

Méadhbh O'Connor

Irish artist at Antarctic Pavilion, 57th International Venice Biennale of Art (2017).

Selected by Alexander Ponomarev (commissioner, Antarctic Biennale) and Hans-Ulrich Obrist, Hani Rashid, Sheikha Hoor al-Qasimi and Nadim Samman.

Short Biography:

Meadhbh O'Connor (b. 1984) is an artist from Dublin, Ireland. She works primarily through sculpture and sculptural installation in projects that are underpinned by her interest in science and environmentalism. In addition to her studio practice, she is very active in the area which sees increasing collaboration between the creative arts and sciences.

Recent shows and awards include *Antarctic Pavilion*, 57th International Venice Biennale of Art, Italy, 2017 (May 12 – July 31); *Biosystem* (solo), Grizedale Sculpture, Cumbria, U.K.; *TULCA*, Galway City, IRL, 2016; *2039*, Artbox, Dublin 1, 2015; *Sculpture Workshop Award*, Fire Station Artists' Studios, Dublin 1, 2015; *Welcome Disturbances*, The LAB, Dublin 1, 2015; *Unknown Shores* (solo), UCD O'Brien Centre for Science, Dublin 4, 2014; *Towards A Dialogue of the Possible*, Mermaid Arts Centre, Co. Wicklow, 2014; *powerS + √roots*, Pallas Projects/Studios, Dublin 8, 2013 and the Artist in Residence Award at UCD Science, twice awarded in 2013 and 2017.

Meadhbh currently teaches an undergraduate module, of her own design, to science students at the University College Dublin (UCD) College of Science which prepares young scientists to think socially and critically about their discipline; and introduce them to the growing, international shift which sees increasing collaboration between the creatives arts and sciences at an experimental, educational, and institutional level.

Relevant links:

Artist's website: <http://www.meadhbhoconnor.info>
<http://www.ucdartinscience.com/meadhbh-oconnor-2017/4593570109>
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=641756107>

Email: studio@meadhbhoconnor.info
meadhbh.oconnor@ucd.ie

Antarctic Biennale: <http://antarcticbiennale.art>
 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/antarcticbiennale/>
 Producer: Ms. Anna Shvets annashvets@mail.ru
 PR contact: Ms. Nadia Doubach doubach@mail.ru

Directions, dates etc. to the Antarctic Pavilion, see the press release attached to this document.



The results and highlights of the first **Antarctic Biennale** will be shown to the public in Venice during the 57th Venice Biennale of Art 2017

Selected artworks created amidst the ice of the Antarctic, as well as photo and video documentation of the voyage – will be shown for the first time in **The Antarctic Pavilion** during the 57th Venice Biennale of Art 2017. The group exhibition will include works done by the voyage's participants and projects of the finalists of the Antarctic Biennale Open Call for young artists.

Private view: Thursday, May 11, 5.00PM – 10.30PM
Palazzo Molin a San Basegio
Fondamenta Zattere Al Ponte Longo 1412, Venice, Italy
RSVP by May 6 to antarcticbiennale.pr@gmail.com

Exhibition:

May: 12 — 6 PM
June: 2 — 6 PM
July: 2 — 6 PM
Day off: Tuesday

ABOUT THE ANTARCTIC BIENNALE

The concept for the Antarctic Biennale was proposed by the Russian artist, seaman, and philosopher Alexander Ponomarev. The idea of holding the most unusual art initiative in history came to the artist over 10 years ago, during his first expeditions to Antarctica. Thanks to the comprehensive support of friends, associates and partners in the project, the original concept has taken on concrete form. On March 17, 2017, about 100 people from all over the world – artists, architects, researchers, poets, writers and philosophers – set off on board the Akademik Sergey Vavilov scientific research vessel, for a creative journey to the shores of the 'white continent'.

The Antarctic Biennale is a biennale in process: a unique sociocultural phenomenon. It aims to create an intercultural and interdisciplinary platform for effective performance and communication in areas either with limited resources, or that are socially and environmentally remote: places that lie at the frontier of human accessibility. The project incorporates artistic, scientific, and philosophical methodologies to address the concept of "shared spaces" such as Antarctica, the Ocean and the Cosmos. The 1st Antarctic Biennale departs from standard exhibition models by re-imagining a traditional art event format. It is a creative journey that expands the parameters of what art can be today.

