

### Biennial as seismograph: Geopolitical factors, funding strategies and potential international collaboration

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ifa Edition Culture and Foreign Policy

## Biennial as seismograph

Geopolitical factors, funding strategies and potential international collaboration

Melanie Vietmeier



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## Content

<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>14</b>
1.1 Objectives and methods .....	16
1.2 Limits of the study.....	19
<b>2. Remapping: "Old force fields" and new geographies</b> .....	<b>20</b>
2.1 Newly founded biennials (2015–2020) .....	20
2.2 Art festivals on the African continent .....	22
2.2.1 Northern Africa .....	24
2.2.2 West Africa .....	26
2.2.3 Central Africa .....	29
2.2.4 East Africa .....	32
2.2.5 Southern Africa .....	33
2.2.6 Trends and needs.....	34
<b>3. Organisational and funding structures</b> .....	<b>37</b>
3.1 Forms of organisation – Tradition and trends.....	37
3.1.1 Founding bodies and founding contexts.....	38
3.1.2 Typologising biennials.....	39
3.1.3 „Re-thinking“ Formats .....	41
3.2 Collaborations and alliances.....	43
3.3 Financial structures .....	46
3.3.1 Financing models .....	47
3.3.2 Private and alternative resources .....	50
<b>4. Funding: Actors and programmes</b> .....	<b>51</b>
4.1 Selection criteria .....	52
4.2 Funding approaches and categories.....	53
4.3 Decentral funding approach.....	60
4.4 Structural funding .....	63
4.5 Multilateral programmes and joint funding.....	65
4.6 European Union .....	66
<b>5. Challenges and potential</b> .....	<b>71</b>
<b>6. Conclusion and outlook</b> .....	<b>77</b>

<b>7. Recommendations</b> .....	<b>80</b>
7.1 Financing: need of biennials.....	80
7.2 Evaluation criteria .....	81
7.3 New funding mechanisms/funding pots .....	83
7.4 Funding the sustainability of biennials.....	85
7.5 Networking.....	87
7.6 International funding cooperation.....	89
7.7 Dialogue between funding institutes .....	90
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>91</b>
<b>Annex</b> .....	<b>97</b>
<b>A. Newly founded biennials 2015-2020</b> .....	<b>97</b>
<b>B. Funding programmes of organisations in European countries</b> .....	<b>103</b>
B.1 British Council, United Kingdom .....	103
B.2 Danish Arts Foundation, Denmark.....	103
B.3 Frame, Finland .....	105
B.4 Goethe-Institut, Germany .....	107
B.5 Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa), Germany .....	109
B.6 Mondriaan Fund, the Netherlands.....	111
B.7 Phileas, Austria.....	114
B.8 Prince Claus Fund, the Netherlands .....	115
B.9 Pro Helvetia, Switzerland .....	117
B.10 Stichting DOEN, the Netherlands .....	119
<b>C. Joint Funding (selection)</b> .....	<b>122</b>
C.1 Arts Council England and Art Council Korea: Cultural Exchange Partnership .....	122
C.2 Goethe-Institut and the Grohs Family: Henrike Grohs Art Award .....	122
C.3 Goethe-Institut and the University of the Arts Kassel: Goethe-Institut Fellowship at the Documenta Institute.....	123
C.4 Mondriaan Fund (the Netherlands), Flanders Arts Institute (Belgium), Danish Art Agency (Denmark) and Pro Helvetia (Switzerland): Orientation trip.....	124
C.5 Nordisk Kulturfond (Nordic Culture Fund) .....	125
C.6 Prince Claus Fund und British Council .....	125
<b>D. EU funding programmes</b> .....	<b>127</b>
D.1 Creative Europe .....	127
D.2 EUNIC Cluster Fund.....	128
<b>E. Interviewpartner</b> .....	<b>130</b>
<b>About the author</b> .....	<b>131</b>

## Foreword

Biennials enable the decentralised expression, reflection and shaping of art and cultural discourses, very often on a global scale. According to the author of this study, they also make it possible to address controversial socio-political issues and to strengthen the creative sector. It is a format with great dynamism. The author's research revealed that at least 59 new biennials were founded between 2015 and 2020. The aim of this study was to take a look at recent developments, especially outside of Europe, and to contextualise them with their framework conditions. Which conditions are particularly conducive to transcultural approaches?

ifa's art department has been shaping the discourse on biennials for more than 50 years in a variety of ways – through its galleries, the format of its touring exhibitions, its funding programmes, the commissariat of the German Pavilion at the Biennale Arte di Venezia and its involvement in international (biennial) networks. "With its transcultural perspective, ifa is qualified to discourse and promote an art format that realises its cultural-political significance in transnational exchange," says Ellen Strittmatter, head of the Art Department.

This practice-oriented study by Melanie Vietmeier, conducted in cooperation with the ifa's Art Department, reveals the potential of this multifaceted format for international cultural exchange. The formulated funding needs and best practice examples, which were developed on the basis of numerous expert discussions, provide important impulses for the revision of funding criteria and point to connecting factors for longer-term cooperation with individual biennials and networks, such as EUNIC. Some of these approaches are transferable to other areas of cultural cooperation.

I would like to sincerely thank the author, Melanie Vietmeier, for this excellent collaboration and her commitment to this research project. My thanks also go to my colleagues in the Research Programme "Culture and Foreign Policy", Sarah Widmaier and Anja Schön, who supported the project by providing conceptual and editorial guidance.

### Dr Odila Triebel

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## **Abstract**

Besides providing platforms for dialogues on global art and cultural discourse, biennials are highly conducive to the decentralisation of the art world. It goes without saying that each biennial's context, in other words its specific geopolitical framework conditions, organisational forms and promotional structures as well as local actors, plays a decisive part. This study, by way of example, will focus primarily on recently founded biennials in the so-called "Global South" and, in this respect, particularly on the African continent with the objective of identifying both trends and specific needs. Therefore, the funding of biennials worldwide as, for example, undertaken by the European Union or cultural institutes of European countries will be studied and contextualised in order to delineate current trends as well as possible promotion activities within the scope of Germany's foreign cultural and educational policy as well as international cooperation efforts.

## Executive Summary

Biennials provide platforms for dialogues on global art and cultural discourse, and they are highly conducive to the decentralisation of the art business. Today more than 300 contemporary art biennials are held around the world and their individual relevance depends on a multitude of factors; however, one feature they all have in common is a special topicality that reflects the contemporary art discourse or actually gives rise to such a discourse. Biennials are places of artistic freedom, freedom of expression and provide conceptual spaces for socio-political themes. Besides the economic effects, their local nature and contexts decisively define their relevance.

The objective of this study is to look at the challenge facing funding institutions in their efforts to design financial support of biennials that is in line with their specific needs, a task made particularly difficult in view of the large number and extreme diversity of biennials around the world. For this reason, and as a guideline for future programs initiated through Germany's foreign cultural and educational policy, it is important to determine the current funding of biennials so that both the obstacles and potential involved in the organisation of biennials can be identified and to query what is urgently needed for a sustainable funding strategy.

Biennials around the world face numerous challenges, for example, complex financing structures and fundraising. Therefore, it is important to analyse the existing support for biennials and to identify their specific needs. The objective of the study is to take stock of and analyse initiatives aiming to support biennials, which are financed or implemented by the EU or cultural institutions of selected European countries.

## Mapping

- Relevance: In addition to being places where art can be presented and produced, biennials play an important part as places where controversial socio-political topics such as gender issues or ecological aspects can be addressed. In addition, they have the potential of strengthening the creative sector and building up cultural infrastructure as well as promoting capacity building through workshops, mentoring programmes and educational initiatives.
- The "biennial boom" in the 1990s brought forth a paradigmatic change: an art world characterised primarily by Western perspectives adopted an increasingly global view of cultural discourse – a development that continues to this day. Whereas established biennials can look back on a long history and frequently

copy traditional models, it is precisely the new biennials that encourage reconsideration and revision of the format of biennials as such. Against this background, the study will identify biennials founded in the past five years.

- Newly founded biennials: At least 59 biennials were created between 2015 and 2020 (see Annex). Of these, at least 21 were founded in Europe, 18 in Asia, 7 in Africa, 7 in North America, 3 in South America, 2 in Australia, 1 in the Antarctic.
- In addition, the study will take stock of the biennials being held on the African continent and look at their geopolitical context. The study focusses on the African continent because numerous new biennials were founded there in the past ten years, and this circumstance seismographically reflects certain trends that, in turn, raise relevant issues concerning the discourse on biennials. Currently, there are 22 active art biennials and triennials in Africa: 12 were launched in the 2010s and one had its first edition in 2020. Since most biennials in Africa have only extremely small budgets, specific needs can be ascertained with certainty. These trends and potentials, on the one hand, and needs, on the other hand, also apply to biennials in other regions – always taking into regard the specific context.

### **Funding: Strategies and needs**

- The activities undertaken in Germany to support biennials, on the one hand, strive to enable artists from Germany to participate at international festivals and biennials with a view to promote their visibility and, at the same time, boost Germany's image in other countries. On the other hand, artists and cultural practitioners, especially from transformation or developing countries, are given an opportunity to participate at festivals and biennials in Germany. The objective is to promote international networking and intercultural discourse between Germany and the Global South.
- The criteria for supporting biennials, most of which have been adopted by other European funding institutes as well, are, amongst others, increasing the visibility of the artists being supported by enabling their participation at biennials, to what extent the biennial addresses socio-political issues and discourse, and to what extent the project has a positive effect on the intercultural dialogue. The following criteria either are not taken into consideration at all or only to a negligible extent: reflecting on the position taken by the host biennials towards artists (artists fees) and aspects of sustainability such as, for example, the involvement of local contexts (art scenes, strengthening the local creative sector, accessibility and impact on the urban space as well as ecological aspects).

- Up until now, the funding priorities primarily have been mobility and transport.
- Biennials particularly need funding for production costs and artists fees as well as accompanying events. They can contribute significantly to capacity building and professionalisation through workshops and other discursive formats such as conferences, mentoring programmes or education initiatives.

## **Selected recommendations**

### **1. Financing: Needs of biennials**

#### a) Production costs

Biennials have special relevance because they enable the production of art. By funding production costs, funding institutes can specifically help biennials carry out this decisive task. Museums frequently do not include the production of new artworks in their budgets, whereas biennials not only commission new works of art but also present them to the public for the first time. For this reason, production costs, besides mobility and transport, should be included in the institutes' funding considerations.

#### b) Fees for artists

Artists fees cover the work artists do in connection with an exhibition that are not related directly to the production of a work of art, in other words conceptual preparatory work, public relations work or setting up an exhibition. Numerous biennials try to pay fees to artists; however, they are more symbolic than adequate remuneration. Funding institutes could make the payment of fees a precondition for funding (as, for example, the Mondrian Fund) or recommend that organisers pay fees and, at the same time, allow them to apply for partial funding of the fees.

### **2. Evaluation criteria**

Rethinking the evaluation criteria applied for the funding of biennials is closely connected to reflecting on the funding institute's position. Experiences gained in recent years have shown that the showcasing of the funding country's culture and art is being increasingly replaced by a focus on intercultural dialogue and a mutual understanding of different cultures.

Therefore, the sustainability of a biennial and the focus on local contexts should be criteria as well. Particularly the following aspects should be taken into consideration:

- Involvement of the local art scene
- Support of the local creative sector (production locally)
- Intercultural dialogue/networking
- Impact on the urban space/accessibility
- Ecological aspects
- Capacity building: workshops and mentoring programmes/educational programmes, discursivity (framework programme)
- Divergence from traditional biennial models
- Thematic alignment to socio-political relevant discourse

### **3. New funding mechanisms/funding pots**

#### **a) Co-creation**

Co-creation is an approach that strives to implement multi-perspectivity and fair partnerships in creative processes. Within the scope of a processual touring exhibition, it would be conceivable to design a project that continues to be developed in collaboration with different biennials worldwide over an extended period of time. Accordingly, the project would necessarily be processual and open-ended. A multi-focal approach would help overcome Eurocentric perspectives and allow the funding of collaborative activities.

#### **b) International collaboration projects between artists**

Creating awareness of the asymmetries involved in the financing of art is a prerequisite for drawing up strategies for solidary action. Funding collaborative projects, for example an entire joint project involving an artist from Germany and an artist from a country with weak funding structures would be one way of implementing ethical dimensions in funding strategies. A specific connection to biennials would be possible in this respect, too.

#### **c) Funding pots for art production for festivals or festival sections**

In this connection, a funding pot conceivably could be created for financing festivals – or sections of festivals and biennials – whose concept does not call for funding for individual artists but for the production of art as a whole, irrespective of the artists' origin.

d) Structural funding

Many of the experts interviewed expressed that substantial structural funding for biennials was much desired. The inherent structure of biennials as ephemeral exhibitions and permanent institutions defines the need for funding for infrastructure (salaries, rent, running costs). There is also a great need for funds that can be used freely, for example, for catalogue production, communication, mobility or scenography. However, new funding pots need to be created to cover these kinds of costs.

**4. Funding the sustainability of biennials**

a) Transversal programmes in the field of capacity building

Activities promoting the training and further training of persons working in the field of biennials and cultural administration are needed to achieve professionalization, especially on the African continent. This is true not only for art biennials but also other parts of the creative sector and that is why transversal programmes can strengthen the cultural sector as a whole. In addition to festival management training, including fundraising skills, training programmes relating to curatorial work, curator networks, exhibition/event technology and restoration would drive professionalisation in the sector.

b) Infrastructure of the creative sector

By systematically funding biennials that support the local creative sector, long-term effects can be set in motion in the region concerned. The photography biennial *Rencontres de Bamako* in Mali shows how relocating the entire production of the biennial from Paris to Mali initiated decolonisation processes that promote the sustainability of biennials as well. Accordingly, local governance and the engagement of local communities facilitate positive, long-term effects on the overall infrastructure of a region's creative sector.

**5. Networking**

By creating international biennial alliances and transnational collaborations, a decisive step is taken towards institutionally testing new forms of international solidarity, developing alternative solutions for transnational collaboration, and strengthening the transfer of know-how. One example of transcontinental cooperation is "New North and South," a network of eleven organisations from the north of England and South Asia. By funding biennial alliances, transnational biennial collaboration projects that involve co-creation, co-production, and programmes encouraging the transfer of know-how could be promoted.

## 6. International funding cooperation

### a) Joint funding

Multilateral funding programmes and joint funding bear considerable potential for departing from national categories as well as merging funds and expertise at the same time in order to be able to operate more efficiently. European funding institutes have implemented various initiatives in such areas as mobility and networking.<sup>1</sup>

### b) EU biennial funding

The interview partners criticised three aspects of EU funding for biennials up to now: insufficient visibility, high complexity and bureaucratic obstacles. Therefore, information about the funding programmes and possibilities should be communicated more extensively. Moreover, such European networks as EUNIC global could play an important part in future.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the “orientation trip” that is organised jointly by institutes from the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Switzerland to strengthen international networks. See Annex: Section B. Joint Funding.

## 1. Introduction

Contrary to commercially oriented art fairs that also are expanding around the world, biennials operate independently of profit orientation and, thus, are an opportunity to experience the pulse of contemporary art as well as geopolitical factors. And yet, the context dependence of each biennial, i.e. the underlying geopolitical conditions, local contexts, forms of organisation, funding structures and resources, is very important.

The "Mother of Biennials" in Venice, established in 1895, is still considered as the most important event for international contemporary art production. The "biennial boom" in the 1990s was accompanied by a paradigmatic change from a widely Eurocentric artworld towards an increasingly global perspective in cultural discourse, art production and the reception of art.

The term biennial basically refers to exhibitions that take place every two years. However, with reference to the art critic Sabine B. Vogel (Vogel 2010), it will be used in this study as a collective term for continual art events that are held at regular intervals, i.e. biennials, triennials, quadrennials or documenta that is held every five years. Although biennials proliferate in a wide variety of disciplines, this study will focus on contemporary art, for which they are considered the medium per se, as the curators and art historians Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal and Solveig Øvstebø posit in their fundamental Biennial Reader: "If it can be said that for more than a century museum and gallery exhibitions have largely been *the* medium through which most art becomes known', then it is the biennial exhibition that has arguably since proved to be the medium through which most contemporary art comes to be known." (Filipovic, van Hal, Øvstebø 2010, 15).

Numerous authors have described the intrinsic connection between biennialisation and globalisation and even designated biennials as the paradigmatic venue of globalisation par excellence (Scheller 2018, 81). An essential aspect of globalisation is the gradual decentralisation of the West (Marchart 2014, 263) and end of hegemonic structures – tendencies that are palpable in the art world as well and which the biennials emerging around the world have promoted and continue to promote significantly.



## 1. Introduction

Various sources state that more than 300 biennials take place on all continents – including Antarctica.<sup>2</sup> The biennials vary strongly because of their respective financial, cultural and geopolitical situations. This makes any comparison difficult and, hence, each biennial has to be viewed in its own specific context. Their respective relevance depends on numerous factors: A common feature is their special topicality, which, like a seismograph, reflects contemporary art discourse or even calls it into existence. In addition, biennials are places of artistic freedom, freedom of expression and provide spaces for socio-political discourse. Besides economic effects and the generation of capital, city branding and cultural tourism are much-discussed aspects associated with biennials. They can help to achieve structural change in cities, to revive specific areas and gentrification of city districts. Moreover, their local nature and the dialogue with local contexts are decisive factors as regards their sustainability – so, for example, the way they affect urban spaces by taking art out of such institutions as museums and letting it enter into a dialogue with the people. The transformation of biennials towards discursivity is paradigmatic, and it is illustrated by the increasing importance of workshops, conferences, programmes on capacity building and mentoring programmes. Furthermore, concepts expanding their outreach are gaining significance, which means that educational programmes and the socio-cultural impact are increasing as well. If nothing else, biennials are of special importance as places of art production and, accordingly, the creation of contemporary art and the attendant discourse.

Critics of biennials find fault with the homogenisation of the biennial landscape and, consequently, contemporary art as well as the continued existence of hegemonic structures. They object to biennials turning into events, in the course of which city marketing instead of the promotion of art is coming to the fore. Ecological aspects also are questioned in view of the transport and travel necessitated by biennials. In addition, the question has been raised as to whether and how biennials have a long-term impact on the local public and civil society and strengthen the art scene in the region concerned in the long run.

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has intensified the discussion about biennials. In 2020, as the pandemic spread over all continents, many biennials had to be cancelled or postponed. The Berlin Biennial was one of the few shows that actually took place in 2020.

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<sup>2</sup> See the Directories of Biennials of the Biennial Foundation and the 39th issue of *On Curating – Draft: Global Biennial Survey 2018*: <https://www.biennialfoundation.org/network/biennial-map/>; <https://www.on-curating.org/issue-39-reader/directory-of-biennials.html#.YAvzy1XZqs> (accessed on 23.01.2021).

## 1. Introduction

In 2021, at least 20 large and numerous small biennials inevitably will take place – provided this is admissible under the prevalent sanitary crisis – most of which originally were planned for 2020. The Venice and Lyon biennials already have been postponed until 2022; which means that they will take place in the same year as documenta 15, the large art show held in Kassel every five years. In many respects, this concentration of art events poses a challenge to the organisers of biennials, not least with regard to obtaining funding, especially in the face of a general shortage of financial resources.

The objective of this study is to describe the challenge facing funding institutions in their efforts to design the support of biennials in line with their needs, a task made particularly difficult in view of the large number and extreme diversity of biennials around the world. For this reason and as a guideline for future programmes of foreign cultural and educational policy, it is important to determine the current financing of biennials, to identify both the obstacles and potential involved in the organisation of biennials and to query what is urgently needed for a sustainable funding strategy.

Hence, this study strives to answer the following questions: Under which conditions can biennials optimally develop their potentials? Which concrete financing needs have been identified and which possibilities are available for international cooperation? The basic questions posed by the study are as follows: How do financial support and form of organisation affect the contents of biennials? How is the format financed in other countries? In which areas can Germany's foreign cultural relations and education policy provide more support, and which areas concretely need financial support? Which international, particularly European cooperation initiatives, already are in existence and how can they be expanded or supplemented?

### 1.1 Objectives and methods

Whereas such biennials as the long-standing Venice Biennale as well as the biennial in São Paulo, which was founded in 1951, have been comprehensively documented and researched in numerous studies (e.g. Alloway 1968, Herkenhoff 1998, Niemojewski 2010, Jones 2017), there are research deficits above all as regards biennials that were recently founded in the so-called "Global South." In this study, the term should be understood more as a concept rather than a geographic reference, i.e. as a designation for a network of places where cultural production takes place and that shares specific issues, themes and a certain precarity (Hoskote 2010, 312). These biennials are confronted by specific political, cultural and economic factors that – together with such complex processes as the search for identity and emancipation – can be traced back to the post-colonial context. One focus

## 1. Introduction

of the study is on the biennials held on the African continent, above all in sub-Saharan Africa, because this is a key region of Germany's current Foreign Cultural Relations and Education Policy.

To begin with, the biennials will be remapped to show how the "old force fields" (Enwezor 2002, 9) of established art events are being displaced by newly organised biennials, a development that is accelerating the decentralisation of the art world. Then, the geopolitical context of biennials being held on the African continent will be studied to disclose the significance of the art events for the continent. Furthermore, the organisational and support structures are presented as background information, on the basis of which support programmes for biennials can be identified and analysed. Subsequently, guidelines and potential promotion activities with the scope of Germany's foreign cultural relations and education policy as well as international collaborations will be defined.

### **Focal points of the study**

- Identifying newly established biennials and current trends (2015–2020).
- Describing and analysing selected biennials in their geopolitical context, with a special focus on the African continent.
- Identifying and analysing the different forms of organisation and funding structures of biennials.
- Discussing the potentials of biennials as regards such aspects as local contexts, political dimensions, digitalisation, justinability and sustainability.
- Describing the support of biennials by the EU and European cultural institutes: identifying and analysing actors and programmes.
- Identifying the funding needs of biennials.

### **Methodology**

The study combines qualitative and quantitative research.

Besides determining such quantitative data as the number of biennials, first editions and geographic distribution, in particular as regards newly created biennials as well as biennials on the African continent, the study drew on the fundamental literature on biennials. In the past 20 years, numerous studies concentrating on this field of research were published, which can be assigned primarily to the fields of Postcolonial Studies and Global Art History. Besides the *Biennial Reader* mentioned above, which was published as part of a much-noticed conference in Bergen in 2010, this includes, amongst others, fundamental research

## 1. Introduction

with historical perspectives such as Charles Green und Anthony Gardener's publication *Biennials, Triennials, and Documenta* (2016), or the recent issue of the art forum *Quo vadis Biennale?* (2020) edited by Sabine B. Vogel, which discusses current issues regarding biennials. Furthermore, numerous symposiums and conferences about biennials are and have been taking place, such as the two World Biennial Forums: the first was co-organised by ifa, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, in Gwangju in 2012, and the second one in São Paulo in 2014 was supported by ifa as a partner.

To begin with, the biennials on the African continent will be mapped by regions. The reason why the study focusses on the African continent is that numerous biennials were launched there in the past ten years and, like a seismograph, they disclose certain trends. The biennials in Dakar, Bamako and Lubumbashi were chosen as case studies because they radiate beyond their regional boundaries and raise issues relevant to the discourse on biennials, for example, organisational and financial structures, decolonialisation processes and the long-term advancement of the art scene and creative sector in the regions concerned. These issues – always viewed in the specific context of each biennial – apply to biennials in other regions.

The research on actors and programmes associated with the funding of biennials is based on the information available on the websites of the funding institutes as well as extensive correspondence with representatives of the cultural institutes. Predominantly European cultural institutes were studied to reduce the complexity as well as to identify already existing cooperation initiatives and further needs for funding.

A central part of the study was the interviews with experts involved in the organisation or support of biennials, either internally or externally: for example, interviews were held with artistic directors, curators and organisers of biennials as well as artists and representatives of cultural institutes like the Goethe-Institut or Institut Français (see Annex for a list of names). Special thanks to the interview partners for sharing their experiences and assessments; their statements also will be used to draw up recommendations. The interviews centred around the following questions:

**1) Decentralisation of the art world:** What are the specific challenges facing and opportunities opening up for the biennials in the so-called Global South?

**2) Organisation form and financing:** How do formats and financing structures reflect the contents of a biennial?

**3) Sustainability:** How do biennials affect the cultural development in their region?

**4) Crises:** Which challenges and perhaps opportunities have arisen for biennials as a result of the ongoing pandemic? How would funding instruments need to be adjusted?

**5) Recommendations for foreign cultural policy:** How and where is the format of biennials supported in other countries? Which recommendations would be conceivable for foreign cultural policy and for funding institutes with respect to financing biennials? Where can particular opportunities for more international - above all European - cooperation be found? Where and how should the EU as a whole perhaps show more active support of biennials?

**6) Visions for the future:** What form could visions for the future of biennials in general take? What is their relevance? What role does digitalisation play?

### 1.2 Limits of the study

Every study researching the phenomenon of biennials is confronted by the vast number and unimaginable heterogeneity of biennials. In addition to more than 300 biennials worldwide at the present time, there are numerous biennials that, for a wide range of reasons, took place only a few times before ceasing to continue. Thus, undertaking a comparison of biennials in the sense of benchmarking would not be productive because of the highly distinctive nature of every biennial. This is true not only as regards structural and financial aspects but also with respect to their size, orientation, discursive scope as well as geopolitical and local contexts. The funding of biennials covers an equally wide range – both regarding the actors and programmes or initiatives – so that only exemplary considerations are possible.

The field is subject to rapid developments because, for one, biennials frequently emerge and cease to exist after just a short period time and, for another, the geopolitical conditions in the regions change in a quick rhythm. In addition, the ongoing pandemic is raising new and currently unforeseeable questions for the future. This relates not only to biennials but to the art sector as a whole.

## 2. Remapping: "Old force fields" and new geographies

Biennials – in the words of the philosopher and sociologist Oliver Marchart – “mediate between local, national and transnational, unlike any other institution in the art sector” (Marchart 2014, 263). In doing so, they contribute to the canonisation and homogenisation of art; on the other hand, they serve as a field of experimentation for current art discourses and have played an essential part in departing from Eurocentric perspectives. Since the 1990s, the number of newly created biennials has been rising exponentially not only in Europe but also in Latin America, Asia and Africa. This trend is continuing and, thereby, contributing substantially to the decentralisation of the art world. Biennials around the world are challenging the position of the established "centres of art" in the USA and Europe as places of art production. Biennials at venues such as Havana, Istanbul, Dakar or Gwangju rendered obsolete the debate about "centre" and "periphery" in the art world.

### 2.1 Newly founded biennials (2015–2020)

Research conducted for this study showed that at least 59 biennials were launched or held for the first time between 2015 and 2020. The detailed list in the Annex provides an overview of newly founded biennials according to continents. At least 21 were located in Europe, 18 in Asia, 7 in North America, 3 in South America, 7 in Africa, 2 in Australia and 1 in the Antarctic.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, it can be said that from a geographic standpoint "art festivals in global format" take place on all continents, even in the Antarctic. So, for example, artistic, scientific and philosophical methods were applied during the Antarctic Biennial 2017 to discuss common spaces as Antarctica, the ocean and outer space.

