

Ministry of Culture, Government of the State of São Paulo, through the Secretariat of Culture, Creative Economy and Industry, the Municipal Secretary of Culture, Fundação Bienal de São Paulo and Itaú present the 36th Bienal de São Paulo

Fundação Bienal de São Paulo announces the second *Invocation* of the 36th Bienal de São Paulo, to be held in Guadeloupe

Titled “Bigidi mè pa tonbé!” [Totter, but never fall!], the Invocation is scheduled to take place from December 5 to 7 in Les Abymes, focusing on the traditional Guadeloupean dance, Gwoka

São Paulo, November 21, 2024 – Continuing the series of *Invocations*, a sequence of programs traveling through four cities worldwide in anticipation of the 36th Bienal de São Paulo, the project arrives in Guadeloupe, a territory in Central America. This edition, titled “Bigidi mè pa tonbé!” [Totter, but never fall!], will be held from December 5 to 7 at La FABRI’K, a space led by choreographer, anthropologist, and educator Dr. Léna Blou, with dance as its central theme.

The core concept of this *Invocation* stems from *bigidi*, core element of the Guadeloupean dance *gwoka*. This dance, characterized by improvisation, alternates between moments of rupture and continuity in a constant effort to maintain balance. Léna Blou, a leading authority on this tradition, identifies *bigidi* and its mode of moving as the essential nature of the Caribbean being, which, in her words, “knows how to stabilize instability and transform disharmony into harmony.” Blou is also the creator of *Bigidi’art*, a concept linking dance to a life philosophy that embraces impermanence and adaptability as forms of survival and cultural resistance.

The *Invocation* features an extensive program bringing together twelve participants from diverse disciplines, including dance, music, poetry, visual arts, and sciences. Through performances, lectures, and workshops, they will share interdisciplinary approaches to the event's central theme.

About the *Invocations*

In preparation for the 36th Bienal de São Paulo – *Not All Travellers Walks Roads – Of Humanity as Practice*, and to introduce and tune in to the conceptual thread, a series of public programs called *Invocations* will take place in four different cities around the world: Marrakech; Guadeloupe; Zanzibar; and Tokyo.

Each edition mirrors the exhibition concept of *Humanity as Practice* from a specific local context, reconfiguring and expanding it through live events and a publication. The aim of the *Invocations* is to expand the vocabulary of humanity, at points of intersection between different longitudes and latitudes.

If humanity were a verb, how would it be conjugated in these different geographies? The Senegalese director Djibril Diop Mambéty once described film – and therefore art – as “la grammaire de ma grande mère” [my grandmother’s grammar], alluding to the familiarity of art, the intergenerational aspects of artistic practices, the colloquialism of art and art/artistic practice as grammar. The four *Invocations* will explore how artistic practices around the globe help to situate, enrich and expand these grammars.

Program:

Dec 5, 2024, Thu

6pm – 7pm: Welcoming note and introduction by Dr. Léna Blou, Prof. Dr. Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung and Anna Roberta Goetz

7pm – 7:30pm: Gwoka dance performance by Raymonde Torin, based on the seven fundamental *gwoka* dances

7:30pm – 8pm: Musical performance by Fritz Naffer and the Gwoka band Foubap

Dec 6, 2024, Fri

10am – 11pm: *Le Bigidi, un savoir incarné dans l'écrin du Lawonn* – Dance conference and workshop by Dr. Léna Blou around the praxis of Bigidi'art

11:30am – 12:30pm: *Climate change impacts, adaptation and resilience in the Caribbean: A narrative in Earth system balance, harmony and resilience* – Lecture by Prof. Michelle Mycoo

2:30pm – 3:30pm: *Dans le ventre des oiseaux, dans la bouche des femmes sauvages: une archive déparlante* [In the belly of birds, in the mouth of wild women: a despeaking archive] – Lecture performance by Olivier Marboeuf

4pm – 5pm: Poetry slam and visual installation by Dory Sélèsprika and Anaïs Verspan

Dec 7, 2024, Sat

10:30am–11:30am: *jwen, sanblé, kontré* – A proposition of performance by Yane Mareine, Minia Biabiany and Santiago Quintana

12pm – 1pm: *The Blip and the Pi tak: human verbs of the improbable* – Lecture by Tiéno Muntu (Dr. Etienne Jean-Baptiste), doctor of music, history and society

3pm–4pm: Mapping choreographic fugues: archipelagic writing in dance – Lecture performance by Lazaro Benitèz

4:30pm – 6:00pm: *Kalanje* – Performance by Geordy Zodidat Alexis

7:30pm–9pm: *Swaré Lewoz* with the gwoka band Foubap

About the participants

Raymonde Torin

Is intimately linked with dance and Gwoka in particular. She describes herself as “an active woman who loves Guadeloupe and wants to contribute to the cultural and artistic well-being of the people of her

country". A key figure in the cultural and artistic dance scene in Guadeloupe, this retired member of the French Ministry of Education and creator of the Art-danse programme in the Académie de Guadeloupe, is also a dancer-choreographer and gwoka resource person for all those, from 4 to 98 years old, who are fond of unique and authentic culture, in Guadeloupe and elsewhere in the world. She's a well-informed teacher, an expert in gwoka dances, who excels at passing on knowledge, know-how and interpersonal skills, from lawonn a Léwòz to the artistic scene, from lékòl du Lakou to the school of the Republic.

Dorysélèsprika (Audrey Celeste)

Nicknamed Dory, is a slam artist from Guadeloupe. She made her name at the first Guadeloupe slam championship in 2006. Her words and sounds are vectors of universality, rooted in her own history and times. She has developed a style influenced by the music of her homeland, Gwoka, Senjan and urban cultures. In *TAN*, her first collection of poetry, she shares her love of nature, the history of her country, the exchanges that nourish it and her disgust at injustice. Since 2006, Dory has been adding to her repertoire of lyrics and collaborating on stage performances, festivals and literary and recording projects with artists such as Dominik Coco, Jil Pietrus, Didier Juste, Fanm Ki Ka, Laurence Hamlet, Bwakoré, Akiyo and many others.

Anaïs Verspan

After three years studying at the IRAVM (Institut Régional d'Arts Visuels de la Martinique), Anaïs Verspan launched her career in fashion design by opening her showroom Afro Excentrik. Her breakthrough came in 2009, when she unveiled her paintings at the Carrefour des Arts in Le Gosier, followed by her first solo show, *Bigidi Plakata* (2009), at the Imagin'Art gallery in Sainte-Rose. Since then, she has continued to present her work individually and collectively, locally, nationally and internationally (Senegal, Germany, Monaco, Portugal). Her visual universe stands out for its cross-over between abstraction and figuration, black and color, matt and gloss, flatness and density. Her works combine materials and contrasts with virtuosity, like two sides of the same duality, oscillating between present and past, heritage and modernity, cultural traces and individual experiences.

Foubap

Is a musical group founded by Fritz Naffer, widely recognized in Guadeloupe as a leading figure of the new generation of Gwoka rhythm (also known as tambour ka). Within the groupe, Naffer takes on the role of boula, responsible for maintaining the pulsating rhythm characteristic of the style. Foubap is the creator of iconic albums such as Simen'N Kontra - Lévé'y Ho!!! and the celebrated Eve On Pwen, which played a crucial role in solidifying Gwoka as an important expression of Guadeloupean cultural identity. Their performances are marked by improvisation, rhythmic dialogue, and profound respect for de Guadeloupe's traditions.

Dr. Léna Blou

Anthropologist, dancer, choreographer, and educator Dr. Léna Blou (Guadeloupe, French West Indies) is engaged with a praxis she calls *Bigidi'art*. It is inspired by Léwòz, one of seven traditional dances found in her island's sung and danced Gwoka practices. Dr. Blou theorizes and uses *Bigidi'art* as an everyday philosophy and dance technique centering an asymmetrical Black/Caribbean body in permanent rupture. The body in *Bigidi'art* is in a permanent imbalance as a mode of self-determination, and sheds light on Caribbeans' harmonization of disorder especially in times of social, political, and environmental precarities. Blou is considered an avant-garde artist for creating *Techni'ka*, a contemporary teaching technique based on Guadeloupe's Gwoka rhythms and dances. Dr. Léna Blou is the founder of the Center for Dance and Choreographic Studies and the Compagnie Trilogie Léna Blou and the Laurel Bigidi'Art, combining training, creation, and research.

