

INTERNATIONAL AMSTERDAM BIENNIAL: RIGHT TO THE CITY (Working titles)

An Urban Research Exhibition on What the Cities can House Today

Aim: presenting a comprehensive international biennial/triennial urban art exhibition, a new way of realizing art in public domain, which will blend with the city, using not only the spaces designated for art but also encompassing the streets and public spaces and interpreting urban, social and cultural structures.

1)- “To biennial or not to biennial”¹:

Why is this urban art biennial vital for Amsterdam ?

- A unique experience of Amsterdam through art
- Places Amsterdam into the hearth of the global contemporary art map
- Enlivens the art and cultural scene of Amsterdam (and the Netherlands)
- Stimulates better exhibitions and raises the artistic criteria to the international level (fosters professionalism of the market / the galleries)
- An international platform for dialogue and exchange for the art & cultural world
- Attracts the international art community and cultural tourism
- Enlivens economy (by creating a micro economic millieu)
- City branding through art
- Creates an archive of memory of the city (thru different perspectives, especially in these transitional times): Brings out the post war history on policy and culture of urbanisation in Amsterdam
- Direct interaction of the residents of Amsterdam with art
- Increases the participation and dialogue between the diverse publics and the art community
- Incubates critical thinking and active citizenship

Why it is important for SKOR:

¹ In the Introduction of “The Biennial Reader” prepared by Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal and Solveig Ovstebo for the Bergen Biennial Conference that investigated the grounds and necessity to initiate a biennial exhibition in Bergen, “To biennial or not to biennial”, this phrase was the opening remark of the editors. Hatje Cantz and Bergen Kunsthall, 2009.

- Initiating a significant international art event for Amsterdam
- Bring together an excellent group of national and international artist, designer and architects
- Realize significant and critical examples of art in public domain
- expanding its interaction with diverse publics and reaching larger audiences
- researching on the current state of urban transformation, specifically, of Amsterdam
- researching and incubating possibilities of sociality for the citizens of Amsterdam
- An opportunity to display its artistic language and grammar
- Re-positions itself nationally and internationally

2)- Structure, organization and calendar:

- **Structure:** An **urban art exhibition** with the participation of 35 international artists, architects and designers will be supported by **3 workshops by 3 universities**. There will be **archives and info centers**, where the outcome and presentations of the workshops will be exhibited. These centers will also provide information on the location as well as the exhibition. The exhibition will be articulated and discussed through **artist talks, lectures and a public debate**. There will be a **guide** accompanying the exhibition and an **end publication** documenting the research (workshops and public programme) and exhibition.
- **Organization:** organized by **SKOR and the city of Amsterdam** in collaboration with **partner institutions** (De verdieping, W139, Partizan Public, etc), **international curator(s)** like Nato Thompson (Creative Times NY), and group of internationally acclaimed advisors like Nicolaus Bourrioud (Altermodern / Tate Modern, Nuit Blanche/Paris), Kaspar König (Münster Skulptuur Projekt), Andrea Schlieker (Millennium Dome, London, Folkstone Triennial) or Jan Hoet (Brussels) **and universities** (Goldsmiths/London, Gerrit Rietveld/Amsterdam VU/Amsterdam, Istanbul Technical University, etc)
- **Funding:** **Financed by SKOR and the City of Amsterdam with public funds** (AFK, Mondriaan, Stimulerende Fonds voor Architectuur, etc), and **international funding institutions** (cultural institutions like Goethe, British Council, FRAME, etc or private funding institutions like Nestle Foundation or Andy Warhol funds, etc) and **private sponsorship** (ABN Amro, Rabo Bank, Philips, Automobil companies, cigarette companies, etc) and **private funding bodies** (VSB, SNS Reaal, Stg Doen, Triodos etc.)

- **Calendar: Realized in May 2013**, starting with the launching event in **May 2012 (press conference)** and there will be two more public moments in **September 2012 (very first project)** and in **January/February 2013 (second project and press conference)**

3)- Promenade and Locations:

Each edition of the biennial exhibition will focus on the specific locations in Amsterdam.

