

For Immediate Release  
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## **Lahore Biennale Foundation Appoints John Tain as the Curator of the Lahore Biennale LB03**

**Scheduled to open 9 Feb, 2024**

The Lahore Biennale Foundation is delighted to announce the appointment of **John Tain**, Head of Research at Asia Art Archive, as the Curator for the third edition of the Lahore Biennale, **LB03**, whose theme is **Ecology and Sustainable Futures**.

Following the success of the inaugural Lahore Biennale in March 2018 and the second edition in early 2020, curated by Hoor Al Qasimi, the Foundation remains committed to showcasing groundbreaking contemporary art from around the world. LB03 promises to build on the legacy of its predecessors, with Tain at the helm, by continuing to foster critical practice and discourse on contemporary art in the region and beyond. The Lahore Biennale has become a significant platform for contemporary art in the region, showcasing artworks from a range of disciplines and media. The appointment **highlights the Foundation's commitment to promoting cultural exchange, inclusivity, and accessibility through the arts.**

For the upcoming third edition, scheduled to take place February-March 2024, LBF will deepen its commitment to bringing art to the people through the placement of new art commissions and large-scale public installations at various heritage and everyday venues across the city. In addition, research into Lahore's history will contribute to the exhibition's emphasis on local and indigenous knowledges and practices as resources for thinking the future. It will also showcase place-making by devoting a number of projects on the Mall Road, a historical centre for public expression and cultural activity. LB03 will also integrate its discursive programming as part of its overall offering. All of these enhancements will foster a deeper connection and understanding of Lahore by diverse communities.

LB03's convening of emerging and established artists, scholars, and researchers addresses ecology and sustainable development, urgent topics in a country that in the past year has seen calamitous floods and degraded environment, aggravated by agricultural disasters, urban pollution, and social inequality. These problems, which now cannot be ignored, have long been in gestation. The exhibition will foreground contributions by artists that suggest aesthetic, sensorial, conceptual, and collective ways to address such challenges, while also underscoring resonances between the histories of Lahore and Pakistan with other parts of the world that face similar issues.

### **BIOGRAPHY OF THE CURATOR**

John Tain joined Asia Art Archive (AAA, Hong Kong) as Head of Research in 2017, and prior to that, served as a curator for modern and contemporary collections at the Getty Research Institute (Los Angeles). Exhibitions that he has curated or co-curated include *Translations, Expansions*, AAA's contribution to documenta fifteen (2022); *Crafting Communities* (2020), on the social practice of the Womanifesto collective; *Out of Turn*, Serendipity Arts Festival (2018); *Women Make Art History* (2018), the Guerrilla Girls' first new commission in Asia; *Yasuhiro Ishimoto: Someday, Chicago* (2018); *In Focus: Ed Ruscha* (2013); and *Greetings from L.A.: Artists and Publics, 1950-1980*, part of the original Pacific Standard Time initiative. Research projects that he initiated include *Independent Art Spaces of Taiwan* (2022-present); the *Art Schools of Asia* (2021-22) seminar and accompanying symposium; and MAHASSA (Modern Art Histories in and across Africa, and South and Southeast Asia), co-organized with the Dhaka Art Summit and Cornell University's Institute for Comparative Modernities (Hong Kong and Dhaka, 2019-20). He has lectured and published widely, and has served as a series editor for Afterall's Exhibition Histories. Since 2021, he has served as an advisor to Asia Forum.

## **ABOUT THE LAHORE BIENNALE FOUNDATION**

The Lahore Biennale Foundation (LBF) is a Lahore-based non-profit organisation committed to advancing cultural exchange by showcasing local and international artists and researchers and fostering social transformation through art. Through its flagship project, the Lahore Biennale, LBF provides a platform for art that encourages methodologically informed discourse and collective action in response to global and local issues. LBF is working to transform physical spaces in Lahore into discursive public spaces by elevating the relevance of contemporary art in Lahore's vernacular, bringing together different communities and stakeholders to explore new ways of experiencing and interacting with their environment.

In addition to its primary event, LBF organises workshops, talks, and other events that engage audiences of all ages and backgrounds. Furthermore, LBF has initiated a Green School Certification Program in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan as a key stakeholder, WWF-Pakistan, and the Lahore University of Management Sciences. This program recognizes environmentally sustainable schools that promote awareness among students and environmental consciousness among young people in Lahore. The aim is to create a generation of environmentally responsible citizens who can contribute to the sustainable development of their communities and the world at large.

