

JUST IMAGINE. *IMAGINED COMMUNITIES* SETS THE THEME FOR THE 21ST CONTEMPORARY ART BIENNIAL SESC_VIDEOBRASIL

Scheduled to open on October 9, the event brings together artists from 28 countries and will occupy Sesc 24 de Maio for the first time

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The presence of nationalism as a means to understanding the disputes that mark our time. That is the background of the **21st Contemporary Art Biennial Sesc_Videobrasil I Imagined Communities**, which will run from **October 9, 2019** through **February 2, 2020**, at **Sesc 24 de Maio**, in São Paulo, comprising **over 60 works of art and two collections, 55 artists from 28 countries**, among video, painting, photography and installation.

The artistic director **Solange Farkas**, the trio of curators **Gabriel Bogossian, Luisa Duarte** and **Miguel A. López** and the members of the selection jury **Alejandra Hernández Muñoz, Juliana Gontijo** and **Raphael Fonseca** analyzed together **2,280 submissions** from **105 nationalities** to select works from Brazil, Latin America, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Oceania. For the first time, the guiding theme was announced in the actual call.

1. THE BIENNIAL

The **21st Contemporary Art Biennial Sesc_Videobrasil I Imagined Communities** borrows the title from Benedict Anderson's classic study to reflect on forms of social and community organization existing beyond, on the fringes or in the breaches of nation states: religious or mystical communities, refugee groups uprooted from their original land, clandestine, fictional and utopian communities or those constituted in the underground worlds of bodily and sexual experiences.

That is the horizon featured in the works by artists from **indigenous groups or original peoples** from Brazil, the United States, Canada, Mexico, Peru and New

Zealand that deal with the issues present in the making and representation of those cultures in art and the world (works by Alberto Guarani, Jim Denomie, Alto Amazonas Audiovisual, Claudia Martínez Garay and others), in works that address the **queer/LGBT universe** (Aykan Safoğlu, Megan-Leigh Heilig, Nilbar Güreş, #Vote LGBT, Paulo Mendel & Vitor Grunvald), **racial issues** (Emo de Medeiros, Nelson Makengo, Thierry Oussou, Jonathas de Andrade), **border conflicts**. To these and so many works are added projects by **five guest artists** - Andrea Tonacci, Hrair Sarkissian, Teresa Margolles, Rosana Paulino and Thierry Oussou.

2. ONE CURATORSHIP. THREE PLATFORMS

The Biennial is divided into three platforms: exhibition, public programs and publications.

Exhibition

Works by 50 selected and five guest artists are distributed on the ground, third, fifth and sixth floors. Throughout the display of 60 works and two collections, visitors will come across an unprecedented video installation by Rosana Paulino, flags made by Mônica Nador and the collective JAMAC, a collection of African jewelry acquired by MAE-USP in the 1970s and never shown in public, a memorial totem developed by the New Zealand artist Brett Graham, an Islamic mosaic installation made of sand that will be swept away at the opening of the exhibition by the Saudi artist Dana Awartani, visitors will be able to take part of and activate the work RESISTA by the collective Chameckilerner, actions with the audience planned by the collective #VOTELGBT, works by original and indigenous peoples, such as that by Alberto Guarani, as well as videos, photographs, paintings and installations in different formats capable of bringing visitors into intimate and immersive contact with the theme of the Biennial.

Public Programs

A program of performances, debates, film screenings and public actions runs through the three months of the exhibition (check days and times at bienalsescvideobrasil.org.br). One of the highlights of this schedule is the seminar "Imagined Communities," which gathers over six days (**October 15, 16 and 17; November 12, 13 and 14**) national and international guests to debate themes directly related to the exhibition – **Lucy Lippard, Vladimir Safatle, Suely Rolnik, Guilherme**

Wisnik, Maria Rita Khel, Amara Moira, Ampam Karakras, Coletivo Guarani, among others.

