



EUROPEAN BIENNIAL NETWORK

Biennial Exchange and Residency Programme

EBN Residency Programme

OPEN CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Istanbul Biennial

Three residencies for artists hosted by the Istanbul Biennial in August 2009.

Residency position requirements:

The scope of the residency must relate to the **conceptual framework of the 11th International Istanbul Biennial** (12 September – 8 November 2009), curated by the collective What, How & for Whom (WHW).

The resident artists will work in Istanbul with WHW to produce new works that will be presented at the 11th International Istanbul Biennial.

Conceptual framework:

The 11th International Istanbul Biennial takes its title from the song 'Denn wovon lebt der Mensch?', translated into English as 'What Keeps Mankind Alive?'. The song closes the second act of the play *The Threepenny Opera*, written in 1928 by Bertolt Brecht, in collaboration with Elisabeth Hauptmann and Kurt Weill. Based on Brecht's assertion that 'a criminal is a bourgeois and a bourgeois is a criminal,' the play set out to revolutionise theatre as both an artistic form and a tool for social and political change. 'What Keeps Mankind Alive' will serve as a script for the exhibition—even a quick look at the lyrics discovers many possible themes, such as the distribution of wealth and poverty, food and hunger, political manipulations, gender oppression, social norms, double morality, religious



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hypocrisy, personal responsibility and consent to oppression, issues certainly 'relevant', almost predictable.

It certainly seems that, seen from the dominant contemporary perspective(s), Brecht's Marxism and his belief in utopian potential and open political engagement of art all look a bit dated, historically irrelevant, in dissonance with this time of the crumbling of institutional Left and the rise of neoliberal hegemony. But the real question is, isn't this in fact symptomatic? Isn't the way in which Brecht is now 'forgotten' and 'unfashionable'—after his immense popularity in the 1960s and 70s and a smooth transformation into 'a classic'—precisely the indicator that something has gone wrong with contemporary society, and with the role of art within it?

The similarities between the influence of rapid developments of liberal economy on the disintegration of hitherto existing social consensus in 1928 and in contemporary times are striking. Again we live haunted by the fears of approaching global changes, consequences of which could have lasting disastrous effects, not unlike those that transformed the world after the economic collapse of 1929, and today's questions about the role of art in instigating social changes are equally pressing as they were in the 1930s, when the Left confronted fascism and Stalinism. Or do we really consider them to be solved within an all-encompassing system of cultural industry and its contemporary malformations, confined to art genres, predictable as cultural trends, and profitable for the purposes of marketing?

As a writer and a director, Brecht continuously sought to slice open and display, then deconstruct and transform the theatre's 'production apparatus'—it is this approach that should lead us out of the current deadlock of 'contemporary art apparatus.' It is not about deus ex machina solution or forgotten method that we can directly translate, but about certain puzzle that could stimulate us to properly formulate problems of the present and revive the function of pleasure and entertaining and didactic role of art. At this time, the question of 'usability' of Brecht means first and foremost a repeated need to observe the interaction of art and social relations.



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Application Guidelines:

- Applications must be made by **cv, portfolio** consisting of a small selection of past projects and a **proposal** for project to be realized specifically for the 11th International Istanbul Biennial. There is no special application form.
- Applicants may be requested to provide further clarifications and/or additional material, during the selection process. This will not constitute any indication as to the success of the application.
- Generic applications, or ones not clearly relating to the requirements of the position, will not be accepted.
- Applications must be in **English**.
- Although the Istanbul Biennial will be selecting the successful applicant, applications must not be sent directly to the Istanbul Biennial. Any such applications will not be accepted. Applications must be sent **by e-mail only** (attached as word or pdf documents) to the **European Biennial Network**: contact@europeanbiennialnetwork.org.
- Application deadline: **15th June 2009**, inclusive.
- The successful applicant will be notified by the Istanbul Biennial, after **1st July 2009**.
- Only the successful applicant will be notified. We regret that due to the volume of applications expected, we cannot individually reply to each applicant.

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