

The 16th Lyon Biennale of Contemporary Art *Manifesto of Fragility*



Hermès et Dionysos, 19th century plaster cast. 212 x 100 x 66 cm
Courtesy Musée des Moulages – Université Lumière Lyon 2, France © Claude Mouchot, 2010

Dates

September 14, 2022 – December 31, 2022

Professional preview days

September 12 and 13, 2022

The Lyon Biennale of Contemporary Art is pleased to announce its 16th edition. Conceived by curators Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath as a *Manifesto of Fragility*, the Biennale positions fragility at the heart of a generative form of resistance that is emboldened by the past, responsive to the present, and primed for the future.

The 16th Lyon Biennale elevates its perspective to a meta-historical panorama through significant loans from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, and from many of Lyon's leading cultural institutions, such as the Museum of Fine Arts of Lyon, the Lugdunum Museum and Roman theatres, the Musée des Confluences and Gadagne.

Curators

Sam Bardaouil et Till Fellrath

Art director

Isabelle Bertolotti

With the conviction that dialogue is crucial for a more equitable and sustainable future, the Biennale will begin to unfold several months before the September 2022 opening in Lyon through collaborations with several partnering institutions in cities internationally that will continue until the end of 2023.

Amongst these events, on October 1st 2021, one year before its official opening and as a preamble to its 16th edition, the curators invite Sasso, a Lyon-based rapper, for a free showcase open to all in the heart of the Fagor Factories. A starting point of a long-term project initiated by one of the Biennale's guest artists, this illustrates the curators' desire to work over the course of time in the territory through all forms of artistic expression, without borders between generations, institutions and practices.

LYON

The 16th edition of the Biennale takes cues from Lyon's complexly layered histories. Rising from the foundations of Lugdunum, on the echoes of Napoleon's declaration of love to the Lyonnais, out of the flickering images of the Lumière brothers' *actualités*, and from the obscure tale of Louise Brunet's perilous journey to the silk factories of Mount Lebanon, the destiny of Lyon is marked by the particularities of its people and the traces of their experiences that enrich the lives of those who come to know the city today. The 16th Lyon Biennale invokes these histories to inform an exploration of fragility that searches for connections beyond the limits of geography and time.

FRAGILITY

Our fragility is perhaps one of few universally felt truths in our divided world. Nowhere is this more apparent than on and within the body. Racialized, gendered, colonized, or depleted, the body is the first of many thresholds where conflict rages and resolves, illness festers and abates, and life in all of its complexity, at least in some sense, begins and ends. Our communities, strained by increasing civil unrest sparked by refusals to bow down to age-old injustices and endemic inequities, provoke in their fragility an enhanced sense of societal frenzy. Whether in the bruised body of a protestor or the ashen skies over the earth's inflamed surface, our awareness of our shared precariousness has rarely been more tangible or visible. Our fragility is inevitable.

Eternally cyclical, our fragility repeatedly rises to the fore, stares us in the face, and then seemingly disappears, while it lingers on underneath time's thick skin, dormant yet not gone, silent but never silenced.

RESISTANCE

The 16th Lyon Biennale assembles a host of creative practices and objects that variously speak to the vulnerabilities of people and places. What would become of our world, the Biennale seeks to ask, if instead of shunning vulnerability as a sign of weakness, we were to harness it as a foundation for empowerment?

In this revised script, true power moves not to conquer new frontiers but rather to continue on a march towards a home that is carried within. The Biennale presents a collective statement buttressed by a plurality of resilient voices thriving on tenderness and flourishing in adversity. A community forms where word, image, sound, and movement come together, culminating in the drafting of a manifesto for a world that is blamelessly fragile.

TIME

The 16th Lyon Biennale recognizes that artists, past and present, are often among the most vulnerable voices in our societies. Museums and libraries bequeath the perishable testimonies of their work to future generations in the hope that their legacies outlast our own mortality. By the same token, we are enchanted by novelty, so much so that we risk losing our appreciation for the contemporaneity of all art. In addressing these contradictory impulses, the 16th Lyon Biennale brings together works of art and objects spanning millennia and disparate geographies that impart enduring accounts of vulnerability and perseverance, bare their scars and deformities, share witness accounts of turmoil, or simply draw attention to the indelible traces of time. With access to the vast collections of museums in Lyon and beyond, the Biennale initiates a revised reading of diverse works and the narratives they embody.

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