

JURY STATEMENT

21ST CONTEMPORARY ART BIENNIAL SESC_VIDEOBRASIL

The past, the present and the future appear to be collapsed and condensed.

We are losing our claims on history and our ability to see with clarity. Fascism is on the rise.

We are overloaded with images, communication and the false idea of a global community. We are paralyzed. The present is hijacked in the hands of a few. How do we respond and reclaim the agency now? How do we move on? How do we imagine the future of our communities?

Racism and oppression have become endemic, especially in the targeting of black and indigenous communities. The LGBTQI+ communities are being persecuted. The amazon is burning. We are deprived of our civic rights. This is happening here in Brazil but also all over the world, from Standing Rock to the Maxakali people's territory, from São Paulo to Tunis. In the 21st Contemporary Art Biennial Sesc_Videobrasil | Imagined Communities, we see that the artworks act as a poetic lens on the critical issues of our times.

Drawing from the ancestral to racial, gender and inequality issues through the works, artists have achieved pertinent results that made our jury process challenging yet exciting. We learned so much from everyone. Saying this, the key points we looked for in the artworks were those that went beyond questioning and the documentary. The awarded works provide answers and proposed possible futures.

We have decided to award and commend two works with the Honorable Mention Award; to Roney de Freitas and Isael Maxakali for their film GRIN, 2016. And Aykan Safoğlu for his video Off-White Tulips, 2013.

The artists Roney de Freitas and Isael Maxakali compose a highly critical and investigative film from important testimonies and archives. Through their own involvement and implication, they are able to portray the complex oppressive structures against the Maxakali communities, since the military dictatorship.

Aykan Safoğlu's work is a seamless narrative collage of both personal, historical and situational contexts that deal with queer histories. It is very powerful in a subtle and playful way.

As for the Residency Prizes, the first being the Instituto Sacatar Residency Award, we have chosen to award it to artist Dana Awartani for her multimedia installation *I Went Away and Forgot You. A While Ago I Remembered. I Remembered I'd Forgotten You. I Was Dreaming*, 2017. With a consistent practice that draws from expanding the universal through crafts and contextual specificities, the artist would be able to engage and draw from the experience provided through the residency afforded by this award in Bahia, Brazil.

The second residency award, the MMCA Residency Changdong Residency Award, goes to Omar Mismar on his video *Schmitt, You and Me*, 2016–2017. Through a very simple strategy that the artist employs, he is able to record a reading of the dimension of subjective power and violence that multiples on the global state of the world today. There is a high level of complicity between artist and subject, which gives new meaning to engagement.

The third residency awarded is the Sharjah Foundation Residency Award, and it goes to Nelson Makengo on his video *E'ville*, 2018. The artist provides a critical undertaking through video about the postcolonial narratives emanating from Congo. It is looking into conflating the image and material ruins applied to the debris of history and politics. The Sharjah Art Foundation Residency Award would provide the artist with intellectual and infrastructural support for his audiovisual trajectory.

The Ostrovsky Family Fund Award goes to the artist Thanh Hoang for her work *Nikki's Here*, 2018. The poetics of this moving image piece incarnates contemporary issues by addressing conditions of labor, intimacy and the resistance against

alienation. The use of duration and inventiveness of the artist's visual and narrative style is outstanding.

From both acquisition awards, the first Sesc Contemporary Art Award goes to the artist No Martins for his series of paintings #JaBasta!, 2019. The remarkable portraits are a statement on affirmation and protestation. The works engage with the historical art of portraiture with an urgent message against racism and inequality. They employ scale, revolutionary gaze and subversive politics and media to create an assertive and powerful call for action.

The second Sesc Contemporary Art Award goes to the collective Movimento de Luta Nos Bairros, Vilas e Favelas on their work Conte isso àqueles que dizem que fomos derrotados, 2018. The video represents collective and meaningful action to social and civic movements that respond to the injustice in Brazil, which largely correspond to the world. It talks to a suspenseful present and desired social future. The active lens becomes one with the action of the community. The result is overwhelming yet exciting.

