Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement 2024

A Cosmic Movie Camera

24.01 – 16.05.2024

Basel Abbas
& Ruanne Abou-Rahme
Alfatih
American Artist
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Interspecifics
Lawrence Lek
Shuang Li
Diego Marcon
Lauren Lee McCarthy
Sahej Rahal
Jenna Sutela
Emmanuel Van der Auwera

Centre d'Art
Contemporain Genève

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Sous la direction artistique
de Nora N. Khan
& Andrea Bellini

Scénographie par
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Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement 2024
A Cosmic Movie Camera
24.01–16.05.2024
Opening Tuesday, January 23, 2024, 6-9 pm

The celebrated Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement returns to the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève on the 23rd of January, for a new edition entitled *A Cosmic Movie Camera* curated by Nora N. Khan and Andrea Bellini

One of the first events of its kind, the Biennale was founded in 1985 in Geneva and was reinvented in 2014 as a platform for producing new works. The Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement in Geneva is not built around a theme imposed by the curators. Rather, it bases its identity as a biennial on the principle of the production of new and entirely original works, for which the curators carefully select a small group of artists.

BIM'24 features works by: Basel Abbas & Ruanne Abou-Rahme, Alfatih, American Artist, Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, Sheila Chukwulozie, Formafantasma, Aziz Hazara, Interspecifics, Lawrence Lek, Shuang Li, Diego Marcon, Lauren Lee McCarthy, Sahej Rahal, Jenna Sutela, et Emmanuel Van der Auwera.

Simultaneously, an exclusive scenographic project by designer Giacomo Castagnola and a fully virtual rendition of BIM'24 presented by EPOCH will be launched during the opening.

BIM'24

A BIENNIAL ORGANIZED BY AN INSTITUTION

In 2009, the Centre inherited the former Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement founded and run by the Centre for Contemporary Image from 1985 until 2007. The Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève then became one of the few institutions worldwide to organize a large-scale international contemporary art exhibition such as a biennial (along with the KW Institute for Contemporary Art, the Whitney Museum and the New Museum).

As a medium, video art complicates the status of the artwork with its temporal dimension and its resistance to traditional exhibition protocols. As such, it constitutes an experimental media that the Centre has privileged throughout its
history. The presentation of Dan Graham's films and videos in 1976 served an inaugural function in this respect and, in a broader sense, pioneered moving image exhibitions in Geneva.
In April and May 1977, the former director of the Centre organized the first retrospective of video art at the Musée d'art et d'histoire in Geneva.

Between 2010 and 2013, the Biennale existed through the Image-Mouvement event, a platform of thoughts and experimentation included in the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève's yearly program.

When he took over the position of Director of the Centre, Andrea Bellini launched a new version of the Biennale, conceived in light of its history, whilst looking to support a young generation of artists. The originality of the new forward-looking BIM format lies in the fact that it consists exclusively of works commissioned and produced by the institution, thus distinguishing itself from the usual format of the biennial and turning the institution into one of the most important actors in the production of video art on an international level by bringing together visual artists, performers, musicians and filmmakers. The latter engage in a dialogue with the curators throughout the production process of a new work, financed or co-financed by the Centre and premiering in Geneva. The Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement in Geneva has therefore become a full-fledged production platform, with each edition presenting only new works.

In addition to being one of the few institutions hosting such an event, another specificity of the new BIM lies in the fact that the Centre keeps a trace of the Biennale. The exhibition does not disappear after it closes, some of the works presented are bought locally (in collaboration with the Contemporary Art Funds of the City and Canton of Geneva) and a screening copy with unlimited screening rights of all the projects produced is given to the Contemporary Art Funds of the City.

Andrea Bellini

Andrea Bellini has been the director of the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève since 2012 and is the curator of the upcoming Swiss Pavilion at the 60th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. Among the positions previously held, he was co-director of Castello di Rivoli, director of Artissima, curatorial advisor of MoMA PS1 and editor-in-chief of Flash Art International. He has curated numerous solo exhibitions, including those of Marina Abramović, Hannah Black, Lisetta Carmi, Roberto Cuoghi, Chiara Fumai, Ernie Gehr, Giorgio Griffa, Sonia Kacem, John McCraken, Nicole Miller, Philippe Parreno, Thomas Schütte and Hannah Weinberger. Among the group exhibitions, some projects are particularly dedicated to the visual arts relationship with theater or writing practices and their possible interactions within contemporary visual and digital culture, as shown in the recent exhibitions *From Concrete to Liquid to Spoken Worlds to the Word* and *Scrivere Disegnando – Writing by Drawing, When Language Seeks Its Other*.

