media, or it can be physical urban public spaces. In Istanbul I feel obliged to look at the urban transformation as it was/is a violent act from top-down in terms of gentrification. Many neighborhoods have been lost, many families, including Roma families, were displaced in the city. And as you may know, Gezi Resistance started with the questions about the park in the middle of the city at Taksim Square. It was the only green area in the neighborhood, and the authorities wanted to transform it into a shopping center in the shape of Ottoman military barracks. So people came together, and the questions I was asking as a possibility in my conceptual framework were transformed into the realm of reality.

Even the contrasting worlds formed new coalitions: anticapitalist Muslims, the feminist movement, the animal rights movement, also football fans–this is really very interesting: When football is politicized, things change faster, I guess. When I wrote the conceptual framework, I didn't expect such a big, unique civic awakening in Turkey. But they overlapped. And the Biennial happened to pass through the eye of the storm. In June,

we (I and the whole team) couldn't really deal with the Biennial because the world was changing. All of us were at Gezi. For fifteen days, Taksim Square and Gezi Park were occupied by people, and the police couldn't enter. Of course afterward, very violently, the voices of the people were suppressed by the police forces. And even today, instead of listening to what is going on in the streets, the government still continues to suppress the reactions. Maybe you know that thousands of people got injured and seven people already died in these protests.

So originally my idea was to discuss the issue of the multiple publics and the public domain in different media: in social media, in the exhibition but also directly in the urban public spaces in Istanbul. Certainly, I was to use Gezi Park, Taksim Square, Tarlabaşı Boulevard, Karaköy Square and some of the most contested areas in the city to be able to open up the conflict and make it visible and debatable. Yesterday Ute also mentioned, based on Chantal Mouffe's ideas, we can claim that the raison d'être of any project realized in urban public spaces is to open up the conflict to make it more debatable. However, when Gezi happened, the conflict split open. We saw the suppression. We saw the pressure. Besides, the streets were and are still today under police surveillance.

When you realize art projects in urban public spaces, you need to collaborate with city authorities. During the protests the city authorities shut down public transportation, even the electricity in Gezi Park and Taksim Square, while the police attacked the people. The conflict was split open and visible. So, we began to question: What does it mean to create art projects in urban public spaces in collaboration with the same authorities that suppress the voices of its own people? After Gezi, the authorities were ready to collaborate with us. Before that they were very critical about our concept. Someone from the municipality even asked me: Why do you want to use Gezi Park? You can use any other park. But after Gezi they needed to gain back publicity, prestige, and legitimacy, which they had lost. Creating our projects in urban public spaces would have given them the opportunity to clean their hands, to get rid of the real blood on their hands through art. That's why we discussed it a lot. We established two forums in the parks (after Gezi, the gatherings continued in neighboring parks). We invited artists, activists, many people to join these two forums and brought up the subject. Consequently, I, Bige Örer, the Biennial team, and artists I've talked to thought that it was not a good idea to collaborate with the authorities at this time. If we would, we'd cover up the conflict again. So we decided to withdraw from the urban public spaces in Istanbul at the end of July–almost a month before the exhibition opened. This of course brought many complications: conceptual, practical, and also space-wise. After we decided to withdraw, we had a huge problem

concerning venues. But fortunately we solved it through collaborations with three art institutions in Istanbul: Arter, Salt, and 5533 (the last one is an artist's initiation). We were able to adapt some of the projects to the exhibition sites, but fourteen projects had been lost. For instance Tadashi Kawamata's project is exhibited as a project proposal. Or Rietveld Landscape wanted to make a light project about Atatürk Cultural Center, which was the main cultural hub at Taksim Square. They changed their plan and realized a light installation in the exhibition venue that gave a taste of what couldn't be done anymore. We also had to reconsider our public programs that I cocurated with Andrea Phillips. And in a very short time we changed the focus from theoretical presentations to more bottom-up practical workshops, talks, gatherings. I asked artists to contribute, and many of them created performances, workshops, talks, and other things. The Biennial had billboards all over the city traditionally as part of the agreement with the municipality. But this time we didn't even have one billboard in the city–of course, when we refused to cooperate, they refused to cooperate, too. But it didn't make much difference, because thanks to Bige Örer, the Biennial team, and their supporters we were able to make the Biennial free of charge, and together with that we had to shorten the time. In effect, during five weeks more than 337,000 people visited the Biennial. In this sense the Biennial itself became a public space where people gathered and began to discuss.

Thank you very much.

Carol Lu

Thank you, Fulya. Despite our sitting order I'd like to invite Yongwoo Lee to be the second panelist of today. Yongwoo Lee is a writer, curator, and art historian based in Seoul. He is currently the president of Gwangju Biennale Foundation, a position he's held since 2008. Yongwoo Lee was a professor of history and critical theory at Korea University and has lectured at many different colleges across the United States and in Europe. He obtained his PhD in art history at Oxford University. He is founding editor of the critical art journal *NOON* since 2009. In 1995 Yongwoo Lee was the founding director of the Gwangju Biennale, which attracted a record-breaking audience of 1.63 million people. The Gwangju Biennale is the first and longest-running international biennial in Asia. Yongwoo Lee was invited to return as the Gwangju Biennale's artistic director of 2004 for the Biennale's tenth anniversary and has been directing the Biennale since then. The infrastructure and the politics behind the infrastructure in making a biennial, in particular the Gwangju Biennale, will be the focus of his presentation this morning.

I'm aware that one of the team members of ZKM is making gestures and signs in terms of keeping track of the time, so I would appreciate if the panelists would be looking toward his direction during the course of their presentation. Thank you.

Yongwoo Lee

Good morning. First of all on behalf of the International Biennial Association and also as interim president I would like to express my sincere gratitude to ifa and ZKM for their sincere support for and participation in the standing of the biennial context and discourses.

To begin with I'd like to introduce to you this phrase, which might be very familiar to all of you: "the most noble manifestation of the modern spirit without distinction of country." We seem to hear this kind of wording today everywhere. But especially the last part of the phrase, "without distinction of country," might represent a familiarity of globalism or globality in the biennial context. As we understand it, globalism, or globality, has lost the political dogma in it, and if you like you could reintroduce it as cosmopolitanism, internationalism, whatever. Anyway this is part of the welcoming address that the mayor of Venice spoke in 1895, about 120 years ago. It is also the rhetoric of biennials today in relation to global understanding.

I'd like to give you some exclamations and images on the Venice Biennale, which has the longest history, almost 120 years. And I'd also like to share with you today the strategies of international art exhibitions in relation to an every-two-or-three-years format. Biennials and triennials have half-responded to a radical change that has taken place during the past twenty years in the field of visual arts.

This is the long queue at the opening at the Art Basel art fair. Biennials and art fairs today are two of the phenomena that have become a dominant trend on the art market and in public space as well. Though global capitalism has been playing a very important role today with its stimulation and instigation for cultural nomadism and globalism, we understand that there are about 200 biennials. When it comes to numbers of the biennials we always say between 150 and 200, but there are no clear statistics conducted by an institution. So we presume that there are lots of biennials. Until the 1980s there were approximately ten biennials, in the cities of Venice (1895), São Paulo (1951), there was documenta (Kassel, 1955), Ljubljana Graphic Arts (1955), Whitney (1973), Sydney (1973), Havana (1984), Istanbul (1987) and Tokyo (1951, now defunct). Since the 1990s, biennials have been recognized as alternative artistic platforms for experimental art and a strategic window for the hosting city.

So what are the biennial aesthetics, what are the biennial politics today? Biennial exhibitions are a reflection of the desire to move art outside of its white cube context, first of all. Biennial exhibitions address the issues of globalization, migration, and displacement in relation to sociopolitical environments. Biennials are supposed to bring an art of action, interfacing with reality. They aim to repair social bonds that are disappearing. They are a critique of artistic spectacles according to Jacques Rancière. He says that the alpha and omega of the politics of art is a critique of the spectacle. Also, biennials are supposed to create an overall experience, including art, tourism, a global meeting point, an information bazaar. And also, biennials deal with the absurdity of time and reality. This kind of biennial politics and aesthetics have become a real phenomenon today because of their relevance within the global attitude.

In this image you can see the opening area of the Venice Biennale last year. I'm showing you lots of images from the Venice Biennale because we don't have any speakers from Venice this time. What you can see here is the French opening at the German Pavilion, and here you can see the German opening at the French Pavilion. As you know they switched their pavilions. I understand that there've been lots of controversies and puzzling points.

This is one of the works by Choi Jeong Hwa from the Setouchi Triennale that took place last year in the Setouchi area in Japan. Have you heard about the Setouchi Triennale? Some of you have. This is a very important and interesting triennial. There are six triennials in Japan, so I call them a Triennial Kingdom. Anyway, Setouchi was founded last year by the organizer of the Echigo-Tsumari Triennale, Fram Kitagawa. The concept is very interesting. It invites twelve inland islands to be part of the triennale. They open seasonally; there's a spring opening, a summer opening, and an autumn opening in which they had an audience of about 300,000 people. So the numbers of the first version of the Setouchi Triennale were really remarkable.

This is the Yokohama Triennale in Japan.

This is the Gwangju Biennale in 2010, directed by Massimiliano Gioni, who was the director of the Venice Biennale last year.

This here is the Kassel documenta as you'll all know.

Ute and Elke talked about the formation of the International Biennial Association. This is an image of the first edition of the World Biennial Forum, organized by the Gwangju Biennale Foundation, the Biennial Foundation, and IFA, where over four hundred biennial professionals and related institutions gathered in the same point. We dealt a lot with today's biennial discourses, the positive and negative sides of a biennial's activities.

This is a meeting of biennial representatives in Gwangju, where sixty-eight representatives and biennial organizers gathered.

And finally we've been able to formulate a public entity through which the organizers of biennials can communicate and participate, they can share information.

Let's take a look at art fairs. Until the end of the 1990s there were just a handful of art fairs worldwide, including Basel and Chicago. It was a situation comparable to the biennials during the 1990s. But in 2008 there already were 100 art fairs. According to the statistics conducted by *Art Newspaper*, in 2010 there were 180 art fairs. By the end of last year there were 300 art fairs. This means an art market revolution took place. Art fairs are sucking up the local traditional art market. They are becoming kind of a black hole. Globalization and nomadization are becoming another dominant trend in the art market.

This is the opening of the Art Basel in Hong Kong.

According to art economics, 30 percent of sales by internationally leading galleries take place at home, 70 percent on the road. Globalization and nomadization are two of the dominant trends in the art market, as I said. Leading art fairs and galleries are aggressively being franchised all over the world. So we started to define art fairs as a black hole in the art market. Today's trend of the art market has been remapped into two top systems: on the one hand art fairs, on the other hand expansion of auction houses.

This is Frieze, New York. As you know, Art Basel is also in Miami and Hong Kong. Frieze franchised to Frieze New York and Frieze Masters.

Finally I talk about the Gwangju Biennale. Thirty-four years ago a civil uprising happened. If you take a look at the map, the location of Gwangju is far down in the southwest Korean Peninsula. In this map unfortunately we don't see the indication of the cities in North Korea as the country is still divided by ideology. Gwangju city is traditionally known for gourmet food and art. The Biennale was founded in memory of the Gwangju Democratic Uprising in 1980. So one of the backbones of the spirit of the Gwangju Biennale is in relation to this civil uprising. The Gwangju Biennale was founded in 1994; this year marks the twentieth anniversary of its founding.

We do a lot of projects together at the same time: Gwangju Biennale (1995), Gwangju Design Biennale (2004), Gwangju Folly (Architecture, 2011), GBICC (Gwangju Biennale International Curators, 2008) and *NOON* (critical magazine on visual culture, 2008).

This is the Gwangju Biennale Hall at the Design Biennale last year. Here you can see a work by the Japanese Artist Kengo Kuma.

This is the Art Biennale from 2012, curated by six co-artistic directors, including Carol Lu and Alia Swastika, who are here today.

In the first edition of Gwangju Biennale that happened in 1995, the number of visitors was about 1.63 million people, which is still the highest record in the history of biennials. So I was asked a lot of questions: What is the secret? What is the attractive point for the audience in the name of contemporary art and visual culture? 1.63 million people is really remarkable and until today unbroken. After this success a lot of biennials came out, especially in Far Eastern countries. In Korea we have about ten biennials and triennials, also in China and Japan. So in three Far Eastern countries there are thirty biennials and triennials–which is a lot, maybe too much.

I would like to briefly introduce you to the Gwangju Folly, which is an architectural project. It was founded in the spirit of rejection of urban colonization by rapid industrial growth. In this picture you can see a work by Rem Koolhaas from last year's edition, curated by Nikolaus Hirsch, cocurated by Philipp Misselwitz. It's a very simple architectural structure which the people of Gwangju are supposed to pass by. On the floor you can read the question: Do you support democracy? And then *yes* is a green field, *maybe* is a gray field, and *no* is a red field. If you pass through, you have to choose. It's like a voting place designed by Rem Koolhaas in cooperation with Ingo Niermann, the German writer and artist. We installed this piece in a slum area of Gwangju. The second question written on the floor was: Do you support same-gender marriage? Here the majority was *maybe*; *no* was second, and *yes*, well, actually very little. The topics were changing every month. In February it was: Is Korea a democratic republic? It's a very fundamental question in relation to North Korea, because we all consider North Korea as part of the Korean Peninsula, so the question applies to North Korea as well.

This is a small house where people could meet and play music. It's a work by the French architect Dominique Perrault from the first edition of the Folly. It used to be a very chaotic area for elite parties here and there. Now it's been rearranged as an artistic and architectural place.

This is a piece by Ai Weiwei, again from the second edition. As you can see, this is a very simple cooking cart. It's an illegal food cart for the streets. Do you have such a thing in Germany? No? It's not illegal? Anyway, Ai Weiwei's concept was interesting. He wanted to use public money, which is governmental money, creating illegal objects on the streets to be controlled, repressed, and discarded by the authorities in the end. But, you know, everybody now wants to keep them as they are. We had a talk with the authorities, and they didn't want to repress them. So they will remain there forever–as what? Architectural object or artifacts? Whatever.

This is a mobile hotel from the second edition by Do-Ho Suh, the Korean artist based in London. This hotel is moving around every day. It moves to every corner of the city,

and people can apply for a reservation. When they get the right to stay one night or two nights, we don't charge them. We rather wish to give them the experience to stay in this mobile hotel, entirely designed by an artist. He describes it as a five-star hotel.

This is the work *Field* by Ai Weiwei during the 2011 Gwangju Design Biennale. Here you can see Massimiliano Gioni. This is Ai Weiwei. Okwui Enwezor was the director of the 2007 Gwangju Biennale. Here he's offering a shaman's ritual. René Block was a curator of the third Gwangju Biennale, here you can also see Kim Hong-hee. This picture shows Ute Meta Bauer and Hou Hanru, who directed the first international World Biennial Forum in 2012. Harald Szeemann was the curator of the second Gwangju Biennale.

Thank you very much.

Carol Lu

Thank you, Yongwoo, for giving us a historical perspective on biennials in relation to the mechanisms in the art system. Now I'd like to invite the third panelist today, Katja Aßmann. She's the artistic director of Urbane Künste Ruhr (Urban Arts Ruhr). In 1999 she directed the art and culture department of the International Building Exhibition Emscher Park. From 2002 to 2007 she worked as freelance curator for several exhibition projects. In 2007 Aßmann was assigned to manage the divisions Architecture, Urban Planning, and Visual Arts of the European Capital of Culture Ruhr.2010. Since 2012, she is artistic director of Urbane Künste Ruhr, a cultural institution to secure the effects of Ruhr.2010. She developed the artistic conception for Urbane Künste Ruhr and curates her own productions with various national and international artists and coproductions with artistic and scientific partner institutions from the Ruhr region and abroad.

Katja Aßmann

Thank you very much for inviting me. I think I'm one of the few curators here who were never involved in a biennial or triennial in the classical sense. But I am involved in public art projects and would like to give you an idea of my work in the Ruhr area and how we develop public art.

Urbane Künste Ruhr was, as you said, Carol Lu, developed after the Capital of Culture year. You could compare a Capital of Culture year with a biennial because this title goes to different cities in Europe, and there's always an artistic program that's very special and contemporary. In 2010 Istanbul was Capital of Culture.

The Ruhr area is situated in Germany close to the Dutch border and consists of fifty-three cities that are connected through their industrial history: The coal mining and

the steel plants were the main drivers for the development of the area. I'm mentioning this because the Ruhr area went through a deep transformation when the coal and steel mining left.

In these pictures you can see how industrial sites were transformed, for example in Duisburg or Essen, where the Zeche Zollverein even is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In the 1990s artists responded to this change. I'm only showing this one work by Richard Serra, because I think it stands for a whole generation of artists who transformed the Ruhr area and the landscape and gave new landmarks and signs to this region.

With all that experience in the Ruhr area there was actually a triennial founded in 2001: the Ruhr Triennale. The motivation was to give new life to the Ruhr area by bringing art to former industrial sites. The first director of the Ruhr Triennale was Gerard Mortier, who started it with the focus on music and theater. But he also invited visual artists. At the moment, Heiner Goebbels is the art director. I don't think you can put his productions into one corner, but artists collaborate from many different disciplines.

Urbane Künste Ruhr is run by the same mother organization, and I'm asked every year to do one production for the Ruhr Triennale. Here you can see a piece from Random International, an artist group from London. They were so fascinated by the scaleless architecture of the coal mines. Here you see again the symbol of the Ruhr area, the shaft of the coal mine Zeche Zollverein. Random International were fascinated by the fact that for eternity in the Ruhr area we have to pump water, otherwise the whole area would collapse. We have to pump water all the time, and nobody knows about it. This fact inspired them to create a piece with water. People could interact and have fun and could just understand the history a little bit better.

Another piece I curated for the Ruhr Triennale is from Rafael Lozano-Hemmer. Here you can see a site in Bochum, the Century Hall. It is also one of the main sites of the Ruhr Triennale. Rafael Lozano-Hemmer realized a piece called *Pulse Park*. Behind the Century Hall there's a new park which is not really taken over by the public as public domain, especially not during the night. That's why I wanted to create a piece that gives a new code to this area. There's a sensor you can go to and measure your pulse, which then is transmitted into the installation, and the whole park would move to that rhythm.

With this in mind, when we had the Capital of Culture year we were thinking of what kind of art project could be developed that would raise international attention. We thought the Ruhr Triennale was so successful because its motivation roots within the specific sites. The industrial space was the starting point, and we asked artists to work

with that. We tried to find topics that are important for this region but maybe need a little more understanding and also involve the inhabitants of the area.

There is the Emscher, the former river that we still use as an open canalization system due to the industrialization. We started an art exhibition called Emscherkunst, which is an art triennial because we do it every three years. It focuses on the transformation of the river into an open canalization system and now back into a river since the coal mining stopped. We started in 2010; in 2013 we did it again, and we are now preparing 2016.

This is the area of the Emscher Valley. In the center you can see the open canalization system; there's a lot of infrastructure, and in between there are two waterways, the Emscher and the Rhein-Herne-Canal. There's a piece of land we call Emscher Island, which is 17 kilometers long. Every three years, we choose a different area for the artists to work on.

This is the piece *Waiting for the River*, from 2010, by the Dutch artist group Observatorium. They simply created a sculpture in which you can wait for the river to come, because it's placed where in the future the new Emscher will flow. In the end it wasn't really about waiting for the river, but a place where you would understand how to look at such nonplaces and imagine what can happen and what mankind can do to nature. You could book for a night to sleep there in one of the pavilions.

In 2013 we took the same sculpture and put it into another surrounding. This is now farmland, but the river will flow here in 2020. It's special about the Emscherkunst that we buy the concept of some pieces and show it every three years. In between we store the piece and then rebuild it on a different site.

Another piece I briefly wanted to mention is from Michael Sailstorfer. It brings a little bit to the point what we are trying to do in the Ruhr area: We try to renature the Emscher Valley. Michael found this so strange that he created a piece called *Antiherbst*, *Anti-autumn*. In autumn he and his team collected the leaves of a tree that stands in the Emscher Valley, dried them, and put them back onto the tree. Michael filmed this performance, and during the exhibition you could see the film in this little wagon next to the tree. It was very simple, but also because it was humorous, people started to talk about it.

Anna Witt is a young artist from Vienna. She realized maybe the most important piece of Emscherkunst in 2013. She lived for a couple of weeks in Duisburg in the Ruhr area. Coming from Vienna, she was fascinated that the streets in Duisburg were full of old furniture, refrigerators, bulky trash–not only at certain times, but every day. She observed that, and in the end she said: Can we not start something productive with this, instead of trying to avoid it? The Ruhr area was always an area of production. She did

an audition with local people who wanted to work with her as performers. The idea was that every day six people would roam the streets searching for bulky trash and then build furniture out of it. Anna Witt worked together with Uglycute, a design collective from Copenhagen. They advised her that she should use also something glittery that will give the designed objects a different meaning instead of being just recycled furniture. Therefore they used this stretchy fabric you would normally design costumes out of. The objects that were built by the performers were left in the streets, so people could just take them home. Finally people ended up waiting for the objects being finished to take them home. Thus the Emscherkunst suddenly was in all these private homes. It was a very successful idea, I still love. There was a headquarters in Duisburg where people could go to see how the performers work. Also a few prototypes were displayed there.

Ai Weiwei was already mentioned. I just wanted to talk briefly about the idea he developed for Emscherkunst in 2013. His initial idea was to design one thousand tents. I'm not very good at Chinese mythology, but in a nutshell he said: The Dragon's head is a symbol for the city. But when he saw the Ruhr area in aerial photos and descriptions, he thought it's more the tail than the head, as you have a lot of little bits and pieces of city and infrastructure. That's why he first wanted to call his work *Dragon's Tail*. But then he changed it to *Out of Enlightenment*, *Aus der Aufklärung,* because he wanted to make a gesture toward the German exhibition in Beijing in 2011.

He designed 10 types of tents, altogether 980. The different designs always referred to some works he realized. In the picture you can see *Fuck Off*, which refers to the exhibition *Fuck Off* he curated. So every tent held a message from one of his projects. People visiting *Emscherkunst* could hire a tent, and the whole work would only be visible during the night when people would sleep in the tents. Besides that he wanted to create something that doesn't leave any marks, because the Ruhr area already has so many marks from mankind. Instead he wanted to create a piece which is completely gone after the exhibition. We had to sign that we would give the tents to the people who used them and not sell them or anything. In the end there was a lottery where people who camped during the exhibition could win one of the tents.

Emscherkunst and all the other projects we realize always get their motivation from the people, from a certain problem, from the desire to change something. We have to change so much and therefore need all the creativity we can get. One of the projects we are currently developing is the *Detroit Projekt / This Is Not Detroit*. One of the cities in the Ruhr area, Bochum, got an Opel factory after the coal mines closed down. The whole city got their identity from Opel. To be an Opelaner and to work for Opel really means

something. But now in Detroit they decided that the Opel factory will be closed. When we came up with the idea to start an art project about the future of the city, the future of work, and how people can gain back responsibility instead of letting somebody else decide how the city will develop, we decided–even before the decision was made that the factory would be closed down–to have an artistic gesture showing that there are other options.

Umschichten is an office just next to Karlsruhe, they are from Stuttgart and want to do the project *Opelation*. Right now they're collecting anything Opel doesn't need anymore in order to give it back to the people. They are designing little huts for the Schrebergärten, the allotment gardens, and trying to make something out of it. Of course this is just another symbol for trying to take back the city.

Thank you a lot.

Carol Lu

Thank you, Katja. We are now moving to the second part of the panel discussion this morning. Besides the panelists we also have two colleagues joining us today as the respondents of the panel.

The first respondent is Blair French. He is the director of curatorial and digital at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. He was previously executive director of Artspace Visual ArtsCentre, Sydney, and curatorial convener for the sixth and seventh editions of SCAPE Public Space Christchurch Biennial.

The other respondent is Germany-based artist Christoph Schäfer. Schäfer helped a community band together to prevent the creation of a contested housing and office development in Hamburg and created Park Fiction, a public park in Hamburg, St. Pauli. He actively supports the Occupy Gezi Movement, organizing a movement to rename Park Fiction into Gezi Park in solidarity with the movement.

I would like to invite the two respondents to make comments and a short statement.

Blair French

I'd like to thank the organizers for inviting me and bringing me such a long way from the other side of the world.

As a respondent I thought I should pull a few threads out of the wonderful presentations we've just heard. But I'd also like to present two images that speak a little bit for my background, my recent work, and so the experience and thinking that informs my responses.

I've noted down six points I'd like to make–six issues I'd like to draw out of this morning's presentations. I will not so much address them myself but offer them back to the panel, and to you all, as points of further conversation. Before I do so I'll give you a brief introduction to the image behind me and leave you to consider it as I talk.

Zina Swanson, Can anybody hear me? (2013)
Photo: Bridgit Anderson
Courtesy of the artist and SCAPE Public Art

What you're looking at here is a work in three forms. It's first of all an artwork by a Christchurch artist called Zina Swanson, a young artist who like many of her peers lost her studio in the large Christchurch earthquake of 2011. Not just her studio, but work completed for exhibition and of course archives and resource materials and all the stuff of an artist's studio. She eventually moved out of the city. Swanson is an installation artist and painter. When I invited her to come and make a work in the external environment of the damaged city for SCAPE Public Art Christchurch Biennial in 2013, she came up with this: On the one hand it's an artwork. On the other hand it's a public gathering of a few people, and that is a point I'd like to come back to just briefly in the end. The third point is that it's an act of hypnosis.

The first of my six observations about last night's lecture and today's panel–the first point I'd like to reiterate and offer back out for discussion–is the point that I think was strongly made by Fulya regarding thinking of the biennial as itself a public domain. It seems self-evident, but we so often talk about art *in* public space as opposed to art *as a form of* public space. What Fulya talked about involves the remarkable recognition that

there's a clear distinction between what the biennial offers as a form of public domain and the experience of art in another form of public domain–that is outside of the four walls or outside of the institution. I think with her act of rehousing much of the Istanbul Biennial within the institutions of art or within buildings that might be associated more with private gatherings and withdrawing from the public sphere–in the sense of a public domain, a physical space, a gathering space–the Biennial itself created its own model of the public. This is perhaps something we talk about a lot, but we haven't really recognized this very specific distinction.

This also came out in a couple of presentations that implicitly touched on the distinction between the biennial as a form of public domain and the museum, which may be some other form of public domain. The idea of the museum as an archive was mentioned last night, and so was the art fair. The tension between the biennial and the art fair–or perhaps where they cross over into the territory of each other–is something we'll likely be talking about increasingly in coming years.

The second point that comes out of this is the way in which physical public spaces–the streets, the parks, the gardens, the squares–have been utilized or deployed within biennials as a very particular form of meeting places. There was a question from the floor last night regarding how one might make the link between the international and the local, immediate community. It seems to me that so often even biennials that are not dedicated to operating outside of institutions or convention halls, etc., nevertheless invite projects into more public spheres. Those public spheres function as immediate points of meeting–they are the biennial's first points of meeting. They offer the most raw forms of meeting, because the artists quite often are visiting and working very hard and quite quickly to establish some point of connection or understanding with local circumstances. So I think again they've been utilized in a certain way, and what Fulya talked about is the way in which perhaps these meeting places can be withdrawn from the public sphere into something else that is the biennial as a whole.

My third observation is around the city, state, and politics and the legitimization of various forms of bureaucratic and political agendas by operating within spheres that have multiple points of interest and control. This is something when working within the public sphere–I think it came out in Katja's talk in a positive way. It's rather necessary to ask the questions Who does the city belong to? Who in effect owns the city? Who owns space? Whose agendas are we actually addressing through the creation of biennial models and artist projects in spaces that have multiple bureaucratic layerings? I hope we can talk about this some more.

My fourth interest is in temporality. The biennial is always a promise. It's a promise of return; it's built on the structure that two or three or five years later something else will happen. I find this very interesting with regard to the type of work that appears in outdoor spaces. Because the rhythm of absence, presence, action, and then withdrawal back into absence is particularly pronounced in these spaces. You might encounter something in a public park, and it's gone one month later. If you are an inhabitant or a regular visitor of the city, what has been changed by that work? Has that work or that action attempted to change one's perception or experience of that place? Temporality is incredibly important. It was spoken a lot about last night. I think this idea of disappearance and withdrawal is actually one of the founding experiences of a temporary exhibition, and one that we do not talk about enough.

My fifth point is around imagination. And this is where I probably come to the work by Zina Swanson. In the SCAPE Biennials I've been working on, the questions of who the city belongs to or who occupies and regulates space, have been far less important–or at least are paralleled by–questions such as Who imagines the city? Or who actually builds the city?

The sixth point is actually to stress the importance of the few. So often our operation within the biennial context is predicated on an appeal to large forms of involved community, and of addressing issues, agendas, and questions pertinent to communities more broadly. But I often think that what we lose in that is recognition that so much of the experience of public space or public domain–whether it would be an online public domain or a physical space–is in fact very intimate, generally rarely in mass forms, but in small clusters. And this intimate, quiet experience of the few is incredibly important to the agency of the work in place.

This work by Zina Swanson–*Can anybody hear me?* (2013)–took place in what's left of the inner city of Christchurch, where something like a thousand buildings were ultimately lost. It took place in a location closed off to the general populace for over two years. For many of the people you see standing there in this image this may well be the first time that they have actually stood on this ground, in this place, for some time. The biennial took place three months after the inner city was finally reopened. The artist commissioned a hypnotist who worked with people associated with the natural sciences or plant world–botanists, gardeners, or florists for example. He met with these people in different parts of the city, which is somewhat overgrown by weeds and various forms of plant life amazingly recolonizing the urban rubble. And here he placed them under hypnosis, where they assumed the persona of the place or weed in front of them,

inhabiting the experience and perspective of the plant. And he asked them a series of questions developed by the artist. Why did you come here? Who are your friends? How do people respond to you? What happened during the earthquake? How did you feel? Through their responses they spoke about the experience of place and community and destruction in manners both poignant and gently humorous. I value this light touch in and about the public sphere as a place of very intimate experience.

Maddie Leach and Jem Noble, I was using six watts when you Received me (2013)
Photo: Bridgit Anderson
Courtesy of the artist and SCAPE Public Art

The second work I end my comments on is another act of displacement, in one sense at least. In many ways much of what we do in the public sphere requires this, particularly in places and situations of stress. So again this is a postdisaster work, in the large city parklands, which immediately following the major Christchurch earthquake acted as a place of gathering and refuge. The two artists, Maddie Leach and Jem Noble, worked with the local amateur radio club and made this act of reaching out to the world, saying: Hey, we are here, with a work called *I was using six watts when you Received me*. They worked with NZ sound archives housed in Christchurch, pulling out little snippets of radio that predate the Christchurch earthquakes and speak about something from the pre-earthquake condition of the city. Together with this amateur radio club, they occupied the park and sent these signals specifically to the orbiting space station. They effectively sent a call to outer space, saying: We still exist, and these are our memories.

I wanted to show these works, because they show a different form of acting a public space that is intimate, that is personal, that is emotional, that is psychological–counterpoints perhaps to an occupation of public space through art that is inherently political and activist.

Thank you.

Christoph Schäfer

I would like to add my own experiences with biennial type of constellations. I was at the Turin Youth Biennial curated by Michelangelo Pistoletto in 2002. I wonder if anybody in the room has seen it. It was actually quite challenging, but no one ever spoke about it, I think. And then I was at documenta 11 with *Park Fiction*. And I had the pleasure and the stress of being part of Fulya's Istanbul Biennial this year.

Today I wanted to elegantly do some drawings while everybody is talking, take some pictures with my smartphone, but I gave up right when you started, because there was not enough time. But yesterday in Ute Meta Bauer's talk on public space and in Fulya's talk, of course, it was totally clear that space is the problem, especially public space. Even the classical definition of public space, let's say in the industrial age, was the promise of being a space of equality, a space for all. It was supposed to be, as Fulya said, a homogenous space, which it is not anymore. Also it has become very problematic because it's a highly gendered space, a male-dominated space. It's also based on the public/private split that was established in that Renaissance era, where things like happiness, desire, imagination, or cooking were part of the private and not of the public domain or public space. And furthermore it's largely a passive space.

Today the problematic point is–even in a situation like Gezi, with a very repressive government acting like it does in Turkey right now–that public space is basically an extended business improvement zone. Everything official art does more or less is supposed to support the business improvement function of public space. Art is basically always in danger of serving real estate owners, real estate business, the global competition between cities and elites–and all this in the age of the image city. In the age of the image city, biennials and art biennials are extremely important.

I think biennials are not the most crucial transforming factor of cities. There are other things like football championships or Olympic Games. But the weird thing is that the same architects that build museums build football stadiums these days. I just want to remind everybody that Zaha Hadid only two days ago said that she's not responsible for the 500 Bangladeshi workers who died in the process of building the World Cup

Stadium in Qatar. So you have the architecture-art-sports connection that is basically transforming cities and urban spaces.

When I saw Ai Weiwei's little food wagon I had to think about the football championship in Japan and South Korea 2002. I was told that one of the rules the FIFA wanted to impose during the championship was, that in a circle of 4 kilometers around the stadiums no one else but the sponsors McDonald's and Coca-Cola, I think, were allowed to have advertisements and sell food–which is quite a thing in cities in South Asia.

This is one of the drawings–actually not the best one–on the discussion of the local and the global we had yesterday. According to Henri Lefebvre, the city is divided into several layers: the global layer, the middle layer, and the private layer, where everyday life happens. The global in this sense doesn't mean that we travel everywhere and fly in and out, but it structures the thinking and the city. So the global level is actually right now controlling all cities. The level of the everyday life is suppressed, I would say, or walking in these lines. The whole idea of public space, as we heard, was so much connected to this global thinking, global politics, global ways of thinking. But it's a poisoned space, I would say, and today it's largely dominated by elites.

As Fulya mentioned the Gezi Park Movement, I think what today happens is very important. Last year we saw not only the occupation and defense of the Gezi Park–and I must say that I like the Gezi Park, but I wouldn't call myself a supporter, that would be too much honor for me. The Gezi Occupation changed the public space into a platform of exchange, into a platform of imagination. I think that's the point where it starts to have a different function. The same can happen in football stadiums. Football stadiums are spaces mostly dominated by capital and sponsors, of spectacle and controlling crowds. But they can be turned around by the audience into arenas of protest. It doesn't only happen in Istanbul, but also in Hamburg, and it happened in Cairo before. In such moments, the very much controlled public spaces are being transformed into something new. The real challenge for biennials is to achieve such a transformation. In this drawing I drew a connection between different localized struggles. Maybe this is one of the chances biennials can take.

This picture shows an example of how the platform building and the transformation of public space looked like in Istanbul. After Gezi was cleared, there were lots of forums in other parts of the city. There were instant public earth tables, *Iftars*, where people came together during the fasting period. Muslims and non-Muslims came together to share food at time. Suddenly the atmosphere changed completely. The public political speech that we know changed into something else. It was six weeks after Gezi when I came back to

Istanbul. It was my second visit there. I couldn't meet the person I want to meet, and I was integrated into this situation in a part of the city I didn't know. Within minutes we were in a conversation that had the quality of a very well picked dinner where people who don't know each other but have a lot to say to each other come together. The conversation floated between cooking recipes, politics, philosophy, the everyday life of your job, what you do and how you would like to change it. If you have a situation where people think about how they can change their job and everyday life, you have a situation I always hoped art could be: a field of resonance where imagination can resonate, where ideas can go back and forth. When such kind of situation happens in public space, it's totally different, it's altering, and it's maybe making superfluous what art was doing up to this point.

