OBOE Journal, special issue: Visual Art Biennials on the African Continent

Deadline: Jan 15, 2025

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Upcoming special issue of OBOE Journal “Visual Art Biennials on the African Continent”.

Edited by N’Goné Fall and Sabrina Moura.

In September 2005, the Ivorian critic and historian Yacouba Konaté was invited to curate the 7th iteration of the Dakar Biennial (2006), with the mission of creating an “authentic African art biennial”. But what would an African biennial be? — he asked. “In order to create something African, it is not enough simply to be African. And if an African can create a non-African biennale, it is no less true that a non-African can create an African biennale. Identity is not inherent” (Konaté, 2013:492).

This special issue of OBOE Journal takes Konaté’s inquiries as a starting point to critically reflect on the role and diversity of visual art biennials across the African continent. We invite contributions that challenge essentialised notions of African identity and explore the complex histories and networks fostered by these initiatives. The aim is to deepen the understanding of biennial platforms and their historical significance in post-Independence cultural scenes, examining their impact not only within the global art world but also on local landscapes.

We welcome submissions that explore the implications of hosting visual art biennials in diverse African contexts, and/or feature critical examinations of specific biennials such as those in Lubumbashi, Kinshasa (Yango and Congo), Kampala, Casablanca, Marrakech, Cairo, Dakar, Cotonou, Lagos, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Luanda Triennale, and the Bamako African Photography Encounters.

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:
• Examining the evolution and impact of visual art biennials within African curatorial discourse;
• Analysing the resonance and influence of African-based biennials within the global art system;
• Exploring the dynamics of local and international audience participation, educational programs, and community involvement in African biennials;
• Assessing the role and impact of artists’ networks in shaping the content and discourse of African biennials;
• Analysing the implications of international collaborations, cultural diplomacy, and the legacy of colonial cultural networks on the formation and execution of visual art African biennials;
• Understanding how these intersect with local cultural production landscapes and contribute to regional artistic networks;

• Addressing challenges and methodologies in archiving and historicising art biennial events specific to the African context.

Important dates.

Abstract submission: 1 October 2024.
Abstract should be in English, and of a maximum length of 400 words. Please provide 5 to 8 keywords and up to 5 references. The abstract should be accompanied by a brief biographical note of 150 words. Proposals must be sent to the journal's email (info@oboejournal.com) no later than 1 October 2024. Selected proposals will be announced by mid-October 2024.

Article submission: 15 January 2025.

Article submissions should be made through OBOE's website: http://www.oboejournal.com/index.php/oboe/user/register.

Articles should be comprised within 5,000 and 8,000 words, footnotes included. Shorter contributions (3,000 words) with a more essayistic/testimonial/curatorial approach will be included in the journal's column "Echoes". All texts must follow the journal's style guidelines: http://www.oboejournal.com/index.php/oboe/information/authors. Non-native English speakers are strongly recommended to get their manuscript reviewed before submitting.
Images should be free from copyright and submitted along with the text.

Peer-review results: April 2025.
Articles will undergo double peer review in accordance with the journal's procedures. Authors will be required to make revisions based on peer-review feedback within one month of receiving the results.

Publication date: September 2025.

About OBOE Journal:
OBOE Journal On Biennials and Other Exhibitions is an annual, open access, and peer-reviewed journal devoted to international academic research around art and exhibitions. It has been rated as a 'scientific journal' by the Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes (ANVUR) in the academic field of "Antiquities, philology, literary studies, art history (Area 10)".

Contact Information:
For any queries or further assistance, please contact the editors: info@oboejournal.com.

Reference:

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