The 1st International Amsterdam Biennial: Right to the City, which will be realized specifically in the Wibaut Straat area, aims at creating an open platform for research and to record the transformation of different neighborhoods in this area through the site-specific and context responsive interventions of artists, architects and designers reflecting upon the urban discrepancies, accidents and wonders that create or obstruct sociality in this district.

Why Wibaut ?: This area is a micro cosmos bringing out the recent history, politics, and socio-cultural narrative of urban development in Amsterdam, and yet, it is the major site for the current renovation of Amsterdam that updates itself with the contemporary global changes and transformations.

- Wibaut Straat Area: Amstel station, Transvaal (immigrant neighborhood), University of Amsterdam, HA and Weesperplein, Waterloo plein.
- Other locations that can be articulated with one project to the exhibition are Nieuwmarkt, Centraalstation and Tolhuis Tuin Area on the North axis and Over Amstel on the south axis.

The exhibition with an interdisciplinary approach will include site-specific temporary urban projects, interventions, installations and objects on building façades and entrances, parking lots, streets, the metro and other urban public spaces and vacant buildings or structures. The exhibition proposes a trajectory from Over Amstel (<http://www.overamstel.nl/>) Amstel Station to Transvaal, the University of Amsterdam and Weesperplein with a continuation to the Nieuwmarkt, Centraalstation and up to the North Tolhuis Tuin area.

4)- Communication and PR: Social Engagement, International Dialogue and Networking

National and International communication and PR activities: will start in 2012 May and continue through out 2012 and 2013.

The ultimate aim of the contemporary art biennials is to create a platform for social engagement with and among the inhabitants of the city (Amsterdam in this case) and international dialogue and networking, as well as, is to take its place in the global art map. For that reason, to communicate the event locally and internationally carries an utmost importance and the process of communication

should be continuous and prevail all year long starting one year prior to the opening date of the biennial.

Locally, besides the press conferences, media presentations and press releases, lectures, panel discussions, workshops, artist talks and other forms of social engagements with the participation of distinguished international curators, critics and artists can be held during the year long starting one year prior to the opening and can be concentrated around the opening events.

Through these activities focusing on and researching the current positions of art in public domain, emerging tendencies and creative strategies as well as its historical background, it is intended to create an awareness and a public platform on the politics of space and specifically the function and reason d'être of art in public domain today. The prospective curators can give a series of lectures in the art institutions and universities elaborating their visions and accomplishments in the field of art in public domain besides the informative lectures on the 1st International Amsterdam Biennial.

Internationally, dialogue and communication should also start one year prior to the opening (even earlier) through the other international biennials, triennials and art fairs in the form of informal meetings and gatherings where the biennial can be promoted socially and publicity materials can be distributed. The Berlin Biennial, San Paolo Biennial, Moscow Biennial, Whitney Biennial, Liverpool Biennial, Manifesta, Venice Architecture Biennial, Rotterdam Architecture Biennial and others will be opening in 2012. Publicity materials like postcards and handouts can be prepared and distributed at these events. If there is an opportunity, an informal cocktail party for promoting the 1st International Amsterdam Biennial can be organized for the international press and art world in the pavilion of the Netherlands in Venice Architecture Biennial in 2012. In accordance with the biennial and triennial as well as important art fair calendar of the 2012, different strategies for the specific events can be planned. An international PR and communication company like Brunswick should be considered.

Our targeted group includes not only the art-audience and professionals of Amsterdam, the inhabitants of the city, who use this route regularly, but also all the inhabitants of the country, who will be invited through PR activities and advertisement efforts.

International press and art professionals from all around the globe and the cultural tourism will be targeted.

Publications:

Two books can be planned; the first one can be an informative guidebook ready for the opening and the second book can be a documentation of the exhibition and the social engagement and educational activities together with iconic texts and articles on the art in public domain. It can be published after the exhibition ends and this

can provide a second chance for the promotion of the biennial locally and internationally even after the completion of the whole event.