I heard the word *platform* very often in the talks today in connection with exhibitions that usually are not platforms but exhibitions. Exhibitions are there for looking at things, not for exchanging things on the basis of equality. The type of platforms we see in short-term temporary exhibitions tend to be romanticized spaces, idealized Marie Antoinette–type villages of the poor. But if biennials try to become platforms for real exchange, they have to become something different from that. We have to think about a different model of globalization. The churches of the Gothic time and their builders might serve as a model of how I would imagine biennials to work. As you probably all know, Gothic churches were built over hundreds of years. The builders had special knowledge that couldn't be copied easily. But they were very flexible. Whenever within the overall inflexible situation of medieval times they were crossed with the aristocrat, they could just move to a different building site and continue building there. Hence that cathedral would remain unfinished for a long time. If we could get this kind of power into nomadism–the idea was written about in the chapter on nomadic warfare in *Mille Plateaux* by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattarie, so you probably all know it–it could be a fantastic example of how one could work in a global structure and at the same time leave things unfinished and have intentions that we don't share.

Thank you very much.

Carol Lu

You probably noticed there was a lot of movement in terms of arrangements onstage, so we have been carrying out a very lively discussion this morning. We don't have much time left.

We've been talking a lot about biennials in the public domain. But as all of you are aware, the public domain is much more than the public space. It implies a certain set

of relationships and organizational principles. I would also like to point out that when we talk about biennials, there are different positions to think about, which position we are speaking from, whether we are speaking from the organizer's and infrastructure's point of view. The organizers and the planners make the biennials possible and create it as an infrastructural being, the curators and artists participate in it and actually realize the biennial itself. The question I'd like to pose is this: What is the limit? Should we refrain from oversizing the biennial format? How far into the public should the biennial go?

Yongwoo Lee

For example the Gwangju Biennale has twenty years of history. One of the serious issues until today is communication between the participants and the audience. One of the frequent questions we get from the audience is: Why has the Biennale been torturing us psychologically in the name of contemporary art? As I told you, the number of visitors of the first edition was 1.6 million. After that it's been radically reduced, from 1.6 million to 900,000–which is still a lot–to 700,000, then 300,000. Now we are recovering to half a million. If there's something you can learn from the contemporary art context, it is that it's something very good that we can share. Gwangju Biennale has been playing as a platform where citizens can participate in discussing about the spirit of democracy that happened thirty-four years ago. We lost over two hundred civilians, and that weakens the civil uprising. Gwangju is a place where this kind of activism has been reactivated in the Biennale context. From the first edition up to now, we try to put this kind of activism-oriented discourse into the context of the Gwangju Biennale. We are widely opening the Biennale not only to the artistic discourses, but also in terms of inviting artistic directors and curators from all over the world. There is no limit of religion, nationality, or whatsoever. I would say that Gwangju Biennale has been playing as a platform where people can share the spirit of any kind of activism. Last year's Biennale has received criticism that it had been all the time dealing with too much rhetoric and narratives on democracy and activism–but we are very happy with that.

Fulya Erdemci

Istanbul Biennial acted as a platform last time, but more than that we started our public program in February 2013. Since the first press conference we got protests from people. I'm also taking that as part of the platform. The protests even for me were very useful, because one of the main sponsors was a producer of military vehicles, and I just learned

about that at the press conference from the protesters. So it's part of the platform. It doesn't need to be inside to open up this important issue. But more than that, this year there was a big discussion about the nature of the Biennial itself. It started an institutional critique of the Biennial as an institution. This is why I believe that biennials are open platforms, either deliberately through an artwork or as a public forum.

Katja Aßmann

The Emscher Triennale will happen every three years, but we already know that there will be an end. It will only be there until the Emscher River is transformed. So we already know that in 2020 we will stop this Triennale. That's why it has a different starting point, a different meaning, and is a different platform. As an organizer and one of the producers, for me it is very good because I know that there is an end. We have certain steps we want to achieve in this project.

Carol Lu

Thank you. We would like to invite questions from the audience now.

Unknown Participant

Maybe just one or two observations or questions. The first one was actually in relation to your presentation. I recall that the Festival in Recklinghausen after the end of the Second World War set the scene for the project you are working on and also was the inspiration for the founding of documenta. I was thinking that in the development of this biennial conversation, it would be important to also do some archival, historical research to keep the memory of these other projects.

This leads me on to my second point, which is: The notion of public space changes depending on the context. For instance the former Communist countries at the moment of transition around 1989–during their Communist period one could say there was no public space, it was owned by the state, there was not the notion of the public in the same way, or you could say the people owned everything. Whatever the case, 1989 represented the moment when there was real public ownership of space; whether it was in Bucharest or cities in Poland, people could actually do things in the space which then the state began to colonize, reoccupy. Now we have this kind of business-in-development zone in the notion of public space. I'm keeping the memory of these really open public spaces. Are there public spaces in North Korea in the sense that we would understand them? I'm not sure. And even some of the currently existing Communist

countries, like Vietnam–to what extent is there public space in Vietnam, Singapore, or Indonesia? This might be an important discussion to have at some point.

Katja Aßmann

May I just add something, because Melanie Bohne from Münster is here, and she's setting up the archive of the Skulptur Projekte in Münster. Of course this is something I'm looking at, because it's our neighbor, and their experience with public space as well as their archive is very valuable for our future work.

Ute Meta Bauer

I just want to come back to the notion of the public space. When we sometimes speak about public space, we speak from the privileged position of choice. I think it's very important to see that for example in North Korea or Havana negotiations of the public begin right now when there's no sufficient freedom of speech. You can also negotiate whether there's free public space here with all the CCTV in London, for example. Is there public space left? Can you feel free to express what you want to express? We could compare this situation to North Korea for example. I think it's important that we are very precise here. People always negotiate the public, and I think with Gezi Park and other uprisings it's interesting to see what's happening and that this desire of being outspoken can't be repressed for longer terms. Where do artists and cultural producers engage in that? For me this is the more important question instead of whether the biennial is a public platform. But what can it provide? What can all of the cultural institutions provide?

Yongwoo Lee

To add a little more to what Ute says: The questions we get from the audience or even from the professionals go to: Why biennial? Is a biennial still one of the liveliest cultural actions? Are for example the Biennial Foundation and biennials growing together? These questions don't apply to the museum. All of us have experiences with museums. Why museums? Are museums useful in terms of the artistic practice? I love this kind of question a lot, because they really apply to the biennial activities today. Museums are about clarification and history, biennials are about practice and realization.

For example I've briefly explained about the Gwangju Folly, the architectural projects. When I first announced to make a Folly, some of the professionals came to me, saying: Now we don't have to see anymore biennial fatigue. Basically we aimed to return life to

the citizens. Because the urban projects all the time tried to remove collected memories from urban life. So we would like to bring that back. This small architectural project has been very well received and was loved by the citizens.

It really depends on how to approach the cultural actions in relation to the biennial practice by whatever you do. So recovering the public sphere and the public places in relation to any kind of situation–you mentioned North Korea, I've been in North Korea twice. It might be very interesting to know what is going on in North Korea. I didn't see any public space there at all. I wanted to visit many different artistic cultural sites, and I was not allowed to. So finding public space in such let's say limited countries is not going to be easy. But think about making an art festival in the neutral zone, the demilitarized zone between South Korea and North Korea that has been protected for over sixty years, but then it's almost inaccessible. If you are able to create an artistic festival in such a demilitarized zone where South and North can participate together, invite global artists to this very much tension-oriented area, it would be another kind of biennial narrative and also another interpretation of the public space.

Unknown Participant

I would like to ask Fulya a critical question about the first reveals in the press. I think she might need to talk about it. From my own experience working with her, I saw that the Istanbul Biennial functions as an exhibition first of all rather than as a platform or as a link to the public space. It returned to its original role and function. Maybe we can talk about the change in the map. I don't know if she abandoned the concept, but the content was there, so the exhibition functioned as a canon–especially in the Istanbul case–linking the historical cases to Paris, Amsterdam, London, New York, especially to gentrification and other urban protests. It reminded the people that they're not alone, that this is not the only case happening. So biennials are still exhibitions. How would you comment on this?

Fulya Erdemci

Actually when I was answering your question, Carol, I forgot to tell something. We talked about the protests in relation to one of the sponsors of the Biennial. But I forgot to tell you that after that of course we were sharing these protests with all of the participating artists. We were telling them that one of the sponsors is producing military vehicles. So, for instance, Hito Steyerl came up with the lecture performance project in which she asked the question: Is the museum a battlefield? How are art and capital re-

lated? How are all the military situations related? We also invited a collective that was formed during the Gezi occupation. Burak Arikan, an artist from the last Berlin Biennale, came together with many different journalists and researchers, and they created a map of a *Network of Dispositions*. They showed the relationship between the developers, the government, the media and the Biennale sponsors.

For me this is another discussion. Maybe it can continue, but as an exhibition art has the capacity and possibility to question itself and its relation to life and to the system. I think it works perfectly in this sense. For instance, I told you that 350.000 people visited the Istanbul Biennial within five weeks. It was written about in the newspapers and discussed in the media. So I guess maybe not like earth tables–that was not possible–but as an exhibition it functions, I guess.

Christoph Schäfer

That was exactly my point, and you have been in Istanbul at the time. But of course last summer there was an abundance of forums. Actually there were so many that people couldn't go to all the places where things were discussed and done. In that situation it would have been better to say that this is not the platform where everything is being discussed. Sorry, no, it wasn't. It was what the German journalists expected and didn't get. Maybe they never had experienced that a self-made platform is something different from one that is given to you by art in a nice gesture.

Fulya Erdemci

I want to add one more thing. For instance we all learned a lot from the last Berlin Biennale. I think it was a historical one and a very strong claim. For me I think art and activism can relate to each other, can learn from each other and change each other, but their processes and impacts are different and need not to be the same.

Carol Lu

As it turns out, having a few extra minutes is never enough for discussions about biennials and biennial making. So with that I would like to thank all of our panelists and respondents of this morning's section. I would like to thank you all for joining us this morning. Thank you very much.

28.02.2014 / 2 p.m.—4 p.m.
Biennials as Motor for Social Change

Chair: **Christine Eyene**
Panel: **Abdellah Karroum, Patrick Mudekereza, Alia Swastika, Gerardo Mosquera**
Respondents: **Elise Atangana, Jun Yang**

Andrea Buddensieg

It's a pleasure to welcome you for the afternoon session. This panel will be chaired by Christine Eyene, who is Guild Research Fellow in Contemporary Art at the University of Central Lancashire. She's also part of the board of the online magazine *Contemporary And (C&),* which is edited by the ifa Institute on Contemporary African Art. The magazine is an important initiative to collect voices from African countries and comment on the discourse. Welcome Christine Eyene.

Christine Eyene

Thank you, Andrea, for this introduction. I would like to thank ZKM and ifa for the invitation to chair this panel.

Before we proceed I would like to tease out a couple of points. It is somehow quite timely to be here today to speak about biennials on the same weekend that the Marrakech Biennale is opening in Morocco. In this respect, because many of us have a link with Africa, it might be fitting to begin with Africa as a starting point to this introductory note.

First of all bearing in mind that all the panelists here have an experience of working in the South, one question that comes to mind when thinking about biennials as a motor for social change–as this panel is entitled–is the notion of the social and political role

of art in a context where, generally speaking, the artist is considered second to other more crucial issues or more pressing needs such as infrastructure, education, and so on.

I'll take, for example, my first biennial experience, which was the Johannesburg Biennale in 1997, when I was a student. I arrived in Johannesburg during the week in which the city was considering to close down the Biennale before its scheduled end date on account that (a) it wasn't there for the local audience and more precisely the disadvantaged audience that experienced the legacy of Apartheid; and (b) the public's opinion was that the money spent on the Biennale would have been put to better use improving the living conditions of the people living in the Townships. That was the last thing we heard about the Johannesburg Biennale. This is an important example because it is one of these instances where the Biennale was perceived as completely the opposite of a biennial as a motor of social change.

Pursuing with the example of Africa in relation to the frame of this conference, which is globalization, the continent has seen, like many other places in the world–yesterday we heard that today there are 201 biennials in the world–many biennials flourishing since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of Apartheid with the International Cairo Biennale in 1989, the Dak'Art Biennale in 1990, followed by the visual arts element in 1992, up to Picha, created in 2008 and Addis Foto Fest, created in 2010. Often these events are initiated by artists or independent cultural actors, and whether large-scale or small-scale institutions, all are faced with financial hurdles that have repercussions on the infrastructure, organization, and capacity; and ultimately this has a bearing on the cultural project that sometimes has to give adaptable proposals if not acrobatic exercises in the face of conjectural changes and uncertainties in the space one has to perform the act of curating.

For instance, in selecting the International Exhibition for the Dakar Biennale, as was the case in 2012, the context of riots and political uncertainty didn't allow us to develop a program for social change. It is rather through a smaller institution, namely Raw Material Company, that records the voice of the people who demonstrated during their political election campaign. They were given a platform in this context. We traced the question: Is a scope to address crucial sociopolitical questions in the frame of a biennial which is placed under the umbrella of the state? What I am referring to here is how do we address the question of censorship. Does it require an association with smaller local institutions? Is there room for more radical positioning of smaller biennials? These questions can be asked in the context of Africa and the South. But it also applies to contexts in the West. For instance the project we did with Thierry Geoffroy at the Zimbabwe Pavilion during

the Venice Biennale was one project that tried to question the engagement with social issues and the impact on social issues. One of the artists with whom Thierry worked and who came to Venice, three years ago in Hanoi she raised the alarm on the forthcoming Russian antigay laws. Only two or three years after that there was a massive outcry, calling for a boycott of the Olympic Winter Games and the Manifesta Biennial, which I'm sure will be spoken about tomorrow.

I am mentioning Geoffroy's work because of his easy disruptive form of intervention that questions in a straightforward and forceful manner art's genuine engagement and impact on the sociopolitical context. This sort of approach pulls us out of the spectacularization of the arts, measured by numbers of visitors–numbers that are being guaranteed by established names of curators. So this is all the more the case today in times of globalization, where curators are globe-trotting, going from one project to another in different cities. In this context, in what way can curators engage and commit to their contemporary environment when they jet in and out of various cities, various art centers around the globe? Conversely, are there any social changes or legacies that can be credited to biennials? Are there lessons to be learned from the Havana Biennial? What is the situation in Indonesia? What do we mean by social change? For whom? What does change entail for the average citizen and the decision makers?

To discuss those issues we are joined here by a fantastic panel: Gerardo Mosquera is an independent critic, curator, historian, and writer based in Havana and Madrid. He's an advisor to the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, in Amsterdam; MUAC Mexico, in Mexico City; Art in General, in New York; and other international art centers. He was cofounder of the Havana Biennial and curator at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York. He was artistic director of Photo Spain 2011–2013 in Madrid, and recently curated the exhibition *Artificial Amsterdam* for De Appel in Amsterdam.

I'm shortening the biographies because I'm sure you can read them in the program.

We are then joined by Abdellah Karroum, who is director of Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art. Born in Morocco in 1970, Abdellah Karroum is an international artistic director. Most recently he was associate curator of the 2012 Triennale at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris and curator of the 2012 Biennale Regard Bénin. In 2012 he was also appointed artistic director of the Fondation Prince Pierre, Monaco's International Prize for Contemporary Art. He's the founder of the famous L'Appartement 22.

Alia Swastika was born in Jogjakarta in 1980. Her career started when she began writing actively in national newspapers and magazines, especially in the fields of art and culture. From 2002 to 2004 she worked as associate editor for *SURAT* newsletter, a

magazine for the visual arts published by Cemeti Art Foundation. This encouraged her to work as a curator in Cemeti Art House. As an artistic manager she was involved there from 2004 to 2009. She cocurated the Jogja XI in 2011. I skip the rest.

Patrick Mudekereza is a writer and cultural producer born in 1983 in Lubumbashi, DR Congo. He's been administrator and curator at the French Cultural Center and cofounded Picha in 2008, an independent art initiative involved in promoting contemporary art practices. He's now running Picha Art Center and Rencontres Picha in Lubumbashi.

We also have two respondents. Elise Atangana is an independent curator and producer based in Paris. She defines her experience in the art field as collective and laboratory adventures. She has recently collaborated with Maison Revue Noire and Elvira Dyangani Ose on Rencontres Picha Biennale in 2012. She's cofounder of the collective On the Roof and cocurated *Synchronicity* at Galerie Baudoin Lebon, Paris (2011) and Tiwani Contemporary in London (2012). She collaborated with Simon Njami on different projects such as Luanda Triennale (2003), Havana Biennial (2006), and the African Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2007. And she's one of the cocurators of the forthcoming Dak'Art Biennale.

Finally we have Jun Yang, who is an artist based in Vienna, Yokohama, and Taipei. He has participated in various biennials, including the Gwangju Biennale in 2012, Taipei Biennial in 2008, Lofoten International Art Festival in Norway (2008), Liverpool Biennial (2006), the 51st Venice Biennale (2005) and Manifesta in 2002.

I would like to start with Gerardo, because you are the wisest of us on biennials. In our exchange you gave a very interesting comment on the context-responsive approach to curating.

Gerardo Mosquera

Thank you. I think the problem with the context-responsive approach is about the context-response to that approach. To me the problem with art in public space and biennials that try to have an impact on their contexts is that sometimes it is a one-way communication. The communication is not completed. I discussed this with Mr. [Yongwoo] Lee this morning. It is the problem of decodification, which is very crucial, especially in those so-called Southern countries, where the population's level of education in general is very low. Contemporary art is a very complex language, and sometimes it is not enough to put the art into public space or to try to create art that can be responsive to their context. The problem is about communication. Is art put out there for us to be watched on our way between the hotel and the museum hosting the biennial or the conference room–or is it there for the people in the streets? Is it possible to have art that can communicate with

"normal" people and is at the same time sophisticated enough for us in the art world? For me that is the challenge. It is something I think is still in question.

A main way for biennials to achieve real social impact is their relationship with the cities. To me it has always been pretty weird that most biennials, and more generally the perennials–which is the new term that has been coined to refer to periodic art gatherings–use the name of a city. Except for documenta, Manifesta, and some others, the rest take the name of a city. But very frequently their relationship with that city is none. The city is just the place where this event takes place. I call that the UFO Syndrome. The biennial is a flying saucer that lands in one place and attracts attention because it has lights, it is strange, it is spectacular, people go there having a look and get attracted for a while, but then the UFO takes off, leaves, and nothing is left. I think it is important for biennials to develop a truly effective communication with the cities that are bringing the biennials a context.

I am not advocating for localism. Sometimes to be true to the context is to establish international communication, to bring the world into certain places that are lacking communication for several reasons. Sometimes the biennials take place in repressive contexts, and just the fact that they are taking place is positive to bring fresh air, new ideas, and the possibility to deal with local issues under the cover of art. There is a certain degree of tolerance in some of these countries to art.

I'm not talking about public art that, as Mike Kelley said, is doomed to failure because of its basic passive-aggressive nature. He says that it's passive because it's not thinking about the people artists are addressing, and that it's aggressive because it's breaching in for something, it's in a way being imposed on the people. But what would be necessary is an art that uses its methodological and formal freedom to resonate with people in the streets and the life and dynamics of the city. This means to move from the city toward art, not to treat the city like raw material, a thing or just a setting; from the city toward art, and then from art toward the city. For working socially, biennials need to set in motion a constellation of focused and diverse activities with clear targets, escape from the nineteenth-century blockbuster exhibition model, to work in teams and transform the biennial into an articulation of small- and medium-scale events.

Perhaps the more effective way in which biennials can contribute to social transformation is by triggering contemporary art's potential to go beyond itself. The Venice Biennial has set an interesting example. I am not referring to the famous Venice Biennale you all know, but to the Venice Biennial in Bogotá. This event was created and organized by Franklin Aguirre and other artists in Venice, a grassroots neighborhood in Bogotá,

Colombia's capital city. They used the location's name to deconstruct the mainstream biennial system by showing the contrast with the lack of social involvement. At the same time the Venice Biennial in Bogotá is a community event that involves the neighborhood in an active, participative way, and which invites international artists and keeps aware of not becoming localistic. The organizers have stated that as the aims of the Biennale de Venecia de Bogotá. I quote: "The Biennial tries to support and look for their own community to transform their ways of life by way of exploring new everyday interpretation elements, new reading references, and experiencing their relationship with urban space, their neighborhood, and themselves."

Christine Eyene

There is one question I would like to ask you. I am referring to your context-responsive approach. For instance at the Johannesburg Biennale your exhibition was at the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG) which then was a dangerous place. I haven't been there, but I remember being told to ask the taxi driver to drop me off just in front of the gallery. So in a way it was not a safe place to go. Was it hard for you? I know it is not easy when you are working in an unfamiliar context to develop a project or aim at social change in your curatorial practice.

Gerardo Mosquera

This is very interesting, because Christine visited the Biennial when she was a girl and was taken there by the elementary school. To answer your question I read out a very brief comment of myself on that:

"When I was traveling through Africa in 1987 and 1988 to curate contemporary African art for the third Havana Biennial, although I did my best to base my decisions on local criteria"–and although I have also African roots for being Cuban; you know that the Cuban culture has a very strong African impact even on Caucasian persons like me–"a feeling of arbitrariness and even absurdity began to grow in me. I was curating from a globalizing, third-worldist perspective, which was abstract by force. This did not correspond necessarily to local values and uses, which responded to particular historical, social, and cultural needs as well as to concrete interests, functions, and methods of biennials and other art institutions and activities. I became aware of the need to curate with both eyes and ears." And by saying *eyes* I talk about perception, I talk about taste, I talk about my own visual education; by saying *ears* I'm talking about learning, hearing, becoming aware of the history of a place, about information. "Most importantly, a curator

should assume his or her own limitations in front of the fast and diverse art practice today. Every curation must begin by being an exercise of modesty."

Modesty is sometimes difficult to find. I think you should be modest enough to try to learn and try to adjust your own standings in response to the new situation and the place in which you are going to work. By this, I insist, I am not advocating for localism, but for a dialogue even in Bakhtinian terms, so a dialogue with frictions, with exchanges, miscommunications, new communications, new meanings.

Christine Eyene

Abdellah, you are going to talk about the Bénin Regard Biennale and the Marrakech Biennale. Morocco is more your context; with Bénin you were going abroad. Can you describe your experience but also talk about if and how you tried to engage with the social context and tried to impart change? Was it part of your reflection?

Abdellah Karroum

Thank you Christine. First of all thank you for inviting me; thank you, ZKM, and the people who organized this encounter.

I wanted to start with what I found interesting in the points of my colleague Gerardo Mosquera when he was talking about communication and education. I like thinking about action and research when reading about the 1960s movement in Africa. "Action and Research" was the subtitle of a magazine called *Souffles* that started in Morocco with a very pan-African investigation, research, and thinking about how artistic and intellectual production in general can exchange, can be a space for investigation and research but also can create spaces for action. This aspect of communication can also be a moment of learning for us, and the time/space of action can be a space of participation, contribution. I don't know if it's a predefined space or a space that is created in order to participate in changing society. So I see biennials as moments and space for production as well.

Recently I started working as the director of the Museum of Modern Art in Doha, Qatar. In Doha we don't have a biennial yet. In a few minutes I'll show some examples of biennials and projects I curated in Africa after this experience with the Dakar Biennale, namely in Marrakech and Bénin.

In Marrakech 2007 I did a very small project that was based on a production that started in Appartement 22. Appartement 22 is located in Rabat and began in 2002 at my own place that was then transformed into a place of artist residency. Rabat is the

Moroccan capital, it's a very cosmopolitan city. It's a political capital but you have a lot of expats as well, you have a large audience, universities but also expats. You have a predisposition of the city to have international exchange, but sometimes you don't have any existing space for art as a space of debate and production of knowledge. You have in Morocco for example a lot of large-scale festivals in every city since the 1970s, but these festivals are places for the promotion of ideas of modernization of the country and the development of tourism. They are not festivals of contents, but festivals of cities. This is a very important difference to make when we talk about the proliferation of biennials and festivals. The majority of these big projects are festivals of cities, not of one discipline or field.

Appartement 22 is a private space for art that opened because of the need to work with artists of my generation. I was thirty-something then and worked with artists who needed to find a space where they could develop something. This was impossible in the existing official spaces. So we had to create this space on the market, in a café and at home. At home we could have discussions that were not possible in the amphitheater of the university. A few years later we opened to enlarge this space and set up a web radio, for example. This is very important: It is from a need that the biennial is curated and not from a business plan or urban development plan.

I see biennials as places of production and education in contexts where you have a deficit in investment in art and culture. I had this discussion with Okwui [Enwezor] about Africa, where you have these places of deficit that can be restored, but new places can be created to respond to these deficits. In Qatar, where I am today, you have an excess of investment in culture. You have a smaller population and an overproduction. At the same time investment in education can compensate for this excess of investment in building, for example. With this background I see biennials also as an echo to the artistic practices; and also as places where critical ideas can be shared. These ideas come from the expression, not necessarily from the existing landscape. Of course you always have an existing artistic cultural landscape which is coming from constructed official histories.

In Bénin, for example, the notion of the artist as a citizen, *l'artiste citoyen*, is inspired by local art practices and local projects. This title of the Bénin Biennale didn't exist before I went to Bénin. I was invited to curate the Biennale in 2012. I arrived in Bénin, West Africa, and I visited studios and collectives, but no art spaces. They don't have museums as in Europe or even Morocco. So the object of the Bénin Biennale was to think about what exists and what you can bring or learn through research, and what you can construct for these people.

The biggest program was not the international exhibition but what we called the special projects. There are about ten special projects, and in every neighborhood you had an initiative or an artist who ran an open studio, offering workshops every week.

In this place, for example, artists were doing actions years before to sensitize people in the streets about pollution, homeless people, and different other social issues. The exhibition space was a supermarket called Centre Kora, which had been empty for ten years. For the international exhibition it was important to have an exhibition space, but it also was important to have a place for these ten special projects that had been selected from local initiatives. Every artist group took a cash register–that supermarket had everything but products to sell–and used it as a stand of information. Everyone was free to produce documentations and to talk about methodologies and to show different artworks.

We occupied the center of that supermarket for an international exhibition which had the same title, *Inventing the World: The Artist As Citizen / Inventer-le-monde: l'artiste citoyen*. *Invention* in terms of looking for vocabularies that will be presented in this exhibition space, but also in connection with people: How can you tell the people of an action what you are doing? How can you express your project to the people who are not visiting a museum every day but do meet with artists?

We did a lot of workshops and encounters. One was called *Rencontres des océans et des mers / Encounters of Oceans and Seas*. The projects were coming from different parts of the world and were documented and shared in Bénin. It's both thinking about the local and finding other projects. For example, we had an artist from Brazil, Carla Zaccagnini, who made this project between Brazil and Bénin. The idea of the link of both sides of the ocean originally came from an artistic project. This link is not an empty space, it's this story that connects continents. The artist was thinking about this idea of having the same perception for two geographies.

So everything in this Biennale was inspired by existing projects. The curator coming to this place did not bring anything. The Biennale exhibition was produced on-site. And of course the conditions of production are not the same in Bénin or in Dakar or in Venice. You don't have that same latitude, you don't have the same space and possibilities. In Bénin you have the freedom but not the money, or you have the time but not the space, and so on. But working with different actors brings other editorial techniques–it's like books going somewhere where the people have oral practices for exchange, and as a publisher you want to make books with people who don't have books. Instead they gather every evening, and this is the way they share and make their history go to other generations.

Christine Eyene

Can I ask you about Marrakech? You also wanted to talk about Arts in Marrakech, as it was called at the time. The reason I'm asking is that I went to visit Marrakech, and because of the fact that it was in the Riad, I felt that somehow there was a disconnection between the Marrakechis and the Biennale. So maybe you can talk about the liberty or scope you had to bridge between the local audience and the Biennale, and if there was social change within your curatorial proposal.

Abdellah Karroum

I was invited as a curator of the Marrakech Biennale in 2007 two weeks before the opening. They had a problem. So they were asking me: Just bring what you have with Appartement 22, and we will show it. We have already invited everyone, the press and the international audience will come, so just bring some artworks to fill up the space.

I said no, I can't work like this. I'm happy to do the fireman–as Hou Hanru always says–but I want to see the space before and see if we can have a solution. So I went to Marrakech. When I arrived, there were only fourteen days remaining. We spent two nights without sleeping, then it was only twelve days before the opening. But the journal was finished after the second night-long discussion with two wonderful people. We made the journal and presented artworks that were produced during the last ten years in Morocco. I worked with artists, a lot of them were locals, but the exhibition was called *L'Appartement 22 Rabat–Marrakech*. The object of the Biennale itself was to bring works from the context they were produced in to the space of the Biennale. So you cannot produce anything within two weeks, but you can show to the international audience what was produced in the country during the last ten years. The space where this first edition of the Biennale happened was the film school.

The second edition in 2009 was called *A Proposal for Articulating Works and Places*. It is a continuation of thinking about this relationship of artworks and the places where they are shown in. The building has nothing to do with art. Morocco is under a big development now, construction is everywhere. The Biennale consisted of a visual arts exhibition, again we had special projects and the idea of freedom. For *Freedom* we asked international curators to propose works dealing with the idea of freedom. Special projects ranged from radio to talks and so forth.

The venues of the exhibition of the Marrakech Biennale were very original but not really visible, because *A Proposal for Articulating Works and Places* included projects that were produced in Marrakech itself, but projects could come also from Mexico; for

example. François Bucher realized a project and showed it in Marrakech, but you can show it only with its context. This is the map of the exhibition.

The communication with the location and the negotiation is very important. Each time in these two different contexts you have the necessity of documenting. You have publications and reviews all the time.

The topic of today's panel is the idea of change. In 2011 we did a project within the most established Biennale–which is Venice–entitled *Working for Change* at the moment of our Arab Spring. We made this proposal for the Moroccan Pavilion, which was not the official pavilion. We took a space in Giudecca and invited artists to work on-site. Every artist had a table to meet people, to conceive the project and to think about the idea of change, change in its own work, or in the world. On this website you have a lot of documentation of the project that ifa is supporting.

Christine Eyene

Abdellah, I need to interrupt you here, and we continue with the conversation. Alia Swastika, you can talk about a biennial which is going beyond the field of art.

Alia Swastika

Hello everyone. I am very happy to be invited to this panel. Thank you Elke, Andrea, and everyone who is working on this conference. Thank you very much.

Our panel is about the role of the biennial as a model for social change. In particular I want to talk about the case of Indonesia. We had quite a number of biennials in Indonesia that were very often international. The first one is the Jakarta Biennale. Jakarta is the capital city of Indonesia. There is another city where I live and work, called Jogjakarta. I know it is sometimes confusing, and I feel the need to clarify it: We have the Jakarta Biennale and also the Biennale Jogja. Both of them have been running for more than twenty years now. There are other events in the country that claim to be biennials, mostly working with the local context. We have the Sumatra Biennale–Sumatra is another island in Indonesia–and also East Java Biennale and the Bali Biennale, but most of them are working in a local context.

In relation to political and social change I want to emphasize the history of Indonesian modern and contemporary art, which is always somehow connected with the idea of social change. In the beginning–I think it started in the early twentieth century, when artists experienced freedom from colonial dictatorship–Indonesian artists wanted to do something of their own without the guidance of the colonialists. At that time what was

called “modern art” was really dictated by the Dutch. So there were movements from young artists who wanted to do their own. Since then the role of the artist in Indonesia was always part of the motor of social change.

After independence, our first president, Sukarno, was one of the biggest patrons of modern and contemporary art. He in a way was the first collector and supported many artistic activities and cultural movements. He was also one of the pioneers of the Asia/Africa Conference happening in Bandung in 1955. The Sukarno era was one of the most glorious times for the connection between arts and politics. He even supported most of the very famous figures in modern art in Indonesia that were connected with the Communist Party.

After he collapsed and Suharto took over the country, there were big changes for the cultural movement. The emphasis of his period was developmentalism. It is the start of the modern country. Suharto was president for thirty-two years, which is quite long. He wanted to establish political stability without criticism or protests. Everything was really silent. In this situation art always somehow took place as activism. Artists worked together with many cultural and political activists, they went to the streets doing demonstration and things like that. That was until the 1980s. In the 1980s the establishment of alternative spaces in Indonesia started to play a very big role.

Within these circumstances, where artists were always part of the intellectual groups and the critical discourses, the Biennale Jogja appeared. The first issue was very local and was initiated by the government. First it was called only Biennale of Painting. They wanted to make an exhibition for the younger generation of painters. So this happened until 1992 when the younger generation of artists felt that painting as a medium is not enough anymore. They wanted to introduce different media into art, and in 1992 they made their own Biennale. It was called Binal Experimental Arts. This is the start of the public’s being introduced to performances, installations, photography. Before that contemporary art was only about painting.

1992 was also important in the history of contemporary art in the city because it reemphasized the connection between the artists and art communities to the sociopolitical context. 1992 was a critical date in Indonesian democracy. Then happened the first big movements against Suharto. Before that it was always silent, no protests. Since then the police started to oversee much of the cultural movements, because they understood them as something dangerous that brings big change to the people.

When Suharto finally came down in 1998 the art world in Indonesia changed. Most of the artists felt that they had lost their common enemies. Usually the state, the president,

and the government were their enemies, but after they came down, the enemies were gone. Consequently they lost their direction. The Biennale at this time was focused on artistic experimentation.

Ten years after that, in 2009, there was a big biennial about the public. Many artists put their works into public spaces, parks, monuments. But it was really a chaotic situation. Many artists fought each other, there were many internal conflicts. But these conflicts in the end led to the establishment of a new organization called the Jogja Biennale Foundation, which became the new organization running the Biennale. This means the Biennale became independent of the government after sixteen years. With this came up the idea to make it an international event. But we didn't want to establish another international blockbuster exhibition where we could invite everyone from every part of the world. There were limitations: Like maybe in Morocco or Bénin we don't have the space, we don't have the resources. Then we came up with the idea to retrace also the history of the Asia/Africa Conference of 1955, because the idea of internationalism was the political statement at that time. So we have something like a dream to redefine internationalism in that sense.

This is when we started the Biennale Equator, where we work only with countries in the equator area. It is very limited, because every two years we work with one country within a zone between 23° above and 23° below the Equator. It is really specific. The first time [edition of Equator series] I was curator and worked with India; we invited Suman Gopinath to cocurate. For the second edition we also wanted to work with the Middle East like Iran and Iraq until we realized that it was far beyond 23°. So we couldn't. But we discovered that we can work with Egypt, because a very small part of it is still within these limitations. So in the end we worked with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates for the second edition. In the end it is quite interesting to see the discourse happening in the sense of how to define regionalism and internationalism regarding choosing our country partners.

I think the most important thing connected to the historical and political context is also this: Before that, being political for the artists always meant to have a very bold statement or very direct involvement with cultural or political movements. But after fifteen years of the reformation era I think we need to build another platform for discussions. Then we found that compared to the previous periods being in a calm, silent period is more what we need. We've seen that most of the tension happens in our surroundings: the tension between the fundamentalist groups and the common people, the military, and the government; within civil society itself, the tension is very high, so our life is always

very dangerous, or at least noisy. So I think, being political today after the reformation can also be a space of reflection, being out of the crowd.

Sometimes we are being criticized because of the distance to the public, but we are really trying to engage also the public, only not as massive as before. I think in a way what we can do is also to bring the platform to different cultural practitioners–the intellectuals, artists, public, critics, academics–which we lost. The goal of the Biennale in this sense is to bring back a platform to work together and to rewrite history again.

Christine Eyene

Patrick Mudekereza, we are in some ways continuing the conversation we started in Dakar in 2012 during Condition Report. You're going to talk about Picha, and I'm sure that you have interesting statements not only on the fact of being a small and independent project but also addressing the funding structure. I remember that you had quite a strong position in terms of how the West sometimes is coming and bringing us a biennial.

Patrick Mudekereza

Thank you Christine, thank you, Elke and Andrea, for having this very fruitful conversation. I am very happy to be here, and I'm very happy to be part of the International Biennial Association. Also thank you, Yongwoo, for the incredible work you are doing.

