

PRESS RELEASE

Amsterdam, November 24, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**“TOWARDS MANIFESTA 8”  
MANIFESTA COFFEE BREAK  
MURCIA, SPAIN, 12-13 December 2009**

Manifesta Coffee Breaks are organised by Manifesta Foundation in Amsterdam in collaboration with Manifesta 8 in the Spanish region of Murcia

**Manifesta Foundation**

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**Manifesta 8, the European Biennial of Contemporary Art**

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In 2010 **Manifesta 8** will take place in Murcia in dialogue with northern Africa. Manifesta is entering a new phase, shifting from its previous East-West dialogue to focus on North-South notions, even looking at trans-continental representation. Manifesta is expanding beyond the European continent. We believe it is now time for a moment of reflection and we would like to stimulate the debate in order to analyze what is expected from Manifesta as it expands further from its former geo-political European context. In what way can Manifesta 8 change the spectrum of a biennial and its practices for artists and curators alike? What is the ongoing relevance of the European nature of Manifesta as a biennial and in which ways can Manifesta transgress its focus on the post-Communist notion of Europe into a new time-frame partly characterised by post-colonial politics? In the next Manifesta Coffee Break this December, we invite you to actively participate in discussions with artists, curators and other art professionals and cultural producers to pinpoint the potential context in which Manifesta's immediate artistic and political concerns can operate. In the upcoming Manifesta Coffee Break, the curators will elaborate upon these issues in collaboration with external specialists.

Situated in the Spanish cities of Murcia and Cartagena and positioned as a biennial in search of a dialogue with northern Africa, Manifesta 8 is curated by three collectives - Alexandria Contemporary Arts Forum (Egypt), Chamber of Public Secrets (Denmark, Italy, Lebanon) and tranzit.org (Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia) - which together form the curatorial team.

**Manifesta Coffee Break** is a recurring public meeting, serving as an active tool to discuss the concept of Manifesta within a larger critical context. The fifth Coffee Break takes place on **12 and 13 December 2009** in **Murcia, Spain**, in preparation for Manifesta 8, and in direct relation to the context of the European Biennial of Contemporary Art, which will take place in 2010. Titled **Towards Manifesta 8**, this Manifesta Coffee Break brings together both local and international artists, curators, theorists, writers and other art professionals to reflect on Manifesta's logic in direct relation to Murcia-Cartagena and its links with northern Africa. It is open for all who are interested, and consists of sessions by the three curatorial teams of Manifesta 8 together with invited speakers and guests.

**Chamber of Public Secrets (CPS)**

**“Unfaithful Relations: Art, Engagement and Audience within the Biennial Model”  
December 12, 10.00-13.30**

with contributions by: Sara Black, Alfredo Cramerotti, Christine Eyene, Rian Lozano, Fay Nicolson and Khaled Ramadan

*Through presentations and work groups at the Manifesta Coffee Break, CPS will start a dialogue about the role and involvement of the audience in the region of Murcia: visitors, artists, students and media presence. How can the local art scene, cultural producers and activists make a sustainable use of a biennial, in terms of time, space and continuity? What possibilities are there for audience development? And how to avoid or respond to the common skepticism of the local (art) scene towards a biennial which can be viewed as welcome/unwelcome or*

*invited/invasive? The presentations by Sara Black (Great Britain) and Christine Eyene (France/Cameroon) do not attempt to answer these questions, but discuss potential approaches towards audience inclusion.*

### **Alexandria Contemporary Arts Forum (ACAF)**

#### **“The Aesthetic Compass: Human Geography and its Reverberations in Art”**

**December 12, 16.00-19.30**

with contributions by: Jeremy Beaudry, Sherif El Azma, Bassam El Baroni, Nida Ghouse and Yaiza Hernández Velázquez

*ACAF will concentrate on the recent borrowing of methodologies and discourses from the field of human geography within contemporary art production and theorization. ACAF curators Bassam El Baroni and Jeremy Beaudry will publicly auction off a number of generic prototypical projects that deal with notions of human geography and cultural dialogue in order to expose what the various concepts embedded in human geography offer to artists and curators. Additionally, ACAF presents two lectures by Sherif El Azma and Nida Ghouse on behalf of the Take to the Sea Research Collective (Lina Attalah, Laura Cugusi, Nida Ghouse). The auction, lectures and discussion (moderated by Yaiza Hernández Velázquez) pave the way for an introduction to ACAF's evolving 'Theory of Applied Enigmatics', the philosophical core of their curatorial approach within Manifesta 8.*

### **tranzit.org**

#### **“Post-Communist as well as Post-Colonial”**

**December 13, 10.00-13.30**

with contributions by: Zbyněk Baladrán, Erick Beltrán, Vít Havránek, Dóra Hegyi, Richard Kostelanetz, Boris Ondrejčka and Georg Schöllhammer

*The members of tranzit.org will explore issues crucial to their contribution to Manifesta 8: the post-Communist conditions of Eastern Europe, reflected as a post-colonial current. Today the Second World – Eastern Europe – is no longer formally outside the West; but has it yet become fully absorbed as part of a New (First?) World? Has it transformed the First World, bringing along its own (colonial, communist) past with all the concomitant traumas of the present day? Is there a critical theory, a methodology or vocabulary available to discuss the experiences of post-Soviet and post-colonial spaces within or beyond the framework of a New First World? Tranzit.org will attempt to relate these notions to the dialogue between Europe and northern Africa. The artists Erick Beltrán (Mexico/Spain) and Richard Kostelanetz (United States) will contribute with personal statements around their reading of George Perec's essay “Think/Classify”.*

### **General information**

All presentations are in English. Simultaneous translation (English-Spanish) is available.

### **Booking is essential before December 4, 2009**

Attendance to the Manifesta Coffee Break is free, but seating is limited. Please reserve your seat by sending an e-mail, which includes your name, organisation and contact details, to: [contact@manifesta8.es](mailto:contact@manifesta8.es)

### **Location of all presentations:**

Centro Párraga  
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Manifesta 8 is initiated by:

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The International Foundation Manifesta is supported by:

