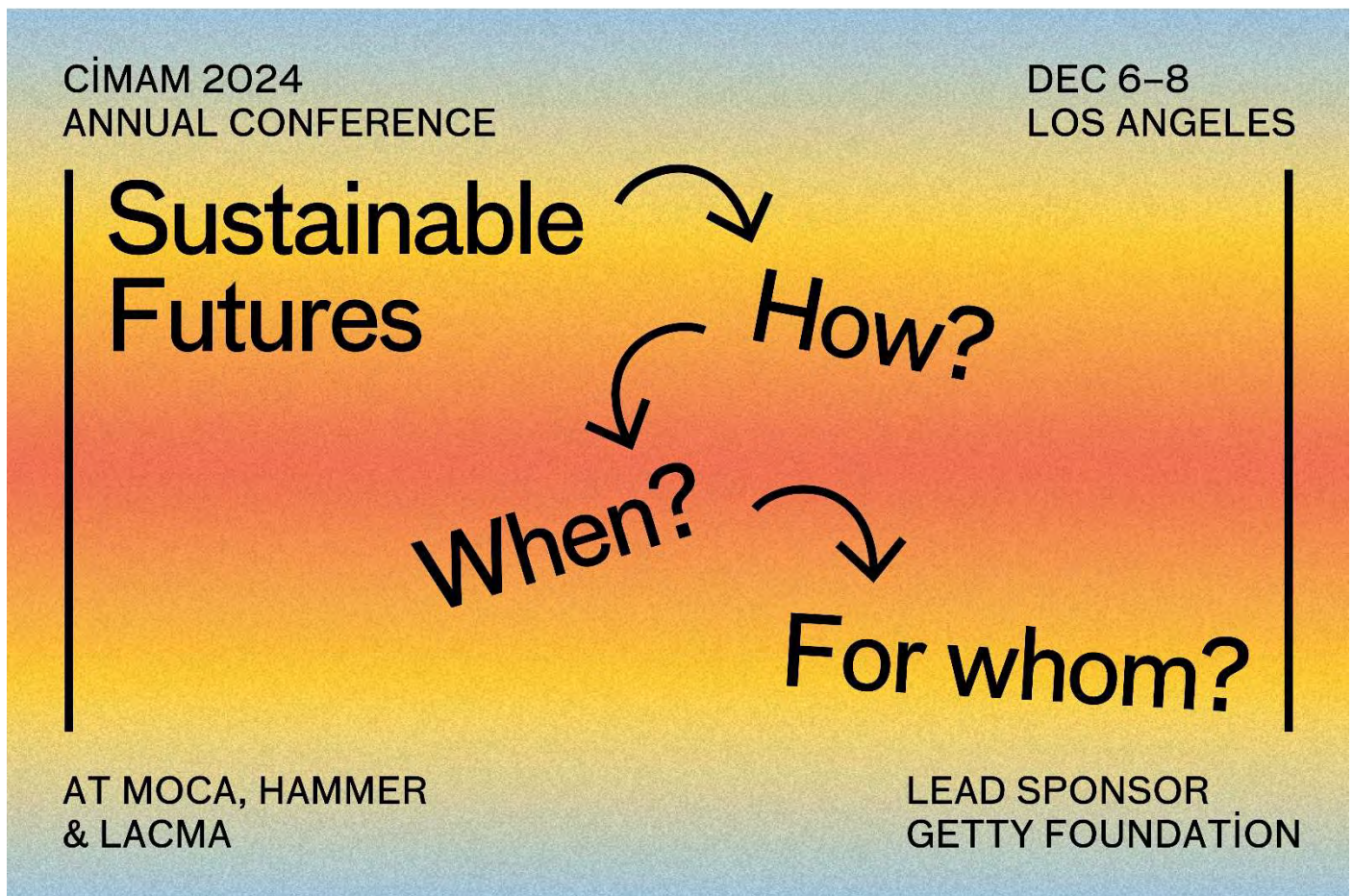


# Report on the CİMAM 2024 Annual Conference 6 to 8 December *Sustainable Futures* *How? When? For Whom?* MOCA, Hammer, LACMA



CİMAM – International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art – an Affiliated Organization of ICOM.



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# Letter from Suhanya Raffel President of CÌMAM



Suhanya Raffel, President of CÌMAM, and Director of M+ Museum, Hong Kong.

Dear CÌMAM Members, Patrons, and Colleagues,

From December 6 to 8, Los Angeles became the epicenter of dialog and collaboration as CÌMAM's 56th Annual Conference brought together an extraordinary community of museum professionals from around the world. This year, we welcomed 277 attendees from 50 countries. Together, we explored the timely and challenging theme, "Sustainable Futures: How? Where? For Whom?"

Organized by the Content Committee, led by Clara Kim alongside Kitty Scott, Suzanne Cotter, Joselina Cruz, Amanda de la Garza, Aram Moshayedi, and Rita Gonzalez, the conference featured 21 inspirational panelists who ignited thought-provoking discussions amidst the vibrant art and cultural scene of Los Angeles. The event was enriched by the participation of 34 Travel Grant beneficiaries from 20 countries, supported by the generosity of the Getty Foundation, Saastamoinen Foundation, Mercedes Vilardell, Aimée Labarrere de Servitje, Eloisa Haudenschield, Fernando Zobel de Ayala, OCA – Office for Contemporary Art Norway, SAHA, the Consulate General of Brazil in Los Angeles, and the Byucksan Cultural Foundation.

We are deeply grateful to the institutions that hosted us so warmly: the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles (MOCA), the Hammer Museum at UCLA, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), and the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures. A special acknowledgment goes to the Getty Foundation for their invaluable leadership and sponsorship.



This year's conference was made possible through the generous support of the Terra Foundation for American Art, along with additional contributions from the Perenchio Foundation and the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation. Hosting sponsorship was graciously provided by Hauser & Wirth, the Getty Foundation, East West Bank, and Jarl Mohn, Founder of MAC3.

The unforgettable post-conference desert tour offered attendees a moment of reflection and inspiration and was hosted in partnership with Desert X, Sunnylands Center & Gardens, High Desert Test Sites, Visit Greater Palm Springs, Palm Springs Art Museum, and Tamarisk Country Club.

The Los Angeles conference was not only a gathering of ideas, but a call to action. Together, we explored pressing issues facing modern and contemporary art institutions and collectively envisioned more sustainable futures.

As I write these lines, a few weeks after our meeting in Los Angeles, we are witnessing how terrible fires are devastating parts of the city that so graciously welcomed us into its museums, art galleries, and artists' studios with warm hospitality and generosity. We wish with all our hearts that our host institutions, and all the art institutions and artists' studios we visited, as well as all their communities, remain safe and sound, and may they recover soon from this devastating episode.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this incredible event, from our esteemed speakers to our generous sponsors, hosting institutions, and, most importantly, our engaged attendees.

We look forward to continuing this vital conversation next year at CïMAM's 57th Annual Conference in Turin from November 28-30, 2025.

Warm regards,

Suhanya Raffel  
President of CïMAM  
Director, M+, Hong Kong  
14 January 2025



Mark Bradford, Artist, Los Angeles



# Letter from Clara Kim, Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles



Clara Kim, Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

Dear Colleagues,

It was a pleasure to welcome you to Los Angeles for the 2024 CİMAM Annual Conference in December 2024.

Thank you for what was undoubtedly a memorable convening around the theme of *Sustainable Future: How? When? And for Whom?*, as we listened and responded to engaging presentations over three days by some of the most inspiring artists of our time, museum colleagues who are transforming the field, and visionary philanthropists who are rewriting the rules of the game. I hope that the conference gave you, as it did for me, ideas for concrete actions to take forward, theoretical issues to tackle, and philosophical conundrums to solve. Moreover, that it left with you the recognition that sustainability is not necessarily a formula to build consensus around or a set of policies to follow, but a perspectival and methodological shift in how we re-align and redefine our work within the intersection of art, ecology and community. I am grateful to the speakers who joined and inspired us to think about sustainability on many levels: from the molecular around the science of conservation to the urban and infrastructural in terms of how our buildings operate and sit within the fabric of the city, to the macro level of economic models and indigenous knowledge systems. To that end, I thank my fellow Content Committee members—Kitty Scott, Suzanne Cotter, Joselina Cruz, Amanda de la Cruz, Rita Gonzalez and Aram Moshayedi for their valuable insights and diverse viewpoints that informed the content of this conference making it a successful and singular event.



In the weeks following the conference, the themes addressed during the conference have felt more urgent than ever, as wildfires ravaged Los Angeles in the early days of 2025, consuming entire neighborhoods and communities including where many artists and art workers lived. It has put into sharp focus that climate change is here, on our very doorsteps. As devastating as it has been to witness and survey the loss of homes and studios, as well as the impact on lives and livelihoods being one of the most destructive fires on record, it has also been deeply heartening to see how swiftly the LA art community has come together to support each other in the face of crisis. Grassroots organizing and institutional coalitions have mobilized relief aid efforts—in the form of triage grants, temporary housing and studios, household goods and art supplies, even administrative, insurance and legal support. Cross-sections of artists, galleries, curators, philanthropists, museums and non-profits, foundations and corporations have come together in response, making evident the power of collaboration and collective action.

As I write this letter, the newly appointed 47<sup>th</sup> President of the United States has begun his term, issuing a record number of Executive Orders during his first week in office, thereby undermining democratic processes and progressive values to deliver on his ultraright wing agenda including withdrawing from the landmark, multilateral Paris Agreement adopted by 196 Parties at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in December 2015.

While our work seems daunting during this unprecedented moment of social and political turmoil, we must remain hopeful and more determined than ever to channel our collective power to create and enable change, to come together and listen, to recognize the diversity in viewpoints and opinions, to understand difference so that we can build new possible futures. With that, I hope that the conversations seeded from the conference will develop in meaningful ways for you and that you will return to CİMAM events and conferences ready to engage again.

