

The Ministry of Culture, the Government of the State of São Paulo through the Secretariat of Culture and Creative Economy, the Municipal Secretariat of Culture and Creative Economy of São Paulo, the Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, Itaú, and Petrobras present

Fundação Bienal de São Paulo Brings Thoughts on Artificial Intelligence and Digital Culture to Tokyo in the Latest Edition of the *Invocations* Cycle

In the last stage of the program, the 36th Bienal de São Paulo seeks to discuss the intersections between art, technology, and humanity from the point of view of artists, scientists, and researchers

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Sao Paulo, March 25, 2025 – After three editions that toured different continents and waters, dialogued with local knowledge and practices in Marrakech, Guadalupe, and Zanzibar, the 36th Bienal de São Paulo concludes its *Invocations* cycle – meetings that precede the exhibition and promote interdisciplinary dialogues about art, culture, and society in different geographical and historical contexts – in Tokyo. Entitled ***Bukimi no Tani*** (不気味の谷): ***The Uncanny Valley – The Affectivity of the Humanoid***, the program takes place between April 12 and 14, 2025 and explores the complex relationship between humans and machines through sound, performance, and visual practices. The program is co-organized by the Bienal's conceptual team with co-conveners Andrew Maerkle and Kanako Sugiyama, and Jordan A.Y. Smith as the advisor for the poetry program. The activities will take place at three different locations: The 5th Floor; Sogetsu Kaikan; and 21 KOMCEE West Lecture Hall, The University of Tokyo, Komaba Campus. To join the events, please register through [this form](#).

Inspired by the concept of the 'uncanny valley' proposed by Japanese roboticist Masahiro Mori in 1970, the Tokyo *Invocation* reflects on the ambiguities of the human in the face of technology and the issues that emerge at the intersection between art, artificial intelligence, and corporeality. The event will address issues such as the impact of artificial intelligences on artistic creation, the performativity of machines, and the affective dimension of the relationship between humans and automated devices. It will also discuss the evolution of robotics and its relationship with Japanese culture and history, ranging from traditional Noh to advanced humanoid robots equipped with embedded learning autonomy systems, along with the concept of Zen. Under

the curatorial direction of Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, accompanied by co-curators Alya Sebti, Anna Roberta Goetz and Thiago de Paula Souza, co-curator at large Keyna Eleison, and communication and strategy consultant Henriette Gallus, the project is part of the 36th Bienal de São Paulo – *Not All Travellers Walk Roads – Of Humanity as Practice*.

Global crossings

Since its first edition in November 2024 in Marrakech, the *Invocations* cycle of the 36th Bienal de São Paulo has established itself as a space for exchange and experimentation, promoting encounters between artists, researchers, and local communities. The inaugural *Invocation*, ***Souffles: On deep listening and active reception***, proposed a reflection on circularity and listening as a practice of coexistence, based on Gnawa music and Sufi cultures, in partnership with LE 18 and the Fondation Dar Bellarj.

This was followed by the *Invocation* in Guadeloupe, entitled ***Bigidi mè pa tonbé!*** [Totter, but never fall!] held in December of the same year, and anchored in dance as its central axis, connecting the body's movements to narratives of resistance and ancestry, with activities held in the Lafabri'k space. In February 2025, in Zanzibar, ***Mawali-Taqsim: Improvisation as space and technology of humanity*** explored musicality and improvisation as cultural technologies, in collaboration with the Dhow Countries Music Academy.

About the *Invocations*

In preparation for the 36th Bienal de São Paulo – *Not All Travellers Walk Roads – Of Humanity as Practice*, and to introduce and tune in to the conceptual thread, a series of public programs called *Invocations* takes 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:

April 12, 2025, sat, The 5th Floor

4pm – 8pm Screening program

[Will remain on view on April 13 and 14, from 1pm to 8pm]

4:30pm – 5pm Welcoming note by Andrew Maerkle, Kanako Sugiyama, Keyna Eleison, Thiago de Paula Souza, and Tomoya Iwata

5pm – 5:30pm Poetry reading by Sakisaka Kujira

5:30pm – 7:30pm 触手の約束 □ Tentacle Cross, live broadcasting session by Multiple Spirits (Mai Endo and Mika Maruyama) with MadokaShitone, Marina Lisa Komiya, Shiori Watanabe

April 13, 2025, sun, Sogetsu Kaikan

11am – 11:30am Welcoming note by Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung

11:30am – 12:10pm Poetry performance by Gōzō Yoshimasu and Marylya

12:10pm – 12:30pm Listening session of *Rain Dreamed by Sound: Reading Theresa Hak Kyung Cha* by Cecilia Vicuña

12:40pm – 1:25pm Of Stone and Sand (parables one and two), lecture-performance by You Nakai with Moe Tomita

2:30pm – 2:45pm Intervention by Multiple Spirits

2:45pm – 3:45pm Conversation between Shiori Watanabe, Bidou Yamaguchi, and Yukie Kamiya on Noh, technologies, and affectivities

