

Liverpool Biennial X British Council Connects 2023 - Delegate biographies.

Alia Swastika, Curator and Writer, Jogja Biennale Foundation, Indonesia

Alia Swastika is a curator and researcher/writer that expands her practices in the last 10 years on the issue and perspectives of decoloniality and feminism, where she involved with different projects of decentralization of art, rewriting art history and encouraging local activism. She works as the Director of Biennale Jogja Foundation in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. She continues her research on Indonesian female artists during Indonesia's New Order and how the politics of gender from the regime influences the practices of artists from that period. She actively curates exhibitions in Indonesia and abroad and had established Ark Galerie in Yogyakarta 2007-2017. Some highlights of her experience are as co-curator for Biennale Jogja XI Equator #1 in 2011: Shadow Lines, co-artistic Director of Gwangju Biennale 2012: Roundtable, curator for contemporary art.

With her concerns and focus on decolonization issues, she expects to learn and experience a new horizon in Liverpool Biennial that comes from the current reflection on global art politics and new cartographies.

Fatima Bintou Rassoul SY, Curator and Cultural Mediator, RAW Material Company, Dakar, Senegal

Fatima Bintou Rassoul SY is a Senegalese curator and cultural mediator based in Dakar. In 2020, she joined as Curator of Programs the teams of RAW Material Company. A centre for art, knowledge and society founded in 2008 by curator Koyo Kouoh, which she recently took over as director. RAW focuses on curatorial practice, art education, residencies, knowledge production and archiving of art theory and criticism. It works to foster appreciation and growth of artistic and intellectual creativity in Africa. The programme is trans-disciplinary and is equally informed by literature, film, architecture, politics, fashion, cuisine, and diaspora.

On — Liverpool Biennial | 'uMoya: The sacred Return of Lost Things' Khanyisile Mbongwa's curatorial proposal for this twelfth edition of Liverpool Biennial is a daring reading of the city of Liverpool and the layers of history it carries. Khanyisile Mbongwa's perspective suggests that we have come to grips with these issues, to heal souls, to privilege beings over things, and to give back a form of sovereignty to what have until now been regarded as a hodgepodge of devitalized matters. In other words, beings, capable of giving, receiving, and influencing our worlds in the same way as the thinking bodies we are. 'uMoya: The sacred Return of Lost Things', offers a glimpse of a world where the balance between the different communities from which we come can be reinvented, if not restored. This Curators networking week will be an opportunity to rediscover and/or inhabit the practices of the artists. Also, it will be an interesting way to create links with Liverpool based researchers, artists, and curators. But also, to reconnect with peers and colleagues from Scotland (Cove Park, CCA Glasgow etc.) and London (Chisenhale Gallery, Gasworks etc.) during this journey.

Greer Valley, Lecturer Department of Curatorial, Public, and Visual Cultures at the University of the Witwatersrand, Independent Curator. Johannesburg, South Africa

Greer Valley is a lecturer in the department of Curatorial, Public, and Visual Cultures at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, and an independent curator who is pursuing a Ph.D. in art historical studies at the University of Cape Town's Michaelis School of Fine Art. As an independent curator, Greer has curated several notable exhibitions, including "Unsettled" at the Dak'art Biennale in Dakar, Senegal in 2022.

Additionally, Greer serves as the vice president of the KwaZulu Natal Society of the Arts and as a board member of the Africa South Arts Initiative (ASAI). Her research investigates curatorial practices that represent the afterlives of African colonial histories, both within and outside museum institutions.

In terms of hopes for the trip to the biennial, I am curious to see how the notion of care as a curatorial proposition is translated into the biennial exhibitions and I am looking forward to meeting and sharing with curators from the southern African delegation as well as those in Liverpool.

Haikaeli Gilliard, Pharmacist, Artist Manager, Curator, Balcony Series, Tanzania

I'm Haikaeli Gilliard, a pharmacist, artist manager, and curator. My curatorial practice delves into the intersection between indigenous knowledge sharing and contemporary health practices. In 2019, I established the Balcony series, a platform that utilizes art to disseminate health information, livelihood skills, and business acumen among young adults. Notably, in collaboration with Picha Time, we produced a documentary called Mwanahiti, which explores the use of a fertility doll by the Zaramo community to educate young girls about sexual and reproductive health as well as social conduct.

