



## **The Lyon Biennial of Contemporary Art**

*17th September 2007 – 6th January 2008*

For the last 15 years, the Lyon Biennial of Contemporary Art has been one of the most essential contemporary art event in the world. Its Artistic Director, Thierry Raspail, has given it a strong curatorial direction by turning yet another biennial into the only “auteur” biennial. Each edition sees two or many guest curators working on a specific theme – for the last three editions, time and how we feel, live and create it.

### **00 – the history of a decade yet to be named**

**17th September 2007 – 6th January 2008**

Many venues including La Sucriere near the river Saône, the Contemporary Art Museum at the Renzo Piano’s Cité Internationale, the Villeurbanne’s Institute of Contemporary art, ie more than 121.500 sq. ft.

## The Artistic Project

There are now 103 biennials around the world, mapping news that is growing exponentially, apparently renewable at will, and interchangeable. Flux is prevailing over singularity. One hundred and three biennials, 103 lists of artists, 103 titles... a biennial opens roughly every three days, and they cover one another. Their mechanics inhabit and generate a perpetual present, stretching to infinity. How, then, can a biennial still have critical authority? In 2003 and 2005, we opened a debate on this new form of temporality – firstly on the programmed future, and then on duration.

And now the debate continues: starting with the conviction that there must surely be a history to news and an archaeology to the news of news (the undifferentiated present), I invited Stéphanie Moisdon and Hans Ulrich Obrist to reflect upon this challenge and conceive the 2007 Lyon Biennial. Their ambition is clear: to open the century and name the decade, but with humour. The 2007 Biennial will thus be a game, played as it should be with the utmost seriousness; it will explore issues to do with players, of course, but also with polyphony and, especially, the essential place occupied by the artist.

Thierry Raspail  
Artistic director, Lyon Biennial

*The 21st century hasn't yet begun, the century has to begin!*  
Alain Badiou

The next Lyon Biennial of Contemporary Art will open on 17 September 2007. The project devised for this 9th edition by Stéphanie Moisdon and Hans Ulrich Obrist is a history book written by a number of people. The history of a decade yet to be named; of a present that is endlessly arriving.

The project is structured like a grand game, with rules for selecting and casting the roles; a game in which some 50 "players" from around the world are invited to invite an essential artist of this decade. The ultimate purpose of this game, in which invitation is the rule, is to produce together an original landscape, to rethink the format and grammar of contemporary art biennials, and to create living matter from the archaeology of now.

This history book, published on the occasion of the biennial, is both the project's origin and its horizon. It is conceived as a space open to different voices and trajectories. It will comprise essays by philosophers, critics and historians, and the manifesto texts of each player, centred on a particular vision of the present and of what is happening on the contemporary creative scene. The dynamic system which develops through the formation of this community, enables us to reach beyond generational, geographical and thematic axes and to shift the hierarchies and conventions of knowledge into a feedback loop.

Stéphanie Moisdon / Hans Ulrich Obrist

## **The Artistic Direction**

*Artistic Director: Thierry Raspail – Production Manager: Thierry Prat*

A major figure of the international contemporary art scene, Thierry Raspail created the Lyon Biennial in 1991 with his long-time associate Thierry Prat and has been its Artistic Director since then. He is also Director of the Lyon Museum of Contemporary Art. On his arrival in Lyon in 1983, Thierry Raspail launched a brand-new policy on artwork production that remains unequalled in France. These “generic artworks” are to be viewed and experienced as pieces of time, in total opposition to artificial, reconstitution-based exhibitions. This has led to art productions and exhibitions by eminent artists such as Dan Flavin, Lawrence Weiner, Ed Ruscha, Robert Morris, Sol Lewitt, Robert Irwin, Joseph Kosuth or Cai Guo-Qiang, whose works Thierry Raspail was among the first in France to exhibit, this without including memorable shows dedicated to Olivier Mosset, Wim Delvoye, Kader Attia, Bettina Rheims, John Armleder, the new Japanese scene or Andy Warhol’s late work. Thierry Raspail inaugurated in 1995 a new building for the Museum of Contemporary Art, consisting of fully flexible premises designed by internationally acclaimed architect Renzo Piano to accommodate all sorts of artworks.

### *Previous Biennials*

**1991 – *l’amour de l’art***

*Guest Curators: Thierry Raspail, Thierry Prat*

**1993 – *Et tous, ils changent le monde***

*Guest Curators: Marc Dachy, Thierry Raspail, Thierry Prat*

**1995 – *L’interactivité, image mobile, vidéo***

*Guest Curators: Georges Rey, Thierry Raspail, Thierry Prat*

**1997 – *L’Autre***

*Guest Curator: Harald Szeemann*

**2000 – *Partage d’exotisme***

*Guest Curator: Jean-Hubert Martin*

**2001 – *Connivence***

*Guest Curators: Anne Bertrand, Jean-Marc Chapoulie, Yvane Chapuis, Laurence Dreyfus, Klaus Hersche, Richard Robert and Guy Walter*

**2003 – *C’est arrivé demain /***

***It Happened Tomorrow***

*Guest Curators: Le Consortium, Dijon (Xavier Douroux, Franck Gautherot, Eric Troncy), Anne Pontégnie, Bob Nickas*

