

Biennale

Press release

30 March 2023, Mannheim/Ludwigshafen/Heidelberg, Germany

The *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* faces an uncertain future. With the ending of BASF's financial commitment after the 2024 edition, a new financing model must be found to maintain the major project that has existed for around 20 years. BASF has supported the Biennale as a premium sponsor since 2005 and contributes about one third of the total budget.

Stefanie Kleinsorge, Chairwoman of the board of the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* e. V., Johan Holten, Director of the Kunsthalle Mannheim, exemplary for the six participating venues in the cities of Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg, and David Company, curator of the 2020 edition, emphasise in initial statements the supra-regional relevance of the photo event and the model character of the Biennale across cities and institutions and call for its maintenance beyond the 2024 edition.

+++++ The upcoming *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* will take place from 9 March to 19 May, 2024. The *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* is supported by the three cities of Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg, with BASF SE as premium sponsor, as well as numerous other supporters. +++++

"To realise the Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie in its usual scope and established quality in the future without the support of its current premium sponsor means a huge challenge. The fact that BASF has informed us so early about the end of its commitment is an appreciation of our almost 20-year-long collaboration. At the same time, this decision gives us the time we need to think about the Biennale beyond the next edition in spring 2024, which will still be supported by BASF.

The management of the Biennale, my board colleagues Ewa Wojciechowska, Head of the Cultural Office of the City of Mannheim, Susan Besara from the Cultural Office of the City of Heidelberg and I are currently holding many talks, including with representatives at various levels, to sound out future funding possibilities. Fortunately, we have already received the first positive signals for a possible stronger commitment to the Biennale. This strengthens our confidence that we will be able to continue to present a top-class curated overview of contemporary photography in Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg every two years after 2024."

Stefanie Kleinsorge, Chairwoman of the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* e. V. | Head of the Cultural Department of the City of Ludwigshafen

"Since its beginnings in the region in 2005, the Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie has developed into an internationally renowned exhibition platform for photography and video, which is very well received by the residents of the region as well as by national and international colleagues. It is one of the few truly cross-city cultural events in which the museums and art associations of the three cities appear with a joint project. Photography is one of the most modern and widely used contemporary artistic media that urgently needs to continue to be presented for critical reflection. It would be a fatal mistake to abandon this evolved form. Already in the past, funds for an exhibition format of this size have been extremely tight. I very much hope that the cities and companies of the region are willing to support the Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie as a beacon of the Rhine-Neckar cultural region with increased funds in order to lead it into the future at a continued high level."

Johan Holten, Director of the Kunsthalle Mannheim

**für aktuelle
Fotografie**

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"The Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie has established an extraordinary reputation for originality and excellence, with an impact and importance much larger than the size of its team and its current budget. I curate exhibitions all over the world and I can say that my experience with the Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie has been by far the best. It is truly amazing what the organisation has been able to achieve. I know of no other Biennale or festival of photography that has made such an impact from such humble means. This really is down to the dedication of the team, its visionary leadership, it's care with its budget, and the many partnerships it has made."

Dr David Company, curator of the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* 2020 and currently Curator at Large at International Center of Photography (ICP), New York

About the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie*

Since 2005, the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* takes place every two years in Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg. For each edition, an internationally renowned guest curator is invited to develop six thematic exhibitions on a total of around 4,500 square meters in the most important exhibition houses throughout the three cities. A multifaceted analogue and digital educational programme for a large regional and international audience accompanies the exhibitions. In addition, the Biennale has established itself as an international get-together for photography experts. To realize the Biennale, cultural organisers and promoters in the Rhine-Neckar region work closely with artists and partners from all corners of the globe. The Biennale engages the three cities and their cultural institutions in a dialogue and has already become a model in Germany and beyond. The Biennale has reached up to 41,000 visitors in past editions.

In 2024, the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* will celebrate its tenth edition.

For the next edition from 9 March to 19 May 2024, the Biennale has chosen three non-European curators for the first time: Shahidul Alam, Tanzim Wahab and Munem Wasif. This is a further step in the development of its international orientation and expands its network of people and institutions with whom exchange or collaboration is to be encouraged. The focus on sustainability, which has characterised the past two editions, is to be further expanded at the Biennale 2024.

Previous curators were:

2022: Iris Sikking

2020: David Company

2017: Florian Ebner, Christin Müller, Fabian Knierim, Boaz Levin, Kerstin Meincke and Kathrin Schöneegg

2015: Urs Stahel

2013: Andréa Holzherr

2011: Solvej Helweg Ovesen and Katerina Gregos

2009: Esther Ruelfs and Tobias Berger

2007: Christoph Tannert

2005: Hansjoachim Nierentz

Participating institutions of the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* 2024 are:

Heidelberger Kunstverein, Kunsthalle Mannheim, Kunstverein Ludwigshafen, PORT25 – Raum für Gegenwartskunst (Mannheim), Wilhelm-Hack-Museum (Ludwigshafen), ZEPHYR – Raum für Fotografie in den Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen (Mannheim)

Further information on the current programme at

www.biennalefotografie.de/en/biennial/press

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