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The 5th Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art Announces the Preliminary List of Participants of the Main Project

The Main Project of the 5th Ural Industrial Biennial announces the preliminary list of 55 participating artists and collectives with a proposed final list of over 70, from 23 countries and regions. This includes internationally renowned artists Carlos Amorales, Cristina Lucas, Pavel Pepperstein, Adrian Piper, Diana Thater, and Anton Vidokle. The full list of participants of the Main Project is to be announced in June. The 5th Ural Industrial Biennial will take place from September 12 to December 1, 2019 in the city of Ekaterinburg at two venues: The Ural Optical and Mechanical Plant and the Colosseum Movie Theater.

Responding to the overarching framework of “Immortality”, the 5th Ural Biennial seeks the possibilities of multiple futures. By probing into various historical junctures, the project explores the catalytic moments that could lead to the interruption and diversion of the global temporal axis’s synchronization process. It challenges the prevailing belief that technological acceleration would lead us to the end of history, to a singularity. The exhibition rejects the politics of acceleration as the only means of transcending traumatic circumstances in recent history and resolving current social and political crises. The concepts of immortality depart from the anticipation of the homo deus and metamorphose into various philosophical and aesthetic ponderings. How can we overcome, not death, but immortality?

Having these reflections in mind, the biennial will commission more than 10 new works to respond critically of the curatorial premise, from artists Zarouhie Abdalian and Joseph Rosenzweig, Agency of Singular Investigation, Evgeny Antufiev, Vladislav Efimov, Markelova Ksenia, Gabriel Lester, Qinmin Liu, Liu Qingyuan, Christian Nymapeta, The Recycle Group, Anastasiya Tsayder, Yan Xing, and among others.

This biennial’s main project, for the first time will feature about a third of its participating artists from Russia. The curator – Xiaoyu Weng, has done extensive research in the country and made meaningful connections with the local art scene to include more

familiar names to Russian audience such as Alexander Shishkin-Hokusai and emerging talents such as Ivan Petrokovich and Ustina Yakovleva.

Alisa Prudnikova, Commissioner of the Ural Industrial Biennial, Director for the Regional Development at the Museum and Exhibition Center ROSIZO:

“The magic of numbers is important for this biennial. The fifth project means that we have gone through 10 years of work. During this time, we have established the main tasks: to work with the local industrial context, to create unique environment for producing new artworks, to discover new names, and to study relevant themes of the global artistic agenda. The greatest international professionals have been working with us, and this year we are glad to cooperate with the renowned expert Xiaoyu Weng, Curator at the Solomon Guggenheim Museum, New York. The topic of Immortality that frames this year’s edition deals with the changes that take place in today’s world, which is in line with the previous editions devoted to mobilization and the new literacy”.

Xiaoyu Weng, Curator of the Biennial's Main Project:

“Inspired by philosopher Yuk Hui’s proposal of rediscovering different cultures’ cosmotechnics, the exhibition puts the homogenous technological future in question. When ghosts of ancient or recent history resurface alongside the rise of new technologies, we might start to ask whether new technical powers are forcing a confrontation with deeply-seated contradictions by bringing forth a so-called efficient and automatic system in exchange for the traditional values and forms of life. Many of the artists live and work out of places that are not their cultural backgrounds and origins. Such complexity is very important in foregrounding different cosmologies and multi-layered perspectives in thinking and practicing technology historically and its relationship with humanity’s future. In August this year, the exhibition title will be announced along with more details of the themes”.

Weng invites us to think further of these questions: “What is at stake in the futurity illustrated by human-machine hybrid, artificial intelligence, perfect emotional control, memory transplantation, smart cities, and space immigration? But what happens when there is unfinished business in the past? How can we reject a linear path attached to the image of technological progress?”

The Ural Optical and Mechanical Plant is part of the Shvabe Holding (Rostec Group) and is one of Russia’s leading optical enterprises. The plant is undergoing renovation, thus the temporarily vacant space will be available to host the exhibition project and a large number of visitors. The opportunity of organizing an international exhibition of such scale in an operating factory is unprecedented in the history of the Ural Biennial. It provides a

unique perspective on the historical development of industrial production and its long-lasting and intricate relationship with art practice. The second venue of the Biennial is the Colosseum Cinema – the oldest movie theater in Ekaterinburg built in 1845, located in the city center. During the Biennial, the cinema's auditorium and lobby will transform to open classes for public access and interaction. In addition to featuring artworks of the Main Project, it will also be the home for the public programs.

Ekaterina Baranova, Director of Communications at the Rostec State Corporation:

“Rostec acts as strategic partner of the Biennial for the second time. But this is the first time we host the exhibition at one of our factory facilities. The Shvabe Holding's philosophy extends to the transformation and improvement of human life and its quality. The history of the factory echoes with the Biennial's framework – Immortality, as it has witnessed the turbulent war times and interacted with generations of workers. We are convinced that today's industry holds a huge share of creativity. The biennial provides an opportunity to see our industry in a new way, to experience the unique industrial aesthetics, and to understand the production facilities and the products we make”.