3:50pm – 4:05pm Experimental poetry reading by Yūki Nagae on Conceição

Evaristo

4:20pm – 5:20pm Food workshop by Asako Iwama

4:35pm – 5:20pm Intervention by Multiple Spirits

5:25pm – 5:55pm Lecture by Hiroshi Egaitsu on Shinjuku Bladerunners on Japanese Hip Hop

6pm – 6:40pm Rap performances on the theme of Uncanny Valley by Nami Chie, Danny Jin, and SRCFLP

7pm – 8pm Contemporary Noh presentation by Shiori Watanabe: *Iruma River*

April 14, 2025, mon, 21 KOMCEE West Lecture Hall, The University of Tokyo, Komaba Campus (Organized in partnership with the Art Center, The University of Tokyo)

4pm – 4:15pm Welcoming note by Andrew Maerkle and Kenji Kajiya, director of the Art Center, The University of Tokyo

4:15pm – 4:30pm Poetry reading by Takako Arai

4:30pm – 5:15pm Conversation between T-Michael and Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung on design technologies, cross-geographic dialogues, and emotional intelligence

5:25pm – 6:25pm Roundtable discussion with Hiroko Kamide, Takashi Ikegami, Yuko Hasegawa, and Zai Nomura on robotics, mind, and art

6:30pm – 6:45pm Poetry reading by Natsumi Aoyagi

6:45pm – 8pm Lecture by Tavia Nyong'o and conversation on the uncanny valley and the depressed cyborg

Screening program at the The Fifth Floor:

April 12, 2025, sat

4am – 8pm Screening program: Hikaru Fujii, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Tourmaline, Yuki Iiyama

April 13, 2025, sun | April 14, 2025, mon

1pm – 8pm Screening program: Hikaru Fujii, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Tourmaline, Yuki Iiyama

Know more about the participants [here](#).

The Fundação Bienal de São Paulo thanks its master sponsors: Itaú, Bloomberg, Bradesco, Petrobras, Instituto Cultural Vale, Citi and Vivo.

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 Fundação 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 Fundação, 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.

The 5th Floor

The 5th Floor is an alternative space that opened in February 2020 in Tokyo. They present ambitious curatorial-driven programs at the unique spaces of their three rooms, and the balcony on the 5th floor of a former dormitory of a local company. They also support emerging artists and curators through residency programs that invite curators both domestic and overseas, promote workshops with international curators and art workers, and educational programs along with self- or guest-curated exhibitions.

Sogetsu Kaikan

As the headquarters of the Sogetsu Foundation, Sogetsu Kaikan serves as an art center that fosters creative activities across various genres. Designed by Kenzo Tange, the building was completed in 1977. During its construction, Sogetsu's founder, Sofu Teshigahara, commissioned Isamu Noguchi to create the stone garden Heaven completed in 1978. It has since become a dynamic space for artistic expression, hosting exhibitions of Sogetsu Ikebana and other artworks, live performances, photography sessions, fashion shows, and art presentations. In 2027, Sogetsu will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its founding and birth of Hiroshi Teshigahara.

Art Center, The University of Tokyo

The Art Center at The University of Tokyo is a multi-departmental organization that explores integrated research on art practices through collaboration between faculty

and graduate students in a variety of disciplines and professional artists from diverse fields and media. It also seeks to foster creativity and innovative thinking as well as diverse values by providing studio art classes to undergraduate students. Located on the Komaba campus, the center was established in May 2019 through a collaboration between seven of the university's graduate schools: Arts and Sciences, Education, Engineering, Humanities and Sociology, Interfaculty Initiative in Information Studies, Mathematical Sciences, and Medicine. In April 2025, five more organizations will join: Graduate School of Frontier Sciences, Institute of Industrial Science, Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology, University Museum, and Library System.

Information

36th Bienal de São Paulo – *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 communications advisor: Henriette Gallus

Invocation #4 – Tokyo, Japan

Bukimi no Tani (不気味の谷): *The Uncanny Valley – The Affectivity of the Humanoid*

April 12–14, 2025

Co-conveners: Andrew Maerkele and Kanako Sugiyama

Poetry program advisor: Jordan A.Y. Smith

Local producer: Tomoya Iwata

free admission after registration through [this form](#)

limited capacity

The 5th Floor

Apr 12, 4pm – 8pm

Apr 13 and 14, 1pm – 8pm: screening program

3 Chome-3-9 Ikenohata 5F, Taito-ku, Tokyo, Japan

Sogetsu Kaikan

Apr 13, 11am – 8pm

7 Chome-2-21 Akasaka, Minato City, Tokyo, Japan

21 KOMCEE West Lecture Hall, The University of Tokyo, Komaba Campus

Apr 14, 4pm – 8pm

3 Chome-8-1 Komaba, Meguro City, Tokyo, Japan

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The title of the 36th Bienal de São Paulo, 'Not All Travellers Walk Roads', is made up of verses by the writer Conceição Evaristo.



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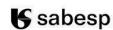
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