Publications

Two bilingual printed publications will be launched during the Biennial. The catalog, **Livro de Artista**, follows the format of an artist's book, with essays by three guest authors – Gladys Tzul Tzul, Bonaventure Ndikung and Erica Moiah. An offshoot of the international seminar "Imagined Communities," **Livro de Leituras** [Book of Readings] comprises a selection of excerpts from the round table debates. Also noteworthy is the production of an audio guide and content projects developed especially for the website and digital environment.

3. NEW NAME, NEW VENUE

Spanning over 35 years of existence, the hitherto called *Contemporary Art Festival Sesc_Videobrasil* takes on the name of **Biennial**, joining the international Biennial calendar and strengthening its position in the global visual arts scene. For Videobrasil director Solange Farkas, rather than a mark of periodicity, "the term Biennial reflects the perception that our investigative practice brings us closer to the role played by international biennials such as those of Sharjah, Cuenca, Havana and Dakar, institutions that, like Videobrasil, strive to offer a more diverse panorama of global production and establish a parallel circuit to that revolving around Europe and the United States."

With its three decades of history largely linked to Sesc Pompeia, the Biennial occupies this year Sesc 24 de Maio. Benefitting from the polyphony of voices, accents and senses present in the downtown region and Paulo Mendes da Rocha's architectural design for the old Mesbla building, the Biennial relies on the harmony created between the diversity and pluralism of the venue and the proposals of its curators.

For the regional director of Sesc São Paulo, Danilo Santos de Miranda, "Sesc is charged with reflecting and mediating multiple perspectives through cultural action devoted to casting off shackles inherited from the colonial past and imposed by a peripheral geopolitical condition. The curatorial selection of the 21st Contemporary Art Biennial Sesc_Videobrasil brings together artistic experiences engaged in conceiving the commons and its respective ties from non-hegemonic elements and commitments." Miranda adds that, "For the first time the Biennial occupies Sesc 24

de Maio, which not only boasts emblematic architecture but is situated in the downtown area of São Paulo and hence represents the plurality of the surrounding community, including a large number of refugees.”

4. AWARDS

Granted by an international jury composed of five women (**Alexia Tala, Gabi Ngcobo, Marta Mestre, Reem Fada and Rosângela Rennó**), seven awards are offered to the participating artists. Three eight-week residency awards are offered by partners of the Videobrasil network: **Instituto Sacatar** (Itaparica Island, Bahia coast); **MMCA Residency Changdong** (National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul) and **Sharjah Art Foundation Residency Program** (Sharjah, United Arab Emirates) In this edition, the **Sesc Contemporary Art Award** goes to two works by Brazilian artists, which will be included in the Sesc Collection of Brazilian Art. Offered by Electrica Cinema & Video, the **State of the Art Award** will be granted to the best participating artist or group. Lastly, the **Ostrovsky Family Fund (O.F.F.)** offers an award for the most innovative moving image artwork. The winners will be announced at the awards ceremony on **October 12** and receive a trophy designed by the artist Alexandre da Cunha.

5. LIST OF PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

ADRIÁN BALSECA, Ecuador, **AHMAD GHOSSEIN**, Lebanon, **ALBERTO GUARANI**, Brazil, **ALTO AMAZONAS AUDIOVISUAL**, Brazil, **ANA CARVALHO**, **ARIEL KUARAY ORTEGA**, **FERNANDO ANCIL**, **PATRÍCIA PARA YXAPY**, Brazil, **ANDREA TONACCI**, Italy / Brazil, **ANDRÉ GRIFFO**, Brazil, **AYKAN SAFOĞLU**, Turkey / Germany, **BRETT GRAHAM**, New Zealand, **CHAMECKILERNER**, Brazil / United States, **CLARA IANNI**, Brazil, **CLAUDIA MARTÍNEZ GARAY**, Peru / the Netherlands, **DANA AWARTANI**, Saudi Arabia, **ELLIE KYUNGRAN HEO**, South Korea / United Kingdom, **EMO DE MEDEIROS**, France / Benin, **ERIN COATES**, Australia, **EZRA WUBE**, Ethiopia / United States, **FEDERICO LAMAS**, Argentina, **GABRIELA GOLDER**, Argentina, **GEORGE DRIVAS**, Greece, **GEORGES SENG**, Democratic Republic of the Congo, **HIWA K**, Iraq / Germany, **HRAIR SARKISSIAN**, Syria / United Kingdom, **JIM DENOMIE**, United States, **JONATHAS DE ANDRADE**, Brazil, **JULIA MENSCH**, Argentina, **KÖKEN ERGUN**, Turkey, **LUIZ DE ABREU**, Brazil, **MARILÁ DARDOT**, Brazil, **MARTON ROBINSON**, Costa Rica, **MAYA SHURBAJI**, Syria, **MEGAN-LEIGH HEILIG**, South Africa / Belgium, **MOHAU MODISAKENG**, South Africa, **MÔNICA NADOR**, Brazil, **MOVIMENTO DE LUTA NOS**

