

# Manifesta 8

02/10/10  
09/01/11

La Bienal Europea de  
Arte Contemporáneo  
Región de Murcia (España)  
en diálogo con el Norte de África

The European Biennial  
of Contemporary Art  
Region of Murcia (Spain)  
in dialogue with northern Africa

## **MANIFESTA 8 - THE EUROPEAN BIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART IN DIALOGUE WITH NORTH AFRICA MURCIA AND CARTAGENA, SPAIN OPENING 02.10.2010**

### **First General Curatorial Statement**

The concept of Manifesta 8 emerges from its particular context and a set of significant conditions that determine the manner in which each of the three curatorial collectives works on the biennial. First is the institution of Manifesta itself. Its history, although relatively brief, is established and well-documented, based on its insistence on curatorial innovation, a desire to push experimentation within the biennial format and its unique, nomadic structure. At each successive edition, these elements renew the challenges presented by its site-specific nature. In 2010, Manifesta 8 will be shaped by the Region of Murcia and all of its attendant qualities - the current social and political landscapes of the cities of Murcia and Cartagena and the historical, geographical and cultural trajectories that have helped form these places. A leading characteristic of Manifesta 8 is the request made to the curatorial teams to establish a dialogue with northern Africa and to locate this within the biennial, perhaps as a continuation of earlier histories but certainly in an attempt to reconsider the more recent contact between Murcia, Spain and the EU nations and the societies and cultures of North Africa.

These points of reference delineate the frame-work of a shared space of engagement, conceived and maintained by the three curatorial collectives. It encompasses a fertile ground, providing a set of conditions to work against and around. In the final analysis, the various projects produced by the collectives will exist as autonomous curatorial contributions, responses which have been independently generated according to different senses of logic and methodology, but also clearly reflecting the shared set of contextual elements. This approach allows for charged, multi-faceted conceptual currents and produces complex but complementary structures, attitudes and projects.

Manifesta 8 will consist of three curatorial contributions. Each of the collectives has developed its own scheme, in each case to span across both cities of Murcia and Cartagena, taking place in a variety of indoor/outdoor locations, media spaces and new/historical buildings.

### **Curatorial contributions**

**tranzit.org** invites the viewer to interface with a wide range of artistic narratives, experiences and specific art histories that explore the significance of the current, more closely related to the conditions of transformation which can be found in any society, rather than simply focusing on geographical factors. The group is working with the format of the exhibition as a multi-authorial space, an assemblage of installation, performance, moving image, text, sound, print and signage, a temporary space for negotiation, experimenting with the model of the exhibition as a *polis*.

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**Chamber of Public Secrets** conceives their project as a series of 'transmissions' to critically utilise artistic, relational and media(ted) strategies to explore ideas about what Spain/Europe is today, focusing on its boundaries and relationships with northern Africa, encouraging viewers to question their perspective. By challenging artists and contributors to explore new terrains beyond their usual practice, CPS searches out and engenders dialogues, placing them in the public realm through such practices as media production, documentary, artistic research and aesthetic journalism. CPS's curatorial approach encompasses the (mass) media platforms of television, internet, radio and newspapers, alongside other exhibition formats.

**Alexandria Contemporary Arts Forum** proposes a curatorial project to move away from the prevalent idea that art can be instrumentalised as a tool for social and political development and change. Instead, ACAF embraces the complex web of signs and signifiers that characterise much of our experience of early 21st Century life. Using their *Theory of Applied Engimatics* as a methodological tool to work with those dominant ideologies embedded in the collective unconscious of contemporary art, ACAF's exhibition and performance program exists as a solutions-based project wherein deeper beliefs and knowledge can be seen as signs pointing towards future, cultural innovations.

As a dynamic exhibition, Manifesta 8 can be seen as an intersection, a site where the curatorial collectives will present their response to the challenge posed by the notions of trans-regional and trans-continental dialogue, using different formats ranging from publications and a series of televised debates, to setting up an incubator to research the feasibility of producing a roaming, pan-African biennial.

ACAF, CPS, TRANZIT.ORG

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