

Biennale

Press release

24 May 2022, Mannheim/Ludwigshafen/Heidelberg

Biennale team delivers a positive summary. Focus on sustainability both in terms of content and production.

Outlook: The curators of the Biennale 2024 have been determined.

The third *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* ended after nine weeks last Sunday, 22 May 2022. Under the title *From Where I Stand*, the edition curated by the Dutch curator Iris Sikking displayed photographic positions by around 40 international artists, collectives and photographers at the intersections of art, journalism and activism. With its six exhibitions in six venues in Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg, the Biennale reached around 26,000 visitors. In addition, an average of around 60,000 travellers and visitors to Mannheim station and more than 40,000 travellers and visitors to Heidelberg station will continue to have the opportunity to see the Biennale's prominently placed photographic installations with works by Anna Ehrenstein (Mannheim), Eline Benjaminsen and Misha Vallejo Prut (both Heidelberg) until 22 June 2022.

Shahidul Alam, Tanzim Wahab and Munem Wasif have been appointed as curators of the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* 2024. Together with four other potential curators, they were invited for a presentation and were able to convince the board and team of the Biennale as well as the directors of the six participating exhibition houses with their curatorial approach. With the three curators from Bangladesh, the Biennale is being conceived for the first time by a trio from outside Europe. The fourth *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* will take place from 16 March to 12 May 2024. In terms of content, it will deal with diverse forms of collaboration, plurality of voices between the Global North and the Global South.

+++++ The *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* 2022 is supported by the three cities of Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg, BASF SE as premium sponsor and many other supporters. +++++

In addition to the visitors counted in the exhibition houses, several hundred interested people took part in the analogue and digital accompanying programme of the Biennale 2022. This included formats such as guided tours, talks with artists, workshops for adults as well as offers for children, young people and families, the *Long Night of Photography*, the *Campus Days* as an offer for students and, in collaboration with the Heinrich Böll Foundation Baden-Württemberg, the Heinrich Böll Foundation Rheinland-Pfalz and the Institute for European Art History at the University of Heidelberg, an eight-part event series on the topic of *photography and sustainability*.

The digital programme, developed within the framework of "dive in. Programme for Digital Interactions" of the Kulturstiftung des Bundes (German Federal Cultural Foundation), funded by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM) through the NEUSTART KULTUR programme, extended the Biennale into virtual space with digital exhibition tours, the web application *Biennale in a Book*, the *Digital Dialogue Day* with digital artist talks, curator tours and the podcast "Biennale to go". These digital offerings will continue to be available on the Biennale's website and YouTube channel beyond the duration of the exhibitions.

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For the opening of the Biennale, a catalogue (German/English) with texts by Iris Sikking was published by Fw:Books. In collaboration with the Fotomuseum Antwerp, the Biennale has also produced the 3rd edition of the magazine *Trigger*. As a package, the Biennale 2022 catalogue and the *Trigger* magazine will continue to be offered through the Biennale office at a special price of 30 € (plus shipping costs). Individually, the catalogue and the magazine can be purchased for 16 € each (plus shipping costs) through the Biennale Office. Orders can be placed by email to info@biennalefotografie.de.

The Biennale was particularly successful behind the scenery: Around half of the newly produced artistic works shown in the exhibitions could be produced sustainably. Instead of aluminium dibond, the artworks were laminated on paper honeycomb cardboard, wallpaper was replaced by reusable textiles or PVC tarpaulins. The supporting programme of the Biennale 2022 also focused on the topic of sustainability: talks on sustainability in artistic and applied photography, a workshop for artists on the sustainable use of materials and a large-scale waste collection campaign (clean up) around the Kunsthalle Mannheim were implemented. The *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* is a large-scale, cross-city project with six participating institutions and many long-standing collaboration partners. It relies on a sustainable structure of cooperation that bundles the expertise of all participants and enables resource-saving work.

The focus on the topic of sustainability is to be further expanded at the Biennale 2024: For the coming edition, the Biennale aims to produce all new productions sustainably.

Outlook: the curators of the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* 2024

With the appointment of three non-European curators, the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* is taking a further step in the development of its international orientation after various international collaborations in 2020 and 2022, thus expanding its network of individuals and institutions with whom an exchange or collaboration is to be stimulated.

About the 2024 curatorial team

Shahidul Alam (b. 1955) is a photojournalist, social activist, curator and writer, and holds a PhD in chemistry. His areas of interest as an activist, photographer as well as a curator are social issues, including natural disasters, human rights violations, government and military oppression in Bangladesh and the "disappearance" of political opponents. He has received several awards for his photographic work and his political commitment.

Tanzim Wahab (b. 1986) is a curator, researcher and lecturer. He is the director of Chobi Mela International Festival of Photography. He has headed several curatorial research projects and exhibitions including *Breaking Ground* – featuring works of the modernist forerunners of Bengal, *(Dis) Place* – an exhibition about displacement; looking at the possibility of a post-historical space and function as a symbolic "act of discharge" (with Hadrien Diez) and currently co-editing *Primary Documents* – The Museum of Modern Arts' (MoMA) publication series on international art. He has also been a fellow of several programs, including Art for Social Change, United States, and Art Think South Asia (ATSA), India, among others.

Munem Wasif (b. 1983) is an artist, curator and educator. His work examines the concepts of 'documents' and 'archives' and their corresponding influence on politically and geographically complex issues. He has been a co-curator of Chobi Mela since the festival's eighth edition, and has curated three major survey shows for the festival: of legendary Bangladeshi photographer Anwar Hossain (2015), Nasir Ali Mamun (2017) and Rashid Talukder (2019). In 2020/21, Wasif was a Fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. His works have been shown

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in institutions worldwide, including the Centre Pompidou, Whitechapel Gallery, Victoria & Albert Museum, Fotomuseum Winterthur and the Chobi Mela Photo Festival.

Participating institutions

Heidelberger Kunstverein, Kunsthalle Mannheim, Kunstverein Ludwigshafen, PORT25 – Raum für Gegenwartskunst (Mannheim), Wilhelm-Hack-Museum (Ludwigshafen), ZEPHYR – Raum für Fotografie in den Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen (Mannheim)

Information on all exhibitions of the Biennale 2022 and the installations in the stations as well as **image material** of the Biennale are available for download at www.biennalefotografie.de.

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