Organizing the last Lubumbashi Biennale, Rencontres Picha was both an exciting and challenging experience. After the success of our trial of moving beyond our local art scene in the first edition in 2008, and the very good experience of working with a curator like Simon Njami as artistic director in 2010, the third edition was an important turning point toward a sustainable initiative. But the idea of sustainability itself was quite far from the fragility of the organization. That pushed us to organize the scheduled activities in two years from 2012 to 2013 because of funding availability. We finally celebrated the biennial in October 2013, during a professional week under the theme *Enthusiam!* suggested by Elvira Dyangani Ose, the artistic director, as a way of gathering social dynamics in a new imaginary of the city.

I really appreciate the reference you make to the Condition Report symposium where we met in 2010. This symposium, organized by Raw Material Company, wanted to reflect on building art institutions in Africa. And most of our initiatives are laboratories rather than art centers. More thinking on how to curate, for whom, with whom, and even on how to exist in our precarious context rather than aligning a list of projects to show in a year. The organization becomes something much more experimental than the artworks

or the exhibition. As a young organization, we learned a lot from other initiatives and tried to adapt their format in our context. A few months after the symposium we opened a very useful companion to the biennial: Picha Art Center. We follow some models like Abdellah Karroum with Appartement 22, Marilyn Douala Bell with Doual'Art, or Bisi Silva's CCA Lagos–many initiatives carried out by individuals who try to achieve what museums and other institutions fail to, unless they are linked to the state and have more means, more sustainability. Picha Art Center is open all year, and is dedicated to promote criticality in art practice and its links to our social, economic, and political context. In four years, we have developed many projects, from talks to public space interventions.

Those two projects, the biennial and the art center, are complementary in the way they carry our need to speak to the world through art. But does the world want to listen to us? Doesn't it have its own fixed description of our situation?

Sometimes those questions become very important and not so easy. The less easy situation is already this feeling of being a different instance than "the world" and trying to talk to it. At that moment, we are the central point of the challenge we want to face, the one of exclusion. Looking at the map of biennials this morning I also see this blank in Africa. Many maps have still a blank area, particularly in central Africa, reminiscent of the terra incognita from maps of the Middle Ages.

To illustrate that idea of being unmapped and unintelligible, I will refer to two works from the colonial period: the novel *Heart of Darkness*, by Joseph Conrad, and a documentary on art production in Belgian Congo named *Mains noires, créatrices de beauté* (Black hands, creators of beauty) by Paul Flon and Marcelle Van Orshoven. I could also refer to very questionable contemporary artwork, especially video artwork made in the Netherlands and Belgium these last four years filming the situation of Congo. But I will keep that for another discussion.

Conrad's book is about a voyage along the Congo River, where the narrator is entering a country of violence and facing in the same time the violence of imperialism in the starting colonization of Congo Free State. Despite the quality of the writer, the focus is put on Western actors dealing with the "tribes." Many thinkers, among which were Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe, criticized the "depersonalization of a portion of the human race" and "the inhabitants, whether antagonists or compatriots, were clearly imaginary and meant to represent a particular fictive cipher and not a particular African people." But, in my view, the worse effect of the book is not coming from its content but from its title, which has become the nickname of D.R. Congo for lazy (or blind?) journalists and artists who don't want to look for more accurate words to describe the war, the political

situation, or the social struggle for life. In 2010, when Congo celebrated its fifty years of independence, the editorial of the French newspaper *Le Monde* was titled “Un anniversaire au coeur des ténèbres” (An anniversary in the heart of darkness).

The second film is more about aesthetics. The title wants to show an oxymoron between the blackness of the hands and the beauty coming from them. Here as well, this idea seems of the past, when the recognition of so-called primitive art started and the rise of export handicrafts from Africa. But the situation in contemporary art is in the end not that different, where African artists are still chosen to add more diversity in exhibition lists, or are seen like mimic productions of European or Northern American trends.

Those examples are some of the reasons why we feel that such initiatives are very important. We cannot do a biennial the way it is done somewhere else. It is not possible to do a biennial in Lubumbashi like in Berlin, Sydney, or Venice. We have to find another way, we have to find how to fit to our context, how to move from that, because of course we cannot gather the same budgets; ours is between ten and thirteen times less than other biennials. We don’t have the same infrastructure. In Lubumbashi we do have a museum, which is working, but it is the only museum in Central Africa, I think. There is a very small one in Kinshasa, and there is one in project in Yaoundé, but that is all for the region of Central Africa. This museum in Lubumbashi has no budget to organize even the smallest exhibition. It only pays the salaries of the employees. So in a way we have more money than the National Museum in Lubumbashi. This provides another kind of relationship, another kind of context we have to fit in.

But at the same time–this is what I discovered with the Biennial Association–we face similar situations, the same tensions for the fund-raising, for instance. This question is about ethics: Whose money should we agree to or not? We have the same problems in our country. We also have the problem of the relationship between the audience and the local art scene. How can we invite twenty international, well-known artists and spend in one week more than the budget allocated by our funder for a whole year for local artists? We have many similarities, and we have to find specific answers in our context.

I try to come back to this idea of *Heart of Darkness* and the questions you raised about the relationship with the Western world. I worked at the French Institute for about seven years doing administration and curating exhibitions. This free huge network of foreign culture centers is completely different from our own initiatives and what I was speaking about in the beginning. The centers have different agendas, even if sometimes incredible persons doing very good jobs. But as they are part of that specific diplomatic

system–which is what remains from the colonial system–you don't always know what they are doing. We try to be independent. But how can we be independent in our own minds, in our own way of thinking, organizing things and interacting with the audience? Being independent means also trying to rethink our history by our own strengths and ways of thinking–what Valentin-Yves Mudimbe calls the "colonial library." We have a huge legacy of thinking and how to look at our own history and situation today. Our cities are built in models that are not fitting us really. We have to find a way to deal with our architecture as a colonial library as well.

But how far do we go? What is the legitimacy we have? I think we have no other legitimacy but, as Abdellah Karroum said, being citizens. We are only us, and we are trying to carry our identity. I'm not representing Congo, Lubumbashi, or Africa. There is just me speaking to you.

This is the map of Lubumbashi. As a colonial city it was divided into two cities: one in the North named La cité blanche, the city for the white people. The red line at the bottom was called Limit south. This was the limit of the white city. The other part was the Cité indigene. On this plan you can see the 700 meters of cordon sanitaire, which is a blank zone that was used to separate these two parts of the city. This picture shows the installation we did in the cordon sanitaire. It was our way to gather people in such a place of division.

An example would be the screening of *The Echo*, a work by Moataz Nasr in 2010 for the second Lubumbashi Biennale. In this five-minute video, a young woman is reciting a monologue from a movie named *El Ards*, where an Egyptian sexagenarian is castigating the passivity to defeat British oppression in the 1930s. The two sequences (the movie in 1933 and the woman acting in 2003) are screened together, giving an echo. But the unexpected echo would come four months later, when the Arab Spring cast out Hosni Mubarak. This video was screened on the front façade of the Justice Court. The repetition of words like *freedom* or *democracy* started a dialogue with this place which is seen as a place of oppression in the very center of Lubumbashi.

Another work shown for the third Lubumbashi Biennale (2013), by Angela Ferreira, intervened on top of a modernist building in Lubumbashi. A sculpture of Angela Ferreira dealing with so-called shared heritage architecture, wants to refer to a constructivist monument by [Vladimir] Tatlin. "Ferreira 'renders' Tatlin's monument into a sculpture, which explicitly 'quotes' the monument's hallmark of an inclination of 23.4°, a reference to the Earth's axial tilt as a symbol for the universalism of unfulfilled utopian goals" said Jürgen Bock, the curator of the project. That gathering is celebrated by two local (opera)

singers through a performance song inspired by popular Bemba culture, of a miner saying good-bye to his mother because he will be buried alive by entering the mine.

We tried to manage the idea of social change in the way of giving new imagination of places and space and how we can try to redefine a new relationship between people inside these places. This is more or less what we are doing with these tools: the biennials.

Christine Eyene

I think we're going to let the panelists have a conversation and then leave it to the floor before we provide our respondents.

There is one question I want to ask: Picha is organized by a team. You have the Picha Art Center, and the team is organizing the Biennale, so you are always there and can monitor the effect of the Biennale. But I wanted to ask all of you: Is social change actually on your curatorial agenda? Which means do we have to measure the legacy of potential social changes the biennials have brought?

Abdellah Karroum

The idea of social change is a very important question, also the question of the participation of artists and intellectuals in general when it comes to social change. In 2011 I was shocked when I read in several journals in Morocco that intellectuals are staying out of action for political change, for example during the Arab Spring. Artists and intellectuals were accused openly of being neutral or taking advantage in the comfort. When you look at these articles, of course you see that they are missing information and again, the work of communication is not done properly. When you look at the Arab Spring and the ideas that provoked the change in society, it was not just sudden events. Ten years before, a lot of artistic projects were witnessing society, proposing ideas, creating spaces of dialogue. Artists and intellectuals were proposing models. When you see the very quick change in the Arab countries, artists and intellectuals are a very important part of it. You maybe don't see them in the streets–although some of them also go into the streets; in Egypt one artist died in the revolution. But during these times of big political change the artists are not going to defend themselves, saying that they are here and reconstructing the image. It's rather the long-term action in any kind of artwork.

A biennial project that communicates with the context it is built in is already contributing to this change. In the example of Gwangju the Biennale came after, as recognition of this change, but this change came also from students, intellectuals, and people thinking about expression. The expression of ideas brings political change and progress.

Gerardo Mosquera

I think that for me the most interesting thing is the possibility of art to go beyond itself and have an impact in other fields; a very special and unique impact. This is not a straightforward thing, and I always recall Francis Alÿs's phrase that sometimes you do something poetic and it gets political; sometimes you do something political and it becomes poetic. It's a complex field of interactions. I really stand for the possibilities of art for social change, but of course it is not going to make the revolution. Perhaps it's only creating layers of new consciousness for the future. I think that culture works on a slow pace. It can grow new ideas, new conflicts, introducing a frisson into society, if not with a banner. As a curator I've been interested lately in outdoor works in the public realm that try to do something specific in response to a situation's needs. This is a very hard challenge.

Alia Swastika

I want to add something to my previous explanation. Jogjakarta is quite a small city when it comes to Indonesian cities, it counts 3 million people, but to us it is a rather small one compared to Jakarta or other places. But it's a very closed society, everybody knows each other, the people are very open. It's been influenced by foreign traditions, with a history of colonialism and also a very strong tradition from Hinduism, Buddhism, and also Islam. So it's a very mixed and multicultural society in a way. I've noticed that the idea of working with a community and the connection between art and the people actually happens as something natural. It is everywhere. If you go to Jogja, artists live there, and the people make something with the artists. So it is really part of the everyday practice of the people.

We heard so much about the Americans and the art market in Indonesia, artists suddenly became quite wealthy from selling their artworks. But usually they come back to their community and build something there. If you come to Jogja, there are so many new sites built by artists, so many very beautiful and residential places, and if you come you can stay in one of their rooms.

So in a way when I do a biennial, I don't have to think about this anymore as a specific focus. Because this kind of direct communication between the artist and the community is there anyway. For me it's more urgent to create a laboratory of thinking in order to analyze, to reread, and to reinterpret this kind of connection and how we can make it a bold statement, or how we can echo this kind of connection back to other people outside of the art world. In this sense we are particularly working with India, the Arab

countries; next year we will be working with Nigeria. It will be interesting also to see the connection and how the people perceive other cultural layers from what they face in their everyday life.

As with Gerardo Mosquera I also think that for a curator it is very important to see the particular context of the place he or she works in. It's not that every biennial needs to directly face a community or the idea of public spaces, because every place has a different history.

Patrick Mudekereza

I wanted to add on this question what for me is very important in Congo. There are many journalists getting aware of the social situation in Congo, there are many NGOs working in different fields, there are thousands of NGOs in Congo. That creates a strange relationship, because I need to censor their papers or their reports. I think at that moment art is very important because it creates a completely different relationship with the people. It allows people to still have their daily life, to share their daily life–not only to share women getting raped, war, and such things. I think in order to move people in their minds, they first of all should understand that they are allowed to have a daily life. From that they can try to think of how to make it better. For me that is the role we are trying to play, this is the more relevant thing about the social aspect of our art practice.

Cristine Eyene

Thank you. I would like to open the questions to the floor.

Audience Member

My name is Iva, I am a student of arts management. I come from Austria and am currently writing my thesis about biennials as an event format and its potential in social change and transcultural encounters.

I am interested in how you would see biennials working as a network for artists and how this network also contributes to a certain social change, especially in non-Western contexts. I've been talking to artists from Dakar, for example, who live and work in Europe. I asked them the same question, how can biennials contribute to social change, or if the specific biennials they participated in had actually changed something in their own social context. One of them answered: Yes, of course, because biennials create networks that enable me to travel, to get sponsorship, to get to Europe or the United States. So in this sense, how do you see the potential of biennials?

Christine Eyene

I answer from my own experience of cocurating the previous Dak'art Biennale and of other contexts in Africa. It is true, biennials are a platform for artists, collectors, etc. There is an economy behind biennials of which we can't say it doesn't exist. At biennials collectors would discover and maybe buy works of artists. It is also a possibility for artists to meet with other art professionals, curators, maybe they get the opportunity to be invited somewhere else. I think the example you gave, Alia, of artists building structures and art spaces for their communities is something important. That is something you can also find in Africa.

Now in terms of the Dak'art Biennale, from my own experience, I don't think it was a platform for social change. As I was saying, we made the selection during the riots, so basically we were inside the Dak'art Biennale office, and in the streets there were demonstrations. It was surreal. I don't want to talk too much about Dak'art, because I think it will be better to talk with the other curators who could express their own opinion. But I don't think I was personally given room for more experimental projects, which is something I mentioned in the essay I wrote for the catalogue. Although the theme dealt with the social context, we didn't have much margin to engage with the local context due to the structure of the selection process established by the Dak'art Biennale, which is that artists submit works before they know about the theme. Actually the exhibition I mentioned, *Chronicle of a Revolt*, was a portrait of what was going on when we were selecting the Dak'art Biennale. It was a snapshot of the society of Dakar at the time and displayed the people's opinion. There was a form of social engagement in that, only because it was demonstrating that in some countries in Africa you can demonstrate when there is a change of power. In the end the transition was quite peaceful. We were all scared because we didn't know what was going to happen with the Biennale as we were preparing it.

So that is my personal experience of the biennial being a catalyst. I think you also, Abdellah, mentioned this drawing from what the artists do, from existing projects, and the biennial being a catalyst for the time it exists. So I see two things: what the artists do and what the biennial as an institution does. For me, Dak'art being the state biennial doesn't offer the same flexibility as maybe Picha.

Audience Member

My name is Carson Chan, I cocurated the fourth Marrakech Biennale. For us it was a very big question what the Biennale does, how it changes society. Something we asked before we even started was: What can we change? This was in 2012 during the so-called Arab

Spring. What we did afterward was, we went back about two or three months and spoke to all the people who were the interns, students, and security people working for the Biennale. We tried to answer this question as scientifically as possible: What did change? How do you see the arts? How do the visitors coming see the arts? And of course the answer we found was that there is no scientific way of doing this. The various things that we thought we were able to instill or push through the artworks were often the exact opposite.

There was a large installation by an American couple in the Royal Theater in Marrakech. We had one dedicated intern looking after the work. In interviews we recorded and collected afterward, I asked what his favorite work was, and he said that this large installation was his favorite work. I thought, for him the reason was because it was very big and moved around. But his response was, no, this was his favorite work because it was a collaboration between a man and a woman. If we had in our curatorial concept thought about how to affect change, we would have never come up with such a thing.

In trying to find out what we can do to affect or how the exhibition has affected change, we have found that everything we tried to do in fact had a completely different response.

Christine Eyene

Thank you. I'm sorry, but I think we have to move on to the respondents now. Oh, there is another question? Please.

Audience Member

My name is Hans Christ, I run the Württembergischen Kunstverein Stuttgart. I would like to address my question to Gerardo Mosquera. You mentioned the educational gap. I think you can find this not only in the Southern Hemisphere, but also in the West. Today we again are mingling around the question of what is mediated by art that appears in a certain kind of surrounding or situation. But isn't it rather a potential that there is the possibility that the audience doesn't have prejudices about what art is and is not?

Gerardo Mosquera

Well, yes and no. There is always a reception and a change of meaning involved in every perception of an artwork by whomever. You see what you can see according to your experience, culture, etc. But then there is the problem of communication, of decodification. Art is complex, it is a very specific language, you need to know many stories in order to understand what is presented to you. The general public, especially

in countries that don't have a very high level of education, is not prepared for that. And sometimes–as the previous responder just said–they understand you in a different way, or the artwork has an opposite impact. That could be good in some cases, but in general I think that the meanings that the artists were trying to convey is lost in many cases. I really believe that contemporary art has the possibility of creating a secant space–a space in the sense of geometry where two or more spheres overlap. In this shared space communication can happen. This interaction could be very fruitful.

Christine Eyene

I move on to the respondents now. I'm sure we can continue the conversation after this panel.

Elise Atangana

I would like to make an exercise from which I do know whether it will work. I will try to list some keywords I heard during the panel which I find very interesting: need, context, daily life, global curator, learning, community, communication, connection, education, production, echo of the art practice, sharing of ideas, workshop, change in both ways, dialogue, cultural movement, documenting, redefining the international.

What I heard about the biennial is that to some extent it is a place for experimentation. It is a laboratory where you can actually create new models. It provides the space and the infrastructure which is needed to gather that kind of practice. It is a place for the artists who are the core of the dynamic of creating social imagination through art. All these aspects bring, as you said, long-term social changes.

Another aspect all of you were mentioning is that the biennial also means to build a permanent workshop for professionalizing all the actors inside the context. Also the educational aspect is very important. Daily life means creating different rendezvous between different events.

Another issue Patrick was talking about is how to get from the local to the global, especially in terms of financing: How can we finance a biennial locally or with international institutions and maintain its independence?

Jun Yang

Good afternoon. I would like to start maybe with the first comment that Gerardo did. I won't sum up any of these comments but would like to respond as an artist to the whole discussion of social change.

At the very beginning Gerardo said that he wishes to make a biennial that is about communication and dialogue, that establishes a dialogue with the city and the people in the city. I participated in the Gwangju Biennale 2012, and after the opening every day there were so many people running through the exhibition space. I think they had the attendance of 9,000 visitors per day. It felt almost as if it was mandatory to walk through this exhibition for the people in Gwangju. At this point I thought–maybe this is not such a serious thought–if a Biennale is partly paid by tax money, why not indeed make it mandatory? Why not expose every two years all these kindergartens and these kids to a different sense of knowledge production, which art is, in a way? Certainly this would be more useful than all the school trips I went through in my life. Maybe in this sense social change can be of reach at one point.

The second comment I wanted to give is on the UFO question, again Gerardo brought up. It was also part of Ute's keynote speech yesterday: Something is flying in, doing something and leaving again. This is good and bad. I moved to Taipei a few years ago. There is the Taipei Biennial. And in a way I would pledge: Please come back more often! Why? Because the museums there are not doing a good job. The education ministry is not doing a good job. Without the Biennial, without the artists flying in, there would be nothing. The other thing is connected to the political situation of Taiwan. Taiwan is not recognized as a country, so most international aid and foundations do not support Taiwan. In this sense it might not be social change, but if you all came, it would at least be social exchange. I think this is at least as valuable and important.

I grew up also in Europe. Traveling through Germany today, there are so many art centers everywhere, I almost hope they would sell some of them to China–each of them, they are needed there, so why not? And at least you would have larger budgets to do more good programs here.

But I thought about a different thing. Half a year ago the city of Munich thought about applying for the Olympic Games. They did this precampaign and had a popular vote on it. Everybody was so sure that the inhabitants of Munich would go for this Olympic application. But in the end the public voted against the application. Why? I've read a few comments. Our big cities in Europe seem to be oversaturated with events. Right now at this moment there is Karneval, and if you go to the train station you see people coming from the Moon. We are oversaturated with festivals, events, biennials, and everything. One comment said, this vote was not against sports but against the show character of the event. I think this is something to remember when talking about biennials.

Let me just make two more points. One point is a project I worked on at the Taipei Biennial 2008. It was a research project connected to the condition and the question of exhibiting, questioning the museum policy, the governmental cultural policy. One of the reasons why I had this in a biennial was also the benefits of the biennial: You had international attention, all the politicians at least would listen. If I had done it for myself they would have said, “Oh this frustrated little guy” or something. The attention is an extreme benefit of a biennial. If you try to make an exhibition–nobody comes. If you go for social change, a biennial is the way to go. In this project we created an alliance of all the artists in Taiwan–I exaggerate here a little bit–and we ended up founding the Taipei Contemporary Art Center with Manray Hsu and Meiya Chang. One of the reasons also was to create an opposing voice to the officials, which are the politicians, but then also to the commerce, which is companies and private interests. Another reason for the success of the project was that the Biennial hit the moment of urgency in the city of Taipei. If it had happened two years before or maybe today it would’ve been a very different situation.

With this last point I would like to end my speech. I would like to stress the fact that I’m not a political activist or a social activist. I am first and foremost an artist. I might use artistic language for social activism, influence, and involvement, but I want to produce things, I want to add things, not to subtract things. I want to create, and I want to criticize, comment, and influence as an artist. As an artist I wish and imagine that I can change things, that my work can have an impact. And I think, even if this claim is naive and very romantic, this aspiration gives us artists–or maybe all of us–a chance to dare to dream and let us think how the society and the world could be. Thank you.

Christine Eyene

Thank you. Does anybody want to add to this final comment? No? It is actually nice to finish with the words of an artist. So thank you, everyone.

28.02.2014 / 4.30 p.m. — 6.30 p.m.
The Dynamics of Biennials and the Role of Its Actors (Curators, Artists, Organizers, Audiences)

Chair: **Marieke van Hal**
Panel: **Başak Şenova, Luchezar Boyadjiev, Mônica Hoff, Tan Boon Hui**
Respondents: **Gabriele Horn, Patricia F. Druck**

Elke aus dem Moore

Good afternoon. Can I also ask my colleagues to come over? It is very hard to keep up the attention, I know, because outside there is brilliant weather. We could all have a walk together. But instead we are dealing with quite interesting aspects of the biennial circus.

I would like to introduce you to the next panel. Maybe you see that there are some personnel changes. Due to the withdrawal of some artists, Marah Braye, the CEO of the Sydney Biennale, couldn't come. We asked her to write a statement for us. I would like to read that statement, but maybe tomorrow morning when we will be refreshed.

Now in the evening session we are going to talk more about limitations and problematic situations we have to face. Therefore we made a change and invited Tan Boon Hui to be part of this panel instead of tomorrow morning's panel. Thank you for that.

I think the dynamics of biennials and the role of its actors–curators, artists, organizers, audiences–is quite an interesting issue. I am pretty much aware that this is a classical question in all biennial conferences. But in fact for us it is quite important to have also the artistic perspective, as you already heard today.

I would like to introduce you to our chair, Marieke van Hal. Marieke van Hal is an art historian and the founding director of the Biennial Foundation. She initiated the World Biennial Forum which took place for the first time in Gwangju; the second will be in São Paulo this year. From 2001 until 2006 van Hal was general coordinator of the Manifesta Foundation, and in 2007 she was director of the first Athens Biennale, for

which she initiated the European Biennial Network. Together with Elena Filipovic and Solveig Øvstebø, van Hal organized the Bergen Biennial Conference in Norway in 2009 and coedited *The Biennial Reader*—an important anthology on large-scale perennial exhibitions of contemporary art. She served as a jury member for the curatorial selection of the ninth Gwangju Biennale in 2012 and the fourth Thessaloniki Biennale in 2013. She's a board member of the Bergen Assembly in Norway, and she's lecturing extensively on the topic of the biennial.

Welcome, Marieke van Hal.

Marieke van Hal

Thank you, Elke, and thank you, Andrea, from ZKM to invite and host us here so generously in Karlsruhe. One rectification about the Biennial Foundation: It's not me only, I would be very embarrassed, and it would be wrong to say, as I have very special colleagues. One of them is here today, Susanne Boecker. We are a team of people working together in different places, keeping up this initiative of the Foundation. Even though I am perhaps the most visible, I could not develop the Foundation without my colleagues. It is very important to mention.

Welcome all the panelists and respondents. This panel basically addresses the various perspectives and, let's say, stakeholders involved in the making of biennials. We have here, as Elke said, the artist's point of view, the curatorial and also the organizer's point of view. Obviously, as we all know, they all have their own ideas and vision on what makes a biennial valuable, relevant, and interesting. I will introduce you personally later.

As we had already quite a dense program with different presentations and topics to digest, I would like for this panel to keep our presentations feasible for the audience. And also I would like the respondents to be as active as the panelists, because you have equal experience and knowledge about the topics.

Maybe just a small introduction: Biennials are complex structures at the crossroads of diverse interests, shaped by various parties and stakeholders involved. Biennial organizers, curators, participating artists, and visitors all have their own specific take on what makes the biennial interesting or relevant. And I would really like to add here the group of funders or sponsors of biennials, and this is actually the third reason why Marah is not here with us today. But we will discuss this further tomorrow, I think in the panel with Kasper König, Nicolaus Schafhausen, etc.

The organizers of biennials in their capacity as managers and directors of biennial institutions feel responsible for the sustainability of their respective biennials. They

usually stay involved with it in the long term, many of them more than two of three editions, which differentiates their relationship, their connection, and their sense of responsibility for the biennial, vis-à-vis the artists and the curators who come and go. The often foreign curators who are invited are normally concerned with ensuring that their exhibitions are distinctive not only from the previous editions of a specific biennial, but also from other international biennials of contemporary art that are simultaneously taking place around the globe.

The rise of the independent curator is or has been certainly related to the development and the popularity of the biennial in general. But what we are trying to address also in this panel is the position of the artist and the audience, and what effects biennials have on these parties. The ideas of the artists and the demands of the funders or the public may differentiate, and they can easily stand in opposition to each other, for instance in the case of an artwork that gives offense. Biennials can pose interesting challenges for those organizing, funding, curating, participating in, and visiting them, as their respective objectives and understandings of the biennial in general do not always harmoniously coincide. It is perhaps this uncertainty, this unpredictability, but also the flexibility that is rooted in the biennial's model as an art institution–an unstable institution, as Carlos Basualdo defined the biennial in 2004–that allows its exhibitions to surprise, to come up with innovative artistic productions, experiments, and even in some cases to contribute to processes of modernization as well as political and economic transformations or social change. The biennial can give rise to subversive possibilities–and this is where in my opinion its strengths still lie.

So here we are in a panel with different actors involved in the making of biennials. I found it very beautiful in the previous panel to end with an artist. This is why I would like to start with an artist as basically the content provider of a biennial.

One question ZKM and ifa would like us to address to this panel is: Which reciprocal effects have biennials had on artists? I'd like to argue that contemporary art biennials have introduced many artists from formerly so-called marginal or peripheral areas into a broader, more interesting international art circulation. As far as I know, not much academic or statistical research has been done on the effects of participation in a biennial for an artist. However we all know the term *biennial artist*.

Luchezar, let me first introduce you. You are an artist and curator based in Sofia, Bulgaria. You were one of the founding members of the ICA Sofia. Your work is focused on the private interpretation of public space, issues of urban reality, and the development of global cities as well as fostering involvement with audiences in various cities through

specific projects aiming to break up the local/global, active/passive, participant/artist/audience divides. This I think also relates to our panel. You participated in numerous biennials including the Gwangju Biennale, the Singapore Biennale, and the Project Biennial of Contemporary Art in Bosnia-Herzegovina, just to name a few.

I have two questions for you, but you also have your own statement. Simply the question: What effects have biennials had in your career? And a second question I'd like to pose: From an artist's point of view, what would be an ideal biennial or biennial participation? What would you like the biennial to offer, provide, or facilitate for you? Can a biennial push the boundaries of an artist's work as actually Marah stated in her abstract? What makes the participation in a biennial interesting for you?

Luchezar Boyadjiev

First of all I would like to express my gratitude to Andrea Buddensieg for inviting me–we already collaborated on the *Global Contemporary* show–and to Elke aus dem Moore. I have to say to you in person that I'd like to thank ifa, who gave me my first artistic exhibition outside of Bulgaria more than twenty years ago. The bad thing about that exhibition was that it coincided with my curating the Bulgarian participation in the first, really important Istanbul Biennial, which happened in 1992 under the directorship of Vasif Kortun. I went there, it was a success and put Sofia on the map–but I couldn't give away my catalogue because I was the curator in Istanbul. The other important thing is that after this biennial not only was Sofia on the map but it was the backbone and the background of the establishment of the ICA in Sofia.

About effects: For me it is not the career effects that are important after the first few participations. It is actually the involvement for that specific kind of space, which is the specific kind of public space. Every participation in a biennial is an imposition on the part of an artist, going to a place and doing something, but it's better if you make a proposition to the process or negotiate the use of this public space. One of the most–if not the only–interesting parts about working in public space is this process of negotiation that you instigate, you take part in, and that you try to make the best out of.

In my presentation I have some examples of passive and aggressive forms of imposition on a city. But just to get it off my chest–and Yongwoo Lee will excuse me–I would like to just say that the first memorable participation in a biennial was the first Gwangju Biennale in 1995. This was a moment when I had just gotten out of the totalitarian situation. My first biennial as an artist was the 1994 São Paulo Biennial, and apart from the strikes by the workers it was a very pleasant experience. But in Gwangju, although I

knew about the background of the Biennale, there were things that stayed in my mind unrelated to the artworks. I will never forget the crates of Sony equipment being carted into the building of the Biennale on the day of the press preview, because all the artists who were from the global position were used to working with Sony, and they didn't want to work with Samsung. Correct me if I'm wrong, but then it was a protective policy of the country not to allow Japanese equipment. So it took a special decision, as far as I can remember. And they were running out of time, so help came in the form of white-coated workers from the municipality. They were really very nice and helpful, but you had to wait extra time for the walls to dry up.

Definitely the most memorable experience was this: I was part of the Biennale Europe 2 under the curatorship of Anda Rottenberg. There was also Europe 1 with artists like Douglas Gordon, Maurizio Cattelan, or Carsten Höller. So Europe 2 and many other artists were staying in a dormitory for army officers. I will never forget, and you will allow me to quote, an announcement at 7:30 in the morning that was every day in perfect English: "Good morning dear artists. It is 7:30 in the morning. It's time for you to wake up, have breakfast, and get on the first bus to the Biennale site so you can start working on your installations. Thank you." That was every morning. This was such a colorful experience that I remember the words.

Of course it was a generation-defining biennial. After Aperture 1993 in Venice and Gwangju in 1995 I was already older than the generation of artists who were in their thirties. But for me it was the generation-defining moment.

Marieke van Hal

Thank you.

Tan Boon Hui, you are a curator and a cultural programmer with research interest in the contemporary artistic expressions of Southeast Asia and Asia in general. Currently you are group director at the National Heritage Board in Singapore, overseeing exhibitions, programs, and outreach events across the museum institutions and the provisions of the National Heritage Board and Singapore. You've been director of the 2001 Singapore Biennale and also the 2013 Singapore Biennale, which you also cocurated. Also you've been working for the National Arts Council in Singapore, and you were in charge of the Singapore Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2004 and the Singaporean presentation at the São Paulo Biennial in 2002.

Tan Boon Hui

Good afternoon. First of all thank you, ifa and ZKM, for inviting me. I come here primarily as, even though I'm also a curator and cultural programmer, an organizer of biennials. I'm going to speak very fast, so you can ask me to repeat at the end of the presentation.

The issues of biennials and their locale. When I was asked to comment on this topic by the organizers, I said I will talk about two things. I will talk about the stakeholders that all biennials, if they are to exist over the long term, must engage and somehow grapple with. One is of course the funders of biennials, which frequently are associated with the host city, the locale, and the objectives it pursues. Why does a city need a biennial in the first place? The second is of course the audience. The two are inextricably linked. I don't want to talk so much about the artist's and curator's perspective, because I think my other illustrious colleagues here will say a lot more about that.

I think the key word here is *context*. When we use terms like *local* and *global*, what they actually mean for the development and organization of biennials really depends on the lens you are adopting. In art scenes outside Europe and the US, the infrastructure to systematically support and nurture the creation, promotion, and growth of contemporary art is often either absent or still being developed. The arrival of a biennial often brings with it an enormous anticipation about its ability to not only stimulate the local art scene but also to catapult it into the global arena.

Biennials and their host cities, for better or worse, have a very complex relationship. Someone referred to it as being frenemies–friends and enemies at the same time. On the one hand most biennials depend greatly on public funding of some form, and as such the relationship of the biennial to the host locale often provides the justification for the city to continue supporting this massively expensive endeavor. The different kinds of formal justifications put forth for why cities must have biennials are actually well reflected in some of the official statements issued by the various biennials. You can notice the engagement with different things, not just dealing with art but with the city, what is good for them, how biennials connect them to the world. And not all of them have to do strictly with art or the art discourse.

In Singapore we are relatively new. The first Singapore Biennale was in 2006. The sort of explicit discourse clearly places it under the idea that biennials are a valuable form of city branding. For better or worse it is linked to travel and leisure, to industry development as well as to contemporary art as an experience. This is where installations as opposed to the fine arts–the paintings on the wall–become in a sense quite amenable to this kind of language.

Hence in 2011 we had the Merlion Hotel. The artist Tatzu Nishi has done similar projects with historical sculptures in Germany. This is a tourist icon. The Merlion is usually a fountain. He built an actual usable hotel around it. And if you think this kind of explicit linking of biennials with the tourist experience is unique to new centers, of course here in the Old World we had the wonderful Grand Tour of 2007, obviously borrowing from the Grand Tour of the Romantic poets who came from the UK to Europe and died very tragically but beautifully. In 2008 in Singapore together with the Asian biennials we did a version of this, the Art Compass 2008, which was literally another version of the Grand Tour.

Biennials add to cities another kind of discourse that is constantly being pushed. This is why they are important to contemporary art development; they map current artistic trends and encourage artistic developments. How these are actually realized and expressed, however, is much more complex. The development of the Singapore Biennale sees a certain kind of transition. The 2006 and the 2008 editions are clearly linked to certain kinds of national interests.

In 2006 the first Singapore Biennale was most explicitly described as the anchor cultural event of Singapore–2006, [Global City:] World of Opportunities. The Biennale was funded by the budget of the annual meeting of the IMF and the World Bank Board of Governance. As a result of that the first Biennale had the largest budget compared to all subsequent editions.

The second Singapore Biennale in 2008 was programmed to coincide with the new F1 Grand Prix. And interestingly enough that Biennale was also known for organizing an art fair in the same building as the Biennale itself.

I took over the organization of the Biennale in 2011, halfway through its preparation. The Biennale shifted to more looking at its capacity for pushing artistic development, developing the art scene and special audiences for art.

This is the second reason why cities are interested in biennials: They grow the audiences for art. In the previous panel Gerardo Mosquera also talked about this. The audience for art and the discourse of contemporary art that is found at biennials is actually quite alien to a large proportion of the population. In Singapore the 2011 Biennale survey of the public revealed that for the majority of the local visitors it was the first time they had come to a contemporary art exhibition. But even more important was their experience. They indicated that they were really provoked by the Biennale. The second question in the survey was whether they would come back to other contemporary art exhibitions in the museums and outside the Biennale, and the majority answered yes. This follow-up

effect of the Singapore Biennale makes it a very important tool for growing audiences in our context.