WHY ANTARCTICA? Antarctica is the last truly international space and it represents a model for the future. According to the Antarctic Treaty (1959) and other international agreements, the continent is intended exclusively for peaceful activities and scientific research in the interest of all of humanity. It is the last continent not to belong to any single state, and it is one of a select few places where international agreements really are

observed. Antarctica is a continent that encourages people to think about the future of humanity and culture. This provides us with an opportunity to create new ways of viewing life on our planet.

The Biennale was planned in two phases:

The strategic phase: In the months leading up to the expedition, a wide range of public events took place worldwide: Moscow, New York, Newport, Barcelona, Venice, London, Miami, Buenos Aires, Ushuaia. These included: Antarctic Biennale Vision Club meetings, public talks, symposia, performance art, and an international open-call for emerging artists. The active phase consists of a series of expeditions to Antarctica.

The first expedition – the 1st Antarctic Biennale – launched on March 17th, 2017.

EXPEDITION

About 100 people from around the world – artists, architects, researchers, poets, writers, musicians and philosophers – set off on board a scientific research vessel, the Akademik Sergei Vavilov, from the port of Ushuaia to the Antarctic Circle. The expedition of the First International Antarctic Biennale, held under the patronage of UNESCO, started on the shores of the Tierra del Fuego on March 16, 2017, and concluded with a ceremonial reception in honor of the participants in the Biennale in Buenos Aires on March 29. The Antarctic Biennale's Commissioner, the artist Alexander Ponomarev, said: *"We have all been witnesses to and participants in a unique phenomenon – a project that goes beyond the confines of a normal artistic event, a Biennale that is beyond time, beyond space, beyond politics. Now we merely have to understand and recognize the fact that we are part of a new cultural phenomenon which, without any exaggeration, is worthy of going down in the history of world art."*

Commenting on his journey to Antarctica with the Biennale, Eugene Kaspersky, Chairman and CEO of Kaspersky Lab, said: *"We have supported Antarctic expeditions in the past, but this has been the biggest project for us on the continent so far. It was an unusual and fascinating endeavor, made possible by the genuinely unique artistic passion of Alexander Ponomarev, the organizers and all the participants. It was an experience I'll never forget and one that I will always look back on fondly. The Antarctic is like no other place on earth; it's a shared continent without borders that's both beautiful and fragile in its barely inhabitable wilderness. It was the perfect backdrop for creative exploration and expression. We were also happy to contribute to the project in a special way: our mission to save the world inspired Argentinian artist and engineer Joaquín Fargas to create the Glaciator, a robot on a mission to keep the Earth safe from viruses by compressing the snow it steps on. Of course, we protected the Glaciator with security software from Kaspersky Lab. All in all, we are very proud to be the general partner of this project."*

During the artistic voyage, the participants traveled around 2,000 nautical miles (4,000 km), making over 12 landings on the shore of the Antarctic peninsula and on islands surrounding Earth's most southerly continent. In total, on the continent's territory, over 20 artistic projects were carried out, including performances, installations, exhibitions and sound-art experiments, as well as over 15 research sessions and philosophical discussions. The main conditions for the creation of the objects of the Antarctic Biennale on the white continent were not only artistic value but also strict observation of the ecological requirements of a human activity in Antarctica.

The results of this historically exceptional Biennale have yet to be assessed, but the project's author and founder, the artist Alexander Ponomarev is certain that the organizers have managed to carry out and even go beyond the previously planned program: *"If we're talking about numbers, then we carried out 150 percent of the program. We worked with the Antarctic, the Ocean, whales and penguins, fish and birds. On board the vessel we had an international team of astonishing people, each of them has an indomitable spirit of adventure and romance. Despite the continual pitching of the ship, in the lecture hall, every day, there was packed attendance for the lively debates, and global issues and the problems of the modern world were discussed,"* added Ponomarev.

The objects created in the region of the South Polar Circle, as well as photo and video documentation of the voyage – will be shown for the first time in the Antarctic Pavilion during the 57th Venice Biennale of Art 2017. The group exhibition will include works done by the voyage's participants and projects of the finalists of the Antarctic Biennale Open Call for young artists, the results of which were announced during the Art Basel Miami Beach 2016 contemporary art fair. A series of documentary films, television arts programs, and illustrated books and photographic albums will be made on the basis of the results of the voyage. The artistic works created amidst the ice of the Antarctic will be exhibited at leading exhibition venues and museums around the world.

