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Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art

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Call for Applications

Curators Workshop for early-career curators, educators, and other practitioners on the occasion of the 12th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art

Berlin, 6.12.2021

Directed by Reem Shadid

- Application Deadline: 31.1.2022
- Workshop Dates: 4.7.–10.7.2022
- Date of Arrival: 3.7.2022
- Date of Departure: 11.7.2022

The *BB12 Curators Workshop: It Speaks to Me* is made possible through the support of the Allianz Kulturstiftung, BMW Group, Goethe-Institut e. V., and Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa). Organized by the Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art.

Introduction

On the occasion of the 12th Berlin Biennale (12.berlinbiennale.de, 11.6.–18.9.2022), curator Kader Attia has invited Reem Shadid to develop and reimagine the format of the Curators Workshop. Following a series of successful theme-based workshops held in conjunction with the 4th to 11th editions of the Berlin Biennale, this iteration—drawing on Attia’s decolonial concept for the 12th Berlin Biennale and its thematic areas—addresses pressing questions about how to place artistic practice at the heart of what we do. Invited participants will have the opportunity to discuss these topics in close collaboration

with curators, speakers, Berlin Biennale staff, and invited contributors. In collaboration with the Allianz Kulturstiftung, BMW Group, Goethe-Institut e. V., and Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa), the Berlin Biennale invites a group of eight to twelve early-career curators, educators, and other practitioners to participate in a ten-day workshop.

BB12 Curators Workshop: It Speaks to Me

The *BB12 Curators Workshop: It Speaks to Me* takes language as a departure point to consider where our conversations have gone astray—from one another, our (art) practice, and our lived experiences. This insistence on doubting or repurposing language comes from an urgency to understand that language is not just the utterance of content—a mere tool for expression—but constitutes the act of speaking itself.

Art innately and persistently searches for adequate forms of language to address, engage, or transcend our current conditions. Rapid shifts in technology and modes of art production and the increased institutionalization of artistic and curatorial practice have entrapped us in a closed loop that recycles and regurgitates the same language within new and familiar forms, media, and aesthetics. Such forms continue to (un)intentionally reproduce decontextualized generic discourses, thus limiting our current conversation and actions. This entrapment also reaffirms our growing rift with(in) lived reality—creating a real sociopolitical imaginary stalemate directly related to language’s inadequacy. So, what do we do when the language we use is no longer sufficient to continue or change existing conversations given ever-evolving colonial, capitalist, and patriarchal systems and patterns? Where is curatorial practice situated within this conundrum, and what can it allow us to do despite its exploitation of language? How can we find and make visible language that is more rooted in practice, and whose aesthetics are derived from the specificities of its context? The workshop invites participants to consider how curatorial practice can reappropriate language that has been sequestered and used against us, in order to contribute to the emergence and redesignation of spaces so that other types of mediations, translations, and encounters may take place.

The *BB12 Curators Workshop: It Speaks to Me* will engage directly with the 12th Berlin Biennale, curated by Kader Attia, with participants contributing collectively to the program. Along with an expression of interest, applicants are asked to submit a document—a writing sample, image, artwork, film, song, sound, meme, ad, etc.—that encapsulates their interpretation of “language speaks.” The essence of the phrase “(that/this) spoke to me” is the precise moment when language is freed from a common predetermined meaning and value.

The program will commence with four online meetings during the three months leading up to the ten-day gathering in Berlin, which will include visits, workshops, and conversations with linguists, translators, organizers, curators, and artists.

Timeline

Applications must be sent by email no later than **January 31, 2022**. Eight to twelve applicants will be selected for participation by an international jury. Successful applicants will be informed by the beginning of March and provided travel and accommodation details as well as additional information about the program. Three to four online sessions between April and June will provide an initial thematic basis. *BB12 Curators Workshop: It*

Speaks to Me will take place from July 4 to 10, 2022 in Berlin. The exact dates are subject to change.

Selection Committee: Kader Attia (Curator, 12th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art), Gabriele Horn (Director, Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art), Reem Shadid (*BB12 Curators Workshop*), Eva Schmitt (Goethe-Institut e. V.), Dr. Ellen Strittmatter (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen ifa), and a representative from Allianz Kulturstiftung

Eligibility

- The workshop will be conducted in English.
- The application is open for early-career curators, educators, and other practitioners of any age.
- Some initial experience in presenting contemporary art (such as exhibition curation, art writing, organizing symposia) is expected.
- Participants should be available to attend three to four digital workshop sessions during the months of April, May, and June 2022.

Application guidelines

Application deadline: 31.1.2022

Application should be sent to: cw@berlinbiennale.de

Please send your application as one PDF document (max. 5 MB) that includes the following documents (in English):

- Expression of interest: a short text (max. 300 words) explaining why you would like to participate in the *BB12 Curators Workshop* and what your practice may contribute to the group
- One sentence (max. 30 words) that summarizes the core idea of your application
- A writing sample, image, artwork, film, song, sound, meme, ad, etc. authored by yourself or anyone else that encapsulates the idea of “language speaks.” This should fit on a single A4 sheet and be formatted as a PDF file (for audiovisual samples, please include a link to download).
- CV (max. 1 page)
- Contact information: full name (with preferred gender pronouns), email, phone number, postal address, nationality, and any other relevant information about yourself you may want to share

Provided by Berlin Biennale:

- Travel and accommodation expenses
- Per diem
- Access to all workshop and exhibition venues

Contact at the 12th Berlin Biennale

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