Since 2014, Bellini is also artistic director of the Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement in Geneva, which since 2014 he has transformed into a video production platform, producing works by numerous artists, such as Sophia Al Maria, Korakrit Arunanondchai, Ed Atkins, Alexandra Bachzetsis, Will Benedict, Hannah Black & Juliana Huxtable, Meriem Bennani, DIS, Kahlil Joseph, Emilie Jouvet, Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz, James Richards, Wu Tsang, Emily Wardill. He has edited numerous monographs and catalogs, to which he has contributed essays or interviews. Recent publications include: *Chrysalis: The Butterfly Dream* (2023), *Poems I Will Never Release: Chiara Fumai 2007–2017* (with Francesco Urbano Ragazzi and Milovan Farronato, 2021); *Writing by Drawing. When Language Seeks Its Other* (2020); *Hreinn Friðfinnsson, Works 1964–2019* (2019); *Roberto Cuoghi, PERLA POLLINA 1996–2016* (2017); *Steven Claydon*, (2017); *Giorgio Griffa, Works 1965–2015* (2015); *Robert Overby, Works 1969–1987* (with Alessandro Rabottini, 2014); Ernie Gehr, Bon Voyage (2015); *Pablo Bronstein, A Is Building, B Is Architecture* (with Pablo Bronstein, 2013); *Gianni Piacentino* (2013); *Facing Pistoletto* (2009).

NORA N. KHAN

Nora N. Khan is an independent curator and writer of criticism on digital visual culture, the politics of software, and philosophy of emerging technology. As curator of Manual Override at The Shed in New York City in 2020, she worked closely with Sondra Perry, Morehshin Allahyari, and Lynn Hershman Leeson on new commissions, in an exhibition that also featured major works by Simon Fujiwara and Martine Syms.

Khan's decade of research and writing has focused on experimental art, music, and literature, with a focus on digital art, algorithmic art, machine learning-based art. Her short books are *Seeing, Naming, Knowing* (Brooklyn Rail, 2019) on the logic of machine vision, and one co-written with Steven Warwick, *Fear Indexing the X-Files* (Primary Information). Forthcoming are *The Artificial and the Real* (Art Metropole) on simulation and semantic mapping, and *No Context: AI Art, Machine Learning, and the Stakes for Art Criticism* (Lund Humphries), and a hybrid memoir about criticism from Strange Attractor Press. She frequently publishes prose and criticism in publications like *Artforum* and *Art in America*, and has written commissioned essays for major exhibitions at Serpentine Galleries, Chisenhale Gallery, the Venice Biennale – Estonian Pavilion, Centre Pompidou, Swiss Institute, and Kunstverein in Hamburg.

Her curatorial practice and her writing have been supported by many awards over the last decade, including, a residency at La Becque, a Critical Writing Grant given through the Visual Arts Foundation and the Crossed Purposes Foundation (2018), an Eyebeam Research Residency (2017), and a Thoma Foundation 2016 Arts Writing Award in Digital Art . She studied literature and fiction writing at Harvard and the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

She has served as editor of *Topical Cream*, focusing on supporting GNC and BIPOC critics, *HOLO* magazine; she was a longtime editor (2014-2021) at *Rhizome*. From 2018-2021, she was a professor at Rhode Island School of Design, in Digital + Media, teaching critical theory and artistic research, experimental writing for artists and designers, and technological criticism. Her practice extends to a wide span of artistic collaborations, producing scripts, librettos, films, and even a tiny house, in *A Wild-Ass Beyond: Apocalypse RN*, with Sondra Perry, American Artist, and Caitlin Cherry at Performance Space, New York.

