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## PRESS RELEASE

# THE EUROPE OF MUSEUMS

### FOR A CONTRIBUTION OF THE MUSEUMS OF MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART TO THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

## SYMPOSIUM / MONDAY 8 APRIL 2019 / 9AM–6PM

GRANDE SALLE, LEVEL -1

A rise in populism, nationalist movements, authoritarian crackdowns, mistrust of institutions: in this year of Brexit and new European elections, the tensions swirling around the continent seem to be putting the whole idea of a common destiny for the citizens of Europe in doubt. Museums of modern and contemporary art cannot be excluded from the debate.

Their twofold mission – to promote cultural heritage via their collections, while providing a platform for artists who address the big issues of the day – means these museums can contribute to articulating a sense of Europe that is both rooted in the past and ready to meet the challenges of the present.

Museums of modern and contemporary art come in for a lot of criticism: while they have a role in developing a shared consciousness (by bringing to light the most vitriolic, radical and unsettling works), they lay themselves open to the harshest criticism and suspicions of subverting national and European identity, and are always the first targets to be accused of elitism.

In what way are museums of modern and contemporary art engaged in Europe's future and what part can they actively play in it? *The Europe of Museums* conference will gather together directors of various European establishments, as well as artists and researchers, to examine these questions.

## Le Monde

news tank  
culture

décider en toute connaissance



## THE TALKS

### Testify to the activism of artists

Like German photographer **Wolfgang Tillmans**, who will discuss the initiatives he has led to oppose Brexit and safeguard the European Union;

### Review the current situation

**Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev** (Castello di Rivoli, Turin), **Alistair Hudson** (Director of the Manchester Gallery, Manchester) and **Bernd Scherer** (Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin) will examine how membership of the European Union, and the crises that befall it, affect their institutions, as well as the most tangible constraints on their programming choices. Together, they will look back on the cultural battles that have raged across the European continent and analyse how places of modern and contemporary art can be called upon, or take the decision themselves, to react;

### Maintain critical vigilance

Challenging the clear European conscience and highlighting the blind spots of Eurocentrism is “part of the job” for many contemporary artists around the world. Brazilian anthropologist **Rita Segato** (University of Brasilia) and philosophers **Patrice Maniglier** (Paris Nanterre University) and **Mathieu Potte-Bonneville** (Department of Cultural Development, Centre Pompidou) will discuss whether and how criticism of and support for Europe can be understood together;

### Share experience

Europe encompasses a wide range of social, economic and cultural scenarios, and so is teeming with various alliances, rivalries and confrontations. From the north of Europe to the south, from central Europe to its western fringes, how is this plurality of perspectives reflected in the museum sphere? This question will be put to the directors of various European art institutions, including **Marina Fokidis** (Curatorial Advisor for Documenta 14, Athens), **Charles Esche** (Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven), **Suzanne Cotter** (MUDAM, Luxembourg) and **Malgorzata Ludwiziak** (Uzajdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw);

### Formulate joint action

Bringing the event to a close, **Manuel Borja-Villel** (Reina Sofia Museum, Madrid) and **Bernard Blistène** (MNAM, Paris) will discuss upcoming collaborations within the network of European institutions, the Europe of Museums conference being the first of these.

Programme still subject to additions and/or changes

## THE SPEAKERS

### **Manuel Borja-Villel**

Having previously been director of the Fundació Antoni Tàpies and the Museu d'Art Contemporani in Barcelona (MACBA), Manuel Borja-Villel is now director of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (MNCARS) in Madrid, where he has completely reorganised the collections and how works are displayed, while also stepping up relations with various European and international museums.

### **Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev**

Writer, art historian and curator Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev is currently director of Castello di Rivoli and the Fondazione Francesco Federico Cerruti in Turin, Italy. A visiting professor at Northwestern University, she was curator of Documenta (13) in Kassel, Germany and, in 2012, was named the most influential person in the art world by Art Review magazine.

