

La Biennale di Venezia
The board of directors nominates
Daniel Birnbaum as Director of the Visual Arts Sector
for the 53rd International Art Exhibition 2009

Venice, 7 April 2008 - The Board of Directors of the Fondazione la Biennale di Venezia, chaired by Paolo Baratta, held a meeting on 7th April 2008 in which it nominated **Daniel Birnbaum** as **Director of the Visual Arts Sector**, with specific responsibility as curator of the **53rd International Art Exhibition**, to be held in **2009**.

Born in **Stockholm** in **1963**, Daniel Birnbaum has been the **curator** of institutions and exhibitions at an international level, and has since 2001 been Rector of the **Staedelschule** in Frankfurt-am-Main in Germany, an international academy which concerned an assessment of traditional and contemporary art as well as the **development of entirely new practices**. Since 1998, he has also been a contributing editor of *Artforum* in New York, with which he has been working regularly since 1995. Since the early 1990s he has also contributed regularly to other magazines such as *Parkett* and *Frieze*.

Following the nomination, **Daniel Birnbaum** declared:

“My recent exhibitions have all been close collaborations with artists, often individually, sometimes in larger contexts. The Venice Biennale is a new kind of challenge, but the principle remains the same: the artist's vision is at the center. How does one steer clear of the hierarchies dictated by commercial interests and fashion? As the director of an art academy, my interest has long been directed towards another kind of influence and another kind of significance. There are artists who inspire entire generations and these key artists are not always the most visible in the world of museums and fairs. I would like to explore strings of inspiration that involve several generations and to display the roots as well as the branches that grow into a future not yet defined. The geography of the art world has been expanding rapidly with new centers emerging: China, India, the Middle East... It will be my ambition to create a show that, although articulated into individual zones of intensity, remains *one* exhibition.”

The President, **Paolo Baratta**, for his part declared:

“With the nomination of a figure with such a rich variety of experiences, the Biennale di Venezia has found a curator for the 53rd Exhibition able to bring to bear original criteria for selection, geared to the artist's point of view. I am convinced of this choice, of which I am particularly pleased. Between the valleys of ideology and the valley of the market, there is the steep hill of quality. This is where the Biennale must plant its standard. The new Director”, added the President, “will also be an interlocutor for our reflections concerning the future development of more permanent activities”.

Daniel Birnbaum

Born in **Stockholm** in **1963**, Daniel Birnbaum is the curator of institutions and exhibitions at an international level.

Since 2001, he has been Rector of the **Staedelschule** in Frankfurt-am-Main in Germany, an international academy bringing together traditional and contemporary art and the **development of new processes and techniques**. The institute aims to train its students not only on a theoretical level, but also on a practical one, involving the young and artists in a relationship geared to “making art”. Basing himself on this important experience, in 2007 Birnbaum published ‘Teaching Art: Staedelschule Frankfurt am Main’. He is also director of **Portikus**, an exhibition space that has been part of the Staedelschule since 1987.

Since 1998, he has been a contributing editor of *Artforum* in New York, with which he has been working regularly since 1995. Since the early 1990s he has also contributed regularly to other magazines such as *Parkett* and *Frieze*. He has written numerous publications and has produced essays for catalogues throughout the world. Among his most recent critical writings are some texts on Olafur Eliasson, Pierre Huyghe, Dominique Gonzales-Foerster, Wolfgang Tillmans, Certih Wyn Evans and Paul Chan. His latest book is ‘Under Pressure’ (Frankfurt 2008).

At the University of **Stockholm**, he studied Comparative Literature and the History of Art, and followed these with further studies into the History of Art and Philosophy at the Freie Universitaet of **Berlin** and Columbia University in **New York**. In 1998, he gained his PhD in philosophy from the University of **Stockholm**.

In 2008, he will be co-curator of the Triennial of Yokohama and curator of the 2nd Triennial of Turin. In the period between 2006 and 2007, he was co-curator of *Airs de Paris* at the Centre Pompidou, of *Uncertain States of America* (with Hans Ulrich Obrist) at Bard College in London’s Serpentine Gallery, and of the 2nd Biennial of Moscow.

In 2005, he was co-curator of the 1st Biennial of Moscow, and in 2003 he was co-curator of the international section of the 50th Biennale di Venezia International Art Exhibition.

Since 2004, he has been associate curator of the Magasin 3 exhibition space in Stockholm.

Since 2001, he has been on the board of Manifesta in Amsterdam.