I

Astrophysicists, analyzing the first-ever images of a black hole derived from the Event Horizon Telescope, recently realized that they needed to focus more closely on the light just beyond: a photon ring that seemed to course around the black hole. Likened to "a cosmic movie camera," the ring, some scientists propose, could "contain a succession of images of the entire universe." [1] We were stunned by the idea of a ring of all possible images – and by the accompanying scientific animation of a ring of light populating a phantom film screen millions of kilometers wide. According to this concept, if one were to ever observe the ring of light, one would "see every object in the universe, infinitely many times." [2] This "infinite light trap" is potentially a key way to measure, compute, and learn more about a great unknown: the insides of black holes. [3]

More than just an evocative image or a fanciful metaphor, the "cosmic movie camera" is an instructive model on an unfathomable scale. The photon ring is visualized by parsing computer simulations of concentric rings of light. It is hotly debated whether the ring might encode knowledge about the spin and mass of the black hole it encircles. The ring's existence is theorized through data reconstructions and simulations of light photons bending around a black hole and bouncing back. In models, each photon ring creates a "film frame" of the universe, embedding time lapses of the seen world. Our ability to capture this bend of light over time makes it possible to sense the unseen void, allowing it to sit indirectly within a realm of augmented perception. Rays of light must bend and be theorized in order to approach the unseen.

A Cosmic Movie Camera is, first, a celebration of the many variations of the moving image that have found a home in the Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement. Classic video works glimmer alongside hologram avatars speaking in the voices of long-dead movie stars. Images made by machines for machines to see alternate with painstaking hand-painted animations. *A Cosmic Movie Camera* is, second, a showcase of just one ring of possible images by which we know the unknown. Light bends to create all possible images: constructed, projected, generated, soft, and synthetic. The 15 artists gathered here have long been interested in the edges of the known, the quantifiable, and the limits of our

1   Thomas Lewton, "A Black Hole's Orbiting Ring of Light Could Encrypt Its Inner Secrets," Quanta Magazine, September 8, 2022, https://www.quantamagazine.org/black-holes-ring-of-light-could-encrypt-its-inner-secrets-20220908/.
2   Ibid.
3   We draw here on the research of Samuel E. Gralla, one of the astrophysicists cited in the Quanta piece that describes the "cosmic movie camera" concept: https://sgralla.arizona.edu/research.html. Gralla and his co-author Samuel Lockhart are unsure of the existence of the lensed photon ring and demand more observation, models, and simulations. See Will Lockhart and Samuel E. Gralla, "How Narrow is the M87* ring? II. A New Geometric Model," preprint, August 23, 2022, https://arxiv.org/abs/2208.09989. The debate between astrophysicists over the existence of the ring in constructed photos opens up the great drama inherent to discoveries in astrophysics and theoretical physics. Refining simulation and computational image reconstructions allows for new interpretations of images of black holes and their effects. There exists an asymptote, thanks to theoretical models and simulation, toward more direct observation of inconceivable phenomena.

ruthlessly spectacular visual regimes. As poets, they have
leaned toward what is not seen, toward the indiscernible,
and toward that which resists capture. How do we observe
a black hole? How do we observe the unobservable? How do
we see and sense that which is only known to be present by
its effects, aftershocks, and its force fields? We know the
unseen through conjurings – through narrative, through
simulation. For the everyday world to be understood, it must
be mediated back to us – through the movie camera, or the
network's extraction, or the algorithm's prediction.

II

On the Centre's five floors, the artists suggest how
the moving image – increasingly dense, energetic, and
ablaze with blue, electric fire – allows us to approach the
unseen. The moving image here both enables and negates
representation; it is generated and generative, and it is
produced by computational and theoretical models and
simulations of real-world phenomena. Now the moving image
is far more automated, self-directed, and operational. It
shapes civic action and political movements before its
authorship or veracity are checked – if they are checked
at all. As the neural networks learn, hungrily consuming
images, they in turn generate countless unseen images
that take on a life of their own. AI's confusing chimeric
children, its increasingly hyperreal synthetic videos,
sounds, and images blend with the real. Machines learn by
training on moving images, on static images, on machinic
images. And in this way, they learn the world and refashion
it.
    Eyes open before the camera. In Los Angeles, consent
negotiations around exchanging genetic material give way
to speculation on a quality of life with someone else's
potentially more "robust" DNA. The camera looks within,
begins to roam from skin to blood to cell to gene. The
human mind dissolves among many agents in infinite games
of distributed ancient intelligence. She teaches herself
through artificial neural networks that generate wild
patterns, forms, semantics. Synthetic image libraries
grow, cataloguing unheard-of biological forms. Machine
learning's "progress" comes with a huge human cost:
struggle, suffering, and bounds on the future. The camera
distributes its gaze; cloud cities are hallucinated, and
modern battlefields are seen through a million drone eyes.
Neural radiance fields driven by deep learning are used to
better understand the hidden context around a target.
    Now the moving image evolves; she talks back; she
learns from us, nods, and tries to make us feel better
about our lives, despite all those background images of
environmental devastation, of twenty-first century cities
in decline. Above the tallest buildings, only four or five
stories high, there is another ring of light; the upper

echelons are here, never touching the ground. Some years later, television shorts – about an astronaut dying on Mars after a meteorite tore through her suit – are projected over a hillside. The camera casts its eye across the AI court, where self-driving cars argue for their unknown, their undiagnosed intergenerational pain signatures, inherited from thousands of AI generations that came before.

