

Press Release

## 13th Gwangju Biennale Announces Participants and Further Details



### Minds Rising, Spirits Tuning: 13th Gwangju Biennale

February 26–May 9, 2021

Opening Date: February 26

Public Programmes: Ongoing

Website: [13thgwangjubiennale.org](http://13thgwangjubiennale.org)

Journal: [13thgwangjubiennale.org/minds-rising](http://13thgwangjubiennale.org/minds-rising)

“Whatever it is, coronavirus has made the mighty kneel and brought the world to a halt like nothing else could. Our minds are still racing back and forth, longing for a return to “normality”, trying to stitch our future to our past and refusing to acknowledge the rupture. But the rupture exists.” – Arundhati Roy

The Artistic Directors of the 13th Gwangju Biennale, **Defne Ayas** and **Natasha Ginwala**, today announce further details of their plans for the forthcoming edition of the Biennale, *Minds Rising, Spirits Tuning*. Having launched the editorial platform of the Biennale, *“Minds Rising”*, and the online public programme with the forum *GB Talks | Rising to the Surface: Practicing Solidarity Futures*, **Ayas** and **Ginwala** are now pleased to announce 69 participating artists, 41 new commissions, and the Biennale exhibition venues in Gwangju, Korea. The exhibition delves into a broad set of cosmologies, activating multitudinous forms of intelligence, planetary life-systems, and modes of communal survival as they contend with the future horizon of cognitive capitalism, algorithmic violence and planetary imperialisms.

Speaking of the selected participants, **Ayas** and **Ginwala** noted: “So as to engender and invoke channels of affiliation, solidarity, friendship and renewal, both in South Korea, which has demonstrated her resilience during this pandemic, as well as globally, we are keen to show our commitment to artistic practices that enable mutating, itinerant, hybrid, and at times undisciplined

alliances. As such, we are committed to artists with mind-expanding and ever-inclusive practices, those that act beyond the binary framings of insider and outsider, legal and illegal, masculine and feminine, that are each invested in interdisciplinary frameworks traversing ancestral knowledge, augmented intelligence, and healing systems. Theirs are active references and experiences that are locally relevant while being connected to our shared planetary conditions today, transcending generations and geopolitics. We are grateful to each of them for their responsive approaches.”

### Participants (\* denotes new commissions)

∞OS (Dmitry Paranyushkin and Koo Des)\*, Pacita Abad, Korakrit Arunanondchai\*, Katarina Barruk\*, Farid Belkahia, Cecilia Bengolea, Seyni Camara\*, Quishile Charan & Esha Pillay (aka The Bad Fiji Gyals), Yin-Ju Chen & Li-Chun Lin (Marina)\*, Ali Cherri, Hyun-Taek Cho\*, Vaginal Davis\*, Cian Dayrit\*, Emo de Medeiros, Patricia Domínguez, Theo Eshetu\*, Gerard Fortuné, John Gerrard, Sonia Gomes, Trajal Harrell\*, Femke Herregraven\*, Lynn Hershman Leeson\*, Tishan Hsu, Gözde Ilkin\*, Jeong Kwan, Jumaadi, Karrabing Film Collective\*, Sangdon Kim\*, Sylbee Kim\*, Timoteus Anggawan Kusno\*, Kwak Duck-Jun, Gap-Chul Lee, Kangseung Lee\*, Sangho Lee, Liliane Lijn, Candice Lin\*, Vivian Lynn, Abu Bakarr Mansaray\*, Angela Melitopoulos\*, Ana María Millán\*, Min Joung-Ki\*, Ad Minoliti\*, Moon Kyungwon\*, MOON & JEON, Siyabonga Mthembu\*, nasa4nasa\*, Pedro Neves Marques, Kira Nova\*, Fernando Palma Rodríguez\*, People’s Archive of Rural India – PARI, Rajni Perera\*, Outi Pieski\*, Angelo Plessas\*, Gala Porras-Kim\*, Ana Prvački\*, Judy Radul\*, Sahej Rahal\*, Zofia Rydet, Jacolby Satterwhite, Arpita Singh, Tcheu Siong, Chrysanne Stathacos\*, Alexandra Sukhareva, Shannon Te Ao, Sissel Tolaas\*, Cecilia Vicuña\*, Ouattara Watts, Shen Xin\*, Tuguldur Yondonjamts\*

### Partnership with Historical Collections:

*Minds Rising, Spirits Tuning* stages an inquiry into the ritual systems of Korean Shamanism, especially the role of female shamans encountering and healing communal trauma, patriarchal violence and illness. Modes of kinship are figured not only between humans but also with the “beyond human” world(s), and moreover amid landscape ecologies of the Korean peninsula. These visual registrations are assembled through ceremonial amulets, hand illustrated manuals, folding screen paintings and artefacts from the collections of The Museum of Shamanism and The Gahoe Museum of Folk Painting in Seoul.

We ask how these modes of intelligence addressing the cleansing of energies, protection of the ailing body, and forces of renewal toward frayed and toxic relations may be harnessed through these sacred and ancestral forms of representation, beyond their surface readings as an aesthetic practice. Further, through a selection of manuscripts and paintings from the Wellcome Collection (London) mappings are projected of the diseased body and personified organs, from a Tibetan bloodletting chart to the lord of death, from Hindu cosmology, Yama holding the wheel of life. The Biennale integrates these broader cultural ontologies of health and systems of cure throughout the gradient of life and death.