Going back to 2006, of course the rhetoric of globality–global artists, global curators, global art–frequently meshes with the host locale's desire to be seen as participating in a global present or even future through art. The Biennale in 2006 was especially very explicit in describing its role as providing a missing cultural layer that would position the city-state in the global capitalist contemporary. However the Biennale was enormously successful. People loved it. And because of the quite ample budget it produced a lot and was spread over almost twenty venues. This is the largest Biennale we ever had.

In the 2011 Biennale the explicit link to economic positioning had dampened, and the idea of developing audiences or exposing new audiences of art–not just from the region but beyond–became very clear.

The 2013 Biennale marked a changing point. It was an attempt to hit the reset button, so to speak. This Biennale is now very famous firstly for looking at the region: 90 percent of the artists were from the surrounding Southeast Asian region. Secondly, instead of having a nomadic star curator who would bring the global contemporary to Singapore, we opted for a regional curatorial model of 27 curators. I won't elaborate how we managed to work together, but basically the principle was that each of these curators would bring with themselves almost a decade if not more, of experience in the specific local artistic community which they were from. They would thus bring to the Biennale specific knowledge of practices and artists that none of the museum curators would know. We looked at what they did, and the names challenged us.

How do these things value, as far as the stakeholder and the funding body are concerned? How do they develop audiences? What does the Biennale mean for the people with whom it engages? This is Siete Pesos, *2243: Moving Forward*. It is a group from southern Philippines, and it is a collaborative project. It is very interesting that the project is actually not in the Biennale venue but occurred in the city the artists came from. It was an opportunity for all the artists–some of them had never met or collaborated before–to work together. This is a contraption which was invented in that city. Basically public transport is very limited, it's a very poor area, so people improvise. What you can see here is a motorcycle, and this structure was built around the motorcycle so it became an instant minibus to ferry people around. But it only moves forward and can never move backward. This was an attempt by the curators and the artists to answer the question of what art can actually mean to the community from which the artists came. In this

case it meant nothing to the people in the museum, that is, the Biennale visitor when it was exhibited; it's merely an intellectual exercise. But it was a living reality in the city it comes from.

Ahmad Abu Bakar–this is a work with prisoners from a penitentiary. Each of them would write a response to that Biennale title and what they personally hoped to do if the world would change. The interesting thing about this work is that when it was exhibited, members of the public could write a note back in response to one of the messages, and it would actually be brought back to this particular prisoner. It was an attempt to create a conversation back to the creators of the art.

This is Hazel Lim's work in collaboration with local students. This work took place over about nine months. The artist was working with students to map the biological diversity of this particular area. It's interesting that some of these lands are reclaimed land, so some of the nature there is not natural at all.

KOMVNI, this is a community photography project from Indonesia.

ZNC, again a work created using disposable plastic bottles. It was built up over the course of the Biennale as the public came in.

Sharon Chin, from Malaysia. This is the *Mandi Bunga*. Singapore is a multiethnic society, our region has many religions and many cultures. However there are certain things that bind us. The idea of the flower bath has meaning across all the ethnic communities whether Malayan, Indian, or Chinese. In this work about 100 members of the public came together to bathe together in flowers. They all brought their own meanings to it. The performance occurred at the beginning of the Biennale.

We had a whole bunch of works that dealt with using local materials and looked at the artisan tradition in the region. One of the valuable things about this kind of approach–because we looked for people who knew things we didn't know–was that we discovered wonderful artists like Toni Kanwa, who was completely unknown to every collector and critic we asked. He works between Brussels and Bandung in Indonesia. These are hand-carved wood sculptures, they are each carved in one sitting, but they are tiny. He produced 1,000 of them, and they are all distinct from each other.

Sociopolitical art is very strong in the region. Alia Swastika in the previous panel spoke about how in Indonesia you cannot detach contemporary art from the modern, its roots in the nation-building process, in anticolonialism and the struggle to create an independent identity. The interesting thing is that this continues throughout the region. Nikki Luna is from the Philippines. Of course this looks like blood diamonds, but it's made out of sugar that comes from the sugar-producing region of Bacolod.

This is Tran Tuan, *Forefinger*. It is an artwork from Vietnam. This is the gun trigger finger, and this group of furniture refers to the generation that protested against being drafted into the Vietnam War. The only way to do that was to cut off your forefinger, your gun trigger finger.

Then we had some artists who were not artists. This is Shieko Reto, from Malaysia. She's a transgender activist and created a clinic for the process of transgender assignment.

Thank you.

Marieke van Hal

Thank you Tan, that was fast and a lot of information. Actually I have some questions, and I want to react immediately on the presentation, because it also reminded me of something that Ute was mentioning yesterday: The Singapore Biennale shifted its focus to a more regional context. Ute also mentioned yesterday that more biennials today are instead of trying to connect with the global-looking regional again. This is an interesting signal. I wonder if it's something of a postglobal stage we are entering?

Tan Boon Hui

I really have problems with terms like *globality* and *locality*. When I actually proposed this model the thinking behind it was more about the fact that it was important for biennials to articulate differences in artistic practices, sensibility, and strategies, and that many of these differences are contingent; either historically or geographically contingent. Any sort of art movement or concept in our age, when it reaches a locality the response and the expression can vary a lot. It looks like it's about regionalism, but it is not. It is simply about making a statement that art is more complex, that artists are more creative, and that they respond in much more layered terms. One of the things we did at this Biennale was to show the artists' list to various curators who traveled by, asking: How many of these do you recognize? I think that was actually the drive. The focus on the region is only a lens. It is a lens to look at something else, but it should not be seen as the endpoint.

Marieke van Hal

Thank you. I'd like to move on from Singapore to Brazil. The World Biennial Forum no. 2 will take place in Brazil. I give you the dates so you can mark them in your agenda as they were not mentioned yet: from November 26 to 30, so during the Biennial. The Forum will be more closely associated with or connected to the Biennial itself. The Forum

directors will be Charles Esche, Galit Eilat, Nuria Enguita Mayo, Pablo Lafuente, Luiza Proença, Oren Sagiv and Benjamin Seroussi., who are actually also part of the curatorial team of the upcoming São Paulo Biennial.

Brazil has reached a new critical moment, I guess. The country's political uprisings have indicated the population's demand for a turn in their social, political, and economic environment. My question is: Can this demand be reflected by the artistic gesture and the art world as a whole? Access to culture is widely seen as a public good, and a biennial can play an important role in this. The Brazilian Biennial is especially known for its focus on education and pedagogy. Many other biennials have followed its example, creating in their local context sites of public participation that are not only periodic but also permanent.

Mônica Hoff, you are first of all an artist, an educator, and a researcher. You were the ground curator and head of the Cloud Formation section of the ninth Mercosul Biennial in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2013. You have also been in the long term associated with the Mercosul Biennial and its pedagogical programming.

Obviously biennials are not only about aesthetics but also about function. Once you look at what they do or are confronted with–can biennials expand and democratize access to culture? Can they be regarded as visible sites of informal education? And if so, in which tools of cultural mediation does one need to invest, and what can be the results?

Mônica Hoff

Thank you, Marieke. I'll try to answer you. In my short presentation I'll speak slowly and hope it won't be boring for you.

For me it is a pleasure and an honor to be part of this meeting. I come from Porto Alegre in the south of Brazil and, as Marieke said, I got involved as head of education at the Mercosul Biennial since 2006. Last year, at the ninth edition of the Biennial, I had also the opportunity to be part of the curatorial team.

My proposal for five minutes is to give you a notion about Mercosul Biennial's dynamics and engagement with its different actors. I'll give special attention to the program that we developed in the ninth edition last year. As ground curator of the ninth Mercosul Biennial–in Portuguese it's the same as base curator, *curador de base*–I was invited not only to think and conceive the educational strategy and the public programs of the ninth edition but to be a bridge between the demands of the curatorial proposal, the institutional interest, and the local community, thinking about how those three axes could relate among themselves.

The Mercosul Biennial Foundation is a nonprofit organization of private nature, located in Porto Alegre in the south of Brazil. Since 1997 it's responsible for organizing the Mercosul Visual Arts Biennial. So very young and still regarded as peripheral, since 2007 the Mercosul Biennial has gained recognition and generated curiosity toward the increasingly larger investment in projects and practices which congregate and problematize the relations between art and education, especially through its relationship with the local community. Perhaps one of its greatest features is exactly the fact that its potential and major audience is the local community rather than art specialists. In that sense after nine editions we could say that the Mercosul Biennial and Porto Alegre have been operating as a kind of curriculum to each other.

The essential point to establish this territory took place in 2006 with the creation of the pedagogical curator position working very closely with the general curator, something that became an institutional rule since then. This prominent place for education consisted in that moment not just of an action which transformed the Mercosul Biennial education program, but in an important epistemological exchange on the Biennial itself. We could state that the Biennial became an extended education program with an exhibition every two years–and not the opposite, as we usually see in most biennials and cultural institutions around the world. By creating this important field for itself, it obviously generated a set of demands with certain characteristics, also projects which somehow relate with the context in which they are inserted–in other words, that involved the local community. This metric established itself more strongly since the seventh Biennial, and this way of thinking was maintained on the eighth Biennial with the Casa M proposal, a kind of social sculpture with its own time and space, independent from the big exhibition and without the regulations of the Mercosul Biennial Foundation.

I'll allow myself to give a little more detail about this process since it is hard for me to think about the role of the actors of the Mercosul Biennial without this chain of successive occurrences–in other words, without considering cultural, political, and social links that tie one edition to the other. Considering this, in 2013, for the ninth edition, I proposed a set of actions and programs which exiled the time and space of the Biennial and the field of art itself. I was interested above all in the idea that art is apparently where it is not. We didn't just leave that museum or the city of Porto Alegre but also left the viewpoint of art to finally be able to be on itself. This was accomplished essentially by three initiatives or three different kinds of commissions.

The first one was Cloud Formations, a kind of free school for educators, mediators, and curious members of the public without headquarters' regulations. Moving between

places in the state of Rio Grande do Sul that were chosen for their relation to nature's transformation process, Cloud Formations comprised a series of meetings, research trips, and field conversations to talk about the stars, the energy from the wind, the energy from the earth, nature's transformation, matter's transformation from the fossil to the plastic, energy from the ocean, to learn with the fisherman, conversation with indigenous communities, from earth to body, from body to earth. There were laboratories led by artists, writers, educators, and the mediators themselves. The mediators took part in micro residence programs in research centers, even in scientific laboratories, industries, and cooperatives. More than to train people how to discuss art we are interested in understanding and discussing how the changes generating nature affect us socially, economically, politically, and culturally, and what strategies you could elaborate on a domestic scale to deal with that. Obviously this resulted in a group of critically and politically active mediators.

The second program was called Home School of Inventions. It commissioned a school proposal to the mediators of the ninth Biennial, who ran, documented, and created strategies to maintain the place, to think on the relationship with the city and the local community and to problematize the Biennial itself. The school occupied a room in one of the venues of the exhibition and operated during the exhibition period.

The last one, Aguaíba, was a collaborative project by Uruguayan artist Ana Laura López de la Torre that engaged other artists and people from different communities from Porto Alegre. Aiming to understand the apparently paradoxical relationship that the people of Porto Alegre have with water, particularly with the Guaíba, the project was a sensitive political and artistic action developed collaboratively over ten months. During this period Ana Laura visited the public water administration, participated in meetings of commissions in defense of the Guaíba, talked with people living nearby the river, followed the process of collecting water, bathed in it three times–exposing herself to high levels of pollution–and got involved in three different communities that have the water of the Guaíba as a permanent issue. The symbolic closing of the project was marked by a beach day at the Guaíba shores on the opening weekend of the ninth Biennial.

However, as a social practice moved by political and affected relationships, it's far from being concluded, just as the education placed in the context of the Mercosul Biennial. What happens today with the Mercosul Education Program is that it doesn't belong to the Biennial anymore. It is already owned by the community. Therefore the effective relationships with smaller and more peripheral cities such as Porto Alegre and community

interests exceed the institutional capacities of the Mercosul Biennial. In one way or the other the community, which was formed throughout sixteen years by the Biennial, today is its greatest critic and contributor. The challenges in terms of social and educational practices in the context of this Biennial are centered on the relationship institutions can establish with the place.

Now, to answer your questions, I think that a biennial can do many things–which does not mean that they are interested in doing so. A biennial is a very complex organism involving various levels of engagement. In a city like Porto Alegre, for example, this engagement is proportional to the capacity of expansion of the community. This is why the Biennale, more than a temporary exhibition, was turning into a kind of nontemporary school, covering gaps in different levels of education.

Thousands of people are engaged in a biennial. I do not mean visitors, students, and educators only but especially the people who year after year get involved in the design and development of it; from the curators to the electricians, from the sponsors to the mediators, they all are engaging in a biennial in one, two, or three editions, not always occupying the same function. This is probably not possible in another context. In this sense I would say that I am now more interested in how this organism works, but I do not see it isolated from aesthetics somehow. Indeed, it is the relationship between the aesthetic, political, and social issues that make biennials what they are. They are utopian initiatives. There is no doubt that biennials expand and democratize access to culture. The question is how this is done, what form we are talking about, what are the real interests, with whom do they want to talk. A biennial is a very complex organism that involves and generates a network greater than itself, and a network that is inside and outside at the same time, that regulates, demands, and infiltrates.

I think that biennials in any case are sites of education, neither formal nor informal, just education in different levels. In that sense education obviously has to do with what it shows, but mainly with the ways in which it is organized. And this organism is complex. Actually, biennials are institutions and at the same time collectives of self-organization. This apparent gap or contradiction is where education happens. Thank you.

Marieke van Hal

Thank you Mônica. Patricia F. Druck is the president of the Mercosul Biennial, and I just wanted to ask you to add to what Mônica has been stating from your perspective. Mônica has to leave, unfortunately.

Patricia Druck

Before you leave, Mônica, I have to say that I am so proud of you. Mônica is one example of how biennials can actually teach the community itself. She started very young as a mediator, and now she's this mature and beautiful international curator. We've had Pablo Helguera, we've had Luis Camnitzer, and now we have Mônica as our pedagogical curator, which makes me proud. Today somebody asked me: How many more biennials you will have to do? And I said: I don't have to do anymore. This is my face forever, because I'm so happy with the ninth Mercosul Biennial.

But first of all I'd like to say thank you to the organizers ZKM, ifa, the Biennial Foundation, Elke and Andrea. I am so happy to be here to have this opportunity to present to you.

Gabriele Horn and I discussed about the best way to respond. So she will reformulate the questions you proposed, and what I'm going to do–since we are pioneers in the pedagogical programs in south of Brazil, Porto Alegre–is to rephrase what Mônica presented in numbers. The idea is that I will show you our social report while Gabriele reads the questions. The report is in Portuguese, but I can actually show you the way we structured the information and the way all this pedagogy comes through as well as the results we actually have.

Gabriele Horn

I will repeat the questions Marieke already asked. The first question is: Biennials are not only about aesthetics, but also about function. If we look at what they do, not just what they show, can biennials expand access to culture?

The second question is, can biennials be regarded as visible sites of informal education such as in Brazil–and if so, in which tools of cultural mediation does one need to invest, and what can be the results?

Patricia Druck

Through this material I will focus on those two questions about the pedagogical issues. In nine editions over seventeen years we've had five million visitors, and about one million are educational. Our curatorial team always has to choose a pedagogical curator. This year it was Mônica.

In the ninth Biennial we had about 500,000 visitors, and 66,000 only came for the educational program. This is a map of Brazil. We had activities in more than 42 cities. As Mônica mentioned, we had field trips and seminars. We had commissioned jobs for six

artists to interact with companies, so we also could interact and make companies learn through the programs we had. For instance one artist proposed to a company that sells resin to sell it in the shape of jewelry. This is what they do now. So in this sense we also exchange knowledge with business.

We had collaborations with many institutions and bookshops, we improved public spaces, we learned about architecture and contributed a lot to the public space between the two years of each edition. We also revealed new places. This island, for example, was abandoned. We organized field trips there, and about 200 people visited this place they've never been to before. More than 5,000 people participated in the pedagogical programs we developed.

Now I'm going to show you the numbers. We trained more than 400 people; 132 people worked as mediators with us for six months and, during the Biennial, with kids on-site. We had more than 2,000 institutions visiting us. Here you have the distribution from the schools: First grade is more than 10,000 kids, followed by sixth grade of around 9,000. It's amazing to see that so many kids visited us. Of course we organize public transportation. The Biennial of Mercosul is free of charge, and almost 20,000 people use public transportation. We published materials like books, manuals, and a catalogue that were also free of charge. I have many other numbers, but I think in terms of pedagogy those are the main ones.

Marieke van Hal

Thank you, this is very impressive. It's very interesting to hear from your perspectives what the Mercosul Biennial is doing in terms of education.

I would now like to move to Başak Şenova. Başak, you are a curator, writer, and designer. You did some important projects among which I'd like to highlight the *Uncovered* project from Cyprus. It was a three-year project, from 2010 to 2013. You were curating the Pavilion of Turkey at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009. You were also curating this very special biennial in Konjic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 2013. You are now working on the Helsinki Photography Biennial, and you are appointed curator for the Jerusalem Show as part of the Qalandiya International Biennial coming up this year.

Başak Şenova

Thank you very much. I will be the last speaker, and I will try to be very brief. First of all I want to express my gratitude to some names and institutions. I must say that this is a historical moment for me, because exactly twenty years ago I was doing my

MFA in graphic design, and I was a research assistant at Bilkent University. I was the assistant of Fulya Erdemci, who was the director of the Istanbul Biennial, and they were working on the fourth edition together with René Block. She actually encouraged me and let me do three bulletins to be published during the course of the Biennial. This is how I started. So it is a historical moment for me to be here with you to together on an international conference on biennials. Thank you very much, Fulya, for corrupting me twenty years ago.

Secondly, I had the opportunity last year to attend the first World Biennial Forum with support of the Prince Claus Fund. The organization was wonderful, I learned a lot, it was very fruitful–but since then all the connections, all the follow-ups, everything has really changed: My thinking about biennials, about my perspective, and also I learned a lot of things. So I really want to thank everybody that was involved, from Ute to Hou Hanru, from Elke to Andrea and you, Marieke. I want to thank ifa, the Biennial Foundation, Yongwoo, the ZKM–thank you very much.

Yesterday Marieke asked me to introduce myself a little. I'm not going to do this. Instead I would like to mention the algorithm between biennials and big-scale or long-term projects with the spaces they are taking place in. While doing this I will underline the sensitivities and conflicting situations. And of course I'll be talking about my role as a curator.

I am obsessed with three issues, and I've been working on them for my entire life. One of them is control mechanisms; the second one is spatial inquiries and issues; the third one is memory and reconstruction of memory. I'm obsessed also with documentation and archiving, which means that I'm really obsessed with books. All the projects I am involved in are having a network with each other. What I mean by that is that they are always a continuation of each other, and sometimes the names of the artists repeat, sometimes the teams repeat. But they always came up with an urgency to have another project out of the research I'm doing.

First I'd like to mention the first kind of case study, the Turkish Pavilion. In 2009, when I was appointed as the curator of the Turkish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, I decided to work on the concept of lapses. I was trying to understand lapses in many contexts, from ideological contexts to historical contexts to memory and all of those things. But in a very weird way lapses, the lap, the lack, the void started to materialize itself in many other things. For instance we lost our main sponsor, then we lost a space in the Arsenale. So I went to the Arsenale, and it took six or seven weeks to convince the Venice office to make a self-standing pavilion in the Arsenale.

This building just disappeared after the Biennale. Today there is no evidence of it anymore. It was very interesting because this was the year in which the German Pavilion was celebrating their 100th birthday with Liam Gillick. I'm thinking about the Arsenale and all the history that comes also from the thirteenth century until today–what does it mean to have a pavilion that looks like a sketch-up from the outside–when you enter, it was a perfect white box–what does it mean to put it there like an organism or parasite?

We were crazy as well, because without money we built this building and together with Banu Cennetoğlu and Ahmet Öğüt we also produced two works and four books.

The second project I wanted to show you–the *Uncovered* project–was just the opposite. Indeed it is an UN-covered project. The object of the entire project was Nicosia International Airport. I had a cocurator, Pavlina Paraskevaidou. It started with the initiation of the UN Good Offices Mission. When I got involved in the project it was a problem–I'm not going to go into the history of Cyprus, I just want to say a few things about it, so we can imagine. After many serious moments in 1974 a war started across the island. Turkey did two military operations during 1974. I must say that the first operation was very successful, it was needed to stop the bloodshed for a while. But then with the second one–I will tell you with the help of a joke that is common on the island. The code to start the operation was: Ayşe is going on holiday. With the operation the Turkish army arrived–and Ayşe is still on holiday. We are calling this operation a peace operation, but the entire world calls it an occupation. When I was there as a curator I was working with the UN, I was working with the Greek superiors and the Turkish superiors, but I wasn't only the foreigner but the occupier.

The project was based on three things: memory, commons, and control mechanisms. The airport is located within the protected area, it's in the green zone. That means, nobody has access unless you're a UN officer or from the UN army. When we started the project, the airport had been abandoned for more than 37 years; now it's more. It was this beautiful avant-garde modernist building, and in the memory of the entire island it was something beautiful, because it was there only for six years.

This is how people remember it. We also started a huge archive project that documents everything about the airport. The more we studied the airport, the more we understood the island. I understood Turkey, and we understood where we were standing. The picture was taken in 1969, I guess, and this is how it looks today.

Over the first two years we were controlled by the UN–by the way, the UN didn't support me, so I found support from Turkey. We had many small projects out of it afterward, the archive projects and others. It was quite difficult to work there, but it was a learning

process for me. We were not allowed to do the exhibition in the airport, which was the initial plan, so we found another building in the buffer zone.

It was also an abandoned building. We cleaned it, and the exhibition happened there. It was a big success. I don't remember the exact numbers, but it was almost 200,000 people visiting this place. We have the number because the UN was counting all the time. And of course the UN censored parts of it. We didn't do any cheap publicity, so we found money from somewhere else, published a book, and in the book we discussed what it means to be censored by the UN. Throughout this project many things happened. There were demonstrations that were never shown in the Turkish media in Cyprus. And I think the most hilarious occupying moment happened at the buffer zone when they use this building that we claimed.

I'm passing very quickly to D-0 Ark Underground. This is the second Biennial of Contemporary Art in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It takes place in the atomic shelter of Tito, which was secret and revealed only ten years ago. It was the second edition, and it was a very weird and unique Biennial: It's going to be a museum of contemporary art, it already functions as a museum of military history, so it's going to be a mixture of military and contemporary art. It has a life span of only five editions, because the artists must accept to coexist with the Biennial before, and all the artists are okay with it. Everything they produce will be part of the permanent collection, but the artists still own the works. So if they want to withdraw, they can. If they want to borrow, they can. But it's going to be a museum by itself.

And very interestingly, thinking about who will be coming there, already every day there are at least two or three schools coming to see the bunker, and when they are in the bunker, they also see the Museum and the Biennial.

It's located 40 kilometers outside of Sarajevo in the mountains, and this is how it looks like when you see from the outside. Indeed it's 6,000 square meters, composed out of 12 blocks, so there are innumerable rooms. It was built for 350 chosen people plus Tito and his wife. Jovanka Broz, the wife of Tito, she was the only female who was supposed to be there, and Tito never allowed her to get pregnant–but this is another story. It was very interesting to work there, because we worked with the military. None of the rules are logical, but indeed the soldiers were the guards, guarding the whole Biennial. They knew the works and were talking with the guests about them.

This is the room of Jovanka, with a work of Danica Dakic. In this is a picture of her mother, and it says: Labor is a conscious human activity.

Last but not least, Helsinki Photography Biennial is opening on March 26, 2014. I just want to briefly talk about one place there. It is not there yet, the exhibition is not there yet, but it's the L3-building in Jätkäsaari. It is a complex of abandoned warehouses and a subject for gentrification. This is how they describe it on the Internet: "Overlooking the beautiful open sea…" I'm going to show there Jawad Al Malhi's photographs that were taken from the Israeli settlements and refugee camps showing the intensely overcrowded urban situation, together with his cement series. And then Yane Calovski's work, which is a video essay about Ijburg, these artificial islands of Amsterdam. It shows the point of urban development as well as the utopia of having a new space. Then Marja Helander, who's a Sami artist. Her work is about how the Sami culture and people are being transformed because of urban development and capitalism. Last but not least, I have Daniel García Andújar's *Postcapital Archive*, which is all about ecology and capitalism.

Thank you.

Marieke van Hal

Brava Başak, that was fast. I visited you in Konjic, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and it was extremely interesting. Luchezar, you also were there. Başak, it seems as if you are drawn to places that are very difficult to work in. Especially in the case of Konjic, what was most striking to me was this concept of a biennial that aims to become or finalize itself into a museum, into a collection, whereas especially in the West, where there is an infrastructure to react to, the biennial was actually always an alternative to existing exhibition venues such as the museum. I would like to quote Charles Esche, who made this statement in an interview: "The last few biennials around the world have been dominated by the museum as a model. The dominant paradigms in which biennials have been curated recently are the reproduction of the white cube, aesthetically finished artworks, a secure curatorial voice and control."

How do you see the distinctiveness of the biennial vis-à-vis the museum?

Başak Şenova

I understand this point and agree with it. But this is a very interesting and totally exceptional case. Last year the National Museum was closed down in Sarajevo, and all the cultural and arts-based institutions will be closed one by one. Maybe you know about Ars Aevi Collection–it collapsed. There is no money and no political or social stability to maintain any of the art institutions in Bosnia-Herzegovina at the moment. So this is an alternative way to first of all gather current and contemporary works which could

also open up some debates about the current situation. It's also a way of grabbing other people from other fields to the realm of contemporary art. As I said, most of the tourists, they come to see the bunker. But then they are being confronted with contemporary art. Maybe it's an interesting way–maybe a little bit fascist but nevertheless interesting–to clash these two entities together. Of course you never know what will happen the next day in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This was one of the reasons why the ownership of the works should remain with the artists. The Biennial is not a white cube, but it can be frozen in time after the fifth edition, becoming something much more interesting, showing what happened there historically in terms of contemporary art. So I'm quite positive of it being a museum and even in a very weird way positive of having it together with the military. It's weird, but in that case, it works.

Marieke van Hal

One more question. For this panel you've been invited as a curator, this means as a person who is invited by biennials and institutions to interfere and interact. You go, as you said, to places that are very specific and already have their own issues, difficulties, and problems. How do you perceive your responsibility as a curator working in such specific places?

Başak Şenova

This is a very important question. I think as curators we are constantly confronted with this issue of responsibility, where it starts and where it ends. I must say that I really believe especially in conflicting issues. It can be anything: It can be ethnicity, it can be format-based conflicts–like I'm doing a photography biennial, but I am pushing a lot of other formats. It can be any sensitive issue, you don't have to be doing something very political. When I edited the book for the D-0 Ark Underground Biennial that summarizes its five years, I faced at least four or five crises, and they were all based on ethnic problems.

I feel you cannot be objective, and you shouldn't be objective. Taking sides is very dangerous, and you should not. But you still should have a criticality toward everyone, and you should still have a stance that shouldn't change. Then you are responsible, because you are responsible from your stance, and you are responsible from your actions. But if you try to be very nice to everyone without having a stance, you are in trouble. This is what I believe in, but it is just my way of doing things.

Marieke van Hal

Thank you Başak. We also have here Gabriele Horn, and I think most of us know her as director of KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin, where she is since 2004. She's also director of the Berlin Biennale, which is related to the KW. You've been in charge as an organizing manager of six editions of the Berlin Biennale. Actually I don't have a specific question to you but would like you to respond.

Gabriele Horn

First of all also thank you to ZKM and to ifa for inviting me to this conference.

It is not easy to respond to this very dynamic panel this afternoon. But maybe some ideas or questions about the title of the conference, *Prospect and Perspectives of the Biennial*, from the point of view of an organizer. As an organizer you are always confronted with giving the biennial the most possible flexibility, the most possible freedom, the most possible money you can ever raise, giving it to the artists as well as to the curators for artistic productions, of course. At the same time, you are on the way to enable new productions also for the artists. For example, for this upcoming 8th Berlin Biennale we have around forty-nine new productions, which was the wish of the curator, and I am totally happy. It is challenging, but it's great that we are doing it.

But I'm also looking for questions of continuity and sustainability, regarding how we can on the one hand keep the necessary independence of a biennial but also to make use of local structures like local museums or national museums. This means that ideally we should find ways bringing those new productions also in the existing public collections. How will you get this together? I think also Ute mentioned this point in her lecture yesterday, and it is one of the really important questions we should work on: concepts for the future.

The same question of sustainability and continuity for me is in terms of education. It is excellent how Porto Alegre managed to hand education over to the community now. We are a temporary format, and we show up every two years. Every two years we have the attention and the audience, and we have some educational program. But after the biennial is closed, we do not have the possibility anymore for deeper educational programs. So how could we bring continuity into this period between two editions in terms of education and discourse, getting closer with the local audience?

Marieke van Hal

Thank you Gabriele. I think we should also open the discussion to the floor. We've been speaking a lot already. Are there any questions?

Audience member

I will try to draw a line from Patricia's to Başak's presentation. Of course in the case of Cyprus we should remember the Manifesta project, which didn't happen but turned into some institutional framework which happened like a school in Berlin. We should also think about how to extend the impact of a biennial in a long-term schedule. I'm asking all of you as the curators and cultural producers: Are you interested in bringing a critical perspective into the notion, idea, or form of education, or education in this context of pedagogy? Is it just about receiving the content of the artworks? Through the institutions of education, how can we develop a critical approach? Education is not only about the reception of artworks. It is a wider social and political issue.

Luchezar Boyadjev

I was hoping to save showing slides, but I guess I'm going to have to at the end. But first I'd like to say that it's too late if you start educating anybody to mediate between a biennial and the audience. It's too late if you try to do it on the opening. It has to be an ongoing process and has to start at least when the artist arrives at the venue and starts producing. You have to start involving the audience. If there is time to get to my computer, I will show you some of my experiences I have with that particular approach, which in my own words go under the title of Schadenfreude Guided Tours. *Schadenfreude* means that I do guided tours after the opening when the other artists are not there. So I can say anything I want about their works.

But there is something more important than sustainability. Last year there was the Online Biennial, if you remember, there were a lot of curators involved in nominating artists. I think it was an initiative by Jan Hoet, if I'm not mistaken. Rest in peace and my respect to this great curator. Then there was this biennial in Konjic, which was literally in a cave. I took part in the Odessa Biennale. They showed the work, and that was one of the most direct appeals to do something political, and it was at least three months before the protests started in Kiev. In my notes to Marieke I said, well, we have won. Contemporary art has won, we can do biennials everywhere, anytime, anyhow, with anybody and for any audience, with any artist or curator. I've been in biennials that have a lot of money, like in Singapore, for example, and in biennials where you had to pay on your own to get there and do something, like in Tirana. In 2001, just a few days after 9/11, it was a very strange situation. There were a lot of scandals involved with that biennial.

But now the issue is resilience, not sustainability. You can find a way to survive, if you really want to have a biennial in the city you live or work in. By the way there is no

biennial in Sofia. Events might evolve into developing one, but at the same time nobody has expressed the desire to have one. Resilience means that no matter what, you have to find a way to adapt, of course paying attention to who the sponsors are and so forth. There is something political about it as well.

Christoph Schäfer

Just a short question to Patricia Druck: Porto Alegre is famous for the words *social forum* and for introducing this civil budget, the democratic budget which we all think would be utopian in other places in the world. The educational part you described and the complete different approach that you take with your Biennale–how much is it linked to this situation?

Patricia Druck

I think a lot. Actually we had a performance at this Biennial, at the participation financing program. And it was exactly leading to this program. It is just because we open up a lot.

But I would like to go back to what Gabriele said. Our entire budget is linked to governmental support, and as soon as the Biennial finishes, the budget finishes as well. So we cannot have any programs between the editions. In all these social reports we do everything what is accounted for. I cannot spend any more money as soon as the Biennial is finished. One program that we can actually sustain in between the Biennials is a laboratory that we run. We have all the catalogues, books, and materials my colleagues send to me. So we open our doors, and people come to visit us in between the Biennials. This is the only thing we can do. We are very poor in between the two years but very rich in terms of knowledge to share. It is a weird situation. We can get money before the Biennial starts to do the training, but as soon as the Biennial finishes the funding stops.

This year I proposed as a volunteer. I've been the director of the eighth Biennial and the president of the ninth, but I've always been in Porto Alegre as an inhabitant. My husband is a member of the board since the Biennial was founded. So I've been with the Biennial, living the Biennial as a community system since the beginning. We came up with creative ideas trying to do different programs, supporting the Biennial as private friends. But for us sustainability is really a problem.

Marieke van Hal

Are there any other questions? No? I would like to ask you, Luchezar, to finalize now.

Luchezar Boyadjiev

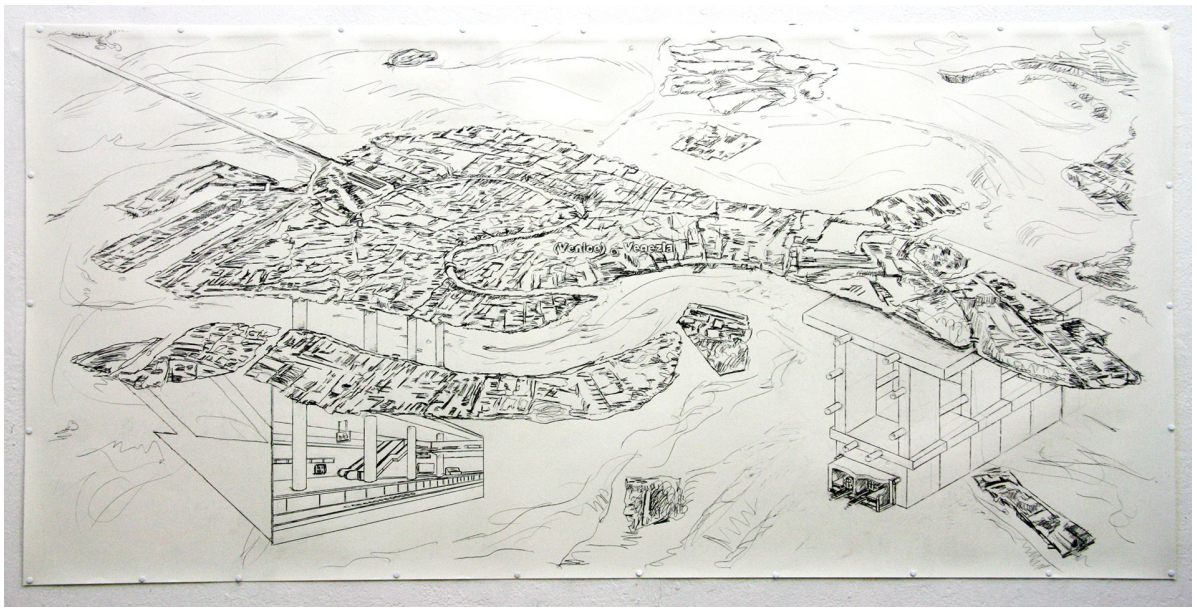
Thank you. I will show some slides now: What you see in this picture is from the Sharjah Biennial 2005. It's a scene from before the opening, and this is the kind of material I collect and use when the time comes after the opening. The person who is pretending to be a car mechanic is the chief curator of the Sharjah Biennial, Jack Persekian. He's trying to fix the work by Emily Jacir, whom you'll see at the very end at the right hand side with another artist, Mario Rizzi, looking on. The point is that I spent nearly a month before the opening only to give one lecture performance for about one hour, just moving mentally in the space of the show trying to relate the works one to another and animate the space and the show for the benefit of the audience. This kind of project requires a long stay, requires talking to all the artists, requires paying attention to the local audience. If I use the triad of Prof. Belting's writings–body, media, image–you have a body of a performing artist or viewer, you have a medium and form of the artwork, and then the image is somewhere else, it is unknown and happens in the space.