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<sup>3</sup> The data is based on extensive research; however, since the field of research exhibits a high geographic and linguistic diversity, it is possible that there are other biennials which were not recorded here. In addition, there is the question of a definition of biennials and which biennials should be taken into consideration. The research concentrated on "Visual Arts"; thus, for example, dance biennials were not taken into account. The count includes first editions that were planned for 2020, but had to be postponed because of the current situation, e.g. the biennials in Helsinki (Finland) and Yerevan (Armenia).

## 2. Remapping: "Old force fields" and new geographies

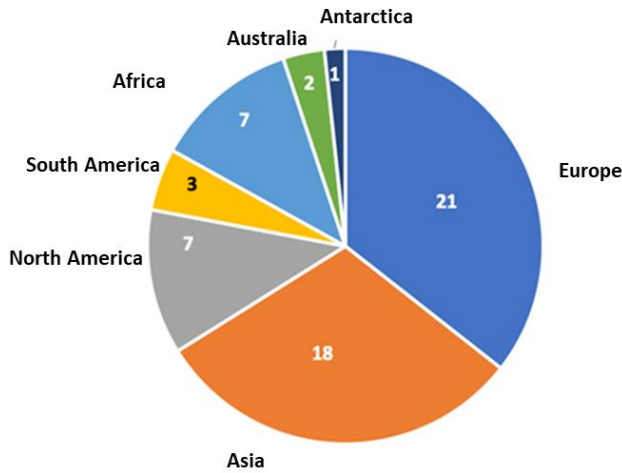


Fig. 1: Newly founded biennials that took place for the first time in 2015 or later or that will take place

Eight of the at least 21 biennials that were newly founded in the past five years in Europe were launched in the capitals of the countries concerned, some of which already have available good infrastructure for contemporary art. Particularly in East European countries, however, biennials play a decisive part in strengthening democratic tendencies and liberal conceptual spaces for culture. In this respect, being located in the capital reinforces their symbolic character and allows them to address a large audience. In contrast to this, some biennials were founded in decentral areas such as, for example, the Biennale Bregaglia in the Swiss canton of Grisons, which took place the first time in 2020. This biennial primarily presents art outdoors, with guided art walks through the Bregaglia valley (Vogel 2020,54) – it has always been an important transit region where cultural-historical, linguistic, architectural and climatic strands come together.

Whereas the biennials in Venice, São Paulo or Havana look back on a long history, newly founded biennials still have to invent themselves. This, however, offers the opportunity of reconsidering and revising the biennial format.

## 2.2 Art festivals on the African continent

Considering the large number of biennials, the study plans to concentrate on one large area for further mapping, namely the African continent. It will be used as the starting point to define issues that may show potential for think tanks, also for other cultural regions and countries. So when one considers the African continent, 16 of Africa's 22 active art biennials and triennials were launched after the turn of the millennium, twelve of them in the 2010s. The most recent launch, the Stellenbosch Triennial in South Africa, had its first edition in 2020, but had to close after just a few days because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Moreover, Africa can look back on a long tradition of significant art festivals like the pathbreaking "Premier Festival mondial des arts nègres" that took place in Dakar in 1966 and is considered the model of postcolonial awakening, or "FESTAC '77" that celebrated African culture in Lagos, Nigeria in 1977 with about 16,000 participants from 56 African countries and the African diaspora.

### General conditions for the creative sector

Africa is a continent with immense potential. Half of the 20 fastest growing economies are in Africa<sup>4</sup>. At the same time, Africa is facing major challenges: according to UN forecasts, the population will double by 2050<sup>5</sup> and innumerable employment opportunities need to be created for the growing young population. Therefore, as early as 2013, the African states set themselves an ambitious strategic framework in the Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU). The goal is to create collective prosperity, self-determination and peace in Africa.<sup>6</sup> Positive trends in this respect can be expected to evolve from the African Free Trade Area that took effect in 2019. Based on estimates of AU, inter-African trade could increase by up to 60% by 2022.<sup>7</sup>

The realisation that the creative sector also holds substantial potential, especially for the young population, has been growing across the continent for several years now. The population in sub-Saharan Africa currently comes to 1.8 billion according to the World Bank, with 77% of the population being younger than 35 years of age. It is expected that the population will increase to 2.4 billion by 2050 (Franco/Njogu 2020, 22). This young

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/Internationale-Finanzierung/KfW-Entwicklungsbank/Weltweites-Engagement/Afrika-im-Fokus/>.

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.bmz.de/de/laender\\_regionen/marshallplan\\_mit\\_afrika/index.html](https://www.bmz.de/de/laender_regionen/marshallplan_mit_afrika/index.html).

<sup>6</sup> <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>.

<sup>7</sup> See Footnote 4.



population is an opportunity for inclusive growth. Nonetheless, high unemployment rates and qualification deficits have led to frustration among young people. As regards cultural policy, the AU debated early on whether the creative sector provides opportunities for tackling some of these challenges, as Pedro Affonso Ivo Franco and Kimani Njogu describe in their study on the cultural and creative industries in sub-Saharan Africa. However, the authors reach the conclusion that no substantial progress has been made since the discussion was initiated in 1992. The Plan of Action for Cultural Industries in Africa concluded in Nairobi in 2005 also identified a lack of government support and demanded more inter-African cooperation (Franco/Kimani 2020, 23).

The significance of biennials needs to be studied against this background because not only are they an experimental field for contemporary art but they also act as exemplary models for more inclusive and prosperous societies. "Hosting a biennale in Africa isn't merely a question of organising a simple exhibition or deciding upon a simple artistic direction. [...] What is required, then, is for each edition, each event, to embrace inclusivity," states curator Simon Njami on the occasion of the 10th *Rencontres de Bamako* and sums up the tasks and challenges facing biennials as regards internationalisation and professionalisation: "[...] enhance the international scope of the event, [...] implement training programmes to help ensure the development of the managerial and technical skills required for the long term, and solidify the foundation for the future by giving young African curators positions of responsibility" (Njami 2015, 406). Njami considers particularly essential the promotion of young talents as well as the development of a critical approach and an endogenous market to strengthen their own, independent legitimacy.

Any attempt to categorise the biennials on the African continent – like on any other continent – is faced with the heterogeneity and diverse framework conditions of the biennials. For this reason, they need to be studied individually and in very specific contexts. Nevertheless, it can be ascertained that many of the biennials in Africa are supported by artists or civil society art centres and primarily depend on funding from local private businesses or transnational companies as well as the support of international, above all European, cultural institutes. The biennials in Bamako and Dakar are exceptions because the state is involved in the organisation and financing.<sup>8</sup> The biennial in Dakar is under the patronage of Senegal's Ministry of Culture and is organised by a secretariat, including permanent staff and a general delegate; accordingly, its continuity is ensured.

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<sup>8</sup> See the Case Studies in chapter 2.2.2.

## 2. Remapping: "Old force fields" and new geographies

The following overview and classification of contemporary art biennials on the African continent is based on geographic zones and follows the definitions of African regions postulated by the AU.<sup>9</sup>



Fig. 2: Countries on the African continent where active biennials are currently held

### 2.2.1 Northern Africa

The region, which counts about 200 million people,<sup>10</sup> comprises countries with very distinct profiles, which, nonetheless, need to master similar challenges: high unemployment, fragile security, stagnating economy and migratory movements. This situation has a adverse impact on the cultural sector, although it receives new dynamics through manifold initiatives at the same time. In February 2019, anti-corruption and pro-democracy protests, also known as the Hirak movement, emerged in Algeria and led to the resignation of the long-standing president Abdelaziz Bouteflika.<sup>11</sup> In view of the fact that reprisals continue, the protests are still going on, too. Following the Hirak movement, a new generation of

<sup>9</sup> [https://au.int/en/member\\_states/countryprofiles2](https://au.int/en/member_states/countryprofiles2).

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/category/african-statistical-yearbook>.

<sup>11</sup> Freedom of expression is prevented by the suppression and arrest of journalists. [https://www.euro-parl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0329\\_DE.pdf](https://www.euro-parl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0329_DE.pdf).

young Algerian artists is increasingly drawing attention to socio-political issues and demanding democracy, freedom and justice.

Name of the biennial	City	Country	First edition
Alexandria Biennale for Mediterranean Countries	Alexandria	Egypt	1955
Cairo Biennial <sup>12</sup>	Cairo	Egypt	1984
Marrakesh Biennial <sup>13</sup>	Marrakesh	Morocco	2005
Mediterranean Biennale of Contemporary Art of Oran <sup>14</sup>	Oran	Algeria	2010
Biennale Internationale de Casablanca <sup>15</sup>	Casablanca	Morocco	2012
Something Else OFF Biennale Cairo <sup>16</sup>	Cairo	Egypt	2015

With the **Alexandria Biennale for Mediterranean Countries**, which, like documenta, was held for the first time in 1955 and the **Cairo Biennale**, founded in 1984, Egypt has a long tradition of contemporary art biennials. Although both biennials took place regularly from their launch to the turn of the millennium, the problematic political conditions and financial difficulties are endangering their continued existence. Thus, the Alexandria Biennale took place only once more in 2014 following its 2009 edition; the Cairo biennial was continued in 2019 after a nine-year break.

Despite the complex political conditions, three new biennials have been launched in North Africa since 2010. The **Biennale Internationale de Casablanca** has particular relevance for the region because it strived for internationalisation as well as inclusive activities with local communities, and in this way had an impact on the city. Founded in 2012 by a Moroccan artist, it has been managed by the Maroc Premium Foundation since 2014. The foundation also is responsible for the associated Contemporary Art Center, the art collection and a project space.

The **Mediterranean Biennale of Contemporary Art of Oran** was launched in 2010; however, it had to be postponed in 2019 because of insufficient public support. Oran, the second largest city in Algeria after Algiers, is experiencing considerable economic growth thanks to the oil industry. As Tewfik Ali Chouche, artist, curator and co-founder of the biennial, explains, the biennial was founded with the objective giving the residents of Oran

<sup>12</sup> <https://cairobiennale.gov.eg> (accessed on 08.04.2021).

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.marrakechbiennale.org> (accessed on 08.04.2021).

<sup>14</sup> <https://oranbiennale.org> (accessed on 08.04.2021).

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.biennalecasablanca.net> (accessed on 08.04.2021).

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.somethingelse-off.com> (accessed on 08.04.2021).

access to contemporary art, especially since Oran barely had venues for contemporary art.<sup>17</sup>

### 2.2.2 West Africa

West Africa plays an important part as producer and market for the creative sector. The region has a population of 365 million, of which 60% are under 25 years of age. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) comprises countries that share certain economic, social and cultural features. Mobility between the countries is facilitated because there are no visa requirements for the West African population. The creative sector is very diverse and animated, and the government is increasingly acknowledging its ability to create future prospects for the young population and to counteract unemployment. The campaigns of the governments in Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal consider the creative sectors to be focal areas for economic growth because they promote tourism and other economic sectors as fashion and artisan craftwork.

Name of the biennial	City	Country	First edition
Dak'art, Biennale de l'art africain contemporain <sup>18</sup>	Dakar	Senegal	1992
Rencontres de Bamako	Bamako	Mali	1994
Lagos Biennial <sup>19</sup>	Lagos	Nigeria	2017
Nuku Photo Festival Ghana <sup>20</sup>	Accra	Ghana	2018
Abidjan Green Art	Abidjan	Ivory Coast	2019
Biso International Biennial of Sculpture of Ouagadougou	Ouagadougou	Burkina Faso	2019

The biennials in Dakar and Bamako, which were launched in 1992 and 1994 respectively, stand for a long tradition of art biennials. Although two more biennials were newly founded in the 2010s, namely *Regard Benin* (2010/2012) and *AFiRlperFOMA Biennial Lagos* (2013), they were discontinued after two and one edition respectively.

Nonetheless, four other biennials with distinct profiles have been held in the region since 2017: in Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso. Whereas the range of the **Lagos Biennale** is wide and dedicated to contemporary art in general, the **Nuku Photo Fes-**

<sup>17</sup> The gallery Civ. Oeuil was one of the few exceptions. In recent years, however, the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art of Oran, in which the biennial took place in 2017, was renovated. <https://www.biennialfoundation.org/2017/09/exodus-4th-mediterranean-biennial-contemporary-art/>.

<sup>18</sup> <https://biennaledakar.org> (accessed on 10.04.2021).

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.lagos-biennial.org> (accessed on 10.04.2021).

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.nukufestival.com> (accessed on 10.04.2021).

tival in Accra concentrates on the medium of photography, and the **Biso Biennial** in Ouagadougou on sculpture. The **Abidjan Green Art** focuses on ecological aspects. In Banco National Park, located in the capital of Ivory Coast, the artists invited to participate create in situ temporary works matched to the specific location and using local or biodegradable materials. The founder and artistic director, the Ivorian sculptor Jems Koko Bi, who lives in Germany, explains that the biennial's objective is to create something and, at the same time, raise the general public's awareness for the protection of the environment.

### Case Study: Dak'Art, Senegal

Senegal takes a special place among the French-speaking countries in West Africa in the promotion of contemporary art, not least because of the cultural policy and initiatives supported by Senegal's first president Léopold Sédar Senghor (1906–2001). Senghor, a renowned philosopher and theorist of the Négritude movement, which advocated the liberation from European models of culture, propagated an active and revolutionary role for modern artists. He created a system of funding for their work and promoted the development of art schools and exhibitions.<sup>21</sup> The country also was one of the first French-speaking countries in sub-Saharan Africa to establish a ministry of culture in 1966.

In international circles, the biennial in Dakar is considered one of the most important biennials worldwide. As a matter of fact, according to the French philosopher and artistic director of the biennial in 2006, Yacouba Konaté, it is the most significant event for contemporary visual arts in Africa (Konate 2009, 17). Founded in 1992, it first followed the "pavilion" model of the Venice Biennale and showed national presentations by artists who were invited by cultural missions and embassies. After distancing itself from this model in 1996, the biennial took on a decidedly pan-African character and pursued the objective of being a "biennial of contemporary African art." This new orientation became evident in content as well as a new form of organisation that featured an official *IN*-programme with an international exhibition, numerous individual projects and small exhibitions as well as an *OFF*-programme. Although it is managed by an independent organisation team, the *OFF*-programme is nonetheless, advertised on the biennial's website. In 2018, the *OFF*-programme alone presented 1000 artists at 320 sites.<sup>22</sup> The biennial is organised by the Biennial Office under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture; therefore, it is closely intertwined with the government. Since the state bears the bulk of the financing, relative stable

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<sup>21</sup> See also: Harney, E. (2004): *In Senghor's Shadow: Art, Politics and the Avant-Garde in Senegal, 1960-1995*. Durham: Duke University Press Books.

<sup>22</sup> <https://biennaledakar.org/2018/off-report-2018/>.

funding is ensured. Up until 2008, the EU delegation was an important sponsor, yet additional external sources of funding are essential for Dak'Art to be able to realise the extensive framework programme of the biennial, which includes conferences, workshops, educational projects and concerts.<sup>23</sup> In view of its marked international perception, the biennial has a decisive effect on the discourse about contemporary African art.

### **Case Study: Rencontres de Bamako, Mali**

The Rencontres de Bamako (Bamako Encounters) biennial is dedicated to photography and video art. Together with the film festival in Ouagadougou and Dak'Art, it is among the most important pan-African events for artists in Africa and the diaspora. Since its foundation in 1994, it has considerably advanced professionalisation in the photography sector and helped numerous African photographers gain international recognition by providing a venue for meeting people engaged in the cultural sector. Picking up on a long tradition of studio photography, it has contributed considerably to making Mali a centre of art photography in Africa.

The biennial faced serious geopolitical conditions when rebels occupied northern Mali in 2012 and a military coup d'état destabilised the government. The 2013 biennial had to be cancelled because of the crisis, but this heightened the significance of its reopening in 2015, which – under the management of the curator Bisi Silva – also introduced a new focus on outreach programmes with the initiative "100 Schools/10,000 Students."

Following an agreement between the Malian state and the Institut Français, the Rencontres de Bamako biennial was co-produced by both actors. In addition, the Institut Français provided about 50% of the funding (Euro 250,000) and co-organised the event from Paris.<sup>24</sup> Given the insufficient infrastructure, logistical difficulties and the fragile economic situation in Mali, most of the production took place in Paris or Europe. This included the production of the photographs, framing the photographs, catalogue production, etc. That manner of proceeding was criticised as a "neo-colonial" structure of management and financing (Moore 2020, 106). Following a process of reflection as to whether this form of organisation could be considered appropriate within the context of decolonialisation and a renewal of the cultural relations between African and European countries, the Malian organisers assumed complete responsibility for the management and production of the 2019 edition. Accordingly, the Malian organisers also have been responsible for selecting the

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<sup>23</sup> "Innovations": <https://biennaledakar.org>.

<sup>24</sup> Additional important "in-kind" support came from the airline Royal Air Maroc in the form of airline tickets and from a hotel chain that assumed the costs for accommodation.

artistic director since 2019; furthermore, about 90% of the photographs were printed and framed in Mali, and the scenography was designed by the Malian designer and architect Cheick Diallo. It is planned to complete the catalogue production for the next edition on the African continent as well. In view of the volatile political situation in Mali, the military coup d'état in 2020 and an interim government, the transition of responsibility for the biennial currently is being managed by the Minister of Culture Keïta Kadiatou Konaré<sup>25</sup> who – according to experts – completely supports the transition of governance. Following a period of transition and support as regards logistics, the Institut Français expects to be merely one among many other partners in future.

Under the management of Bonaventure Ndikung, the ambitious 25th anniversary edition in 2019 presented 85 artists and collectives at eleven sites in the city. Forty percent of the selected positions were female photographers and two separate exhibitions were dedicated to them, too – a paradigmatic decision supported by UNESCO as part of their endeavours for gaining more visibility of women in Africa's creative sector.

### 2.2.3 Central Africa

About 176 million people live in the Central African region. Six states joined to form the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC): Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Cameroon, Republic of the Congo, Chad and the Central African Republic. Intra-regional mobility – also for persons engaged in the cultural sector – still is difficult due to visa requirements. Even though CEMAC authorised the free traffic of tourists and goods, the effectiveness of the decision is questionable (Franco/Njogu 2020, 37).

Name of the biennial	City	Country	First edition
São Tomé e Príncipe Biennale <sup>26</sup>		São Tomé e Príncipe	1995
SUD, Salon Urbain de Douala <sup>27</sup>	Douala	Kamerun	2007
Biennale de Lubumbashi <sup>28</sup>	Lubumbashi	Demokratische Republik Kongo	2008
Yango biennial de Kinshasa <sup>29</sup>	Kinshasa	Demokratische Republik Kongo	2014
Young Congo biennial <sup>30</sup>	Kinshasa	Demokratische Republik Kongo	2019

<sup>25</sup> The daughter of the former Malian president Alpha Oumar Konaré is the current *Ministre de la Culture, du Tourisme et de l'Artisanat* in Mali.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.ngola-biennial.org> (accessed on 24.02.2021).

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.salonurbaindedouala.org/festival-sud2017/theme/> [Zugriff: 24.02.2021].

<sup>28</sup> <http://picha-association.org/category/biennale/> (accessed on 24.02.2021).

<sup>29</sup> <https://yangobiennale.com> (accessed on 24.02.2021).

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.congobiennale.art/2021/> (accessed on 24.02.2021).

## 2. Remapping: "Old force fields" and new geographies

The region hosts five active art biennials. The **São Tomé e Príncipe-Biennale** on the African island country already was created during the biennial boom in the 1990s by João Carlos Silva, artist, chef and entrepreneur.<sup>31</sup>

The Democratic Republic of the Congo boasts an active cultural scene; however, it is also marked by substantial deficits in infrastructure. The Sapeurs movement<sup>32</sup> of Brazzaville and Kinshasa have attracted international attention in the fashion sector. Three biennials for contemporary art have been established in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 2008, two of them in the capital Kinshasa.

The **Yango Biennale de Kinshasa**, founded in 2014 by the Congolese photographer and film producer Kiripi Katembo Siku (1979-2015), will be held in 2020/21 under the title *CONGO/graphies* with the aim of analysing the country's history of colonisation, dictatorship, exploitation of natural resources as well as contemporary creative momentum. The inaugural **Young Congo Biennale**<sup>33</sup> under the management of the non-profit artist initiative Kin'Art Studio took place in 2019. Works by more than 40 artists were presented at five exhibition sites. An artist residency programme aiming to encourage creative intercultural discussion is being planned for the 2021 edition.

**SUD, Salon Urbain de Douala** is a triennial for art in public space that is held in the city of Douala, Cameroon. The objective of this triennial is to support the research and practical work of artists who are interested in urban themes.<sup>34</sup> By realising public art projects – both permanent works of art as well as events – in various areas of Douala, SUD addresses the condition of the city's public spaces. In order to realise the projects, the SUD triennial, which has been active since 2017, and the art centre doual'art support a joint process that involves the local residents and their neighbourhood organisations. In this way, socio-political topics gain attention: the works of art themselves, their artistic and cultural forms of expression, have strong social and political dimensions because they strive to create a public sphere or a public "space," a rarity in many African cities.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> For more information, see Chapter "Forms of organisation".

<sup>32</sup> The Sapeurs movement emerged in the 1920s under the colonial rule of France and Belgium. The fashion movement was born in the slums of Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Brazzaville in the Republic Congo. Its followers work as taxi drivers or gardeners during the day only to transform themselves into stylish dandies wearing elegant clothing and designer fashion after work. See also: Tariq Zaidi (2020): *Sapeurs. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Congo*, Heidelberg: Kehrer.

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.congobiennale.art>.

<sup>34</sup> <http://saonurbaineddouala.org/festival-sud2017/>.

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.biennialfoundation.org/biennials/sud-salon-urbain-de-douala-cameroun/>.



### **Case study: Biennale de Lubumbashi**

The Biennale de Lubumbashi is one of the most dynamic and experimental artistic events in Africa today. Founded by a group of artists and writers from Lubumbashi in 2008, it has become an important platform with international charisma for African artists. It is situated in the southeastern part of the country in the Katanga Region, whose mineral resources have made it an economically important region since colonial times. Located more than 1,500 km from Kinshasa as the crow flies, Lubumbashi is far away from art centres and the capital's tradition-steeped art academy. The biennial acts as an outpost for contemporary art and its initiatives have an impact on the region, particularly because of the insufficient government support for the arts and substantial deficits in the cultural infrastructure in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Although the inaugural edition of the biennial had a budget of about USD 90,000, which was mainly borne by a private local sponsor, the Institut Français and another cultural organisation, it has acquired additional institutional partners and received EU funding through *Cellule d'appui à l'ordonnateur national du Fonds européen de développement*<sup>36</sup> in recent years (for more details, see Chapter 3.3.1 Financing models). Even though the biennial does not receive any government funding and funds for building up the local infrastructure continue to be a desideratum, it still intensively supports the local scenes, e.g. through the resonating concept of the curator Simon Njami that the city be viewed as a museum and have an effect on public spaces. Local actors are involved in the installation and staff is trained for the outreach programmes. Since 2017, "Atelier Picha" has been promoting professionalisation activities whose impact continues to be felt for a long time after the biennial: e.g. such programmes as "Mentorship for young artists" and "Programmes for Cultural Practitioners" that are carried out by national and international experts. These initiatives are supported by the DOEN Foundation, Wallonie-Bruxelles International and the Institut Français. Currently long-term partnerships are being forged with such international partners around the world as the Sharjah Art Foundation, Gasworks in London or Universidad Distrital de Colombia in Bogota.

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<sup>36</sup> Annual Report 2019, S. 38. [https://cofed.cd/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/RA2019\\_VERSION-WEB-.pdf](https://cofed.cd/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/RA2019_VERSION-WEB-.pdf).

### 2.2.4 East Africa

Whereas conflicts are destabilising many areas in the region around the Horn of Africa, East Africa is experiencing steady economic growth. Interstate organisations are setting up socio-economic alliances such as the East African Community (EAC) to facilitate mobility within the member states. In contrast, visa requirements make it difficult for artists and cultural practitioners to travel to neighbouring regions in southern Africa.

Name of the biennial	City	Country	First edition
East Africa Biennale <sup>37</sup>	East Africa Region	Burundi, Kenia, Ruanda, Uganda, Tansania	2003
Addis Foto Fest <sup>38</sup>	Addis Abeba	Äthiopien	2010
KLA Art <sup>39</sup>	Kampala	Uganda	2012
Kampala Art Biennale <sup>40</sup>	Kampala	Uganda	2014

Besides the **Addis Foto Fest**, a photography biennial, which has been held in the capital of Ethiopia since 2010 and has gained more than regional significance, Kampala is a centre for the production of contemporary art in the region as it is home to the biennials KLA Art and the Kampala Art Biennale.

In an environment marked by rising tensions and a high potential for conflict, the cultural sector in Uganda faces immense challenges, and these will not cease following President Yoweri Museveni's reconfirmation in office after 34 years in January 2021. "It must be feared," states a current report published by the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation, "that individual and democratic liberties will be limited even more in the coming years and that constitutional principles will be undermined further."<sup>41</sup>

Despite these geopolitical conditions, Uganda's capital is home to two biennials that are important platforms for art discourse and practice. There have been three editions of **KLA ART** that is produced by *32° East | Ugandan Arts Trust*, an independent non-profit organisation. The question of how art can be used to transform public spaces and reach new target groups is the focal point of its reflection and activities. The second art biennial located in the capital, **Kampala Art Biennale**, has been held four times since its foundation

<sup>37</sup> See chapter 3.2.

<sup>38</sup> <http://addisfotofest.com> (accessed on 24.02.2021).

<sup>39</sup> <https://klaart.org> (accessed on 28.02.2021).

<sup>40</sup> <http://kampalabiennale.org> (accessed on 28.02.2021).

<sup>41</sup> Country report January 2021, p. 6: [https://www.adept-africa.de/files/img/6%20Berichte/Berichte%20ADEPT/Presseartikel/2021%20Januar\\_KAS\\_Langzeitpr%C3%A4sident%20Museveni%20h%C3%A4lt%20sich%20an%20der%20Macht%20-%20mit%20allen%20Mitteln.pdf](https://www.adept-africa.de/files/img/6%20Berichte/Berichte%20ADEPT/Presseartikel/2021%20Januar_KAS_Langzeitpr%C3%A4sident%20Museveni%20h%C3%A4lt%20sich%20an%20der%20Macht%20-%20mit%20allen%20Mitteln.pdf).

in 2014. The edition planned for 2020 was not postponed but took place as a virtual 3D biennial, the only one on the continent, despite the Covid-19 sanitary crisis. The new "Master/Apprentice" collaboration format that was tested in 2018, in which renowned artists carry out projects together with young artists in their respective disciplines, was transformed into a digital variant and presented in a virtual exhibition. The activities to promote knowledge sharing and co-creation were rounded off by workshops with adolescents from socially deprived districts.

### 2.2.5 Southern Africa

According to the AU, Southern Africa comprises ten countries and is characterised by great contrasts. Government crises and corruption destabilise the political structures and, together with widespread inequality, promote violence.