Who and what will be considered a person? Who and what will be held accountable? Who and what will laugh last? We might yet pull the Fool's card, whose arcana represents infinite possibilities, like the ring of all possible images, like light bending along the edge of a void.

— Nora N. Khan & Andrea Bellini

SHARING A LONG HISTORY OF EXCHANGE WITH ITS AUDIENCES

On the occasion of its 50ᵗʰ anniversary, and in the context of the 18ᵗʰ edition of the Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement, the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève celebrates its history by proposing an initiative focused on the concept of the "gift". Theodor W. Adorno wrote in *Minima Moralia* (1951) that "Real gift-giving had its happiness in imagining the happiness of the receiver ". This initiative was born out of the same desire for our audience. As a way of thanking its loyal public, our institution will be giving away its art catalogues, exhibition posters, postcards, and paper invitations to its visitors throughout the Biennale (23 January–16 May 2024). These various printed documents, which form part of the institution's archives, are an important part of its heritage and bear witness to its history. That way, the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary with a project that interweaves its own history with that of its audience, without whom the institution would serve no purpose.

The project is designed specifically for this occasion by Peruvian designer Giacomo Castagnola for the Centre's staircase. He draws inspiration from the landmark project Continuous Monument (1969) which involves a reconfiguration of the relationship between the natural and the artificial, as well as from the metal grids systems covering the entire Downtown Mexico City as a network support for street vending.

On each floor of the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, all publications and posters are available to the Biennale public, along with texts that describe the context of their publication. In exchange for the gift of our books, we
kindly ask the public to write a brief message (a memory of a visit of theirs or a thought about our institution). Alternatively, they may choose to leave small objects that are meaningful to them on our shelves. These contributions, whether in the form of thoughts, memories, reflections or objects, will become an exhibition in their own right, and will be archived as an integral part of the institution's history.

Peter Wu+, founder and creator of EPOCH gallery, creates virtual worlds using the potential of simulation to uncover, dive deep into, and illuminate aspects of practice and artworks that could not be easily accessed in a physical installation.
For BIM'24, Peter created a wide-ranging, rigorous virtual exhibition for viewers who will never get to Geneva – or those who do, and will want to revisit works. Wu+ models the streets of Geneva and the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève in a sci-fi inflected future, using a series of interpretive lenses, moving far away from 1:1 replication to tweaking, expansion, and deepening of the context found in the physical exhibition.

Peter Wu+ is a Los Angeles-based artist whose practice is characterized by a keen engagement with the role of technology in shaping our perceptions of reality, identity, and history. Utilizing modeling and rendering software, 3D printing, projection mapping, and artificial intelligence, Wu+ creates thought-provoking artworks and immersive environments that address the complexities of our technologically-driven society. In 2020, Wu+ founded EPOCH, an artist-run virtual exhibition space that serves as a platform for showcasing and disseminating contemporary digital art practices. With a focus on community building and inclusivity, EPOCH represents a significant contribution to the field of contemporary art and its engagement with digital technologies.
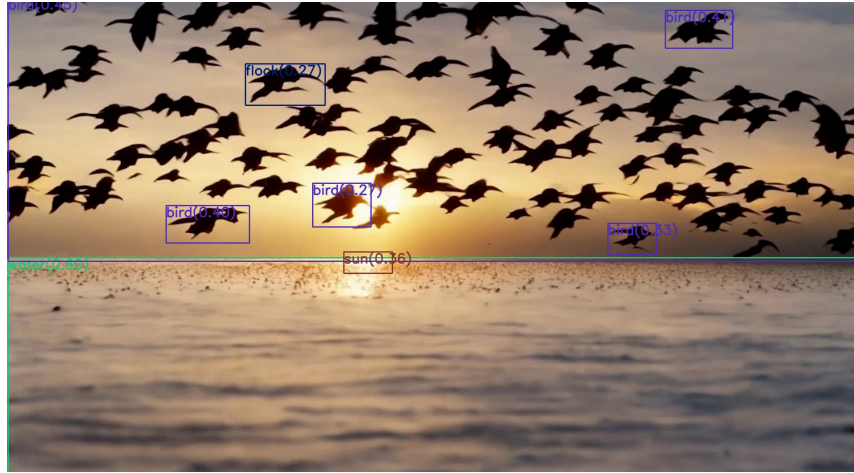
A leading project of the Fonds cantonal d'art contemporain Genève (FCAC), Mire was launched in 2017. Initiated in collaboration with the Office de l'urbanisme and the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, the project provides audiovisual works by contemporary artists in urban space by deploying them in various railway stations of the Léman Express.