Luchezar Boyadjiev, Schadenfreude (Pearl) Guided Tours (2005)
At: Belonging, 7th Biennial, Sharjah, UAE
Photos: the artist (left); Sharjah Biennial (right)
Courtesy of the artist

So this kind of Schadenfreude Guided Tour facilitates this process. The first time I did it was in the show *In the Gorges of the Balkans* in the Fridericianum. René Block, who curated the show, let me spend about twelve weeks there, but there was no physical work–only me relating the works. The main benefit for this conference from that particular project is that I got to know the audience in Kassel in a way that nobody knows in between documentas. We don't even think that there is any audience in Kassel. We say

documenta, but the people living there, a lot of them are migrants from Balkan countries, there is history in this place. And the audience is there, and it's very educated. Probably it's the most educated audience for contemporary art in the world. If you start talking about a work of an artist from Kosovo or Serbia–this was after the war in Yugoslavia–the audience immediately responds: Well, we have discussed such issues with Josef Beuys. This is amazing. You can hardly encounter such an audience anywhere else.

But of course going to Kassel every time–and this is the other kind of imposition on biennial cities–you travel and can think about cities where biennials happen from a different point of view. So I came up with this cycle of suggestions about cities: Kassel definitely needs an airport. It would make life a lot easier. These are my ideas for the on-going project "Utopian Solutions for Dystopian Cities." Another suggestion is how to support the islands of the Venice Biennale: You build a Venice Underground, because literally the tube can support the islands, and it would make moving around the venues of the Biennale a lot easier. So these are the suggestions for biennial and other kinds of cities: New York needs to sleep (a bed). Istanbul needs no split. Paris needs to reboot (an audience). Singapore needs to clone (a colony); it is such a good model for a society, I would urge you to colonize Bulgaria, for instance. Seoul needs a rest (for three days). Rome needs to forget. Moscow needs to grow up; it's very spread but needs to grow upward. Berlin needs to shape up. Sofia needs to think. London needs to make room. And Jerusalem needs to . . . I'm going to show you soon.



Luchezar Boyadjiev, Venice needs an Underground (2007) Cycle: "Utopian Solutions for Dystopian Cities" (2007 – in progress) Photo: the artist Courtesy of the artist

Also going to biennial cities I made this cycle, which is an anti-nation-state cycle. It was recently shown at the Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin. Some of you might have seen

it. It is called *On Vacation*. Every nation-state sooner or later has established monuments. In this cycle I take away the military figure and send him or her on vacation. Zhukov from Moscow, Simon Bolivar from New York, Alexander II from Sofia–there are very few female characters on horseback; there is Jeanne d'Arc all over France, but apart from that there is only Elizabeth II in Toronto. There is however only one case of a monument that was given by a woman to a man, and this is in St. Petersburg, and both people are Great: Catherine the Great gave a monument to Peter the Great, and this is the inscription on the monument, it is beautiful: From Catherine to Peter. Nothing more. They were both Great. Of course this is from Berlin, Friedrich der Große. This one is from Istanbul, General İnönü. So these are extra pleasures you take when you go to biennials, you get to know the cities in an official way.

Luchezar Boyadjiev,
On Vacation: Zhukov from Moscow (2011)
Cycle: "On Vacation..." (2004 – in progress)
Photo: the artist
Courtesy of the artist

For the Singapore Biennale, which was my happiest experience with Schadenfreude Guided Tours, Fumio Nanjo allowed me to work for the first and the second editions and train people for a long time before the opening to introduce the Biennale to the rest of the audience in Singapore, to relate the works in ways that I would encourage by giving them insider's knowledge about the production of artworks, but also I encouraged them to activate their own experiences and try to see why this particular work has been chosen for this particular location and this particular time. Of course it supports in many ways the vision of the curator, but it could also criticize. Most of the artists are not there after the opening, so at least I could say anything I wanted.

The first Singapore Biennale was called *Belief*, and I was training these guiding agents of belief. The second Singapore Biennale was called *Wonder*. From experiences with

Singapore, how do I reach this country? How do I talk to the people? They are very educated, it is an extremely ambitious country, an amazing place. So I told them two things: We Bulgarians and Singaporeans are related at least in two ways. Firstly, corruption. Singapore prides itself as being a zero-corruption society; Bulgaria, on the other hand, claims the status of the most corrupted country in the European Union. So me coming from Bulgaria, I say: Zero corruption? This is not human! And sooner or later they realize that there is a point in that.

Secondly, I compared the climate. We are very similar in terms of climate: in Bulgaria because of the global warming or whatever the spring and the fall has disappeared. There is only either winter or summer, it is a two-seasons-climate; either very cold or very warm. And it's the same in Singapore: You are either indoors or outdoors, and one is very cold, the other is very hot. So we have these similar climates, and from there on you can start talking to everybody in Singapore about whatever you want.

**Luchezar Boyadjiev, Off Site(s) (2008)
At: Lucky Number Seven, 7th SITE Biennial, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA**

Photos: the artist (left – my Art Squad of "spies"; right – the IAIA "hot spot" for rumors at the beginning of the show); Courtesy of the artist

This is one of the biennials that is also very amazing. The site is from the seventh SITE Santa Fe Biennial. You might not know that SITE Santa Fe is not funded publicly. They don't use either federal or state or city funding. There is only private funding. As a result in 2008, when I was part of this biennial–other artists being Ahmet Öğüt, Wael Shawky, Mandla Reuter, Piero Golia–we were 22 artists. The preview days of the Biennial were about three days. Just like in Venice. Why? Because the first day is for people who gave more than $50,000 sponsorship, the second for those who gave between $20,000 and

$50,000, and so on. So you immediately got aware of the people involved with the Biennial. And not only that, the credit goes to Lance M. Fung, who created the Biennial. He invited artists from the Native American community, and that was incredibly important for my work. The main part of the work consisted of training "spies," my so called Art Squad. I trained these young people to spy on the city on behalf of the Biennial and to spread or collect rumors. Then these rumors were put on especially installed boards in six other art institutions around Santa Fe, such as, in this case, the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA), the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, the museum of Spanish Colonial Art, and so forth.

Luchezar Boyadjiev, Off Site(s) (2008) At: Lucky Number Seven, 7th SITE Biennial, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA Photo: the artist (the IAIA "hot spot" for rumors at the end of the show, panel is back in Sofia) Courtesy of the artist

This is the result I got in the end on these boards. In 2008 the Biennial lasted for six months, and it coincided with the election campaign for the American president. On this board you see a lot of stuff about how people in Santa Fe did or did not appreciate the Biennial in real comments like graffiti comments. But there's also a lot about the political situation in the United States from the point of view of citizens of New Mexico and Santa Fe.

Now this is in Jerusalem, the first Jerusalem Show in the summer of 2008. When you do such a tour around Jerusalem you feel like Jesus a little bit, like it or not. The point is, that sometimes it is possible to connect artworks in different biennials from different cities in unexpected ways.

In this case there was a work in a textile factory by a Palestinian-born artist living in Boston. It looked like this, a ladder going through the roof, and it's called *Jack's Ladder*

(No Angels Here). This particular structure looks exactly like the stairs going through the roof of a kiva, the temple of the Pueblo and Zuni Indians from the Southwest of the United States–something I learned when I worked in Santa Fe. Now why is this important in the context of Jerusalem? Because of the main question: Who has the right to be native? Who has the right to claim the status of being native to a land? It is a crucial question in Palestine. And then of course you cannot make useful suggestions, but you can make a lot of relevant utopian suggestions what to do with the Old City of Jerusalem. I think the only solution is that Jerusalem needs to hover. You have to separate the Old City–the heavenly Jerusalem–from the land. Then you can solve all questions. Of course it's utopian.

My tour in Jerusalem was for the finissage, and I had this site-specific installation on a rooftop of a particular building near the Herod's Gate. It is called *City with a View*. There were several formations with cinema chairs trying to look at Jerusalem in a cinematic way, away from the center. This is a view to Mecca; the work belongs to the Museum of Contemporary Art of Palestine. Obviously in the background there is the Church of Nativity. There were two other formations looking into the direction of Moscow and New York.

City with a View(s) (2008)
At: The Jerusalem Show 0.1, 2008
Photo: the artist
Courtesy of the artist and CAMP (Contemporary Art Museum of Palestine)

Jerusalem needs to hover (2014)
Cycle: "Utopian Solutions for Dystopian Cities" (2007 – in progress)
Photo: the artist
Courtesy of the artist

This is the work from the Odessa Biennale last year. It's an old idea from more than ten years ago. Now it all of a sudden became relevant, but unfortunately nobody has taken it up. It's an idea for societies that cannot solve their own problems–at some time it was Bulgaria, now it's Ukraine–and no government seems to be trusted. In Bulgaria

at the moment there are daily protests, and you cannot trust your government. So then, what you can do is, rent a government. It's a RENT-A-GOV service. In any event a lot of countries need support from international institutions, monitoring from the United Nations, from NATO, from the European Union, from the International Monetary Fund. So instead of having a military junta from your local murderers, you can rent a government from NATO generals and then at least you can have something more reliable. Or you can compose your government according to statistical data and percentages and so on.

These are the last slides. This is the prototype of a work for the first Kiev Biennale in 2012 and the second Ural Biennial in Ekaterinburg at the end of 2012. This is *Gagarin in Space*. After this model I produced inflatable mummies with a lot of disposable heroes and their faces. You can play with these toys if you want.

This is the space of the Kiev Biennale, now it has been canceled and postponed until next year. But the space of the Biennale is so spectacular, it is a former arsenal that can accommodate hundreds of artworks, in this case Phyllida Barlow, and there is Ai Weiwei in the background, somewhere is Louise Bourgeois. Unfortunately it was postponed after they had problems with censorship and so on.

This is the venue of the Ural Biennial in Ekaterinburg with works by Peter Kogler, Zbyněk Baladrán, in the background Nedko Solakov and then Slavs and Tatars. Here my soft sculptures were used as they should be used. They were used as a boxing device, you could express your displeasure with heroes if you wanted to. In the center there is this guy you probably know, it's Dobby, the house elf from Harry Potter. In the context of Russia after the protests, if you show the face of Dobby, everybody knows that you are talking about Putin. There is a certain likeness to Putin. The initial idea was that people should just punch these figures, but that didn't work all the time.

I'll end up with Başak Şenova and the work from the Konjic Biennial. It's called *Endspiel*, and initially it was a homage to Marcel Duchamp. You probably know the Russian poet Joseph Brodsky. Now this work for a bunker, it reminded me of his definition of jail. He said that jail is defined by the extreme shortage of space, compensated for by an overabundance of time. This work is an endless game of chess in a bunker. By the way, I have to thank Başak, because after spending nearly a week in the bunker my claustrophobia is cured. This was an indirect effect.

Başak did not show these photographs, but it is a very sunny and beautiful environment. The outside looks like a rest home.

Thank you so much.

Marieke van Hal

Thank you Luchezar. I think this is the perfect closure of today's session and today's day full of talks.

Luchezar Boyadjiev

Do you know Jorge Amado? He was a Latin American writer of magical realism, and if you are familiar with his novel about the sailors of Bahia, there is a comment there. It's a little macho, but he says: It is impossible to sleep with all the women in the world, but one should try. It's the same with biennials and artists.

Marieke van Hal

Okay, see you all tomorrow. Let's have a drink.

01.03.2014 / 9.30 a.m. — 11 a.m.
Chances and Limitations of Biennials in the Context of Marketing and Policies

Chair: **Sabine B. Vogel**
Panel: **Zhang Qing, Kasper König, Bige Örer, Nicolaus Schafhausen**
Respondents: **Ursula Zeller, Sally Tallant**

Elke aus dem Moore

Good morning, everyone. I'm delighted to see all of you back here in this more-or-less dark room. Thank you for attending this wonderful conference. I'm happy that Marah Braye, who couldn't be here personally, sent this statement. I think it's crucial to have. There will be also another statement–which I cannot read in its whole length because it is very long–from Nikos Papastergiadis, who also comments on the situation in Sydney. But first of all I'd like to read the statement from Marah Braye: "It is with great sadness and sincere apologies to each of you that I'm no longer able to be with you as part of this panel, 'The Dynamics of Biennials and the Role of its Actors' for the *Biennial Conference Prospect and Perspectives* forum. As we prepare for the opening of the nineteenth Biennale of Sydney on March 21, we are dealing with an unanticipated event that prevents me from leaving Sydney at this time. In the midst of dealing with a situation that changes almost hourly, I have time enough to provide a very crude summary of events.

The Australian government's bipartisan policy regarding asylum seekers is a vexed conversation, and it is unfortunate that the Biennale and the artists have been drawn into a complex public debate. The debate surrounds the Biennale of Sydney's founding partner and major sponsor, Transfield, whose business activities now include providing a range of services to governmental detention centers. Many of us at the Biennale hold very strong views on the refugee issue and are disappointed that the conversation is being directed at the Biennale and the artists rather than the policy itself. On the one

hand, rather than exercising their voice within the Biennale, five artists have withdrawn from the exhibition in protest against the Biennale's receiving money from Transfield. On the other hand, many artists have expressed their continued support of artistic director Juliana Engberg, myself, and the staff of the Biennale of Sydney. They are choosing to use the Biennale as a platform to protest against these policies in a public, thoughtful, and creative way. With an audience that has swelled to more than 665,000, we continue to believe that the Biennale can provide a major platform for this conversation. Despite the contradictions of funding, we retain creative control and are not dictated to by any of our sponsors, and we are willing to lend spaces for constructive conversations to ensure.

The support provided by Transfield and the Belgiorno-Nettis founding family is 6.1 percent of our total revenue. It is naive to expect the board of the Biennale to break ties with a family who founded the Biennale forty years ago and who has contributed significant funds to this and other art organizations throughout Australia for the last half century. This is not indicating in any way that the board supports mandatory detention or the creation of the facilities for which Transfield is now responsible. It's a conversation with many contradictions. While we empathize with the artists in this situation, some interesting questions have been raised, for instance, whether a boycott is an effective means of protest, and what it means that these artists remain comfortable with the 60.2 percent federal government funding the Biennale receives when they are objecting to the bipartisan government policy. We anticipate robust dialogue in the coming month. There are many complex questions, and in many ways it's a shame that the timing of Karlsruhe does not follow the close of the nineteenth Biennale of Sydney. The ground is shifting, and the role of biennial actors, curators, artists, organizers, and audience, will continue to change. I send my very best to all my wonderful colleagues assembled in Karlsruhe and hope to have the opportunity to join you all in another occasion."

Thank you, Marah. I hope she can join our conference with the live stream. Thank you for this statement. We also got a letter from Nikos Papastergiadis. I won't read out the whole letter, because it goes into many details, telling the whole story of Transfield and the involvement in the Biennale of Sydney from his point of view. Nikos, as we know, is a well-known theoretician and cultural scientist in Sydney. He's a very critical and important voice. He was the keynote lecturer of the last Biennial Forum in Gwangju. I will quote only the last passage of the letter, and you can read the whole letter on the homepage of the Biennial Foundation.

"In my mind Transfield, and any company that implements a government policy that is in my mind immoral, should be shunned. Tobacco companies are no longer welcome to

art parties, so why should a company that profits from the gross abuse of human rights also enjoy the privilege of being cool?"

Thank you.

Andrea Buddensieg

Now I would like to introduce our next panel, "Chances and Limitations of Biennials in the Context of Marketing and Policies." It's chaired by Sabine B. Vogel. She is a freelance writer, critic, and curator, and published the eminent book *Biennials—Art on a Global Scale* in 2010. Please welcome Sabine.

Sabine B. Vogel

Thank you, Andrea. Thank you everybody being here on this Saturday morning. Thanks for the invitation, it's a fantastic, incredibly interesting symposium, and I'm happy to be part of it.

I won't give you an introduction to the subject: we really want to have a discussion. We'll start with two speeches from Bige Örer–she will talk about gentrification–and Zhang Qing–he will talk about the three subjects we will discuss later on. Afterwards we start immediately with discussing, and we'd like to invite the audience after approximately one hour to join us. Then the respondents will start.

First of all I introduce everybody one after another. Zhang Qing lives and works in Beijing. He's head of the Curatorial and Research Department of the National Art Museum of China. He is guest professor at the Tongji University in Shanghai and at the Yunnan University in Kunming. From 1999 to 2011 he was the director of the Shanghai Biennale and has been focusing on curating and researching the Shanghai Biennale while writing a book entitled *Shanghai Biennial Research*. His speech will be read by his assistant.

Zhang Qing (Assistant)

First of all I'd like to say thank you to ifa and ZKM for inviting us here, and it's really my honor to speak on behalf of Mr. Qing to give a short presentation on the chances and limitations of biennials in the Chinese context of marketing and policies.

In the development process of the Shanghai Biennale, we reflected the features of the chances and limitations of biennials in the context of marketing and policies like a mirror. *Gentrification* is a keyword we raised up in the discussions before, so I'd first of all like to introduce a little bit how we understand gentrification, and how the Shanghai Biennale responded to this trend.

The contemporary art market in China has commenced from the beginning of the 1990s. It gained the limited impetus mainly from the diplomats who were enthusiastic in the area, and a small amount of overseas galleries. In 1996 galleries which engaged in contemporary art had emerged in Beijing and Shanghai, operated by Westerners and Chinese. The year 1996 is exactly the starting year of the Shanghai Biennale, and therefore the Shanghai Biennale and the contemporary art market in China have grown up collaboratively. I specially emphasize that because of the economic benefits the Shanghai Biennale brought to the city. Like with the Olympic Games and the World Expo, art galleries, curators, artists, collectors, journalists, all rush into the city and the surrounding area, which caused hotels and restaurants to raise their prices, and the profits have been increased considerably. It has become a phenomenon that the exhibition of an artist's work at the Biennale increases his price on the art market. So to speak, the rise of the art market and the Shanghai Biennale act as the two wings of an aircraft which has taken off quickly since the year 2000.

In the Shanghai Biennale we used a variety of marketing approaches and marketing strategies. The art marketing of the Shanghai Biennale belongs to the nonprofit academic art style, adherent to academic topics. Therefore the so-called art marketing is tightly connected with events and activities and the entire curated program, like media and communication, education, and promotion. We used approaches like marketing by public praise and word of mouth. Implants marketing. Focus media. Cyber marketing and the cultivation of potential groups like young students.

The result of these strategies is very successful in attracting the public to the exhibition during the exhibition period. When comparing the admission fee of the Shanghai Biennale to other cultural activities in Shanghai, it's easy to see that the relatively low price of the Shanghai Biennale makes it affordable and accessible to all sections of society and therefore has a great effect on the cultural benefits, contemporarily and internationally. The Shanghai Biennale on the one hand met the gentrified need of the public for affordable price and, on the other hand, it interacted with the gentrification trend and its own language.

For example this is the poster of the 2008 Shanghai Biennale. The topic theme is *Trans local motion*. It has shown the reflection on gentrification profoundly in the context of accelerated urbanization and inflated consuming desires.

After introducing the economic background of the Shanghai Biennale, it's also necessary to give an introduction of how the political environment and the cultural ecology transformed during the past twenty years. The transformation of political environment

in China started also in the beginning of the 1990s. Contemporary art in China transformed from the grand historical narrative to the reflection and exploration of social life and individual problems. Since the year 1996, art and politics have a brand-new cognition and practice in China. The fundamental transformation was that artists had perceived that contemporary art was the art production under the capitalist culture, with biennials being a link of the production chain. Therefore the Shanghai Biennale faced the same transformation in political environment and social thoughts as Chinese contemporary art did.

The Shanghai Biennale regards its own development as the representation of the promotion and economic and cultural development of the city. The government of Shanghai acts as the organizing committee of the Biennale, so expenditure of the Shanghai Biennale is mainly from the government's stable allocations nowadays. Moreover, the sponsors from all kinds of foundations and enterprises worldwide, and the free-of-charge coverage as well as support from the media play an important role in the budget.

The rise of attraction of art-capital is also an important and significant phenomenon. The Shanghai Biennale is not only on art news but also on social interviews and the newspapers. Citizens regard investment in contemporary art as a profitable choice besides their investment in real estate or something else. When art is linked to the capital and interest of citizens, it becomes the need of the public in the new context. This is also the reason why Chinese citizens identified contemporary art eagerly with facing the market, the capital, and the benefits. These factors have influenced recognition and the attitude of the government toward contemporary art profoundly as well.

Nowadays, the fashion industry also has a substantial influence on contemporary art and biennials in China. In recent years, the fashion and entertainment industries have developed prosperously, and contemporary art has been brought to the middle of the stage from the underground. Former marginalized artists have stepped into the middle of the stage, together with the politics and administration offices frequently. The success story of contemporary art has been widely reported by fashion prizes, occupied the coverage pages and abundant pages through various approaches of broadcasting and communication. The investigation and show up of the contemporary artist has become the new rule of the game.

The last aspect is on the common ambition of the city and its culture. The Shanghai Biennale is a product of a specific development stage of urbanization and globalization. The city of Shanghai has provided the production and conception of the Shanghai Biennale with the social and cultural context. At the same time, the Biennale acting and

reacting as the important cultural pattern has participated in the cultural construction of the city of Shanghai. For example the theme of the 2000 Shanghai Biennale translates into English as "Shanghai Spirit." The Chinese version, *Hai shang, Shanghai*, is presented in a symmetrical form and has the meaning of "Offshore Shanghai."

The scenes of the Shanghai Biennale are closely connected to the public's daily life and reflect the inner demands of the public as well as the political issues through the cover of art. Projects exhibited in the Biennale are organized from urban life, at the same time hoping to form social principles as well, reflecting on forming new patterns of social relationships. Meanwhile it has influenced the transformation of social and cultural space.

The Shanghai Biennale has constructed a comprehensive and diversified interactive relationship with the city's economy and culture, the institutional as well as spiritual culture on multiple layers and aspects.

Censorship in China consists of three aspects. The first is political sensitivity, including religion. The other two are pornography and violence, which are the same all around the world. It's hard to describe what "political sensitivity" really means. For example in the project *Bank of Sand or Sand of Bank* by the Chinese artist living in France, Huang Yongbing, which was shown at the 2000 Shanghai Biennale, the artist expressed his idea in an implicated way with his own metaphor on the postcolonial but hasn't overstepped the tolerance of the censorship.

The development of the Shanghai Biennale has committed to endorse for the city with the rich historical and cultural source of Shanghai, accumulated from the year 1843. It fully mastered the construction and development of contemporary art in Shanghai. Urban culture has been promoted widely concerning the chances and limitations of biennials in the context of marketing and policies. And the most remarkable achievement is that the spiritual and the cultural value of the Shanghai Spirit was proven and enhanced by the marketing and political ambitions of the Shanghai Biennale.

Thank you.

Sabine B. Vogel

Thank you for this really interesting and dense analyzing of the Shanghai Biennale. We will come back later especially to the question of censorship, which seems to be pretty interesting.

The next speaker will be Bige Örer, from Istanbul. Since 2008, she's the director of the Istanbul Biennial. She started in 2003 at the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts

and worked on the coordination of cultural and artistic projects. Since 2009 she has been the adviser of the Turkish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. 2013 she was appointed as the first vice president of the International Biennial Association. She also teaches at the Istanbul Bilgi University on the subject of managing biennials and international exhibitions.

Bige Örer

First of all I would like to thank Elke and Andrea, the ZKM, and ifa for the wonderful invitation. It's a great pleasure to be with you all. When I received this invitation, I wanted to focus on the gentrification issue, because for the Istanbul Biennial it was one of the most crucial issues, as you have been following all the current events as well.

The Istanbul Biennial positions itself as a real and lived placed, not as a commodity or brand in the race of competing marketing cities. In other words, the Biennial never functions as a tool for selling the city to global capitalism, but as an agency for presenting itself to its citizens and others who are interested in seeing this reality.

As you all know, Istanbul is going through a violent urban transformation and rapid gentrification of mini-neighborhoods in the city center such as Beyoğlu, Galata, Tarlabaşı, and Karaköy, which have been the neighborhoods in which the locations of the previous Istanbul Biennials were located. As citizens and cultural producers of Istanbul, we are also being affected seriously by these issues. In fact the Istanbul Biennial has always been closely related to urban reality. From the beginning when it was created in 1987, it has been in search for sites, as we didn't have any fixed venues in the city. It's not a biennial that's funded by the local or central government, but by a foundation and a nonprofit organization that also organizes other cultural events in the city. I think this is very important to mention.

The conception of the Biennial has always been organically driven by this search of sites and therefore is by definition an urban event. The search for sites starts as one of the first issues to be discussed with the curator of the Biennial; alternative spaces are presented according to their conceptual framework and the main issues of the specific issue. I thought that it would be really interesting to see different ties between various Istanbul Biennials and the way how the Biennial has been trying to open up or give different perspectives to the ongoing discussions.

One of the spaces that hosted the Biennial several times was Taksim Square. Taksim Square is one of the most contested spaces in Istanbul, a symbol of the republican project of modernity, a stage for rituals of celebration of the republican project, a common-

place for protest and manifestations. It represents also the beginning of the process of the gradual wiping away of regular citizens, who reclaimed the urban space in 1977 on Labor Day. Thirty-eight people died on this square.

One of the first projects for Taksim Square was the contribution of Maria Eichhorn to the 4th Istanbul Biennial in 1995. She invited left-wing organizations, subculture groups, and other initiatives in Istanbul to design posters that could then be pasted prominently at Taksim. This billboard project, which included political posters and calls for actions and other announcements, wouldn't have got the permission to be installed there, but it was allowed to because it was a project of the Istanbul Biennial and had the permission of the Istanbul metropolitan municipality. But the artwork was removed by other city authorities, then reinstalled, then removed, then reinstalled after the intervention of the director of the Foundation at that time. So it gave us again another opportunity to reflect on the structure of the artwork and the city bureaucracies.

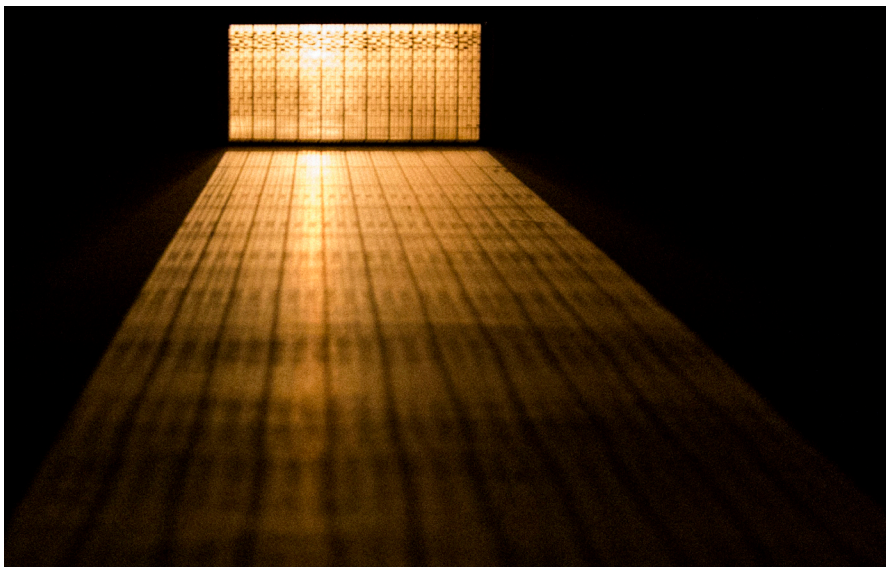
In 1999 Ugo Rondinone installed a work at Taksim Square for the 6th Istanbul Biennial, which was curated by Paolo Colombo. Title of the work was *Where do we go from here*. In the picture you can see a colorful light installation which looked like a rainbow, and which presented a poetical stance to millions of pedestrians and passengers at Taksim.

Ugo Rondinone
Where do we go from here?, 1999
material: Perspex, transcluent foil, flourescent tubes
dimension: 525 x 1150 cm
Photo: Manuel Çıtak
Courtesy of Galerie Hauser & Wirth & Presenhuber, Zurich

Atatürk Cultural Center, which is situated at Taksim Square and which used to be Istanbul's major public site of cultural events, performances, and opera house, became one of the main venues of the 10th Istanbul Biennial, held in 2007 and curated by Hou Hanru. Of course, the discussions on Atatürk Cultural Center and Taksim Square–the Center should be demolished–have a very long history. I should also add that this crisis caused by urban transformations is of course part of a much larger global tendency.

With the end of the Cold War and the prevailing neoliberal capitalism around the world, numerous buildings presenting certain periods in various countries are facing the same fate of erasure and gentrification in order to validate the neoconservative order imposed by global capitalist and populist politics. In the 10th Istanbul Biennial, we envisioned bringing artistic interventions and critical visions to the Atatürk Cultural Center in order to introduce different potentials of the building to the public, to create further dialogues and debates on the future of this edifice.

The exhibition in Atatürk Cultural Center was entitled *Burn it or not*. We believed that since political and social discourses on urban issues are closely linked to specific places, Atatürk Cultural Center has the potential to activate conflicts, to open up a field of debate, bringing new antagonisms and picking up the contradictions for a far-reaching urban and architectural debate on politics.



Rietveld Landscape
Intensive Care proposal, March 29, 2013
Visualization
Photo: Servet Dilber
Courtesy Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV)

The building was closed in 2008 for renovation, and it remained closed even during the period when Istanbul was the European Cultural Capital in 2010. In 2012, during the preparation of the last Istanbul Biennial, as our curator Fulya Erdemci already mentioned yesterday in her excellent presentation, we had an internal search of venues. As she wanted to reopen the discussion on multiple publics and the public domain as a political forum, we had chosen the most contested urban transformation sites in Istanbul such as Gezi Park, Taksim Square, Karaköy and Sulukule neighborhoods. We even asked for permission to use the depots of Atatürk Cultural Center, but the minister of culture and tourism rejected our request as the building was going through “renovations.” Our negotiations continued when Rietveld Architects wanted to do a light installation project on the façade of the building. The light, which was supposed to come from deep inside

the building, would have had a system that is based on the breathing of a patient, hospitalized at intensive care. However, after the Gezi resistance, which became a turning point in the history of the Turkish Republic, we decided to consider our decision to realize a number of projects that would intervene in urban public spaces. We had multiple discussions with the local art scene, the participating artists, and the curatorial team, and then we decided to move away from the urban public spaces and continue our discussion throughout and during the exhibition.

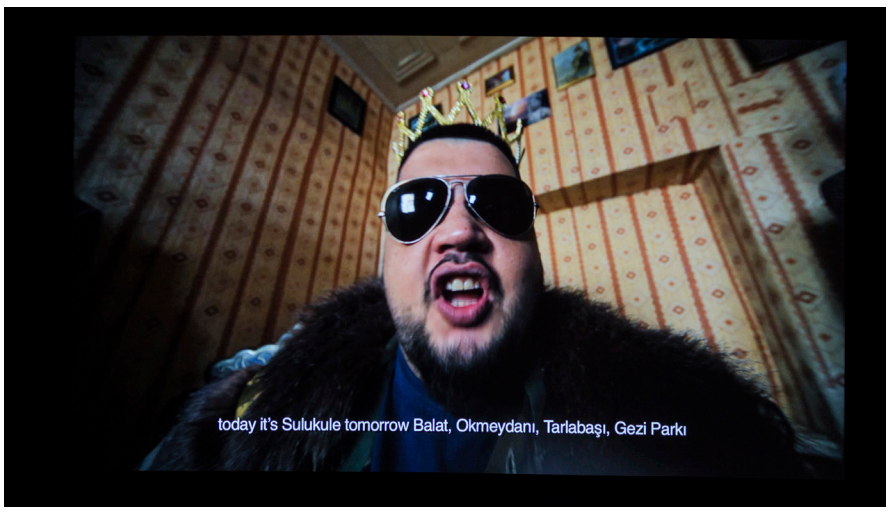
During the Gezi resistance, Atatürk Cultural Center became a symbol and acted itself as an artwork. Its façade was covered with flags of left-wing organizations, subculture groups, and other initiatives. For two weeks it became really public again, as hundreds of protesters entered the building and saw with their own eyes that renovation was not proceeding at all. The building itself became a space of resistance and asked for its own future to become public.

Wong Hoy Cheong
Aman Sulukule Canim Sulukule (Oh Sulukule, Darling Sulukule), 2007 (installation view)
Video, 14 min.
Dimension Variable
Photo: Serkan Taycan
Courtesy Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV)

Sulukule is another place that was subject to discussions about gentrification. It has also a history with previous Biennials. Sulukule, as you may know, was the first target of large-scale urban transformation in Istanbul and one of the oldest Roma settlements in the world. In 2007 Wong Hoy Cheong worked with children and youths in Sulukule, exploring visual and performative literacy as possible pathways to understanding issues relevant to the children and the neighborhood youth, the community and the environment. Wong Hoy Cheong made an experimental documentary consisting of video animation, scripted and filmed by both the children and himself. Unfortunately, the demolitions in Sulukule began in 2007. However, the Sulukule Platform became renown with their innovative urban structure practice. They discussed the processes of transformation, opened up discussion on the platform's own

horizontal and open structure, and explored transformative activities that are not restricted through demolition of the residents' homes, and acted with the community. The platform posed the question: What renders urban struggle successful? What makes it a failure? In the previous Istanbul Biennial, Sulukule Platform presented the Sulukule process and the ongoing struggle via a time line to trigger a debate on what was lost in the demolition and what has emerged anew.

The platform was inspiring also for Tahribad-ı İsyan, the hip-hop band created by three youngsters in Sulukule, with whom Halil Altindere worked for *Wonderland*, which was one of the highlights of the previous Istanbul Biennial. Altindere's video is a document of anger and resistance, but also of hope and energy regarding Istanbul's adventure of concretion, gentrification, and sanitizing. In the video we see the potential of the resistance.



Halil Altindere
Wonderland, 2013
Video, 8:25 min.
Photo: Servet Dilber
Courtesy Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV)

As Fulya mentioned yesterday, the *Networks of Dispossession*, which was created during the Gezi resistance by artists, activists, lawyers, and journalists, is ongoing research. I think this is really important, because it shows all the links that were in fact open to the public—but we were not aware of all those connections of these companies that are involved in the urban transformation process.

Another important example regarding gentrification is Antrepo, the warehouse buildings which are part of the Istanbul harbor. Multiple Antrepo buildings have become sites for the Biennial since 1995, and in a city like Istanbul we are challenged to find an independent art space for temporary art exhibitions. The Antrepo buildings had the potential to function as something like a Kunsthalle in Istanbul. However, they are threatened by one of the major urban transformations which would also affect the Karaköy neighborhood. All the Antrepo buildings will be demolished soon, except

Istanbul Modern, which was opened after the 8th Istanbul Biennial in 2005, and the Istanbul Contemporary Art Museum, which was moved by the will of the government to Antrepo No. 5 after the 11th Istanbul Biennial in 2011 and is expected to open in 2015. In the last Istanbul Biennial, Ayşe Erkmen developed a new work for the site, *Bang bang bang*, which referred to the physical transformation in the area. In this work a crane with a giant ball was installed in front of the Antrepo building. The ball swung to the building like a pendulum, it also acted as a bomb which can explode anytime.

All the artworks which were presented throughout the Istanbul Biennial were tackling directly the urgency of these issues and opening up new perspectives on the ongoing discussions about the future of the city. As a conclusion I would like to ask you—all the panelists and the audience: Is a biennial only an exhibition? Or is it a project of mobilization of the city that reexamines its own urban reality and its position in a global international context, therefore an examination of the urban situation? Is a biennial a place where the possibilities of participation through spaces are sacred for the activated public? In the turbulent political context, is the biennial simply a temple for aesthetic contemplation, or far more compellingly a convocation where the driving urgencies of the collective moment can be discussed and mediated?

I would like to thank you very much for your patience and also my dear colleague Kevser, who helped me with this presentation. Thank you.