Name of the biennial	City	Country	First edition
Stellenbosch Triennale <sup>42</sup>	Stellenbosch	South Africa	2020

Several biennials were discontinued after just a few editions as, for example, the **Triennial Luanda** in Angola or the legendary biennial in Johannesburg.<sup>43</sup> The **Johannesburg Biennale**, which was founded in post-Apartheid South Africa, was one of the most important contemporary art events of the 1990s, even though it was held only two times, i.e. in 1995 and 1997. *Africus: Johannesburg Biennale 1995* drew attention to overcoming the trauma of Apartheid, *Nation Building* and the end of South Africa's isolation. The second edition was curated by Okwui Enwezor in 1997. The discrepancy between internationalist ambitions, scrutinising globalisation from a post-national perspective, and South African demands for identity politics and nation building at a time of enforced financial austerity measures led to a hostile local reception, and the biennial was ended prematurely (Gardner/Green 2020, 1).

A new biennial for contemporary art emerged after a long time in southern Africa in 2020: the **Stellenbosch Triennale** in South Africa. However, it had to close again shortly after its opening because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Although it is considered a rather elite event by the local art scene, it introduced numerous noteworthy innovations, many of which address traditional African and contemporary practices. Hardly any biennials for contemporary art are being held currently in southern Africa; however, some art fairs in

<sup>42</sup> <https://stellenboschtriennale.com> (accessed on 28.02.2021).

<sup>43</sup> These biennials are not listed in the table because they are not active anymore. The Triennial Luanda presented editions in 2017, 2010 and a smaller, more local one in 2013.

South Africa are of national significance and, given their discursive programmes, assume certain functions of biennials. In addition, MOCCA, the Museum for Contemporary Art Zeitz in Cape Town, provides an extensive collection and an ambitious programme. It has become a new centre and platform for discourse about contemporary African art.

### 2.2.6 Trends and needs

The research showed that Africa is home to 22 active art biennials and triennials at the present time, six of them in North Africa, six in West Africa, five in Central Africa, four in East Africa, and one in South Africa. Half of the biennials were founded in the past 10 years, i.e. eleven biennials in Africa had their first edition in 2010 or later. These biennials quickly gained significance in their respective region and internationally. Just like the long-standing biennials in Dakar and Bamako they play a decisive part in increasing the international visibility of the African art scene.

Certain **trends** and **needs** that impact different areas can be derived based on these biennials:

- Initiatives regarding professionalisation and mentoring
- Strengthening the creative sector
- Activities in the field of education and achieving a wider impact
- Intercultural dialogue and co-creation
- Discursivity on socio-political and post-colonial issues
- Insufficient structural funding

Of decisive importance are initiatives aiming to **strengthen a sustainable development**, which work together with biennials, especially in such areas as **education, professionalisation and strengthening the creative sector**. They can bring about long-term effects promoting the creation of jobs and perspectives in the cultural sector as well, above all for young people. Several biennials have developed exemplary initiatives: for example, the "Master/Apprentice" cooperation implemented by the Kampala Biennial in Uganda or the mentoring programme for young artists organised by the Lubumbashi Biennial (Democratic Republic of the Congo). The latter is particularly active as regards education. So, for example, it trains guides for tours, offers educational programmes and encourages the sharing of knowledge in workshops with adolescents. Expanding the impact and striving to bring art closer to children and adolescents as well as people who have no or only negligible access to art is the objective of numerous biennials, such as the ambitious initiative "100 schools/10,000 students" launched by the Rencontres de Bamako (Mali) that was described above.

In addition, numerous of these biennials gain special relevance not only for their region but internationally as well because of their specific approaches or **selected focal topics**. So, for example, the Lagos Biennial pursued an interdisciplinary approach in its second edition in 2019 by bringing together architecture, design and urbanism with contemporary art.<sup>44</sup>

Post-colonial discourses and socio-political issues are increasingly being addressed. Through their decided thematic framework, numerous biennials have drawn attention to sensitive issues and discussions. Under the title "La place de l'Humain", the Salon Urbain de Douala (Cameroon) looked at dehumanisation and disempowerment. By installing art works in the city, it took the reflection on the general declaration of human rights and the desire for more peaceful coexistence to the public domain.<sup>45</sup> In the same year, the Mediterranean Biennale of Contemporary Art of Oran (Algeria) focussed on the situation of mankind in the face of natural catastrophes or wars under the title "EXODUS"<sup>46</sup> With its title "Get Up, Stand Up", the Kampala Art Biennial (Uganda), which was curated by the renowned curator Simon Njami in 2020, raised challenging questions – questions regarding political, economic and intellectual freedom. Decolonial perspectives currently are questioned by the Young Congo Biennial in Kinshasa, whose edition this year has the motto "The Breath of the Ancestors" (2021) and addresses cultural inheritance, remembrance and colonial history and propagates the diversity of cultural forms of expression.<sup>47</sup>

Ecological aspects are being taken up as well, as demonstrated by the Abidjan Green Art (Ivory Coast) and its focus on land art. The small number of artists involved, the choice of prescribed materials and in situ production of the artworks alone reflect its commitment to environmental protection.

A central theme in the biennial discourse is **local contexts**, in particular the question as to how biennials respond to local conditions, what impact they have on public space and how they promote intercultural dialogue. More than, for example, in Europe or the United States, where museums, art associations, galleries and academies of art make up a comparably good infrastructure for (contemporary) art, biennials in Africa gain relevance in connection with creating spaces and venues for discourse about contemporary art. This is illustrated by Lubumbashi or Oran. This also is associated with the necessity of creating a

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<sup>44</sup> <https://contemporaryand.com/magazines/curators-announced-for-the-second-lagos-biennial-2019/>.

<sup>45</sup> The edition was curated by the London-based curator Cécile Bourne-Farell. <http://doualart.org/2017/01/19/festival-sud-2017>.

<sup>46</sup> <https://oranbiennale.org/biennale-2017>.

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.congobiennale.art/2021/>.

local market for contemporary art so as to offer local artists perspectives and prevent them from migrating to Europe or the United States.<sup>48</sup>

Strengthening an **intercultural dialogue** through exchange and **co-creation** is the focus of initiatives organised by the KLA ART Labs in Kampala (Uganda), which were supported by the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development and Arts Collaboratory. The participating artists completed residencies in Indonesia, Colombia and Mali before joining the laboratory in Kampala for "Making Things Public" (2019/2020), where the artists worked as a group to address issues about the transformation of spaces and study how different audiences in different contexts received works of art.<sup>49</sup>

Biennials on the African continent have in common a certain precarity and, in an international comparison, most of them work with low budgets.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, the question is how **funding institutes** can systematically provide support, aspects that will be discussed in more detail below.

Proceeding from a region – in this case the African continent – questions and topics relating to biennials worldwide emerge, which will be described in more detail below. In the following chapters, the organisational and funding structures of biennials and the funding of biennials will be studied, however, this will not be limited to the African continent but will take a global perspective.

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<sup>48</sup> Sadek Rahim and Tewfik Ali Chaouche, co-founders of the Mediterranean Biennial of Contemporary Art of Oran in an interview with artists Anne Murray, 2017. <https://www.biennialfoundation.org/2017/09/exodus-4th-mediterranean-biennial-contemporary-art/>.

<sup>49</sup> <https://klaart.org> and <https://ugandanartstrust.org/kla-art-labs/>.

<sup>50</sup> See Chapter 3.3.

### 3. Organisational and funding structures

A detailed examination of the organisational and funding structures, however, would go beyond the scope of this study in view of the diversity of the myriad biennials being held around the world, their individual histories, the context of their foundation and geopolitical conditions.

The seemingly simple question posed programmatically by contributors to the Biennial Reader: "What, however, *is* a biennial?" (Filipovic, van Hal, Øvstebø 2010, 13) leads to a fundamental debate about the nature of biennials. The biennial discourse discusses the duality of biennials, which are defined, on the one hand, as temporary exhibitions and, thus, as ephemeral and, on the other hand, as institutions and, thus, permanent (van Hal 2015, 14). Although the literature predominantly refers to biennials as an exhibition format and the focus is on funding from cultural institutes that primarily support projects, biennials also have a permanent structure and strive to achieve sustainability and continuity. The permanent structure of a biennials needs funding as well to ensure – as several of the experts who were interviewed pointed out – that the organisational structure of a biennial does not have to be completely deconstructed after every edition and then re-constructed again.

#### 3.1 Forms of organisation – Tradition and trends

The forms of organisation and formats of biennials vary considerably and need to be viewed in their specific context. The form of organisation depends on who founded a biennial and how it was founded, the design of the internal structure and, above all, to what extent it is connected to public, i.e. government or municipal, institutions or certain entities. It also affects the selection of the artists who are to be presented, i.e. is it based on an open call, are they selected by a curator or a team of curators, as well as who, in turn, appoints the curator and who else has a voice in these matters.

#### 3.1.1 Founding bodies and founding contexts

##### Founding bodies

A study of the bodies involved in the foundation of biennials shows who founded a biennial, why it was founded, and the long-term objective. Founders of biennials come from the public and private sectors, they can be government bodies, including ministries of culture, municipalities and municipal associations, tourism councils, museums, private foundations or artists and curators.

A study of biennials that was conducted as part of a research project of the post-graduate "in Curating" programme of ZHdK in Zürich and published by Ronald Kolb und Shwetal A. Patel in 2018, examined these founding bodies. The study *Draft: Global Biennial Survey 2018* examined the founding bodies as one criteria of the study (Kolb/Patel 2018).<sup>51</sup> The study showed that of the 286 biennials reviewed, 51 had been founded solely by a private foundation or association, 46 by artists and/or curators, 33 directly by the government and the rest by other bodies. When classified by continents, the study came to the conclusion that although most of the biennials in Europe were founded by a government or private foundations, government involvement in North America was equal to zero (Kolb/Patel 2018, 30ff). This comes as no surprise, however, in view of the fact that although the USA may be the country that hosts the most biennials worldwide, government funding for the arts is very low. By contrast, most of the biennials on the African continent were initiated by artists and curators; however, government involvement plays a very important part in connection with two very important African biennials, namely the Biennale de Dakar and the Rencontres de Bamako.

##### Founding contexts

The formation contexts of the biennials reflect the different intentions behind the implementation of biennials: Sometimes it may be an act of cultural policy initiated by a government, sometimes it may be for strategic reasons to boost (cultural) tourism in a region. Some cities use so-called city branding and avail themselves of the international attraction and reputation of a biennial so as generate both economic and positive image effects.

Quite a few biennials – particularly in the Global South – were established in response to the lack of local infrastructure for contemporary art in an attempt to compensate for the vacuum of such institutional sites for contemporary art as, for example, museums.

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<sup>51</sup> The study can be found online under: [https://www.on-curating.org/issue-39.html#\\_YHxzWC222XO](https://www.on-curating.org/issue-39.html#_YHxzWC222XO).



### 3. Organisational and funding structures

As Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal and Solveig Øvstebø underscore, the founding histories of many biennials are connected to specific "local" events and issues despite their pointedly global ambitions. So, for example, the founding of documenta, which has been taking place since 1955, was decidedly influenced by the reconstruction of Germany after the war; the Johannesburg Biennale, the first of two editions was held in 1995, was influenced by the end of Apartheid; the fall of the Berlin Wall was the conceptional founding point for Manifesta<sup>52</sup>; for the Havana Biennale<sup>53</sup> it was the urgent wish to promote an "un-aligned perspective" (Smith 2016, o.p.) – an alternative position to the Western-American dominance in the art world; and, finally, the reason for founding the Gwangju Biennale in South Korea, whose first edition was in 1995, was the country's orientation towards democracy after many years of repressive military dictatorships, etc. (Filipovic, van Hal, Øvstebø 2010, 18).

#### 3.1.2 Typologising biennials

Numerous authors have proposed typologising biennials – an endeavour that makes only limited sense in view of the heterogeneity of biennials. Charlotte Bydler's much cited classification of biennials into three phases makes the following distinctions (Bydler 2010, 388):

1. The capitalistic-philanthropic undertakings from the end of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century, some of which were founded by influential patrons (Venice Biennale, Carnegie International, and such younger biennials as those in São Paulo or Sydney). Accordingly, the main motive for founding the mother of all biennials in Venice was economic, namely to boost cultural tourism.
2. Biennials that emerged after the Second World War, characterised by the tension experienced through the bloc building of the Cold War and responses thereto (documenta, Havana Biennale, Dak'Art).
3. The large range of flexible, production- and event-oriented biennials that came into being in the 1990s and 2000s (e.g. in Istanbul, Gwangju or Sharjah and Manifesta).

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<sup>52</sup> <https://manifesta.org>.

<sup>53</sup> <http://biennialhavana.org>.

#### Venice

The oldest of all biennials, it has been held every two years since 1895 and has served as a model for innumerable other biennials. La Biennale di Venezia<sup>54</sup> is created at a moment when world trade is flourishing and Europe is undergoing significant change, in which monarchies and foreign rule are being superseded by national states (Vogel 2020, 53). Its concept evolved from the spirit driving the large world expositions in the 19th century (Jones 2016) and has not changed significantly in the past 120 years: It introduced the concept of presenting contemporary art trends in separate national pavilions, for which the individual country appointed a curator. Numerous critics pose the justified question whether a national presentation of art still is appropriate in an age of global networking. Even if there also is a comprehensive and transnational theme-centred exhibition that shows current art trends from many countries, the national pavilions remain a geopolitical image that no longer reflects reality: viewed from a postcolonial perspective, this raises numerous complex questions regarding persistent hegemonic power structures in the art world.

Nevertheless, the national character of the pavilions also enables countries, such as, for example, Germany, to reflect on their own positions and productively debate the question as to the intrinsic qualities of art from Germany and who decides this. For exactly 50 years, the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa) has been coordinating the contributions shown in the German pavilion. They always took a critical stand as, for example, Hans Haacke's *Germania*, for which the artist tore out the marble floor slabs and challenged such concepts as nation, history, politics and memory (Filipovic, van Hal, Øvstebø 2010, 15). The aspect of inherent internationalism has been pondered increasingly in recent years by deconstructing specific national identities. This formed the background for the 2013 contribution curated by Susanne Gaensheimer: solely non-German artists were invited and, moreover, Germany and France exchanged their pavilions in honour of the 50th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty.

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<sup>54</sup> <https://www.labiennale.org/en>.

#### 3.1.3 „Re-thinking“ Formats

The "Venice model" was copied and adapted in manifold ways by subsequent biennials; nonetheless, very diverse, partially experimental, biennial formats were conceived as a result of a decidedly critical examination of this organisational form.

Numerous biennials have chosen a model that comprises a main exhibition, additional other exhibitions and an accompanying programme. Furthermore, when the biennial is divided into an official curated IN programme and an unofficial independent OFF programme, as, for example, at the biennial in Dakar<sup>55</sup>, different presentation levels, sites and interests can be combined, and this facilitates an impact on the city and society.

The third Havana Biennale in 1989 marked a paradigmatic change in the biennial landscape, because it heralded the creation of the biennials of the Global South, which Oliver Marchardt classified as postcolonial *Biennials of Resistance*<sup>56</sup>. Acting as counter-models to the Venice Biennale, they initiated postcolonial emancipation processes. Their focus on global art production from predominantly non-Western countries and the abandoning of national presentations coincided with curatorial decisions that anticipated the *discursive turn* and *educational turn* that the world of biennials would undergo. Accordingly, Oliver Marchardt concludes: "(...) the so-called 'periphery' anticipated developments that would later be of great significance to the centre" (Marchardt 2014, 263). It wasn't until the much-discussed documenta exhibitions in 1998 - curated by Catherine David - and 2002 - curated by Okwui Enwezor - that these developments towards discursive formats and outreach programmes as well as a global perspective of art gained momentum.

Since the 1990s and 2000s, any reflection on biennials returns to the recurring debate about the homogenisation of biennials. Thus, authors like Sabine B. Vogel point out the worldwide uniformity of biennials that are directed by "star curators" and repeatedly present the same artists (Vogel 2020, 58). The curator Young Chul Lee, artistic director of the second Gwangju Biennial, emphasises that it is necessary to understand the structural reasons for this homogenisation, points to the hope of many cities that they will become part of a presumably transnational global culture. According to Young Chul Lee, this pursuit blurs the differences between cultures and contexts are blurred by this pursuit (Lee 2007, 116).

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<sup>55</sup> <https://biennaledakar.org/note-de-presentation/>.

<sup>56</sup> With reference to Ranjit Hoskote, the co-curator of the Gwangju Biennale, who coined the term in 2008 (Hoskote 2010).

Nevertheless, it is precisely the biennial format that – and all interviewed experts agree on this point – is continuously reinvented and, consequently, continuously redefines biennials as a field of experimentation for art discourse. This is illustrated by the examples below:

- **Horizontal structures:** The 2018 first edition of the **Bangkok Biennale**<sup>57</sup> (not to be confused with the Bangkok Art Biennale), for example, was planned as an inclusive "open access" platform. Decentralisation is not limited to cancelling the geographic focus on one city frequently associated with biennials. Indeed, the **Bangkok Biennale** also reversed the hierarchic structures of the art world: It did not have a central curator, but pursued a participatory approach with autonomous, self-organised "pavilions."
- **Biennials as festivals or as a performative process:** The eighth edition of **N'GOLÁ Biennial of Arts and Culture in São Tomé e Príncipe** in 2019 was held for the first time as a festival.<sup>58</sup> The biennial festival was presented at several locations on the island of São Tomé. Besides a multidisciplinary art exhibition, there were workshops, lectures, concerts and a hairstyling event as well as a fashion performance and a parade of "Sapeurs" from Kinshasa, all of which embody a form of colonial resistance, social activism and peaceful protest.
- The 9th edition of **Contour Biennale** in Belgium in 2019 also tested a new format in a special way proceeding from the question: "What can a biennial be today and how can we organise it in a more sustainable way?"<sup>59</sup> Contrary to earlier editions with a duration of 10 weeks, the presentation concept of the biennial was aligned to the phases of the lunar cycle and offered an extensive discursive programme as well as exhibitions on three weekends. The themes and various practices reflected a strong involvement in local contexts, particularly because many of the works were created collectively by the artists and residents in and around Mechelen. Critical voices on the part of the artists and the public objected to the low degree of visibility given to the artistic positions and projects due to the short exhibition time; however, the organisers and public gave a high rating to the sustainability. This became manifest in an intensive debate about the addressed topics of racism or decolonialisation.

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<sup>57</sup> <https://www.bangkokbiennial.com>.

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.ngola-biennial.org/about>.

<sup>59</sup> <https://contour9.be/en/contour/>.

- **Deceleration:** Certain tendencies that already were evident before the Covid-19 pandemic have gained new explosive power and relevance through the current situation. The newly created **osloBiennalen**<sup>60</sup> diverges from "classic" biennial formats in that it is conceived as a steadily evolving five-year programme focusing on art in public space. The first edition of this biennial, which runs from 2019 to 2024, experiments with artistic practices and the creation of infrastructure and addresses what is hidden, what flows and the fragility of urban space. The audience are the people who pass by.

Likewise, **sonsbeek 20–24**<sup>61</sup> in the Netherlands, conceived by the artistic director Bonaventure Ndikong from Cameroon, will replace the customary exhibition rhythm with a new, more sustainable form consisting of a process that will continue until 2024 and combine two editions. Together with his team of five co-curators, the artistic director explores the socio-economic relations between employers and employees through sonic frequencies. The biennial project takes the form of a complex and history-charged course through an aircraft hangar, several castles, (former) estates, agricultural locations, bunkers, art spaces and Sonsbeek Park.

New biennial formats force sponsors to reconsider their funding strategies and promotion of biennials, to design them flexibly, and to support not only extensive exhibition formats and the participation of artists in precisely one exhibition but to create conditions which would allow biennials to retain their flexibility and experiment with new formats.

#### 3.2 Collaborations and alliances

The creation of international biennial alliances and transnational collaborations constitutes a decisive contribution towards experimenting with new forms of international solidarity at an institutional level, to develop alternative solutions for transnational cooperation and to create new networks. The biennial format is complemented and broadened by diverse forms of collaboration, intercultural discourse about curatorial practice is intensified and sharing of knowledge is promoted.

In Europe, the **Perennial Biennial**<sup>62</sup> was created in 2018 as a partnership of five biennials for contemporary art that are working together to develop and explore sustainable

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<sup>60</sup> <https://www.oslobiennalen.no>.

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.sonsbeek20-24.org/en>.

<sup>62</sup> <https://biennial.com/news/perennial-biennial-new-collaborative-project-european-biennials-announced>.

### 3. Organisational and funding structures

models of collaborative work in connection with biennials. The Liverpool Biennale, the Berlin Biennale, the Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts, the Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art and the Bergen Assembly in cooperation with the International Biennial Association (IBA) are striving to establish a dynamic European exchange platform in order to strengthen the art sector globally, Europe-wide and locally. Particularly because of the different rhythms of the biennials and triennials mentioned above, the cooperation focuses less on curatorial work than on structural aspects involving joint workshops, publications, programmes as well as contact between team members to promote a long-standing exchange of knowledge and experience.

Also established in 2018, the **East Europe Biennial Alliance (EEBA)**<sup>63</sup> brings together the Biennale Matter of Art in Prague, the OFF-Biennale Budapest, the Kyiv Biennial and the Biennale Warszawa. Acting as a contraposition in culture to certain ideological tendencies prevalent in Eastern Europe, it gains special importance because of its political dimension. Vasył Cherepanyn, Director of the Visual Culture Research Center in Kiev, which is responsible for holding the biennial there, explains that the objective of the biennial alliance is to propose a different narrative for Eastern Europe and to re-define the way cultural institutions work together: "In the political context characterised by growing nationalistic tendencies, hardening of borders, narrowed public space, and institutional weakness, the conglomerate of biennial organisations presents the generative power of a self-critical institution that enacts the biennial format as an artistic tool in the political framework" (Cherepanyn 2018, 406). This alliance of up to now four biennials in Ukraine, Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic strives to establish a long-term collaboration mechanism through art events, exhibitions and public programmes and to conceive cross-border visions in culture that can overcome the restrictive categories of national identities. Six symposiums have been held to date, at which persons engaged in the art sector discussed issues relevant to the biennial format, collaboration practices and political contexts.

The transcontinental cooperation **New North and South** transcends the regional or intercontinental collaboration projects described above, albeit not only geographically. The network is made up of eleven art organisations in the North of England and South Asia: Liverpool Biennial, Manchester Art Gallery, Whitworth, Manchester Museum, The Tetley in Leeds as well as Colombo Biennale (Sri Lanka), Dhaka Art Summit (Bangladesh), Kochi-Muziris Biennale (India), Karachi Biennale and Lahore Biennale (Pakistan) and the British Council. It is supported by public funding by the National Lottery through the "Ambition for Excellence" programme of the Arts Council England. Along with the public

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<sup>63</sup> <https://eeba.art/en>.

### 3. Organisational and funding structures

programme, it includes a number of residencies and co-commissioning of the different biennials. Moreover, the Liverpool Biennale is developing mentoring and commissioning opportunities for emerging artists from Bangladesh.

There are two noteworthy African biennials that are not a collaboration of several biennials but are conceived as nomadic biennials similar to the format of Manifesta, the wandering European biennial for contemporary art: the East Africa Biennial and the CICIBA Biennale; however, the latter is not active anymore. Whereas the first Manifesta was held in 1996, **CICIBA Biennale** was established as early as 1985: another example underlining the fact that formats practiced in the "Global South" appeared later in the "Global North" – albeit in an altered form (Marchardt 2014, 263). Bound up directly with the political interests of the Centre International des Civilisations Bantu (CICIBA), the Biennale is an emblematic example of transnational artistic exchange that was not dominated by the former colonial powers (Greani 2016, 70). Each of its seven editions was based on a simple, though controversial, premise: the existence of a common culture of the "Bantu" – a term more likely used in a linguistic context nowadays. This local biennial works to unite Central African countries by being held alternatively in Gabon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and the Republic of the Congo and refusing to be guided by nations – the more so as they are a postcolonial construct – but rather by cultural spaces. Since it is basically independent of European funding, it is a transregional platform for contemporary art, where such renowned international artists as Moke and Chérie Samba were discovered by the global art scene despite the exhibition's local focus.

As its name implies, the **East Africa Art Biennale Association (EASTAFAB)** actively holds art exhibitions in the capitals of Eastern African countries in order to promote regional integration through culture. The underlying idea is to support the vision of an East African community, to create a borderless society of East African people. It distinguishes itself from the biennials dominating the international art scene through its regional focus and aesthetics. Nevertheless, it is a pathbreaking initiative for forming networks. The East Africa Biennial has been held regularly every two years since 2003: at first, in the style of Manifesta, always in a different city in the region; however, since 2011, the exhibition has taken the form of a touring exhibition and is shown in different cities. This format ensures more intensive sub-regional networking in Burundi, Kenya, Ruanda and Uganda; moreover, the headquarters are located in Tanzania.

**Cooperative biennial projects** provide an opportunity to invigorate intercultural dialogue and knowledge sharing, to explore collaborative practices and to show solidarity at

an international level. Numerous of the experts who were interviewed emphasised that the promotion of transnational, transregional and transcontinental collaboration projects contributes significantly to bolstering learning and exchange activities between countries and cultural spaces, be it in education and outreach, where, for example, the United Kingdom has been doing pioneer work for many years, be it in graphic design, etc. Moreover, certain trends like democratic movements in a region could be reinforced across national borders through such cultural initiatives as biennials because they reach a broad public. One expert points out the potentials of funding collaboration projects on the African continent to ensure that networks are reinforced at a sub-regional level. Instead of focusing on nations, "clusters" should be pursued so that networking does not occur along former colonial borders but within spaces that have developed organically. When one views East Africa as an area with a cluster, for example, consisting of Burundi, Ruanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, it needs to be considered that a country also could be placed in several clusters, i.e. that Burundi and Ruanda could be deemed to be one area together with parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

#### 3.3 Financial structures

All research on the financial structures of biennials also faces the problem of insufficient transparency regarding the funding structures. In addition, it is difficult to obtain information or statistics on budgets, sources of income or distribution of costs, except when it is a question of public funding. One of the few studies that are available was drawn up in 2013 by the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts: "The Financing of International Contemporary Art Biennials." It provides a comparative analysis of eight influential biennials, five of them in Europe, one in Latin America and one in Australia.<sup>64</sup> Even if the decisive selection criterion was that the biennials have similar scopes and reputations so as to obtain a common framework, the study only examined a very narrow spectrum within the extremely heterogeneous biennial landscape. Additional current reports from 2019, 2018 and 2017, which describe economic and socio-cultural effects and provide analyses of the number and composition of visitors – always with regard to the specific biennial – are available for the general public from the biennials in Toronto,<sup>65</sup> Liverpool<sup>66</sup> and Kochi<sup>67</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> The art biennials in Berlin, Lyon, São Paulo, Gwangju, Istanbul, Liverpool, Sydney and Manifesta were studied. The study was conducted by the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts. ([https://www.iksv.org/i/content/233\\_1\\_InternationalContArtBiennials.pdf](https://www.iksv.org/i/content/233_1_InternationalContArtBiennials.pdf)).

<sup>65</sup> <https://torontobiennial.org/about/>.

<sup>66</sup> <https://biennial.com/files/pdfs/7834/liverpool-biennial-2018-evaluation.pdf>.

<sup>67</sup> <https://kochimuzirisbiennale.org/kpmg-kmb-impact-study/> The study on the Kochi Biennale, for example, was drawn up by KPMG at the request of the Kochi Biennale Foundation and, thus, also reflects a specific motivation.