**2005 – *Expérience de la durée /***

***Experiencing Duration***

*Guest Curators: Nicolas Bourriaud and Jérôme Sans*

## The 2007 Guest Curators

*Invited as guest curators this year are Stéphanie Moisdon & Hans Ulrich Obrist.*

### Stéphanie Moisdon

*Born 1967, lives and works in Paris*

After image semiology and cinematographic research studies, Stéphanie Moisdon started working for the Centre Pompidou in 1990 before creating in 1994, together with Nicolas Trembley, the BDV (Bureau des Vidéos – ie. Videos' Office), an artists' videos production, edition and diffusion agency. As an art critic and independent curator, Stéphanie Moisdon acquired a strong reputation with critically-acclaimed exhibitions such as "Presumed Innocent" at Capc-Bordeaux (2000), "Manifesta 4" in Francfort (2002), "Genesis Sculpture" in Reims (2004) or "L'Ecole de Stéphanie" at "La Force de l'art" in Paris (2006). She is also a teacher at ECAL-Lausanne and art editor for the Self Service Magazine, launched Frog Magazine in 2005 with Eric Troncy, regularly writes for Purple or Beaux-Arts Magazine and published artists monographies including "Dominique Gonzales-Foerster" in 2002. Some of her texts are to be published soon by the Presses du Réel.

### Hans Ulrich Obrist

*Born 1968, lives and works in London*

The Swiss curator Hans Hulrich Obrist often lists Paris, London and Vienna as his primary residences, but on any given day he can be found in Berlin, New York or Moscow. In 1993, he founded the Museum Robert Walser and began to run the Migrateur program at the Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris where he served until 2005 as curator for contemporary art. He is now Co-Director of exhibitions and Programmes, and Director of International Projects at Serpentine Gallery, London. From 1991 to the present he has curated numerous exhibitions, including Do it (more than 30 versions from 1994 to present), Cities on the Move (with Hou Hanru, 1997), the 1st Berlin Biennial (1998), Mutations (Bordeaux, 2000), Utopia Station at the 50th Venice Biennial. He was also co-curator of the Dakar Biennial 2004 and co-curated numerous monographic exhibitions of Olafur Eliasson, Philippe Parreno, Jonas Mekas or Doug Aitken among others. Since his arrival in London, he curated, among other, monographic exhibitions dedicated to Ellsworth Kelly, Thomas Demand, Michael Elmgreen & Ingar Dragset and co-curated "Uncertain States of America" at the Serpentine and "China Power Station: Part I" at the Battersea Power Station (2006). Accompanying his curatorial projects, he has edited the writings of Gerhard Richter, Louise Bourgeois, Gilbert & George and is the editor of a series of artists books including John Baldessari, Matthew Barney, Christian Boltanski or Douglas Gordon. The first volume of his ongoing interview project was recently collected in "Hans Ulrich Obrist Interview" (Ed. Charta, 2003).

## **Facts and Figures**

In 2005, more than **1200 journalists** from **31 countries** came to Lyon to cover the Biennial.

**4500 contemporary art professionals** (curators, museum directors, gallerists, artists, museum trustees, etc.) from as many as **34 countries**, including the United States, the UK, Switzerland & Germany, also visited the Biennial.

Thanks to its critical success, the Lyon Biennial not only caters for the contemporary art world but also for its audience: in 2005, more than **173 000 visitors** came to Lyon to see the Biennial during its 3 month-period. Guided tours for adults and children, kids' activities and general education programmes always have a great success.

### **In 2005:**

- **63 artists** from **19 countries**
- **290 art works**, including **21 new productions**
- **121.500 sq. ft.** exhibition space

## What the Press says

*The Lyon Biennale is a success – largely because it allows art to breathe.*

– Frieze

*For its Artistic Director Thierry Raspail, the Biennial succeeded in keeping a single and inalterable course: the one that consists of exposing art works rather than merely exhibiting them.*

– La Liberté

*While other European countries (Italy, Switzerland, Germany) have trumped France in the contemporary art scene, the Lyon Biennial of Contemporary Art proves that the French are interested in paintings beyond the Monet-Manet-Matisse trifecta.*

– The New York Times

*With its contemporary art Biennial, Lyon holds a meeting that mixes exigency and parties.*

– Le Monde

*Requiring at least two full days visiting it, the very rich Lyon Biennial of contemporary art is an invitation to experience art.*

– La Tribune

*For its 2005 edition, the Lyon Biennial of contemporary art is investing the whole city again and confirms its international aura.*

– Beaux-Arts Magazine

*A huge opening and a search for quality rather than mere novelty.*

– Financial Times

**N°46: Hans Ulrich Obrist**

*He is a man who can't hide, the most ubiquitous in the art world, sleepless in the Serpentine, roaming the world in search of a good space and an artist to interview. Hans Ulrich Obrist, the busiest curator in Europe, behind [...] countless high-profile shows [...], and now boasts a job title with more syllables than anyone else : Co-Director of Exhibitions and programmes and Director of International Projects, Serpentine Gallery, London. He masterminded the 24-hour interview 'marathon' at the Serpentine following the unveiling of its summer pavilion – anyone who can make a series of lectures look cool has got some kind of irrepressible brio.*

– Art Review Power 100 issue 2006