Prof. Michelle Mycoo

Professor Mycoo's work focuses on strengthening the interface between science, policy and practice in alignment with optimum land use, infrastructure provision and environmental management in support of sustainable human settlements. Among her scholarly contributions are 43 international peer-reviewed publications on a wide range of thematic areas on Caribbean case studies in urban and regional planning. Topics covered include: urban sustainability, climate change, integrated coastal zone planning and management, urban water demand management, disaster risk reduction, sustainable tourism, gated communities and

peri-urban development. Apart from journal articles, books and book chapters, she has written training manuals, policy briefs, newsletters and viewpoints and 40 technical reports for national, regional and international policymakers and practitioners.

Olivier Marboeuf

Olivier Marboeuf is a writer, storyteller and curator. Since 2004 he has founded and directed the independent art center Espace Khiasma in Les Lilas, on the outskirts of Paris. At Khiasma, he has developed a programme addressing minority representations through exhibitions, screenings, debates, performances and collaborative projects throughout north-east Paris. Since 2017, Khiasma has merged with an experimental platform, exploring ways to create a place collectively and developing an online radio tool, R22 Tout-Monde. Interested in different ways of transmitting knowledge, Olivier Marboeuf's proposals are rooted in conversational practices and speculative narratives, attempting to create ephemeral situations of culture.

Geordy Zodidat Alexis

Born in 1986 in Guadeloupe and currently living in Paris, Geordy Zodidat Alexis is a committed multidisciplinary artist. His artistic practice touches various mediums, ranging from drawing to performance through installation and writing. A graduate in plastic expression from the Montpellier School of Fine Arts, he discusses societal themes in his works, including the question of living together and memory. As an artist of intermingling and hybridisation, Geordy Zodidat Alexis works on language and memory, on the intimate link between history, collective memory and personal remembrance. Based on a reflexive approach, he questions his multiple cultural heritage (Caribbean, Africa and Europe) to bring out new thoughts. By confronting several cultures, he opens a humanist dialogue on the construction of the relationship with the Other and on the place of the human in society.

Minia Biabiany

Is a visual artist from Guadeloupe. In her practice she observes how the perception of the body is entangled with the perception of space, land and history. She works on poetical and political narratives linked with self-understanding and healing. She explores the possibility of an enunciation out of the dominant colonial storytelling particularly in the context of Guadeloupe and the consequences of the French assimilation

in the relations between the people, the land and the plants.

Santiago Quintana

Is a muralist and architect from Quibdó, Colombia. He has been exploring perception and corporeality through theatrical practices and butoh dance. He is particularly involved in the resolution of social and urban phenomena, linking his experimental practices with environmental issues and vernacular architecture.

Yane Mareine

Is a Guadeloupean actress and singer who has been conducting research into the voices of people from the "great brigandages of history" for over 30 years by collecting their traditional and sacred songs from the Indian Ocean to the Americas, and all the way to the African continent. She is part of the very closed circle of 52 voice teachers of Roy Hart in the world, and runs NOLEJIZ ART, an experimental learning space based on the exploration of voice in Guadeloupe.

Tiéno Muntu (Dr. Étienne Jean-Baptiste)

Plays a leading role as a tanbouyé bèlè, trombonist, pianist, composer and conductor in modern and contemporary Bèlè musical experiments. He was first introduced to Bèlè by such illustrious figures as Paul Rastocle and Ernest Méphane. Tiéno Muntu followed in the footsteps of his mentor Siméline Rangon. He studied music at Sermac with Edouard Boniface, then with Alexandre Monier and Jacqueline Rosemain. A qualified lecturer, he holds a doctorate in Music, History and Society from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris (EHESS). He also holds the Certificat d'aptitude de professeur de musique, the highest qualification for teaching in conservatoires. He is a member of the in-house team ADECAM (Archives, Ethnographic Documents, Caribbean America) of the CRILLASH laboratory (Centre de Recherches Interdisciplinaires en Lettres Langues Arts et Sciences Humaines) at the Université des Antilles.

