

For Immediate Release
4 February, 2024

It is said: In these hardship/economically challenging times, Art(s) is one of the areas where we see significant growth and positive projection of Pakistan

- 1) **Reception with the Chief Minister of Punjab and the Patrons of the Lahore Biennale Foundation and Bank of Punjab and Punjab Walled City Heritage Areas Authority to celebrate the Curtain Raiser Ceremony for the third edition of Lahore Biennale LB03, scheduled for the 5 October 2024**
- 2) **Preview Exhibition, of some of the artists from the Lahore Biennale LB03 (list provided below)**
- 3) **Signing of MOU between Lahore Biennale Foundation & Bank of Punjab as “Presenting Partner” for LB03 and “Institutional Partner” (From BOP Zafar Masud and LBF Qudsia Rahim)**
- 4) **Signing of MOU between Lahore Biennale Foundation & Punjab Walled City Heritage Areas Authority (From PWCHAA Kamran Lashari and LBF Qudsia Rahim)**

Celebrating 10 Years of LBF

The Lahore Biennale Foundation (LBF), works towards the promotion of arts in public spaces and public-centred programming in Pakistan and abroad, **commemorated its 10th anniversary and announced significant partnerships with the Bank of Punjab (BOP) and Punjab Walled City Heritage Areas Authority (PWCHAA)**. The event unfolded during a reception with **esteemed chief guests, the Chief Minister of Punjab Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi**, other guests include Secretary Information and Culture Danyal Saleem Gilani, Executive Director Alhamra Mr. Tariq Mahmood, Chairpersons LBF Naazish Ata-Ullah and Raza Ali Dada, Executive Director LBF Qudsia Rahim, Director General PWCHAA Kamran Lashari, President & CEO BOP Zafar Masud, along with notable guests like our patrons Nayyar Ali Dada, Ms. Nighat Ali, Sohail and Iram Naqvi, and other dignitaries. (President & CEO BOP Zafar Masud, Chief Digital Officer BOP Nofel Daud, Chief of Staff & Strategy BOP Raza Bashir)

4th February 2024: LBF hosted a grand reception to mark the Curtain Raiser Ceremony for the upcoming third edition of Lahore Biennale, LB03. The event, graced by the Chief Minister and Patrons of the Foundation, anticipates LB03's scheduled inauguration on October 5, 2024.

After the ribbon-cutting ceremony that marked the beginning of the event, Curator John Tain conducted a guided tour for our patrons and guests of the preview exhibition showcased the diverse talents contributing to LB03, including renowned artists such as Haegue Yang, Lo Lai-Lai Natalie, Hamra Abbas, Ali Kazim, Usman Saeed, Carolina Caycedo, Abuzar Madhu, Mehreen Murtaza, Imran Channa, and retrospective works by artists Zahoor ul Akhlaq, Mian Salahuddin, Sheherazade Alam.

Qudsia Rahim, the Executive Director of LBF, extended a warm welcome, expressing gratitude for a decade of support and introducing the exciting LB03 edition. *"The Lahore Biennale Foundation adopts an inclusive and context-driven approach to achieve its projects and goals, which challenges traditional critique methods and prevalent frameworks for curating, researching, and archiving material culture, built ecologies, and histories. The organisation is committed to being public-centred, and to achieve this, it embeds itself within the public and creates sustained dialogues to catalyse public-centred programming."* - Qudsia Rahim

Zafar Masud, President of the Bank of Punjab (BOP), addressed the gathering, emphasising the importance of corporate collaboration in promoting the arts. This exemplary partnership between BOP and LBF serves as a model for other corporate-arts relationships, providing much-needed support sought by the arts community. The subsequent signing of the MOU between LBF and BOP solidified a 3-year institutional partnership, with an annual sponsorship.

Kamran Lashari, Director General of PWCHAA, took the stage, acknowledging the shared vision of preserving tangible and intangible historic and cultural legacies. The signing of the MOU between LBF and PWCHAA solidified their commitment, renewing a decade-long collaboration both parties have worked on bringing attention to many historically important sites and have brought them back in public discourse and consciousness by repurposing them.

John Tain, the Curator of Lahore Biennale LB03, presented the title, *"Of Mountains and Seas"* for the upcoming Biennale, showcasing the convergence of art, environmental awareness, and global collaboration. LB03 aims to focus on the pressing environmental issues facing Pakistan and the world at large while also promoting creative solutions that challenge and innovate on traditional conceptions of sustainability by gathering new and old knowledge-based systems from industrial and natural worlds, economic and political systems, natural and social ecosystems, and imaginative and aesthetic explorations. Framing ecologies and sustainable futures as integral themes, LB03 and its initiatives bring together a diverse community of artists, researchers, and thinkers. The goal is to actively implement forms of solidarity, emphasising collaborative efforts to address challenges shared across multiple locations. The 2024 Biennale strives to foster such potential solidarities, facilitate the exchange of knowledge concerning historical connections, and propose collective pathways for navigating the future together.

Co-Chair Naazish Ata-Ullah shared brief remarks, highlighting the significance of the partnerships forged. Reflecting on a decade of achievements, Prof. Ata-Ullah highlighted LBF's commitment to environmental initiatives, including the Certified Afforestation Lahore Group (ALG). Notable achievements include planting 2.5 million trees, advocating for environmental laws, and implementing the Green School Certification Program (GSCP), promoting climate education in schools.

Chief Minister Mr. Mohsin Naqvi delivered the closing remarks, encapsulating the spirit of the event and looking forward to the LB03 edition as a symbol of the democratisation of art in public spaces and reclaiming our creative heritage. He emphasised how the Arts play a vital role in sustaining a balanced and humane society. Through the introduction of art in public spaces and outreach activities in the field, culminating in the advent of an

arts biennale every two years in Lahore, the LBF aims to foster a meaningful and sustained dialogue between the public and the Arts.

Acknowledgments: (This could not have been possible without the help of the CM office, the Information and Culture Department Punjab, Commissioner Office Lahore, Punjab Walled Cities and Heritage Areas Authority (previously WCLA), Environment Protection Department (EPD), the Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA), Environment Protection Department, Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Climate Change for their resources and support.) LBF honours the loving memory of Abdullah Sumbal, one of Pakistan's finest public servants.

BIOGRAPHY OF THE CURATOR

John Tain, Curator of LB03, served as Head of Research at Asia Art Archive from 2017 to 2023. Projects there included AAA's contribution to documenta fifteen (2022); the Art Schools of Asia seminar and symposium (2021-22); the exhibition Crafting Communities (2020), devoted to Thailand-based Womanifesto; and MAHASSA (Modern Art Histories in and across Africa, and South and Southeast Asia, 2019-2020), a collaboration with the Dhaka Art Summit and the Institute for Comparative Modernities at Cornell University. He served as a series editor for Afterall's Exhibition Histories, and is a co-editor for the Intersecting Modernisms project, with Pamela Corey, Iftikhar Dadi, Salah Hassan, Mari-Carmen Ramirez, and Ming Tiampo. He was previously a curator for modern and contemporary collections at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, and currently is an advisor for Asia Forum, an ongoing collateral event at the Venice Biennale.

ABOUT THE LAHORE BIENNALE FOUNDATION

The Lahore Biennale Foundation (LBF) is a Lahore-based non-profit organisation committed to advancing cultural exchange by working with 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 Italian 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, popularising a term adopted by cities around the world to hold similar events. The 2024 Lahore Biennale, held in the historic cultural capital of Punjab, will be the third edition.

2. When does it take place?

The third edition of the Lahore Biennale (LB03) is scheduled to open on October 5th, 2024, and will be on view until early November.

3. Who organises the Lahore Biennale, and what other activities are they involved in?

The Lahore Biennale is organised 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, 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 people of 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 LB03 be different 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 and 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, and in particular from East and Southeast Asia, with an equal participation of both international and local artists. The artwork and programs in LB03 will address the theme of ecology and sustainable futures.

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

Lahore Biennale LB03 has the strong support of the Government of Punjab and its various departments, including the Department of Information and Culture Punjab, the Ministry of Information and Culture Punjab, and the Commissioner's Office Lahore; the Walled Cities & Heritage Areas Authority, formally known as Walled City Lahore Authority; and the Foreign Ministry, and the Ministry of Climate Change. The Climate Congress is supported by a generous grant from the Getty Foundation.

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

7. Who is the curator of LB03?

John Tain will curate the third edition of the Lahore Biennale. As Head of Research at Asia Art Archive (AAA) from 2017 to 2023, he led a number of projects. Exhibitions he curated and co-curated include "Translations, Expansions", AAA's contribution to Documenta Fifteen (2022); "Crafting Communities", AAA, Hong Kong (2020), about the Thailand-based Womanifesto collective project; "Out of Turn", Serendipity Arts Festival (2018); and Women Make Art History (2018), a commission with the Guerrilla Girls during Art Basel Hong Kong 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 served as a series editor for Exhibition Histories, published by Afterall. He has also been an advisor to Asia Forum, a collateral event at the Venice Biennale.

8. Where in Lahore will works be exhibited?

The upcoming LB03, like previous editions, will be located at venues across the city, including heritage sites and lesser-known but historical locales. The Foundation has worked with various locations in the Walled City in its previous projects, and these will continue to be of interest for LB03, but it will also debut some venues as well. In particular, the Foundation plans to showcase art's involvement in place-making by devoting a number of projects on the Mall Road, a historical site for public expression and cultural activity.

9. Who can attend 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 organised as part of the Biennale?

Programs and activities will 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?

International and local press inquiries can be addressed to:
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