Clara Kim

CİMAM Board Member, and Chair of the 2024 Contents Committee.

Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs, The Museum of Contemporary Art.

26 January 2025





# Conference Abstract

## ***Sustainable Futures How? When? For Whom?***

The CIMAM 2024 Annual Conference in Los Angeles will address the subject of sustainability from an integrated and holistic perspective, beginning with our desire to respond to climate change by reassessing our policies around collection care and conservation; rethinking the buildings we occupy and the cities we are part of; while also exploring innovative models for economic sustainability and community building.

The conference will address key questions such as: How do museums navigate the tensions of the ongoing cycles of crisis and change? What does it mean in the context of art institutions? How are museums putting it into practice? And how do we acknowledge different contexts, cultures, and economies?

Through keynote speeches and panel format presentations and discussions, the conference will engage colleagues at the forefront of the field who are thinking anew about the intersection of museological practice, climate/social change, and contemporary art, and forging new models of sustainable practice in the cultural sector. Artists are central to this change – in pushing the conventions by challenging notions of what is “collected” and “preserved”; in redefining the possibilities of art in relation to community engagement; and in centering indigenous perspectives and belief systems that fundamentally question the proscribed definitions of art as well as our relationship to nature and ecology.

### **Day 1: Friday, December 6 The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA**

*What is our Agency? The Contemporary Art Museum and Climate Crisis*

We are living through a time of climate crisis. What does sustainability, in the most expansive sense, look like within institutions today? How are we as a group of professionals enacting lasting structural changes in our institutions? What are the opportunities for the sustainable museum? How do we think about collection environments in ways that speak to the entanglements of addressing carbon emission reduction? How can a commitment to equality, social change, and cultural transformation be part of a sustainable vision for museums for the future?

*Sustainable Ecosystems: Rethinking Museum Collections and Buildings within the Urban and Social Realm.*

Museums are living, thriving entities that are part of the urban landscape, having an impact on neighborhoods, communities, and cities. As part of a larger ecosystem with a wide range of stakeholders, museums are tasked with intellectual, historical, and social responsibility, as well as expected to respond to moments of crisis and change. As museums take a turn towards the social, how do we develop more sustainable ecosystems that reimagine our role and responsibility within the larger urban fabric of a city? How do we redefine our relationship to place beyond museum walls?

## Day 2: Saturday, December 7 Hammer Museum at UCLA

### *Economies of Sustainability: Ethics, Values and Resilience*

Within the economic, political, and social challenges we face today, the need to reassess existing financial models has become more urgent than ever as it relates to the long-term health and viability of museums and as we navigate the encroaching lines between public good and private interests. What do sustainable funding structures look like in the art and cultural sector? How is the governance of museums affected by who is in power and what is in play? From what changing philanthropic models can museums and non-profits learn? How do social impact philanthropy and artist-generated projects help sustain long-term goals for self-reliance as well as create new resilient models?

## Day 3: Sunday, December 8 Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA)

### *Sustainable Communities: Indigenous Perspectives and Worldviews*

Indigenous artists, curators, and thinkers have been making highly visible change in museums throughout the world. Indigenous ways of thinking and knowing have permeated institutions and the practices of exhibition making and collecting. What does sustainability, when seen and understood through indigenous perspectives, mean for our institutions? What should be sustained, changed, and reimagined? How do indigenous perspectives and worldviews realign the intersection between art, ecology, and community?



Professionals attending the CİMAM 2024 Annual Conference.



# Members of the 2024 Contents Committee

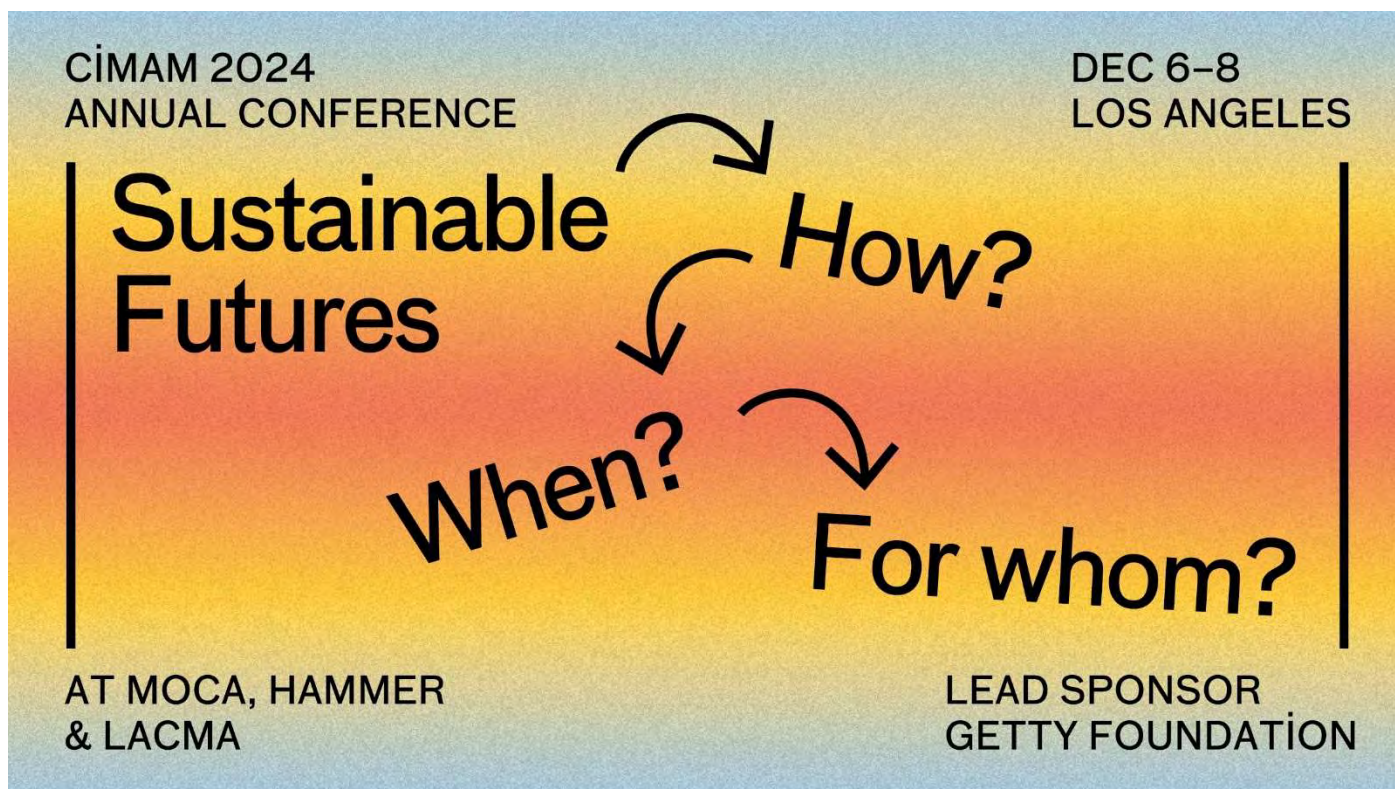


From right to left: Clara Kim, Suzanne Cotter, Joselina Cruz, Amanda de la Garza, Rita Gonzalez, Aram Moshayedi, and Kitty Scott.

For more than one year, the **2024 Contents Committee** met regularly to conceive and design the theme, format, and list of speakers of the CÍMAM 2024 Annual Conference consisting of seven professionals, from the hosting institutions, and the CÍMAM Board:

- Clara Kim (Chair of the Contents Committee), CÍMAM Board Member, Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.
- Suzanne Cotter, CÍMAM Board Member, Director, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney.
- Joselina Cruz, CÍMAM Board Member, Director/Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD) Manila.
- Amanda de la Garza, CÍMAM Board Member, Artistic Deputy Director, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (MNCARS), Madrid.
- Rita Gonzalez, CÍMAM Board Member, Terri and Michael Smooke Curator and Department Head Contemporary Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles.
- Aram Moshayedi, Interim Chief Curator, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.
- Kitty Scott, Strategic Director, Fogo Island Arts / Shorefast, Toronto.

# Overview: CÌMAM's 2024 Annual Conference



The Annual Conference is CÌMAM's most important meeting throughout the year. It is attended by directors and curators of modern and contemporary art museums and collections, and independent professionals.

The 56th CÌMAM 2024 Annual Conference was held in Los Angeles, United States of America on December 6-8, hosted by The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), the Hammer Museum at UCLA, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).

The CÌMAM Annual Conference returned to Los Angeles for the first time since 1990, bringing together more than 270 contemporary art museum directors and curators worldwide, including 34 CÌMAM Travel Grant recipients, to address the theme of sustainability from an integrated and holistic perspective.

The programming and production of the 2024 Annual Conference was made possible thanks to lead sponsorship from the Getty Foundation and the generous support from the Terra Foundation for American Art. Additional support from the Perenchio Foundation, the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Hauser & Wirth, Jarl Mohn, and East West Bank. An optional post-tour was organized for the desert on December 9 and 10, 2024.

***A total of 277 modern and contemporary art curators and museum professionals from 50 different countries attended the CÌMAM 2024 Annual Conference.***

The three-day event fostered a progressive conversation, delving into the different inspiring sustainable perspectives presented by 21 guest speakers who addressed key questions that amplified the notion of sustainability: How do museums navigate the tensions



of the ongoing cycles of crisis and change? What does it mean in the context of art institutions? How are museums putting it into practice? And how do we acknowledge different contexts, cultures, and economies?

Through three keynote speeches, sixteen case studies, and three panel discussions, the conference brought together museum directors, curators, artists, architects, and other visionaries from around the world. It departed from the realization of the social role museums play as part of a city's urban fabric and natural landscape.