Sabine B. Vogel

Thank you, Bige. I add another question: Are biennials driving forces in changing urban space?

Bige Örer

Of course. We also become actors in changing the urban space, but we're also strong enough to open up the debate of how it will change the urban space.

Sabine B. Vogel

Are biennials, on the other hand, to blame for gentrification?

Bige Örer

This is an ongoing discussion, not only about biennials but also about art institutions like museums and galleries. We are part of the system, but I think we shouldn't generalize what we are expecting from art institutions. Every cultural institution and every cultural

producer needs to have the responsibility to think over these issues. It's not always easy to give answers, but it's important to continue these debates.

Sabine B. Vogel

Thank you. Now I'd like to invite Kasper König and Nicolaus Schafhausen to this discussion.

Kasper König organized numerous exhibitions: *Andy Warhol* (1968). *Westkunst* (1981), a very famous exhibition in Germany in the Cologne Exhibition Hall. He's a coinitiator of the project Skulptur Projekte Münster, which started in 1977. From 1988 to 1999 he was professor at the Städelschule in Frankfurt and is the founding director of Portikus, an exhibition space in Frankfurt. From 2000 to 2012 he was director of the Museum Ludwig in Cologne. Kasper König curates the Manifesta 10 in St. Petersburg, which opens in June 2014.

Nicolaus Schafhausen is the director of Kunsthalle Wien since 2012. Before that he was director of the Kunstverein Frankfurt. He founded the European Kunsthalle, curated the German Pavilion at the 52nd and 53rd Venice Biennales in 2007 and 2009, and he ran the Witte de With Center in Rotterdam from 2006 to 2012. In 2012 he was invited to curate the Bucharest Biennale and resigned at the end of January.

Welcome. Also to you this question: Are biennials a driving force of gentrification?

Nicolaus Schafhausen

This is a very complex topic. Biennials as forces for gentrification are not per se a bad thing. Within the German context, documenta is a very interesting example. Without documenta, Kassel, a rather small town in the middle of the country would hardly even exist on the map of the German audience who is interested in contemporary art. With its initiation in the 1950s, of course documenta was from the very beginning a driving force for politics, for marketing, and for economy.

Kasper König

I feel rather uncomfortable when I hear about my working biography, because this very much has to do with the context in which I grew up. So in a sense with the topics we are talking about I feel like a dinosaur. All the things I did were very contextual, they happened because of particular necessities. They were very much dealing with the circumstances, first of all of being born at the very end of the Second World War, growing up fortunately with many older brothers and sisters and becoming very much aware

of what historians and sociologists in Germany said about ten or fifteen years ago: that the Nazi time was basically over in 1968. That was the time when children asked and questioned what had happened, dealing with a trauma head-on, but at the same time insisting that life goes on, looking forward–being interested in jazz, being interested in a particular kind of art which at the time came from America and was looked upon as rather vulgar, commercial, and not very distinguished. There was a different reading from an European point of view. Therefore the Skulptur Projekte Münster with Klaus Bußmann, who happened to be a curator and a great architectural historian with sympathy for–even though he is a conservative man, he is a real connoisseur–Willy Brandt and opening the East. So the public sculpture issue became a didactic necessity to inform people about the history of modern sculpture.

Sabine B. Vogel
Could you please come back to gentrification?

Kasper König
Yes. What I mean is, talking about these phenomena like gentrification is very simplistic, because it becomes a fashionable, pseudo-leftist vocabulary. Everybody talks about gentrification, not even understanding where the word comes from, what it means. Whenever there is social change, there is no aesthetic change without economic change. There is no historical awareness of looking at things differently with all these factors coming together.

There is one remark I must make about the marketing of the Shanghai target group students. I had the fortunate experience to be invited by Julian Heynen, who was one of the various cocurators, to come to Shanghai to a conference as part of the Shanghai Biennale. Since I knew a couple of students from Canada as well as from Frankfurt–mostly architectural students I liked a lot, not only because they were good cooks but also good party people. So I was looking forward to meeting them again. I told them that I would be in Shanghai on a given day, giving a lecture in reference to Skulptur Projekte Münster. That happened to be a Monday, the museum was closed. The conference room was within the museum, I was allowed to invite guests, but they wouldn't let them in, because it was Monday and the museum was closed. So I felt at that time that the Shanghai Biennale was very much run by functionaries, very political, a poker-faced group of people you had to greet, and they were sitting in front of the conference room,

you felt like talking to a wall. All the artists that were invited–like Ulrike Ottinger for example, who made a film on the German Jewish immigrants in Shanghai who had fled Nazi Germany, or Suchan Kinoshita–they couldn't even meet their Chinese colleagues.

What I find more interesting when talking about globalization is the different social-historical attitude on how to communicate. The most significant thing in reference to Istanbul was a silent man, a guy standing there for eight hours–obviously an actor–understanding the media, being very intelligent, not being provoked, and he became a global symbol. At the same time there was Banksy in New York dealing with street art on an economic level. So there's great intelligence in the streets, informed by art but much more direct in communication. Ai Weiwei is a fluke, he's an interesting political–

Sabine B. Vogel

These are now too many things at the same time–

Kasper König

Yes. I just say a few more things and then stop talking. I'm talking about the way symbols move in the media. Some of these biennials do not work effectively on that level.

Sabine B. Vogel

Kasper, please. . . . So as far as I understand, you were asking Zhang Qing about the question of censorship. I will rephrase the question, so his assistant can translate: Is censorship an attack on progress or maybe a trigger for creativity? And could you also please comment on the story Kasper König just told?

Nicolaus Schafhausen

May I please add something to this question? Zhan Qing, it is very interesting that you included censorship as one of your arguments. I assume you have a completely different understanding of how to define censorship than Europeans. Could you clarify what censorship means to you? In your work, do you have to circle around certain issues such as pornography or religion?

Zhang Qing (translated by assistant)

Censorship in China is not as serious as you imagine. It's not toward all artists. Our cultural background has its own bans and taboos. It's just concerning the cultural, ethical, and historical issues.

Nicolaus Schafhausen

This, I think is very important, because we are talking about different things. Censorship in Europe means something else and is considered a rather authoritarian act to confine creativity and freedom of thought.

Zhang Qing (translated by assistant)

I think it differentiates in every country, so it must be different between European countries and China.

Nicolaus Schafhausen

On this note, I have to add that I was shocked when I worked on a project in Shanghai during the Expo in 2010. I was invited to curate the Dutch pavilion. The selected artworks included a piece by a Dutch filmmaker in which the Star of David was censored. Otherwise we wouldn't have been allowed to show the film. Furthermore, there was a poster by Ken Lum with pornographic references which was censored as well. As curators, we adapted to the situation and accepted the amendments. Whereas in Europe, I never would have accepted this kind of intervention. In such situations I couldn't call it censorship anymore.

Sabine B. Vogel

Biennials are a tool for city marketing. Kasper König, how would you see this together with the question of censorship and gentrification?

Kasper König

I promised not to make public relations for what I'm involved in right now. However, it's an important question in relationship to Russia. The next Manifesta will be due to the 250th birthday of the Hermitage–which is an extraordinary place with fantastic collections, a very complex historical place. So there's a law now, a law which forbids propaganda for homosexuality in order to protect young people. This is a completely idiotic law. However it's a law, and everybody who has the power and the money to bring people together, whatever corruption may be involved, can pass a law. So we're talking about a situation, which is not a legal society. I have a contract which clearly says that I have certain autonomy, but the exhibition must be within the limits of the Russian law. This is something you can deal with, and the most dangerous thing is not to censor oneself. You have to deal with it in a very playful way, knowing that the context is un-

acceptable. However, when you visit the Hermitage, all the great works you see there have to a great extent dealt with the fact of undermining or going beyond censorship, either because of religion, because of nation, because of values which were the current, dominant values. So the fact that we have grown up without experiencing censorship is also a loss. I'm very happy to be now confronted with a complicated situation like this. You are dealing with amnesia, you are dealing with certain momentums where you have to be very careful, because you are a guest. At the same times you do understand certain anxieties, and then you try to liberate them. But not as a missionary. You have to be much more sensitive.

Quite often the fear of homosexuality is when you criminalize it–this happened to my mother, she was very afraid that one of her nephews would become gay. And we said: Why? This boy is wonderful. Then it became clear: Her younger brother was as a soldier put into company, where his chances to survive were almost zero because he was gay. This is what is happening: It is an unacceptable situation to divert between real problems and saying something like, *We are defending the Russian soul and culture*. This would be completely fascist and reactionary–but it's reality. St. Petersburg is a very gay city, it's a very aristocratic, very elegant, very beautiful city, and I would say, the Hermitage with its wonderful hybrid qualities is unthinkable without that kind of gay atmosphere, intellectually, spiritually. Even Putin says: Yes, we know, Tchaikovsky was gay, but that's not why we like him. So there's even an irony, which is difficult to understand. But I tell you, being there, it gets onto my nerves when I see the origin of Manifesta as an organization which becomes more or less a corporate Dutch mission that wants to do good, having certain principles of art and how art is going to make the world better, which are unacceptable. It's almost like Scientology. I'm much more now a friend of St. Petersburg than of this idealistic, silly biennial notion from a Western point of view, from an African point of view, from an Oriental point of view, from an Arab point of view–these biennials are completely different. Globalization is a complex thing, and I think we in the West, living in full consumerism have a simplistic notion of globalism.

I was very touched yesterday by the talk of the colleague from Brazil. Then the artist asked: Why do you call it art? It's a beautiful social event, wonderful, but why do they call it art? That again is some Western value in order to get money from the politicians. I'm not a friend of this proliferation of biennials, because I think quite often they are done from one to the next, and there's a certain kind of indifference. It's almost like these stupid garden shows in Germany, from one town to the other. One isn't even over, and they're looking for the next. Then they go there, and what do they do? They don't make

things better, but more boring. So I'm not necessarily that friendly about the phenomenon of biennials. But it's very different from different cultural points of views. For example the Berlin Biennale, I think, is as necessary as a hole in the head. Which sense does it make when members of the occupy movement are invited with public money to the KW Institute for Contemporary Art and behave like misanthropes disliking absolutely everything about the art world? Or when artists participating in an interesting context as in Berlin Dahlem in the Museum of World Cultures and avoiding any reference to the future Humboldt Forum in the rebuilt Berlin Schloss?

Nicolaus Schafhausen

I agree, that within our living environment of Central Europe we don't need any more biennials. I would very much prefer for existing institutions to receive better funding and be included in the marketing of cities and communities. My question is: Currently, you are maybe the most iconic figure of Manifesta. Why did you accept the invitation? I also understand what you meant when talking about the preaching character of the Manifesta organization.

Kasper König

This is not a question of accepting. I was asked whether I would be interested in making a proposal. Three people have been asked, and it was a big secret who the two others were. Eventually I found out, because there's a folder which says *top-secret* in Dutch–think about that! I immediately said: Yes, give me a visa, I go there right away because we all know St. Petersburg from literature, literature, literature. And knowing about history–everybody of my generation was more or less interested in Marx and the October Revolution, then the city moved to Moscow; when Lenin died, Petrograd became Leningrad. It's a forgotten, very beautiful, hybrid city. It's what probably Brasília will be in 150 years.

I was very interested and didn't even behave professionally. They asked me for a proposal, and I said that I would be happy to do it. I've done two or three things like this, where you get an inside track into the institutions for a certain time, you get paid for it. I traveled there twice for two weeks and got along very well with the director of the Hermitage, Mikhail Borisovich Piotrovski. He's an Orientalist and a very diplomatic man. I only wrote a paper with a young colleague, Emily Joyce Evans, an American art historian who worked at the Museum Ludwig on Russian constructivism and photography from Soviet interpropaganda, and she is a very disciplined art historian person–which I'm not–and she's another generation, so working with her was good. We just wrote a paper,

not to win but about what I thought would be interesting. It's a very conventional proposal, and it's going to be a rather conventional thing which is *Happy Birthday Hermitage*.

Afterwards I found out, that the two other people that were asked also had a museum background and were more or less my age, which means they are senior–you know I'm a pensioner. I had the time and I did it, and I won the thing. Then they asked me questions based on the papers of the others. Twelve questions, of which at least nine were in my paper. So I said I couldn't answer them. Obviously the others didn't really raise many questions. Then ultimately I said: I'm only interested in making a good damn great show. That's all. So there's no sayery behind it, however it's very complexly avoiding to make it look Russian, avoiding cliché. The show is going to be much more gay than it usually would be. Because it seems to be so existential to deal with these questions from an aesthetic point of view, transformation and so on. So it's an interesting contextual opportunity.

Sabine B. Vogel

So you are doing a very subversive Manifesta.

Nicolaus, you also curated Mediacity Seoul in 2010. How important are global sensitivities curating a biennial–religion, politics, sponsorship, all these issues, how important are they when you come up with an artist list, with a subject, with a concept?

Nicolaus Schafhausen

I was not the only curator of Mediacity Seoul 2010–we were a team of three. Since I had already been teaching at Seoul National University, I was quite familiar with the context. Mediacity is an international festival and definitely not focusing on the representation of the local art scene. 2010 was probably also around the time when the term *nomadic curator* got washed out everywhere. As a team, this made us a little bit uncomfortable. Of course, when accepting the invitation to curate a big festival to attract around 100,000 people, you adapt with the organizers and the purpose of the undertaking-marketing reasons for example. But mainly, these events serve the goal of reaching out not only to us but to a diverse audience. The way I see it, the composition of a curatorial team of different intellectual, social, and religious backgrounds requires to translate various thoughts to national audiences. I really believe that this tells something about the other. This concept of belonging raises questions such as Where are you? Where are we? What are we aiming for? etc.

Sabine B. Vogel

So there are global sensitivities and also local sensitivities; sometimes it becomes a real conflict. You got into conflict in Bucharest. Do you really think that resigning as a curator is a useful tool for this kind of conflict situation?

Nicolaus Schafhausen

I resigned from a position for the very first time in my life. I didn't want to be part anymore of what I felt was a morally unjustifiable work environment. I have been a director of institutions for about twenty years. From very small ones at the beginning to institutions that have a more popular approach, today. They all entailed certain conditions and required compromises. But I reached a point where I could not compromise anymore. I don't mean to blame the organizers. But if you can't identify with the whole organization anymore, you need to resign. Also, as the curator I was working with circa 50 artists whom I had to take care of. Half of them could not work in that situation either. With thinking this conflict of interest, consequently, I had to resign for the better.

Kasper König

I'd like to make a short statement for the relevance to exhibit something. *Ausstellen* means to make something public. It's a very contentious act which is physical, emotional, intellectual, and contextual. There are many so-called exhibitions and many curators. I used to prefer to term *Ausstellungsmacher*, which was kind of a hip term thirty years ago. Rainer Werner Fassbinder called himself *Filmemacher*. He was a big hero. He got money for one film and financed with it one and a half, then he got money for another film, and suddenly the third film was produced in between. It was very witty, and when he made theater, he also used the money for making films. So he was doing what he wanted to do, but it was very contextual.

The medium of exhibiting can be relevant–but that's an exception. You can publish something, you can make a film, publish something on the Internet, make a blog or whatever, but there has to be some form, and the content must be related to that.

There's an interesting observation of an Italian art historian who said, the most important exhibition of the twentieth century was just around the corner of Karlsruhe–actually inter-related to Karlsruhe–in Stuttgart. There was a Sonderbund exhibition that dealt with the housing shortage after the First World War. All the architects who realized Weissenhofsiedlung were so extraordinary, but now it's only an event in art history and forgotten in social history, because it was at the end of the 1920s, the end

of the Weimar Republic, then the Nazi time came, and it's wiped out. This is what an exhibition potentially can be. Documenta is just because it was on the border to East Germany during the Cold War. These contextual things have happened to many of the biennials in South Africa, in Gwangju, in many other places. They were independent because it was not Seoul but Gwangju. It were the Blacks making an exhibition in South Africa, and when they invited Marlene Dumas, who happened to be there because she's from South Africa, she walked into the office, and they said, "What do you want here?" She replied, "I'm an invited artist." This was a very important experience for her, she said it was even existential. She was very hard with the boycott, and the boycott was successful in South Africa. Now the question is whether it's meaningful to make a boycott in Russia? Yes or no? And every artist has to decide on his or her own. There are lots of people who seem to know very well what's good and what's not. And there's an interesting Russian proverb: A moralist is somebody who scratches where somebody else is itching.

Sabine B. Vogel

Sorry, but time is running out. We immediately have to turn over to respondents.

Ursula Zeller, she's director and CEO of the Zeppelin Museum in Friedrichshafen, Germany. From 1995 to 2007 she served as head of the Visual Arts Department of ifa in Stuttgart and Berlin. For more than 25 years she has curated exhibitions, published in the field of contemporary art, and contributed to art journals.

Sally Tallant is director of the Liverpool Biennial. From 2001 to 2011 she was head of programs at the Serpentine Gallery. She has curated exhibitions, performances, sound events, film programs, and developed commissioning programs for artists and long-term projects.

So now it's the respondents' time.

Ursula Zeller

Thank you. We don't have much time, so I will try to be quite short. I think this was a quite lively discussion we had here, so we don't have to add too many things. I'm working in the fields of biennials since at least the year 2000, when I organized this first conference with René Block in Kassel. I always observed and was keen on having something like what's established now, a Biennial Association, because I think there are questions which have to be addressed among all biennials. As we heard when Elke was delivering Marah's letter and then also in the action or reaction of Nikos, the

ethical point of view has to be discussed among biennials. The issue that censorship is something different in different countries also has to be discussed among biennials in an association like that.

I agree with what Kasper König mentioned regarding Manifesta, because this is our Western point of view. We still think that we have the better model, and that we bring something somewhere. But no. We rather go somewhere and will get something. I think this is a completely different point of view, and I'm really glad to see after fourteen years now something like a Biennial Association, because I think these are the questions which have to be discussed, and all the people involved in biennials have to have a standpoint in that.

Sally Tallant

I wanted to try to find a way to reflect a little bit on the issues that have been raised. For me being an artistic director and executive director of a biennial, these are lived everyday contradictions. I'm looking at Bige, because I think you are doing an amazing job managing the contradictions in Istanbul. And I was, while watching the presentation, impressed by the way the Istanbul Biennial has managed to operate in a city, with a city but maintained some autonomy in terms of the spaces and places for politics within your program. You've done that in extremely precarious situations probably better than a lot of people would have managed to.

About the interdependence we have with the cities in which we operate: If biennials are defined by the cities, like Gerardo [Mosquera] was saying yesterday, how do we then play a role in redefining and reimagining the urban contexts in which we operate? I think this touches on a more complicated question, which is about the value of art and artists, and how we understand it socially and politically. I don't think we don't need any more biennials, but it's what you do with the platform you have that's interesting. How do we construct spaces that are appropriate for contemporary culture production that can express value alongside and with, but also apart from the market? I think biennials do that in a very interesting way.

Obviously the dangers, the hazards of regeneration and gentrification offer enormous challenges to artists and curators. But I think, as Bige said, it's possible to ask questions of those processes that would not be asked if we were not there. Maybe it's worth stepping outside of the museum and gallery in order to do that. What better mechanism than thinking about the role that we play in redefining our cities? Actually the challenges of working in China, as expressed very eloquently, are untranslatable for someone like

me, but I think what's interesting about having conversations as a group is not being generic about the comments that we make.

I heard a word the other day I wanted to use because it's an awful word that shouldn't go into mainstream use. Somebody I was talking to, said: Oh yeah, we are very interested in *artvertising*. I think this is relevant with this debate, because I have it alongside with another word I've heard before: *agitainment*. I think most people in this room are really working hard to define new ways of not falling into the traps of those practices. But we need to be bold about living out those contradictions and not be afraid to face the realities of compromises we might need to make or the decisions we need to make.

What else? City as a teacher. I think that's interesting. Denise Scott Brown wrote a very beautiful book: *Learning from Las Vegas*. Thinking about the city in which you operate as your teacher is maybe a really interesting way to go. Actually I think this was very well articulated yesterday when we were looking at Mercosul Biennial and the idea of a curriculum that operates in the city through its citizens.

Finally, what do curators mean in the context of biennials is something we don't really talk about. We talk about marketing, talk about the actors. What are the different contradictions–I think Marieke, you explained this very clearly yesterday–between the organizers of biennials who work so hard to build fragile ecologies in the cities they operate in, and what happens when curators come and trample on their dreams or challenge those realities and push difficult questions to the foreground. How do we navigate local operations in a global context? How do we create models of situated curatorial discourse and practice that can work within a network culture? What does it mean to invite a curator such as you, Nicolaus, into a biennial? What do you represent and how do you carry that cultural capital?

Nicolaus Schafhausen

Well yes, we always convey certain ideologies which can be used as political tools. All exhibitions do. Kasper, you mentioned the 1927 exhibition–shortly after, in 1935, the show *Das Wunder des Lebens* opened in Berlin, visualizing the ideology of the Nazi regime from purity to fraternity. It was the most popular exhibition before the Second World War. And it was very political, too.

Kasper König

A show for instance like *The Family of Man* at the Museum of Modern Art in 1951 by Edward Steichen, who is from Luxembourg, determined a kind of humanistic, very

simplistic look on photography all over the 1950s and 1960s–Henri Cartier-Bresson was an exception–it was clear propaganda, it was Cold War.

While you were talking, Sally, a picture came to my mind: David Hammons selling snowballs in Harlem. So yes, it dealt with gentrification. The people living in Harlem didn't own the houses, they paid too much rent, they were exploited. Hammons explains something in a very poetic way, not resigning but clearly focusing. Carl Valentin, Marcel Duchamp, they have told us–even Jean Tinguely did with this carnival fountain that uses stuff from the theater which was torn down because the Swiss wanted to have new technology for theaters after the war. There are certain contextual works which are iconic, and the twentieth century is full of them. This is the situation I'm confronted with: People in St. Petersburg know everything from the Internet, but they have not experienced the disappointment of seeing, let's say, Marcel Duchamp without being fulfilled on the aesthetic level the same way when looking at Rubens. I like Rubens, too, but I love Duchamp, and the one does not exclude the other. But it's a completely different experience you have. This is what an exhibition possibly can make in few exceptions.

Sally Tallant

What became clear for me is that the idea of understanding is at stake. It is at stake for everybody in relation to building a platform. And if Sarat Maharaj had been here–which is sad that he is not–I love when he talks about curators and cultural producers. He describes us as *ideolectuals* in that we walk into situations and gather knowledge. I think the idea of learning and understanding is also at stake.

Sabine B. Vogel

Thank you all. Now please, questions from the audience.

Audience Member

I have a question for Bige concerning the last Istanbul Biennial. One of the main sponsors, Koç Holding, is involved in the process of gentrification, I think also in the Sulukule district. Was there an official statement from the direction of the Biennial toward this problem? Have there been any artistic responses from the artists, not only from Halil Altındere? Was there any official response of the Koç Corporation toward this conflict?

Bige Örer

To start with, when we worked with *Networks of Dispossession*, we found that Koç was not involved in the urban transformation process, but Koç was criticized because it produces vehicles for military use, which is also problematic. There was this letter of the Koç family during the coup d'état in the 1980s which showed their support to the military. The funding issue in Turkey–not only the funding of the Istanbul Biennial but the funding of all the culture and arts institutions in Turkey–is very problematic. In Turkey we don't have public funding at all–or only very little. For funding the Istanbul Biennial for example, we have to start from scratch for each and every edition. About 5 percent is public funding, the rest we have to fund-raise. I started working in 2003 for the Istanbul Biennial, and it was very difficult to find sponsors. The team, the artists, and all the participants were complaining about the lack of resources to produce works and to develop the projects. Then there was this tobacco company. At that time there were no laws that forbid the tobacco industry to sponsor cultural events like today. But this is an issue we're asking ourselves about. How can we define the ethics of funding? If there's any problem with public funding, biennials start working with sponsors. Maybe it can become a principal to try to understand not only their main interests but also what they are doing. Usually these companies are working in different fields, and sometimes you don't know. I think we really need to think about alternative sources of funding as well.

At the Istanbul Biennial we made this comparative analysis of the financing structures of eight international biennials, including Liverpool, Berlin, Sydney, São Paulo, Istanbul, etc. The main objective of this research was to open up this debate about the different structures of funding, and how these institutions can continue their activities. We saw different models, and we still continue to dig on these issues, also after the current incident at the Biennale of Sydney. I think during the political era of our days, these issues become more and more urgent and crucial.

Christoph Schäfer

I understand that Kasper König in St. Petersburg is thinking about different issues at the moment. But to say that gentrification is a fashion thing and not precise etc. is a bit ridiculing the work of many biennials that try to tackle the issue and it's also underestimating the factor image producers have within an economy that is based on images. I don't want to talk in moral terms. I think there's a lot of moral nonsense written concerning gentrification, but it also gives power to producers of images, and we do look at

the powerful cultural activists around for the last five years, who are able to produce powerful images and to make politics. It changed the role of art, it's not the dignified artists of the 1970s who could make a big statement, but it's a multiheaded person that maybe turns into an artist for a short time when he's very powerful, then he produces powerful images, then he might disappear to become a doctor, a bartender, or unemployed.

Kasper König

I agree, and I think Sally mentioned the term *infotainment*. This is a door opener. In our situation the only thing which is public is what the investors have lost interest in, or what they returned to the taxpayer because they couldn't make profit out of it.

And it's true that our culture becomes more and more visual, in other words it becomes more and more stupid. Because it generalizes, there is no differentiation. In particular those countries that have not been as hard-core capitalist as we are can't protect themselves. There is television twenty-four hours a day, and it's all advertisement. You can't even distinguish between the advertisement and the film, because the advertiser is producing the film and makes sure that his product is present all the time, so you want it subconsciously, to put it in simplistic terms.

So it's true that the art world–I'm Mr. Art World, I can't help it, I'm unhappy about it, too–is a vehicle to make the world more stupid globally, and to make it more and more difficult to work with contradictions. It's like spoiled children: I want this, I want that. They get everything and get even more frustrated. So the idea of nonconsuming would be the greatest idea; an aristocratic principle.

I agree with you, there's a responsibility. That's why it's not good when there's too much stupid art, uncritically being presented, like: Ah, he was at documenta, he was at Venice, he was at art fair this-and-that. We are living in a very noncritical world. When you read a press release, you must be ashamed to be part of this. This is why I said, I don't feel comfortable when I hear my biography. This is why I never believed in courses for curators. I mean, you get all these e-mails from people who write their PhDs, they have all kinds of questions. I only say: What do you want from me? Leave me alone, go to the libraries, go to the museums.

Sabine B. Vogel

One last question from Ute Meta Bauer.

Ute Meta Bauer

Well, you'd be surprised how people get upset when they are forgotten somewhere. So I think it's not that bad if there are PhD students asking questions.

It's a pity that there's no artist on the panel today, because I'm very curious about the opening statement from the Biennale of Sydney that the artists should have responded through their artistic tools. Actually they did not boycott the Biennale, they were just communicating their withdrawal, that they don't want to participate in it, which is their right. But I'm wondering: Would you demand from the artists to remain in their discipline and respond in an artistic way, or from the curator to respond with a curatorial statement? Nicolaus, you withdrew. I'm curious about the limits. What do you think about artists using their right, just like citizens, to say enough is enough?

Nicolaus Schafhausen

In the case of the Sydney Biennial, I suppose the artists were invited by the curator which means they have accepted an invitation in the first place. Also the sponsor is not new. I have been to Sydney and know that this issue had been addressed many times. Of course it is a problem. Only, I am wondering whether I misunderstand the institutional critique in this case. It seems that possibilities to actually react to or address complications within the infrastructure project were not taken into consideration. In this case, I am siding with the curators and organizers.

Kasper König

I have a little anecdote which I think is good in this context. Sally, you mentioned *Learning from Las Vegas*. It is a great book by Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, maybe the most interesting postmodernist theory, even though it's particularly architectural, but it goes beyond. We all know that there was an attempt of the global Guggenheim phenomenon to do something in Las Vegas, which is a twenty-four-hour-seven-days-a-week gambling city, which is extremely interesting, because it's like the good conscience of capitalism: working hard, making money, and then throwing it away within an hour.

Anyway, the Hermitage was one of the partners. Rem Koolhaas constructed a big building in Las Vegas–but Piotrovsky said it was a huge flop. He laughs about it. It was a complete disaster. But nobody at the Guggenheim in New York or in Bilbao or in Venice or anywhere–they are now active in China–would ever mention this and laugh about it, because a corporation never can make a mistake.

When we talk about Skulpur Projekte Münster, it gets some dimension. In 1977 there was not one female artist invited, and we didn't even notice what was going on. Sculpture was so male-dominated, we didn't even ask. Neither did the participating artists. Thank God things changed completely. However, we have to be open and not repeat our mistakes. We should make new ones.

Sabine B. Vogel
This is a perfect last word. Thank you all, it was a very interesting discussion.

01.03.2014 / 11.30 a.m.—1 p.m.
Alternatives and Open Spaces

Chair: **Rafal Niemojewski**
Panel: **Leah Gordon, Pan Gongkai, Royce Smith**

Elke aus dem Moore

Welcome back, everyone, to our last panel. This last panel on open spaces and alternatives–what does this mean, or what could this mean? This panel will fluidly go over into the final discussion. This is what we arranged with Rafal Niemojewski. The panelists are Pan Gongkai, Leah Gordon, and Royce Smith. Rafal will introduce you to the speakers. I'd like to introduce the chair, and I'm delighted that Rafal took over this task also to moderate the final discussion.

Rafal Niemojewski is a researcher and cultural producer based in London. He graduated in art history and curatorial studies at the Sorbonne, Paris, and gained his PhD at the Royal College of Art, London, for his thesis on the proliferation of the contemporary biennial. More recently, his research interests have expanded to include the exhibition history of the twentieth century and the role of speech in the realm of artistic and curatorial practice. Outside academia, Niemojewski has led projects for the Serpentine Gallery, Bergen Kunsthall, Manifesta, and documenta 13, and worked as a curator at the Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre. In 2013 he founded Artfore, a research and commissioning agency that explores new ways to produce and experience contemporary art.

Before we open up this panel, I'd like to make an announcement. Due to some requests of the audience and the participants about the presentation of the Lubumbashi Biennale by Patrick Mudekereza, which was quite short, Patrick offered to send his presentation to everyone who is interested.

Rafal Niemojewski

Thank you Elke, thank you Andrea, thank you ZKM team for doing such a fantastic job programming and producing this conference. Also a big thank-you to all the participants and colleagues for sharing their stories and insights. It's been a very exciting two days. And thank you to the public for still being with us today.

Our panel is called "Alternatives and Open Spaces." I'd like to begin by just slightly reframing the subject. The distinguished speakers we have onstage will present projects and ideas that are maybe somehow less established than those presented by some of the previous panelists. However, I think it would be very unfortunate if we single them out as alternative, "exotic," or "other" biennials. In my opinion all the biennials presented at this conference are alternative by definition. Every project that was mentioned during the past two days is full of idiosyncrasies, peculiar ideas, and promises to deliver something different, something new. Biennials do come in all shapes and sizes, and trying to apply some normative agenda at this point of the discussion would be counterproductive. There is no registered trademark on the term *biennial*. To my knowledge there is no patent that any particular biennial could apply for. There are a few interesting studies I came across, commissioned in certain particularly wealthy countries, and conducted by large global consulting firms, which try to figure the magic formula of how to make the successful biennial. Nevertheless, there's still no manual for biennial organizers, there is no handbook of recipes here. Situated at the junction where global capitalism and culture intersect, contemporary biennials remain highly fragmented entities, which only take their full meaning once sited within a given context, whether it's Istanbul, Singapore, or Dakar.

In my research and scholarship, I tried to challenge for some time some of the widely held assumptions about biennials and examine them from the perspective of the history of exhibitions and institutions of art. Just to name a few, I struggled with the assumption that Venice should always be seen as the model for today's biennials, as the "mother of all biennials"–I would say that is the mother of all assumptions. Obviously every biennial is to a greater or lesser extent intertwined with the modernist ideas of progress, cosmopolitanism, and aspiration. But I think it's very important–especially given that our discussion is taking place in probably one of the most generously funded institutions on the planet, and we're right in the middle of former Western Europe–to be open to the idea of multiple, parallel articulations of modernity.

We should also not forget that some thirty years ago, for a short window of time between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s, newly established biennials such as Havana, Cairo,

Dakar, and Johannesburg provided an alternative vision, radical rhetoric, and the bold project of redrawing the cartography of the contemporary art world and of countering the radically unequal relations of power within the art world and also in the world at large. I think the legacy of the anticonformist biennials of that decade–which were peripheral par excellence–is something that might help us to frame the presentations that will follow. I warmly welcome those new positions and new projects which may be young, some of them still in the embryo stage, but I believe they all show a promise of new possibilities and of going beyond the realities of the existing order of capitalism and beyond the status quo.

In this spirit I'd like to introduce our first panelist. Professor Pan Gongkai is an art practitioner as well as historian, educator, and one of the greatest experts on Chinese art in the twentieth century. Mr. Gongkai is the president of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing; he's the recipient of honorary doctorates from the San Francisco Institute of Art and the University of Glasgow. You may be familiar with his work from many shows around the globe, but maybe also in the context of biennials from his contribution to the Chinese Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2011. And I would also like to very warmly welcome Xu Jia, who is the director of the International Office at the Central Academy, and who kindly agreed to help us with translations.

Pan Gongkai (Translated by Xu Jia)

Good morning. Thank you for joining this conference and the lecture. I do value this very important discussion on the biennial phenomenon. I believe this phenomenon happens in a more general context of the global transmission of modernity. At the very beginning I'd like to talk about this context, which is transmission and alternity of modernity. I feel so sorry for my poor English, so to save time Xu Jia will make the presentation on behalf of me.

Xu Jia (Presentation by Pan Gongkai)

It is my pleasure to do this presentation on behalf of Mr. Pan Gongkai. The title for the presentation is "Transmission and Alternity: Thinking Biennale." *Transmission* and *alternity* in this context means the transmission and alternity of modernity.

Firstly I'd like to give some historical background of this transmission during the twentieth century. As many of you might know already, China experienced a very difficult time during the last hundred years. Especially at the very beginning of the last century, China was already very much behind modernized, capitalized, and industrialized

Western countries in Western Europe. At the very beginning of the twentieth century, the Western modernity was introduced into China together with the Colonial Wars, and at a very difficult time in China. With this introduced and implanted modernity–which was not invented originally in China–arose a variety of responses, especially among Chinese intellectuals at the time. Basically this variety of responses could be concluded into four major strategies: Westernism, fusionism, traditionalism, and peoplism.

Westernism is about fully copying, accepting, and implementing this already happened Western modernity into China and refusing to do an adapted version, which never happened in the West. The West never bothered to think about how to do the Chinese adaption of this modernity. Fusionism welcomes the Western modernity, but also prefers to do a little bit of change to this introduced Western modernity to have it more easily adapted to Chinese reality. Traditionalism is mostly represented by traditional Chinese painters and intellectuals, who have a profound accumulation and understanding of Chinese traditional culture and aesthetics and very much believe in the value of China's own cultural resources and aesthetic traditions. They are against the implant of Westernism, which may block the way and space for China to develop its own original modernity. Peoplism has not so much to do with this discussion. It's mostly about motivating people for the revolution of Utopia.

These four major strategies all come together to be the alternative modernity in China. They might also be helpful to explain the alternative modernities in other secondary modernity countries.