At its core, the foundation seeks to democratise access to the arts and to emphasise engagement and capacity building for local cultural actors. LBF engages with underrepresented groups, and attempts to overcome socio-economic and geographical barriers while ensuring that its programs are accessible within the cultural ecosystem. By promoting inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainability, LBF hopes to strengthen the relationship between the arts and the community, creating a cultural space that is vibrant, engaging, and reflective of the diverse social and cultural realities of Lahore and the wider region.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. What is a Biennale?**

Biennale is the Italian word for 'biennial' or 'every other year.' It denotes an event that happens every two years and is commonly used in the art world to describe large-scale international contemporary art exhibitions. Biennales date back to 1895 when the famous Venice Biennale was first held, popularizing a term adopted by cities around the world to hold similar events. The 2024 Lahore Biennale, held in the historic cultural capital of Punjab, is in its third edition.

### **2. When does it take place?**

The third edition of the Lahore Biennale (LB03) is scheduled to open on 9th February 2024.

### **3. Who organizes the Lahore Biennale - what do they stand for, and what other kinds of activities are they involved in?**

The Lahore Biennale is organized by the Lahore Biennale Foundation (LBF). Qudsia Rahim is the Executive Director of LBF and one of the driving forces behind this pioneering initiative. An artist, curator, and former academic, Rahim is supported by a network of advisors, including art historian and artist Prof. Iftikhar Dadi, artist and academic Prof. Naazish Ata Ullah, architect Raza Ali Dada, advisor Faaria Salahuddin, and environmentalist & lawyer Rafay Alam.

For more info about the LBF and its team, visit: <https://www.lahorebiennale.org/>

LBF's other activities include Afforestation Lahore: <https://afforestationlahore.com/>

### **4. What are the objectives of the Lahore Biennale?**

The Lahore Biennale seeks to develop greater awareness of art among the public in our country and the region. All our programs are free and open to the public, which is a core value that informs all our projects.

Biennales have an important role in connecting the local with the international in places like Lahore. They enable the international art world to become more engaged with developments in Pakistan, fostering dialogue between local artists' communities and others from around the world. In this exchange, the local scene receives exposure to global developments and vice versa.

Biennales are still new to Pakistan, and the aim is to also create a nurturing environment and infrastructure that will contribute to the flourishing of the arts overall in Pakistan.

### **5. How will the focus of LB03 be distinct from its predecessors, LB01 and LB02)?**

The first Lahore Biennale in 2018 focused predominantly on the South Asian context. LB02 in 2020 engaged with West Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Africa and fostered a wider dialogue with artists from the Global South. The third edition of the Lahore Biennale, LB03, will continue to focus on artists from the Global South, especially from East Asia and Southeast Asia, with an equal participation of both international and local artists, and with a majority of women artists. The artwork and programs in LB03 will address its theme, **Ecology and Sustainable Futures**.

#### **6. Who are the Lahore Biennale Foundation's main partners and sponsors in LB03?**

Lahore Biennale LB03 has strong support of the Government of Punjab and its various departments, the Walled City Lahore Authority, the Culture Department Punjab, the Commissioner's Office Lahore, the Foreign Ministry, and the Ministry of Climate Change.

Lahore Biennale Foundation's Founding Patrons include: Syed Babar Ali Foundation, Nayyar Ali Dada and Associates, Ferozsons Laboratories Ltd, Nighat Ali, and Ambreen Zaman.

#### **7. Who is the curator of LB03, a short Bio?**

John Tain has served as Head of Research at Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong (AAA) since 2017. Recent exhibitions he has curated or co-curated include "Translations, Expansions," AAA's contribution to documenta fifteen (2022); "Crafting Communities," AAA, Hong Kong (2020); "Out of Turn," Serendipity Arts Festival (2018); Women Make Art History (2018), a commission with the Guerrilla Girls; and Yasuhiro Ishimoto: Someday, Chicago (2018). Research projects include Independent Art Spaces of Taiwan; the Art Schools of Asia seminar and accompanying symposium; and MAHASSA (Modern Art Histories in and across Africa, and South and Southeast Asia), co-organized with the Dhaka Art Summit and Cornell University's Institute for Comparative Modernities (Hong Kong and Dhaka, 2019-20). He has lectured and published widely and is a series editor for Exhibition Histories, published by Afterall. He also serves as an advisor to Asia Forum (2021-present).

#### **8. Where in Lahore will works be exhibited?**

For the upcoming LB03, the Foundation plans to showcase place-making by devoting a number of projects on the Mall Road, a historical site for public expression and cultural activity. The Foundation has been using various sites in the Walled City in its previous projects, and these continue to be of interest for LB03.

#### **9. Who will be attending the Lahore Biennale?**

The Biennale is free and open to the public and welcomes everyone. In addition to the diverse local public, international attendees include participating artists, art world professionals, museum directors, curators, and the press.

**10. What sorts of activities will be organized as part of the Biennale?**

Programs and activities may include curated art exhibitions, academic talks, public lectures, symposia, screenings, performances, and panel discussions. A program dedicated to youth is also planned.

**11. Where do I go for further information about LB02?**

For international and local press inquiries:

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