

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
& CONVERSATIONS  
REPORT**

4 – 7 March 2015  
Sharjah

INTERNATIONAL  
B I E N N I A L  
ASSOCIATION



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission Statement | p. 5

2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly & Conversations Program | p. 6

Letter from Yongwoo Lee | p. 10  
President, International Biennial Association

Introduction to “Conversations” | p. 12

Speaker Biographies | p. 13

Introduction to the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly | p. 15

2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly Resolutions | p. 16

Photo Gallery | p. 18

Acknowledgements | p. 23



*The IBA is a platform for establishing, researching and exchanging knowledge and information necessary for institutions and professionals, who plan and curate periodic art events such as biennials and triennials, artists, researchers and others concerned with contemporary art.*

*The IBA is a center for producing multidisciplinary discourse that embodies the productive and discursive voices of the global biennial community. It develops a range of diverse programs to support rights and promote mutual understanding between institutions and their individual members, who play pivotal roles in both its practice and discourse.*

## 2<sup>ND</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY & CONVERSATIONS PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY, March 4

TIME	EVENT AND VENUE
19:00 – 20:30	<p><b>Welcome Dinner</b>            (Welcome kit and information folders)            Venue: Shababeek, Al Qasba, Sharjah +971 6 554 0444</p>

THURSDAY, March 5

TIME	EVENT AND VENUE
10:00 – 13:00	<p><b>Sharjah Biennial Official Opening</b>            Abkhazia Anemabassy Opening Hours with Maxim Gvinjia, part of <b>Secession Sessions</b> by Eric Baudelaire            Venue: Sharjah Institute for Theatrical Arts</p>
10:00 – 19:00	<p><b>Reception and Information Desk</b>            Venue: Sharjah Institute for Theatrical Arts</p>
13:00 – 14:00	<p><b>Lunch Break</b>            Venue: Sharjah Institute for Theatrical Arts</p>
14:00 – 19:00	<p><b>Conversations Program</b>            Venue: Sharjah Institute for Theatrical Arts</p>
14:00 – 14:15	<p><b>Welcome and Introduction</b>            Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi, President, Sharjah Art Foundation            Venue: Sharjah Institute for Theatrical Arts</p>
14:15 – 15:30	<p><b>Keynote Speech: “Rethinking Cosmopolitanism: Is Afropolitan the Answer?”</b>            Salah Hassan, Goldwin Smith Professor and Director of the Institute for Comparative Modernities (ICM), and Professor of African and African Diaspora Art History and Visual Culture in the Africana Studies and Research Center, and the Department of History of Art and Visual Studies, Cornell University</p>

15:30 – 16:30	<b>Conversation Between:</b> Christine Tohme, Director, Lebanese Association for Plastic Arts and Home Works - Beirut Khalil Rabah, Artist and Director, Riwaq Biennale - Palestine Moderated by Tarek Abou el Fetouh, Independent Curator
16:30 – 17:00	<b>Coffee Break</b>
17:00 – 18:00	<b>Presentation 1: Dream City - Tunis</b> Sofiane Ouissi, Director, Dream City
18:00 – 19:00	<b>Presentation 2: Lubumbashi Biennial</b> Patrick Mudekereza, Director, Lubumbashi Biennale
20:00 – 21:30	<b>Dinner and Biennial Awards Ceremony</b> Venue: Calligraphy Square
21:30	<b>Sharjah Biennial Performance</b> <i>Souls' Landscapes: Violence, magical superstructures &amp; invisible guardians</i> Performance by Uriel Barthélémi Venue: Mirage City Cinema, SAF Art Spaces

FRIDAY, March 6

TIME	EVENT AND VENUE
10:00 – 12:00	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> IBA Board Meeting</b> Venue: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Sharjah Institute for Theatrical Arts
10:00 – 16:00	<b>Reception and Information</b> Venue: Sharjah Institute for Theatrical Arts
12:00 – 13:00	<b>Lunch Break</b> Venue: Sharjah Institute for Theatrical Arts
13:00 – 13:30	<b>Sign-in for 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly</b> Venue: Sharjah Institute for Theatrical Arts
13:30 – 16:00	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly</b> IBA members only Venue: Sharjah Institute for Theatrical Arts

