

present and future, through a focus on daily routines and habits, in a time that is of the present, sometimes intimate and domestic, and that is related to our environment. When time is activated in this way, what emerges is a space-time as “here and now” that addresses socio-political issues in the present and introduces new necessary thought patterns through manifold art practices.

LR: *Your strong background in drawing (you’ve held positions as guest curator in the Department of Drawings at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and as chief curator of The Drawing Center in New York) has been talked about in relation to this biennial, as well as its potential resonance within Moscow, where recent art history is weighted towards graphics and illustration. Can you speak to that?*

CdZ: I don’t think of exhibitions in separate mediums, but as a whole. This does not diminish my interest in drawing, which will definitely be present.

LR: *Tell me about the contemporary art scene in Moscow. Are you intending to include many Russian artists?*

CdZ: As I have always done, I will work with artists from around the globe, with a focus on artists from and around Russia — both older and younger generations. I find the art scene in Russia very interesting and vibrant. There is a wonderful younger generation who are investigating art and society in very thoughtful and innovative ways. I always work in an empathic way within the context of a specific place and time.

Abu Dhabi

BIRTH OF A MUSEUM

On April 22, 2013, the much-anticipated Louvre Abu Dhabi exhibition “Birth of a Museum” opened in the galleries of Manarat Al Saadiyat on Saadiyat Island — Abu Dhabi’s ambitious cultural district expected to be completed by 2020. Following a number of delays and setbacks with the Louvre Abu Dhabi’s construction, the exhibition gives viewers a tangible hint of what to expect when the



Birth of a Museum, Vernissage

museum officially opens in 2015. Divided into 10 thematic sections, on display are 130 of the 300 artworks already acquired. In response to questions that have circulated around the new museum — Is it a Western Museum? Is it merely an annex of the Paris institution? — “Birth of a Museum” reveals that the thematic narrative at its core is a comparative, cross-cultural approach to art history. The first gallery, for example, sees various figurations of the female body: a late third millennium BCE Bactrian princess stands alongside a Cypriot idol-statue and Yves Klein’s *Anthropometry* (1960). And while there are unresolved tensions — for example between the museographical elements of a didactic historical narrative and the pure aesthetics of many of these works — the museum remains committed to what Laurence des Cars, curatorial director of Agence France-Muséums, calls “a global reading of the history of the world” — one that by necessity will evolve.

Under the 2007 intergovernmental agreement to create and define the first universal museum in the Arab world, the Louvre Abu Dhabi will display its own collection as well as rotating loans from the French National museums.

Still, is the concept of a universal museum — one that aims to cover a continuum of ancient to contemporary art from all cultures and civilizations — outdated? The Director General of Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture, HE Mubarak Al Muhairi, told Flash Art: “For

too long museums have been Western-centric. Today we are in a different time as we search for interconnectedness. Perhaps you could ask this question in London or Paris where there are hundreds of museums, but not here. It is an important part of our economic and social plan.”

With a Louvre museum designed by Jean Nouvel, a Guggenheim by Frank Gehry and the Zayed National Museum by Norman Foster all under construction on the island, another point of contention has been the concept of buying culture from the West. In a moment of humility, HE Mubarak Al Muhairi admits that “rather than going out on our own, and perhaps failing, these museums bring the know-how and expertise that does not exist in the UAE.” Considering that in 1961 Abu Dhabi had only one school, he makes a valid point. HE Zaki Nusseibeh, Adviser to the Ministry of Presidential Affairs, adds that culture is a living thing that grows and enriches a city over many generations.

One could almost overlook the significance of the individual masterpieces the Abu Dhabi government has been quietly collecting since 2009. Many have never been exhibited before, such as Picasso’s *Portrait of a Lady* (1928). The institution’s preference to reveal the collection in curated themed shows with extensive public programming — rather than simply showcasing individual purchases — speaks well of its educational and cultural mission.