The final grand prize, the State-of-the-Art Award was unanimously granted by the jury to the artist Gabriela Golder on her seminal four-channel video installation Laboratorio de invención social (O posibles formas de construcción colectiva), 2018. This work is an accumulation of knowledge from organic collectives and cooperatives to create an effective tool for change for workers all over the world. The artist is creating a call for agency on ways to control and organize the economy towards equity. It is a decolonized formula of resistance to the capitalistic and industrial realities and ruins. The installation documents a visual synchronicity in the relationship between humans, machines and the outcomes of their labor to create a unity of voices, actions and lives.



AWARDS JURY

ALEXIA TALA (Chile, 1966) is the chief curator of the Paiz Art Biennial in Guatemala, to be held in 2020, and artistic director of Plataforma Atacama, specializing in Latin American art research. She was co-curator for the 8th Mercosur Biennial – *Essays in Geopoetics* (2011), the 4th San Juan Poly/graphic Triennial, Puerto Rico (2015), and the 20th Paiz Art Biennial in Guatemala (2016). She curates the Solo segment of the SP-Arte Fair (São Paulo, 2019). The author of *Installations and Experimental Printmaking* (UK, 2009), she contributes widely to art publications in Latin America and the UK. She is currently working on a monograph on the Chilean artist Lotty Rosenfeld.

GABI NGCOBO (South Africa, 1974) is an artist, independent curator, and lecturer at the arts faculty of Wits University, Johannesburg, South Africa. Since the early 2000s, she has devoted her time and energies to collaborative artistic, curatorial, and educational projects at home and abroad. She co-founded the Center for Historical Reenactments (2010–2014) and is a founding director of the collaborative project NGO-Nothing Gets Organized (Johannesburg). She curated the 10th Berlin Contemporary Art Biennale and co-curated the 32nd Bienal de São Paulo (2016) and the exhibition *A Labour of Love*, at the Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt, Germany (2015).

ROSANGELA RENNÓ (Brazil, 1962) is an artist. She trained in the fine arts at the Escola Guignard in Minas Gerais and studied architecture at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. She holds a doctorate in art from the School of Communications and Arts, Universidade de São Paulo. Her work involves the appropriation of discarded images found at flea markets and street fairs and investigates the relationship between memory and oblivion. In her photographs, objects, videos, and installations, she works with family photo albums and images drawn from public and private archives. She also creates authorial books.

REEM FADDA (Kuwait, 1979) is a curator and art historian. From 2010 to 2016, Fadda worked at the Guggenheim Museum as associate curator for the Middle Eastern Art, Abu Dhabi Project. From 2005 to 2007, Fadda was director of the Palestinian Association for Contemporary Art (PACA). She served as academic director for the International Academy of Art Palestine, which she helped found in 2006. She has curated many international exhibitions and biennials,

including *Jerusalem Lives* at The Palestinian Museum, Birzeit (2017); *Not New Now*, 6th Marrakech Biennale (2016); and the United Arab Emirates National Pavilion, 55th Venice Biennale (2013). Fadda was awarded the eighth Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial Achievement in 2017. She currently works as the curator for Abu Dhabi's Department of Culture and Tourism.

MARTA MESTRE (Portugal, 1980) holds a master's degree in culture and communication from the Université d'Avignon and teaches history of non- Western art at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa. She was curator of Instituto Inhotim, Minas Gerais (2016– 2017), assistant curator of MAM-RJ (2010–2015), and lecturer at the Escola de Artes Visuais do Parque Lage, Rio de Janeiro (2015–2016). As a curator, her exhibitions include *Histórias de rostos – variações Belting* (Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon, 2019) and *Visão Yanomami – Claudia Andujar* (Instituto Inhotim and Arquivo Fotográfico de Lisboa, 2017). She has published in the catalogues and magazines *Raw Vision* and *Kaleidoscope*, among others, and has sat on some important jury panels (PIPA Prize and Sesc/ Bienal Naif de Piracicaba). She collaborates with the website *Buala*, which she co-founded with Marta Lança, and is one of the curators of the publishing house Imago (Portugal).