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For: OSTRALE - Centre for Contemporary Art

OSTRALE Biennale - 15th International Exhibition of Contemporary Art, 7 June - 5 October 2025

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**‘NEVER GREY’ - OSTRALE Biennale
announces title for 2025**

The international exhibition of contemporary art OSTRALE Biennale 2025 will take place from 7 June to 5 October 2025 under the title ‘NEVER GREY’. For the 15th time, the OSTRALE will bring together international artistic positions in Dresden, for the third time in the robotron canteen, an as yet unrenovated, temporarily used pavilion building of Eastern Modernism. Art historian Drorit Gur Arie, part of the OSTRALE curatorial team for the third time after 2016 and 2019, talks about her perspective on this year’s exhibition.

The curators relate the motto of this year’s Biennale to an aphorism by Jürgen Wilbert (*1945): ‘Those who think in black and white dread shades of grey.’ The curators: ‘NEVER GREY as the dissolution of shadows, of fog, of darkness, of lostness towards the perception and opening up of the colourful diversity that surrounds us. Colour, used as a catalyst, activates and intensifies perception in order to make the diverse viewing possibilities and the colourful discourses and themes within the exhibition accessible. Our focus lies in the examination of the current social issues that concern us in all their complexity. At the heart of the curatorial approach is the idea of colour as a material, as a symbol, as a dialogue, as well as in the context of movement, poetry, spirituality or science. Colours are an expression of identity, of a cultural and political space.’

This year’s OSTRALE Biennale was curated by (vitae see below, photos attached):

- Drorit Gur Arie, art historian, curator / Israel
- Dr Veronika Krülle Kotoucova, art historian, curator, OSTRALE / Czech Republic
- Evelyn Drewes Gallery Hamburg, Berlin / Germany

Artistic direction and spatial choreography:

- Andrea Hilger, Director OSTRALE - Centre for Contemporary Art / Germany

The OSTRALE Biennale ‘O23’ attracted 29,000 visitors in just a few weeks. It will take place from 7 June to 5 October 2025 in the robotron-Kantine, Zinzendorfstraße 5 / corner of Lingnerallee, D-01069 Dresden. The still unrenovated, temporarily used pavilion building of the Ostmoderne will be used by the OSTRALE alternately with the Kunsthaus Dresden.

www.ostrale.de

Interview with Drorit Gur Arie:

How did you come up with the selection of artists?

I selected artists from the space that spans the language and culture of the Middle East and Mediterranean: Israeli artists, a Palestinian artist, a Turkish-German artist, and a Cypriot artist. Steeped in rich, ancient history and imbued with tension-filled frequencies and energies, this region holds affinities and shared experiences. The light in it is distinct, influencing the perception of color and its role in our lives. I associate color with identity, gender, landscape, and geopolitical space, regarding it as a reflection of the soul, affecting both personal and collective memory. Color plays a vital role in each of the works I have selected. It speaks of reality, virtual reality, memory, and trauma, among other things.

The colors black and white stand out in the work of Palestinian artist Hannan Abu-Hussein, where they articulate her life within the duality of two societies and cultures, being a Palestinian artist, a woman, navigating within Israeli society. Similarly, the black-and-white arrangements of scattered pita bread in Yosef Joseph Yaakov Dadoune's animation become a comment at once playful and poignant on order and randomness, while also hinting at a possible utopia—one rooted in the Mediterranean and united by food. The covers of books by historian Jacques Benoist-Méchin appear on the margins of some of the photographs. These are books addressing the Middle East in the 1960s, topics that remain relevant today. The two colors dominating Cypriot artist Alexia Vassiliou's film, a black and a white accompany a sound ceremony, conjuring up the past echoes of her occupied hometown, Famagusta.

Another group of artists explores color from the perspectives of both actual reality and virtual or fictional reality. Ran Slavin blends hyper-realistic virtual reality, experimental techno, and vivid digital landscapes, weaving AI-animated scenes and 3D virtual characters into a manifesto on reality. Lior Tamim introduces an oracle—a prophet with a computerized voice spouting random sentences, asking how color might define territory.

What role does color play for you as a symbol of dialogue?

In the color spectrum, each hue has its own unique character, yet colors also function as complementary opposites. When mixed, two colors combine to form a third. I see this transition from primary colors to their combinations as a metaphor for dialogue—one that is always open to new possibilities and connections. Just as colors can shift, both optically and materially, so too can the connection between people, identities, and nationalities, with the hope that such dialogue will give birth to a new form of existence. For example, the collaboration between Israeli artist Shahar Marcus and German-Turkish artist Nezaket Ekici mirrors the concept of complementary colors. Both artists work in video and performance, each bringing their distinct energy, and together they create a fabric that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Why do you think it is so important to look at the perspective of an Israeli curator in Germany right now?

Israel is a space that weaves together a tapestry of identities, religions, and nationalities—a diverse palette of colors. In these times, fostering open dialogue and a horizon for collaboration is of paramount importance. As an Israeli curator, I strive to bring forth a broad range of voices, unlocking the artistic potential for dialogue, connection, as well as the expression of resistance and

disagreement. It is impossible to exist in any other way. Given its own complex history, I find Germany to be a fascinating and inspiring creative space for me as well.

Could you confirm your statement: ‘Colours are an expression of identity, they are an expression of a cultural and political space’, in the context of the dramatic political changes?