THE ANTARCTIC PAVILION

In 2014, as Commissioner, Ponomarev established the Venice Biennale's first ever supranational pavilion – The Antarctic Pavilion – as an international interface of the Antarctic Biennale. The first exhibition in the Antarctic Pavillion, *Antarctopia* (2014), featured 15 world-famous architects, including Zaha Hadid, Hugh Broughton, Alexey Kozyr, and others, and showcased both speculative and realistic architectural projects for Antarctica. During the 2015 Venice Biennale of Art, Alexander Ponomarev exhibited here his installation *Concordia. The Antarctica: Re-cyclical a frontier in flux* – an installation by Hani Rashid and the Institute of Architecture, University of Applied Arts Vienna continued the successful exhibition history of the Antarctic Pavilion in 2016.

The exhibition "ANTARCTICA" will be opened for the public starting May 12 and will last till July 31, 2017.

THE ANTARCTIC BIENNALE OPEN CALL

First announced in August 2016, the Open Call received over 500 applications from 59 countries. The most active applicant countries were the USA (72 applications), UK (45 applications) and Russia (38 applications). The top 10 active participating countries also included France, Germany, Italy, Canada, Australia, Turkey and Mexico. The winner and finalists were selected by an international jury comprising the Commissioner of the Antarctic Biennale, Alexander Ponomarev, and members of the Artistic Advisory Board: president and director of the Sharjah Art Foundation, Sheikha Hoor al-Qasimi; art critic, curator, author Hans-Ulrich Obrist; architect and artist Hani Rashid; and Antarctic Biennale co-curator, Nadim Samman.

As Nicolas Iljine, advisor to the General Director of the State Hermitage Museum, cultural consultant and member of the Antarctic Biennale Board of Trustees said – the Antarctic Biennale concept had an inspiring influence on the vision of applicants. All received projects were original and displayed a sincere attitude towards Antarctica's unique context. Throughout, proposals demonstrated sensitivity one of the key parameters of the Antarctic Biennale open call – leaving no trace behind.

On December 1st, 2016, the results of the Antarctic Biennale Open Call were announced during Art Basel Miami Beach. The first prize – an invitation to realize a proposed artwork during the first art-expedition to the shores of Antarctica in March 2017 was awarded to two artists, Sho Hasegawa (Japan) and Gustav Dusing (Germany).

The intention of the Open Call competition was to give an opportunity to emerging and mid-career artists under 35 to be heard. Commissioner Alexander Ponomarev said: *"We need more brave and breakthrough ideas for humanity, addressing living together in the future – sharing common spaces. Having an emerging artist join an experienced and established group during this expedition is very important for the project. It's a once in a lifetime chance for the winners – and the one they really deserve"*.

ANTARCTIC BIENNALE OPEN CALL ARTISTS-FINALISTS

whose artworks will be presented as part of a group exhibition during the 57th Venice Biennale of Art 2017:

Andreas Lutz (Germany), 'Hgdnt', kinetic audio-visual installation
Ariel Spadari (Brazil) 'We met in ANTARTIC', sculpture and drawings
Banrei (USA), 'Massa notification 2017', multi-channel audio file, speakers
Bridget Steed (UK), 'Sur', rendered 3D reconstruction of iceberg
Jasmin Blasco (France), 'In From the Cold', antennae, FM transmitter and receiver
Louise Oates (UK), 'via self-assembly', installation
Matilde Solbiati (Italy), 'The indigenous population of Antarctica', mixed media
Meadhbh O'Connor (Ireland), 'Climate Simulator', single-channel video
Stefan Laxness (Iceland), 'S4.E3_Prospect_of_Love', film/animation/TV
Stephanie Roland (Belgium) 'Deception Island', video
Sybren Renema (Netherlands), 'Great God! This is an awful place', neon
Tomjo Blake (Australia), 'One Hundred Words for an Empty Vessel', participatory project
Valentine Siboni (France), 'Ballad Antarctica: few ways to get there.', video installation
Winston Chmielinski (USA), 'Melting As a Model, That's All', flags, thread

ARTISTS-PARTICIPANTS IN THE 1ST ANTARCTIC BIENNALE:

Abdullah Al Saadi (UAE). 'Antarctic Alphabets', Expedition Diaries
Alexander Ponomarev (Russia). 'Alchemy of Antarctic Albedo (Or Washing Pale Moons)'. Underwater installations
Alexis Anastasiou (Brazil). 'It's Cold out There'. Large scale projection
Andrey Kuzkin (Russia). 'The Phenomenon of Nature or 99 Landscapes with a Tree'. Series of performances
Eulalia Valldosera (Spain). 'Penelope's voice: communicating with animals'. Audio intervention on the ship that travels to Antarctica
Gustav Dusing (Germany). 'The solid state of matter'. Tent made of frozen cotton
Joaquin Fargas (Argentina). 'Glaciator'. Robotic & Solar, mixed techniques
Julian Charriere (France/Switzerland). 'Silence', Performance
Juliana Cerqueira Leite (Brazil). 'Vestibule'. Video Installation
Julius von Bismarck (Germany). 'Space Fish (Raumfisch)'. Performance
Lou Sheppard (Canada). 'Requiem for the Antarctic Coast', Sound installation
Paul Rosero Contreras (Ecuador). 'Arriba!' site-specific intervention, film, photographs
Shama Rahman (Bangladesh/UK). 'Truth be told', Performance with sitar on ice
Sho Hasegawa (Japan). 'Winter Landscape (Antarctica Version)'
Tomas Saraceno (Argentina/Germany). 'Aerocene' Performance
Yasuaki Igarashi (Japan). 'Bundling Time', Performance
Yto Barrada (Morocco). 'Abstract Geology'
Zhang Enli (China). 'Egg'

THE CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS: Adrian Balseca (Ecuador), Cinemateque de Tangiers (Morocco), Constant Dullaart (Netherlands), Eli Maria Lundgaard (Norway), Emile Brout and Maxine Marion (France), Emmy Skensved and Gregoire Blunt (Canada), Etienne de France (France), Eva and Franco Mattes (Italy), Hans Op de Beeck (Belgium), Jessica Sarah Rinland (UK), Julian Charriere (France / Switzerland), Karin Ferrari (Austria), Katya Kovaleva (Russia), Marcel Dinahet (France), Paul Rosero Contreras (Ecuador), Swetlana Heger (Sweden), Young Hae-Chang Heavy Industries (Korea), Yto Barrada (Morocco).

INTERDISCIPLINARY PARTICIPANTS:

Adrian Dannatt (UK), Alexander Sekatskii (Russia), Barbara Imhof (Austria), Carlo Rizzo (Italy/UK), Elizabeth Barry (USA), Jean de Pomereu (France), Hector Monsalve (Argentina), Lisen Schultz (Sweden), Miguel Petchkovsky (Angola/Portugal), Nicholas Shapiro (USA), Sergey Pisarev (Russia), Susmita Mohanty (India), Wakana Kono (Japan).

ABOUT THE ANTARCTIC BIENNALE

The Russian artist, seaman and philosopher Alexander Ponomarev is the author of the concept for the Antarctic Biennale and the project's founder and Commissioner. The idea of holding the most unusual Biennale in history came to the artist over 10 years ago, during his first expeditions to Antarctica. Thanks to the comprehensive support of friends, associates and partners in the project, the original concept has taken on concrete form. On March 17, 2017, about 100 people from all over the world – artists, architects, researchers, poets, writers and philosophers – set off on board the Akademik Sergey Vavilov scientific research vessel, for a creative voyage to the shores of the Earth's most southerly continent. Learn more at www.antarcticbiennale.art

ARTISTIC ADVISORY BOARD

Alexander Ponomarev – Commissioner of the Antarctic Biennale (Russia)
Hani Rashid – Co-founder, Asymptote Architecture (Canada / USA)
Hans-Ulrich Obrist – Artistic Director, Serpentine Galleries (Switzerland / UK)
Nadim Samman – Co-curator of the Antarctic Biennale (Germany)
Sam Keller – Director, Fondation Beyeler (Switzerland)
Sheikha Hoor Al-Qasimi – President and Director, Sharjah Art Foundation (UAE)

PRINCIPLES OF THE BIENNALE

Supranationality A cultural conceptualization of a space that doesn't belong to any single country. A model for a future world community.

Interdisciplinarity A visionary collective effort to find new approaches to solve the problems the humanity is facing using the achievements of numerous academic disciplines.

Intercultural Exploration Re-imagining the function of culture in the 21st Century.

Mobilis in Mobile! The concept of "mobility in the mobile" – transportable installations that are quickly erected and dismantled respect Antarctica's fragility leaving no traces of the artistic activity on the continent.

ABOUT KASPERSKY LAB

Kaspersky Lab is a global cybersecurity company founded in 1997. Kaspersky Lab's deep threat intelligence and security expertise is constantly transforming into security solutions and services to protect businesses, critical infrastructure, governments and consumers around the globe. The company's comprehensive security portfolio includes leading endpoint protection and a number of specialized security solutions and services to fight sophisticated and evolving digital threats. Over 400 million users are protected by Kaspersky Lab technologies and we help 270,000 corporate clients protect what matters most to them. Learn more at www.kaspersky.com

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