### 3.3.1 Financing models

The budgets of biennials usually are assembled from various sources: public financing, funding by national cultural institutes, private sponsorship, ticket and catalogue sales, and other sources. Support through public subsidies is provided at national, regional and/or local levels. Frequently, biennials are systematically supported by the cities in which they are located because the municipalities hope to promote cultural tourism and boost the city's reputation. Budgets vary strongly – both as regards the amount and the composition of the sources, as is shown by the examples below:

Name	Year of the edition	Budget (approximately)
Manifesta	2020	€ 6.5 Mio. <sup>68</sup>
Berlin Biennale	2018	€ 3.5 Mio. <sup>69</sup>
Biennale de Lyon	2017	€ 9.03 Mio. <sup>70</sup>
Documenta 14 (incl. Athens)	2017	€ 47.3 Mio. <sup>71</sup>
Biennale de Marrakesh	2014	€ 1 Mio. <sup>72</sup>
Rencontres de Bamako	2019	€ 500,000 <sup>73</sup>
Biennale de Lubumbashi	2019	US \$ 400,000 (of this amount, USD 67,000 for Atelier Picha) <sup>74</sup>

Whether the budget of a biennial is high or low does not necessarily say anything about the type, effect or sustainability of a biennial. The experts interviewed emphasised that a small biennial may create substantial added value. Whereas numerous European cities have good cultural infrastructure, biennials assume important functions when they are held in areas with only weak cultural infrastructure and few cultural institutions like museums or galleries for contemporary art or training programmes for jobs in the cultural sector.

<sup>68</sup> Amount confirmed, interview with co-curator of the Manifesta.

<sup>69</sup> 3 Mio. € from the *Kulturstiftung des Bundes*. <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/heres-the-full-list-of-participating-artists-for-the-10th-berlin-biennale-1272623> (accessed on 03.02.2021).

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.grandlyon.com/delibs/pdf/Conseil/2019/05/13/DELIBERATION/2019-3472.pdf> (accessed on 03.02.2021).

<sup>71</sup> [https://www.documenta.de/de/retrospective/documenta\\_14](https://www.documenta.de/de/retrospective/documenta_14) (accessed on 03.02.2021).

<sup>72</sup> Interview with the art director of the 5. Marrakesh Biennial 2014.

<sup>73</sup> [https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2019/12/09/photo-pour-leurs-25-ans-les-rencontres-de-bamako-voient-grand\\_6022252\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2019/12/09/photo-pour-leurs-25-ans-les-rencontres-de-bamako-voient-grand_6022252_3212.html) (accessed on 03.02.2021).

<sup>74</sup> Information provided by the organiser to the author, email dated 12 February 2021.

### 3. Organisational and funding structures

When the financial structures of biennials are studied in a global context, it can be concluded that public funding is very important for the sustainability and long-term life of biennials. Quite a number of biennials that did not receive government funding and were funded solely through private sponsors and European funding institutes, had to be discontinued after just a few editions. So, for example, the art biennial in Marrakesh has not been able to realise another edition since 2016. The scope and continuity of public funding for biennials also allows conclusions about the cultural policies of the respective country. Almost all of the biennials analysed in the study by the Istanbul Foundation received at least 50% of their budget from public funding. This is still the case today: For example, €1,406,628 of the total budget of the **Biennale de Lyon** 2017 (€9,034,032) came from national funding (Ministry of Culture), €2,368,048 came from local municipal funding and €707,000 from the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. In addition, some small amounts came from other public sources.<sup>75</sup> This shows that countries like France and Germany, but also South Korea, pursue the promotion of international art events at a national level; in contrast, this is not the case in Turkey or Brazil.

The **São Paulo Biennial** is special because in the past few years up to 80% of the budget came from so-called "indirect public funding." Legal regulations promote private investments in the cultural sector; hence, the biennial receives ample sponsoring. The *Lei de Incentivo à Cultura* (called *Lei Rouanet* until 2016) allows companies to grant 4% of the income tax owed (6% for private persons) to cultural projects that have been classified by the Ministry of Culture instead of paying this amount directly to the state. This system also is an effective mechanism in European cultural policies, in particular by enabling the use of tax deductions.

As regards the São Paulo Biennial, there is a direct connection between "indirect public funding" and the orientation of the biennial, which has always done pioneer work in education. Substantial efforts are made to ensure widespread communication and to reach a diverse audience. The 32nd São Paulo biennial recorded about 900,000 visitors in 2016 and 90,013 of them participated in initiatives offered as part of the extensive educational programme. Since the Biennale Foundation in São Paulo is member of a government cultural programme, which offers visits and transport to cultural events to groups of students attending state schools, about 15,800 students participated in mediation programs and tours

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<sup>75</sup> See footnote 70.

### 3. Organisational and funding structures

at the 33rd São Paulo Biennial in 2018.<sup>76</sup> There were also different initiatives carried out by artists with students or programmes organized by the Biennale Foundation, which about 350 teachers attended in 2018.<sup>77</sup>

A study of the African continent delineates the insufficient government or public local support, and the **Lubumbashi Biennale** in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is just one among many biennials that do not receive any government funding.

In 2019, the budget was made up as follows: **40% from "public funds"** from European cultural institutes and intermediary organisations such as the EU. The organisations and cultural institutions providing support were: Wallonie.Bruxelles International (Belgium), Africalia (Belgium) Pro Helvetia (Switzerland), Institut Français (France), KUNSTEN en Ergoed Vlaanderen (Belgium) and ifa (Germany). The EU supported the 2019 and previous editions through COFED (Cellule d'appui à l'ordonnateur national du Fonds européen de développement) and once through EUNIC.

Funds from **institutions and private sponsors**, either in-kind or monetary, also made up **40%** of the fund. OSISA (Open Society Foundation for Sothern Africa) and DOEN Foundation (the Netherlands) granted essential funding for structural costs. Five of the 19 sponsors were located in Belgium and only three came from the African continent, e.g. the Fondation Alliance/MACAAL in Morocco. Additional cooperation and support came from such museums as the Musée du Quai Branly or the Louvain La Neuve triennial in Belgium. Another **9%** of the budget can be traced back to donations and in-kind support by the organisers themselves; only **11%** came from local sponsors. Therefore, an objective of the organisers is to increase local funding (sponsors, companies) and equalise it to institutional and public funding, which, albeit essential, also calls for substantial administrative efforts. Ideally the cultural and political conditions in the country would be such that support from local authorities is encouraged, at least for local editions (e.g. rent for space at the university or the national museum or the institute for the visual arts).

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<sup>76</sup> The programme Cultura Ensina was developed by the educational development institute Fundação para o Desenvolvimento da Educação (FDE): <http://bienal.org.br/relatorio/2017-2018/gestaoinstitutional/institutional-connections/national/in-the-state>. There were numerous other initiatives, e.g. with refugees.

<sup>77</sup> <http://bienal.org.br/relatorio/2017-2018/gestaoinstitutional/institutional-connections/national/in-the-city>

#### 3.3.2 Private and alternative resources

At a time marked by global recession and the Covid-19 sanitary crisis as well as in countries in which public funding for biennials is not available, the significance of private or alternative funding methods is increasing. This poses opportunities as well as risks for biennials. On principle biennials are non-commercial, independent events; nonetheless, it is justifiable to ask how the source of funding influences the curatorial work.<sup>78</sup> consider the consequences of privatisation of curatorial work. Accordingly, curators and organisers of biennials also may have to face moral and ethical considerations in connection with funding, e.g. they may have to look carefully at the companies (or, in the public sector, the government) offering sponsorship (or funding). Artists already have taken a stand on this issue, e.g. during the Sydney Biennale 2014 when numerous of the invited artists protested against certain sources of funding.<sup>79</sup> (Smith 2016)

Crowdfunding is an alternative possibility for generating additional funds for biennials. It also offers opportunities for festivals in the Global South as, for example, the #00 Biennial in Havana in 2018. Organised by artists as a substitute for the regular Havana Biennial when it had to be postponed because of the hurricane Irma, it also was a counter-project to the regular biennial in Havana that is caught up in the context of government regimentation. Crowdfunding provided ways of circumventing state censorship. The Festival Management Training Programmes organised by the British Council also look at crowdfunding as a strategy for strengthening the self-management and independence of cultural organisations. Although some initiatives have fallen short of expectations (Hucks/Patel 2020, 18), this alternative source of funding does show potential not only for biennials of the Global South but also the Global North.<sup>80</sup> Technological progress, increasing digitalisation and the growing significance of social media networks augment the potential considerably.

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<sup>78</sup> There are various opinions on this. For example, in the USA private funding is considered a more independent source than state funding, since the latter may make the funds contingent on certain preconditions as regards content, format, etc.

<sup>79</sup> Shortly before the opening of the exhibition, artists called for a boycott when word was out that the main sponsor was affiliated to a company that was involved in controversial conduct towards refugees.

<sup>80</sup> See also the fundraising campaign for the Italian pavilion at the 55th biennale of Venice.

#### 4. Funding: Actors and programmes

The current pandemic has significantly impacted the cultural sector. It also has aggravated and made more apparent various aspects that already had been discussed controversially before the pandemic. Therefore, sponsors and political decision-makers need to reconsider the priorities and principles of the financing programmes originating from before the pandemic. For this reason, the following section discusses how and where the biennial format is promoted in different countries, which joint funding initiatives exist and in which form, and in which areas it would be advisable for German foreign cultural relations and education policy to provide additional funding and adapt the support.

The following survey and analysis of selected existing actors and initiatives involved in biennial financing is used as a basis for recommending adjustments. Although many cultural institutes prioritise the funding of biennials, no statistics or overviews of the funding are compiled in most cases. The focus of this study is on the funding programmes of selected funding organisations and cultural institutes in northwestern Europe, which is to say individual countries and multilateral initiatives of these countries as well as the EU as a whole. Given the extensive funding spectrum of the organisations, only programmes that relate directly or indirectly to biennials were taken into consideration. Depending on the orientation and geographic location, biennials also cooperate with numerous other funding organisations around the world. The selection allows a representative overview of the tendencies and further potential. Whereas some programmes, e.g. the in Motion Digital Grant which was created in 2020 in response to the pandemic<sup>81</sup> by the British Council and Prince Claus Fund, had to be discontinued, the majority of the programmes that were studied still exist.

##### Actors and orientation

The funding initiatives of national cultural institutes and intermediary organisations need to be studied in their specific cultural-political contexts since they implement agreements concluded between the institute and the government concerned. Viewed against this background, they are, so to say, caught between the need to preserve national interests, on the one hand, and the issue as to how such funding can be defined in post-colonial narratives and what they mean, on the other hand.

Funding generally is linked to national aspects, in other words the funding institute supports the participation of artists *from* its country at international biennials. In recent

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<sup>81</sup> See Funding Programmes B in the Annex.

years, the funding has been linked less to nationality than to the place of residence and artistic work of the artists. This takes into account the social multiculturalism prevailing in countries – an aspect that the persons interviewed considered very important and, in some cases, in need of more development.

##### 4.1 Selection criteria

Funding institutes face the difficulty of having to design long-term funding strategies. The large number of active biennials as well as their diversity and the fact that new ones are continually being launched is considered a problem by numerous institutes. Selection criteria for funding are the artistic quality of the projects and relevance of the inviting biennials. Accordingly, one institute stated that, with regard to funding, they evaluated the value of the biennial as a platform where artists from the country could start or boost their career. Biennials are considered platforms for international visibility and networks. Therefore, numerous well-known biennials are regularly supported by various institutes, others are funded infrequently.

The funding of biennials in Germany, on the one hand, strives to enable artists from Germany to participate at international festivals and biennials and to foster Germany's image at the same time. On the other hand, artists and cultural practitioners, especially from transformation and developing countries, are given the opportunity to participate at festivals and biennials in Germany. The objective is to advance international networks and international discourse between the Global South and Germany.

The criteria set by European funding institutes in regard to funding biennials generally follows such parameters as increasing the visibility of the artists being supported in connection with the biennial (number of visitors, reports in the media, presence of multipliers in the art scene, etc.), positive impression conveyed by the funding country abroad, reflection on relevant socio-political issues and discussions as well as the impact of the project on the intercultural dialogue about joint learning and international networking.

There are, for example, no **geographic** "keys" for the selection in most cases. However, some institutes adhere to geographic selection criteria, which may be redefined at regular intervals. This is the case in the Netherlands where the country's foreign cultural policy set a strategic focus on 23 countries for the period of time from 2021–2024, including China, Indonesia and Brazil, and three countries on the African continent: Egypt, Morocco and South Africa. This strategic selection is justified as follows: "Countries are selected on

the basis of a combination of factors: demand from abroad, artistic and economic opportunities for the Dutch cultural sector, artistic quality, social relevance, historic ties and importance for foreign policy."<sup>82</sup> As far as the Mondriaan Fund is concerned, funding is available to institutions all over the world; however, in compliance with the Netherlands' international cultural policy, platforms in the focus countries are treated preferentially. In some cases, geographic proximity is a determining factor, as is exemplified by the Finnish organisation Frame. From among the 20 biennials that were supported in the past years, five were in Scandinavia and five others in Eastern Central Europe.

In terms of sustainability, each biennial and its current initiatives need to be studied in detail, as several of the experts interviewed within the scope of this study maintained. Some biennials implement western aesthetics and models "satellite-like" in a region, whereas others strive to build up a strong link to local contexts and communities, as is exemplified by various biennials in Africa, e.g. Biennale SUD (Salon Urbain de Douala) in Cameroon<sup>83</sup> or the biennial in Casablanca, Morocco, both of which included the local population and art scene through various activities. In Europe, the 9th edition of Contour Biennale in Mechelen, Belgium, could be taken as an example (see chapter 3.3.3).

Biennials can help promote the local creative sector particularly by strengthening local cultural infrastructure as, for example, demonstrated by the Rencontres de Bamako, Mali: in the 2019 edition the artistic director of the biennial insisted that almost all artworks had to be produced in Mali and not, as was previously the case, in Paris.<sup>84</sup>

#### 4.2 Funding approaches and categories

All the experts interviewed agree that needs for financing exist, particularly in areas customarily supported by cultural institutes: mobility, production and transport. These types of funding are complementary and essential for all phases of a biennial – from research travel undertaken by curators and artists, to the production of the artwork or project, to its transport and installation.

Usually, programmes as such are not geared specifically to biennials, instead numerous funding organisations assign this funding to certain funding areas:

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<sup>82</sup> International Cultural Policy 2021–2024, S. 12. <https://www.government.nl/documents/parliamentary-documents/2020/02/20/international-cultural-policy-2021-2024>.

<sup>83</sup> See Chapter 2.2.3. <http://dualart.org/sud/>.

<sup>84</sup> See Chapter 2.2.2., interview with the artistic director of the biennial's 2019 edition.

##### **Mobility**

1) Programmes promoting mobility help finance the personal travel and per diem costs of artists invited to participate in an exhibition/biennial as well as the transport of artworks and their insurance during transport. This support is granted to the participating artists.

2) Research travel abroad for curators: the objective is for curators from one country to acquire more knowledge about international contemporary art, to promote networking between art scenes and to support exhibition projects in the field of international contemporary art.

3) Cultural institutes have special visitor programmes, through which they invite international curators and cultural practitioners active in the visual arts to provide insight into the contemporary visual arts of their country, to strengthen international relations and to promote the exchange of ideas. The visits are designed to promote international exchange projects.

One funding institute stated that they proactively contact new biennial curators and, as the case may be, invite them on a research trip to the country of their institute with the goal of enhancing networking in the contemporary art scene.

Both biennial curators and representatives from cultural institutes stress that there is still a great need for funding programmes that support mobility. This also is confirmed by a study of the European Commission undertaken within the scope of the i-Portunus pilot project: more than 2,500 applications from more than 3,000 persons requesting over Euro 6,000,000 in support were received during the three calls in 2019; accordingly, this clearly illustrates the need for mobility in the art sector.<sup>85</sup>

The need for mobility is not limited to Europe, but extends to travel between continents as well as on the African continent. Moving Africa, a programme launched in 2008 by the Goethe-Institut, is an example of a successful and long-term programme for supporting mobility in connection with festivals.<sup>86</sup> It enables cultural practitioners from Africa

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<sup>85</sup> Artists Abroad. Executive Summary (2020), Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Commission, p. 1 <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a2938a77-b1d5-11ea-bb7a-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>. Cf. On the Move (Jordi Baltà, Yohann Floch, Marie Fol, Maïa Sert, coordinated by Marie Le Sourd) (2019): Mobility Scheme for Artists and Culture Professionals in Creative Europe countries. Brussels: European Commission.

<sup>86</sup> <https://www.goethe.de/ins/za/en/kul/sup/mov.html>.



to visit or take part in biennials and festivals in Africa, since the biennials themselves frequently cannot assume the costs for travel because of limited budgets, particularly because intercontinental travel is very expensive and VISA restrictions need to be considered as well.

However, the current situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has made it necessary to reconsider mobility funding strategies. Hence, calls for research travel have been discontinued<sup>87</sup> or it was not possible to travel in 2020. The future will tell whether and to what extent digital visits to galleries and exhibitions are viable alternatives to research travel – albeit a scenario not considered very attractive by the persons interviewed. In addition, the current study *COVID-19 learning points for the performing arts sector and policy-makers* by Elena Polivtseva<sup>88</sup> points out the problem that, in 2020, research without travel was possible only if the researcher had ample suitable contacts. This means that young artists who are just beginning their career in the *performing arts* are at a disadvantage. Reconsidering the international dimension and reinforcing relations to local scenes already was postulated before the pandemic, also as regards art biennials, and has gained even more momentum now. "Interlocal is the future of international," is declared in the study mentioned above. "Creating collaborations between localities of different countries would ultimately mean taking more time to develop conversations, build long-term relationships, less but more conscious and meaningful mobility."<sup>89</sup>

#### **Project funding**

Programmes for exhibition funding/project funding help organisations present the works of artists active in the same country as the funding institution. In most cases, the funding covers installation costs, travel and accommodation costs as well as transport and insurance of the art works of the participating artists. The support is granted to the hosting organisation (biennial foundation, museum, etc.). Some programmes also fund the production of art works.

Compared to museums, biennials enable **art production** on a larger scale. Some funding institutions support the production costs - such as Mondriaan Fund, Pro Helvetia or Phileas. The Mondriaan Fund supports a maximum of 50% of the production costs of a

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<sup>87</sup> So, for example, the second application date for research travel for curators of the Goethe-Institut was cancelled.

<sup>88</sup> Elina Polivtseva is Head of Policy and Research at IETM – International network for contemporary performing arts, Brussels.

<sup>89</sup> *COVID-19 learning points for the performing arts sector and policy-makers*, Dec. 2020, IETM Publication, p. 18. [https://www.ietm.org/en/system/files/publications/ietm\\_covid\\_publication\\_v3.pdf](https://www.ietm.org/en/system/files/publications/ietm_covid_publication_v3.pdf).

new (site-specific) artwork commissioned by a non-Dutch art institution.<sup>90</sup> Pro Helvetia supports artists with Swiss nationality or permanent residence in Switzerland, who are firmly established in the Swiss cultural scene, for the production of a new work in the context of its first public presentation with up to a maximum of CHF 25,000.<sup>91</sup>

Some galleries, especially in connection with such biennials as the one in Venice, play a large part in assuming production costs and reflect the interconnection between non-commercial exhibitions and the art market. As one of the interviewed experts pointed out it is the objective of, and challenge for, curators to safeguard independence in curatorial decisions and to choose young artists who are not represented yet by renowned galleries. Another difficulty that needs to be considered is when those artists do not come from countries with a solid funding structure for the arts. And that is precisely where an increased need for solidary initiatives in connection with funding strategies comes to the fore.

Numerous of the experts interviewed within the scope of this study underscore that the cultural institutes should definitely continue to focus on funding exchange opportunities for artists and production, and they caution against hasty changes motivated by the Covid-19 pandemic. By contrast, others believed that now would be right time to reassess and adjust funding strategies. A review of the funding programmes and actors studied already reveals changes in trends or strategy: for example, the Prince Claus Fund has changed strategy and will no longer furnish project support or project grants; instead, it will concentrate on supporting individual persons through *awards*. Accordingly, the mobility funds were discontinued as well (see Annex).

#### **Artist fees**

At the conference “Why Biennial? Why Associate?” held by the International Biennial Association (IBA) in 2014, the question was raised as to why “artist fees” are rarely paid to artists when they participate in an exhibition. The ensuing discussion referred to the paradox that biennials, on the one hand, depend on underpaid work and, on the other hand, claim to address such topics as precarity, economic crises and migration.

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<sup>90</sup> Cf. The programme International Art Presentation: <https://www.mondriaanfonds.nl/en/application/international-art-presentation>.

<sup>91</sup> <https://prohelvetia.ch/de/wegleitung-visuelle-kuenste/>.

Artist fees cover the work of artists undertaken in connection with an exhibition, which is not directly linked to the production of art works, for example, attending meetings, public relations and the installation of an exhibition.<sup>92</sup> A survey showed that numerous biennials do not (cannot) pay artist fees, others offer fees between USD 1,000 and USD 2,000, or at most USD 5,000.<sup>93</sup> Whereas, for example, the Biennale in Venice does not pay fees to the artists shown in the main exhibition,<sup>94</sup> quite a few biennials endeavour to pay fees for the artists' work, such as, for example, Manifesta, the biennials in Berlin and Lahore or the Immigrant Artists Biennial US. The biennial in Gwangju, which enjoys good infrastructure and relatively ample budgets, has been implementing artist fees since 2016. The Whitney Biennial announced that it would increase artist fees to USD 1,500,<sup>95</sup> the Kochi-Muziris in India pays about €1,500. However, there are other approaches: so, for example, the Marrakesh biennial did not pay fees but assumed the costs for travel, accommodation and research trips.

For this reason, artist fees are a topic that is considered and discussed by funding institutes. Although some sponsors, such as SAHA in Turkey, make their support contingent on payment of artist fees, others, like the Danish Arts Foundation, encourage organisers to pay fees and, if they do so, they may apply for partial funding for the exhibiting artists.

Nonetheless, the UK-based study *Paying Artists*, which was conducted by DHA Communications in 2014/2015 and queried about 1,450 artists and 330 curators as well as galleries, comes to the following conclusion: "Paying artists [...] a difficult and complicated task in the current funding climate."<sup>96</sup> This is also true for biennials worldwide, in particular those managed by artists or small organisations, frequently without any government support. Thus, the experts interviewed recommend that funding institutes create opportunities for biennials to apply for funding for artist fees or for topping-up the fees. This also would counteract the specificity of countries or origin.

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<sup>92</sup> The New York-based organisation W.A.G.E. (Working Artists and the Greater Economy) updated best practice records for institutions and sponsors in 2020. Through its WAGENCY initiative it acts as a transnational platform for the fair remuneration of artists in the non-profit sector. (<https://wageforwork.com/home#top>).

<sup>93</sup> <https://news.artnet.com/market/venice-biennale-hidden-costs-1493455>.

<sup>94</sup> [https://www.thenationalnews.com/arts-culture/art/the-hidden-cost-of-being-at-the-venice-biennale-1.862971?fbclid=IwAR2J3KKsgngaylsZyYbnVLXZqoXsw\\_RJfI9dft-unzGO\\_H8czfU0E\\_piJc](https://www.thenationalnews.com/arts-culture/art/the-hidden-cost-of-being-at-the-venice-biennale-1.862971?fbclid=IwAR2J3KKsgngaylsZyYbnVLXZqoXsw_RJfI9dft-unzGO_H8czfU0E_piJc).

<sup>95</sup> <https://news.artnet.com/market/venice-biennale-hidden-costs-1493455>.

<sup>96</sup> *Paying Artists. Valuing Art, Valuing Artists*, Consultation Report 2015, DHA Communications, p. 8. (<http://www.payingartists.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Paying-Artists-Consultation-Report-20151.pdf>).

##### **Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa)**

The Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa) is an example of a predominantly central funding approach to biennials. ifa, Germany's oldest intermediary organisation, promotes art and cultural exchange in a variety of ways. Since 1971, it has been responsible for the realisation of the German pavilions at the Venice Biennale, since 2009 as a commissioner.

Biennale funding is provided through two programmes - exhibition funding and artist contacts. As is the case with many other funding institutions, this funding is centrally controlled and depends on the application within the funding programmes, which are not only aimed at biennials, but take them into account decisively and support positions from Germany at biennials worldwide, but also enable the participation of artists, especially from transition and developing countries, in biennials in Germany.

Geographically, ifa's funding focus in the area of biennials - both in terms of number and funding amounts - is on other European countries and Asia. Between 2015 and 2019, ifa funded a total of 57 biennials, 27 of which were biennial projects in Europe. Numerous biennials in Asia are also regularly funded by ifa; between 2015 and 2019, there were 15 projects. For 2020, 10 of the 16 approved funding amounts concerned biennial projects from Asia. This high number correlates with the overall very high number of biennials on the Asian continent, many of which are characterised by innovative concepts and approaches. Biennials from the African continent have only been increasingly considered in recent years. Looking at South America and the funding period from 2005 to 2020, it can be seen that ifa was a constant partner of the biennial in São Paulo, but that it only funded the Brazilian biennial in Curitiba twice and the Montevideo biennial in Uruguay once.<sup>97</sup> Biennials in Southeast Asia were also rather underrepresented in ifa's funding.<sup>98</sup> It would therefore be worth considering cooperating more intensively with biennials in these regions.

According to the Biennale organisers, the establishment of stable financing and structures can only be realised through partnerships in the field of private financing and corporate sponsorship due to the project-financed funding structures. In times of economic recession, however, this financing option is more difficult. Some biennials are permanently

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<sup>97</sup> The São Paulo Biennial has received funding from ifa in all editions since 2010 up to and including 2020, the Curitiba Bienal was funded in 2009 and 2013, and the Biennial in Montevideo, Uruguay in 2013. However, the fact that no other biennials in South America were funded may also be related to a failure to apply to ifa.

<sup>98</sup> In the funding period 2005-2020, the Bangkok Art Biennale in Thailand was funded twice and the Jakarta Biennale in Indonesia once.

sponsored by cultural institutes – not only Institut Français or the Goethe-Institut; Phileas has also established partnerships with various biennials. The Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (ifa) also supported numerous biennials over several consecutive editions and is thus a longer-term partner, as the evaluation of its support for biennials in the period 2005 to 2020 shows. At least 19 biennials were regularly supported by ifa, eight of them in Europe, five in Asia, one in North America, one in South America and one in Australia/Oceania. Only since 2014 have more biennials been supported in Africa (in Marrakech, Lumbashi and Lagos). This regular support also contributes to the sustainability of biennials.

In addition to centrally controlled biennial funding, ifa accompanies the academic dialogue on biennials by supporting publications<sup>99</sup> and conferences, such as the series "Biennials in Dialogue" since 2000, exemplified by the groundbreaking conference "Biennials. Outlook and Perspectives" at the Centre for Art and Media in Karlsruhe. It also houses the Biennale Archive German Pavilion. The creation and maintenance of networks and exchange is also a major concern. Together with the Biennial Foundation and other partners, ifa organised two international network meetings for biennial actors, the "World Biennial Forum" (2012 and 2014).<sup>100</sup> In addition, ifa co-founded the International Biennial Association (IBA), a non-profit association of institutions and individuals from the biennial context whose aim is to provide a platform for exchange and cooperation within the framework of biennials.<sup>101</sup> The IBA develops various programmes to facilitate knowledge transfer and dialogue between its members, both in terms of practice and current discourse.