Participants explored the economic and financial sustainability of cultural infrastructures and analyzed today's challenges in the two predominant models: the US non-profit system and the publicly funded European institutions, as well as new models being forged by artists, foundations, and philanthropists, centering direct community engagement and social change.

Individual panels highlighted the importance of Indigenous worldviews in debates about the intersection of art, ecology, and practice, and provided spaces to reflect on community-based sustainability, stewardship versus ownership, and the intellectual and philosophical frameworks of what a museum can be.

*The afternoon visits included 18 different venues and tours from which participants could choose according to their preference and optional tours to 18 studio visits.*

The venues included in the conference program were MOCA Grand, REDCAT, Broad, The Brick, ICA, VPAM, Eames House, Schindler House, Hollyhock House/LAMAG, David Horvitz's Garden, Art + Practice, Crenshaw Dairy Mart, CAAM, Autry, JPL/Brand, MOLAA, Hauser & Wirth, and the Getty Center.

This year, the conference organizers offered a special add-on program of studio visits on Monday 9 December with a select group of leading artists working in Los Angeles today. CİMAM 2024 offered complimentary shuttle bus transportation to four tours including the following artists' studios: Rodney McMillian, Charles Gaines, Joey Terrill, Elliott Hundley, Paul McCarthy, Andrea Bowers, Tala Madani, Nathaniel Mellors, Kelly Akashi, Christina Quarles, Todd Gray, Kyungmi Shin, Rosha Yaghmai, Analia Saban, Lita Albuquerque, Judith F. Baca, and Alison Saar.

*The conference program consisted of 21 speakers and 3 panel discussions with respondents.*

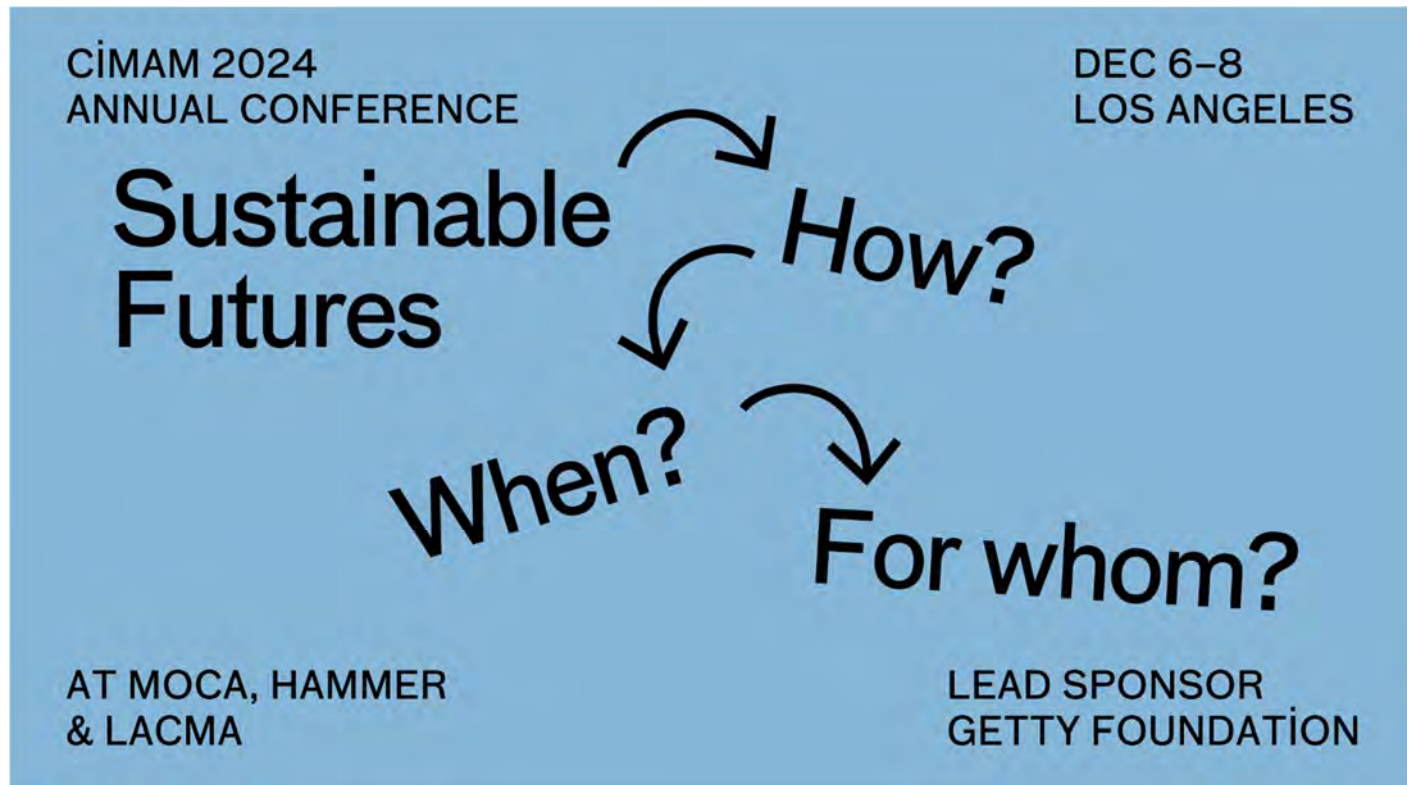
The program on Day 2 included the Interlude Presentation – Artist Talk by Walid Raad: *Two drops per heartbeat: A free-fall in the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection.*

During CİMAM's General Assembly at the 56th Annual Conference, CİMAM announced the three recipients of its fourth edition of the Outstanding Museum Practice Award (OMPA). İstanbul Museum of Modern Art (Turkey), the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), and the Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko National Museum of Art in Kyiv, (Ukraine) were named OMPA 2024 winners for their progressive models and practices that can inspire museums worldwide.

At the end of the CİMAM General Assembly, held on December 8 in Los Angeles, Suhanya Raffel, President of CİMAM and Director of the M+ in Hong Kong, together with Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, President of the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo,

announced Turin (Italy) as the new city to host CìMAM's 57th Annual Conference. The next edition will be co-hosted by Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Fondazione Torino Musei, and Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, and will be supported by Fondazione per l'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea CRT.

## DAY 1: Friday, December 6



Introduction by Clara Kim, CìMAM Board Member, Chair of the 2024 Contents Committee, Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

→ Keynote: Mark Bradford, Artist, Los Angeles. *Arts Education and the Potential for Impact*.

### Session #1

*What is our Agency? The Contemporary Art Museum and Climate Crisis*

With presentations by:

- J Fiona Ragheb, Deputy Director for Curatorial and Exhibitions, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles.
- Kelsey Shell, Environmental & Sustainability Strategist, MOCA, Los Angeles.
- Daniel Vega, Deputy Director for Exhibitions and Conservation, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Bilbao.
- Cecilia Winter, Project Specialist, Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles.
- John Kenneth Paranada, Curator of Art and Climate Change, Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia, Norwich.

Moderated by Suzanne Cotter, CìMAM Board Member, Member of the 2024 Contents Committee, and Director, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (MCA), Sydney.



## Session #2

### *Sustainable Ecosystems: Rethinking Museums within the Urban and Social Realm*

With presentations by:

- Michael Maltzan, Principal, Michael Maltzan Architecture, Inc., Los Angeles.
- Andrea Lissoni, Artistic Director, Haus der Kunst, Munich.
- Sara Zewde, Principal, Studio Zewde, New York.

Moderated by Chus Martinez, CIMAM Board Member, and Director, Institute Art Gender Nature, Basel, Switzerland.

### *Respondents*

- Aileen Burns and Johan Lundh, Directors, Remail Modern, and Apsara DiQuinzio, Director, Nevada Museum of Art.

## DAY 2: Saturday, December 9



Introduction by Kitty Scott, CIMAM Board Member, Member of the Contents Committee, and Strategic Director, Fogo Island Arts / Shorefast, Toronto.

- Keynote: Zita Cobb, CEO of Shorefast, Co-Founder, Shorefast, Ottawa / Joe Batt's Arm. *Fogo Island: The Possibility of a Place*.

## Session #3

### *Economies of Sustainability: Ethics, Values, and Resilience*

With presentations by:

- Manuel Segade, Director, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (MNCARS), Madrid.

→ Mai Abu ElDahab, Director, Mophradat, Brussels.

→ Ibrahim Mahama, Artist and Founder, Savannah Centre for Contemporary Art (SCCA) and Red Clay Studio, Ghana, in conversation with Yesomi Umolu, Arts Leader and Curator, London.

→ Andrea Fraser, Professor, UCLA, Los Angeles.

Moderated by Aram Moshayedi, Member of the 2024 Contents Committee, and Interim Chief Curator, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

#### Respondents

→ Deepanjana Klein, Director of Acquisitions & Development, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, and Eungie Joo, Curator and Head of Contemporary Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA).

### DAY 3: Sunday 8 December



Introduction by Joselina Cruz, C1MAM Board Member, Member of the Contents Committee, and Director/Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD), Manila.

→ Keynote: Candice Hopkins, Executive Director and Chief Curator, Forge Projects, Taghkanic. *The Potential in Not Being a Museum*.

#### Session #4

*Sustainable Communities: Indigenous Perspectives and Worldviews*

With presentations by:

→ Edgar Calel, Artist, San Juan Comalapa, Guatemala.

→ Pablo José Ramírez, Curator, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.



→ Taloi Havini, Artist, Brisbane.

→ Djon Mundine, Artist, Curator, Activist and Writer, Australia.

Moderated by Rita Gonzalez, Member of the 2024 Contents Committee, and Terri and Michael Smooke Curator and Department Head of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles.

### *Respondents*

→ Michelle LaVallee, Director, Indigenous Ways Department and Curatorial Initiatives, National Gallery of Canada, and Stephanie Rosenthal, Director, Director Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Project, Guggenheim Museum Foundation.

→ Visit the Conference Booklet available at [cimam.org](https://cimam.org) including the speakers' bios and abstracts, the conference schedule, information about the conference hosts, and sponsors, the venues visited, and the attendees who attended the Annual Conference in LA.



Professionals attending the CìMAM 2024 Annual Conference.



# Overview: CIMAM's 2024 Post-Tour to the Desert

Clara Kim organized an optional post-tour to the desert on December 9 and 10, 2024, with the precious support of Jenny Gil, executive director of Desert X.

*A group of 60 conference delegates attended the two-day post-tour program to the Desert.*

The Post-Conference Tour program consisted of visits to Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage, and Joshua Tree in the High Desert – a two-hour drive from downtown LA – allowing conference participants to experience the unique desert landscape of Southern California as well as ruminate on our place on earth in relationship to extreme climate conditions and delicate ecosystems.

Visits included a preview of a Desert X installation at Sunnylands Center & Gardens. The visit continued with a private visit to Palm Springs Art Museum including their PST ART exhibition, and the iconic modernist architect Albert Frey's Aluminaire House, Joshua Tree National Park, High Desert Test Sites, with special tours of A-Z West – a compound and artwork by Andrea Zittel – and tours to Noah Purifoy Desert Art Museum, to the Institute of Mentalphysics, and Boxoprojects.

The post-conference tour to the desert was made possible through the generous support of Desert X, Sunnylands Center & Gardens, High Desert Test Sites, Visit Greater Palm Springs, Palm Spring Art Museum, and Tamarisk Country Club.

The dinner hosted at Tamarisk Country Club was generously sponsored by members: Susan and Rod Lubeznik, Mihail Lari and Scott Murray, Sally and Jon Kovler, Lori and Howie Friend, Jay Hart and David Mazer, Susan and Lonnie Edelheit, Craig Hartzman and James John, Jeff Joyce and Bill Rogers, Donna and Jim Pohlad, Steve and Janet Anixter, Marilyn Loesberg, Rob Levine and Larry Ginsberg, Karen Fox, Jerry Spellman and Chet Robachinski, Bob and Jane Clark.

Visit to Albert Frey's Aluminaire House, Palm Springs.







Day 3 at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).



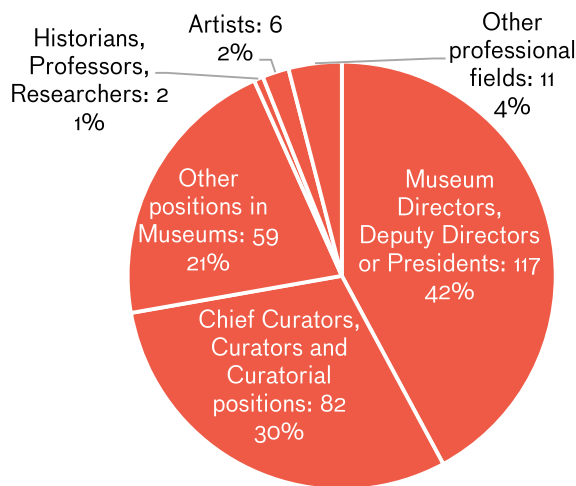
Edgar Cael, Artist, San Juan Comalapa, Guatemala.

# Conference Participants

The Annual Conference is CİMAM’s most important meeting throughout the year. It is attended by directors and curators of modern and contemporary art museums and collections, and independent professionals.

In 2024, 277 modern and contemporary art curators and museum professionals from 50 countries attended the CİMAM 2024 Annual Conference.

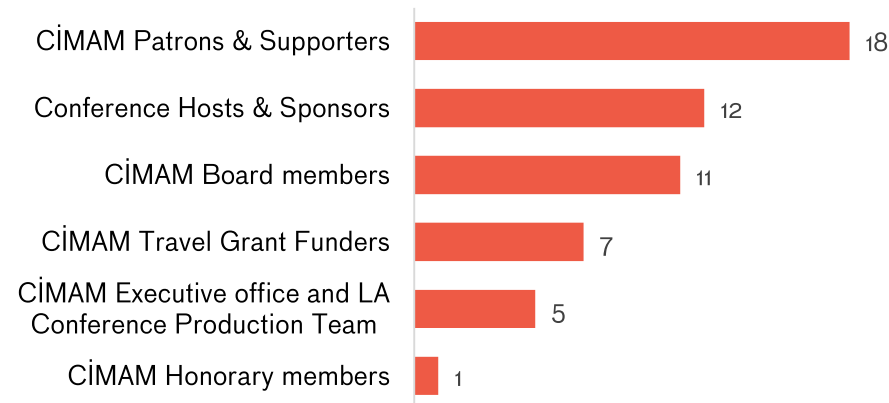
Conference participants by **position**



The first CİMAM Annual Conference took place in 1962 in The Hague. Since then, the Committee has celebrated 56 conferences that have been held in over 30 different cities around the globe. Visit the [list of cities and titles at cimam.org](https://cimam.org).

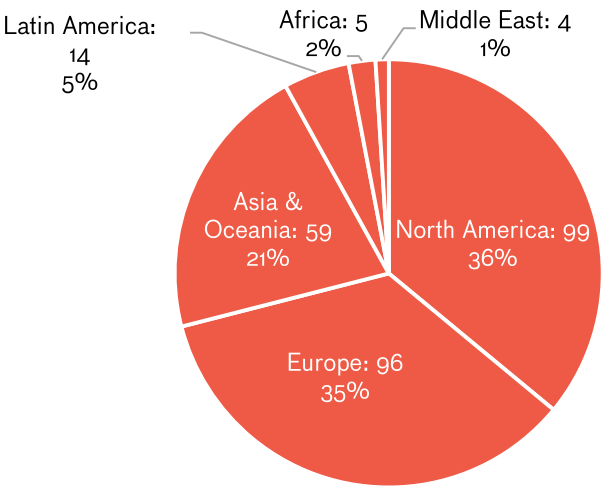
CİMAM’s Annual Conference has become an important meeting point for contemporary art professionals and an essential resource for the collaboration between museums, visual art professionals, artists, and other institutions concerned with modern and contemporary art.

Conference participants by **profile**





Conference participants by **continent**



Conference participants by **country**

In 2024, 277 professionals from 50 countries attended the Annual Conference. There was a strong representation of North American and Australian modern and contemporary art professionals attending the Annual Conference.

USA	75	Sweden	3
Australia	18	Switzerland	3
Canada	16	United Arab Emirates	3
Spain	12	GD Luxembourg	2
Finland	10	India	2
Norway	10	Kazakhstan	2
United Kingdom	10	Vietnam	2
Germany	8	Argentina	1
Mexico	8	Armenia	1
Italy	7	Colombia	1
South Korea	7	Czech Republic	1
France	6	Ecuador	1
Japan	6	Georgia	1
Singapore	6	Ghana	1
Belgium	5	Indonesia	1
Hong Kong	5	Ireland	1
Philippines	5	Kenya	1
Austria	4	Kosovo	1
Chile	4	Morocco	1
Poland	4	Nigeria	1
Turkey	4	Peru	1
Brazil	3	Portugal	1
Guatemala	3	Qatar	1
Netherlands	3	Uganda	1
Slovenia	3	Ukraine	1

## Conference Participants 2005-2024

The CìMAM Annual Conference takes place in November in a different city each year to focus on a series of topics that reflect the needs and the diversity of the international contemporary art museum community.

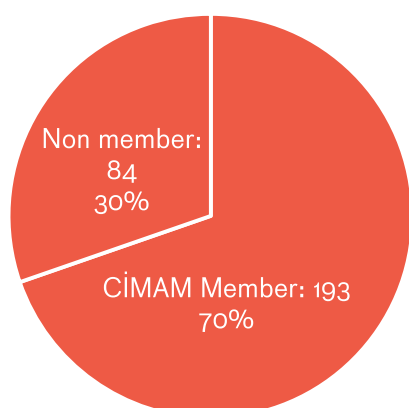
2005 São Paulo	112
2006 London	140
2007 Vienna	130
2008 New York	170
2009 Mexico	150
2010 Shanghai	200
2011 Ljubljana and Zagreb	180
2012 İstanbul	218
2013 Rio de Janeiro	159
2014 Doha	224
2015 Tokyo	260
2016 Barcelona	230
2017 Singapore	280
2018 Stockholm	229
2019 Sydney	200
2021 Lodz and Gdansk*	250
2022 Palma de Mallorca**	247
2023 Buenos Aires	248
2024 Los Angeles	277

\*150 onsite and 100 online.

\*\*227 onsite and 20 online.

## Conference participants and CìMAM membership

CìMAM Members are our best audience but there are also many professionals from outside CìMAM joining our meetings. This year CìMAM engaged with a larger number of professionals from the US and the region that were non-members.







Day 1 panel discussion moderated by Suzanne Cotter, with Daniel Vega, Cecilia Winter, Kelsey Shell, Fiona Ragheb, and John Kenneth Paranada.





# CiMAM 2024 Annual Conference Support and Budget

The 56th CiMAM Annual Conference was co-hosted by The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), the Hammer Museum at UCLA, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).

The production of the 2024 Annual Conference was made possible thanks to the lead sponsorship from the Getty Foundation and the generous support from the Terra Foundation for American Art. Additional support for the conference was provided by the Perenchio Foundation and the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation. Hauser & Wirth, Getty Foundation, Jarl Mohn, and East West Bank provided hosting sponsorship.

The post-conference tour to the desert was made possible through the support of Desert X, Sunnylands Center & Gardens, High Desert Test Sites, Visit Greater Palm Springs, Palm Springs Art Museum, and Tamarisk Country Club.