BAIRROS, VILAS E FAVELAS, Brazil, **NATALIA SKOBEEVA**, Russia / United Kingdom, **NELSON MAKENGO**, Democratic Republic of the Congo, **NIDHAL CHAMEKH**, Tunisia / France, **NILBAR GÜREŞ**, Turkey / United States, **NO MARTINS**, Brazil, **NOE MARTÍNEZ**, Mexico, **OMAR MISMAR**, Lebanon, **PAUL ROSERO CONTRERAS**, Ecuador, **PAULO MENDEL & VITOR GRUNVALD**, Brazil, **RONEY FREITAS & ISABEL MAXACALI**, Brazil, **ROSANA PAULINO**, Brazil, **SADIK AFRAJI**, Iraq / the Netherlands, **TANG KWOK-HIN**, China, **TERESA MARGOLLES**, Mexico, **THANH HOANG**, Vietnam, **THIERRY OUSSOU**, Benin / The Netherlands, **TIÉCOURA N'DAOU**, Mali, **TOMAZ KLOTZEL**, Brazil **#VOTELGBT**, Brazil, **XIMENA GARRIDO-LECCA**, Peru

6. CURATORIAL TEAM

Artistic Director: Solange Farkas (Feira de Santana-BA, 1955)

The founder and director of Associação Cultural Videobrasil, Farkas has taken up the role of artistic director of the festival and biennial Sesc_Videobrasil since its first edition in 1983, investing in the growth of its collection and in the creation of a wide network of institutional partners on all five continents. She participated as a guest curator of FUSO (Portugal), Dak'Art – African Contemporary Art Biennale (Senegal), the 6th Jakarta International Video Festival (Indonesia), the 10th Sharja Biennial (United Arab Emirates), the 16th Cerveira International Art Biennial (Portugal) and the 5th Video Zone - International Video Art Biennial (Israel). In recent years, she has been a member of the Prize Jury of the 14th Sharjah Biennial (2019), the Prince Claus Fund Award Prize Committee (2017–2018), the jury of the 10th Rencontres de Bamako - African Photography Biennial (Mali, 2015), the curators' selection committee for the 11th Berlin Biennale (2020) and helped organize the "Anthropocene Project" exhibition at the Imin Museum of Art (Korea, 2019).

Guest Curators

Gabriel Bogossian (Rio de Janeiro, 1983) is deputy curator of Associação Cultural Videobrasil since 2016 and independent editor and translator. Since 2015 he has researched the representation of indigenous peoples in Brazil, integrating the production of images of contemporary art, journalism, and social movements. Bogossian curated the exhibitions *Nada levarei quando morrer, aqueles que me devem cobrarei no inferno* (Galpão VB, São Paulo, 2017), *O museu inexistente n.1* (Funarte, São Paulo, 2017), project developed with the artist Victor

Leguy, *Tomorrow Everything will be Alright* (Galpão VB, São Paulo, 2016), solo show by Akram Zaatari, *Cruzeiro do Sul* (Paço das Artes, São Paulo, 2015), and *Transperformance 3: Corpo estranho* (Oi Futuro, Rio de Janeiro, 2014), with Luisa Duarte. He contributes to *Traço*, *Artelogie* and *BRAVO!* magazines, and translated into Portuguese *Americanism and Fordism*, by Antonio Gramsci (Editora Hedra, 2008), and the novel *Quiet Chaos*, by Sandro Veronese (Editora Rocco, 2007), among others.