Color plays an essential role, embodying various cultural and political qualities. Each political space carries its own distinct colors. Even the shades of each color can differ between countries. The deep green of the European landscape is not the same as the light- and sun-drenched green of the Middle East. To me, this is symbolic: green is similar, yet different. Colors exert a suggestive influence not only on our optics, our perception, but also on human behavior.

Due to the current worldwide political tension, the title NEVER GREY is almost a challenge, how do you see this thematically from your curatorial position?

The range of gray shades also serves as a metaphor for the spectrum between extremes. Through the works, I propose a color palette in which even juxtaposed colors, with their purity and raw radiance, can coexist harmoniously; the same is true for human existence. I view the title as both an artistic and curatorial challenge: how to convey the richness inherent in the colorful spectrum and, in doing so, present a rich cultural and ideological space within a dynamic biennial, which is not a static or fixed sphere, but one that constantly evolves. In times like these, art holds a unique power to provide direction, to outline a path, and, ultimately, to illuminate the rainbow [after the storm].

Thank you.

The curators:



Drorit Gur Arie, Foto: David Adika

Drorit Gur Arie, art historian, curator / Israel

Drorit Gur Arie (born 1955 in Israel) is the founder of the renewed Petach Tikva Museum of Contemporary Art, Israel and the founder of SPOT - Film & Media section at the Petach Tikva Museum, where she served as Chief Curator and Director (2004-2019). She is chief curator of the art gallery ‘Ehadhaam 9’ (Faculty of Art, Hakibutzim Academy College) and of BALCONY, global network of independent curators. Drorit Gur Arie is an art and cultural studies scholar whose research focuses on multiculturalism, cultural dynamics in geopolitical space and the interrelations between hegemony, centre and periphery. She is involved in international projects, has curated numerous local and international exhibitions in Israel and worldwide and has been honoured with numerous awards. She is a lecturer and member of the admissions committee at the Department of Museology (postgraduate programme) at the Faculty of Art History at Tel Aviv University and the Department of Cultural Studies at Sapir Academic College.

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OSTRALE Biennale NEVER GREY



*Veronika
Krülle
Kotoučová,
Foto: blrck.de*

Dr. Veronika Krülle Kotoučová, art historian, curator, Czech Republic

Veronika Krülle Kotoučová (born 1985 in Prague, Czech Republic) holds a doctorate in art history from the Institute of Art History at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, with a research focus on German-Czech relations in the first half of the 20th century. Between 2015 and 2022, she worked as a cultural manager and curator of the 'Art/Architecture/Design' section of the Czech-German Cultural Days (Brücke/Most-Stiftung, since 2017 Euroregion Elbe/Labe). In addition to her work as an art historian and project manager at the OSTRALE - Centre for Contemporary Art (since January 2023), she works as a curator and cultural manager in several, mainly German-Czech projects (Cultural Centre Řehlovice - Art Symposia Currents/Proudění, Gotické dvojče Gallery in Litoměřice, etc.).



*Evelyn Drewes,
Foto: Ann-
Christine Krings*

Evelyn Drewes, gallery owner, curator / Germany

Gallery owner and curator, founder and director of Evelyn Drewes | Galerie in Hamburg (since 2008) and Evelyn Drewes | Galerie in Berlin (since spring 2024). Both galleries for contemporary art with a focus on painting support emerging artists and enable young positions to explore and realise technical and aesthetic concepts. The collaboration with art academies enables the discovery of up-and-coming artists and the resulting exhibitions.

OSTRALE - Centre for Contemporary Art



*Andrea
Hilger, Foto:
blrck.de*

Andrea Hilger, Director

Andrea Hilger; born 1970 in Leipzig, artist, organiser. 2007 founder and director of OSTRALE - Centre for Contemporary Art, 1997 foundation of TANZart Dresden, 2001 foundation of HILLUMINATION - Licht + Bühnenkunst, since 1999 member/board member of Tanzbühne Dresden e.V. and 1999 dancer at numerous opera houses in Germany, including the Semperoper Dresden to this day, since 2000 stage and costume designer at numerous theatres in Germany such as Oper Kiel, Staatstheater Cottbus, Landestheater Coburg etc..., 2009 sponsorship award winner of the city of Dresden, 2017 restructuring of the OSTRALE for the OSTRALE Biennale - international exhibition of contemporary art in Dresden. Curator at home and abroad, has travelled to numerous European countries and Africa with 'Out of OSTRALE' since 2010. Helped shape the programme of several European Capitals of Culture.

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F.d.R.d.A. Tobias Blaurock

The background

The OSTRALE Biennale is one of the largest temporary exhibitions of contemporary art in Germany. The guiding principles of the OSTRALE, such as peaceful coexistence, acceptance of the foreign and the unknown, respectful interaction, religious diversity and internationality, as well as the call for sustainability, biodiversity and the circular economy, are reflected in the content of the exhibitions.

The OSTRALE team often also designs significant parts of the artistic programme of European Capitals of Culture, such as 2010 in Pécs/Hungary, 2016 in Wrocław/Poland, 2018 in Valletta/Malta, 2020 in Rijeka/Croatia (digital due to the pandemic) and 2022 in the European Capital of Culture Kaunas/Lithuania. In 2021-2022, OSTRALE was the lead partner in the 'Flowing Connections' project, which was co-financed by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union.

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DIE STADT



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