- MOCA, Hammer, and LACMA
- Getty Foundation
- Terra Foundation for American Art
- Perenchio Foundation
- Helen Frankenthaler Foundation
- Hauser & Wirth
- Jarl Mohn
- East West Bank
- Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sport
- Desert X
- Sunnylands Center & Gardens
- High Desert Test Sites
- Visit Greater Palm Springs
- Palm Springs Art Museum
- Members of the Tamarisk Country Club.

CiMAM will be eternally grateful to them for their generous support and strong commitment to sustainability in the field of modern and contemporary art museums.



Day 2 at Hammer Museum at UCLA.



## 2024 Conference Budget

The organization and production of the CIMAM Annual Conferences are funded mostly by the hosting institutions. The hosting institutions are responsible for raising the necessary funds and in-kind support to defray 98% of the costs of organizing the CIMAM Annual Conference.

<i>Main Conference Figures</i>	<i>Total USD</i>
Total conference cost	\$362,456
Institutional sponsorships & Funds from the hosting institutions	\$247,500
In-kind support	\$118,040
Average cost per participant	\$1,308
 <i>Breakdown of Conference Expenses</i>	 <i>Total USD</i>
Speaker flights, accommodation, fees, and language translation	\$48,930
Auditorium and venue rental, and furniture	\$44,916
AV and technological equipment	\$29,444
Hostesses, guides, security, visit tour costs, event coordinator and executive staff	\$65,952
Conference registration and communication of the event	\$5,913
Conference identity, designs, booklet, and signage	\$11,050
Catering	\$66,246
Transportation	\$33,124
Documentation of the event	\$23,687

*\*exchange rate as of 4/2/2025.*

*This breakdown does not include the optional post-conference tour figures.*

After eleven years of fixed prices, the registration fee to attend the Annual Conference increased in 2024. This year, rates were 350,00€ for CIMAM Members in groups C, D, and E, 450,00€ for groups A and B, and 490,00€ for non-members, [according to the membership groups aligned to ICOM](#). Registration fees are collected by CIMAM to cover CIMAM's overheads and the expenses incurred in organizing this event.



Day 1. Welcome to CîMAM 2024 Travel Grant beneficiaries, Travel Grant Funders, CîMAM Board, and the executive team.



# Travel Grant Program

This is an essential program for CÍMAM because it allows the participation of a broader range of professionals in the international debate concerning contemporary art.

*In 2024, 34 contemporary art curators, researchers, and museum professionals from 20 different countries were awarded support to attend the Annual Conference.*

Launched in 2005, CÍMAM's Travel Grant Program is designed to foster cooperation and cultural exchange between contemporary art curators and museum directors in emerging and developing economies and their counterparts in other regions of the world.

## *Key Aspects of the Travel Grant Program*

- CÍMAM's Travel Grant Program supports the curatorial and research development of individuals through their attendance at the Annual Conference where the most current concerns regarding contemporary art practices are being discussed.
- Awarded candidates benefit from unique networking opportunities through interaction and exchange with international museum directors and peers.
- Successful applicants become members of CÍMAM for the 3-year term they have been awarded allowing continuity and belonging to the most relevant international contemporary art museum community.
- Beneficiaries receive wide international visibility as their profiles and reports are announced through CÍMAM's newsletter, website, conference report, and social media before and after the conference along with the names of the Travel Grant Funders that have supported their participation.
- Over the years CÍMAM's travel grantees have constituted a remarkable group of professionals, many of whom have gone on to become important participants in the field of museums of modern contemporary art.
- Since 2005, over 400 young curators and museum directors from emerging economies have been awarded support to attend CÍMAM's Annual Conference.
- The profiles and conference reports of CÍMAM grant beneficiaries since 2015 are [accessible at cimam.org](https://cimam.org).

## *Purpose of the Grant*

The main aim of the grant was to facilitate the selected candidates' access to the Annual Conference. The distribution of funds is set on a case-by-case basis for each recipient.



CiMAM seeks to offer as many grants as possible with the available funds of each Travel Grant Funder. The support included in the grant consists of:

- Registration: access to conference sessions, lunches, dinners, refreshment breaks, access to organized visits and transportation to and from planned visits, and badge.
- Travel expenses (round trip economy tickets)
- 4-nights accommodation in a conference hotel.

CiMAM booked and pre-paid all expenses directly (travel and accommodation). Funds did not cover transportation to/from the airport, visa expenses, travel insurance, and registration for the optional conference tours.

## *Application Process*

Candidates were invited to complete an online application form and include a CV and short résumé, a motivation statement, and two documents (letter or email message) of recommendation by museum professionals or scholars who are familiar with the candidate's qualifications.

When accepting the grant, each successful candidate returned an online Acceptance Form with the grant's terms and conditions. This document contained information on travel insurance, registration to the conference, travel and accommodation arrangements, visa requirements, instructions to submit a written report, and details as new members of CiMAM.



Day 1 panel discussion moderated by Chus Martínez, with Andrea Lissoni, Sara Zewde, and Michael Maltzan.

## Selection Criteria

Grants were evaluated and conferred by CÍMAM's Selection Committee based on their assessment of the professional's genuine financial need, the potential benefit to their career development and/or research, and the relevance of field experience in relation to the objectives of CÍMAM. Grants were restricted to modern and contemporary art curators and museum directors working and residing in the countries determined by the Travel Grant Funder.

While curators of all career levels were encouraged to apply, priority was given to junior curators (with less than 10 years of experience). Researchers and independent curators whose field of research and specialization is contemporary art theory and museums were also eligible.

In 2024, CÍMAM received over 119 eligible applications which were reviewed and evaluated by CÍMAM's Travel Grant Committee, composed of five members of the CÍMAM Board. All grant recipients were first approved by the Travel Grant Funder.



CÍMAM's 2024 Travel Grant Committee

- Agustín Pérez Rubio (Chair of the Travel Grant Program), Independent Curator, Madrid, Spain.
- Joselina Cruz, Director/Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD) Manila.
- Clara Kim, Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.
- Kamini Sawhney, Independent Curator, Bangalore.
- Amanda de la Garza, Artistic Deputy Director, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (MNCARS), Madrid.

## *Calendar of the 2024 Travel Grant Program*

- The call for applications was launched on 29 April and closed on Sunday 9 June.
- Successful candidates were informed between 3 to 9 July.
- Their travel and accommodation arrangements were finalized by July 31.
- The list of the 34 grant beneficiaries was announced on 10 September 2024.
- The deadline for grantees to submit their reports about the conference was 22 December.

## *Funders of the 2024 Travel Grant Program*

CiMAM is deeply grateful to the institutions and individuals who have made possible the 2024 Travel Grant Program:

- The Getty Foundation supported 13 professionals from Emerging Markets and Developing Economies. It has supported 306 since 2005.
- Saastamoinen Foundation supported 3 professionals from Finland. It has supported 6 since 2023.
- Mercedes Vilardell supported 2 professionals from Africa. She has supported 12 since 2021.
- Aimée Labarrere de Servitje supported 3 professionals from Mexico. She has supported 5 since 2023.
- Eloisa Haudenschild supported 2 professionals from Emerging Markets and Developing Economies. She has supported 4 since 2023.
- Fernando Zobel de Ayala supported 2 professionals from the Philippines. He has supported 3 since 2023.
- OCA – Office for Contemporary Art Norway supported 3 professionals from Norway. It has supported 11 since 2020.
- SAHA supported 2 Turkish professionals. It has supported 7 since 2022.
- Spanish Support provided funds for 2 professionals from Spain. It has supported 10 since 2021.
- The Consulate General of Brazil in Los Angeles supported 1 professional from Brazil.
- The Byucksan Cultural Foundation supported 1 from South Korea. It has supported 11 since 2018.

## *Grant Expenditure Report for the International Grant Beneficiaries:*

In 2024, the amount of funds used to cover the flights, accommodation, and registration fees of 34 international professionals through the CiMAM Travel Grant Program was 82.691,73 €.

- Average cost per international grantee: 2.432,11 €.
- Average travel cost per international grantee: 1.234,82 €.
- Average accommodation cost per international grantee: 732,00 €.
- Average registration fee per grantee: 373,53 €.
- Admin fee for each awarded professional: 120,00 €.



*The granted funds have been spent as follows:*



CiMAM keeps a file of all expenses, including receipts, which document how the funds have been spent. This information will be kept for a minimum of four years.

The support we receive from Travel Grant Funders allows CiMAM to develop a Travel Grant Program that has become essential facilitating a broader range of professionals's participation in the international debate concerning modern and contemporary art.

Since 2005, CiMAM's website has dedicated a section exclusively to the Travel Grant Program, which includes extended information about its sponsors and beneficiaries.

#### *Selected Feedback from 2024 Travel Grantees:*

"As a young curator, this experience has allowed me to recognize and explore different ways of understanding not only curating but art."

"I am optimistic that connecting with CiMAM's membership and some of the participants during this year's annual conference will allow me to engage in new conversations and network."

"To be there also made the institution I work for more visible for networking in the future."

"I had never had the opportunity to engage with so many experiences; I think I'm leaving with a much broader sense of the art world."

"These conferences shape my professional development and influence what I can contribute to and learn from my immediate environment"

"Without a travel grant, it would not have been possible for me to attend or even travel to this part of the world, so I am very grateful for this opportunity."

"I met amazing colleagues, not only from the people who attended the conference but also guest speakers, panelists, and board members. This was a good space for making connections, and expressing my voice and that of the institution I work with now."