Lazaro Benitèz

A dance researcher and choreographer, Lazaro Benitez obtained a Bachelor's degree in Dance Art in the Danzologie profile (theoretical studies and research in dance) from the University of the Arts ISA (2019), followed by a Master's degree in Dance from the Université Paris 8. His artistic and academic research focuses on the border zone

between dance and performance. The notions of border, margin, liminality and invisibility are systematically part of his analyses. In his work, he is interested in problematising the limits of the body, gender performance and notions of representation. He explores a choreographic approach to the social that engages with the issues and power relations in contemporary society as manifestations of dissidence and (art)ivism. Since 2021, he has been working on mapping contemporary dance in the Caribbean islands. Founder and coordinator of Encuentro Internacional de la memoria fragmentada, laboratorio para la investigación y la práctica en danza from 2016 to 2019, and editorial coordinator of Giros Magazine, a specialist dance magazine, from 2015 to 2018, Lazaro continues to collaborate with various specialist arts magazines. He has given lectures and workshops at various festivals and conferences in Latin America and the Caribbean.

About the Fundação Bienal de São Paulo

Founded in 1962, the Fundação Bienal de São Paulo is a private, nonprofit institution with no party political or religious ties, whose actions aim to democratize access to culture and foster interest in artistic creation. Every two years, the Foundation holds the Bienal de São Paulo, the largest exhibition of the Southern Hemisphere, and its traveling exhibitions program in several cities in Brazil and abroad. The institution is also the custodian of two items of Latin American artistic and cultural heritage: a historical archive of modern and contemporary art that is a standard reference in Latin America (the Arquivo Histórico Wanda Svevo), and the Ciccillo Matarazzo Pavilion, the head office of the Foundation, designed by Oscar Niemeyer and listed as historical heritage. The Fundação Bienal de São Paulo is also responsible for conceiving and producing Brazil's representations at the Venice Biennales of art and architecture, a prerogative bestowed upon it decades ago by the Federal Government in recognition of the excellence of its contributions to Brazilian culture.

About La FABRI'K

Heir to the CDEC, Centre de Danse et d'Etudes Chorégraphiques (Centre for dance and choreographic studies) set up by Léna Blou in 1990, La FABRI'K, founded in 2020, offers opportunities for practice, creation, transmission and research into Caribbean dance and music, particularly Techni'ka and Bigidi. Today, as the Centre Caribéen de Recherche Chorégraphique (Caribbean Centre for Choreographic Research), accredited as an AFA - Atelier de Fabrique Artistique (art factory workshop) by the French Ministry of Culture, La FABRI'K is a centre specialising in choreographic art and research (creation, transmission, etc.), an ecosystem linked to the visual arts, theatre, singing, literature, etc.; in short a truly strategic hub in the Caribbean.

Service

**36th Bienal de São Paulo – *Nem todo viandante anda estradas –
Da humanidade como prática* [Not All Travellers Walk Roads / Of
Humanity as Practice]**

Chief curator: Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung / Co-curators: Alya
Sebti, Anna Roberta Goetz, Thiago de Paula Souza / Co-curator at
large: Keyna Eleison / Strategy and communication advisor: Henriette
Gallus

Invocation #2 – Guadeloupe

Bigidi mè pa tonbé! [Totter, but never fall!]

Dec 5–7, 2024

Thurs, 6pm – 8pm

Fri, 10am – 5pm

Sat, 10:30am – 9pm

La FABRI’K

27 bis et 29 rue Abel Libany, 3e rue de l'Assainissement

Les Abymes, Guadeloupe

free admission



master sponsorship



Bloomberg

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support



Rodobens



local support

local partnership

cultural partnership



Toledo do Brasil



realization



Secretaria da
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