

# Biennale

## Press Release

June 29, 2020, Mannheim/Ludwigshafen/Heidelberg, Germany

With successful numbers of visitors both online and off, the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie 2020* in Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg has come to an end yesterday. Under the extraordinary circumstances posed by the Corona pandemic, the Biennale has succeeded in offering its visitors an attractive online programme during the time exhibition spaces were closed, which has received much international attention and has been widely used. The virtual tours at [www.biennalefotografie.de](http://www.biennalefotografie.de) will be permanently available online. Open for an extended period through September 13, 2020, is the Biennale exhibition *When Images Collide* at the Wilhelm-Hack-Museum in Ludwigshafen.

The 3rd *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* will take place from March 19 through May 22, 2022. An international expert committee comprised of former curators and the directors of the participating venues are supporting the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* in the selection of the curator for the next edition. A decision is expected by fall 2020 at the latest.

+++++ The *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie 2020* is supported by the three cities of Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg, with BASF SE as premium sponsor and many other supporters contributing to the strengthening of photography in the Rhine-Neckar region. +++++

For the Biennale 2020, which opened on February 28, six thematic exhibitions entitled *The Lives and Loves of Images* explored the inner workings of images and our ambivalent relationship to photography. In six venues in Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg, English curator David Campany presented contemporary and historical works by around 70 international artists and photographers.

In the first exhibition weeks up until March 17, around 10,000 visitors were counted across all participating cities. During the closures due to Corona, a total of 33,000 virtual visitors were able to be reached with an almost instantaneously launched digital offering. Free virtual tours were realized through all six Biennale exhibitions, all of which were developed in only two weeks, as well as live virtual tours, which were in part conducted in German and English in cooperation with the Chennai Photo Biennale, India, and the directors of the participating houses. All in all, 750 persons took part in the live tours via video conference software. Recordings of the live tours are available on the Biennale YouTube channel.

Numerous planned workshops, guided tours and events such as the *Long Night of Photography* or talks in the new series *Photography & Science* which was introduced in 2020, among many others, had to be cancelled. For the three cancelled talks of *Photography & Science*, alternative dates are being scheduled and will soon be announced.

**Sabine Schirra, Chairwoman of the Biennale:** *“The Biennale took a completely unexpected turn this year, and we had to prove that we were not only able to respond to a global crisis in a flexible manner but also to what extent. We want to continue making use of the good experiences we have had with the digital offering of the Biennale in the future. At the same time, we’re glad to have made it possible for guests to visit our exhibitions in the actual venues by extending the duration. The reactions of visitors upon reopening have shown us that the Biennale was something they had missed and that the curatorial work by David Campany was a complete success. We now look forward to the future with confidence, and to the 3rd edition of the Biennale which we will open in spring 2022.”*

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In order to find a curator for the Biennale 2022, the executive board and management are currently in discussion with an international expert committee comprised of former curators, including David Company (2020), Florian Ebner (2017), Christin Müller (2017), Urs Stahel (2015), Andréa Holzherr (2013), and Esther Ruelfs (2009), as well as the responsible executives of the exhibition houses, such as Barbara Auer (Kunstverein Ludwigshafen), Johan Holten (Kunsthalle Mannheim), Thomas Schirnböck (ZEPHYR – Raum für Fotografie in the Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen), Ursula Schöndeling (Heidelberger Kunstverein), Yvonne Vogel (Port 25 – Raum für Gegenwartskunst), and René Zechlin (Wilhelm-Hack-Museum). A decision is expected to be announced this coming fall at the latest. Characteristic of the Biennale is its concept of alternating guest curators every two years who continuously deal with new aspects of contemporary photography in dialogue with the artists invited as well as the Rhine-Neckar metropolitan region, the three cities hosting events, and local, domestic and international visitors alike.

## **A catalogue for the Biennale**

Appearing at Kehrer Verlag Heidelberg Berlin, is a catalogue in German and English with texts by David Company and the participating artists. The catalogue is available for € 25 under [info@biennalefotografie.de](mailto:info@biennalefotografie.de) (plus shipping costs) and in book stores.

## **Artists**

Dennis Adams, Claudia Angelmaier, Adam Broomberg & Oliver Chanarin, Jean-Marc Caimi & Valentina Piccinni, David Claerbout, Jojakim Cortis & Adrian Sonderegger, Jeff Cowen, Julia Curtin, Tim Davis, John Divola, Stéphane Duroy, Walker Evans, Camille Fallet, Joan Fontcuberta, Pablo Genovés, George Georgiou, Hein Gorny, Sara Greenberger Rafferty, Richard Hamilton, Darren Harvey-Regan, Aaron Hegert, Sohrab Hura, Maurice Jarnoux, David Jiménez, Lisa Kereszi, Christoph Klauke, Steffi Klenz, Kensuke Koike, Justine Kurland, Sherrie Levine, Mark Lewis, Ute Mahler & Werner Mahler, Michael Mandiberg, Josh Murfitt, James Nares, Antonio Pérez Río, Max Pinckers & Dries Depoorter, Max Pinckers & Sam Weerdmeester, Jessica Potter, Patrick Pound, Peter Puklus, Timm Rautert, Sebastian Riemer, RaMell Ross, Thomas Ruff, Mark Ruwedel, Anastasia Samoylova, Martina Sauter, Maurice Scheltens & Liesbeth Abbenes, Bryan Schutmaat, Stephen Shore, Peter Sorge, Eva Stenram, John Stezaker, Daniel Stier, Clare Strand, Batia Suter, Nick Waplington, Christopher Williams, Vanessa Winship, Stanley Wolukau-Wanambwa, Thomas Wunsch, Ewa Monika Zebrowski

## **Participating institutions**

Forum Internationale Photographie (FIP) & ZEPHYR – Raum für Fotografie in den Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen (Mannheim), Heidelberger Kunstverein, Kunsthalle Mannheim, Kunstverein Ludwigshafen, Port25 – Raum für Gegenwartskunst (Mannheim), Wilhelm-Hack-Museum (Ludwigshafen)

## **About the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie***

Since 2005, the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* has established itself as one of the most important curated photo events with international appeal in Germany. The Biennale is characterised by the conceptual work of the guest curators, who come on board for two years and who are constantly addressing new aspects of contemporary photography while initiating dialogue with the invited artists, the Rhine-Neckar Metropolitan Region, the three cities hosting the event and with local, national and international visitors. The most important exhibition houses of the three cities Mannheim, Heidelberg and Ludwigshafen are involved and their specific profiles are included in the exhibition's design. Cultural organisers and promoters from the entire Metropolitan Region work closely together to make the Biennale happen. The Biennale connects the three cities and their cultural institutions in an inter-city dialogue, a cooperation that has set an example nationwide.

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Further information and image material for the Biennale can be downloaded from the press section at [www.biennalefotografie.de](http://www.biennalefotografie.de)

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Instagram: [die\\_biennale](https://www.instagram.com/die_biennale)

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