# *Names of the 34 professionals awarded a Travel Grant in 2024:*

## *Supported by The Getty Foundation (Los Angeles)*

- Santiago Avila Albuja, Exhibitions and Public Programs Manager, Quito Contemporary Art Center, Quito, Ecuador.
- Douglas de Freitas, Curatorial Coordinator, Inhotim Institute, Museum and Botanical Garden, Belo Horizonte, Brazil.
- Aindrea Emelife, Curator Modern and Contemporary Art, Museum of West African Art (MOWAA), Lagos, Nigeria.
- Marie-Nour Hechaime, Curator, Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock Museum, Beirut, Lebanon.
- Mayari Juracan, Director, Bienal en resistencia, Santa Lucía Milpas Altas, Guatemala.
- Erëmirë Krasniqi, Curator, National Pavilion of the Republic of Kosovo at the 60th International Art Exhibition—La Biennale di Venezia, Pristina, Kosovo.
- Alejandra Labastida, Curator, MUAC (Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo), Mexico City, Mexico.
- Christina Li, Independent Curator, Kowloon, Hong Kong.
- Ana Ruiz Valencia, Junior Curator, Medellín Museum of Modern Art, Medellín, Colombia.
- Aprille Tijam, Associate Director and Head of Exhibitions and Collections, Ayala Museum, Makati City, Philippines.
- Armen Yesayants, Director of Exhibitions, Cafesjian Center for the Arts/Cafesjian Museum Foundation, Yerevan, Armenia.
- Chahrazad Zahi, Independent Curator and Researcher, Marrakech, Morocco.
- Larisa Zmud, Independent Curator, Coordinator and Curator of Contents for The Rolling Map of the Argentinian Contemporary Art Scene, Museo Moderno de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

## *Supported by Saastamoinen Foundation (Helsinki)*

- Ramiro Camelo, Curator and Project Manager, Vantaa, Finland.
- Milja Liimatainen, Curator, Changing Exhibitions, Helsinki Art Museum (HAM), Finland.
- Ingrid Orman, Chief Curator of Exhibitions, Espoo Museum of Modern Art (EMMA), Helsinki, Finland.

## *Supported by Mercedes Vilardell (London/Mallorca)*

- Teesa Bahana, Director, 32° East, Kampala, Uganda.
- Martha Kazungu, Founding Director, Njabala Foundation, Kampala, Uganda.

## *Supported by Aimée Labarrere de Servitje (Mexico City)*

- Adriana Flores, Researcher, Colección CIAC, Mexico City, Mexico.
- Fabiola Iza, Curator and Researcher, Mexico City, Mexico.
- Fernanda Ramos, Independent Curator, Mexico City, Mexico.

*Supported by Eloisa Haudenschild (United States)*

- Ilaria Conti, Executive Director and Chief Curator, La Nueva Fábrica (LNF), Santa Ana Antigua, Guatemala.
- Aditya Lingga, Assistant Curator, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art di Nusantara (Museum MACAN), Jakarta Pusat, Indonesia.

*Supported by Fernando Zobel de Ayala (Manila)*

- Maria Consuelo Cabrera, Instructor and Independent Curator, Department of Art Studies, College of Arts and Letters, University of the Philippines, Quezon City, Philippines.
- James Luigi Tana, Independent Curator, Arts Writer, Educator, Cultural Worker, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, Manila, Philippines.

*Supported by OCA – Office for Contemporary Art Norway (Oslo)*

- Silja Leifsdottir, Exhibition Curator, Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen, Norway.
- Irene Pernille Snarby, Ph.D. Candidate, Curator, The Arctic University of Norway (UiT), Tromsø, Norway.
- Eva Rowson, Director Bergen Kjøtt, Bergen, Norway.

*Supported by SAHA (İstanbul)*

- Deniz Kirkali, Curator and Co-Founder, Garp Sessions, topsoil, İstanbul, Türkiye.
- Esra Özkan, Independent Curator, İstanbul, Türkiye.

*Supported by Spanish Supporter (Spain)*

- Alex Alonso Díaz, Director, fluent, Santander, Spain.
- Patricia Sorroche, Head of Exhibitions, Museu Tàpies, Barcelona, Spain.

*Supported by the Consulate General of Brazil (Los Angeles)*

- André Luiz Mesquita, Curator, Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand (MASP), Sao Paulo, Brazil.

*Supported by Byucksan Cultural Foundation (Seoul)*

- Jina Kim, Project Director, Space for Contemporary Art, Seoul, Republic of Korea.



## Santiago Avila Albuja, Exhibitions and Public Programs Manager, Quito Contemporary Art Center, Quito, Ecuador.



The 56th Annual CIMAM Conference, held in Los Angeles from December 6–8, 2024, marked a significant gathering for professionals in contemporary art museums. Hosted collaboratively by the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), and the Hammer Museum at UCLA, and supported by the Getty Foundation, this conference returned to Los Angeles after 34 years. Centered on the theme “Sustainable Futures: How? When? For Whom?”, the event delved into the multifaceted concept of sustainability and the evolving role of art institutions in addressing global challenges.

### Insights from Key Lectures

The keynote lectures set the stage for thought-provoking discussions. Mark Bradford, a globally acclaimed artist, emphasized the transformative power of artistic practices in addressing societal inequalities and fostering community resilience. He underscored art’s role as a catalyst for societal change, urging institutions to adopt practices that bridge creativity and activism. His reflections on the intersections of art, activism, and social justice strongly resonated with attendees, sparking meaningful dialogue on the ethical responsibilities of art institutions in today’s polarized world.

Zita Cobb, founder and CEO of Shorefast, shared innovative approaches to sustainability, drawing on her experience revitalizing the cultural and economic landscape of Fogo Island. She introduced the concept of “economies of care,” prioritizing long-term community well-being over short-term gains. Her key questions, “What do communities need? What holds them back?”, highlighted the importance of understanding local contexts and embedding community engagement within broader sustainability frameworks.

Manuel Segade, Director of the Museo Reina Sofía, explored the interdependent nature of museums, advocating for a reimagined, dynamic public space that engages deeply with its communities. He stressed that museums’ actions are critical in responding to global crises—climatic, political, or military—while positioning themselves ethically and resiliently. Segade also emphasized the importance of fostering interdependence within museum operations and understanding the ethical implications of their role in supporting common rights.

Candice Hopkins, Executive Director of Forge Projects, provided a compelling narrative on integrating Indigenous perspectives into contemporary curatorial practices. She emphasized how traditional knowledge systems and practices can inform sustainability, advocating for an expanded understanding that includes cultural survival, intergenerational knowledge, and ethical stewardship of resources. Her insights challenged participants to rethink conventional paradigms in favor of inclusive and resilient approaches.

## Reflections on Exhibitions and Site Visits

Aligned with Getty's PST ART initiative, the conference incorporated site visits to major exhibitions across Los Angeles, offering invaluable perspectives on the intersections of art and science. Highlights included:

The *Life at the Center* by Carolina Caycedo at the Vincent Price Art Museum. This exhibition profoundly engaged with the conference's themes, exploring the interplay of environmental justice, cultural heritage, and activism.

Scientia Sexualis at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. This exhibition provided a critical examination of the intersections between science, identity, and societal norms, offering a nuanced perspective on the cultural dimensions of knowledge production.

Exhibitions at MOCA, focusing on the environmental impacts of artistic production, and the Hammer Museum's community-driven projects further emphasized the role of museums as integral parts of their communities. These projects illustrated how museums can foster dialogue, action, and resilience, inspiring participants to explore how such methodologies could be adapted to their local contexts.

## Expanding the Discourse

The discussions extended beyond theoretical debates, offering actionable strategies for integrating sustainability into institutional practices. Sessions addressed topics ranging from rethinking conservation methods to exploring innovative funding models, underscoring the need for a holistic approach that aligns ecological responsibility with cultural missions. A key theme involved bridging global responsibilities with local commitments, providing a nuanced understanding of how museums can navigate the complexities of today's challenges. Institutions were encouraged to adopt adaptable frameworks that remain grounded in core values, ensuring relevance and impact in a rapidly evolving world.

## Personal Reflections

Participating in this conference was an intellectually and professionally enriching experience. The diversity of perspectives—ranging from Indigenous knowledge systems to contemporary scientific research—provided a comprehensive view of sustainability's complexities. The discussions reinforced collaboration and adaptability as essential tools for addressing future challenges. Witnessing the intersections of art, activism, and innovation offered both intellectual stimulation and practical inspiration for driving meaningful change within my own professional practice.

The opportunity to engage with global peers and experts underscored the importance of dialogue in fostering collective growth. Sessions focused on community engagement were particularly impactful, prompting reflections on how art institutions can actively contribute to equitable and resilient societies.

## Recommendations and Future Directions

1. **Amplify Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Museums must prioritize partnerships across sectors to tackle sustainability's multifaceted challenges. Recognizing the diverse origins and scales of participants is crucial. Academic boundaries often fail to reflect the dynamic ways life is organized.
2. **Enhance Accessibility and Inclusion:** Expanding scholarship programs like those

offered by CĪMAM can ensure broader participation, particularly for cultural agents from the Global South. Accessibility efforts should continue to focus on equitable access to knowledge-sharing platforms and fostering diverse perspectives.

3. **Promote Community Engagement:** Institutions must deepen ties with local communities to ensure initiatives are impactful and relevant. Communities sustain museum processes and should drive proposals, rather than merely adapting to institutional agendas. Discussions at this year's CĪMAM emphasized adapting to community needs as vital to fostering meaningful connections.
4. **Foster Ongoing Dialogue:** Continuous platforms for exchange and reflection can sustain the momentum generated by conferences like CĪMAM. This aspect requires significant strengthening, with future editions benefiting from more participatory activities for attendees. Regular forums, workshops, and publications can help extend the impact of these discussions.

## Conclusion

The CĪMAM 56th Annual Conference served as a critical platform for envisioning sustainable futures for contemporary art museums. By fostering a collective commitment to innovation, equity, and ecological mindfulness, the conference established a robust foundation for future actions and collaborations. The general assembly highlighted the importance of identifying common challenges and the value of creating spaces for dialogue. Recognizing participants' cultural and linguistic diversity, it is vital to facilitate language accessibility beyond English, fostering broader inclusivity.