Luisa Duarte (Rio de Janeiro, 1979) is an art critic, independent curator, and professor. She holds a master's degree in philosophy from the Pontifical Catholic University (PUC-SP) and a PhD in art theory from the Rio de Janeiro State University. Duarte was art critic at *O Globo* newspaper between 2009 and 2017 and a member of the Advisory Council of MAM-SP (2009–2012). She was a member of the curatorial team of the Rumos Artes Visuais/Itaú Cultural program (2005–2006) and coordinated the cycle of conferences *A Bienal de São Paulo e o meio artístico brasileiro – Memória e projeção* (28th Bienal de São Paulo, 2008). She coedited with Adriano Pedrosa the book *ABC – Arte brasileira contemporânea* (Cosac & Naify, 2014) and was curator of the exhibition *Quarta-feira de cinzas* (Parque Lage School of Visual Arts, 2015), co-organizer with Pedro Duarte of the Walter Benjamin Library International Conference (MAR – Museu de Arte do Rio de Janeiro, 2016), and curator of the exhibition *Tunga – O rigor da distração* (MAR, 2018).

Miguel A. López (Lima, Peru, 1983) is a writer, researcher, codirector and chief curator of TEOR/ética in San José, Costa Rica, and cofounder of Bisagra, an independent venue in Lima, active since 2014. In the past decades, López has researched cooperative dynamics and feminist reinterpretations of art and culture. He has published articles in magazines such as *Afterall*, *ramona*, *E-flux Journal*, and *Art in America*, among others. He was curator of exhibitions such as *Energías sociales/fuerzas vitales*, *Natalia Iguiñiz: arte, activismo, feminismo 1993–2018* (ICPNA, Lima, 2018), *The Words of Others: León Ferrari and Rhetoric in Times of War* (REDCAT, Los Angeles, and Perez Art Museum, Miami, 2017–2018), and of the section *Deus é bicha* of the 31st Bienal de São Paulo (2014). He edited the book *Robar la historia. Contrarrelatos y prácticas artísticas de oposición* (Metales Pesados, 2017). In 2016, he received the Independent Vision Curatorial Award from Independent Curators International (ICI, New York).

ABOUT VIDEOBRASIL

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SESC VIDEOBRASIL

IMAGINED
COMMUNITIES

10.9.2019 – 2.2.2020
SESC 24 DE MAIO,
SÃO PAULO

Videobrasil is an art platform and cultural association that researches and disseminates art produced in regions of the world's geopolitical South – Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Created and directed by Solange Farkas, it is part of a network of initiatives that includes exhibitions, displays, publications, documentaries, meetings and artistic residencies. With over a thousand video works and four thousand items, its collection has set a benchmark in the continent for video conservation, video installations and documentation of performances.

ABOUT SESC

Sesc – Serviço Social do Comércio [Social Service of Commerce] is a non-profit private institution created in 1946 by businessmen in the retail and services sectors, present all over Brazil. In the state of São Paulo, Sesc has 40 units, mostly facilities that offer activities related to culture, education, sports, leisure and health. Its initiatives are guided by educational purposes and the pursuit of social welfare based on a broad understanding of culture.

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Opening: Wednesday, October 9, at 7 p.m.

October 9, 2019 through February 2, 2020

Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m.- 9 p.m.; Sundays and holidays, 9 a.m.- 6 p.m.

Sesc 24 de Maio, Sao Paulo, Brazil

<http://www.bienalsescvideobrasil.org.br>

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SESC 24 DE MAIO

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Portal: sescsp.org.br/24demaio

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