#### **Co-creation**

Co-creation is a method to implement the process of a collaborative creative process of different project partners and to give space to network-like value-creation logics, which are becoming increasingly important not only in business and marketing, but also in the field of art. The focus is on multi-perspectivity and equal creative processes based on partnership.

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<sup>99</sup> For example: Ursula Zeller (2007). *Die deutschen Beiträge zur Biennale Venedig 1895-2007* [a publication of the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e.V., Stuttgart]. Cologne: DuMont.

<sup>100</sup> It was initiated by Marieke van Hal (former director of the Biennial Foundation) and Yongwoo Lee (former president of the Gwangju Biennial Foundation) together with Elke aus dem Moore, at the time head of the art department at ifa.

<sup>101</sup> <https://biennialassociation.org>.

At ifa, for example, there are also various initiatives to strengthen the aspect of co-creation. International curators, for example from South America, Southeast Europe or Africa, are invited in advance of a project. On the basis of this dialogue, exhibition projects are developed that include the perspective of the partner countries. In this sense, there is also a rethinking of the touring exhibitions, through which the German art scene is connected with international cultural workers and co-operations and networks are formed. Whereas touring exhibitions were previously "sent out into the world", the classic format of this exhibition is undergoing a revision. The current exhibition "Are you for real?"<sup>102</sup>, which was conceived with the curator Paula Nascimento from Angola, will be further developed in the coming years with different actors at different locations.<sup>103</sup>

In the sense of a **processual touring exhibition**, it would be conceivable to initiate a project that would be further developed over a longer period of time in cooperation with various biennials worldwide. Biennials are at best site- and context-specific. In this framework, designing a project with different actors that responds to the different local contexts and geopolitical frameworks of the respective biennials makes it possible to think of the project as a platform for encounters and as a place for intercultural dialogue. The project would thus necessarily be processual and open-ended. In order to reduce transport for ecological and financial reasons, a project in the field of media art/digital or with productions *in situ* should be considered.

### 4.3 Decentral funding approach

Biennials may be funded through programmes managed by the central office of an institute as well as through the programme work carried out by cultural institutes worldwide on the basis of their large networks and long-standing cooperation with local institutions and organisations. These institutes are often the first point of contact and cooperation partners for biennials, as they have long-standing relationships with the organisations that organise biennials, and their knowledge of the local scene makes sustainable cooperation possible. However, as one interviewee reported, there are hardly any agreements between centrally controlled funding for a particular biennial and decentralised activities of the institutes on site.

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<sup>102</sup> <https://www.ifa.de/tournee/are-you-for-real/>.

<sup>103</sup> Similarly, the exhibition "Pure Gold - Upcycled! Upgraded!" is a travelling exhibition by ifa that presents works by 53 designers in seven regions of the world over a period of ten years and takes a multi-perspective approach by inviting local designers to collaborate at each exhibition venue. The exhibition addresses the problem of waste and pollution for our ecosystem and is dedicated to the topic of upcycling and the reuse of raw materials. <https://pure-gold.org>.

##### **Funding centred on focal points**

The **Goethe-Institut's** funding of biennials depends on the cooperation activities being realised at the venue as well as the programmes of the head office. The funding is not designated for structural needs, but only for artistic projects. This means that the support is less systematic and more in terms of content when the **themes** overlap with certain **focal topics**. For the time period 2019-2022 the focal topics are: "How do we innovate and make progress?", "Cultures of equality" and "Ecology and sustainability".<sup>104</sup> Although some programmes like the Co-Production Fund are managed by the head office, the cultural programme work is designed individually in line with the local project partners and networks. The support is not only financial, but also may be "in-kind support," e.g. when they host activities and events. In addition, any points of overlap between biennials and the programmes of the cultural institutes are specifically used. The extensive "Episodes of the South" programme, which favours a south-south dialogue, and particularly the "Museal Episode" were included as activities of art festivals, e.g. the biennial in São Paulo or documenta 14 in Athens. Although reference to Germany is required in connection with biennial funding, the support of the art scenes concerned and international projects has been brought to the foreground for several years now in order to depart from a purely national oriented funding strategy.

As far as the African continent is concerned, the focus of funding strategies is on young and small biennials trying to gain an international or at least pan-African foothold. As such, the objective is to promote biennials that do not copy western aesthetics but are striving to develop their own profiles.

##### **Regional strategies**

The **British Council** also primarily pursues a decentral approach as regards the funding of biennials. Whereas a programme has been defined for architecture, design and fashion biennials (see Annex), art biennials are funded through the local institutes, and they generally pursue a regional strategy. Therefore, there is no decided invitation to apply for biennial funding in the area of the visual arts.

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<sup>104</sup> <https://www.goethe.de/ins/fi/de/ueb/auf.html>.

#### 4. Funding: Actors and programmes

Fifteen percent of the funding available to the British Council are grants from government offices<sup>105</sup> and 85% is income from sponsorships and language courses. Since the government funds come from budgets earmarked for foreign relations measures, funding sometimes is contingent on the fulfilment of conditions, the motivation of which tends to be related to “foreign and overseas development policy rather than cultural policy”.<sup>106</sup> For this reason, the focus is on developing and transforming countries as well as strengthening mutual respect between cultures, which address the global challenges as well as conventional forms of cultural exchange. Other or related conditions also are formulated by the different regions of the British Council around the world with a view to achieving their own specific regional strategic goals for cultural relations.

In the past three years, the British Council gave financial support to more than 40 biennials for contemporary art: more than 15 biennials in Europe, e.g. the Venice Biennial, documenta 14 or EVA Biennale (Ireland), numerous biennials in Southeast Asia, e.g. the Chennai Photo and Kochi Muziris biennials in India as well as the Kathmandu Triennial in Nepal and the Kathmandu Photo festival. Likewise, several biennials in Eastern Asia received funding, including the Yokohama Triennial that was founded in 2001 and the well-known Korean biennials in Gwangju and Busan. Less attention was paid to biennials in North and South America, while several biennials in Africa, above all in Sub-Saharan Africa, were supported: KLA Art (Uganda), the long-standing Dak’art (Senegal) and the young Lagos Biennial, Nigeria, which was founded in 2017. Besides funding, the British Council offers non-cash support as, for example, support for communication or putting biennials in contact with British experts.

Funding strategies are being reassessed given that it is difficult to measure the long-term effects of biennial funding or to assess changes in attitude in the country receiving funding. The key question is whether financial support really promotes mutual intercultural dialogue by enabling artists to travel or present a work of art and how sustainable this is. For this reason, solutions are being devised which underscore the aspects of learning from, connecting with and understanding other cultures, exchange processes as well as increasing the accessibility of art events and festivals for the general public. Thus, for example, a scholarship program was set up which gives financial assistance to the Coventry Biennial, Liverpool Biennial and Glasgow Biennial so that they can support Latin

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<sup>105</sup> This funding comes from project funds of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the department of the British government that, like the Foreign Ministry, is responsible for protecting and promoting British interests around the world. Accordingly, the project funds are not provided by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) that actually is responsible for cultural funding.

<sup>106</sup> Information given to the author by the British Council, 16 April 2021.



American artists. Clear-cut conditions in the funding agreements define what work the artists being supported need to perform in addition to the presentation of their artworks. This includes participating at programmes for local communities and the press. Likewise, a condition for receiving support is that the respective biennial submit a report describing the contacts that the artists made in Great Britain and the projects that will ensue from this in future.<sup>107</sup>

A successful initiative to achieve long-term effects in the cultural sector is the Festival Management Training of the British Council, which was implemented in 2017 as part of a larger cooperation project between cultural festivals in the United Kingdom and West Africa. Research in Ghana, Sierra Leone and Senegal showed that deficits in qualifications and skills were the main obstacle keeping art festivals from making a name for themselves. With the support of the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, 40 festival managers were invited to participate in the training programme. In a subsequent evaluation, 93% stated that they had gained a better understanding of best practice in the festival sector, and some already had used the content imparted during the course in their practical work. One participant reported that the newly learned skills had enabled her to generate 80% of the festival budget through crowdfunding. Moreover, a network was created to reinforce communication between the participants as well as with UK-based festivals.<sup>108</sup>

#### 4.4 Structural funding

Substantial **structural funding** is a desideratum, as numerous of the persons interviewed underscored. In many cases, biennials receive public funding from the city or region in which they are located and this funding can be used to cover the costs for infrastructure. Numerous biennials, not only in the Global South but also in Europe, however, do not have this kind of structural support or a team that ensures the continuity of the biennial. With the exception of the Dutch DOEN Foundation<sup>109</sup> only very few funding organisations support structural needs. The DOEN Foundation works with funds generated through charity lotteries; therefore, it can take a different course of action than cultural institutes and state intermediary organisations.

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<sup>107</sup> Interview with the Head of Programmes for the Visual Arts of the British Council.

<sup>108</sup> [https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british\\_council\\_arts\\_strategy\\_sssa\\_digital\\_0.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_arts_strategy_sssa_digital_0.pdf).

<sup>109</sup> <https://www.doen.nl>. So, for example, the foundation gave funding of €100,000 to DARB 1718 Contemporary Art and Culture Center in 2019, one of the few cultural spaces in Cairo, which also is one of the exhibition locations of the Something Else Off-Biennial Cairo.

Not only are know-how and expertise lost when a biennial does not have a permanent structure, but archives frequently are not maintained or even built-up because the infrastructure of the biennial is repeatedly dismantled and reconstructed. Accordingly, one noteworthy initiative is EUNIC's – one-time – support of knowledge sharing by funding the changeover from one Manifesta working group to the next<sup>110</sup> (see Annex).

To what extent could structural funding be the responsibility of cultural institutes? In the opinion of one of the persons interviewed, this should not be the responsibility of national cultural institutes but should rather be assigned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Ministry of Culture or, indeed, be part of development aid. Nevertheless, there are examples demonstrating the opposite, as will be discussed below.

#### **Institut Français**

Just like the funding strategy of many other European cultural institutes, that of the **Institut Français** also prioritises the participation of French artists in art festivals around the world. However, as regards the African continent, its objective is not necessarily to finance the presence of French artists but to advise and support biennials in connection with their efforts to build up a structure and develop further. For this reason, the Institut Français has been supporting biennials on the African continent for 30 years through the "Afrique et Caraïbes en création programme."<sup>111</sup> It also partnered in the organisation of the Bamako Biennale and Biennale des Rencontres de la Choreografie, which has been reinforcing structure in the choreography scene on the African continent.<sup>112</sup>

The programme as such no longer exists, since it was transformed into the current "Mission des coopérations culturelles sur l'Afrique et les Caraïbes." In particular, actors from civil society are granted financial support, in other words biennials that, contrary to "state" biennials, can be traced back to initiatives of artists. The focus is on biennials organised by young actors from civil society, which, in turn, promote the creation and support of local infrastructure and local scenes.

As explained above, the Institut Français has been co-producing the Bamako biennial together with the Mali government since the beginning; it also has financed half of the to-

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<sup>110</sup> A phase of passing on and exchanging experiences in personal meetings was planned to take place during the Manifesta in Marseilles. In view of the Covid-19 pandemic, it had to be conducted digitally.

<sup>111</sup> For detailed information on the programmes, see: Franco/Njogu 2020, S. 97ff.

<sup>112</sup> Interview with the programme manager.

tal budget. In response to the new positions taken within the scope of the discourse on decolonialisation and emancipation of the creative sector on the African continent, the Institut Français has withdrawn from co-production since the last edition in 2019; however, it still is a partner and sponsor of the biennial. Other biennials were supported substantially during their founding phase, e.g. the Lubumbashi biennial received more than €100,000.

At the present time, the focus of the institute's funding is on start-up funding for small biennials, e.g. grants between €10,000 and €15,000. The decisive criterion is that it is structural funding or funds that can be used freely by the biennial concerned depending on need (mobility, art production, structure, catalogue production, etc.).

The funding strategy is being revised along the lines of the newly created programme *Accès Culture*, which stresses long-term and strong partnerships in the cultural sector based on funding for three years and higher budgets of about €25,000/30,000 per year. The programme for cooperation projects is not necessarily designed for funding biennials and is conceived for population groups who do not have access to culture for social, economic or geographic reasons. Still, the three-year support is noteworthy, because it is considered essential for long-term funding and long-lasting effects.

#### **4.5 Multilateral programmes and joint funding**

There have been and still are many different *joint funding* initiatives. Joint programmes of various organisations offer considerable potential for implementing funding initiatives at national, regional and global levels. More efficient operation could be achieved by means of pooling funds and complementary expertise. Above all, multilateral programmes are a way to depart from national categories – an aspect repeatedly mentioned by the experts interviewed.

A number of initiatives are particularly active with respect to mobility and networking. One example is *Orientation trip*, where the Mondriaan Fund, Flanders Arts Institute, Danish Art Agency and Pro Helvetia jointly organise trips for visual artists and cultural practitioners to Asia, Latin America and Africa with the objective of expanding networks and stimulating the international dialogue between art professionals. Joint funding projects also were carried out by the Arts Council England and Arts Council Korea as regards project funding, or by the Prince Claus Fund and British Council for (digital) mobility (see Annex).

Another example described by one of the experts interviewed as being pathbreaking is **Nordisk Kulturfond**, which has been promoting cultural cooperation in the Nordic region since 1966 and expanding their funding strategy worldwide since 2020 (see Annex): "We view the global as borderless - the world as a united whole. The international is defined by the borders between nations, so its scale is narrower than the global, as is implied by the word itself: inter-national."<sup>113</sup> The Nordic countries came together to form the Nordisk Kulturfond with the goal of ensuring support jointly and independently of national interests. "Through this strategy, we aim to ensure that culture can be without borders and open to encounters – so that all Nordic citizens, both new and established, can enjoy the same right to participate in cultural civil society, and so that Nordic relevance can be enhanced and renewed, with a global focus in mind."<sup>114</sup> Therefore, the fund can be considered a more or less independent actor, whose funds are not subject to decisions motivated directly by political considerations.

Another Nordic funding institute currently is challenging national categories with a paradigmatic decision: as a co-commissioner of the Nordic Pavilion at the Venice biennial, the **Office for Contemporary Art Norway** (OCA) is taking over the curatorship of the pavilion in 2022. The Nordic Pavilion, which was completed in 1962, always has been a space for collaboration between Finland, Norway and Sweden. For the 59th Venice Biennale it will be transformed into the Sámi Pavilion. This will be the first time that the Sámi will be recognised as a nation in a pavilion that bears their name.

#### 4.6 European Union

The question is to what extent the European Union (EU) is active or could be more active in regard to biennial funding. The activities of the EU in the cultural sector supplement the cultural policies of the member states, above all as regards cooperation between the cultural institutes of different countries, promotion of mobility of cultural practitioners as well as the preservation of Europe's cultural heritage.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> <https://www.nordiskkulturfond.org/en/globus/>.

<sup>114</sup> <https://www.nordiskkulturfond.org/media/29907/nordic-culture-fund-strategy-2019-2022.pdf>.

<sup>115</sup> The treaty establishing the European Economic Community did not provide for an explicit cultural competence on the part of the European Community. EU-wide cultural policy and competency was introduced subsequently through the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, which details the support of cultural activities. Although the Treaty of Lisbon, which was signed in 2007 and took effect in 2009, only provides for a supplementary contribution to cultural financing on the part of the EU, European cultural-political activities have increased in the past years. On 22 May 2018, the European Commission adopted a New European Agenda for Culture, whose strategic goals include economic and foreign-policy dimensions. One of the goals is to strengthen international cultural relations and intercultural dialogue. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/de/sheet/137/kultur>.

### Creative Europe

Creative Europe is the European Commission's framework programme for providing support to the cultural and audiovisual sectors. It strives to promote Europe's diversity of cultures and languages, to preserve Europe's cultural heritage and to strengthen the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors.<sup>116</sup>

The new EU package increased the budget for Creative Europe from €1.46 billion for the period 2014-2020 to €2.4 billion for the period 2021-2027.<sup>117</sup> This budget will be distributed among the sub-programmes Culture, Media and a cross-sectoral strand that – following certain changes above all in the media strand – will be continued in the new period. The Culture sub-programme comprises different areas of funding, including "Cooperation Projects."

In the past few years, projects connected to biennials have been supported within the scope of Cooperation Projects. One extensive project is the **Perennial Biennial**, an association of five biennials and triennials: Liverpool Biennial, Bergen Assembly, Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts, Berlin Biennale and Riga Biennial. The support granted by Creative Europe for the period 2018-2022 came to €200,000. The main applicant from the consortium of equal partners is the Liverpool Biennial. Since partners from at least three EU member states are involved, the minimum admissibility requirements are fulfilled. The formal prerequisite that at least three partners having their seat in three different countries be responsible for the project is, so to speak, the formal implementation of a European synergy effect: to put it differently, not a national or binational will suffice but it needs to be at least a trinational project to ensure that a European dimension is given and the EU can actively provide funding.

The project partners from Norway, Slovenia, Latvia, Germany and the United Kingdom work together with the objective of reformulating curatorial practice and the discourse on biennials through collaborations, exchange of staff and expertise. In keeping with the objective of sustainability, long-term international partnerships are formed.

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<sup>116</sup> Although Creative Europe is the EU's dedicated cultural funding programme, other programmes such as HORIZON Europe also overlap with the cultural sector. From 2021 onwards, HORIZON Europe will for the first time include a Creativity and Inclusive Societies cluster with a focus on cultural heritage.

<sup>117</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_2405](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2405).

#### 4. Funding: Actors and programmes

Even if biennials are not the focus of the funding strategies, simply because of the requirement that the project have a European dimension, other projects connected to biennials have been supported until now: so, for example, the "What do we have in Common" project coordinated by the Tbilisi Architecture Biennial received funding of about €160,000 between 2020 and 2021 and involved partners from North Macedonia, Ukraine and Germany. Not only the 27 EU member states are eligible to participate in Creative Europe, but also 13 other countries such as Norway and Iceland as well as several countries from eastern Europe are eligible following appropriate agreements. The large number of eligible countries promotes the intercultural dialogue with neighbouring countries of the EU.

The Creative Europe programme is of particular importance at the present time when, based on the current Covid-19 pandemic, trends toward localisation are on the rise and cross-border mobility is restricted. Perhaps new forms of international cooperation will have to be found to maintain and reinforce the intercultural exchange.

The Creative Europe programme gains particular importance at a time when localisation tendencies are increasing due to the current pandemic and cross-border mobility is restricted. New forms of international cooperation may have to be found and tested in order to maintain and strengthen intercultural exchange. While Creative Europe is geared towards European partners, there are also EU initiatives to promote biennials worldwide within the framework of international cultural relations.

#### EUNIC

The European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) network was established in 2006. At the present time, the network of national cultural institutes comprises 36 members from all EU member states and the United Kingdom. On 4 June 2020, EUNIC adapted new strategic objectives for the time period 2020–2024: to strengthen the cultural relations worldwide together with partners, to advocate for culture in the cultural relations as a strategic partner of the EU, and to improve its capacity as a network.<sup>118</sup> The scope of funding also includes festivals and biennial projects, some of which were supported indirectly or directly in the past, e.g. the Matter of Art Biennale in Prague, or supporting the exchange of know-how and experiences for Manifesta 14, that is to be held in Pristina in 2022 (for more information on other initiatives, please see the section EU Funding Programmes in the Annex).

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<sup>118</sup> EUNIC Strategic Framework 2020–2024 (<https://www.eunicglobal.eu/media/site/3129979799-1591718794/eunic-strategic-framework-2020-2024-final.pdf>).

##### **EU delegations**

The EU delegations are vital elements in the promotion of international cultural relations and cultural support and, accordingly, impact biennials, too. On the African continent, this support is important not only for the biennials in Dakar (Senegal) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the EU also is an important partner of the Kampala Art Biennale and, thus, has a part in the cultural development of the region, as Head of Delegation Attilio Pacifici affirms:

*„The EU and its Member States stand beside Uganda in addressing the covid-19 emergency. As soon as the restrictions are lifted, and in compliance with the instructions of the Ugandan authorities, we will be delighted to resume the work with AfriArt Gallery for the Fourth Edition of the Kampala Art Biennale (KAB) in 2020. The KAB is not only an occasion to talk about art from the aesthetic and creative point of view; it also presents opportunities for building new jobs around art and for empowerment, particularly for young people, in the creative spaces.“<sup>119</sup>*

The European External Action Service currently has 139 EU delegations and representations worldwide. In view of the large number of EU delegations and their activities, the "Commission Staff Working Document" published by the European Commission regarding the new European agenda for culture (2018) states the following: "The potential for cooperation and coordination to advance the EU's cultural cooperation and diplomacy is therefore considerable."<sup>120</sup> Accordingly, the potential for cooperation and coordination on the part of the delegations with the aim of strengthening EU cultural diplomacy is deemed to be high – not only on the African continent but around the world.

##### **ACP-EU Culture-Programme**

The objective of the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Culture Programme is to support culture as a motor for sustainable social and economic development. It is part of a new series of programmes designed in 2016 to implement the joint communication on the EU strategy for international cultural relations. With a budget of €36 million, the programme aims to promote the potential of the cultural and creative sector and its contribution to the social and economic development of ACP countries.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Attilio Pacifici, Head of Delegation, EU-Delegation to Uganda (<http://kampalabiennale.org/partners/>) (accessed on 14.02.2021).

<sup>120</sup> Commission Staff Working Document, A New European Agenda for Culture, 2018, p. 15 (swd-2018-167-new-european-agenda-for-culture-en.pdf)

<sup>121</sup> The programme aims to promote the potential of the cultural and creative sectors and their contribution to the social and economic development of ACP countries with a budget of €36 million. EU support for each project may not exceed 180,000 euros per year. <https://www.acp-ue-culture.eu/en/>.

#### 4. Funding: Actors and programmes

At the present time, a new regional support mechanism is being launched for the cultural and creative sectors in ACP countries, which is organised into six regional hubs (one for every ACP region). This means that art fairs, festivals and biennials possibly could be supported within the scope of this programme in future<sup>122</sup> – the first call for proposals of this modified programme will be in 2021.

##### **Insufficient visibility and considerable complexity of EU support**

When asked about EU support, the persons interviewed for this study criticised three aspects in particular: insufficient visibility, considerable complexity and bureaucratic obstacles. Even though fault was found with the lengthy, highly administrative processes, praise was expressed for the proactive approach taken by European support organisations, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic because they contacted organisations to ask about current needs and proposals for adjusting the specific funding. In the first instance, insufficient visibility is criticised regarding the accessibility of EU support. The representatives of cultural organisations of individual EU countries are visible as contact persons, but the visibility and presence of the EU as a whole is negligible. In addition, support programmes and opportunities should be communicated more extensively.

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<sup>122</sup> This was confirmed by the Team Leader of the programme.



### 5. Challenges and potential

Given the diversity of biennials and their contexts, any study of the organisational and financial structures can only be exemplary and take the form of an overview. The same holds true for considerations about the role of biennials, both as regards their relevance in the past, present and future. Nevertheless, some aspects being currently discussed regarding the specific role of biennials can be found both in the literature and were discussed in the interviews with experts. In addition to the impact that biennials have on the cultural infrastructure and art scene of a region, digitalisation, ethical aspects, local contexts, socio-political dimensions, the pandemic and capacity-building activities raise questions about the future of biennials and the potential need for funding.

#### The Covid-19 pandemic - new challenges

Numerous biennials were cancelled or postponed in 2020 in consequence of the current Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, contact restrictions, social distancing, bans on public meetings and international travel restrictions present special challenges to biennials.

The experiences that the persons interviewed had with the pandemic varied extensively, depending on if and to what extent a biennial was affected.

There was consensus that it has become more important to concentrate on encouraging the local population to visit the exhibition. Financial challenges depended on how far the preparation of the biennial had progressed and whether the budget had to be reduced. For example, contracts with staff who support the organisation team that had been entered into just a few months before the exhibition are commitments that cannot be cancelled or postponed at short notice.

Whereas some organisers suffered only negligible or hardly any budget cutbacks, others had to accept budget reductions. Some of the sponsors that had promised funding, retracted their pledges because of the prevailing uncertainty. In addition, the changed conditions of work had far-reaching effects. Partners working at a distance from one another could no longer work together on a personal basis because of travel restrictions. Fundraising was hampered since insufficient personal contact with potential sponsors was limited, and this aggravated the difficulties connected to cultural funding even more.

#### Digitalisation

The Covid-19 pandemic extremely accelerated digitalisation in the cultural sector as well. Biennials were forced to switch to digital or at least hybrid formats. On the one hand,

some of the experts interviewed believe that digitalisation could open up enormous opportunities for biennials to reach a global audience despite the sanitary crisis. Furthermore, new or additional possibilities of documenting a biennial would emerge; and this is frequently a desideratum. On the other hand, they do not believe that digital formats are a long-term alternative to actually experiencing works of art in person. Moreover, the steadily growing number of websites in the cultural sector that were created in response to the restrictions caused by the pandemic are overwhelming, especially since many of the digital formats are not user friendly.

The experiences gained the past months have showed that, on the one hand, the physical experience of art cannot be completely replaced by digital formats; on the other hand, it is necessary to create professional, inclusive and appropriate digital formats. One example for an interesting digital format was developed by the biennial in Gwangju, which was designed exclusively for an online audience. The commissioned artworks are presented as episodes and web series on the biennial's social media channels and streamed on their website. The works of art by Ana Prvački, Kira Nova and nasa4nasa examine hybrid forms of individual and collective expression and focus on the relationships between bodies located somewhere the spiritual, physical and virtual, beyond the estrangement and spatial distancing caused by the pandemic.<sup>123</sup>

Although the majority of the persons interviewed for this study agreed that it would be difficult to forecast the future role of digitalisation in connection with biennials, the financial needs for creating digital formats were underscored nonetheless. It also was pointed out that substantial efforts already were underway at different levels to expedite digitalisation within society as such and that various financing initiatives had been developed as well.

### **Political dimension**

Several of the experts interviewed explained that some biennials are of special importance because of their political dimension. Biennials are downright predestined to address political topics, especially if they are not bound by institutional structures. They can be used as free spaces to raise critical socio-political questions as well as to visualise and discuss comments on current political events. And in the course of doing so, they can reach a broad audience.

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<sup>123</sup> <https://13thgwangjubienale.org/live-organ/> (accessed on 13.04.2021).

## 5. Challenges and potential

This political dimension is reflected not only in the topics or artworks that are presented at the biennials, but also in formats. For example, the OFF-Biennale Budapest 2013 was conceived as a direct democratic, collaborative project that boycotted Hungary's state art infrastructure. Since then it has been pointedly carried out without any public institutional or financial support from Hungary. A small association is responsible for the organisation and the project is borne by local artists, curators, civil-society organisations as well as art collectors, researchers and galleries. Contrary to most biennials, which are directed by a higher-ranking curator, the programme evolves from the totality of the contributions of the participants mentioned above and takes place at different venues in Budapest. So, the OFF-Budapest Biennale is organised as a response to a political context that takes a restrictive stand on free thought and alternative, socio-critical artistic practices. In December 2019, the right-wing conservative government coalition in Hungary adopted a controversial law on culture that is to "ensure the government's strategic control of the cultural sectors."<sup>124</sup> For this reason, the biennial is viewed all the more as a protest against the undemocratic tendencies and stands for free spaces in art.

