

The 53rd edition of the CIMAM Annual Conference raises the debate on the "under pressure" situation affecting modern and contemporary art museums in the context of Xenophobia and Climate Emergency.

- The conference was held November 5-7 at the Muzeum Sztuki in Lodz and the NOMUS New Museum of Art/Branch of the National Museum in Gdansk, Poland, bringing together more than 150 museum professionals onsite and another 100 virtually.
- In the same context, CIMAM announced the appointment of Es Baluard Museu d'Art Contemporani de Palma to host CIMAM's Annual Conference in 2022, an edition that will mark the 60th anniversary of this committee and will coincide with the elections for CIMAM's Presidency and Board Members.
- On the last day of the meeting, CIMAM recognized the Queens Museum, New York, with the Outstanding Museum Practices Award 2021.

November 15, Barcelona - The International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern and Contemporary Art celebrates the success of its 53rd Annual Conference, entitled "**Under Pressure. Museums in Times of Xenophobia and Climate Emergency**". This year, the event brought together more than 150 museum professionals in the **Muzeum Sztuki in Lodz** and the **NOMUS New Art Museum/ Branch of the National Museum in Gdansk, Poland**, and 100 more virtually, for three days of lectures and discussions on the pressures facing modern and contemporary art museums worldwide as they address the emerging issues of xenophobia and climate emergency.

Mami Kataoka, president of CIMAM and director of the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, Japan, reflects on the conference with these words: "The pandemic has shown that it means a lot for us to come together physically in one place, learning from the history of the country and the region, especially in the land of Gdansk, where the memory of solidarity is accumulated in the European Solidarity Center."

Regarding the political context in which the conference took place, Kataoka comments: "It was essential to be aware of what we are discussing here for three days, while real political conflicts are taking place on the border between Poland and Belarus, which is not so far away. This situation constantly reminds us of the role of the museum here and now."

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Finally, Mami Kataoka concludes: "The CIMAM Annual Conference has always been a place where each of us has been reminded that we are part of a broad, global or planetary museum community. Whether we have participated physically or virtually online, this planetary imagination is extremely important more than ever."

Jarosław Suchan, Director of the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź and member of the Contents Committee of the CIMAM Conference, reflects on the congress with these words: "The CIMAM Conference in Poland was the first such meeting since the outbreak of the pandemic. More than 250 people attended, and almost 150 of them decided to come to Łódź and Gdansk to participate in person. The unexpected number of the latter shows that, when interpersonal contacts are increasingly mediatized virtually, there is a strong need to meet and be together for real. Moreover, the willingness to attend the conference despite all the obstacles imposed by the pandemic regime shows that we all feel part of a global community."

Suchan comments on the content proposal offered by the conference: "Undoubtedly, it was the burning issues that drove people to attend the conference. Xenophobia and the climate crisis are some of the most critical challenges facing the contemporary world, and no one, no museum, can remain on the sidelines. We all have to face these threats. The great speeches and inspiring presentations by our colleagues, artists, curators, and activists have provided us with intellectual food that we will digest for months to come and that, I am sure, will help us reorient or reshape our activity to make it more inclusive, more socially engaged, more ecologically responsible and guided by true care for the human and non-human environment."

At this year's Annual Conference, current, urgent and relevant contents, proposed to generate debate among museum professionals and to provide them with tools to operate their institutions according to best practices, have been suggested and developed by the Content Committee, composed of **Małgorzata Ludwisiak**, Chief Curator of the Department of Modern Art at the **National Museum of Gdansk**, **Saskia Bos**, independent curator and critic, **Agustín Pérez Rubio**, independent curator, **Eugene Tan**, Director of the **National Gallery Singapore and the Singapore Art Museum**, **Victoria Noorthoorn**, Director of the **Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires**, **Daniel Muzyczuk**, Head of the Modern Art Department of the **Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź**, **Jarosław Suchan**, Director of the **Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź** and **Aneta Szylak**, Head of the **NOMUS National Museum in Gdansk**.