Over the past two years, we have screened the film to diverse audiences, fostering dialogue, and incorporating the unique artistic expressions of various artists. This year (2023), I'm thrilled to celebrate two remarkable milestones: donating the documentary to the National Museum of Tanzania and having it selected for the Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF) scheduled to take place from 24th June to 2nd July 2023 in Zanzibar.

Outside of my professional pursuits, I find immense joy in reading books, engaging in deep conversations, savouring delicious food, and embarking on thrilling adventures. Looking forward, I'm excited about my upcoming trip to Liverpool. This journey promises numerous opportunities to connect with fellow curators, immerse myself in art experiences, absorb best practices, and uncover the hidden gems of Liverpool City.

I am aspiring to form new friendships and identify potential partners, and collaborators. Together, we can continue our creative endeavours long after the biennale concludes, working hand in hand to bring forth meaningful art projects that resonate with our shared passion.

Mike Mavura, Curator and Cultural Producer, Stellenbosch, Triennial, South Africa

Mike is a curator and cultural producer whose work combines art practices, social science methodologies and indigenous knowledges to think through civics, spaces, and design. As a trustee and curator, he was part of the team behind the Stellenbosch Triennale 2020 'Tomorrow There Will Be More of Us' whose ethos was to use art practices to think through common intersectional futures, aesthetics, the right to the city, and healing within a post-apartheid South African context. Mike's projects cover a spectrum of work; from curatorial projects (Mitumba: Invasive Species1- Jan van Esch Solo exhibition at GUS Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa, March 2023) to teaching beyond the classroom via his Creative Exchange Projects that take post-graduate students on learning journeys using cities as design provocations (Harare (2018, 2023), Maputo (2019), Durban (2021, 2022)). Mike is currently setting up 'Pamurove', an interdisciplinary learning site that seeks to integrate contemporary arts with contemporary ecological practices on five hectares of land in Domboshava, Zimbabwe.

Nneoma Angela Okorie, Independent Curator, Ghana

My curatorial and research practice is centred around exploring new forms of displaying & debating using visual, textual, activations, audio, or archival materials. In the past few years, I have contributed to projects that sought to create structures for our context, discarding pre-imposed ways of using space, co-producing, and curating with communities. Currently, I am pursuing independent research projects with INCHIKOTA—which translates to “gather”, a framework for my inquiry into the potential of interdisciplinary collaborations, participatory and community-engaged approaches to facilitate dialogue, artistic interventions, and play in public spaces. As a curator with a keen interest in public spaces as well as equitable forms of cultural production, the interrogation of cities as archives, identities, and playgrounds is crucial to me—how do we investigate the expansive range of experiences of individuals and communities, as well as their histories within these parameters. I am drawn to the theme of this year’s Liverpool Biennial. The engagement of historic buildings and unexpected spaces was compelling and sealed the decision to send in my application. In addition to exploring what the Biennial offers, I look forward to immersing myself in the best of Liverpool’s cultural landscape and exploring the city’s arts scene—independent art spaces, artist-run initiatives, public art installations, experimental projects, etc. I am also thrilled by the prospect of engaging with the exhibiting artists to learn more about the questions they are asking with their works, their perspectives on care, community, restoration, and artistic deconstruction. And of course, to share as well. I am open to all experiences, including conversations with other delegates and Liverpool’s cultural practitioners that lead to new partnerships, and to forming a network for future collaborative work.

**Oyindamola Fakeye, Creative Director, Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) Lagos,
Nigeria**

Oyindamola Fakeye is an Experiential Art Curator and Learning & Participation Producer working to facilitate contemporary art workshops, events and exhibitions. She is the current Executive & Artistic Director of the Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos (CCA, Lagos), where she previously co-founded the Video Art Network Lagos, alongside artist Jude Anogwih and Emeka Ogboh (2009). Oyindamola is a Company Director for Res Artis the worldwide professional body for artists residencies, She sits on the board of Arts in Medicine Projects and is a Director of Special Projects for the Global Arts in Medicine Fellowship, training art and healthcare practitioners on best practices within the field and is the 2023 Chair of the National Art in Health Week Nigeria 'Art and Human Connection: Uniting Through Creativity.'

Oyindamola has worked on various exhibitions and projects including; *Identity: An Imagined State* (2009) alongside Jude Anogwih, the first video art exhibition in Nigeria, featuring the work of 12 local and international lens-based media artists, Lagos Biennial II (2019) 'How to Build a Lagoon With Just a Bottle of Wine' alongside Tosin Oshinowo and Antawan Byrd and was the creative producer for Moving between is a virtual experience of the Kofar-Mata dye pit, a cultural and historical site in Kano Nigeria.

Oyindamola continues to consult within the art and tech space to support digital collaboration, creative entrepreneurship, grant giving and cultural relations through the creative industries.

Qudsia Rahim, Director Lahore Biennale Foundation, Pakistan

Qudsia Rahim received her undergraduate degree from the National College of Arts, Lahore and a Master's from Alfred University, New York. Before co-founding Lahore Biennale Foundation in 2014, Rahim worked as an associate professor and curator of the Zahoor Ul Akhlaq Gallery at her alma mater, the National College of Arts. As a curator, she has organised artist residency exchange programs and research-driven exhibitions that have showcased works by local and international artists. In her current leadership role as the Executive Director of the Lahore Biennale Foundation and Director of the Lahore Biennale, Rahim has executed numerous public programs that promote the role of contemporary art in public and non-conventional spaces. She founded the '*Research Cell*' as part of the Foundation's outreach efforts to encourage cross-sectoral collaboration on the domestic and international front and strengthen art philanthropy and scholarly research in the visual and contemporary art fields. In addition, Ms Rahim initiated '*Afforestation Lahore*', a scalable and nationwide project that brings together stakeholders from the government and civil sector to combat the loss of tree cover and address other urgent environmental challenges, and the '*Green School Certification Program (GSCP)*' that brings critical thinking and whole systems approach to climate education with the power of art and pedagogy. The LBF is currently working towards the third edition of the Lahore Biennale (LB03) scheduled for February 2024 which aims to advocate for climate justice through new and old knowledge systems to create agency, self-help, and awareness to build a community of care.

Robert Niathika, Curator Nairobi Now, Kenya

Robert Njathika has over ten years' experience working for the government, non-governmental organizations and academia. Currently, he serves as the curator of NairobiNow (url: <https://nairobinow.wordpress.com/>) events blog, and a consultant for both the Strathmore Business School's Kenya Small Business Development Centre (KSBDC), and the GoDown Arts Centre.

Prior to this, Robert was a Local Project Manager for the Structural Support to the Cultural Sectors in Kenya and Tanzania - a European Union funded Cultural Project that sought to improve livelihoods of artists in the capitals of the respective two countries.

Robert has also worked as an Associate Project Manager for the African Union Cybersecurity Convention Project at Strathmore Law School's Centre for Intellectual Property and Informational Technology Law, CIPIT. Robert is now the curator of NairobiNow, a site that is popular in Nairobi for arts and cultural events and has worked with both Kenyan and Somalia visual artists on different projects. He is particularly interested in Visual Arts and Live Music.

Robert holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science (major) and Economics (minor) from the University of Nairobi and has a CPA I qualification from Strathmore University.

Sadia Rahman, Independent Editor and Curator, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Sadia Rahman is an independent editor and curator based in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Working in Bengali and English, Sadia is interested in engaging the underused potential of exhibitions, publishing, and public programming to be generative spaces for non-hierarchical learning, contestation, solidarity, mutual care and also joy. An active participant of কে বা কাহারা Curatorial Collective, creating accessible public works through open, supportive, egalitarian and attentive practices is a key focus.