15:30 – 16:00	<b>Coffee Break</b>
16:00 – 18:30*	<b>Sharjah Biennial Performance</b> <i>Fanfare Funérailles</i> (Funeral Brass) Performance by Papy Ebotani Venue: Arts Square to Calligraphy Square
Until Sunset	<b>Sharjah Biennial Performance</b> <i>Use Like Water</i> (end of the performance) Performance by Nikhil Chopra Venue: Bait Obaid Al Shamsi, Corniche Street, SAF Art Spaces
19:00 – 20:30	<b>IBA Members' Banquet</b> Venue: Zahr El-Laymoun, Al Majaz Waterfront 6, Sharjah, UAE +971 6 552 1144
20:30 – 21:30	<b>Sharjah Biennial Performance</b> <i>Le Cargo</i> Performance by Faustin Linyekula Venue: Sharjah Institute for Theatrical Arts
22:00	<b>Sharjah Biennial Performance</b> <i>In the absence of the objects seen</i> Screening event by Ayreen Anastas and Rene Gabri Venue: Bait Obaid Al Shamsi, Corniche Street, SAF Art Spaces

SATURDAY, March 7

TIME	EVENT AND VENUE
10:00 – 17:00	<b>Sharjah Biennial 12 Tour</b> Depart from Radisson Hotel to The Flying Saucer and Kalba Venue: Various
10:30 – 11:30	<b>Sharjah Biennial 12 Tour</b> Installation by Hassan Khan Venue: The Flying Saucer
13:00 – 14:00	<b>Lunch</b> Venue: Kalba, The Restaurant



14:30 – 16:00	<b>Sharjah Biennial 12 Tour</b> Installation by Adrián Villar Rojas Venue: Kalba Ice Factory
18:30	<b>Sharjah Biennial 12 Tour</b> Return to Khalid Port Warehouses
19:00	<b>Sharjah Biennial Performance</b> <i>Souls' Landscapes: The great mantle of night which has enveloped us...</i> Performance by Uriel Barthélémi Venue: Warehouse 1 at Khalid Port
20:00 – 00:00	<b>Farewell Dinner</b> Venue: Rooftop of Building H, SAF Art Spaces
21:30 – 22:30	<b>Sharjah Biennial Performance</b> <i>Le Cargo</i> Performance by Faustin Linyekula Venue: Sharjah Institute for Theatrical Arts
23:00	<b>Sharjah Biennial Film Program</b> Screening of <i>Edouard Glissant One World in Relation</i> , directed by Manthia Diawara Venue: Mirage City Cinema, SAF Art Spaces

## LETTER FROM YONGWOO LEE

My esteemed colleagues and friends, I am honored to welcome you here today. We are delighted to open the International Biennial Association's 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly in collaboration with the Sharjah Art Foundation. It is our greatest pleasure to have you join us, in celebration of both IBA and the opening of Sharjah Biennial 12.

The International Biennial Association is a platform and collaborative organization not only for biennial professionals, but all those who produce culture within the contemporary art field today.

In a landscape of increasing internationalism in the world of biennials and contemporary art, it is ever more important to take note of the regional movements that create the composite. As we began the discussion yesterday with the *Conversations* program, the time has come to take a closer examination of the cultural, social, political mobility of the biennial.

All periodic art events have one of two innate qualities. The first is a cosmopolitan strategy that stresses communication and global networking, while the other maintains an aesthetic of regionalism that reflects head on the political realities and beautiful traditions of a region. These two distinct approaches do not raise conflict within biennials, but concurrently seek the most effective methodologies. We can attest to this phenomenon and cooperative resolution from yesterday's discussion.

As our numbers grow (those of us in the field of periodic art events), so too, does the urgency with which we consider the role and effect of the biennial form. It is key that we continue the conversation as we move into our shared future. Though this is only IBA's second General Assembly, we already have among us principal figures from across the global biennial community and a representative diversity of emerging and alternative events. I have great hope and anticipation for our association, as our philosophical and theoretical conversations begin to manifest into our artistic practice throughout the world.

And it is my privilege to participate in this critical juncture alongside the distinguished members of the International Biennial Association.

I would like to take this moment to congratulate Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi on the successful opening of Sharjah Biennial 12, as well as give my sincere thanks to her support in hosting this event. Her generosity and the coordination of her team at the Sharjah Art Foundation helped gather us today on this memorable occasion.

My gratitude to our presenters yesterday, who shared both illuminating ideas and rich experiences. To Professor Salah Hassan, our honored guest and keynote speaker, Khalil Rabah of Riwaq Biennale, Christine Tohme of Home Works, Sofiane Ouissi of Dream City, and Patrick Mudekereza of Lubumbashi Biennial and our own IBA Board—thank

you. I would also like to recognize Tarek Abou el Fetouh, whose collaboration in the organization of the public program was pivotal.