Tickets for the Main Project of the 5th Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art will be available at the venues and at the official website of the project. To enter the territory of the Ural Optical and Mechanical Plant, visitors will be required to present their passports. Foreign citizens will be required to register online 5 working days prior to the visit. The website with registration forms and online ticket sales is scheduled to be launched in late June.

The Artist-in-Residence Program – the strategic project of the Ural Biennial – will also study the topic of Immortality. 12 artists from 8 countries have been invited to rethink the constant presence of the industrial traces in the Urals by actively communicating with the local context. 10 enterprises in 11 cities of the Sverdlovsk, Chelyabinsk, Tyumen, Orenburg and Perm regions will host the invited artists. The Artist-in-Residence Program runs with the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Sverdlovsk region and the partners: the Usmanov Foundation and the Okno Platform, Sibur Company and Magnezit Group.

One of the residents – Cecilia Jonsson (Norway) – will focus on mining in the Ural region, which she sees as the foundation of human existence. The Werker Collective will continue their long-term project devoted to labor on the basis of the Ural Optical and Mechanical Plant; it is based on the methodology of the Worker Photography Movement established by amateur photographers in the 1920s Germany.

Hannah Perry (UK), whose work often reflects the anxieties of digital age, will create a new immersive multimedia installation. Among the participants of the residencies are also Ural

artists, well-acquainted with the local context: Anna Titova, Krasil Makar and Anna Marchenkova.

Intellectual Platform has been an important part of the Biennial since 2010. It comprises conferences, reading groups, open workshops with an all-welcoming environment. The platform celebrates discursive approaches of knowledge disseminating.

On April 25th, the artist talk by Naime Perrette, who attends the Artist-in-Residence program has commenced this year's Intellectual Platform's program. These meetings are informed by the reading sessions dedicated to the works studied by the participating artists. The reading sessions will start on May 16th at the Ural branch of ROSIZO-NCCA.

The Intellectual Platform's key event is the Symposium, which will take place in Ekaterinburg, from September 11 to September 14. It serves as a pathway to understand the works presented at the exhibition. It offers the opportunity to contextualize the artworks under a theoretical and aesthetic framework, and allows new interpretations. Stationed in an ornately decorated hall of the Colosseum Cinema, art historians, social scientists, biotech scholars, curators and artists from different parts of the world will participate and debate the topics.

Berlin-based philosopher Yuk Hui, whose concept of "cosmotechnics" has helped to shape the narratives of the Main Project, will illuminate the visitors on the limits and possibilities of this proposal, seen in the context of philosophy and history of technology. Together with Hui, the audience can imagine alternate technological futures which exist beyond the margins of popular culture.

Anthropologist Abou Farman from New York's legendary New School for Social Research will give a Keynote lecture dedicated to our contemporaries who try to achieve the most literal and physical immortality through cryonics, biogerontology, and AI.

Symposium also invites influential Russian researchers: anthropologist Sergey Mokhov, the author of the book *The Birth and Death of the Funeral Industry*, will discuss the secular visions of immortality and the way these transform past and future generations; philosopher and sociologist Greg Yudin will present a talk on contemporary bioethics, a discipline that is largely responsible for future medicine and technology of defining the longevity of human life. Strategic partner of Intellectual Platform is the Ural Federal University.

The Ural Industrial Biennial is one of the largest international projects in the field of contemporary art in Russia, organized and conducted by the National Centre for Contemporary Arts (NCCA) as part of ROSIZO in Ekaterinburg and the Ural region since 2010. Once in two years the Biennial takes place in the non-exhibition spaces of Ekaterinburg and the cities of the Sverdlovsk region.

The Biennial explores the concept of industry both as heritage and actual practice in the Ural region. Utilizing art as a relevant resource, the Biennial integrates the region into the context of international art scene. Curators, artists, sociologists and cultural theorists from around the world define the Urals in new different ways. Over the course of the Biennial its participants were: 300 artists from 70 countries, 100 cultural institutions and exhibition spaces, 60 researchers of contemporary culture and history, with 14 plants and factories in the city and the region as its venues.

Initiators: The Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, The State Museum and Exhibition Center ROSIZO

Co-Initiators: The Government of the Sverdlovsk Region, The City Administration of Ekaterinburg

Organizer: Ural branch of the National Center for Contemporary Arts as part of The State Museum and Exhibition Center ROSIZO

With the support of: The Department of Culture of the City Administration of Ekaterinburg, The Ministry of Culture of the Sverdlovsk Region

Co-Organizer: The Center for the Support and Development of Contemporary Art ZA ART

Dates of the 5th Ural Industrial Biennial: September 12 – December 1, 2019

Preview dates: September 10 and 11, 2019

To view more detailed information, please visit uralbiennale.ru

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