The development of Chinese modern art in the last century is quite like a mirror of the transmission of this introduced Western modernity. On the left half of the slide you can see what we learned from art history. A sequence of the different art movements happened in China from the European classical to impressionism, modern art, abstract expressionism, pop art, conceptual art, and installation to digital media. All of this happened in the West in a diachronic, linear time sequence. One replaces another, more or less. After the Cultural Revolution, at the early 1980s and 1990s, China reformed and opened up. At this period, all these different art movements, which may conflict with each other at the original Western place, were introduced into China at the same time in a synchronical way. The reopened China welcomed and embraced modern design, digital media, animation, photography, installation, conceptual art, pop art, abstract art, and classical oil painting, together with a renaissance of traditional Chinese painting–in the 1980s and 1990s they were altogether considered as avant-garde and modern art in China. This is the reality of the development of Chinese modern art.

Prof. Pan Gongkai understands the globalization as a continuation of this transmission of modernity, transmitted from the original prototype to every corner of the world. While it's being transmitted to every local place, a variety of responses could be easily stimulated to evolve into a local version of the transmitted modernity or transmitted globalization: Japanese version, German version, Brazilian version, Indian version, etc. This is what Prof. Pan Gongkai sees as the reality today, a multipolar globalization.

This is the basic context in which Prof. Pan Gongkai delivers his reflection on the biennial phenomenon. In this context, biennials are considered as a way of this transmission of modernity and globalization mostly on three levels: idea, mechanism, and artworks.

In terms of the idea, in China we have already ten biennials with a big variety of locations, cities, and themes. However, even the theme of a biennial gives a strong sense of transmission from the original Western prototype. To give an example, the last Guangzhou Triennale–not Gwangju in Korea but Guangzhou in South China–is sponsored by the Guangzhou Museum of Art. They curated a theme, called *Farewell to Postcolonialism*, which instantly stimulated a critique saying that in China we're still making huge efforts to walk into postcolonialism from colonialism, so it's far from us to walk out of postcolonialism.

Mechanism is a standard biennial format, for every two or three years with a jury committee and often a national pavilion.

In these ten biennials in China, we presented a huge amount of works that referred to a very limited number of Western artists, especially Marcel Duchamp, Joseph Beuys, Robert Rauschenberg, and others.

By discussing the transmission of the biennial format into China, Prof. Pan Gongkai doesn't mean to criticize it. He admits that this transmission contributes a lot to the awakening of sociopolitical awareness of the public in the city where a biennial happens, especially in the very beginning when this format was introduced. However, he also sees a potential danger for this transmission. Though we have this transmission and proliferation of the biennial format, it's more in a competitive sense, it's more focused on the link between the transmitted biennial and the original prototype, for example, the Venice Biennale or Kassel's documenta, rather than the direct response from the local reality. It does awaken the sociopolitical local awareness, but because the prototype is a single one, it's a standard way to awaken this awareness. The potential danger is that it may awaken a similar awareness, and that it's more a proliferation of the format rather than the proliferation of real awareness.

As a response to this potential danger, Prof. Pan Gongkai would like to raise two points. The first one is a potential alternative for curatorship. A future biennial might be able to focus the curatorship on the transmission of the biennial format itself. To give some examples: Marcel Duchamp, he reinvented art with his *Bottle Dryer*. At the last Shanghai Biennale we saw two Bottle Dryers in one biennial. Joseph Beuys, he reinvented art with *Sweeping Up*, *7000 Oaks*, etc. Today we find this kind of community intervention in almost every single biennial in China. It's more like a proliferation of the format. It would be an interesting topic of research to be presented in a biennial, how this very original protocol transmits, how this transmission is processed alternatively by means or unconsciously, and in what it results. This would be an interesting curatorship for an alternative biennial.

Another issue Prof. Pan Gongkai would like to discuss is that a future biennial could consider relinking with art. In the context of a biennial format we talk a lot about linking art with politics, economics, society, revolution, and with several decades passed, we find a lot of political, economic, and social things in current biennials. But the identification of art from current identity becomes a problem. So maybe a future biennial could refocus on art or find a balance between the political-social reality and art.

At the end of the presentation, Prof. Pan Gongkai would like to quickly show some of his personal art practices on exploring these two possibilities: research transmission and relinking with art.

The first piece is his work from the Chinese Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2011. The title for this installation is *Snow-Melt*. The work consists of two parts. The screen shows this large-scale ink painting with very traditional Chinese materials: water, ink. The subject is very traditional: ink with lotus in autumn. This is a very weak time in the life of lotuses. And you can see there is some shining snow falling down. This is an animation projected on the screen. The falling-down snow is an English translation of Prof. Pan Gongkai's paper "On the Boundary of Western Modern Art." It discusses Western modern art, the boundary of art, and the logic behind the Western modern and contemporary art. So the lotus is a metaphor of the traditional Chinese aesthetics, which has its own beauty and value; however, in the last century it was at a very weak condition. The snow falling down is a metaphor of Western modernism, which is dangerous to the weak lotus. In the animation, it piles up on the lotus to give even more weight, more pressure to the already very weak lotus. However with the animation moving on, the snow melts into water to be absorbed by the lotus as nutrition to have the next life of the lotus coming out next spring with a much stronger, better, and a beautiful life. It's

a metaphor or description of what happened exactly in the last century to the Chinese aesthetic, when Western modernity or Western modern art was introduced.

Another installation–which was not exhibited at a biennial–is about the discussion of the biennial format. It's a typical biennial format artwork: a large-scale installation. In the picture you can see the scale in comparison with the human figure. It's about the quite complicated absurdity of time and space and the confusion of real life and virtual life. It's not an artwork in the traditional sense, but announced or defined as such. In front of the installation there is a label which says *This is my work*. This is a typical following-up or transmission of the logic from Marcel Duchamp. However, on the opposite side of the same label, the Chinese version says *This is not my work*. Mr. Pan Gongkai worked out this typical biennial artwork following the biennial logic and defining it as such. However, from the perspective of Chinese aesthetics, it is defined not as a work. Instead, the Chinese title may explain that my work of art is somewhere else in my life, not here in this big installation.

Thank you very much.

Rafal Niemojewski

Thank you very much for this presentation. We will pass directly on to the second speaker.

Leah Gordon is an artist working with film and photography. She also works as a curator, and maybe today she wears more the curator hat. She works between London and Port-au-Prince. Her recent curatorial projects include the Haitian Pavilion in Venice in 2011, *Kafou: Haiti, History & Art*, recently at the Nottingham Contemporary and *In Extremis: Death and Life in Twenty-first-century Haitian Art*, which was shown at the Fowler Museum in Los Angeles and the Musée de la Civilisation in Québec. But today, I think Leah will focus on her project called Ghetto Biennale, which she codirected in Haiti and soon will be in its fourth edition.

Leah Gordon

Firstly I would also like to thank ifa and ZKM for inviting me to speak here today, not only from myself, but also from André Eugène, the codirector of the Ghetto Biennale, and from the community and artist collective Atis Rezistans in Port-au-Prince.

I've been working as an artist in Haiti since 1991, I speak fluent Creole, and I've been working alongside Atis Rezistans ever since 2006. When I first met them, I was working as a freelance curator for the International Museum of Slavery in Liverpool.

I spoke to André Eugène recently, and he said he would like a clip from the film *Atis Rezistans* to be shown as, in a way, his contribution to this discussion. I think the relevance of what he says in this film will become apparent later on.

"I am André Eugène. I was born on twenty-third August, 1959. I am forty-eight years old and was born in Port-au-Prince. We live in a ghetto, on Grand Rue, Boulevard Jean Jacques Dessalines. I live at number 622. In ghettos everywhere you can find all social classes, you can find thieves, all sorts, but you will find big intellectuals, too. Myself I take up the role of a sculptor, of an artist. I am taking the role of an artist, and what I am doing now is to teach other people how to work and encourage them, and when they make work, I buy it and have made a kind of art museum. It's usually the bourgeoisie that creates the galleries and museums, but I organized myself in the ghetto, in Grand Rue, to make a gallery, a kind of museum. I have Claude Saintilus, who is my apprentice. I work with Wilbert Pierre, who is also an apprentice and I watch out for other people; and there are also children here, and I'm watching to see if they have potential. Yes, it's always the bourgeoisie that have the galleries, but I want to have a gallery and a museum. Not just a gallery but a museum. This is why I have named my place E Pluribus Unum, From Diversity Unity, Museum of Art."

During the days I've been here, I found myself looking back to my own past in these last few days. In the 1980s I used to be in a feminist folk punk band, and the ethos was that you don't have to be skilled in music or even able to play an instrument to be in a band. And I'd like to say that this is the same ethos I brought to the Ghetto Biennale. Also after listening to Kasper [König] this morning, I would like to maybe slightly play the devil's advocate as well, playing to some of the anxiety I feel that maybe is haunting this conference but maybe not fully articulating.

The punk rock and punk folk movements in Britain reacted to slightly bloated, at times pompous, self-satisfied progressive rock and folk scenes of the late 1970s. Now punk is a past response, but maybe we all need to ask what could be the equivalent response to the biennial scene if it does become too mainstream, and also who would lead that response. Perhaps it is not something we can curate our way out of but may change from the roots–the artists themselves.

I will give some background. In 1804, after the slaves' revolt, Haiti was the first black republic in the Western hemisphere and the first postcolonial nation in the world. Afro-Haitian religious practices have developed a popular imagery that has led to a vibrant subaltern art production, organized through numerous popular neighborhoods, both within and outside of Port-au-Prince. Until recently the art has been distributed

and sold through a gallery system in the middle-class suburb of Pétionville, above Port-au-Prince.

Atis Rezistans have existed since the late 1990s and have been producing art that reflected a heightened, dystopian view of their society, culture, and religion within a sort of vodou-cyberpunk aesthetic. In 2009 Atis Rezistans hosted the first Ghetto Biennale. They invited artists, filmmakers, academics, photographers, and writers to come to the Grand Rue area of Port-au-Prince to make work in the neighborhood. In the words of the writer John Kieffer, it was hoping to be a "'third space' [. . .] an event or moment created through a collaboration between artists from radically different backgrounds." The Ghetto Biennale has been a dynamic, often unstable entity ever since.

We find ourselves in the alternative section, although the Ghetto Biennale was not necessarily created as an actual alternative. The idea for the Ghetto Biennale came from conversations between myself and André Eugène and other members of Atis Rezistans about mobility and exclusion for Haitian artists. The artists wanted to find a way of having greater control over their means of distribution as well as their means of production. And distribution in the arts is partly the ability to travel. But it's also—coming back to that footage I showed you of André Eugène—about reappropriation. Atis Rezistans use recycled materials for their works, but their work is not just dealing with the reappropriation of discarded materials and of Haitian culture. Another part of their practice is the reappropriation of bourgeois art-world institutions.

Another point of departure in 2009 was Nicolas Bourriaud's recently published catalogue and book *Altermodern* and *The Radicant*. The Ghetto Biennale was a partial response to his text, especially his concept of the contemporary global artist as *Homo viator*. Travel for the majority of the global community most usually takes two forms: forced migration or illegal immigration. The Haitian artists had been refused visas for openings many times; their economic background precludes travel. They feel that they are often denied access to the globalized art scene that they clearly see on the Internet.

But also the way in which they make works and learn and share their skills is very different from the typical Western art school model. They use an apprenticeship system to disseminate skills. This difference, and lack of conventional art historical knowledge, has often forced them into the unwelcome category of "outsider" or "naive" artists. By holding the Ghetto Biennale and inviting contemporary artists to work with them in Port-au-Prince, they were refusing this positioning. This was a repositioning by association. By creating artist-to-artist networks, they are able to bypass the tight network of Haitian galleries and art dealers.

While the first Ghetto Biennale in 2009 was a shock and surprise for all involved, and considered very successful, the second Ghetto Biennale that took place in December 2011, in contradiction to its aims, revealed its own contextual, internal, and institutional vulnerabilities to the inequalities that run across race, class, and gender. These inequalities were embodied within the previously unconsidered neocolonial organization structures of the Ghetto Biennale–and I'm very much implicating myself here. The hierarchical nature of the local host community brought its own problematics too. The effect of the postearthquake burgeoning NGO culture in Haiti had a really deep effect, and a victim-donor mentality revealed itself as deeply embedded in many of the relationships formed.

While the Ghetto Biennale was conceived to expose social, racial, class-related, and geographical immobility, it seemed to have upheld these class inertias within its structural core. The third Ghetto Biennale, in 2013, was looking for balance amongst the multifarious and often totally contradictory agendas underpinning the event. We needed to question the Ghetto Biennale's actual potency as a form of institutional critique, if whilst many of the visiting artists embrace the practice at differing levels, at the same time all the Haitians want to do is to plug themselves directly into the institutions into which they've for many years been denied access. Also the Ghetto Biennale had to be reviewed within the growing academic discourse surrounding poverty tourism. We are always aware of that potential problematic and exoticizing nature of the visiting artist's interests working in Haiti.

When choosing artists for the third Ghetto Biennale we tried to choose projects that could engage with this position more critically. We also made the decision to make it a lens-free Biennale for the visiting artists, to partially resist both the ethnographic gaze and the commodity fetishism that the lens can engender. Only Haitian artists could use the lens throughout the three weeks of the Biennale. We also for the first time had a universal theme, *Decentering the Market and Other Tales of Progress*, which visiting and local artists responded to, which opened a greater platform for debate about form, meaning, and intent within the projects.

The Ghetto Biennale had many shifting, involving agendas, many of them totally contradictory, and I think there are many class-related, racial, and geographical barriers separating these multiple agendas. I think our original strapline is a good point of departure to discuss this: "What happens when first world art rubs up against third world art? Does it bleed?" This line is a transmutation of a quote from a book about the maquiladoras in Juárez, Mexico. The original quote by Gloria Anzaldúa states: "The U.S./Mexican border

is an open wound where the third world grates against the first and bleeds." We wanted to see what happens when arts practices from widely varied social and economic backgrounds came together. Do they bleed? And if so, where?

It does bleed–and at times hemorrhages. After three Ghetto Biennales, we feel that the most successful visiting artist projects are those which engage either quite deeply with local culture, with the critical discourse of the Ghetto Biennale, and also with the material entropy of the actual local site. Interestingly it is often the projects with roots in social practice that expose the artist and contributors to the vulnerabilities of unexamined class difference.

So the third Ghetto Biennale felt much more successful. The shared theme created a much more equitable platform for creativity and discourse; the host artists held many meetings to attempt to self-police the hustling and unwanted sexual advances that had taken over the second Ghetto Biennale. Finally we used the Congress as a mechanism for critique, self-reflection, an arena for future ideas, fostering a greater sense of democratic ownership amongst the host and the visiting artists. There are ethical considerations in situating an art festival in an informal neighborhood, especially one in Haiti, whose usual byline in mainstream press is always "The poorest country in the Western Hemisphere."

If we revisit Gloria Anzaldúa's quote, which informed our earlier strapline, she continues: "The lifeblood of two worlds merging forms a third country–a border country and a border culture." We hope that the border culture of the Ghetto Biennale can find a resonance with the contemporary Western crisis in art education and expand the class involvement in art. Alex Farquharson wrote in the catalogue of *Kafou: Haiti, Art and Vodou*, the recent UK-based survey show of Haitian art that I cocurated: "Haitian popular art has significant resonance for the international avant-garde at its moment of emergence at the 1940s and 1950s. It is our conviction that it could and it should resonate again with aspects of the work of many leading global artists in the present day; work that is often characterized by concerns with combinations of overlooked radical histories, unorthodox and esoteric knowledge systems, and alternative and unlikely aesthetic forms."

Haitian arts and culture is still produced by popular neighborhoods and in the lower classes. This is the key to the creative possibilities of the Ghetto Biennale. An event like this could never have taken place without the natural weight of cultural history and local autonomy of production. Polly Savage wrote for *Third Text* after seeing the first Ghetto Biennale: "By virtue of its self-organized autonomy, the specificity of the site, and its participatory and relational structure, the first Ghetto Biennale genuinely seemed to disrupt the zones of exclusion entrenched in both contemporary art systems and the geopolitics

of the global poor. In this amorphous, chaotic, deinstitutionalized space, the distinctions between artist and audience, between city and gallery, and, to a certain degree, between the informal proletariat and the *Homo viator* appeared momentarily blurred."

Thank you.

Rafal Niemojewski

Thank you so much, Leah. We're moving on to our next speaker, to whom I owe special thanks and gratitude for accepting our last-minute invitation. Dr. Royce Smith is associate professor of modern and contemporary art history and director of the School of Art and Design at Wichita State University. He also serves as a visiting professor of contemporary art history and criticism at the Instituto Superior de Artes in Havana, where he is currently working on programming a conference to celebrate the thirty-year anniversary of the Havana Biennale. Royce has been appointed artistic director of the new Asunción Biennial in Paraguay, and I think that's what he's going to talk about in his presentation, which is due to inaugurate in 2015. He's also working with several other biennials in Latin America to coordinate a new Grand Tour.

Royce Smith

Thank you. I have to tell you that I'm relishing the fact that I'm the last speaker of the conference for a number of reasons. First of all because I have gained inspiration from a number of you who are in here–Marieke, who I've known for quite some time, as well as her scholarship, Rafal as well. All of you have in probably very unknown ways contributed to the topic of my discussion with you today, which is the formation of the Bienal de Arte en Asunción in Paraguay. Through numerous visits to the Istanbul Biennial, to the Sydney Biennale, to the Gwangju Biennale and many others, I have learned a great deal about how the concept of a biennial surfaces not just as a practicality–and all of you have shared this with us, you've shared what you have accomplished, you've shared the things that you have managed to do in spite of very difficult circumstances. And it is those practicalities that underlie the dreams of people like myself. So I hope this conference never loses sight of the dream of a biennial. All of you can shut your eyes who have experience with very established biennials, and can remember the day, when your biennial did not exist. That is the delicious, vulnerable, and challenging place in which I now find myself working in Asunción, Paraguay.

On that I also have to share a very dirty secret. That is the fact that I live in Wichita, Kansas. Kansas is a very interesting place to work as a contemporary art historian,

because it's usually not a place that is on the lips of very many people when they think about contemporary art discourse, except of maybe five or six of you in here. Probably not. I've been in Wichita now for ten years after doing my PhD in Australia. When I started teaching in Kansas, I came across–as I was teaching a survey class to my students–Jasper Johns's *Map* from 1961. I found it very interesting, because I never paid attention to it before, until I was working in Kansas and realized, that on Jasper Johns's map it was the place that was conveniently eradicated and used as a mixing place for all the other bits of color that he used on the canvas. So my existence is effectively wiped out.

If I were to locate myself in the Art Universe, published by *Vanity Fair* in 2006, where would I find myself? If you are the Venice Biennale or the Istanbul Biennial, you will find yourself in places that we like to visit, but strangely Kansas, as well as Paraguay, does not find itself on this map. Larry Gagosian's gallery does.

Or perhaps more familiar to some of you is Joaquin Torres' Garicia's *América Invertida (Inverted America)* from 1943, the idea being that the displacement on dispossession of the South may be a little bit more difficult to deal with if it is looked at anew. If our perspectives about what constitutes the North and the South are changed, do we somehow have a greater respect, a greater understanding of the world around us? Strangely, the contours of Paraguay are neither more nor less visible when the Americas are inverted. It is equally, as I would say, invisible. And it is those two states of invisibility that have underpinned a lot of the effort of putting the Bienal de Arte en Asunción together.

And there you see it, if you're not sure where it is: in the middle of South America. It is one of two landlocked countries in South America and does not find itself enveloped in many contemporary art historical discourses. But that has been changing.

Does Paraguay plus passion equal a biennial? How the Bienal de Arte en Asunción started.

I'm going to be possibly a little bit gossipy here, so you will bear with me, as I talk about this. I attended for the first time the International Association of Art Critics Congress in Asunción in 2011. And it was during that time that Chus Martínez represented documenta 13 and gave a very slick presentation on all the things that the documenta was engaging with, not the least of which was a little bit of lively discussion about a meteorite that was going to be moved from South America to Germany–which did not happen–100 notebooks that would be published on the occasion of the documenta, released in anticipation of the opening day–fifteen of which I had purchased by the time of this conference–and many other points of discussion, like this satellite venue in Kabul, Afghanistan. At the end of her presentation I found myself very uncomfortable,

because we found ourselves in the middle of Paraguay, where 90 percent at least of the population does not have the resources or material wealth to be able to participate in that conversation. So I raised my hand and asked Chus, how this world of opulence, of excess, of dreams that can be realized, might square with the fact that these discussions were happening in Asunción. I told her that in order to purchase the first set of catalogues for the documenta, I needed to use half of my summer school teaching salary from Wichita State University. When I expected an answer, instead she pulled out her iPhone and started to calculate what my salary was, to see whether I was being honest about my salary. And of course there was lots of translation going on, many people were speaking in the audience. Afterward some artist from Paraguay came up to me and thanked me, because they said that I asked a question that was on their minds, but they were feeling too polite to ask themselves.

Long story short–and I love the way they captured me with my fist and hand raising in the air as though I'm getting ready to smack something, I really wasn't that way when I gave my presentation–what this led to was an opportunity to think about the way that biennials and Paraguay fit or might not fit together. Asunción is a metropolitan area with approximately two million people. It has one of South America's lowest per capita incomes but is third in the world in terms of its economic growth. In 2013 it was behind only Qatar and China in terms of its economic expansion. It has local and regional political tensions, it's been suspended from the Mercosur Alliance, there are great challenges in its educational system, the relationship between the populations–indigenous and nonindigenous peoples–a very underdeveloped cultural infrastructure, and no consistent system of large-scale arts patronage. This is precisely why I came back to Paraguay a year later and convened a series of seminars to discuss contemporary art and the potential of a biennial that many people felt to be impossible. They said: When we think about biennials, we think of wine and Champagne and punch bowls and glitterati. And I said: But that is not all that a biennial needs to be. Biennials need to be honest, they need to be forthright, and they need to be engaged. So working with the Kansas-Paraguay Committee–which strangely is an organization that was born of the fact that both Kansas and Paraguay enjoyed internal landlocked status, and we often find ourselves as regions that are excluded from conversations of contemporaneity. One of the other things that underscored my discussions with a group of artists, administrators, critics, and curators who attended the seminars, was a comment that Rasheed Araeen made to me at a conference in Johannesburg discussing biennials, which is: Why are artists from the non-West always fighting over the size of Venice pie? Why is it that one should

complain about not being included in a biennial, when they have at their disposal the ability to create a countersystem to a biennial–which is exactly what we are attempting to do in Asunción. Biennials issue from cultures with established art infrastructures of varying degrees and interestingly have expanded into alternative spaces–and I'm thinking in particular of the Sydney Biennale and its use of Cockatoo Island. But what happens when the city has no museum culture? A biennial then has to find those places and use them as the basis for arguing for future funding and investment in a cultural infrastructure. So in some ways what we're trying to do in Asunción is the reverse of how many biennials have operated. Instead of using a base of operations in the museum and gallery world and then expanding into other parts of the city, the other parts of the city are what constitute the very lifeblood of this future biennial.

What also has affected me: David Álfaro Siqueiros's *Las fechas de la historia (The Dates of History)*, 1952–56, which adorn the Universidad Autónoma de México. They are murals that are placed there as a reminder to what one's education should do in the world. I felt like my scholarship and experience, my ability to travel as an art historian, needed to surface in terms of action and change. So this is a work that stays very much in my mind as I am working on this biennial project.

As was too the Network of Uncollectable Artists, which I worked with in Sydney before I came back to the States. The Network of Uncollectable Artists critiqued Isabel Carlos's *On Reason and Emotion* in Sydney and staged a counterinsurgency into the biennial by selling people these trading cards. They were sold with a very strange-tasting size of orange bubblegum. You could buy the card, and you would see that this particular collective established a completely different set of parameters by which art was viewed as meritorious. Do you do it for love or money? Do you rely on materials, or do you make immaterial gestures? Are you political or apolitical? Stealth Video Ninja was one of my favorites, going around various parts of Sydney and projecting guerilla video graffiti on the sides of buildings, which, rumor had it, also included the prime minister's residence in Australia, too. What I liked about it was the fact that it was a counterstatement established, because a group of people felt as though a biennial was not engaging with the communities in which they were working. And that is very much the spirit that Asunción is working in as well.

This is just a slide of some of the people who attended the chats that I put together in Asunción at the Centro Cultural de Paraguay. This is the group of people who on the very last day banded together and began to discuss, why a biennial? And why a biennial in Asunción? The answers changed from a rather defiant, No, we don't need this because

we can't do this, to, We must do this. The regularity, the engagement, and the ability to bring people from the outside in, and for those on the inside to learn how to work better together, is the impetus of what's making this exhibition work.

I'm sure that most of your biennials do not function this way. The last time I went to Paraguay to meet with my foundation that has been established there, one of the first things they did was to rush me off the plane and go to the local network, where I walked into a studio. It was some *Good Morning Asunción* program where they were finishing up a little recipe on how to cook really good ribs, and then made this very awkward segue into the development of a biennial in Asunción. And of course if I look sleepy there it's because I've just got off a flight from the States. We also ended up going to the local newspaper, who wanted to run a story on the biennial, and got photographed as well. I'm not really too much interested in the world of biennials and celebrity, but I learned that the reason why there was so much interest in the media about this biennial is because there was an interest that was shown in what was going on in Paraguay by somebody who was not from there. So celebrity is not celebrity. Celebrity indicates interest and engagement. That's been a bit of a learning curve for me.

My proudest moment is the fact that no biennial that is initiated by a westerner and someone living in the United States would be successful unless there were people in the local community who believed in it. And over the past two years a group of Paraguayans have banded together and have become an official nonprofit organization and created La Fundación Bienal Asunción, or FUBA, that is responsible for two things: It is responsible for helping to fund-raise and create the infrastructure for the biennial and also supporting artistic gestures by contemporary artists in Paraguay. So its mission is both related to the episodic structuring of a biennial, but it is also designed to increase and elevate the status, presence, and functioning of the contemporary art world in a place that has not had that level of support.

I continuously get little WhatsApp messages. This is the way by which we communicate with each other when I can't be in Paraguay. This is an announcement that's been made about the official launch of the Biennale.

This is a group of people that also remind me how difficult this exhibition is going to be to coordinate and to be inclusive. Not four miles outside the city of Asunción are incredibly poor neighborhoods of indigenous Paraguayans. In this particular community we brought shirts and food and cookies to the children who were there. That has set up for me a really interesting conundrum, which is the fact that Paraguay and its constituents have had a very difficult time in being represented on the global art stage,

but even within Paraguay, indigenous artists have had the difficulties in getting their work represented within their own country. So the Biennale is attempting to raise the visibility of each group and also provide a forum for those two groups of people to work and speak with each other.

I had to include the WhatsApp message I got last night. This is the governor of the municipality of Asunción who announced to the president of the Biennial Foundation, Carmen Zambrini, that the municipality of Asunción is giving us twenty-five abandoned houses to use as venues. They are also supplying twenty-five portable toilets, because none of the venues have running water; they are supplying temporary electricity for artists who are going to be using projectors, and they are also paying for our promotional materials, branding, and catalogues. So I was a very excited person last might.

Our visions for the first Bienal de Asunci*ón*: Today's the first day that I'm publicly talking about the theme, so this is a rather exciting moment for me. The theme of the first Bienal de Asunci*ón* is *El Primer Grito de Libertad* (The first cry of liberty). Paraguay's anticolonialist cry is arguably the first, which not many people know, followed by Ecuador in 1809 and all the way to Costa Rica in 1821. It is that sort of reliance on going back into history and excavating the importance of Paraguay that underscores or underlies this exhibition. Putting it together has been a bit of a difficult proposition. We are using four platforms to anticipate the Biennale.

The first is art, education, and expression. We've heard many times over, especially in the Mercosul Biennial, which is an inspiration to all of us in Paraguay, that in our culture where the teaching of art rarely happens or happens sporadically, helping people understand what art is and why it should matter is of prime importance. And we already began some of our activities with respect to going into schools and classrooms and teaching students about what is on the horizon.

Our second platform is indigenous perspectives, where we are going to be creating several different outreach opportunities for artists to be able to share and showcase their work.

The third platform is a critical group of critics, curators, and writers who will be addressing "We are all Americans, but are we all Americans? Globalization in Regional Contexts." We will explore the idea about how globalization and contemporaneity surface in the Americas. As somebody who lives and works in the United States I'm very frequently called American. It's a habit most of us get into. But one of the things that's important to realize is that Paraguayans have just as much right to call themselves Americans as well. And the biennial is going to be engaging with that. We wish to elevate

the visibility of indigenous artists and exploring their relationships to other contemporary practice.

We also are facing a very interesting proposition. We're not São Paulo, we're not Rio, we're not Sydney or New York, but we're staging some venues like Bolsi–Bolsi is a restaurant in downtown Asunción where everybody ends up after a night of drinking. This is the Costanera, which is the most recently constructed passageway and recreational area on the banks of the Paraguay River. Those will both be venues of the exhibition. As people go through and experience the biennial, they are going to be experiencing the life of someone who typically lives in Asunción, going to some of the same bars, clubs, restaurants, plazas that people on their day-to-day trajectories would do. All of this is done with the belief in a statement that was made by Paz Guevara, which has always stuck with me in the process of putting this exhibition together, that every culture has the right and the responsibility to claim its "right to the contemporary." This is what we're doing with the first Asunción Biennial.

I close by saying that I think what underscores my thinking about this biennial is the fact that curating is both a centripetal and centrifugal exercise. Centripetal forces are those things that bring people to a center. How do I get indigenous, nonindigenous, non-Paraguayan, Paraguayan artists and thinkers to live and work and collaborate with each other? What are those magnetic dimensions that I need to be aware of, curating and organizing this exhibition that will attract people to Asunción? Asunción, traditionally speaking, has not been a destination city in South America.

The centrifugal forces are just as important, which is, when you come to the center and then are flung back out on your flights to Europe or the United States or wherever you happen to come from, what do you leave with? How are you changed as a consequence of coming to my biennial, or your biennial? How many other biennials change as a consequence of having experienced ours? If Asunción can change the way that the biennials of Istanbul or Sydney think about theirs, that would be a very exciting moment for me.

I could talk about fund-raising in Paraguay, but we can save that for another day. The other thing that is exciting about what we are doing is capturing the inertia of established biennials in Curitiba and hopefully Mercosul to support what we're doing, staging a bit of a triad of biennials to serve as a bit of a counterweight to São Paulo. And I'm very thankful to the president of the Curitiba Bienal, who has been working with our foundation and myself, helping us navigate some of these ethical obstacles and putting a biennial together and helping us out as we make this run toward our first realization of the Bienal de Asunción.

So thank you for your support and for all the dialogue over the past two days. It's been amazing, and you're amazing colleagues and thinkers and doers.

Rafal Niemojewski

Thank you very much. This panel has no respondents hence I would like to solicit comments and responses directly from the audience.

Audience Member

This is a question for Leah that comes back to a comment you made about education systems in the West and what biennials–and your biennial in particular and maybe some of the so-called other biennials–can teach us, or maybe can offer solutions for the problems that we face with art education in the West. I wondered if you could expand on that a little bit.

Leah Gordon

Basically, I'm considering this because of the rise in fees in the UK. I'm of a certain age where there was a window of opportunity for working-class kids to jump through and decide to go to art school, even though it was considered the craziest thing you could ever do. And I think this gap really narrowed down now.

I suppose, having worked with Atis Rezistans for a long time, there's a certain discourse that comes through traditional Western art education, which most artists are fearful of not dragging around behind them. It's very hard in a way to promote a set of artists that have no critical discourse of the Western educational discourse. I feel that a lot of the discourse of Atis Rezistans is the discourse that comes through their revolutionary history and their culture.

Rafal Niemojewski

Do you have any more questions at this time? If not, I would like to ask one. It was very encouraging seeing your presentations. They somehow remind me of the anticonformist biennials of the 1980s, like Havana, marked by utopian aspirations of changing the art world, and the world at large. Today, we tend to forget about it, and biennials often seem a little bit self-congratulatory. Some of the earlier speakers mentioned here the biennial fatigue. The center/periphery-dialectic became completely unfashionable. In biennials' catalogues we often read that art is global and transnational. All this suggests that the biennial is an achieved project. I wonder if that's true–I wonder whether

we should reassess some of these seemingly Western ideas and question to what extent has the process of decentralizing the art world, driven by biennials over the past thirty years, been achieved?

Pan Gongkai (Translated by Xu Jia)

First of all I believe that the decentralization of the biennial format in the last decade is a great development. It contributes a lot to the proliferation of democracy around the world. This contribution is relevant to art because in a sense it weakens the attention to the ontological dimension of art and focuses more on the relevance of the political and social reality, it gives comparatively less attention to the art language, art form, art expression itself. The weakening of the attention of the ontological art expression is a good thing, because it offers more accessibility for normal people and the public to art.

For the last two presentations, for example the Haiti exhibition and the one in Asunción, without this weakening of the ontological attention toward art, it would be impossible to involve the local community into art practices. So this is also a great contribution.

However, I myself as president of Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), as an art educator, I'm confronted with a big challenge because of this. In my school, how should I prepare my students to adapt to this reality? Should I adapt my students just as members of the public, not expecting them to be any different from those who have never been into an art school and never received any art training? Or in what way could I prepare my students to professionally contribute to this movement and take some leadership position in it?

Rafal Niemojewski

Thank you. I think it's very interesting that you brought the idea of passing this knowledge or challenge over to your students, who are the future artists. Yesterday, we observed a panel here about biennials presenting themselves as a driving force for social change. Several amazing projects were presented with the shared assumption that social change is always for the better. I was just wondering if we can turn this around for a moment–I can anticipate that this will be a rather contentious question–what if we consider that biennials can also have a negative impact on local art communities. Marieke van Hal mentioned yesterday that biennials can function as launchpads for artists, especially the young, emerging ones, to enter the international circuit. But I wonder if any of you also encountered the side effects of this process, a troublesome situation

where as a consequence of a biennial the local art scene, which can be sometimes small and fragile, is being drained of young talent?

Leah Gordon

This is something I have actually thought about a lot. Haiti for me is a really unique place, because you have dotted around many different art collectives in lots of different popular neighborhoods, all with a different output. Whilst trying to make it a more egalitarian platform for the third Ghetto Biennale by making all the artists supply for the same theme, I felt suddenly I was cutting and pasting a sort of Western style of applying for an art school onto an art collective that doesn't work like that. Eugène doesn't go around referencing Duchamp in his workbook. He doesn't need to do that, but he can still appropriate, and he still understands the politics of appropriation. So I felt quite conflicted, but the Haitian artists, they got around it by basically writing a description of what they do normally–that theme was the market–and just putting the word market in the title. I found that was quite a clever way of dealing with it. But certainly, I'm constantly worrying about that. But you never know, I suppose.

Royce Smith

I think the same thing holds true in Paraguay, because it's also fragile. When you speak about the opportunity to have a global art stage, or you raise the potential that this exhibition will be held at the same time that people come to Curitiba or Porto Alegre and there will be an international audience, then you have to manage expectations. When you have a group of Paraguayan artists, who for so long have been excluded from discussions of contemporaneity, how do you impose a model of jurying, or a model of exclusivity in a culture where people just want to be heard or want to be included? I think in the end for me–and this is following up on your first question–I don't have biennial fatigue, and I hope nobody does have either, because I always looked at biennials as organisms that have these kinds of alchemical nuances to them. They remind me of my high school chemistry class, where I accidentally put in too much of this stuff, and it exploded in the beaker, and other people managed to do it just right. Isn't that what biennials are? It's the perfect mix of culture, politics, history, contemporaneity, resources, that ends up coming together in these deliciously unpredictable ways. This, I think, is the foundation for any biennial. It will be for ours, and it has been for all the others.

Rafal Niemojewski

I wonder if there's anybody in the audience who could relate to this? I think this question could be particularly relevant for some of the biennials in Africa. Biennials can function as a motor for positive changes, but we hardly ever seem to consider the flip side. They can make a dramatic difference to a career of a young artist from a small local art scene, who suddenly gets a story in *Artforum*, ends up signing up with a gallery, and often simply moves out of the country. Would anybody like to comment on that? Christine?