Holding a Master's Degree in Social Anthropology from Dhaka University, Sadia has designed and delivered public programmes, exhibitions, and publications in significant not-for-profit arts initiatives in Bangladesh and the UK. Motivation In Liverpool, I look forward to a concentrated period of exchange and learning with a community of like-minded practitioners from diverse backgrounds and contexts who are committed to examining and creating practices of care through exhibition-making and programming. Through the pandemic we have been intensely responding and producing, but in isolation. I am hopeful that the programme will provide opportunities for spontaneous questions, unpredictable connections, and unusual inspiration by bringing practitioners together to think about care and caring in focussed, but open-ended ways.

Sangeeta Rana Thapa, Director Sidhartha Art Gallery, Kathmandu Triennale, Nepal

Sangeeta Thapa founded Siddhartha Art Gallery in 1987 with eminent artist Shashikala Tiwari. She has curated over 600 shows of Nepali and international artists. She regularly gives consultations to collectors of Nepali art and initiates community art projects. She served on the Board of Patan Museum for six years and is a Fellow of the De Vos Institute of Arts Management. In 2009, she launched Nepal's premier art event The Kathmandu International Arts Festival (KIAF) as a tri-annual event. In 2011, she established the Siddhartha Arts Foundation as a non-profit and organized the second edition of the Kathmandu International Arts Festival in 2012, through the Foundation.

In 2016, Ms. Thapa co-curated the first exhibition of contemporary Nepali art at the Moesgaard Museum in Arhus, Denmark.

Ms. Thapa is the publisher of four volumes of poetry: Khulla Dhoka, Nirantar Khulla Dhoka, A Thousand Earths Thousand Skies, and Even the Moonlight can Burn. She has written a book on the drawings of Nepali artist Manuj Babu Mishra entitled In the Eye of the Storm and has written essays on contemporary Nepali art in the Gallerie Magazine (India) and for the Nepal Art Now exhibition catalog printed by the Welt Museum, Vienna.

I am very keen to visit the Liverpool Biennale to learn how they sustain their model and also to network with artists and curators to invite them to the Kathmandu Triennale in 2023.

Sangeeta

Shivangi Bansal, Independent Curator, Founder Danfe Arts, Nepal

Shivangi is an independent curator and the founder and creative director of Danfe Arts, a space that supports contemporary art practices of emerging visual artists, primarily based in Nepal.

Her curatorial practice stems from exploring the nuances of 'pause' and 'slowness' at its core, how one recognizes it in their lives. Her practice entails a deep appreciation for understanding 'process', as a method to curate.

She lives between Kathmandu and Delhi and is interested in exploring 'curating' beyond the boundaries that one inherits by being tied to an institution, place, or a region.

Shivangi is a former UK graduate and started her artistic journey after completing her masters in Cultural and Creative Industries from the University of Sussex. She also worked as a project-based consultant for the Culture team at UNESCO Nepal.

Currently, she juggles between the role of an arts manager, curator, researcher, and a proud dog mom.

Shuchi Kapoor, Founding Member Chennai Photo Biennale

Director Programs, Community Engagement, Partnerships, CPB Foundation Chennai

Shuchi Kapoor is a documentary photojournalist from India and the Co-founder of the Chennai Photo Biennale Foundation - a platform that facilitates learning, exhibition-making, and publishing opportunities in the space of photographic arts.

Shuchi works at the intersections of visual storytelling, research, and education, deeply curious about regimes of representation and visual cultures. Photography is her medium of inquiry. Her documentary work focuses on visual narratives on human rights, environment, politics, the aftermath of communal warfare, refugee life, gender and sexuality, mental health, juvenile and child labour, social & ethnographic cultural practices and more, spanning across regions, cultures, and mindsets in her country. She has published with The Washington Post, So Press (France), Al Jazeera, The New Internationalist, The Sunday Guardian, Economic Times, The Wire, Marie Claire, Ariana and has been commissioned by UNICEF, Save the Children, Oxfam, SOMO, among others. She is a Dart Asia-Pac Fellow and was awarded the fellowship on Trauma & Journalism in Hong Kong (2015). While her origins are from Ahmedabad & Delhi, she is currently based in Chennai, India where she leads community engagement via programs and partnerships at the Chennai Photo Biennale Foundation and the CPB Learning Lab. Follow her on @girlinthegalli and @chennaiphotobiennale @cpblearninglab.