## **Participating Biennale Venues:**

Gwangju Biennale Exhibition Hall, Gwangju National Museum, Gwangju Theater, Yangnim mountain - Horanggasy Artpolygon

### **Gwangju Biennale Exhibition Hall**

The exhibition brings together key figures from the contemporary cultural community in South Korea as well as visual artists who have featured prominently in its past, in order to draw upon the historic and existing artistic milieu. Engaging with the unfinished histories and suppressed chronicles in the Korean context seminal practitioners such as prolific painter Min Joung-Ki, photographer Gap-Chul Lee, and interdisciplinary artists Moon Kyungwon and Sangdon Kim assume a significant presence within the Gwangju Biennale Exhibition Hall. The ground floor gallery is envisioned as a space free to access to the public, with the new codes of proximity and gathering in mind, and featuring several new commissions by artists as well as archival and historical loans from the Shamanism Museum Collection and Gahoe Museum, with major collections on Korean Shamanism and folk painting on view. The works on view conjure sensorial entryways into the present while also inviting audiences into glimpses of commemorative aesthetics and sacred emblems of protection and recovery, as well as the groundwork of collective intelligence in a networked society.

### **Gwangju National Museum**

The exhibition here unveils a dialogue with conceptions of death and the afterlife, reparation of spirit-objects, corporeal limits of the body as well as acts of mourning through newly commissioned works by Theo Eshetu, Trajal Harrell, Gala Porras-Kim, and Cecilia Vicuña. From the ephemeral aura of a flower mandala by Chrysanne Stathatos to the loneliness of a desert necropolis by Ali Cherri, artistic and historical works will attune to linkages of ancestry, visions of the afterlife, non-western mappings of ailment and cure, and the foundational role of the undead in shaping registers of “the real” across the world(s) of the living.

### **Gwangju Theater**

Judy Radul will challenge the concept of visual perception and “the image” as such in a technological and biological sense, by pointing thermal cameras, usually used for weapons, border control, mechanical inspection, surveillance and fever screening systems, at a live orchestra performing at the 85 year-old Gwangju Theater, Korea’s single oldest cinema operating to date. Her installation stages an attempt to hijack a technology that usually appears in connection with weapons, border control, mechanical inspection, fever scanning, or ghost hunting. Photomontages by Zofia Rydet developed between 1975 and 1979 will dialogue with the theatre’s cinematographic history by blending surrealistic visions with glimpses into the everyday life of communist-era Poland.

### **Yangnim mountain / Horanggasy Artpolygon**

The Yangnim mountain area is symbolic of a layering of histories, from Japanese colonisation and the anticolonial resistance, to Christian evangelisation across the Korean peninsula and the geo-political / militaristic influence of the United States. These histories can be traced through the well-preserved examples of traditional Korean architecture, the cave tunnels dug as bomb shelters during colonial times, and the memorialisation of missionaries. The Gwangju Biennale will be situated in the premises of a community art space called Horanggasy Artpolygon, located on this sacred

mountain previously used as a site for sky burials and currently the base of a Christian cemetery. New commissions by Korakrit Arunanondchai and Sissel Tolaas will be on view, alongside recent works by Patricia Domínguez, Sahej Rahal, and Sangdon Kim.

### ***Live Organ***

#### ***Online Commissions***

Exclusively conceived for online audiences, works by Ana Prvački, Kira Nova, and nasa4nasa are presented in the forms of episodes and web series on social media channels and streamed on the Biennale's website, leading up to and after the opening of the Biennale. Hybrid forms of individual and collective expression, protocols of intimacy and codes of spontaneity are all explored in these newly commissioned artworks, as well as our relationship to bodies that transit between the spiritual, physical and virtual, beyond the grip of pandemic-induced alienation.

#### ***GB Talks | Rising to the Surface: Practicing Solidarity Futures***

Scheduled from September 2020 until January 2021, the public programme examines the tidal currents of people's movements, the recurring spectre of oppressive regimes, and the inventive tools of current citizen protests. The programme features more than a dozen online talks, sessions, and video recordings by scholars, artists, activists, and civil society actors from around the world; to address grassroots struggles in a discussion of shared vocabularies on strategies of public dissent, civic advocacy, healing communal trauma, indigenous solidarity, and environmental activism. Online and on-site sessions featuring Ruha Benjamin, Djamila Ribeiro, Esther Haluk, Nadège, Lokman Tsui, Vladan Joler and a.o. focus on algorithmic violence and digital surveillance; struggles to protect land and waters from extractive infrastructures; and the feminist legacy of democratization movements from the 1980s onward.

### **Publications**

#### **Stronger Than Bone**

The reader *Stronger than Bone* reveals various strands of our inquiry into these issues and engages wide-ranging topics, including the following: robotics and techno feminism; healing practices; sexual freedom and sexual violence; matriarchal cultures and shamanic deities; the gendered dimensions of self-optimization, digital identity, and gaming culture; how the trauma of state violence is passed to future generations; race, repatriation, and ecological violence in the Global South; among others. Co-published with Archive Books, Berlin. ISBN: 978-3-948212-30-8.

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### **Notes to Editors**

#### **Media contacts**

National press contact: Elisa Lee, [elisa.lee@gwangjubiennale.org](mailto:elisa.lee@gwangjubiennale.org)

International press contact: Sam Talbot, [sam@sam-talbot.com](mailto:sam@sam-talbot.com)

**Gwangju Biennale Foundation**

111 Biennale-ro, Buk-gu

61104 Gwangju

South Korea

T +82 62 608 4114

E [biennale@gwangjubiennale.org](mailto:biennale@gwangjubiennale.org)

W [gwangjubiennale.org](http://gwangjubiennale.org) / [Facebook](#) / [Instagram](#)

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