Particularly these kinds of fragile structures, borne by micro-associations and individuals active in a hard-pressed cultural scene, depend so much more on the support of funding institutes. The experts interviewed underlined that funding is essential for the projects and artistic contributions during the biennial but that there is also an urgent need for structural funding. The funding of structures, however, is supported by only very few cultural institutes and could be expanded.

### Local contexts

When the question is raised as to how the relevancy of a biennial can be maintained, the response always turns to such aspects as the specific location and local contexts, as Marieke van Hal ascertains:

*„The most interesting biennials are those where there is a strong connection or relation to the particularity or locality of the place where the biennial takes place, which is usually a city or regions. It is the very unique relationship between or combination of cultural, geopolitical and aesthetical issues that make biennials what they are. This perspective is also crucial when we ask ourselves about the cultural relevance of biennials.“*  
(van Hal 2015, 16).

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<sup>124</sup> In reaction to the massive protests by the Hungarian art scene, the draft proposal was adopted in a substantially less restrictive form than planned. <https://www.dw.com/de/ungarn-verabschiedet-umstrittenes-kulturgesetz/a-51631732>.

### **Strategies for *justainability***

The term *justainability*, a portmanteau derived from *justice* and *sustainability*, emerges in the debate about the principle of collaboration and egalitarian cooperation. As Annika Hampel explains the concept is based on the idea that "sustainable partnerships can only evolve in connection with fair structures and processes in global cooperation. This dialogue needs to decode and appraise non-perceived or suppressed colonial structures and patterns of thinking. Basically, awareness of the asymmetry needs to be created."<sup>125</sup> The aspiration to become international and gain global perspectives means that biennial curators and organisers need to obtain funding precisely for those artistic contributions, for which they potentially cannot revert to national funding institutes. This is true for many countries on the African continent. An ethical approach to funding that could counteract imbalances reaches limits set by culture-political conditions as well as the predominant funding structures.

The experts interviewed for this study discussed this aspect and, among other things, referred to documenta 14, where –as the curator Adam Szymczyk explains in an interview– a new strategy was to be implemented, namely generating funding for the event as a whole instead of for individual commissioned artworks.<sup>126</sup> All funding was to flow into a joint budget for artistic creation that would then be distributed to the individual artistic contributions. Yet, the endeavour to depart from traditional hierarchies by means of this strategy could not be realised as planned.

As a matter of fact, promoting collaborations and joint projects at biennials would provide an opportunity for counteracting inequality, for example by supporting a curatorial team or a collaboration project involving artists from different countries as an entity. This would allow artists from countries with strong and artists from countries with less developed funding options to get to know one another, or a new funding programme could be created for supporting festivals, or sections of festivals and biennials, that present a concept which does not involve limiting support to individual contributions of artists but views the overall art production in order to counteract the focus on specific origins.

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<sup>125</sup> Annika Hampel, *Internationale Hochschulkooperationen der Zukunft. Außenwissenschaftspolitik am Beispiel von Transnationalen Bildungsangeboten*, ifa-Edition Kultur und Außenpolitik, 2020, p. 10.

<sup>126</sup> <https://www.frieze.com/article/museums-must-evolve-or-they-will-not-exist-curator-adam-szymczyk-speaks-out-future-museums>.

### Capacity Building

An important field of activity of Germany's foreign cultural relations and education policy is cultural cooperation that involves capacity-building and professionalisation programmes. This field and the wide spectrum of non-formal cultural education also offers "diverse educational experiences and practical action-based experiences in the context of sustainable development to young cultural practitioners."<sup>127</sup> Biennials and festivals provide considerable potential for capacity building and mentoring programmes, both for young artists and curators as well as the overall infrastructure of the creative sector that is connected to a biennial, including technicians and exhibition management. One of the experts interviewed pointed out that such artistic subjects as the visual arts or music are rarely part of school curricula in numerous African regions, e.g. sub-Saharan Africa. Biennials could be an opportunity to offer educational programmes, even if they are only temporary.

Various initiatives of biennials offer capacity building programmes for young cultural practitioners, e.g. workshops, master classes or mentoring programmes. These initiatives are important to achieve long-term effects in the region, as several of the interview partners underscored. Whereas they are of particular relevance for the local art scene at biennials of the Global South, they enable biennials of the Global North to discuss ideas about curatorial and artistic discourse and practice and to promote international networking. So, for example, the KW Institute for Contemporary Art and the Allianz Cultural Foundation together with the Goethe-Institut and the BMW Group and, since 2016, ifa, Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, host the Curators' Workshop, which allows young curators from around the world to gain theoretical and practical curatorial knowledge. The workshop considers education an experience of liberation and is open to contradictions, discussions and processes of failure.

Another example among many others is the Photography Master Classes, that were initiated in 2008 by the Goethe-Institut South Africa and the renowned curator Simon Njami. At this forum, young photographers from sub-Saharan Africa can meet with curators from the region and beyond. The master classes have been held repeatedly in cooperation with biennials or festivals, e.g. the 2009 Rencontres de Bamako in Mali or the 2010 Addis Foto Fest in Ethiopia. Graduates of the programme have become mentors for another generation of young cultural practitioners, including Sammy Baloji, co-founder of the Lubumbashi biennial.

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<sup>127</sup> <https://www.bne-portal.de/de/non-formale-informelle-bildung-1776.html>.

## 5. Challenges and potential

Brazil also has particularly extensive programmes for students. The Fundação Bienal in São Paulo is a member of a state cultural programme that provides visits and transport to cultural events for student groups from the state school system. Through this partnership, around 15,800 students participated in guided visits at the 33rd São Paulo Biennial in 2018.<sup>128</sup> There were also various initiatives of artists with students or pro-programmes organised by Fundação Bienal, in which around 350 teachers participated in 2018.<sup>129</sup>

As a travelling exhibition, a version of the São Paulo Biennial then travels around the country and abroad, reaching a large audience. For example, the travelling exhibition of the 32nd São Paulo Biennial was visited by more than 650,000 people in 13 other locations.<sup>130</sup> Also in Brazil, the Frestas Triennale in Sorocaba<sup>131</sup>, a city 100 km west of São Paulo, strives to intensively involve schools and already provides educational material on its homepage.<sup>132</sup> Other initiatives in Brazil include CUBIC (Curitiba Biennial University Circuits) - a cooperation between the Curitiba Biennial and universities that has existed since 2013 to promote sub-regional exchange within different regions of Latin America.<sup>133</sup>

The Kochi-Muziris Biennale in India is also characterised by numerous activities. Based on the conviction that art is essential for society, the Kochi-Muziris Foundation organises a rich programme both during the Biennale and in the period between the Biennales, which take place every two years. These include the Student's Biennial (redesigned as an online edition in 2021), Art by children, Learning at home - ABC online, Master Practice Studios by renowned artists for young emerging artists, residencies, and an extensive programme of workshops and talks, as well as a curated film festival and performances of traditional music.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> The Programa Cultura Ensina [Cultural Education Programme] was developed by the educational development organisation Fundação para o Desenvolvimento da Educação (FDE): <http://bienal.org.br/relatorio/2017-2018/gestaoinstitucional/institutional-connections/national/in-the-state> (accessed on 15.04.2021). There have also been numerous other initiatives in the past years, such as with refugees.

<sup>129</sup> <http://bienal.org.br/relatorio/2017-2018/gestaoinstitucional/institutional-connections/national/in-the-city> (accessed on 16.04.2021).

<sup>130</sup> [http://imgs.fbsp.org.br/files/3-33bsp-presskit-Factsheet\\_33rd-Bienal-de-Sao-Paulo.pdf](http://imgs.fbsp.org.br/files/3-33bsp-presskit-Factsheet_33rd-Bienal-de-Sao-Paulo.pdf) (accessed on 15.04.2021).

<sup>131</sup> The Frestas Triennial, which first took place in 2014, will be curated in its third edition in 2020/21 by Beatriz Lemos, Diane Lima and Thiago de Paula Souza, the latter co-curator of the Berlin Biennial 2018. For the current edition, entitled "The River is a serpent", the curators have travelled extensively to the north of the country to start an intensive dialogue with the population and cultures, far from the centres of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo (author's interview with the co-curator).

<sup>132</sup> <https://frestas2017.secsp.org.br/educativo/index.html> (accessed on 15.04.2021).

<sup>133</sup> <http://bienaldecuitiba.com.br/bienal14/index-en.html> (accessed on 15.04.2021).

<sup>134</sup> <https://www.kochimuzirisbiennale.org> (accessed on 15.07.2021).

## 6. Conclusion and outlook

Funding biennials helps to strengthen international cultural relations. In particular now, at a time when the Covid-19 pandemic substantially weakened the cultural sector and many artists live in precarious circumstances, international cooperation and cultural exchange are more important than ever before.

This study was conducted to examine the challenges facing funding institutes in their efforts to design and adapt long-term funding strategies for biennials. The main difficulty in this respect primarily is the large number and diversity of biennials worldwide. It was important, for future need-oriented measures of Germany's foreign cultural relations and education policy (AKBP), to take stock of biennials, to identify potentials and obstacles involved in the implementation of biennials and to determine the specific needs for a long-term funding strategy.

By focussing on biennials in one geographic region – in this case the African continent – it was possible to deduce questions concerning the potentials and needs of biennials and to examine and discuss such issues in more detail. Subsequently, forms of organisation and financing structures of biennials as well as the funding of biennials, not only in Africa but worldwide as well, were studied. To do so, actors, programmes and strategies involved in the funding of biennials were analysed to determine additional needs that could be met by funding institutes.

The activities undertaken in Germany to support biennials, on the one hand, strive to enable artists from Germany to participate at international festivals and biennials. On the other hand, artists and cultural practitioners, especially from transformation or developing countries, are offered an opportunity to participate at festivals and biennials in Germany. The objective is to promote international networking and intercultural discourse between Germany and the Global South.

The criteria set by European funding institutes in regard to funding biennials generally follows such parameters as increasing the visibility of the artists being supported, in connection with the biennial (number of visitors, reports in the media, presence of multipliers in the art scene, etc. to promote the career of the artists being supported in the hope that follow-up projects will ensue from this). Likewise, the funding countries hope to positively influence their image abroad. Additional criteria are whether the biennial addresses relevant socio-political issues and discussions as well as the impact of the project on the intercultural dialogue.

This study shows that these criteria should also include the position that the hosting biennial takes towards the artists (artist fees) as well as aspects related to the sustainability of the biennial. To this end, such factors as the involvement of the local context, i.e. to what extent does the biennial cooperate with local cultural organisations or strengthen the local creative sector, for example through the production of artworks or catalogues. In addition, the accessibility and impact on the urban space as well as ecological aspects (travel, production, etc.) need to be considered.

Biennials exhibit special potential in such fields as capacity building and professionalisation through workshops and mentoring programmes or educational initiatives for students and young adults.

The analysis of existing funding programmes and funding strategies of selected European funding institutes, on the one hand, and conversations with experts working in the field of biennials, on the other hand, disclosed specific needs and gaps in the funding. Furthermore, funding for mobility and the transport of artworks is needed urgently. In addition, funding for production costs and artist fees also is important. It needs to be borne in mind that biennials achieve special relevancy because they facilitate new productions and, thus, the creation of art—largely independently of the market. In this way, they influence contemporary discourse about art. For this reason, production costs and artist fees should be included in the costs eligible for funding.

Moreover, the examination of the funding strategies applied by selected cultural institutes from western, central and northern Europe in connection with biennials showed that the funding usually is granted through central programmes that focus on projects. Sometimes, however, biennial funding is provided by the local offices of cultural institutes or it is based on focal topics.

This predominantly project-oriented approach is one reason why structural funding for biennials is such a desideratum. An exception is the funding strategy of the Institut Français, which grants structural funding to biennials on the African continent, above all to young biennials during their start-up phase. The Dutch DOEN Foundation not only supports projects but carefully selected local organisations that, in turn, organise biennials with a view to provide long-term structural support.



## 6. Conclusion and outlook

In addition to new funding pots for structural funding, financial support is needed by the biennial alliances and networks, which are experimenting with new forms of international solidarity, developing alternative solutions for cross-border cooperation and strengthening the exchange of knowledge.

Furthermore, the field of co-creation exhibits substantial potential because it implements many perspectives and fair partnership in creative processes.

### 7. Recommendations

The following recommendations for action are based on in-depth discussions and correspondence with experts in the field of biennials, such as artistic directors, curators, biennial organisers and representatives of cultural institutions and funding organisations.

#### 7.1 Financing: need of biennials

##### Production costs

By funding production costs, funding institutions can provide targeted support for biennials and thus make new productions possible largely independently of the market. Some funding institutions already support production costs on a pro-rata basis, such as Mondriaan Fund, Pro Helvetia or Phileas; other organisations, such as the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (ifa) or Frame, have not yet covered such costs. Production costs should therefore be considered as eligible costs alongside support for mobility and transport.

##### Fees for artists

Artists fees cover the work artists do in connection with an exhibition that are not related directly to the production of a work of art or material, in other words conceptual preparatory work, the time needed to complete the work or participating in meetings and public relations as well as setting up an exhibition. Numerous biennials try to pay fees to artists, such as the Berlin Biennial, Manifesta and the Gwanju Biennial.

Whereas some funding institutes make payment of fees a precondition for granting funding – such as the Mondriaan Fund<sup>135</sup> in the Netherlands and SAHA<sup>136</sup> in Turkey – others formulate it as a recommendation for the organisers, e.g. the Danish Arts Foundation<sup>137</sup> which, however, allows organisers to apply for partial funding of the fees for exhibiting artists at the same time.

Cultural institutes should create possibilities, through which applications can be submitted for the funding of artists fees or for topping them off.

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<sup>135</sup> A condition for granting funding is that the inviting biennial includes in its budget adequate fees for artists and the curator. Accordingly, the expenses are part of the production costs and have to be paid by the institution that commissioned the work. <https://www.mondriaanfonds.nl/en/application/international-art-presentation/> (accessed on 17.04.2021).

<sup>136</sup> <http://www.saha.org.tr/en/application-guide/application-criteria> (accessed: 16 April 2021).

<sup>137</sup> Danish Arts Foundation – Programme “Exhibition of Danish Art Abroad” (fees for exhibiting artists) <https://www.kunst.dk/english/funding-1/exhibition-of-danish-art-abroad> (accessed on 16.04.2021).

### Mobility

Not only transcontinental mobility but also sub-regional networking requires determined support. An exemplary approach is the programme Moving Africa<sup>138</sup> of the Goethe Institut, which promotes intercontinental mobility in Africa and, thus, enables numerous actors from the cultural scene to participate in or visit festivals and biennials on the African continent. Furthermore, options allowing digital travel should be created in response to the digital changes taking place at the present time.

### 7.2 Evaluation criteria

Rethinking the evaluation criteria applied for the funding of biennials is closely connected to reflecting on the funding institute's position. Experiences gained in recent years have shown that showcasing one's own culture and art is being increasingly replaced by a focus on intercultural dialogue and a mutual understanding of different cultures. This goes hand in hand with an unlearning of values and questioning the evaluation criteria of biennials, for example, when success is determined on the basis of scope, size or visibility. Criteria like the number of artists that were presented, the number of countries that participated, the number of artworks that were presented or the number of visitors should be replaced by considerations about sustainability and local contexts. In particular, the support of long-term cooperation projects and transfer of knowledge will help to reach the goal of attaining mutual respect and understanding between cultures through cultural cooperation and exchanges. The thematic **focus on socio-politically relevant issues and discourses as well as the integration of local contexts** are becoming increasingly important in the context of the debate on the sustainability of biennials. In general, there is also the question of what role a biennial plays for the **infrastructure** of contemporary art in the region.

For this reason, the following criteria are merely stated as an impulse for devising alternative criteria, depending on how active the respective biennial (edition) is in certain areas:

#### Sustainability and local contexts

- Attitude towards the participating artists/artist fees
- Impact on the local infrastructure for contemporary art
- Workshops and mentoring programmes
- Education programmes and increasing impact

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<sup>138</sup> <https://www.goethe.de/ins/za/en/kul/sup/mov.html> (accessed on 17.04.2021).

## 7. Recommendations

- Involvement of the local art scene/cooperation with local art spaces
- Cooperation with local institutions, e.g. art academies, etc.
- Promoting the local creative sector (local production)
- Intercultural dialogue/contact zone/cooperation with local residents
- Having an impact on urban space/accessibility
- Networking
- Ecological aspects
- Departing from traditional models of biennials

For these aspects, there are numerous examples of initiatives by biennials worldwide, as shown in this study. The inclusion of local contexts and the strengthening of the accessibility of contemporary art as well as the impact on urban space (e.g. SUD, Cameroon, chapter 2.2.3), the promotion of local creative industries (e.g. Rencontres de Bamako, Mali, chapter 2.2. 2) or activities in the field of education and professionalisation such as workshops and mentoring programmes (e.g. Lubumbashi Biennale, chapter 2.2.2, or Kochi-Muziris Biennale, chapter 5) are initiatives of biennials that go beyond the principle of spectacular, large-scale art shows to develop more sustainable formats.

### **Thematic emphasis**

The question whether biennials should define a thematic core area gives rise to controversial discussions. Funding biennials on the basis of core areas is a reasonable option; however, in this case, the themes would then address content that was prescribed by the West. If a funding institute of a country grants funding for prescribed core themes for a certain period of time due to overlapping, then it may be reasonable that the other funding institutes of a sponsor country can act freely, i.e. without thematic conditions, so that funding may be granted to the overall range of applications made by biennials expressing themes arising from their different and specific contexts and issues.

### **Regional emphasis**

Some institutes adhere to more or less stringent geographic selection criteria, which, as in the Netherlands, may be redefined at regular intervals within the scope of the foreign cultural policy. For the time period 2021-2024, 23 focus countries were selected.<sup>139</sup>

At ifa, for example, the funding focus is on biennials in other European countries and Asia, while Latin America, apart from the biennial in São Paulo and a few other funding

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<sup>139</sup> International Cultural Policy 2021-2024, p. 12. <https://www.government.nl/documents/parliamentary-documents/2020/02/20/international-cultural-policy-2021-2024> (accessed on 05.02.2021).

initiatives, has so far been underrepresented, although this is also related to the number of biennials per region and the applications received (cf. chapter 4.2).

Flexibility as regards funding, also regionally, facilitates responding to trends. Most funding institutes do not keep explicit statistics about biennial funding. Yet, that would be a good starting point for becoming aware of regional or thematic funding gaps. It would also be conceivable to introduce a "geographic key" for biennial funding.

### 7.3 New funding mechanisms/funding pots

#### Co-creation

Some of the experts interviewed criticised that the funding strategies of numerous European cultural institutes were still dominated by nationally biased support. In times of postcolonial discourse and decolonialisation of knowledge and power structures, also in the art sector, it is debatable whether such national orientation still is appropriate. Co-creation is an approach that strives to implement **multi-perspectivity** and fair partnerships in creative processes.

Activities in the field of co-creation - as in the field of ifa's current touring exhibition - could also be thought of at the interface with biennials that realise processual, open-ended projects transculturally and transnationally and connecting them (cf. chapter 4.2).

A multifocal approach promotes the overcoming of Eurocentric perspectives and offers the possibility of promoting co-creation and joint collaborative activities. It is important to design projects as equal dialogue with democratic decision-making processes from the very beginning.

#### Collaboration projects between artists from Germany and other countries

Continuous and open dialogue about opportunities as well as limits of equality in funding is one way of implementing ethical aspects in funding strategies. Creating awareness of asymmetries is the precondition for designing strategies for **solidary** action and *justainability*.

This leads to a discussion about ethic-specific strategies in funding mechanisms that take into consideration the question as to which funding options are available in the individual countries or regions and which are available to individual artists. The support of collaborative projects, for example a joint project in its entirety, involving an artist from Germany and an artist from a country with weak funding structures – as, for example,

## 7. Recommendations

Angola – would be one way of implementing ethical dimensions in funding strategies. A systematic affiliation with biennials is conceivable.

### **Funding pots for art production at festivals or sections of festivals without specification of countries**

Along these lines, it also would be conceivable to create a funding pot for projects in connection with biennials, with the funds being used for the production of art, irrespective of the artists' country of origin.

The approach of the artistic director of documenta 14 (2017), Adam Szymczyk, to put all of the funding granted individually by funding institutes for artistic contributions into one overall budget that would then be distributed to the artists involved, cannot be realised, in part because of legal regulations governing the allocation of funds. In this connection, a funding pot conceivably could be created for financing festivals – or sections of festivals and biennials – whose concept does not call for funding for individual artists but for the production of art as a whole in order to counteract the specification of origin.

### **Structural funding**

Many of the experts interviewed said that substantial structural funding for biennials is a desideratum. The inherent structure of biennials as an ephemeral exhibition, on the one hand, and a permanent institution, on the other hand, also calls for basic funding for infrastructure (wages/salaries, rent, running expenses). Funds that can be used freely for producing catalogues, communication, mobility, scenography are urgently needed. However, new funding pots should be created to cover these needs.

Especially biennials that do not have infrastructure at their disposal (e.g. when they are not associated with a museum) or do not receive long-term basic financing from the city, region or a foundation need the support of funding institutes. Cultural-political initiatives are needed to establish this structural funding at regional, national or local levels.

Most of the experts interviewed agreed that long-term structural funding for at least three or four years respectively is essential to ensure the sustainability and long-term existence of biennials. This is particularly true for small biennials with budgets of less than EUR 1 million (incl. institutional costs and wages/salaries). The necessity of having to search for funding every year impacts the structure and is very time consuming.

If a biennial does not have a permanent structure – or if the organisation team, including the curator, frequently changes from one edition to the next, know-how and expertise are lost. A noteworthy initiative in this respect is EUNIC's effort to ensure the transfer of knowledge from one Manifesta working group to the next by providing financial support.<sup>140</sup>

### **7.4 Funding the sustainability of biennials**

#### **Transversal capacity building programmes**

Particularly on the African continent, training and continuing education courses are needed to promote professionalisation in connection with biennials and culture management. This is true not only for art biennials but also for many fields in the creative sector, which means that transversal programmes could reinforce the cultural sector as a whole. In addition to festival management and fundraising training, educational activities regarding curatorial skills and know-how, curator networks, exhibition and event technology as well as restoration would promote professionalisation in the sector. The design of the programmes needs to define and take into consideration the contexts so that the type of intervention and target group can be determined: if, for example, a tradition for photography has emerged through interaction with a biennial, building up art printing shops and professionalisation in this field would pave the way for long-term perspectives in this sector.

#### **Infrastructure of the creative sector**

The local creative sector can be strengthened by supporting the whole value chain for the art sector, including exhibition management, logistics, printing shops (e.g. catalogue production), marketing and the local art market. The photo biennial *Rencontres de Bamako* in Mali is an example of a decisive initiative that aims to strengthen the local creative sector. The complete shift of production of the biennial from Paris to Mali has significantly contributed to the expansion and specialisation of the local creative sector. This includes increasing know-how as well as the acquisition of machines or certain materials for printing art photographs. Accordingly, local governance and the inclusion of local communities promote positive long-term effects and development potential for the whole infrastructure of a region's creative sector. Long-term effects for a specific region can be attained by systematically funding biennials that support these types of processes.

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<sup>140</sup> See Funding Programmes C.2. in the Annex.

### **Ecological aspects**

Against the background of debates about climate change, ecological aspects are gaining significance in the biennial discourse. Criticism has been voiced regarding the mobility of curators, artists and visitors and the transport of artworks around the world, necessitated by more than 300 biennials worldwide. Many biennials are increasingly addressing these aspects, some based on their programme, some because of a lack of funding, by producing works in situ – as, for example, at the Jogja Biennale in Indonesia or Abidjan Green Art, Ivory Coast. At the latter, the artists created ephemeral works made of natural materials in a National Park. By specifically funding ecologically sustainable biennial initiatives or strategies, funding strategies can help preserve resources and ecosystems.

### **Digitalisation – deficits and potential**

In recent months, digitalisation has accelerated tremendously, also in the visual arts, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Biennials are testing possibilities of switching to digital formats, numerous programmes, panel discussions and conferences as well as tours through exhibitions are being moved into virtual spaces. The quality of these digital meetings varies considerably from improvable attempts to innovative, experimental formats. In connection with the rapidly progressing digitalisation in this field, some critical issues need to be considered, as, for example, copyright, data protection or censorship of platforms or accessibility for people with a less privileged background. The experiences gained during the past months have shown that although the physical experience of art cannot be replaced completely by digital formats, funding is nonetheless required for establishing professional, inclusive and appropriate digital formats.

At a time marked by the Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing, one section of the current biennial in Gwangju, designed exclusively for an online audience, is an interesting example of a digital format. The commissioned artworks are presented as episodes and web series on the biennial's social media channels and streamed on their website. The works of art by Ana Prvački, Kira Nova and nasa4nasa examine hybrid forms of individual and collective expression and focus on the relationships between bodies located somewhere the spiritual, physical and virtual, beyond the estrangement and spatial distancing caused by the pandemic.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> <https://13thgwangjubienale.org/live-organ/> (accessed on 13.04.2021).



### 7.5 Networking

#### Biennial alliances and networks

By creating **international biennial alliances** and **transnational collaborations**, institutions can take a decisive step towards experimenting with new forms of international solidarity, developing alternative solutions for transnational collaboration, and creating new networks. The biennial format is supplemented and expanded by different forms of collaboration, the intercultural discourse about curatorial practice is intensified and the transfer of knowledge is promoted.

In Europe, the Perennial Biennial was founded, a partnership of five biennials, including the Berlin Biennial. In addition, the East Europe Biennial Alliance<sup>142</sup> was established. Acting as a cultural contraposition to certain ideological tendencies prevalent in Eastern Europe, it has gained special importance because of its political dimension.

One example of transcontinental cooperation is “**New North and South**,”<sup>143</sup> a network of eleven organisations from the north of England and South Asia: museums and biennials in England (Liverpool Biennial, Manchester Art Gallery, Whitworth, Manchester Museum, The Tetley in Leeds) as well as Colombo Biennial (Sri Lanka), Dhaka Art Summit (Bangladesh), Kochi-Muziris Biennial (India), Karachi Biennial and Lahore Biennial (Pakistan) as well as British Council. The New North and South network makes possible a series of residencies, co-commissions and mentoring programmes alongside the public programme.

The funding of cooperative biennial projects provides an opportunity to invigorate intercultural dialogue and knowledge sharing as well as collaborative practices and to show solidarity at an international level. Many of the experts who were interviewed emphasised that the promotion of transnational, transregional and transcontinental collaboration projects contributes significantly to bolstering learning and exchange activities between countries and cultural spaces, for example, in education and outreach. The United Kingdom has been doing pioneer work in this area for many years, for example. Moreover, certain trends like democratic movements in a region could be reinforced across national borders through such cultural initiatives as biennials because they reach a broad public.

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<sup>142</sup> An alliance of biennials in Prague, Budapest, Kiev and Warsaw.

<sup>143</sup> <https://www.biennial.com/collaborations/new-nort-and-south> (accessed on 18.04.2021). Funded by: Arts Council England’s Ambition for Excellence programme, the British Council is a partner.

