

Dear Mr. Hans Haacke,

I am the curator of the 13th Istanbul Biennial. We haven't had the chance to meet yet, but, as you may remember, we had contacted you before to invite to participate the 5th Scape Biennial of Public Domain, Christchurch NZ in 2008. It wasn't possible for you at that time. I do hope that we can collaborate this time for Istanbul.

The notion of the public domain as a political forum will be the focal point of the 13th Istanbul Biennial. This highly contested concept will serve as a matrix to generate ideas and develop practices that question contemporary forms of democracy, challenge current forms of spatio-economic justice, question given concepts of civilization and barbarity as standardized positions and languages and, above all, question the role of contemporary art as an agent that both makes and unmakes what is considered public.

The title "Mom, am I barbarian?" is a quotation from the book of the Turkish poet Lale Muldur. In order to open up a third space in between the theoretical and practical axis of the conceptual framework of the biennial, I wanted to start the communication of the exhibition with art, with a poetic gesture. Actually, it is closely related to the imminent political conflicts and the expression of the discontent and frustrations with the existing regimes, governances and ideologies, which were staged on the streets. This translates into a desire to start anew, going beyond the already existing formulas, even to the unknown. Hence, I reintroduce 'barbarity' as a positive concept to open up the possibility for construction of new subjectivities and collective imagination. The biennial focuses on the city of Istanbul (that has been undergoing through a severe urban transformation) as a spatial component of democratic apparatus.

There has been an extensive urban transformation going on in Istanbul consisted of approximately 48 mega projects including a third bridge over the Bosphorus, a 'crazy' canal project where two new cities to accommodate one million people each is planned, opening up the forest, agriculture and water basins for new settlements, etc. As the urban transformation and regeneration fosters economic vitality and extra employment possibilities, it is taken globally as an antidote for financial crises. However, in Istanbul, this fact not only leads to a physical growth of the city but also stimulates new immigration waves. Certainly, there are heated discussions and protests against the modus operandi of this process that is not transparent and mainly based on commercial concerns and speculations. The biennial focuses on the debated places and neighborhoods under transformation to be able to open up the possibility of co-producing the city with its citizens.

As you can understand, your work "Schapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, A Real Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971" has a prominent place in the conceptual framework of the 13th Istanbul Biennial, unfolding the horizon for it. However, although we had already contacted and applied to MOMA & MACBA as well as Pompidou for loaning the "Schapolsky et al" for the upcoming

Istanbul Biennial that will take place between the 14th of September and the 10th of November 2013, unfortunately, it wasn't possible for MOMA & MACBA as they are planning to show it almost at the same dates and we have just learned from Pompidou that it is not possible for them either as it was over-exposed and needs to be kept in their depot.

Considering the importance of your work for the exhibition, here I would like to ask you if you would like to propose any other work of yours or a new project for the 13th Istanbul Biennial. I am well aware of the limited time for the exhibition and your over-loaded schedule, but I do hope that we can find a way to collaborate. If you have any questions or need further details, I will be happy to provide you with necessary information. Attached I am sending you the conceptual framework of the 13th Istanbul Biennial.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

My very best,

Fulya Erdemci
Curator, 13th Istanbul Biennial