Eleven invited speakers presented papers and case studies exploring themes related to **Conflict, Crisis and the Politics of Growth** (Day one), **Museums as Spaces for Recognizing Differences** (Day 2), and **New Perspectives on**

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Climate and Commonality (Day 3), to address the two major themes of the conference: **Xenophobia and Climate Emergency**.

Małgorzata Ludwisiak, Chief Curator of the Department of Modern Art at the **National Museum of Gdansk and CIMAM Board Member**, reflects on the contents presented during the three days of conferences: “Three keynote speakers – **Dipesh Chakrabarty**, **T.J. Demos**, and **Maristella Svampa** – provided a broad theoretical background for discussions on how the issues of climate emergency and xenophobia are deeply intertwined. Speakers from Eastern Europe brought case studies from this region to the conference attendees. **Jaroslaw Lubiak** proposed a new museum model in response to the climate catastrophe; **Joanna Sokolowska** shared her curatorial responses to this issue; **Hilke Wagner** showed how the Albertinum in Dresden successfully managed a massive wave of hatred directed at the institution by turning the crisis into a new platform for mutual understanding with diverse audiences. Performer and choreographer **Alex Baczynski-Jenkins** proposed community and body-based artistic practices to respond to the crisis, and filmmaker **Oleksiy Radinsky** spoke about the memory of post-Soviet monuments in public spaces. Finally, two curators, **Binna Choi** and **Pelin Tan**, and one artist, **Otobong Nkanga**, shared their different approaches to extractivism and the destruction of a landscape for political or economic reasons.” Ludwisiak concludes: “Faced with the scale and intensity of planetary crises, museums may have to rethink themselves to remain relevant. The CIMAM 2021 Conference gave us an excellent start to this process.”

Daniel Muzyczuk, Head of the Modern Art Department of the **Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź** and member of **CIMAM's Annual Conference Content Committee**, reflects: “The themes chosen for this edition of the conference proved to be relevant and incited many meaningful discussions. We are all under pressure primarily from the politics of growth and economy, both xenophobia and climate emergency are byproducts or instruments of these tendencies. There were many moments of sharing experiences of dealing with these issues. These exchanges are the basis for mutual support, resilience and hope in the future of museums.”

During the meeting in Poland, it was also announced that **Es Baluard Museu d'Art Contemporani de Palma**, Spain, has been chosen as the [institution that will host the 54th edition of the CIMAM Annual Conference in November 2022](#), coinciding with the **60th anniversary of CIMAM and the election of the new President and the Board Members** of this Committee.

<https://cimam.org/news-archive/es-baluard-museu-dart-contemporani-de-palma-appointed-to-host-the-cimam-annual-conference-in-2022/>

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In the context of the conference, CIMAM announced the winner of the [Outstanding Museum Practice Award](#), which in this first edition recognizes the work of museums in response to the consequences of the Global Pandemic.

After the first round of voting by CIMAM members, CIMAM Board Members selected the **Queens Museum, New York**, to receive this inaugural award. In addition, the Jury gave special mentions to 3 of the 16 submitted nominations. <https://cimam.org/news-archive/cimam-acknowledges-the-queens-museum-new-york-with-the-outstanding-museum-practices-award-2021/>

Thanks to CIMAM's [Travel Grant Program](#), supported by the **Getty Foundation**, the **V-A-C Foundation**, the **Byucksan Foundation**, **Mercedes Vilardell**, the **Garage Museum of Contemporary Art**, and the **Office for Contemporary Art Norway**, this year, **50 contemporary art curators and museum professionals from 32 different countries** were able to attend the conference – 23 of them in person. This is an excellent opportunity to expand their network of contacts.

All the presentations and the Q&A sessions with the speakers and moderators can be found by following this link.

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/cimam>

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