A personal question that continues to resonate is: What type of museum institutions are we striving to build? Where does the museum situate itself within the context of the climate crisis? While museums cannot replace the role of streets or everyday life, they can serve as extensions and supports for what occurs both outside and within the world. The dialogues initiated in Los Angeles must inspire and propel meaningful change across the global museum community. By embracing adaptability, inclusivity, and interdisciplinary collaboration, museums can position themselves as leaders in shaping a sustainable and equitable future for all.

## Additional Reflections on My Area of Work and Its Connection to Other Departments

- It is essential to develop evaluations that quantitatively and qualitatively capture the communities and individuals benefiting from museum incentives and support.
- Educational and community activities should not be confined to isolated spaces but should holistically shape the museum's programs and initiatives.
- The museum faces significant financial challenges; while mobilizing collections or exhibitions may be unfeasible, efforts should focus on bringing artists to engage with the museum.
- Management models should emphasize interdependence across departments, fostering sensitivity to artistic processes.
- Operational and exhibition frameworks must align with and support the rhythms of life.
- Sustainability within the museum context requires numerical data—not for justification but to acknowledge the complexities of engaging with communities and social actors while ensuring ongoing follow-up on their proposals and concerns.



- Sustainability cannot exist without education. Pedagogical models must encourage reflection on how life is sustained, resisted, and subverted within the broader context of global exploitation.

## **Douglas de Freitas, Curatorial Coordinator, Inhotim Institute, Museum and Botanical Garden, Belo Horizonte, Brazil.**



The CİMAM 2024 Annual Conference in Los Angeles focused on envisioning a sustainable future for institutions. The key questions driving the discussions were: "How do museums navigate the tensions of the ongoing cycles of crisis and change? What does it mean in the context of art institutions? How are museums putting it into practice? And how do we acknowledge different contexts, cultures, and economies?" These questions were addressed from an integrated and holistic perspective by professionals from various fields within museums, including artists who work with community-centered practices or see them as integral to their work, such as Edgar Calel, İbrahim Mahama, and Mark Bradford.

Mark Bradford presented on the first day of CİMAM with "Arts Education and the Potential for Impact," discussing the history, impact, and essential role of developing sustainable relationships through agreements and listening. He emphasized that effective change cannot occur without truly listening to the community's needs and the desires of those involved in the projects. In this sense, creating safe spaces for work and listening is fundamental to implementing a project that considers education and community work. As part of the conference tours, we had the opportunity to visit Art + Practice, a space co-founded by Bradford in Leimert Park, South Los Angeles, on the third day of CİMAM.

Bradford also talked about how artists play a crucial role in challenging institutional conventions. Edgar Calel, an artist based in Guatemala, presented his work on the third day, reflecting on the possibilities of existence in the circuit in ethical alignment with their spirituality, community, and ancestry. Calel presented his work as a case that institutionalizes in fairs, collections, and museums as exceptions but with the potential to rethink these systems from more sustainable ancestral perspectives in relation to nature and ecology.

On the second day, Zita Cobb discussed the importance of considering place and how culture is the human response to that place. In her talk "Fogo Island: The Possibility of a Place," Cobb, an eighth-generation Fogo Islander, presented Shorefast (Ottawa / Joe Batt's Arm, Canada), where she reflected on how the history and way of life of her ancestors inspired her current practices and how the pursuit of sustainability involves an inclusive and creative effort to find an innovative, dignified, and sustainable way of life. She also highlighted how implemented systems have evolved as if place did not matter, leading to the failure of economies, communities, and cultures.

I find especially symbolic that the words "potential" and "possibility" appear in the titles of Cobb's and Bradford's talks, both focused on practices related to people and communities, their histories, and their desires. Perhaps the path to effective change lies in people, individually or collectively. Institutions must seek to create safe spaces with responsibility, ethics, knowledge, and care for interpersonal relationships for the creation of sustainable solutions on different scales. Thus, it is essential that sustainability initiatives are thought out and implemented inclusively, encompassing both the needs of local communities and the

particularities of each cultural and economic context, and not imposed based on pre-existing policies that do not apply to the specificities of the locations. By integrating these practices, art institutions not only contribute to environmental preservation but also strengthen their role as agents of social and cultural transformation.

## **Aindrea Emelife, Curator Modern and Contemporary Art, Museum of West African Art (MOWAA), Lagos, Nigeria.**



### *Rethinking Museums in the 21st Century: Reflections on CIMAM 2024*

As I sit with my thoughts after attending the CIMAM 2024 Annual Conference, I am moved by the profound conversations and the intellectual generosity that marked this gathering of museum professionals from across the globe. In a time where the role of museums is being scrutinized, challenged, and reimaged, the conference served as both a compass and a mirror. It was a guide to new possibilities and a reflection of the challenges we face, particularly as we build institutions like MOWAA that seek to redefine what a museum can be in the 21st century, and in Africa.

### *Indigenous Practices and the Power of Rooted Narratives*

One of the most resonant moments for me was the panel discussions centred on indigenous practices and their integration into contemporary museum strategies. These sessions not only illuminated the rich tapestry of indigenous knowledge systems but also highlighted the pressing need to shift from extractive paradigms to collaborative frameworks. Most profoundly, I was struck by the insistence on museums as custodians of living traditions rather than static archives.

At MOWAA, we are actively exploring similar themes. How do we honour the dynamism of West African art and its deep ties to oral histories, performative traditions, and community engagement? These discussions at CIMAM affirmed that this is not a peripheral concern but a central mission for any institution that seeks to remain relevant and authentic. It also posed questions about whose voices are heard and how the museum's role can shift from authoritative to participatory. This theme feels urgent and necessary in our context.

### *Sustainability as an Ethical Imperative*

Another highlight was the candidness with which many speakers addressed the sustainability of their institutions. I was struck by their willingness to divulge the internal workings of their organizations as they grappled with questions of energy consumption, decolonial practices, and equitable funding models. These discussions underscored a truth we cannot escape: sustainability is not merely a technical problem but an ethical and philosophical one.

At MOWAA, sustainability is not an afterthought. It is baked into our very foundation. As a new institution, we have the privilege and responsibility to implement practices that are forward-thinking from the outset. The dialogue at CIMAM reinforced the importance of designing systems that are not only environmentally conscious but also socially sustainable. How can museums in Africa, for instance, lead by example in addressing climate change while also ensuring that their economic models benefit local communities? These are questions we at MOWAA are asking, and it was invigorating to find colleagues around the world wrestling with them too.

## *The Philosophical Dimensions of Museum Practice*

What struck me most profoundly, however, was the tone of philosophical inquiry that pervaded the conference. The speakers, in their openness and vulnerability, demonstrated a willingness to ask fundamental questions: What is a museum for? Who does it serve? How do we ensure it remains a space of dialogue, not dogma? These are questions that resonate deeply with my own practice as a curator.

At MOWAA, we are grappling with what it means to be a museum in Africa today. How do we reconcile the weight of history with the urgency of innovation? How do we build an institution that not only houses objects but also fosters critical thought and societal transformation? CIMAM provided a space to delve into these questions, and I left with a renewed sense of purpose.

## *Building Bridges, Forging Connections*

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not reflect on the incredible colleagues I had the honour of meeting. The willingness of so many museum professionals to engage in dialogue, to share insights, and to extend their hands in collaboration was nothing short of humbling. These are individuals whose work I have long admired, and to converse with them as peers was an experience I will treasure.

I am particularly inspired by the possibility of building a network of new institutions that, like MOWAA, are at the beginning of their journey. It would be fascinating to hear how others have approached these questions at inception and to learn from their successes and failures as we shape our own path forward. There is something uniquely powerful about starting anew, about having the opportunity to design differently, and the conversations at CIMAM reminded me of the potential inherent in this moment.

## *A Call to Action*

As I reflect on the conference, I am reminded of the words of Okwui Enwezor: “Museums are not neutral spaces.” They are spaces of power, possibility, and transformation. At MOWAA, we are committed to harnessing that power to tell stories that matter, to foster connections that endure, and to imagine futures that are inclusive and just.

CIMAM 2024 was not just a conference. It was a call to action, a reminder of the work that lies ahead, and an affirmation that we are not alone in this journey. The fire in my belly burns all the more brighter and the profound understanding and feeling of luck to be part of such an incredible journey, doing important work in an ecosystem of brilliant minds makes 2025 all the more exciting. To all the colleagues I met, to all the ideas shared, and to the spirit of collaboration that infused every session: thank you. Let us continue to push boundaries, ask difficult questions, and build museums that reflect the complexity and beauty of the world we inhabit.



## Mayari Juracan, Director, Bienal en resistencia, Santa Lucía Milpas Altas, Guatemala.



### *The Radicality is not a Word. Reflections on my Experience at CIMAM Sustainable Futures 2024*

From the beginning, I had high expectations about the importance of this conference and its historical relevance. The theme, “Sustainable Futures,” deeply resonated with me, as I was eager to observe how these issues are analyzed from a global perspective.

Mark Bradford’s opening lecture gave me the sense of being in the right place. I consider it highly significant to begin such gatherings by discussing art and education, as these are often undervalued spaces. Later, during the session “What is our Agency?: The Contemporary Art, Museum and Climate Crisis,” while I found the scale of the museums discussed intriguing, I reflected on how, from my context and work as an activist and defender of the land, the central issue was not comprehensively addressed.

The climate crisis is not solely about architectural constructions or energy use in large museums. If one believes these changes significantly contribute to a sustainable future, they are starting from a flawed premise. The primary reflection should be that this is not merely a climate issue; it is also political, territorial, and capitalist. It is crucial to understand that a museum that does not work alongside local communities, activists, and community leaders is generating more publicity than genuine social awareness of the problem. The responses presented by the museums seemed superficial, focused on “cleaning the dirt they themselves carry on their shoes” without reflecting on their role within the system perpetuating this crisis.