A pathbreaking attempt to strengthen networks is **Bienalsur** – a collaborative global network of artists, curators and institutions from the Global South and Global North. This biennial project started in 2015 with the “Global South Meetings. A Platform for Reflection on Contemporary Art and Culture.” The focal point of the biennial is a dynamic project based on dialogue and exchange.<sup>144</sup> The second edition in 2019 involved 112 event locations in 21 countries, such as Argentina, Benin, France and Japan.<sup>145</sup> Another interesting point is the concept of simultaneity because several projects – or a digital version of them – are presented at different locations at the same time, giving rise to parallel experiences and reception.<sup>146</sup>

On the one hand, ifa, in its capacity as a funding institute of biennial alliances and networks, could contribute to transnational biennial cooperation projects that include co-creation, co-production, residencies and programmes for the transfer of knowledge. On the other hand, a connection to networks with biennials or to Bienalsur also is conceivable through ifa-Galleries.

### Exchange between biennials

Forums and conferences such as the World Biennial Forum that was held in 2012 and 2014, offer biennial organisers and curators the possibility of discussing topical issues and the needs of art biennials around the world. The International Biennial Association (IBA) – a non-profit association that evolved from the first World Biennial – is designed as a platform where knowledge and information can be shared. These platforms, conferences and symposia are important instruments for exchanging information about different practices, formats and current challenges facing biennials, and they require funding to create horizontal networks.

Other aspects that need to be discussed are the investment in these types of networks, both as regards funding for the organisation of conferences and workshops as well as the strengthening of long-term structures (staff, office) of such organisations and, furthermore, the possibility of helping representatives of biennials with small budgets and weak infrastructure attend joint meetings or funding the mobility of actors in the Global South so that they can attend conferences about biennials.

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<sup>144</sup> For more information, please go to: <https://bienalsur.org/en> (accessed on 16.04.2021).

<sup>145</sup> The majority of the participating partners are in Latin America, currently project partners from France, Spain and Italy are involved in Europe; up until now there is no project partner from Germany. The biennial is organised by UNTREF (Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero) in Buenos Aires.

<sup>146</sup> So, for example, the project of an artist from Madagascar, Joël Andrianomearisoa, was shown simultaneously in Argentina, Brazil and Benin.

## 7.6 International funding cooperation

### Joint Funding

Multilateral funding programmes and joint funding constitute considerable potential for departing from national categories as well as pooling funds and expertise at the same time so as to be able to act more efficiently. Cross-border cooperation as regards funding, co-funding and joint transnational programmes not only encourages common action and, hence, makes available new knowledge and the sharing of costs and risks, but also promotes multilateral intercultural dialogue.

Different initiatives of European funding institutes are active above all in the fields of mobility and networking such as, for example, "Orientation Trip," which is organized jointly by institutes from the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Switzerland with the aim of strengthening international networks. Transcontinental cooperation as regards the funding of biennials is being realised by the United Kingdom and Korea.<sup>147</sup>

### Biennial funding at European level

With regard to funding by the European Union, the interview partners criticised three aspects in particular: insufficient visibility, high complexity and bureaucratic obstacles. A joint European approach is considered positive by several of the persons interviewed.

Biennials are a good opportunity to act collectively based on a joint European position. Taking Africa as an example, it would be possible to address jointly - with partners from Europe and Africa - the process of overcoming the past and the question as to how a joint future can be created.

Therefore, funding programmes and possibilities should be communicated more extensively. Moreover, EUNIC global could play an important part in future, also for funding biennials. For example, ifa already is working together with EUNIC in research programmes and, thus, the question is raised to what extent ifa is considering a European approach as regards the funding of art.

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<sup>147</sup> See Section B. Joint Funding in the Annex.

### **7.7 Dialogue between funding institutes**

Dialogue and agreements between the cultural institutes and sponsors active in a country are necessary and productive to ensure more efficient and more synergistic use of resources. Reciprocal information about funding promotes visibility. Thus, for example, artists supported by ifa could also be promoted and assisted in building up a network through additional events that are coordinated by the local Goethe Institut. Therefore, funding institutes in one country should complement one another and avoid overlaps in funding areas in order to cover a larger range of financial needs and make use of synergies.

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Homepage of the International Biennial Association (IBA):  
<https://biennialassociation.org>

Homepage of Universes in Universe:  
<https://universes.art/en/biennials>

## Annex

## A. Newly founded biennials 2015-2020

## Europe

	Name of the biennial	City	Country	Disciplines	Editions
1	L'ANDART		Andorra	Country art (focus)	2015, 2017, 2019
2	Anozero	Coimbra	Portugal	Contemporary art and cultural heritage	2015, 2017, 2019
3	ARoS Triennial	Aarhus	Denmark	Contemporary art	2017
4	Art Encounters Biennial	Timisoara	Romania	Experimental festival and contemporary art biennial	2015, 2017, 2019
5	Biennale Bregaglia	Val Bregaglia	Switzerland	Contemporary art	2020
6	Biennale Matter of Art	Prague	Czech Republic	Contemporary art	2020
7	Biennale Wrszawa	Warsaw	Poland	Interdisciplinary socio-cultural projects	2019
8	Bodø Biennale	Bodø	Norway	Festival for the Visual Arts and Dance	2016, 2018, 2020
9	Bruges Triennial	Bruges	Belgium	Contemporary art and architecture	2015, 2018
10	Coventry Biennial	Coventry	UK	Contemporary art	2017, 2019
11	Garage Triennial of Russian Contemporary Art	Moscow	Russia	Contemporary art	2017, 2020
12	Helsinki Biennial	Helsinki	Finland	Contemporary art	Postponed to 2021
13	Henie Onstadt Triennial for Photography and New Media	Høvikodden	Norway	Photography/new media	2020

	<b>Name of the biennial</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Disciplines</b>	<b>Editions</b>
<b>14</b>	Larnaca Biennale	Larnaca	Cyprus	Contemporary art	2018, 2020 postponed to 2021
<b>15</b>	OFF-Biennale Budapest	Budapest	Hungary	Contemporary art	2015; 2017, 2020 postponed to 2021
<b>16</b>	osloBiennalen	Oslo	Norway	Art in public space	2019– 2024
<b>17</b>	Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art	Riga	Lithuania	Contemporary art	2018
<b>18</b>	New Swåland	Småland Region	Sweden	Contemporary art	2019
<b>19</b>	Strasbourg Biennale	Strasbourg	France	Contemporary art	2018/2019
<b>20</b>	Vienna Biennale	Vienna	Austria	Art, design, architecture	2015, 2017, 2019
<b>21</b>	Yorkshire Sculpture International	Yorkshire	UK	Sculpture outdoors	2019

## Asia

	Name of the biennial	City	Country	Disciplines	Editions
1	Anren Biennale	Anren	China	Contemporary art (incl. theatre)	2017/18
2	Bangkok Art Biennale	Bangkok	Thailand	Contemporary art	2018, 2020
3	Bangkok Biennial	Bangkok	Thailand	Contemporary art	2018, 2020
4	Chennai Photo Biennale	Chennai	India	Photography	2016, 2019
5	Jeju Biennale	Jeju	South Korea	Contemporary art	2017
6	Karachi Biennale	Karachi	Pakistan	Contemporary art	2017, 2019
7	Kathmandu Triennale	Kathmandu	Nepal	Contemporary art	2017, 2020 postponed to 2021
8	Kuala Lumpur Biennale	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia	Contemporary art	2017, 2019
9	Lahore Biennale	Lahore	Pakistan	Contemporary art	2018, 2020
10	Makassar Biennale	Makassar	Indonesia	Contemporary art, theme "Maritime"	2015, 2017, 2019
11	Okayama Art Summit	Okayama	Japan	Contemporary art	2016, 2019
12	Oku-Noto Triennale	Suzu	Japan	Location-specific installations, art festival	2017, 2020 postponed to 2021
13	Reborn Art Festival	Ishinomaki	Japan	Art, music, culinary arts	2017, 2019
14	Shenzhen Biennale	Shenzhen	China	Contemporary art	2018

	Name of the biennial	City	Country	Disciplines	Editions
15	Suzhou Documents	Suzhou	China	Contemporary art	2016
16	Thailand Biennale	different locations	Thailand	Contemporary art	2018 Krabi
17	Yerevan Biennial	Yerevan	Armenia	Visual arts and theory	planned 1st edition 2021
18	Yinchuan Biennale	Yinchuan	China	Contemporary art	2016, 2018

### Africa

	Name of the biennial	City	Country	Disciplines	Editions
1	Abidjan Green Arts	Abidjan	Ivory Coast	Country Art	2019
2	Biso International Biennial of Sculpture	Ouagadougou	Burkina Faso	Sculpture	2019
3	Lagos Biennial	Lagos	Nigeria	Contemporary art	2017, 2019
4	Nuku Photo Festival	Accra	Ghana	Photography	2018
5	OFF Biennale Cairo	Cairo	Egypt	Contemporary art	2015, 2018
6	Stellenbosch Triennale	Stellenbosch	South Africa	Contemporary art	2020
7	Young Kongo Biennale	Kinshasa	Demo. Rep. Congo	Contemporary art	2019

**North America**

	Name of the biennial	City	Country	Disciplines	Editions
1	Bonavista Biennale	Duntara	Canada	Contemporary art of indigenous, Canadian and international artists	2017, 2019
2	DeCordova New England Biennial	Lincoln, MA	USA	Contemporary art	2019
3	Desert X	Palm Springs	USA	Site-specific contemporary art	2017, 2019
4	Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art	Cleveland, Ohio	USA	Contemporary art	2018
5	Hawai'i Triennial	Honolulu	USA	Contemporary art	2017, 2019
6	Toronto Biennial of Art	Toronto	Canada	Contemporary art	2019
7	Triennial of Asia	New York	USA	Contemporary art	2020

**South America**

	Name of the biennial	City	Country	Disciplines	Editions
1	BIENALSUR		Argentina/global	Contemporary art	2016/17, 2019
2	Biennial of the Frontiers	Matamoros	Mexico	Contemporary art	2015
3	TRIO Biennial	Rio de Janeiro	Brazil	Contemporary art	2015

**Australia**

	Name of the biennial	City	Country	Disciplines	Editions
1	Fremantle Biennale	Fremantle	Australia	Site-responsive contemporary artistic practices	2017, 2019
2	NGV Triennial	Melbourne	Australia	Art and design	2017 planned for 2020

**Antarctica**

	<b>Name of the biennial</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Disciplines</b>	<b>Editions</b>
<b>1</b>	Antarctic Biennale	Expedition: e.g. Ushuaia, South Shetland Islands, Cape Horn		Artistic, scientific and philosophical methods to thematise common spaces like Antarctica, the ocean and outer space	2017



## **B. Funding programmes of organisations in European countries**

### **B.1 British Council, United Kingdom**

#### **Programme: Biennales and Festivals grants – Architecture, Design and Fashion**

**Area:** Architecture, design, fashion

**Number of projects funded:** about 5 projects in 2020–21

#### **Eligibility criteria:**

Who is eligible: Biennials and festivals

**Amount of grants:** £1,000–3,000

#### **Context**

The fund is used to support presentations by UK designers, architects and fashion designers at international biennials and festivals. Biennials and festivals held in the UK are supported to present work by international designers, architects and fashion designers as well. In view of the Covid-19 pandemic, applications for digital presentations or a digital exchange will be accepted, too.

### **B.2 Danish Arts Foundation, Denmark**

The Danish Arts Foundation is Denmark's largest art foundation. It receives approximately 12,500 applications and supports about 6,000 artists and art projects through more than 60 programmes every year. The Danish Arts Foundation supports several biennials, e.g. the Venice Biennale, and the participation of Danish artists in numerous other biennials around the world. Its programmes comprise the visual arts, architecture, design and artistic craftwork, performing arts and literature.

#### **Programme: Exhibition of Danish Art Abroad**

**Type of funding:** Mobility, transport, presentation in printed or digital form, artist fees

**Art form:** Visual arts

**Budget:** About 50% of the close to 1,500 applications submitted in 2019 for the programme received funding from a total budget of about €3.1 million, i.e. about half the annual funds available to the committee.

#### **Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: International museums, galleries, biennials, exhibition spaces, independent curators who want to exhibit Danish art

**Amount of grants:** No limit. In 2019 the funds were distributed as follows:

- 59% of the grants were less than DKK 25,000 (about €3,300)
- 82% were less than DKK 45,000 (about €6,000)

- 96% were less than DKK 75,000 (about €10,000)

- 82% waren kleiner als 45.000 DKK (ca. 6.000 €)

- 96% waren kleiner als 75.000 DKK (ca. 10.000 €)

URL: <https://www.kunst.dk/english/funding-1/exhibition-of-danish-art-abroad>

### **Context**

The programme funds the presentation of Danish and international contemporary art in printed or digital form and exhibitions with Danish contemporary artists abroad. The organisers are encouraged to pay artists fees to the artists in connection with their involvement in the exhibition. The exhibition venue can apply for partial funding of the artist fees for the exhibiting artists.

### **Programme: International Research Programme**

**Type of funding:** Mobility

**Art form:** Visual arts

**Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: Danish and international curators, directors of art institutions, art critics, art mediators

**Amount of grants:** max. DKK 15,000 for travel and accommodation costs

### **Context**

On the one hand, the programme strives to make contemporary art known in Denmark and Danish contemporary art abroad by helping foreign curators gain insight into the Danish art scene with a view to future cooperation. On the other hand, Danish curators are given the opportunity of getting to know foreign contemporary art.

### **B.3 Frame, Finland**

Frame is a private foundation and information centre for contemporary art in Finland with the special mandate to support and create international initiatives. Frame is financed by the Finnish Ministry for Education and Culture. Commissioning and producing the exhibition for the Finnish pavilion at the Venice Biennale is Frame's largest international project.

In the past seven years Frame has supported the following biennials or artists participating at the biennials:

- Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil
- EVA International, Ireland
- Kochi-Muziris Biennale, India
- Nørrekærbiennale, Denmark
- Open Art Biennale, Örebro, Sweden
- Liverpool Biennial, United Kingdom
- Art Encounters Biennial, Romania
- Bucharest Biennale, Romania
- Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art, Russia
- Momentum, Norway
- Riga Photography Biennial, Latvia
- Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art, Latvia
- Moscow Biennale, Russia
- Screen City Biennial, Norway
- WRO Media Art Biennale, Poland
- Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art, Sweden
- Pyeong Chang Biennale, South Korea
- Congo Biennale, Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Thessaloniki Biennale, Greece
- Douro Biennial, Portugal

#### **Programme: Travel grant for artists for exhibiting abroad**

**Type of funding:** Travel expenses, transport, accommodation costs, insurance

**Art form:** Contemporary visual arts

**Duration:** Continuous

**Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: Artists from Finland, working groups of artists from Finland

**Programme: Project grant for contemporary art organisations to exhibit work by Finnish artists abroad**

**Type of funding:** Travel expenses, transport, installation

**Art form:** Contemporary art

**Duration:** Continuous

**Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: Organisations (biennials, museums) for travel and accommodation costs, transport of the art works and insurance during transport for artists from Finland

**Programme: Travel grant for foreign art experts for traveling to Finland**

**Type of funding:** Travel expenses

**Art form:** Contemporary art

**Duration:** Continuous

**Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: Foreign curators

**Programme: International visitor programme**

**Type of funding:** Travel expenses and accommodation costs

**Art form:** Contemporary art

**Duration:** Continuous

**Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: By invitation through Frame only

**Context**

Frame supports networking by inviting international curators, researchers and cultural producers to Finland. Although the programme is designed to meet the interests of each guest, the focus of the visitor programme is on visits that benefit the local contemporary art scene as greatly as possible. A large part of the programme is carried out together with international and local organisations.

#### **B.4 Goethe-Institut, Germany**

The Goethe-Institut, a cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany, is active around the world and represented in more than 90 countries. Besides promoting the study of the German language, the focus is on encouraging international cultural cooperation through cultural events and contributions to festivals in such fields as film, dance, music, theatre and exhibitions. In addition to the programmes managed by the head office listed here, the Goethe-Institut's individual local institutes and centres offer funding for specific projects. Accordingly, the local budgets of the Goethe-Institute are used to support projects that, when they are part of a biennial, can strengthen the exhibition as such. Basically, this concerns funding for individual projects, usually with the involvement of cultural practitioners from Germany.

Besides the architecture biennials in Chicago and Tallinn, the music biennial in Zagreb and the Bial de Performance Buenos Aires, the Goethe-Institut, in 2019, supported 13 biennials for the visual arts, 7 of them in Europe, 3 in Asia, 1 in Africa, 1 in Central America, 1 in Australia:

- Attakkalari India Biennial
- Chennai Photo Biennale, India
- Triennale di Milano
- Biennale Warszawa
- La Biennale di Venezia
- Kaunas Biennial, Lithuania
- Ballarat International Foto Biennale, Australia
- Biennale de Lyon
- Havana Biennial
- GIBCA - Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art
- Karachi Biennale KB19, Pakistan
- Abidjan Green Art, Ivory Coast
- Contour-Biennale in Mechelen

**Programme: Projektfond Bildende Kunst**

**Type of funding:** Project funding

**Art form:** Visual arts, architecture, design and art mediation as well as interdisciplinary projects

**Duration:** Continuous

**Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: Artists, curators and cultural practitioners in Germany and abroad, at least two project partners, at least one institution

**Amount of grants:** max. €25,000

**URL:** <https://www.goethe.de/de/uun/auf/mus/ikf.html>

### **Context**

The objective of the Visual Arts Project Fund of the Goethe-Institut is to support artists, curators and institutions from different countries and regions in the realisation of projects that they plan together and carry out based on an equal division of work. Funding is provided for the development of exhibitions and discursive formats based on transnational collaborative structures of work. In the course of this, international networks in the visual arts, architecture, design and art mediation are promoted. Collaborative work processes and artistic research in global, transcultural contexts open up opportunities for joint learning and the generation of new knowledge across national borders.

### **Programme: International Coproduction Fund**

**Type of funding:** Project funding

**Art form:** Theatre, dance, music and performance art (no exclusively exhibition projects)

**Duration:** Continuous

**Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: private and legal persons, applicant is the foreign partner.

Geographic criteria: The focus is on projects between German and non-European partners, in particular from transformation countries.

**Amount of grants:** max. €25,000 €

**URL:** <https://www.goethe.de/de/uun/auf/mus/ikf.html>

### **Context**

With the International Coproduction Fund, the Goethe-Institut wants to promote the unrestricted international and intercultural connection of artists where they can exchange their ideas. Facilitating this kind of exchange and the associated networking of the actors are just as important as the productions resulting from the project.

### **Programme: Research Trips for Curators**

**Type of funding:** Mobility

**Art form:** Contemporary art

**Duration:** Continuously since 2008

**Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: Curators who primarily work in Germany

**Amount of funding:** Partial funding (travel costs, accommodation costs), max. €5,000

**URL:** <https://www.goethe.de/de/uun/auf/bku/20375937.html>

### **Context**

The objective of the programme is to help curators from Germany deepen their knowledge about international contemporary art, enable networking between art scenes in Germany and abroad, and support exhibition projects about international contemporary art.

### **Programme: Moving Africa**

The objective of the Goethe-Institut's pan-African exchange programme, which was launched in 2009, is to enable artists to travel to selected cultural festivals on the continent. The Goethe-Institutes in Africa or festivals propose suitable participants for the programme. The aim is to promote contact and networking among African artists. Partnerships have been undertaken with festivals covering such different areas as film, literature and dance as well as the art biennials Dak'Art, Rencontres de Bamako, Addis Photo Fest and Salon Urbain de Douala (SUD).

## **B.5 Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa), Germany**

The Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, ifa, is Germany's oldest intermediary organisation and acts as a competence centre for Germany's foreign cultural and education policy. It promotes art and cultural exchange through exhibition and conference programmes, and also banks on long-term cooperation. With its exhibition funding, ifa supports international art biennials. Through its publications and, since 2000, its "Biennials in Dialogue" conference series, it gives impetus to a founded discussion of biennials. Together with the Biennial Foundation and partners from the biennial sector, ifa organised the World Biennial Forum - an international network meeting of biennial actors, which has been held up until now in Gwangju in 2012 and in São Paulo in 2014. Since 1971, ifa has been responsible for the coordination and realisation of the German pavilion at the Biennale Arte di Venezia on request of the Federal Foreign Office.

**Programme: Exhibition Funding**

**Type of funding:** Transport, mobility, accommodation costs, rent for equipment

**Art form:** Visual arts

**Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: German artists or artists who have been living in Germany for at least 5 years

**URL:** <https://www.ifa.de/foerderungen/ausstellungsfoerderung/#section1>

**Programme: Artists' contacts**

**Type of funding:** Mobility, accommodation

**Art form:** Visual arts, architecture, photography, media art, design

**Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: Artists, curators and researchers, cultural practitioners, art mediators, art theorists, architects, and designers

**URL:** <https://www.ifa.de/foerderungen/kuenstlerkontakte/>

**Context**

The Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen supports biennials with two funding programmes.

The Exhibition Funding programme supports international exhibition projects by artists from Germany, e.g. solo exhibitions, group exhibitions and participation in international exhibition projects and biennials outside Germany, provided they take place in public museums, non-commercial galleries and art societies, etc. The application can be submitted by the artist, the exhibiting institution or curator.

The Artists' Contacts programme supports travel and work stays of artists and cultural practitioners from transformation and developing countries who would like to come to Germany. Moreover, applications for participating at biennials in Germany can be submitted as well. Furthermore, travel and work stays of artists and cultural practitioners from Germany to transformation and developing countries are funded to foster the intercultural dialogue between Germany and the Global South.

The focus of funding as regards biennials is on other European countries, both as regards the number of grants and the amount of funding. From 2015 to 2019, ifa funded altogether 27 biennial projects with a total of €284,830. The institute also regularly funds nu-



merous biennials in Asia, e.g. 15 projects between 2015 and 2019. This large number correlates with the very large (absolute) number of biennials on the Asian continent, many of which distinguish themselves because of their innovative concepts and approaches.

Biennials in Africa have gained attention only in recent years. Whereas not a single biennial was funded on the African continent between 2005 and 2013, several biennials received funding from ifa in subsequent years: Marrakesh-Biennale, Morocco (2014, 2016); Kampala Art Biennial, Uganda (2016); Biennale de Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo (2017, 2019); Lagos Biennial, Nigeria (2017, 2019); East Africa Biennale (2017).

Based on the numbers, the focus of funding in 2020 was in Asia: 10 of the 16 biennial funding projects that were approved were biennials in Asia, and three of them were in South Korea (Soul Mediacity Biennale, Busan Biennale, Gwangju Biennial. All of them had to be postponed because of the Covid-19 pandemic).

## **B.6 Mondriaan Fund, the Netherlands**

The Mondriaan Fund is a public fund for the visual arts and cultural heritage. It supports innovative projects and activities of visual artists, cultural practitioners (curators, critics), museum and other cultural heritage organisations, art institutions, archives, galleries and commissioners.

Apart from that, the Mondriaan Fund is responsible for the Dutch contribution to the Venice Biennale.

### **Programme: International Presentations**

**Type of funding:** Production costs, presentation costs, mobility

**Art form:** Contemporary art

**Number of projects supported:** On its website, the Mondriaan Fund lists 99 "Art Presentation" projects in 2019, 13 of them were biennial projects (in addition to the Venice Biennale).

**Duration:** Continuous

**Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: International platforms for contemporary art.

Geographic criteria: Artists from the Netherlands.

**Destination:** International

**Amount of grants:** Travel costs for artists and/or (guest) curators for the installation of the project; accommodation and max. €150 per diem for max. 14 days, transport costs, production costs for new works commissioned by the organisation (max. 50% of total production

costs), artist fee (as part of the production costs), support for a publication that accompanies the presentation (max. 25% of the costs), translation costs (max. 50%).

### **Context**

Internationally recognised platforms for contemporary art outside the Netherlands can apply for funding for the presentation of living artists from the Netherlands. If the presentation of artists from the Netherlands additionally is curated by a (guest) curator from the Netherlands, international platforms can apply for additional funds to allow the curator to attend the opening.

### **Biennials and festival projects supported by the fund (selection)**

#### **2020**

- Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka, Bangladesh

#### **2019**

- Venice Biennale, Italy
- Serendipity Arts Festival, Panaji (Goa), India
- Singapore Biennale, Singapore
- La Biennale de Lyon, France
- Istanbul Biennale, Turkey
- Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art, Yekaterinburg, Russia
- Contemporary Art Biennial Sesc\_Videobrasil, São Paulo, Brazil
- Bergen Assembly, Norway
- MOMENTA, Montreal, Canada
- Biennial of Graphic Arts Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Contour Biennale, Mechelen, Belgium
- WRO Biennale, Wroclaw, Poland
- Setouchi Triennale, Takamatsu, Japan
- Havana Biennial, Cuba

**Programme: Visitors Programme**

**Type of funding:** Mobility

**Art form:** Visual arts

**Number of projects supported:** about 20 guests are invited every year

**Context**

With the objective of promoting art from the Netherlands abroad, the Mondriaan Fund organises special visitors programmes for curators and cultural practitioners active in the visual arts to allow them to gain more insight into Dutch contemporary visual arts, to strengthen international relations and to promote the exchange of ideas. Professionals are invited to the Netherlands to visit museums, galleries and artists. The aim of these visits is to encourage international exchange projects.

Bonaventure Ndikung (among other things, curator of Rencontres de Bamako in Mali 2019 and artistic director of the 12th Quadriennale sonsbeek20->24) and Claire Moulène (co-curator Lyon Biennale 2019) were among the participants in 2019.

**Programme: Pilot: Istanbul Biennial**

**Type of funding:** Mobility, networking

**Art form:** Visual arts

**Number of projects supported:** 1 pilot project with 15 artists

**Duration:** Pilot project 2019

**Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: Individuals

Geographic criteria: the Netherlands

**Destination:** Istanbul Biennale

**Amount of grants:** Funding of up to €1,000 for travel costs, accommodation, admission tickets for the preview of the Istanbul Biennale, Networking Dinner organised by the Mondriaan Fund

**URL:** <https://www.mondriaanfonds.nl/en/activity/pilot-international-networking-istanbul-biennial/>

**Context**

In order to boost the international position of artists from the Netherlands, the Mondriaan Fund decided to fund the presence and positioning of artists at important international events.

## **B.7 Phileas, Austria**

Founded in 2015, Phileas is an independent philanthropic organisation based in Vienna. It raises private funds to support and co-produce ambitious visual arts projects. Phileas is financed through the annual contributions of its partners as well as numerous companies and organisations.

### **Programme: Exhibition**

**Type of funding:** Project support (transport, insurance and installation)

**Art form:** Visual arts

**Number of projects supported:** Numerous exhibition projects since 2015, 37 were biennial projects.

**Duration:** Continuous

**Eligibility criteria:**

Applications from: Institutions

Geographic: Support of Austrian artists or artists living in Austria.

**Destination:** Worldwide

**Amount of grants:** Variable

### **Context**

Since the beginning, Phileas has been funding the participation of Austrian artists or artists living in Austria at international biennials. Whenever possible, Phileas acquires the works of the artists it supported after the end of the exhibition projects and donates them to public museums in Austria. In this way, the organisation has made 50 donations up to now. Recurrent cooperation has evolved with some biennials. Phileas has confirmed its support of the biennials in Gwangju, Liverpool, Casablanca, São Paulo, Kochi and Istanbul as well as the Bienal de America del Sur in 2021, and the New Museum Triennial in Los Angeles in 2022.

