

# artnet<sup>®</sup> news

## Art World

### Here's Your Guide to the Most Important Art Biennials Taking Place Around the World in 2023, From São Paulo to Sharjah

Here's what you need to know about the major international art events slated for this year.

Caroline Goldstein, January 16, 2023



Alicja Kwade, *Big Be-Hide* (2019). © Maija Toivanen HAM Helsinki Biennial 2021

Mark your calendars, folks, it's about to be another busy 12 months in the art world. Although 2022 was a banner year for these major events, with the triple threat of the Venice Biennale, the Whitney Biennial, *and* Documenta, this year is shaping up to be chock full of the agenda-setting exhibitions that have become an entire ecosystem unto themselves. (For a deep dive on biennial culture, from the most prolific artists that participate in them to the galleries that represent those artists, plus how the ambitious projects get funded in the first place, check out Artnet News's full Biennial Artist Project.)

Details for the forthcoming events are still trickling in, so we'll keep this list updated as we get more information.

## Islamic Arts Biennale

January 23–April 23, 2023



Hajj Terminal of King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Photo: Karim Sahib/AFP via Getty Images.

This is the inaugural edition of the biennial which sets out to celebrate contemporary art and historical artifacts of Muslims around the world. Situated at the historic Hajj Terminal in Jeddah, the biennial is helmed by a team that includes Sumayya Vally, the cofounder and principal of architecture firm Counterspace, which was invited to design the Serpentine Pavilion in London in 2021.

## Sharjah Biennial 15

February 7–June 11, 2023



Installation view of Joe Namy's *Libretto-o-o* at the 2017 Sharjah Biennial, façade of the Sharjah Art Museum, Arts Square, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.

Titled “Thinking Historically in the Present,” the 15th edition of the Sharjah Biennial was developed by the late curator Okwui Enwezor, and is curated by Hoor Al Qasimi, the director of the Sharjah Art Foundation. Visitors should look out for 70 new works on view by the likes of John Akomfrah, Coco Fusco, Mona Hatoum, Doris Salcedo, and Kerry James Marshall. The show will take place across 18 venues in the emirate of Sharjah and will feature more than 150 artists from 70 countries.

## Desert X

March 4–May 7, 2023



Xaviera Simmons, *Because You Know Ultimately We Will Band A Militia*, (2021). Desert X installation view, Palm Springs, CA. Photo: Lance Gerber. Courtesy of the artist and David Castillo.

The 2023 edition of Desert X in California’s Coachella Valley will focus on water—and the lack of it—in the arid landscape of the desert and beyond amid global climate change. Per the press release, “Our structures in the survival of these extremes speak not just to the physical adaptations of climate, but to the social formations that give form to a world increasingly shaped by climate crisis and the political and economic migrations that follow in its wake.”

## Gwangju Biennale

April 7–July 9, 2023



A visitor looking at the art installation “Outi Pieski” by Eeva-Kristiina Harlin during a preview of the 13th Gwangju Biennale on March 31, 2021. Photo: Jung Yeon-je/AFP via Getty Images.

For its 14th edition, the South Korea-based Gwangju Biennale is curated by Tate Modern chief curator Sook-Kyung Lee and titled “Soft and tender like water,” based on the philosophies in Laozi’s *The Tao Te Ching*. Some 80 international artists will participate in the event, which is organized around four themes: “Luminous Halo,” “Ancestral Voices,” “Transient Sovereignty,” and “Planetary Times.”

## Venice Architecture Biennale

May 20–November 26, 2023



Lesley Lokko, curator of the 18th Architecture Biennale.

Curated by Lesley Lokko, founder and director of the Accra, Ghana-based African Futures Institute, the theme of the 18th International Architecture Exhibition will be “The Laboratory of the Future.” In a statement, Lokko explained

that “Africa *is* the laboratory of the future” as the world’s youngest continent to undergo rapid

urbanization, and one that must adapt and react to climate change on local and global scales. Lokko also noted that the exhibition itself is a laboratory of the future, “a time and space in which questions are asked about the relevance of the discipline for *this* world, and for the one to come.”

## Liverpool Biennial

June 10–September 17, 2023



Kevin Beasley, *Your face is / is not enough* (2016). © Kevin Beasley. Courtesy of Casey Kaplan, New York. Photo: Pete Carr.

The forthcoming 12th edition of the Liverpool Biennial is titled “uMoya: The Sacred Return of Lost Things” from the isiZulu language, in which *uMoya* means spirit, breath, air, climate, and wind. More than 30 artists and collectives will participate in the event, curated by the Cape Town-based artist and sociologist Khaniyisile Mbongwa.

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## Helsinki Biennial

June 12–September 18, 2023



Hayoun Kwon, *489 Years* (2016). © Maija Toivanen HAM Helsinki Biennial 2021.



For the 2023 edition of the Helsinki Biennial, titled “New Directions May Emerge,” curator Joasia Krysa invited five artists and collectives to collaborate on the event, which will take place at venues around the city, on Vallisaari Island, and at the HAM Helsinki Art Museum. The five entities include the Museum of Impossible Forms; TBA21-Academy; Critical Environmental Data; and Visual Cultures, Curating, and Contemporary Art (viCCA).

## São Paulo Biennial

September–December, 2023



Hélio Menezes, Grada Kilomba, Diane Lima, and Manuel Borja-Villel. Photo: © Levi Fanan/Fundação Bienal de São Paulo.

Although the dates for the upcoming event are still to be determined, the show is organized around the theme “choreographies of the impossible.” The curatorial team of Diane Lima, Grada Kilomba, Hélio Menezes, and Manuel Borja-Villel penned a text outlining the ideas, writing: “As the title already suggests, it is an invitation to radical imaginations about the unknown, or even about what figures as im/possible.”