Christine Eyene

There's a lot in this question. Dak'Art is a platform for artists from the continent, it's a launchpad, other curators are coming, discovering new works, critics are there, collectors are there. I would also like to bring Patrick [Mudekereza] into this conversation, because the danger is of something we talked about during the Manifesta Coffee Break in 2009 in Murcia. N'Goné Fall dismissed the biennials that were created by the French. N'Goné Fall is a well-established Senegalist curator, and she was saying that for her the Bamako biennial wasn't an African biennial, because it was created by the French. The danger is that we have these biennials parachuting on the continent. It's quite difficult, because at the same time they also function as platforms. It's a tricky situation, and Patrick actually had this quite radical position. When there was this conference, *Condition Report*, in Dakar (2012), I remember him making quite strong statements about challenging the idea that biennials are funded by the West. But then again, we had the African art fair in London, there are people like me and my family, black people in the West who also pay their taxes, and in a way our money is going back to Africa, which is a good thing.

Rafal Niemojewski

Thank you. Would anybody else like to comment on that?

Audience Member

I would like to respond to Leah and Royce. After listening to your presentations, I thought about the format of the biennial. Are we fetishizing? I wasn't there so I cannot judge, but something else is happening there: Maybe the form of the event or the execution can develop another language, another form instead of looking like a biennial program or an objective that pretends to be a biennial. Maybe something else is coming, maybe more radical, maybe more interesting. Maybe biennials are not interesting at all. I see it a bit like a compromise, taking away one of the most interesting or strong

characters of the event. Why do they have to be labeled as a biennial? Maybe there is something else, much stronger. Why do you label it as a biennial?

Leah Gordon

We knew we had to be noticed really quickly. And I think if we called it "Artist Residency in a Popular Neighborhood," I wouldn't be sitting here today, to be honest. So in a way it was the power of the word. And we called it "Biennale" rather than "Biennial." The first ghetto actually was in Venice, and this is why we chose the Italian pronunciation. But it really was to get noticed, and it really was to highlight the immobility of the Haitian artists. I think this is very interesting, because Haitian artists go to the biennials, but it seems to be like three artists from the bourgeois class who are circling around the world. And even Atis Rezistans, who were in a show at the Frost Museum, they were told by the American Embassy to nominate a member of the bourgeoisie–sorry, I use this word *bourgeoisie*, it sounds like I'm some eighteenth-century revolutionary, it's just as they are French–to go and represent them.

So in a way it was sort of an abuse of the word *biennale* in the beginning, and we were just a Trojan horse. Basically we have other agendas hidden within this Trojan horse of the word *biennale*. But in fact, as always the word has overtaken us, and there is actually on the ground in Haiti much more desire to be taken seriously as a biennale. The power of the name is really very interesting.

Rafal Niemojewski

I just got a message that we have only five minutes to wrap up. There's one last thing I'd like to bring to discussion before we close this conference, which is the art practice. I'm really glad that our panelists today showed images of many artworks to illustrate their presentations. I think if biennials are so relevant today–and we're having all this passionate discussions about it–it is precisely because over the past thirty years they provided a very viable alternative to the museum culture and they accommodated a whole variety of practices and discourses that museums, at least in their traditional form, are just simply not equipped to deal with. The art practice keeps changing at an astonishing speed. The exhibition making keeps changing as well. If we allow ourselves to speculate about the future, what structural changes could take place in order to accommodate the most recent practices? What if we imagine biennials as an open, empty container that only takes shape once it is filled with the artworks? Would anybody like to share something on the question of accommodating recent and future art practice?

Leah Gordon

I think one thing that obviously the Ghetto Biennale is hoping for the future is that it will start being judged on the works, rather than the social, economic, and political conditions in which they're made. We still have a long way to go then. Art objects and performances are definitely very central to the Ghetto Biennale.

Royce Smith

I think in some ways we're positioned to be very successful because we aren't tied to the baggage of a museum and a gallery. We are not resisting a White Cube culture that has established parameters and guidelines and rules and expectations. We're in the process of drafting our own. Those are expectations of what art is, what is included and what is not, the expectations we have of ourselves and the relationships that we establish with other people and other artists and other cultures. So I think these emerging biennials, or the ones that are fledgling, just starting up, or are still simply existing in the realm of ideas, are good and need to be nurtured, because that will be the fertile terrain of adaptability and flexibility that tomorrow's artists are going to be able to put their roots down into and flourish in.

I just want to go back to a further comment from the audience. You asked, why do we need to be a biennial, why do we have to use that name? I'm just going to kind of lob the hand grenade back to you and say, why isn't the Istanbul Biennial changing its name and removing "biennial" from its identity? Why is it the Asunción Biennial that's now emerging after so many others that has to assume the responsibility of radicality?

Rafal Niemojewski

Does anybody want to make a final comment on that? Maybe someone representing one of the biennials with a longer history? Are there any specific efforts made to adjust the current structures in order to better accommodate, let's say public art, time-based pieces, performance–

Andrea Buddensieg

I would have a counterproposal. It's not an answer to your question, but I would apply for an open overall discussion including also other aspects of yesterday's panels.

But if you're all exhausted now, I would like Elke to complete.

Elke aus dem Moore

Thank you very much for this interesting panel. We thought this discussion would lead us a little bit more into some conclusion, but on the other hand there will never be a conclusion. I would like to close this conference and thank you for the togetherness we experienced, the encounters. I think this was one of the most important things. Thank you all for your profound knowledge, the expertise you were sharing with us, the fun we had together, the deep discussions–and also the flat discussions. As we noticed in the panel in the morning, limitations for example are quite a critical aspect. It's part of the history of exhibition and something, I would suggest, we really have to go deeper into. It could be the topic of a next conference.

What I enjoyed especially was the critical review from the artists. It would also have been interesting to have different groups of audiences to have their perspective toward the subject of biennials.

In the frame of the conference, I had lots of conversations, as you all had. For example, I had a small conversation with Hans Belting: It's always the question of where we are now. What are we facing? In the context of this conference and its discussions, I would say that we are now in a very delicate situation where the role of art can be more valuable in decision making, politics, society.

We were all talking in a very diplomatic way, this I know. We were talking a lot around the topic of conflict. It's a potential of biennials that we can face conflicts–I don't want to use the term *embracing*, but biennials can face conflicts.

I'd like also to commemorate Jan Hoet, a dear colleague who died during the days of our conference on Thursday, February 27. Hoet was the curator of the 9th documenta and set so many important lines in curatorial history.

There will be a list of all participants of this conference. I would also like to announce or remember the dates of the next possibilities for encounters. The first one will be in July in the frame of the Berlin Biennale, the General Assembly of the International Biennial Association, which will be held July 10 to 13 at the House of World Cultures, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, as a huge program, also partly a conference program.

The second date–I'm pretty happy that our dear colleague from Brazil was also coming over from São Paulo–will be the next World Biennial Forum that will be organized by the Biennial Foundation together with the São Paulo Biennial and ifa from November 26 to 28. There will be a longer program for those who might stay.

So thank you all, there will be lunch outside. Thank you all for coming, thank you for your huge interest, and also hello to our visitors outside of this room.

Contributors

Elise Atangana is a independent curator and producer. Based in Paris, she defines her experience in the art field as collective and laboratory adventures. She recently collaborated with the Revue Noire, with Elvira Dyangani Ose, curator at the Tate Modern, on the *Rencontres Picha. Biennale de Lubumbashi 2012/2013*. Cofounder of the collective On the Roof, she cocurated *Synchronicity* in Paris and London, *Cyclicités* at Le Manège de Dakar Gallery, and LE SOCLE at the Buttes-Chaumont park in Paris. Her encounter with Simon Njami in 2003 sets the beginning of many collaborations especially *Check List Luanda Pop* at the 52nd Biennale de Venice (2007), the African artists selection at the 9th Havana Biennale (2006), the 1st Luanda Trienniale (2006). Meanwhile, since 2007 she works as a project and communication manager at SNCF group (including 5 years at the SNCF Foundation). In 2014, she cocurated the international exhibition of the 11th Biennale of Contemporary African Art of Dakar.

Katja Aßmann is an architect and curator, and, since 2012, artistic director of Urbane Künste Ruhr. From 2007 to 2011, Katja Aßmann was head of the program department *City of Opportunities of the European Capital of Culture RUHR.2010* and responsible for all projects in the fields of visual arts, architecture, and urban development. At the same time she was head of project and later general manager of the state initiative Stadt-BauKultur NRW. In her capacity as freelance cultural manager she also organized and curated numerous exhibitions at the Lehmbruck Museum Duisburg and in cooperation with MoMA New York and the Vitra Design Museum Weil am Rhein. From 1997 to 2000 she worked for the Internationale Bauausstellung (IBA) Emscher Park and became head of the art and culture division in the final stages of the IBA.

Ute Meta Bauer is working as a curator with a focus on transdisciplinary formats. Since October 2013, she is founding director of CCA – NTU Centre for Contemporary Art, Singapore, a national research center of the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), where she is also professor in the School of Art, Media and Design. From 2012 to 2013 she was dean of Fine Art at the Royal College of Art, London. Prior to that appointment she was associate professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, where she served as the founding director of ACT, the Art, Culture, and Technology program (2009–2012), and as director of the MIT Visual Arts Program (2005–2009) at MIT's School of Architecture and Planning. Bauer was founding director of the Office for Contemporary Art (OCA) in Oslo, Norway (2002–2005), where she also served as commissioner for the national contributions for the Venice Biennale and the Bienal de São Paulo, and was codirector with Hou Hanru of the World Biennial Forum No. 1, Gwangju, South Korea, 2012; artistic director of the 3rd Berlin Biennial of Contemporary Art, Berlin, 2004; and cocurator of documenta 11 (2001–2002). Bauer has edited numerous publications in the field of contemporary art, most recently *World Biennale Forum No. 1: Shifting Gravity* (coedited with Hou Hanru) and *AR – Artistic Research* (coedited with Thomas D. Trummer). In 2014 she curated *Theatrical Fields*, commissioned by Bildmuseet Umeå, Sweden (2013/2014) at the CCA in Singapore.

Luchezar Boyadjiev is an artist and curator living and working in Sofia, Bulgaria. He is a founding member of the Institute of Contemporary Art in Sofia, a unit of artists, curators, and theoreticians engaged with the development and promotion of contemporary art as a dialogue between people and contexts. His work is focused on private interpretations of public space, issues of urban visuality and development of global cities, as well as fostering involvement with audiences in various cities through specific projects meant to break up the local/global, the active/pasive participant, and the artist/audience divides. His primary media is installation, photography, drawing, text, video, and lecture-based performances. Among his most recent exhibition projects are: *Not a Library Artist Either*, Intervention Hüseyin B. Alptekin Archive, SALT Galata, Istanbul (2013, solo); *Luchezar Boyadjiev: Artist in the Storage*, City Art Gallery, Sofia (2010, solo); *Time Cube*, 2nd Biennial D-0 ARK Underground. Tito's Nuclear Bunker near Konjic, Bosnia and Herzegovina (2013); *The Best of Times, the Worst of Times*, 1st Biennial, Kiev, Ukraine (2012); *The Eye Never Sees Itself*, 2nd Ural Industrial Biennial, Yekaterinburg, Russia (2012); and *The Global Contemporary. Art Worlds after 1989*, ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany (2011).

Fulya Erdemci is a curator and writer based in Istanbul. Erdemci was the curator of the 13th Istanbul Biennial and of the 2011 Pavilion of Turkey at the 54th International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale. She was the Director of SKOR (Stichting Kunst en Openbare Ruimte) Foundation for Art and Public Domain in Amsterdam between June 2008 and September 2012. Erdemci was among the first directors of the Istanbul Biennial (1994–2000). She served as the director of Proje 4L in Istanbul (2003–2004) and worked as temporary exhibitions curator at Istanbul Modern (2004–2005). She curated the 'Istanbul' section of the 25th Biennale of São Paulo in 2002, and joined the curatorial team of the 2nd Moscow Contemporary Art Biennial (2007). Erdemci initiated the *Istanbul Pedestrian Exhibitions* in 2002, the first urban public space exhibition in Turkey and co-curated the second edition in 2005 with Emre Baykal. In 2008, Erdemci co-curated SCAPE, the 5th Biennial of Art in Public Space in Christchurch, New Zealand with Danae Mossman. Erdemci has served on international advisory and selection committees, including the International Award for Excellence in Public Art initiated by *Public Art* (China) and *Public Art Review* (United States), Shanghai, May 2012; the SAHA, Istanbul, 2012; the 12th International Cairo Biennial, Cairo, 2011; and De Appel, Amsterdam's, Curatorial Programme '10/'11 and '09/'10. Erdemci has taught at Bilkent University (1994–1995), Marmara University (1999–2000), and at Istanbul Bilgi University's MA Program in Visual Communication Design (2001–2007).

Christine Eyene is Guild Research Fellow in contemporary art at the University of Central Lancashire. She is collaborating on *Making Histories Visible*, an interdisciplinary visual art research project based at UCLan's Centre for Contemporary Art led by Lubaina Himid MBE, professor of contemporary art. Her role consists in conducting and publishing internationally leading research on the art of the black diaspora, and to devise and lead innovative curatorial projects which investigate how museums and collections can work collaboratively with contemporary artists to address diverse audiences for visual art in Britain and internationally. Her current subject areas include a research on the work of South African photographer George Hallett produced in the UK in the 1970s and '80s, gendered perspectives in contemporary art, contemporary African art, and non-object-based art practices. As an independent curator, she has been involved in several biennials including Brighton Photo Fringe at the Brighton Photo Biennial (2010); 3rd Photoquai Biennial, Paris (2011); Dak'Art Biennial (2012) and the experimental project *Mobile Emergency Room* with Thierry Geoffroy presented at the Zimbabwe Pavilion during the 55th Venice Biennale (2013). She is the curator of *Where we're at!* an exhibition of

women photographers from Africa and the diaspora presented at BOZAR, Brussels, as part of the Summer of Photography 2014, an international biennial of photography and lens-based media.

Patricia Fossati Druck is living between Porto Alegre and São Paulo, Brazil. She graduated in journalism and public relations with a masters in business administration from Boston University in Boston, MA, an Asia-Pacific Executive MBA from National University of Singapore and Academic Masters in Communication from PUCRS. She is a consultant for marketing, communications, and new business for Habitasul Group in Brazil and art collector for contemporary art. She is a member of the Advisory Council of Art Acquisitions for the Centre Pompidou, the Tate's Latin American Acquisitons Committee, and the Group of Patrons of Contemporary Art of São Paulo's Pinacoteca, president of the 9th Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre, and Member of the Board of Directors of Mercosul Biennial Foundation. Furthermore she is an alumnus of Harvard Business School (Owner/President Management Program–OPM 34, 2003; Families in Business: From Generation to Generation, 2002; Strategic Giving: Frameworks for Decision Making, 2002) and of INSEAD (International Executive Programme, 2002) as well as a member of the editorial board of *DASARTS* magazine, Brazil.

Blair French lives in Sydney where he is assistant director, Curatorial & Digital at the museum of Contemporary Art Australia. He has worked in art galleries and Museums in New Zealand and the United Kingdom, and, since arriving in Sydney from New Zealand in 1995, has developed a dual career as a writer/curator in the field of contemporary art and photography. In addition to his artspace activity, Blair has curated a range of varied projects in recent years for venues in Australia and New Zealand. Most significantly he was curatorial convener for the 6th (2010–2011) and curator for the 7th (2013) iterations of SCAPE: Christchurch Biennial of Art in Public Space–major projects realized in the aftermath of the devastating Christchurch earthquakes of 2010 and 2011. Blair has lectured in New Zealand art history at the University of Waikato, New Zealand; in art history and theory at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Australia; and in visual communications at the University of Western Sydney, Australia. Blair was president of Contemporary Arts Organisations Australia (CAOs), a formal nationwide network of 12 individual organizations, (2006–2009), and was an external member of the Board of Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney, (2008–2012).

Leah Gordon is an artist and curator and has produced a body of work on the representational boundaries between art, religion, anthropology, postcolonialism, and folk history. Gordon's film and photographic work has been exhibited internationally including the National Portrait Gallery, UK, Parc de la Villette, Paris, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. Her photography book *Kanaval: Vodou, Politics and Revolution on the Streets of Haiti* was published in June 2010. Leah Gordon is the codirector of the Ghetto Biennale in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, was an adjunct curator for the Haitian Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale, was the cocurator of *Kafou: Haiti, History & Art*, at the Nottingham Contemporary and on the curatorial team for *In Extremis: Death and Life in 21st Century Haitian Art* shown in 2012 at the Fowler Museum, UCLA, and 2013 at the Musées de la Civilisation, Quebec City. Gordon is a senior lecturer at the University of Bedfordshire and is represented by Riflemaker Gallery, London.

Mônica Hoff was the ground curator and head of Cloud Formations of the 9th Mercosul Biennial in Porto Alegre in 2013. She is an artist, educator and researcher. Since 2006 she has been the head of education of the Mercosul Biennial's renowned pedagogical programs. She has a double degree in visual arts and art pedagogy from the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), and is currently pursuing there her master's degree in art history, theory and criticism. Apart from her work in the Mercosul Biennial, Mônica has also developed education programming for other projects in Brazil. She coedited, in 2011, with Pablo Helguera the publication *Pedagogia no campo expandido* for the 8th Mercosul Biennial and, in 2013, the anthology *The Cloud* with Sofía Hernandez Chong Cuy for the 9th Mercosul Biennial in PortoAlegre.

Gabriele Horn received her master of arts (M.A.) at the Freie Universität (FU) Berlin, Germany, majoring in art history, history, and sociology in 1985. During and following her master's degree, she worked for the Staatliche Kunsthalle in Berlin. From 1982 to 1994 she was first the assistant in the Education and Development department and then assistant director and interim director. Gabriele Horn was the head of the Department for Cultural Affairs in Berlin from 1994 to 1996. During that time she was also lecturer of cultural management at the Academy for Music Hanns Eisler in Berlin. From 1996 to 2004, she was head of the Department of Fine Arts at the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture in Berlin. Gabriele Horn was head of the department and director of the 3rd Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art in Berlin on a part-time basis in 2004. Since September 2004, Gabriele Horn has been the director of KW Institute for Contemporary Art and of the Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art in Berlin.

Abdellah Karroum is the Director of Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art. Most recently, he was associate curator of the 2012 Triennial at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris and curator of the 2012 Benin Biennial. In 2012 he was appointed artistic director of the Fondation Prince Pierre de Monaco's International Prize for Contemporary Art. Between 1993 and 1996 Karroum served as the assistant curator at the CAPC Museum of Contemporary art in Bordeaux, France. He has been associate curator for various international art biennials including Dakar 2006, Gwangju 2008, and associate director of the Marrakech Biennial in 2007 as well as its artistic director in 2009. His most iconic project is L'appartement 22, an independent art space. This unique art space in Rabat, Morocco, was created in 2002 and is still used today for exhibitions and an artist-in-residence program. He also launched in 2007 *R22 radio*, an experimental online radio and a platform for hosting projects. He founded the research laboratory Art, Technologie et Ecologie at ESAV (Film School in Marrakech) and other art places in Morocco and remains its director.

Kasper König was only twenty-three years old when he curated the Claes Oldenburg exhibition in a museum in Stockholm. While still a student, he organized several exhibitions and published numerous books. In 1985 König became professor of art and the public, a then newly created position at the Academy of Fine Arts in Düsseldorf. Three years later, he accepted a professorship at the Städelschule Frankfurt, where he has served as president of this fine arts college since 1989. During this same period he became founding director of the Portikus, an exhibition hall in Frankfurt/Main. König has organized several large exhibitions, including *Westkunst* (1979) in the Messehallen, Cologne; *von hier aus* (1984) in the Messe, Düsseldorf; and *Der zerbrochene Spiegel* (1993) in Vienna and Hamburg. In 2000 he was responsible for *In-Between Architecture*, the arts projects of the EXPO Hannover. König was the director of the Museum Ludwig in Cologne from 2000 till 2012. Together with Klaus Bußmann, he organized the first Skulptur Projekte Münster in 1977. In summer 2014 Manifesta 10 St. Petersburg curated by Kasper König opens.

Yongwoo Lee is a writer and curator. He was the founding director of the Gwangju Biennale in 1995, and is currently president of the Gwangju Biennale Foundation. He was professor of critical theory and visual culture at Korea University. Lee has published books on audience studies and new media art that include *Mass, The Culture Creator*, *Information and Reality*, *The Origins of Video Art,* and *Nam June Paik,* among others.

Carol Yinghua Lu lives and works in Beijing. She is the contributing editor for *Frieze,* and the executive editor-in-chief, for *Yishu* (Chinese version). She was also the appointed as China researcher for the Asia Art Archive (2005–2007). Moreover, she frequently writes frequently for international art journals and magazines. Lu was on the jury for the Golden Lion Award in the 2011 Venice Biennale and was one of the cocurators for the 9th Gwangju Biennale in 2012. Together with Liu Ding, she cocurated the 7th Shenzhen Biennale (2012). Both were guest curators for Museion, Bolzano in 2013, where they presented the research exhibition project *Little Movements: Self-practice in Contemporary Art*. Since July 2012 Lu is the artistic director of OCAT Shenzhen.

Gerardo Mosquera is an independent art critic, curator, historian, and writer based in Havana and Madrid, advisor to the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam, MUAC, Mexico City, Art in General, New York, and other international art centers. He was a cofounder of the Havana Biennial and curator at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, and Artistic Director for PHotoSpain 2011, 2012 and 2013 in Madrid. He curated the exhibition *Artificial Amsterdam* for de Appel, Amsterdam. Author of numerous texts and books on contemporary art and art theory, he is a member of the advisory board of several art journals, including *Art Nexus* (Bogota), *Calabar*, and *Nka* (New York). He has lectured extensively in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America and North America. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1990.

Patrick Mudekereza is a writer and cultural producer born in 1983 in Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He initiated many art projects with the Vicanos Club collective while studying chemistry at the Polytechnic department of the University of Lubumbashi. Afterwards, he was administrator and curator at the French Cultural Center and co-founded in 2008 Picha, an independent art initiative involved in promoting contemporary art practices. He is now running Picha Art Center and Rencontres Picha, Lubumbashi Biennale.

Rafal Niemojewski is a researcher and cultural producer based in London. He graduated in history of art and curatorial studies from La Sorbonne, Paris, and earned his doctorate from the Royal College of Art, London, for his thesis on the proliferation of the contemporary biennial. More recently, his research interests have expanded to include the 20th century exhibition history, and the role of speech in the realm of artistic and curatorial practice. Outside academia, Niemojewski has led projects for

the Serpentine Gallery, Bergen Kunsthall, Manifesta and documenta 13, and worked as curator at the Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre. In 2013 he founded Artfore, –a research and commissioning agency exploring new ways to produce and experience contemporary art.

Bige Örer is the director of the Istanbul Biennial. Örer received her BA in political science and public administration in French at the Marmara University and completed her first MA in communications management at the University of Toulouse followed by a second MA in sociology at the University of Toulouse II – Le Mirail. Bige Örer joined the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts in 2003 and worked in the coordination of cultural and artistic projects until she was appointed director to the Istanbul Biennial at the age of 30 in 2008. Since 2009 she has been the advisor of the Turkish Pavilion in the Venice Biennale. She has acted as a consultant and a jury member for a number of international cultural and artistic projects and currently is an independent expert in the European Union's department that evaluates cultural funds. She is also a member of the project Capacity Building for Cultural Policy in Turkey and a member of the team that writes the alternative Cultural Policy Compendium of Turkey. In March 2013 she was appointed as the first vice-president of the International Biennial Association. Her breadth of activity embraces both the artistic and the academic fields. Together with Fulya Erdemci, she was the cocurator of the *'Agoraphobia'* exhibition in Berlin, which was a prologue to the 13th Istanbul Biennial. Her contribution to various publications include the research she coconducted on the financing of international contemporary art biennials. She also teaches at the Istanbul Bilgi University on the subject of managing biennials and international exhibitions.

Pan Gongkai is an artist, theoretician, and educator. From 1994 to 1996 he was director of the Research Department at the China Academy of Art (in 1993 the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts was changed into the China Academy of Art). From 1996 to 2001 he was president of the China Academy of Art. In 2001 he came to the Chinese Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) as president where he remains today. He has been conferred an honorary PhD by the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI) in San Francisco, California and the University of Glasgow, Scotland. His installation *Melting* was shown on the 54th Venice Biennale. His large ink and wash painting is spiritually charged, retaining the essential taste of traditional literati painting while showing modern aesthetics, thus exemplifying the modern transformation of traditional ink and wash painting. Pan's ink

and wash paintings have been exhibited in the Paris UNESCO headquarters and major art museums in New York, San Francisco, Beijing, Tokyo, Hong Kong, and Macao. He is the author of *History of Painting in China, Limit and Exploration, Analysis of Pan Tianshou's Painting Skill* and *On Pan Tianshou's Life and Art.* In the last ten years, Pan directed the comprehensive research on modern Chinese art, titled *The Road of Chinese Modern Art*, and published a research monograph and an anthology of seminar essays in 2012. This research sorted and reviewed various topics emerged in modern Chinese art history, conducting a thorough analysis on art in China in 20th century.

Christoph Schäfer is an artist who lives in Hamburg. Since the early 1990s, he has worked on urban everyday life and the production of spaces for collective desires. Schäfer is decisively involved in the project Park Fiction in Hamburg. As a member of this project, Schäfer is interested in the exchange between different subjectivities and the collective redefinition of public spaces. With Park Fiction Schäfer participated in documenta 11. In the context of European Cultural Capital RUHR. 2010, he marked places of the Ruhr Uprising in 1920 with the media of city marketing. In 2010 his first book *The City Is Our Factory* was published by Spector Books. In 2012 his three-piece public work *Topografie der Gemeinheit* (Topography of Meanness) has been installed in a forest and a barn near Bad Bentheim, Germany. As artistic sub-curator he constructed *Container Uni*, a temporary campus for Zeppelin University Friedrichshafen out of 160 containers together with Margit Czenki and Architects Quartier Vier. In 2013 he participated in the 13th Istanbul Biennial.

Nicolaus Schafhausen studied history of art at the University of Berlin and Munich and worked as an artist before starting his career as a curator. He was art director at the Künstlerhaus Stuttgart and director of the Frankfurter Kunstverein, curator at the Nordic Instiute for Contemporary Art (NIFCA) in Helsinki and founder of the European Kunsthalle. Schafhausen was the curator of the German Pavilion at the 52nd (2007) and 53rd (2009) Biennales of Venice. From 2006 to 2012 he ran the Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam. He is also the strategic director of the Fogo Island Arts, an initiative of the Canadian Shorefast Foundation. Since 2012 he is the director of the Kunsthalle Wien. Besides his work as a director and as a curator, Schafhausen is also an author and publisher of numerous publications about modern art.

Başak Şenova is a curator and designer. She has been writing on art, technology, and media, initiating and developing projects and curating exhibitions since 1995.

Şenova studied literature and graphic design (MFA in graphic design and PhD in Art, Design and Architecture at Bilkent University) and attended the 7th Curatorial Training Programme of Stichting De Appel, Amsterdam. Şenova is an editorial correspondent for ibraaz.org and one of the founding members of NOMAD, as well as the organizer of ctrl_alt_del and Upgrade!Istanbul. She is the editor of many publications, including *artist 6, Kontrol Online Magazine*, *Unrecorded*, *Lapses book series*, *UNCOVERED*, *Aftermath, The Translation, D-0 ARK Underground*. Senova was the curator of the Turkish Pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009). As an assistant professor, she lectured at the Faculty of Communication, Kadir Has University, Istanbul (2006–2010) and is currently teaching at Koç University. She cocurated UNCOVERED (Cyprus) and the 2nd Biennial of Contemporary Art, D-0 ARK Underground (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Recently, she was appointed the art gallery chair of (ACM) SIGGRAPH 2014 (Vancouver) and the curator of the Helsinki Photography Biennial 2014. Şenova lives in Ankara and works in Istanbul.

Dr. Royce W. Smith is associate professor of contemporary art history and director of the School of Art, Design and Creative Industries at Wichita State University, Kansas, US. After earning his PhD in Australia in 2005, he joined Wichita State University where he has taught courses about art and theory since 1990, contemporary mega-exhibitions and biennales, curatorial studies, and global contemporary art practices from Asia, the Pacific and the Americas. Smith cocurated the Havana Biennale 2015 in Cuba and was the curator of the 1st Asunción Biennale in Paraguay in 2015.

Alia Swastika was born in Jogyakarta, 1980. She graduated from Communication Department Gadjah Mada University in Jogyakarta. Her career was started when she began to write actively in national newspapers and magazines, especially in the field of arts and culture. From 2002 to 2004, she worked as associate editor for *SURAT* newsletter, a magazine for visual art published by Cemeti Art Foundation, that encouraged her to work as a curator in Cemeti Art House. At the same time she maintained her activity of writing art critics for national and international publications with the main interests on arts, gender, and identity. In 2005, with a grant from Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF), she joined a staff exchange program in UfaFabrik, Berlin, Germany. In 2006, she participated in a fellowship program organized by the Kelola Foundation and funded by the Asian Cultural Council to observe and learn about contemporary art practice in some cities in the US. Another curatorial residency she was at BizArt, Shanghai, 2008. Her recent grant is a research fellow at the National Art Gallery, Singapore, funded by the

Singapore International Foundation. Swastika was the curator of Jogja Biennale XI in 2011 and became one of the co-artistic directors for the Gwangju Biennale IX in South Korea in 2012. She curated special exhibition of Indonesian artists in Art Dubai, 2012.

Sally Tallant is director of Liverpool Biennial, the UK Biennial of International Contemporary Art. From 2001 to 2011 she was head of programs at the Serpentine Gallery, London where she was responsible for the development and delivery of an integrated programme of exhibitions, architecture, education and public programs. She has curated exhibitions in a wide range of contexts including the Hayward Gallery, Serpentine Gallery, hospitals and schools, as well as public commissions. She has developed commissioning programs for artists in a range of contexts and developed long-term projects including *The Edgware Road Project*, *Skills Exchange*, and *Disassembly*. She has also curated performances, sound events, film programs and conferences including initiating the *Park Nights* series in the Serpentine Gallery Pavilions and cocurating the Serpentine Gallery Marathon series with Hans Ulrich Obrist. She is a regular contributor to conferences nationally and internationally, and is a board member of the International Biennial Association (IBA) and Metal.

Tan Boon Hui is a curator and programmer with research interests in the contemporary artistic expressions of Southeast Asia and Asia and the remaking of traditions among artists of today. He is project director and co-curator for the Singapore Biennale 2013: *If the World Changed*, having first proposed the group curatorial model that has defined this edition of the Biennale. From July 2013, he assumed the role of group director of programs at the National Heritage Board (NHB), overseeing exhibitions, programms and outreach events across the museums, institutions and divisions of the NHB. Boon Hui is concurrently artistic director for the Singapore Festivarts 2015, an interdisciplinary festival of visual and performing art, design and film in France. Prior to this, he was also project director for the Singapore Biennale 2011: *Open House* and concurrently director of the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) from 2009 to 2013. In the latter role, he oversaw the transformation of SAM into a leading center for contemporary Southeast Asian and Asian art. Tan has led the curatorial team in building one of the most important public collections of contemporary Southeast Asian art in the world, developing international exchanges, and the creation of new commissioning platforms. He was head of programming at the National Museum of Singapore from 2006 to 2009. From 1989 to 2002, he was assistant curator for Southeast Asia at the Asian Civilisations Museums. From

2002–2005 he handled international development and visual and literary arts development at the National Arts Council. At the Council, he was project manager for key initiatives like the Singapore Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2004; International Society for the Performing Arts Congress Singapore: Face Asia 2004; IFACCA's 2nd World Summit for Arts and Culture; and the Singapore presentation at the Sâo Paulo Biennial 2002.

Marieke van Hal is an art historian and the founding director of Biennial Foundation and initiator of the World Biennial Forum. From 2001–2006, van Hal was General Coordinator of Manifesta Foundation, where she was in charge of the development and production of three editions of the European Biennial of Contemporary Art. In the same time period she served as managing editor of *Manifesta Journal, Journal on Curatorial Practices*, working with chief editors Victor Misiano and Igor Zabel. In 2007 van Hal was director of the first Athens Biennale *Destroy Athens*, for which she initiated the European Biennial Network, a two-year exchange program between the Athens Biennial, Liverpool Biennial, Berlin Biennial, Lyon Biennial, and Istanbul Biennial. Together with Elena Filipovic and Solveig Øvstebø, van Hal organized the Bergen Biennial Conference, Bergen Kunsthall, Norway (2009), and coedited *The Biennial Reader: An Anthology on Large-Scale Perennial Exhibitions of Contemporary Art* (Bergen Kunsthall, Hatje Cantz), 2010. Van Hal was an MPhil research graduate at the Curating Contemporary Art department of the Royal College of Art, London (2011). She served as a jury member for the curatorial selection of the 9th Gwangju Biennale (2012) and the 4th Thessaloniki Biennale (2013). She is a Board member of the Bergen Assembly, Norway. Van Hal has lectured extensively on the topic of the biennial.

Sabine B. Vogel was born in Essen, Germany, and has lived in Austria since 1995, where she obtained her PhD on biennials at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna. Since 1986 she is a freelance writer on art, critic, and curator (Vienna Secession 1992, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf 1994, Wiener Kunstverein 1997–1999, Belvedere 2009, ifa Gallery Berlin 2011); since 2003 she is teaching at University of Applied Art, Vienna; since 2009 she is president of AICA AUSTRIA (International Art Critic Association). She has published several books like *Power of Ornament* (Belvedere, Vienna 2009); *Biennials – Art on a Global Scale* (Springer Verlag, 2010), *Globalkunst*, Bd. 220 (Kunstforum International, 2013).

Jun Yang is an artist based in Vienna, Austria, Yokohama, Japan and Taipei, Taiwan. He has participated in various bienniales, including the Gwangju Biennale (2012),

Taipei Biennial (2008), Lofoten International Art Festival (Norway, 2008), Liverpool Biennial (2006), 51st Venice Biennial (2005) and Manifesta 4 (Frankfurt, 2002). Jun Yang is the 25th recipient of the Otto Mauer Art Award (Austria, 2005). He is also one of the founders of Taipei Contemporary Art Center, which evolved following a project he initiated for the Taipei Biennial 2008.

Ursula Zeller is director and CEO of the Zeppelin Museum in Friedrichshafen, Germany. From 1995 to 2007 she served as head of the Visual Arts Department at the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (ifa), Stuttgart/Berlin. 1990 until 1995 she was deputy director at the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart (Galerie der Stadt Stuttgart). Previously she worked as assistant curator at the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart (1988–1990).) and was Fellow of the J. P. Getty Foundation at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University (1987–1988). For more than twenty-five years Zeller has curated exhibitions on contemporary art, published intensely in the field of contemporary art and contributed to art journals. At ifa she was the editor of *The German contributions to the Venice Biennale 1895–2007* (DuMont Verlag, Cologne: 2007) and also organized several conferences including Art in Central and Eastern Europe, Art Exchange, and the Biennials in Dialogue series, taking place in Kassel, Germany (2000, together with René Block), Frankfurt, Germany (2002), Singapore (2006) and Shanghai, China (2008, together with Elke aus dem Moore).

Zhang Qing, born in Suzhou, lives and workes in Beijing, China. He is head of the Curatorial and Research Department of the National Art Museum of China. He is a member of CIMAM and the International Biennial Association and he is a guest professor at Tongji University and Yunnan University. His latest position was deputy director of the Shanghai Art Museum and director of the Shanghai Biennale Office. Since 1999, Zhang Qing has been focusing on the curating and researching of Shanghai Biennale while writing a book titled *Shanghai Biennale Research*.

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