Finally, I'd like to thank the City of Gwangju for their continued support and Arts Council Korea, for their contribution.

Yongwoo Lee  
President of the International Biennial Association

## INTRODUCTION TO CONVERSATIONS

The concept of Conversations focuses on the creative structure of periodic events and its social practice that challenges space and time in contemporary art. In particular, there will be discussions that investigate how internationalism and multi-nationalism in contemporary art is encountered and practiced within the larger global field. The fact that artists and curators move continuously amongst biennials and festivals has created an alternative, cross-national and intangible space where discursive voices can be heard and shared.

Notions of cosmopolitanism and transnationalism have been rendered ever more visible in the realm of contemporary art and its practices, with international biennials at its heart. The form has already reached some 280 iterations as biennials widespread and decentralized across different corners of the globe, and has marked a shift in cultural production and consumption from a framework of dense cultural centers to a multiplicity of cultural networks. As a result, contemporary art across the world, increasingly, exists in the gap between multiple cultural influences and zones of exchange.

The program will include a one-on-one discussion between Khalil Rabah (Riwaq Biennial) and Christine Tohme (Home Works) moderated by Tarek Abou el Fetouh, and two presentations by Soufiane Ouissi (Dream City) and Patrick Mudekereza (Lubumbashi Biennial). The keynote speech by Salah Hassan, Goldwin Smith Professor and Director of the Institute for Comparative Modernities (ICM), and Professor of African and African Diaspora Art History and Visual Culture in the Africana Studies and Research Center, and the Department of History of Art and Visual Studies, Cornell University, is titled "Rethinking Cosmopolitanism: Is Afropolitan the Answer?" The program will be open to the public and free of admission.

Conversations was held at the Sharjah Institute for Theatrical Arts on March 5, 2015.

## SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

**Salah M. Hassan** is the Goldwin Smith Professor and Director of the Institute for Comparative Modernities (ICM), and Professor of African and African Diaspora Art History and Visual Culture in the Africana Studies and Research Center, and the Department of History of Art and Visual Studies, Cornell University. He is also a curator and art critic and editor of *Nka: Journal of contemporary African Art* published by Duke Press.

**Christine Tohme** is a curator and the artistic director of Ashkal Alwan, the Lebanese Association for Plastic Arts that organizes Home Works forum and initiated in 2011 the Home Works study program in Beirut Lebanon.

Home Works: A Forum on Cultural Practices is a multidisciplinary platform that takes place in Lebanon every two to three years. Launched by Ashkal Alwan in 2002, it has evolved into one of the most vibrant platforms for contemporary cultural practices in the Arab region and internationally.

Artists, curators, writers, thinkers, and cultural practitioners gather for 10 days in order to share their works, which take the form of exhibitions, lectures, panels, artists' talks, screenings, workshops and publications, as well as theatre, dance and music performances.

Each edition is thematic, and what links the forum's participants together is their approach to a common set of urgent, timely questions. Their work endeavors to create methods of critical inquiry and aesthetic form capable of conveying those questions meaningfully—and proposing possible solutions.

**Khalil Rabah** is an artist and artistic director of the Riwaq Biennale.

The Riwaq Biennale is named after an institution, not a place. Riwaq is the Centre of Architectural Conservation in Ramallah. The biennale was initiated in 2005, to expand upon Riwaq's approach aiming at the revitalization of historic centers of 50 towns and villages throughout Palestine. The biennale is invested in Riwaq's efforts to clarify the growing political and epistemic significance of architectural heritage in local towns and villages.

The Riwaq Biennale focuses on bodies in space: who was here before, who's still around, and what could structures like Riwaq have to do with that. RB may not prioritize exhibitionary display, it does nonetheless emphasize materiality. It approaches objects as aesthetic touchstones, historical pointers and functional infrastructures alike. It addresses the look of thought, the traction of theory, the promises of sustainability in contemporary art, within Palestine and beyond.

**Sofiane Ouissi** is a dancer, choreographer and, together with Selma Ouissi, the artist-director of Dream City, Biennial of Contemporary Art in Public Space in Tunis.

Dream City is a multidisciplinary event that aims to develop and support artistic creations in public spaces in Tunis exploring new forms of engagement between artists, residents and the public through research, debate, experimentation and artistic creations.

**Patrick Mudekereza** is a writer and cultural producer, living and working in Lubumbashi, DR Congo. He co-founded the Picha Art Center, and helps stage Rencontres Picha (Lubumbashi Biennale), which is dedicated to photography and video art.