### **Suzanne Cotter**

Suzanne Cotter is now director of MUDAM, the Grand Duke Jean Museum of Modern Art in Luxembourg, having previously held the post of artistic director of the Museu de Arte Contemporânea - Fundação de Serralves in Porto, Portugal. Suzanne is well known on the international art scene, in particular for her role as curator with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and for having curated the Sharjah Biennial 10, in the United Arab Emirates.

### **Charles Esche**

Charles Esche is director of the Vanabbemuseum in Eindhoven (the Netherlands) and lectures in contemporary art and exhibition curating at the University of the Arts, in London. An advisor to the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht, he was co-curator of Power and Other Things, Europalia at BOZAR, Brussels in 2017; at the MACAN Museum in Jakarta in 2017; and at The Museum Gone Astray, as part of Printemps de Septembre, in Toulouse in 2016.

### **Marina Fokidis**

Writer and curator Marina Fokidis is based in Athens, Greece, where she founded the Kunsthalle Athena and South as a State of Mind – a biannual arts and culture journal. As head of the artistic office for Documenta 14, Marina Fokidis was heavily involved in organising the event, which took place simultaneously in Kassel and Athens.

### **Alistair Hudson**

Alistair Hudson is director of the Whitworth and Manchester Art Galleries in the UK. He is a former director of the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (mima), where he developed the concept of the Useful Museum, steering the institution towards promoting art as a tool for education and social change.

Works, works

### **Malgorzata Ludwisiak**

Malgorzata Ludwisiak is director of the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in Warsaw, Poland. Malgorzata studied philosophy and has written several critical texts and was previously deputy director of the Centre for Contemporary Art in Łódź, where she organised the exhibition Correspondences: Modern Art and Universalism.

**Patrice Maniglier**

Philosopher and lecturer at Paris Nanterre University Patrice Maniglier specialises in contemporary French thinking. His works encompassing social science, basic philosophy and art theory have drawn great attention. In 2018, he was project manager of the 'May 68 in theory' seminar at the Centre Pompidou.

**Bernd Scherer**

Bernd Scherer is honorary professor at the Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany, and director of the city's Haus der Kulturen der Welt (House of World Cultures – HKW), where he runs large-scale programmes such as '100 Years from Now' and 'The New Alphabet'. Taking in philosophy, semiotics and aesthetics, his work focuses on intercultural issues.

**Rita Segato**

Argentinian anthropologist Rita Segato is currently professor emeritus at the University of Brasilia in Brazil, Anibal Quijano Chair at the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid, Spain, and Rita Segato Chair of 'Uneasy Thinking' at the National University of San Martin, Argentina. Her research explores the relationships between gender, racism and colonialism, with a particular focus on indigenous communities and African-Americans in Latin America.

**Wolfgang Tillmans**

Wolfgang Tillmans is a photographer and contemporary artist based in London, UK and Berlin, Germany. He was the winner of the Turner Prize in 2000 and his work is exhibited in the leading international institutions. In 2016, he founded a 'Pro-EU, Anti-Brexit' campaign, for which he created a series of original works featuring images and text in favour of the UK remaining in the European Union.

**Bernard Blistène**

Bernard Blistène is Director of the the National Museum of Modern Art at the Centre Pompidou since 2003. A Heritage conservation official, he has successively been Curator at the National Museum of Modern Art at the Centre Pompidou, Director of the Musées de Marseille, General inspector for the artistic creation, Director of the Cultural Development Department at the Centre Pompidou. He will be the curator of the upcoming retrospective dedicated to French artist Christian Boltanski in the fall 2019 at the Centre Pompidou.

**Mathieu Potte-Bonneville**

A philosopher, Senior lecturer at the ENS (École normale supérieure) in Lyon, Mathieu Potte-Bonneville is the Director of the Cultural Development Department at the Centre Pompidou. He previously presided the International College of Philosophy in Paris and always made sure, through his positions at the Institut Français as well, to create dialogues between the French intellectual scene and the international ones.