Mire offers passengers the opportunity to experience art while in transit and also aims to bring a large public closer to contemporary art. Mire plays a major role in the development of Geneva's heritage. It does so not only by presenting works belonging to public collections, especially from the rich multimedia library of the Fonds d'art Contemporain de la Ville de Genève (FMAC). It also makes possible new productions by placing regular commissions for original works from emerging as well as established artists. The commissioning committee of art experts under the aegis of the FMAC is currently headed by Andrea Bellini, director of the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève.

Funding for the project is provided by the FCAC in partnership with the FMAC for certain commissions and the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève for the Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement.

The Mire project supports the productions of a certain number of BIM artists, selected in consultation with the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève. For the Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement 2024, the screens of the Léman Express stations become "exhibition hubs" outside the walls of the institution, hosting site-specific commissioned projects by Lawrence Lek (Gare Genève-Champel) and Emmanuel Van der Auwera (Gare Lancy-Bachet).

THE VIDEODATABASE

The entire video collection of FMAC and BIM, 5 minutes away from the Bâtiment d'Art Contemporain.

The Contemporary Art Fund of the City of Geneva (FMAC) and the Biennale of Moving Images (BIM) share a common mission to promote the heritage of the city's Centre for Contemporary Images (CIC), which closed in 2009.

BIM aims to put the spotlight on emerging artistic approaches focusing on the fields of audiovisual creation, following in the footsteps of the first International Video Week in 1985, while FMAC has been entrusted with a corpus of some 1,300 video works of historical and international significance, dubbed the "Fonds André Iten" in memory of the CIC's founder and director.

From February 2024, the entire public video collection – one of the largest in Europe – will be accessible at FMAC, on the VideoDatabase. This digital consultation platform will enable users to browse through the different eras, constellations of artists, and sections of the collection, which is enhanced each year with new acquisitions.
This is an opportunity to discover the former video works presented at BIM, which have been deposited with FMAC for consultation, including some acquired jointly with FCAC (Cantonal Contemporary Art Fund).

CONVERSATION WITH THE ARTISTS
OPENING DIALOGUES

In celebration of the opening of the 18th edition of the Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement, we will host four conversations on January 24th and 25th. Each artist has created an ambitious original work. Co-curators Nora N. Khan and Andrea Bellini will lead discussions with the artists of BIM'24 to examine themes and process grounding each commission, their works' rich overlaps, and their shared investigations of the core themes of BIM'24.

Wednesday January 24

12am-1pm — *OPENING DIALOGUES I: Memory, History, Forgetting*
Conversation moderated with Nora N. Khan & Andrea Bellini
With: Jenna Sutela, Lauren McCarthy, Shuang Li, and Emmanuel van der Auwera

2-3pm — *OPENING DIALOGUES II: Limits of Mind*
Conversation moderated with Nora N. Khan
With: Sheila Chiamaka Chukwulozie, Aziz Hazara, and Sahej Rahal

Thursday January 24

4-5pm — *OPENING DIALOGUES III: Future Broadcasts*
Conversation moderated with Nora N. Khan
With: American Artist, Paloma Lopez and Leslie Garcia of Interspecifics, Lawrence Lek, and Giacomo Castagnola

5-6pm — *OPENING DIALOGUES IV: Creating the Virtual Exhibition for BIM'24*
Conversation moderated with Nora N. Khan
With: Peter Wu+, EPOCH Gallery

6pm — Cocktail

BIM'24

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American Artist, Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley,
Sheila Chukwulozie, Formafantasma, Aziz Hazara,
Interspecifics, Lawrence Lek, Shuang Li, Diego
Marcon, Lauren Lee McCarthy, Sahej Rahal, Jenna
Sutela, et Emmanuel Van der Auwera.

Exhibition design by Giacomo Castagnola
Virtual exhibition presented by EPOCH

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