Following the first edition in June 2008, the art center was founded to support the development of artistic practice locally. Picha Art Center assists local artists, musicians and writers, and offers a diverse program of activities focused on innovative artistic practices. It is the first center of its kind in the Katanga region.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE 2ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The International Biennial Association's 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly was held at the Sharjah Institute for Theatrical Arts in Sharjah, UAE. The General Assembly is the association's most important event of the year, and is attended by directors, curators, artists, contemporary art world associations and independent professionals from across the globe.

The 2015 event included support for 15 members of the IBA, who received Participation Grants that covered travel and accommodation costs. To be eligible, candidates had to represent biennials designated as an emerging market and developing economy by the International Monetary Fund, or be present on the Development Assistance Committee List of Official Development Assistance compiled by the OECD. The following were provided with the 2015 Participation Grants, sponsored by the Sharjah Art Foundation.

1. Asian Art Biennale: Md. Jafar Iqbal
2. Baltic Triennial of International Art: Kestutis Kuizinas
3. Bienal Internacional de Arte SIART Bolivia: Norma Campos Vera
4. Biennial of Muralism and Public Art of Colombia: Carolina Jaramillo
5. Bucharest Biennale: Răzvan Ion
6. Colombo Art Biennale: Annoushka Hempel
7. Dak'Art Biennial: Mauro Petroni
8. Ghetto Biennial: Leah Gordon
9. International Biennial Research Center, China: Qing Zhang
10. Istanbul Biennial: Elif Kamışlı
11. Jogja Biennial: Woto Wibowo
12. Kaunas Biennial: Virginija Vitkienė
13. Land Art Mongolia: Marc Schmitz
14. Mediations Biennale: Tomasz Wendland
15. Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art: Alisa Prudnikova

## 2ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS

Changes to the Articles of Incorporation as approved by the majority of the General Assembly are as follows (changes highlighted in yellow):

### Article 3: Objectives

The objectives of IBA shall be:

1. To share and expand activities of curatorial, artistic creation and knowledge production through cooperation and exchange among biennials around the world.
2. To create a horizontal network within the broader biennial world to further develop cultural and artistic production and to create a space for communication, cooperation and information exchange by providing strategies, methodologies and vision.

The Mission Statement:

The IBA is a platform for establishing, researching and exchanging knowledge and information necessary for institutions and professionals, who plan and curate periodic art events such as biennials and triennials, artists, researchers and others concerned with contemporary art.

The IBA is a center for producing multidisciplinary discourse that embodies the productive and discursive voices of the global biennial community. It develops a range of diverse programs to support rights and promote mutual understanding between institutions and their individual members, who play pivotal roles in both its practice and discourse.

### Article 8: Organization and Operation of the Board

1. No more than seven members from any region (as defined by the General Assembly of the IBA) may be elected to the Board. A Board Member candidate shall be selected among the Individual Members by the recommendation of more than three Board Members with a majority vote of Board Members present at the relevant Board Meeting. Eligible candidates will be elected by obtaining a majority vote of all Institutional and Individual Members present at the relevant General Meeting.

### Article 12: Rights and Duties

4. Institutional Members shall provide free admission to their representative biennial or other periodic art event for those holding valid IBA Membership Cards.



## **Article 15: Organization and Management of General Meetings**

6. The General Meeting is established by the attendance of one-third of the Institutional and Individual Members (**Institutional** attendance can be delegated). Decisions shall be made by a majority vote of the members that are present at the General Meeting.

**PHOTO GALLERY**



Sharjah Institute for Theatrical Arts, UAE



IBA Members during the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly & Conversations in Sharjah



Coffee break during the Conversations program on March 5



Lunch at the Sharjah Institute for Theatrical Arts



“Rethinking Cosmopolitanism: Is Afropolitan the Answer?” by Salah Hassan



“Conversation Between” with Christine Tohme (center) and Khalil Rabah (right)  
Moderated by Tarek Abou el Fetouh (left)



“Dream City – Tunis” presentation by Sofiane Ouissi



“Lubumbashi Biennale” presentation by Patrick Mudekereza



(From left) Yongwoo Lee, Hoor Al Qasimi and Gabriele Horn at the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly



IBA Members at the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly in Sharjah

All photos courtesy of Event Images

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our gratitude to the Sharjah Art Foundation for co-organizing the Conversations program on the occasion of the International Biennial Association's 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly. A special thanks to Tarek Abou el Fetouh for coordinating with the speakers.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly & Conversations was generously supported by the City of Gwangju and Arts Council Korea.

INTERNATIONAL  
BIENNIAL  
ASSOCIATION



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