Teesa Bahana, Director 32° East Ugandan Arts Trust, Uganda

Teesa Bahana is director of 32° East Ugandan Arts Trust, a not-for-profit that promotes the creation and exploration of contemporary art in Uganda. As director she has supported the development and execution of projects such as KLA ART Labs for research and critical thinking through public practice, the third edition of KLA ART, Kampala's public art festival, and residency exchanges with partners such as Arts Collaboratory, and Triangle Network. She is also currently overseeing 32° East's capital project, raising funds to build the first purpose-built art centre in Kampala. With an academic background in sociology and anthropology, she is particularly interested in the intersection between art and Ugandan society, and how artistic environments should be protected and nurtured. Before her directorship at 32° East, she was on the inaugural organisation committee for Nyege Nyege International Music Festival and worked in communications and external relations for educational non-profits in Rwanda, Burundi, and South Africa.

I'm really interested in how biennials and festivals can be places where we encounter knowledge that shifts both how we think and how we feel. If we believe that other ways of living are urgent and necessary, what are the kinds of knowledge that we need to bring these new worlds into being, and what are the methods used to transfer and actualise this knowledge? This biennial, with its direct confrontation with Liverpool's role in the world(s) ending creation of the British Empire, and the centring of indigenous forms of knowledge, is an incredible occasion to engage with these questions directly and see how the city of Liverpool is responding to the work and the proposition of the biennial.

Vishal Kumaraswamy, Artist and Curator, Bangalore, India

I'm a Bangalore-based artist-curator working across text, film, video, sound, performance & computational arts. My curatorial practice is deeply concerned with the creation of non-hierarchical ways of gathering informed by the anti-caste movement's methodologies of reclaiming contested public & socio-cultural spaces. Additionally, rooted within my own community's ways of creating smaller surfaces for equitable presence of our physical bodies within the duration of a gathering, I develop multi-format digital & physical curatorial projects that look at the long-term building of equity for marginalised subaltern communities across a range of geographies.

For the Curator's Week at the Liverpool Biennial, I am keen to learn about what the mounting of a city-wide curatorial project entails, the ways in which communities are engaged over the course of the biennial and how inclusive environments are fostered within its context. I am especially excited to meet and learn from fellow curators from South Asia & Africa as we share similar socio-economic concerns that often determine the shape of curatorial practice in our geographies.

Zarmeene Shah, Academic, Independent Curator and Writer, Karachi Pakistan

Zarmeene Shah is an academic, and an independent curator and writer currently based in Karachi, Pakistan. Focusing on global contemporary art with specialist knowledge of the Global South, and Pakistan in particular, Shah's research-based practice investigates ideas of power and control, geography, land and territory, ecology and economy, rights and access. Her current research focuses particularly on interactions between the human and non-human, and at practices that speak to ideas of collaboration, community, and ecologies of care.

Since 2010, Shah has curated and been involved in the production of several notable and often large-scale exhibitions of contemporary art institutionally and independently, in Pakistan and beyond. Amongst other prominent projects and appointments, she has served as Assistant Director and Curator of the Mohatta Palace Museum (2013), and Curator-at-Large of the inaugural Karachi Biennale in 2017 (KB17). She is currently Associate Professor at the Indus Valley School of Art & Architecture, where she also serves as Director Graduate Studies.

Liverpool Biennial Curators' Connect Week:

I am deeply interested in ideas of indigenous knowledge and healing, as part of my current research related to ecologies of care, and practices that focus on community and collaboration. Through Liverpool Biennial's program, I hope to be able to connect with artists, curators and institutions with whom I can build ways to share knowledge and collaborate in the future. This extends to my position as Director Graduate Studies at one of the leading art and design institutions in Pakistan, which expands the possibility and scope of institutional collaborations and partnerships.