*Venice***IL LEONE
D'ORO**

The Venice Biennale's jury presented its highest award, the Golden Lion, to Berlin-based British artist Tino Sehgal for his untitled performance piece in Massimiliano Gioni's 55th Venice Biennale, "The Encyclopedic Palace" (June 1 – November 24 2013), and to Angola for the best national pavilion.

The jury, comprised of Jessica Morgan, Sofia Hernández Chong Cuy, Francesco Manacorda, Bisi Silva and Ali Subotnick, praised Sehgal for his innovation and opening up of the artistic field. In the Biennale's central pavilion, Sehgal presented a performance in which two people hum and beat-box while engaging in corresponding movements on the floor. The artist had a strong 2012 with his acclaimed performance at dOCUMENTA13 and "These Associations" in the Tate's Turbine Hall. He is also currently a nominee for the British Turner Prize.

Angola, a first timer at the Biennale, was awarded the prize for the best national pavilion, which included photographer Edson Chagas's "Luanda, Encyclopedic City" and a group show titled "Angola in Motion."

The Silver Lion, which goes to a promising young artist in the main exhibition, was awarded to New York-based Parisian artist Camille Henrot for her work in video.

Maria Lassnig and Marisa Merz received Golden Lion Awards for Lifetime Achievement, an announcement that came prior to the Biennale's opening. Marisa Merz, born in 1926 in Turin, Italy, is a central figure in postwar Italian art and the avant-garde movement Arte Povera. With a long career that began in the 1960s, the theme of interiority runs throughout her work. Originally working in sculpture and using industrial materials to create organic forms, she has generated a very personal language of painting, drawing and multimedia installation. In 2001 Merz was awarded the Special Prize of the Jury at the 49th Venice Biennale, and she has previously participated in the 1998 edition as well as in exhibitions at the Tate Modern in London, Documenta in Kassel and at the Guggenheim in New York.

Maria Lassnig, born in Kappel, Austria, in 1919, has always been focused on self-portraiture. Her early works are highly expressionistic and rooted in early 20th-century figurative traditions as well as the treatment of the body used by the Viennese Actionists. In recent years she has become known for her self-coined "drastic paintings." In 1980, Lassnig exhibited in the Austrian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale; she has also participated in two editions of Documenta, the 8th Gwangju Biennale and in many important group and solo exhibitions.

*Auckland***IF YOU WERE TO
LIVE HERE: THE
5TH AUCKLAND
TRIENNIAL**

by NATALIE KING

Thoughtfully choreographed, Hou Hanru's 5th Auckland Triennial mobilized eight venues under the rubric "If you were to live here..." Habitation, dwelling and place were enacted by over thirty artists whose work occupied interstitial spaces in the Auckland Art Gallery as well as the industrial waterfront district. Perhaps the most prescient intervention was by Paris-based collective Claire Fontaine, whose neon signs were exquisitely suspended in a room of 19th-century paintings. Like a prophetic epitaph, "foreigners everywhere" illuminated a conventional gallery in five different languages — except English. This insertion within the permanent collection set the tone for hidden narratives of migration, belonging and alienation.

Having curated at least 22 biennales, Hou imbued this smaller offering with notions of locality and place. Hou engaged the Pacific Rim with the inclusion of New Zealand and Australian artists while situating Auckland as "a proximity, an intimacy and, eventually, a home for us all." Extended to urban communities, Keg de Souza exhibited an inflatable canopy at Fresh Gallery Otara in a bustling Pacific market alongside a politically graphic mural by Black Panther member Emory Douglas with Rigo 23 and Wayne Youle. Ho Tzu Nyen's projection, reminiscent of a grand narrative painting, was positioned near religious depictions while his immersive, rock-induced surround sound with deranged characters shifted the Triennial from the political to the poetic.

Somber and melancholic, Luke Willis Thompson's memorial garage roller doors alluded to a local crime. Australian duo Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro undertook a residency resulting in a dense configuration of locally procured domestic accoutrements, and New York-based Amie Siegel exhibited an alluringly anxious film of a lone female figure psychologically entrapped in Ian Athfield's