**Biennials and festival projects supported by Phileas:**

- Art Encounters Biennial, Timisoara, Romania (2019)
- Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil (2018, 2021)
- Bienal de America del Sur, Argentina (2021)
- Biennale Internationale de Casablanca, Morocco (2021)
- Biennale of Sydney, Australia (2018, 2020)
- Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka, Bangladesh (2018)
- documenta, Athens, Greece, and Kassel, Germany (2017)
- Gwangju Biennale, South Korea (2021)
- Istanbul Biennial, Turkey (2017, 2019, 2021)
- Kochi-Muziris Biennale, India (2018, 2021)
- La Biennale de Lyon, France (2017, 2019)
- La Biennale di Venezia, Italy (2015, 2017, 2019)
- Lahore Biennale, Pakistan (2018)
- Liverpool Biennial, United Kingdom (2016, 2018, 2021)
- Manifesta (Palermo, 2018)
- New Museum Triennial, New York, USA (2021)
- Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art, Latvia, 2020
- Shanghai Biennale, China
- Sharjah Biennial, United Arab Emirates (2019)
- steirischer herbst, Graz, Austria
- Whitney Biennial, New York, USA (2017)
- Yerevan Biennial, Armenia (2021)

**Context**

Phileas organises annual research trips for international museum and biennial curators, art critics and journalists to Austria. The programme includes visits to the studios of artists and galleries as well as meetings with museum directors and curators. It is supported by the Austrian Federal Chancellery.

**B.8 Prince Claus Fund, the Netherlands**

The Prince Claus Fund supports cultural exchange and artistic developments above all in Latin America, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Eastern Europe. It has actively contributed to the funding of biennials and their environment through various activities, e.g. the "Ticket Grant" in 2014, which helped cultural practitioners travel to the World Biennial Forum No. 2 in São Paulo.

In 2021, the fund will be embarking on a new funding strategy that shifts the focus from organisations to individuals. Accordingly, the project funding and corresponding programmes will be discontinued. Instead artists and cultural practitioners will be supported through three different kinds of awards.

### **Prince Claus Awards**

**Type of funding:** Awards

**Duration:** 2021–

**URL:** <https://princeclausfund.org/awards>

### **Prince Claus Seed Awards**

Each year the Prince Claus Fund grants 100 Seed Awards to artists and cultural practitioners following a call for applications. The works need to address current social and/or political topics within their respective local context.

### **Prince Claus Mentorship Awards**

Each year the Prince Claus Fund gives 35 Mentorship Awards to cultural practitioners (5–15 years of professional experience) so that they can participate in one of three thematic mentorships every year. The mentorships are worked out together with partner organisations and have specific open calls.

### **Prince Claus Impact Awards**

Every two years, Impact Awards are granted to six outstanding personalities whose activities in the art sector have had a tangible positive effect on regions where the possibilities for cultural expression are limited. The awards want to honour up-and-coming leaders in their field, who have shown transformative strength, consistent dedication and commitment in their context and beyond.

### **Programme: Next Generation**

**Type of funding:** financial and capacity development

1. Three-year funding of 12 excellent art and cultural institutes that work with and for young people.
2. Develop a network of organisations that receive Next Generation funding.
3. Project funding: Development, production and dissemination of cultural initiatives that open up new ways of thinking about gender, diversity and inclusion.
4. Annual award.
5. Academic research.

6. Bringing together Next Generation partners with young cultural practitioners in the Netherlands.

**Art form:** Diverse

**Duration:** Programme will end the middle of 2021

**Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: Individuals and organisations (programme for and with young cultural practitioners ages 15-30).

Geographic criteria: In 2020, focus on Asia and Eastern Europe/in 2019, Latin America and the Caribbean/in 2018, Africa and the Middle East

**Amount of grants:** Period of time: 3 years

### **Funded projects (selection)**

"I know my truth better than you," Kathmandu Triennale 2020 (postponed to 2021), Nepal: The project offers young artists, researchers and activists the opportunity to discover their history, identity and future. This includes the production of art works that are research-based, community-minded and collaborative and explore both gender and indigenous topics.

## **B.9 Pro Helvetia, Switzerland**

Pro Helvetia is a public-law foundation mandated to support Swiss art and culture. With offices in Cairo, Johannesburg, New Delhi, Shanghai and Moscow, Pro Helvetia is present around the world. Since 2021, Pro Helvetia has been increasingly promoting cultural exchanges between Switzerland and South America with liaison offices in Bogotá (CO), Buenos Aires (AR), São Paulo and Santiago (CL).

As part of its cultural promotion work, the Swiss Parliament grants Pro Helvetia a global credit every four years. For the period 2016–2020 (non-recurrent five-year period), the foundation received CHF 210.9 million.

Of the CHF 42.4 million that Pro Helvetia used for its operational budget in 2019, 87.2% went directly into culture, 41.2% of this to activities in Switzerland and 58.5% to activities abroad (39.8% in Europe).<sup>148</sup> Of the 5348 applications received in 2019, almost 50% were granted support. The funds granted ranged from about CHF 1,000 (e.g. travel costs) to about CHF 250,000 (e.g. large project with several disciplines). The 2020 budget came to

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<sup>148</sup> The calculation is based on the standards of ZEW Foundation, the *Zertifizierungsstelle für gemeinnützige Organisationen* (a Swiss monitoring agency for charitable fundraising organisations), <https://prohelvetia.ch/de/zahlen-und-fakten/>.

CHF 44.6 million. Pro Helvetia funds the Swiss contribution at the Biennale in Venice and numerous other biennials and festival projects.

### **Funding activities – visual arts (selection)**

General prerequisite: Clear-cut reference to Switzerland, only co-financing

Cultural practitioners:

- Work grants (research grant max. CHF 5,000; production grant max. CHF 25,000; production with presentation max. CHF 25,000)
- Residencies and research trips (Swiss cultural practitioners active in the visual arts can travel to selected countries, and cultural practitioners from specific countries can travel to Switzerland).

Institutions organising an event:

- Funding for the presentation of contemporary Swiss artists in and outside Switzerland (transport and insurance costs, rental costs for equipment, material costs, artist fees, travel costs).
- Funding to support knowledge sharing (grants for artists and art professionals on topics regarding contemporary Swiss art - travel costs without accommodation).
- Transdisciplinary events: Funding for transdisciplinary events (incl. festivals) to promote the collaboration between at least three disciplines.

### **Projects supported at biennials**

#### **2019**

Funding for visual arts and performance biennials in 2019: CHF 74,000 plus Venice Biennale CHF 700,000

Geographic: Europe, Africa, Asia

- Bratislava, Slovakia (Biennale of Illustration) CHF 1,000
- Biennale Bragaglia 2020 (Rhaeto-Romanic Switzerland) CHF 10,000
- Venice Biennale CHF 10,000
- Lagos Biennale and Curatorial Intensive CHF 17,000
- Biennale de Lyon CHF 18,000
- Lubumbashi Biennale CHF 10,000
- Karachi Biennale CHF 2,000
- Biennale d'art vidéo et de performance, Palestine CHF 2,000
- Venice Biennale, global credit CHF 700,000



## 2018

Geographic: Europe, Africa, Asia, North America

- 6th Moscow International Biennale for Young Art, Educational Programme, Performance
- Something Else OFF Biennale Cairo
- Shanghai Biennale
- Lahore Biennale
- Busan Biennale
- Biennale de Québec
- Ateliers de Rennes
- Athens Biennale
- Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement (Geneva, London, Turin, New York)
- Student's Biennale 2018 Neu-Delhi
- Indian Ceramics Triennale Breaking Ground, Jaipur

### **B.10 Stichting DOEN, the Netherlands**

The DOEN Foundation supports projects working towards ecological sustainability, social inclusion and creative innovation. Financed by contributions from the Dutch Charity Lotteries, Stichting DOEN provides project and programme funding as well as institutional funding, through which the infrastructure of an art organisation can be financed.

Amongst other things, funds have been granted to the Association PICHA in the Congo for its mentorship and training programmes for artists. PICHA, in turn, organises the Lubumbashi Biennale.

In 2019, the foundation had funds of €37 million available, €7.2 million were used for funding projects in the creative sector and, among others, €22.6 million for Green Projects.

**Programme: International Culture and Media**

**Type of funding:** Direct funding in the form of grants, loans, guarantees or investments

**Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: Legal persons

Geographic criteria: No funding for organisations from Europe, USA, Australia or Oceania

URL: <https://www.doen.nl/en/wat-we-doen>

**Context**

Within the scope of the International Culture and Media programme, DOEN supports local organisations in North, East and West Africa that promote the cultural sector.

**Projects and organisations that have been supported (selection)**

**2019:**

- DARB 1718 Contemporary Art and Culture Center: Darb is one of very few cultural spaces in Cairo. It organises concerts, exhibitions, workshops and it is one of the exhibition venues of the Something Else Off-Biennale Cairo (€100,000, institutional funding).
- Festival au désert /EFES: The cultural platform Caravane Culturelle pour la Paix is a counter-weight to the continuing crisis in Mali (€450,000, programme funding).
- PICHA: Atelier Picha's mentorship and training programme focuses on capacity building and the professional development of young Congolese artists (€25,000, project funding).
- RUANGRUPA: The art collective develops new perspectives of the city of Jakarta with local researchers, activists and residents (€100,000, institutional funding).

**2018:**

- Manifesta (Palermo): Opening with choir of refugees and local residents (€15,000, project funding).
- Kampala Arts Trust/Kampala Art Biennale (€15,000, project funding).

**2017:**

- Jakarta Biennale (Exhibition without waste, €55,000, project funding)

**Arts Collaboratory**

Arts Collaboratory is a network of 25 independent art organisations in Africa, Asia and Latin America that was founded in 2007 by the Dutch humanist organisation Hivos and

DOEN Foundation. Since 2016, it has been an independent and self-organised network that DOEN supports through funding, its own network and know-how.

**2018 funding (selection)**

- 32° East/Ugandan Arts Trust: The organisation supports the professionalisation of visual artists in Uganda and funds socially engaged artistic practices. Together with other actors located in Kampala, it organises the KLA ART Biennale in Kampala (institutional funding, €100,000).
- Doual'art: Doual'art organises the Art Triennale SUD Salon Urbain de Douala, Camero (institutional funding, €100,000).

**2016:**

- RUANGRUPA: The collective in Jakarta started a new public centre for independent art organisations in 2016 in order to reinforce the exchange of knowledge (institutional funding, €171,000).

**BankGiro Loterij Fonds**

The fund finances initiatives in the creative sector in the Netherlands, including numerous festivals and biennials such as the 2017 Graphic Design Festival Breda (€30,000, project funding) and 2016 Stichting Sonsbeek International, Arnhem (€100,000, project funding), IABR-2016 architecture biennial, Rotterdam (€50,000, project funding), Breda Photo (Photo Biennial, €30,000, project funding) and Internationale Stichting Manifesta, Amsterdam (€13,000, project funding).

## **C. Joint Funding (selection)**

### **C.1 Arts Council England and Art Council Korea: Cultural Exchange Partnership**

**Type of funding:** Project funding, mobility, residencies

**Art form:** Performance and the visual arts

**Budget:** £1.4 million

**Number of projects supported:** 21 projects

**Duration:** 2017/18

**Eligibility criteria:**

Geographic criteria: United Kingdom and Korea

**URL:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/busan-brighton>

#### **Context**

The fund supported projects and collaborations between artists from the United Kingdom and Korea. The total of 21 financed projects included a collaboration between Liverpool Biennale with Busan Biennale, Gwangju Biennale and Mediacity Seoul, whose objective was to create connections and networks between international biennials. The project comprised research trips, programmes for professional continuing education as well as art residencies and commissioned work. The objective was to establish long-term and sustainable partnerships.

#### **Supported projects (selection)**

- Liverpool Biennial (£100,000), research, residencies and exchange, in cooperation with Busan Biennale, Gwanju Biennale, Media City Seoul.
- Ray Lee (£20,000), Chorus, in cooperation with the Seoul Architecture Biennale

### **C.2 Goethe-Institut and the Grohs Family: Henrike Grohs Art Award**

**Type of funding:** Award – The prize is awarded at a biennial or an important art event, mobility

**Art form:** Visual arts

**Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: Young artists or artists' collectives

Geographic criteria: Place of work and residence has to be in Africa

**Destination:** African Continent (2020/21 Dakar, Senegal)

**Amount of award:** €20,000, production of a publication: €10,000/second and third prize €5,000 respectively, costs for traveling to awards ceremony

**URL:** <https://www.goethe.de/prj/hga/en/h20.html>

### **Context**

The Goethe-Institut and the Grohs family initiated the Henrike Grohs Art Award in memory of Henrike Grohs, the former head of the Goethe-Institut in Abidjan. It is awarded every two years, and the awards ceremony always is held at a biennial or another outstanding art event in Africa.

### **C.3 Goethe-Institut and the University of the Arts Kassel: Goethe-Institut Fellowship at the Documenta Institute**

**Type of funding:** Scholarship

**Art form:** Research in the visual arts

**Duration:** Duration 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2023

**Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: Young scientists/art researchers

Geographic criteria: Applications from non-European or European countries that are underrepresented in the art context are particularly welcome.

**Destination:** Kassel, Germany

**Amount of scholarship:** €2,000/month

**URL:** <https://www.goethe.de/de/kul/bku/ser/fel.html>

### **Context**

The Goethe-Institut Fellowship at the documenta Institut was initiated to support research into interdisciplinary and international aspects of the documenta exhibition with reference to art history and contemporary history and to gain new insight into art production and the associated networks that have emerged. It also hopes to diverge from the art historical canon that is generally dominated by Western European/North American perspectives so that it can be expanded by new points of view.

#### **C.4 Mondriaan Fund (the Netherlands), Flanders Arts Institute (Belgium), Danish Art Agency (Denmark) and Pro Helvetia (Switzerland): Orientation trip**

**Type of funding:** mobility, networks, research

**Art form:** visual arts

##### **Context**

Since 2004, the Mondriaan Fund has been organising orientation trips for visual artists and cultural practitioners to Asia, Latin America and Africa. The trips serve to help professionals in the visual arts connect and cooperate with one another. The objective of the orientation trips is to expand international networks and contacts and to stimulate the international dialogue between art professionals. Participating institutions are BAM - Flemish institute for visual, audiovisual and media art (since 2007), Danish Arts Agency and Pro Helvetia (since 2011).

##### **Funded projects (selection)**

- Orientation trip 2019: The destination of the trip was the United Arab Emirates (Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Scharjah) and Pakistan (Karachi and Lahore). It was organised in cooperation with Frame Contemporary Art Finland, the Danish Arts Agency and Pro Helvetia as well as in close collaboration with the Dutch embassies in the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan. Altogether 15 people participated in the trip, including six participants from the Netherlands, who were selected by the Mondriaan Fund.
- Orientation trip 2018: Organised by the Mondriaan Fund, Flanders Arts Institute, Danish Arts Agency, Pro Helvetia, the destination was South Africa (Johannesburg and Cape Town) and Zimbabwe (Harare and Bulawayo).
- Orientation trip 2017: Organised by the Mondriaan Fund, Flanders Arts Institute, Danish Arts Agency, Pro Helvetia, the destination was the USA (Houston, New Orleans and Miami) and Cuba (Havana).
- Orientation Trip 2016: A group of 17 artists and cultural practitioners from the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Switzerland travelled to Iran (Tehran and Isfahan) and Armenia (Yerevan and Gyumri).

### **C.5 Nordisk Kulturfond (Nordic Culture Fund)**

The Nordic Culture Fund was founded in 1966 by the Nordic Countries to promote cultural collaboration between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland without being subject to national interests. At the present time, the fund has a budget of DKK 36 million.<sup>149</sup> The grants are financed through the budget of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Therefore, the fund is part of the official Nordic collaboration.

With its "Globus" programme, the Nordic Culture Fund started a new five-year programme that is designed to give artists and cultural players the opportunity to apply for funding for projects extending beyond the Nordic region. Following a pilot project, applications will be accepted as of 2021.

#### **Funded projects (selection)**

- 2020 34th Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil (with contributions from Norway, Denmark and Greenland; amount of grant DKK 250,000 from a total budget of DKK 2,359,853).
- 2017 Screen City Biennial, Stavanger, Norway (with contributions from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden; amount of grant DKK 200,000 from a total budget of DKK 2,933,430<sup>150</sup>)

### **C.6 Prince Claus Fund und British Council**

#### **Programme: in Motion Digital Grant**

**Type of funding:** Project funding

**Art form:** Art and culture

**Number of projects supported:** 8

**Duration:** 2020

**Eligibility criteria:**

Geographic criteria: Sub-Saharan Africa

**Destination:** Sub-Saharan Africa

**URL:** <https://princeclausfund.org/in-motion-digital-grant>

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<sup>149</sup> <https://www.nordiskkulturfond.org/media/29907/nordic-culture-fund-strategy-2019-2022.pdf>, here p. 5.

<sup>150</sup> <https://www.nordiskkulturfond.org/en/inspirational-projects/screen-city-moving-image-biennale-2017/>.

### **Context**

Numerous trips had to be cancelled in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, the "in Motion Digital Grant" was developed as a collaboration between the "in Motion grant" of the British Council and the "Mobility Grant" of the Prince Claus Fund. The new grant is an adaptation of the previous collaboration and tailored to the needs of post-corona cultural society, in which the digital sphere will have become increasingly important as a space for networking and staying in contact with like-minded organisations and individuals. The hope of the initiative is to help artists and cultural practitioners become involved in digital initiatives or to found one.

### **Funded projects (selection)**

In a closed-call process, eight projects from sub-Saharan Africa were chosen, for example "Art Meets" – a South Africa-based exhibition platform, a discussion forum, an agency for the production of video contents and a mobile app. The objective was to provide visibility and networks for artists as well as educational material for students and the public.

### **Programme: Mobility Fund**

**Type of funding:** Mobility

**Art form:** Art and culture

**Number of projects supported:** 59

**Duration:** 2019–2020

**Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: Young artists and cultural practitioners

Geographic criteria: Africa

URL: <https://princeclausfund.org/mobility-fund>

### **Context**

This initiative strives to enable young artists and cultural practitioners from Africa to participate in cultural festivals, work together with colleagues from abroad, participate in art residencies, etc. By assuming the travel costs for artistic and cultural mobility, the Mobility Fund supports the professional development and network of the grantees.



## D. EU funding programmes

### D.1 Creative Europe

Creative Europe is the European Commission's framework programme for supporting the cultural and creative sectors in Europe. For the 2014–2020 period, a budget of €1.46 billion was available, which was allocated as follows: 51% to the sub-programme Media, 31% to the sub-programme Culture, and 13% to the sub-programme Cross-Sector.

For the period 2021–2027, a new budget of €2.4 billion was passed at the end of December 2020.<sup>151</sup> Creative Europe is divided into three funding areas: Networks, platforms and cooperation.

#### Sub-programme Culture, Action: Cooperation projects

**Type of funding:** Project funding

**Art form:** Culture

**Duration:** 2014–2020; new period: 2021–2027

**Eligibility criteria:**

Who can apply: Legal persons (non-profit and profit oriented)

Geographic criteria: all 27 EU member states and 13 additional countries (for the period 2014–2020: Norway, Iceland, 11 other countries from Eastern Europe, with the exception of Belarus, along with Georgia and Armenia as well as Tunisia).

**Amount of grants:** The funding is based on co-financing: for small-scale cooperation projects up to 60% of the eligible costs, max. €200,000; for large-scale cooperation projects up to 50% of the eligible costs, max. €2 million.

#### Context

The minimum requirements for cooperation projects are as follows: for small-scale cooperation projects, at least 3 partners from 3 eligible countries; for large-scale cooperation projects, at least 6 partners from 6 eligible countries. The projects always are carried out by a consortium of equal partners; one of them is the main applicant, who submits the application on behalf of all parties involved. Partners from third countries can be included in the project; however, they are not official project partners.

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<sup>151</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_2405](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2405) (accessed on 17.01.2021).

### Funded projects (selection)

- **Manifesta 14 Pristina**

Within the scope of the "Western Balkan Cooperation Projects" sub-programme, the project "Co-Producing Space and Shaping Formations of Solidarity in the Western Balkans and Beyond" is funded as part of Manifesta 14. This is a collaboration of 11 project partners from eight countries: the Netherlands (project coordination), Germany, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Serbia, Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina. Amount of funding: €429,884.

- **Perennial Biennial**

This is a partnership of five biennials working together to develop sustainable models of curatorial practice, research and perspectives of global cooperation and new markets.

Project coordinator: Liverpool Biennial (UK); project partners: Riga Biennale (LV), Bergenstrinnalen (NO), Mednarodni Graficini Likovni Center (SI), Kunst-Werke Berlin (DE); Period of time: 2018–2022; amount of funding: €200,000

- **Tbilisi Architecture Biennial – What do we have in Common**

Project coordinator: Tbilisi Architecture Biennial, project partners: Association for Urban Culture Development and Space Actualisation Meleem Skopje (North Macedonia), Charitable Organisation Charitable Foundation Teple Misto (Ukraine), Studio Co Now GmbH (Germany), 2020–2021, amount of funding: €161,208

## D.2 EUNIC Cluster Fund

Launched in 2012, EUNIC Cluster Fund is the network's most important internal financing instrument. It is financed by the voluntary contributions of its members. The fund supports activities within and outside the EU with about €200,000 per year. Since its foundation, 119 cluster fund projects have been financed with a total budget of €970,000.<sup>152</sup>

In 2020, 27 projects were chosen for co-financing within the scope of the EUNIC Cluster Fund with a total budget of €333,700. In response to the current Covid-19 crisis and its impact on culture around the world, the focus in 2020 was on supporting local cultural and creative scenes.

In 2019, 15 out of 33 applications were accepted; six were projects in Europe and nine were outside Europe. The projects received funding of altogether €188,300. Based on the

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<sup>152</sup> <https://www.eunicglobal.eu/about> (accessed on 28.01.2021).

principles for EU action in international cultural relations, the following selection criteria were defined: Relevance for local contexts, alignment with the EU principles for international cultural relations, feasibility, partnerships, effects and visibility.

### **Funded projects (selection)**

#### **2020**

- **EUNIC Prague – Tranzit Residencies. Cultural Deserts**

The Tranzit Residencies bring together European curators and artists in Czechia to promote international exchange and joint development of a concept for the international biennial "Matter of Art" in Prague in 2022. The objective is to redefine the concept of the biennial in a post-Covid-19 situation and to support the production of new works of art that will be presented during the "Matter of Art" in 2022.

- **EUNIC London – Imagining Futures - Independent Festivals in a Post-Covid World**

The project supports independent performing arts festivals in the UK in their endeavour to explore and develop future strategies at a time marked by crisis. It brings together visionary festival directors from Great Britain and Europe to study the urgent challenges facing festivals today. The new network of festival directors wants to develop new European artistic approaches and co-commissions in a post-Covid and post-Brexit era by sharing knowledge and in workshops.

#### **2019**

- **EUNIC Pristina - Support to Manifesta 14**

Pristina has been chosen to host the 2022 edition of Manifesta, the European Biennial for Contemporary Art. Between March and October 2020, EUNIC provided funding of €20,000, including €10,000 from the EUNIC Cluster Fund 2019, to promote the sharing of knowledge and experience between the Manifesta 14 working group (Pristina) and actors responsible for previous Manifesta editions.

Other festival projects:

**EUNIC Stockholm - REX Animation Film Festival**

**EUNIC Palestine - Site Specific Performance Festival in Bethlehem**

## E. Interviewpartner

- **Terreza de Arruda**, curator, Curitiba Bienal, Havana Bienal
- **Sammy Baloji**, artist, co-founder Biennale de Lubumbashi
- **Alban Corbier-Labasse**, coordinateur général Coopération Culturelle Afrique et Caraïbes, Institut Français
- **Marieke van Hal**, Head of Research and Development, Manifesta Foundation
- **Gemma Hollington**, Director Programme, Visual Arts, British Council
- **Gabriele Horn**, director of the Berlin Biennale, vice president of the International Biennial Association
- **Ronald Kolb**, scientific researcher at the Postgraduate Programme in Curating, Zurich University of the Arts
- **Fleur van Muiswinkel**, director of BredaPhoto Festival
- **Yvette Mutumba**, co-founder of the magazine Contemporary And, co-curator of the 10th Berlin Biennale
- **Paula Nascimento**, curator and architect
- **Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung**, artistic director of Rencontres de Bamako 2019 and sonsbeek 2020–24
- **Rafael Niemojewski**, Executive Director, Biennial Foundation
- **Emeka Ogboh**, artist, participant at the 56th Venice Biennale, documenta 14, Biennale Sharjah 14
- **Shwetal A. Patel**, founding member of the Kochi Biennale Foundation
- **Katharina von Ruckteschell-Katte**, Head of the Goethe-Institut London and Northwestern Europe
- **Alya Sebti**, Head of the ifa-Galerie Berlin, co-curator Manifesta 2020 and Dak'Art 2018
- **Nadine Siebert**, Head of Culture and Development, Goethe-Institut Johannesburg
- **Hajnalka Somogyi**, director and co-curator of the OFF-Budapest Biennale
- **Thiago de Paula Souza**, co-curator of the Frestas Triennial, Brazil
- **Alia Swastika**, curator and director of the Jogja Biennale Foundation
- **Jacopo Visconti**, curator of the Bienal de São Paulo 2020/21
- **Diana Wechsler**, artistic director of Bienalsur, Argentina

Special thanks to all the other representatives of cultural institutes and organisations who shared information and opinions.

### **About the author**

**Dr Melanie Vietmeier** is a free-lance art historian and curator. Her research work focuses on the subject of transcultural networks between Africa, Latin America and Europe in Modernism and Contemporary Art. From 2015-2019, she was a member of the research and exhibition project "museum global. Microhistories of an Ex-centric Modernism" initiated by the Kunstsammlung NRW in Düsseldorf. Within the scope of the project, she curated a micro-history of modern art in Brazil (resident in São Paulo from 2015 to 2017). Since January 2020, she has been co-curator of a contemporary art exhibition addressing the issue of restitution of cultural heritage objects from Africa (Nantes 2021).

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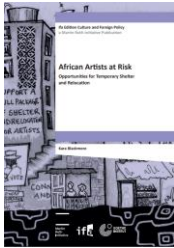
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## Biennial as seismograph

Geopolitical factors, funding strategies and potential international collaboration

Besides providing platforms for dialogues on global art and cultural discourse, biennials are highly conducive to the decentralisation of the art world. It goes without saying that each biennial's context, in other words its specific geopolitical framework conditions, organisational forms and promotional structures as well as local actors, plays a decisive part.

This study, by way of example, will focus primarily on recently founded biennials in the so-called „Global South” and, in this respect, particularly on the African continent with the objective of identifying both trends and specific needs. Therefore, the funding of biennials worldwide as, for example, undertaken by the European Union or cultural institutes of European countries will be studied and contextualised in order to delineate current trends as well as possible promotion activities within the scope of Germany's foreign cultural and educational policy as well as international cooperation efforts.