

September 3, 2010

DIALOGUE WITH NORTHERN AFRICA - MANIFESTA 8

Manifesta 8, the European Biennial of Contemporary Art



Manifesta 8, the European Biennial of Contemporary Art, will take place in the Region of Murcia (Spain) in dialogue with northern Africa, from October 9, 2010, until January 9, 2011.

Preview days:	October 7 and 8
Official opening day:	October 9
Symposium:	October 10

In the framework of Manifesta 8, a trio of independent projects is being initiated by the three curatorial collectives responsible for the artistic content of Manifesta 8, in order to further investigate the potential for establishing a closer dialogue with northern Africa. Alexandria Contemporary Arts Forum (Egypt) has already initiated a series of discussions aiming to research the potential for the creation of a new pan-African roaming biennial, tranzit.org (Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia) will develop an in-depth publication to examine the various links, narratives and discrepancies between Post-colonial and Post-communist communities, while Chamber of Public Secrets (Scandinavian Countries, Italy, Lebanon and U.K.) will set up a collaboration with the popular Arab language talk-show *Heewar Maftouh* (Open Dialogue), broadcast on the Al Jazeera network.

Bringing you the answers before we know the question: four positions regarding the idea of a pan-African roaming biennial

Symposium, October 10, 2010, Murcia (Spain)

Confirmed speakers : N'gone Fall, Senam Okudzeto, Thembinkosi Goniwe and Christine Eyene.

The *Incubator for a Pan-African Roaming Biennial* is a year-long task-force consisting of Gabi Ngcobo from the Center for Historical Reenactments (CHR) in Johannesburg, Mia Jankowicz from the Contemporary Image Collective (CIC) in Cairo, Jimmy Ogonga from the Center for Contemporary Art of East Africa (CCAEEA) in Nairobi and Khadija El Bennaoui from Art Moves Africa (AMA). The Incubator has been set-up in response to a proposal by Bassam El Baroni and Jeremy Beaudry of Alexandria Contemporary Arts Forum (ACAF), as an extension to the political issues raised by OVERSCORE, their curatorial contribution to Manifesta 8, and the intellectual territory it covers.

The project aims to facilitate the articulation of critical positions regarding the notion of a pan-African, roaming art biennial. The Incubator will avoid assumptions or simple assessments of what a biennial looks like, what is its context, what effect it has, and whether it can even be done. The Incubator will identify and bring together perspectives from curators, artists, cultural producers and active sponsors, whose current activities reveal the desire to find room for autonomy and progressive experimentation within their respective contexts. Articulating this research should bring together a set of historically and politically informed viewpoints, while paying attention to infrastructure and pragmatic issues. These will happen through several means: the symposium taking place during the opening of Manifesta 8; a website; a workshop which will take place in an African city in April 2011; the appointment of key voices as planners; the production of a publication in September 2011. The Incubator and its platforms

should register these positions as an (uneven) landscape upon which others may imagine a new biennial, a roaming biennial, an alternative structure or a model responding to a different set of priorities entirely.

More information about the Incubator will soon be found on: www.panafricannial.org

Post-colonial / Post-communist Reader

Given the motto of Manifesta 8 in its dialogue with northern Africa, tranzit.org immediately recalled the Eastern European experience of the transformation of societies after the decline of socialism and the different projections which the idea of communism had created for so many movements of liberation and self-determination. This became the starting point for their contribution to Manifesta 8 – a point that was not a dialogue, but a conflict of transfers of imaginations. tranzit's multi-venue exhibition will focus on the transfer between theory – as an imaginative and symbolic operation – and practice, in this case the making of an exhibition. For their project, tranzit.org decided to establish a critical counter-check and revision of the so-called post-colonial, the de-colonised and the post-communist conditions of transformation. This will be the subject of a Reader published by the Manifesta Foundation in collaboration with tranzit.org and Erste Stiftung after the closure of Manifesta 8. The aim of the book is to facilitate the transfer of critique, research and thinking between specific notions and concepts of post-colonial thought, and to provide post-communist and transformational inquiries. One of the major challenges of the publication is to establish an exchange of some of those imaginary utopias, disappeared since the end of the Cold War.

¿The Rest is History?

Flashback on contemporary history

Chamber of Public Secrets' choice to work intensely with the media, as both a constructive and divisive agent, addresses the concept that reality is not a fact to be understood, but rather an effect to be produced. In keeping with this engagement, CPS is collaborating with Ghassan Ben Jeddou, a prominent journalist and host of the talk show *Hiwar Maftouh (Open Dialogue)*, regularly broadcast on the Arabic Al Jazeera network.

Over the past 10 years, through its perceptive programming, this international news network has taken an intensive role in recording and re-writing Arab history. Accordingly, during Manifesta 8, Ben Jeddou will produce two broadcasts focusing on some of those narratives shared between Spain, northern Africa and the Arab world. These will address the complex nature of this transnational dialogue which, despite giving birth to a project of great potential for multiple perspectives, also reveals itself as negotiating history in parallel terms of honour and denial.

For more information:

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