The shift towards a sustainable future cannot rely solely on an institution. This is a long-term process that must be led by communities who have continually fought for laws that protect the planet. The full awareness that the future includes everyone is an essential step.

The second session, “Sustainable Ecosystems: Rethinking Museum Collections and Buildings within the Urban and Social Realm,” also brought forth significant reflections. Chuz Martínez’s introduction was insightful, but once again, discussions on architecture were analyzed through a Western lens of what constitutes territory. Phrases such as “making the territory less hostile” or “making the territory comfortable” were used. However, from our Maya Kaqchikel worldview, there is no such thing as a hostile territory. The land inherently possesses a design of coexistence with humans and non-humans; hostility is a capitalist invention rooted in the idea of comfort and white power.

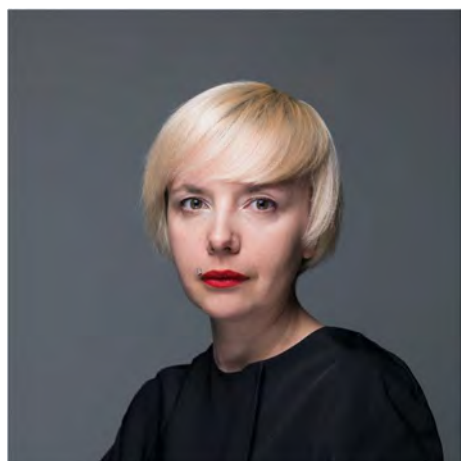
Sara Zewde presented an interesting proposal, but it raises fundamental questions: Is the creation of a concrete building designed to consume energy and protect art objects not already a hostile vision towards the earth? Paradoxically, the most fertile space in a museum is the ground beneath the concrete on which it was built.

The conversation spaces were beautiful and conducive to sharing perspectives. However, I believe they could be broader in time and scope.

On the final day, the intervention by Edgar Cael and Pablo José Ramírez was profoundly moving. I am grateful for their lives, work, and voices. They perfectly articulate the places we come from and our battles to narrate our history in our own words. However, from my feminist and queer social struggle, I find it essential to include more voices of Central American women in these dialogues. There are numerous female artists, curators, and thinkers from indigenous backgrounds who have worked for art for decades, yet the 2024 statistics by La Revuelta indicate that less than 3% of them have been invited to spaces of power. It is critical to reflect on the gender gaps in the cultural field, where male curators and artists have dominated.

CiMAM provided me with a tremendous opportunity to learn and understand artistic ecosystems on a global scale. I felt safe and heard, in a space where I could express myself and be recognized. However, I also believe these spaces need to be led by more women, feminists, activists, and diverse bodies so that we can stay grounded and genuinely understand that sustainability lies in being generous with the earth, as she is with us.

## **Erëmirë Krasniqi, Curator, National Pavilion of the Republic of Kosovo at the 60th International Art Exhibition—La Biennale di Venezia, Pristina, Kosovo.**



Attending the 56th CiMAM Annual Conference (December 6–8, Los Angeles, USA), which explored the theme of sustainability in cultural institutions—“Sustainable Futures: How? When? For Whom?”—offered valuable insights into the practices of remarkable individuals and museums, as well as an opportunity to address pressing questions I had about museum-building and their broader ecosystems. I have been assisting the Ministry of Culture in Kosovo in designing a roadmap for the future Museum of Contemporary Art. While this work has been carried out in collaboration with local experts, I became acutely aware of the gaps in knowledge we face when undertaking such a significant endeavor. To tackle these challenges, I saw the importance of engaging with global conversations about museums, and attending CiMAM was a natural and necessary step in this process.

Many of our museum structures are shaped by discourse and our positioning in relation to global developments. This necessitates the continuous reassessment of both old and new practices to remain relevant to the times and in dialogue with the communities we serve. However, for this to happen, we need to be part of a larger conversation. Coming from a context without established museological infrastructure, these discussions often feel solitary and one-sided. While access to conferences like CiMAM, a global platform for museums, is valuable, the discourse shared at times can feel disconnected, as different geographies move at different speeds.

Listening closely to well-established museums such as Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, MoCA, Hammer Museum, Haus der Kunst München among others presenting on the first day of the conference about their programming and its contribution to sustainable practices offers

one perspective, but it doesn't directly address my locality, as the solutions proposed are not informed by the context I come from. While cutting the carbon footprint by extending the duration of an exhibition and making this practice more sustainable in the long run is an important consideration, it's not an urgent one in Kosovo, where small-scale exhibition-making typically doesn't involve significant transportation or complex art handling. Does this mean we're sustainable to begin with? Not necessarily. It might simply reflect that we lack the financial resources to be environmentally irresponsible.

While the presentations from well-established institutions highlighted valuable lessons and potential pitfalls in the museum-making process, I found the most resonance in the speakers who shared their experiences with smaller-scale institutions and initiatives. Their methodologies, rooted in building from the ground up, felt more relatable to my context. A standout moment was Mark Bradford's keynote speech, where he emphasized that meaningful partnership and collaboration only thrive when everyone has a seat at the decision-making table. To paraphrase: sustaining a partnership means ensuring that all voices are heard, as we come to the table not with the same tools, but with a shared desire to contribute. His process-oriented approach to artistic practice underscored the communal aspect of our work as artists, curators, and institutions.

For these reasons and others, the second day of the conference was especially inspiring, leaving me with very few notes as I was fully immersed in what the speakers were sharing. Zita Cobb's presentation on place-making in Fogo Island, Mai Abu ElDahab's discussion on the challenges faced by Mophradat in supporting art communities amid the wars and conflicts in the Middle East, and the conversation between Ibrahim Mahama and Yesomi Umolu about the significance of preserving contentious colonial objects as a means of engaging with history's multiplicity, all provided valuable insights into distinct practices and geographies. While we share common concerns, our resources are not the same. We often need to create tailored economic and cultural models to address the unique needs of our contexts, fostering local courage to engage in the narratives of our communities, while also promoting sustainable institutional practices.

Third day of the conference offered a great opportunity to learn about indigenous practices within institutional settings. While the indigenous people chose not to inherit the model of the museum, they chose to keep some of its parts. The key takeaway was that, more often than not, we build institutions at the speed of trust. This means acknowledging all stakeholders, bringing them to the decision-making table as Bradford suggested on the first day of the conference, and collaboratively developing cultural institutions that are suited to our communities, while advancing through the process of trust-building.

Overall, I found the 56th CİMAM Annual Conference to be a hub of experts and a vast network of museum institutions, offering a space where you can engage in meaningful conversations and seek the support needed to build a situated museum. This was an incredibly encouraging realization.



## Alejandra Labastida, Curator, MUAC (Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo), Mexico City, Mexico.



Mark Bradford talked about the safe spaces that allowed him to become Mark Bradford. I am going to assume this blank space to share my experience of the event you so generously invited me to is a safe space in which brutal honesty, colloquial style, and profound respect for your work can cohabit.

First, I would like to enlist some incredibly valuable insights from the speakers that have followed me to Mexico, and I hope to share with my colleagues:

- In order to protect everybody, everybody needs to be sitting at the table of the power distribution
- Sustainability doesn't need to be a sacrifice, but it needs to be embedded in all decision-making and not be an afterthought
- Sharing rather than storing
- Use local materials = take root again
- Motivations instead of values
- Virtual couriers!
- Moving away from the rigid environmental approach- local risk assessment.
- Rethink the purpose of conservation
- Material change does not equate to loss of value: from loss evasion to value creation
- In the dilemma between conservation and access, prioritize access
- If conservation is deferred access, should we prioritize the access of future privileged communities over present marginalized communities?
- TRUST YOUR COLLEAGUES!
- Stop the growth!
- Discuss deaccession
- Is sustainability a method with accountability or a philosophy? (some things can be methodologically right but philosophically wrong)
- Take time for longer conversations.
- Think of museums as landscapes
- Our idea of the social contract is wrong from the beginning because it is not based on interconnectedness.
- sacred capital, what has real value beyond money?
- development instead of growth.
- It all comes down to scale. The road to hell is paved with the desire of a bigger scale.
- a global network of intensely local places.
- tentacular models of interdependency
- the mission of art museums is to conserve the complexities of the world.
- redistribution of futures
- the right to culture
- the condition of survival is interdependency

- initiate, not react
- avoid making assumptions about your audiences
- work from the gift and not from the commodity
- connect with time instead of freezing objects in time
- REPAIR
- democratize boards, include artists and non-funding members
- shift hierarchy of values
- turn money into fish (art), not fish ( art) into money
- do not inherit structures
- hospitality
- move at the speed of trust!!
- consider the histories of the lands we are on: land acknowledgment as a contract
- solidarity making as a practice
- buildings as kin to the land and the sky
- give back without strings attached
- active listening

I realize many of these quotes taken out of context may seem to have escaped from a self-help book, but we are not in Kansas anymore, and I believe any reflection and experience on how to navigate these critical times in solidarity and interdependency is essential. It is not a matter of producing an inflexible decalogue of good museum practices but a guide to navigating a possible new cultural contract. In your evaluation survey, you asked what I would like to be the theme of the next CIMAM, and I didn't answer honestly. I think at least the five next CIMAMs should continue the subject of sustainability; no need for novelty but for long conversations.

It is not a secret that everybody was upset with the distribution of speakers on the first day, which concentrated on big global north institutions. To the infamous reference of the millions spent on LED bulbs in Guggenheim Bilbao, Edgar Calel commented how the Museum of Modern Art in Guatemala was way ahead in terms of reducing its carbon footprint since it has been closed for lack of budget for years, so no bulbs at all. But with some distance, it was perhaps useful and honest in terms of not performing inclusion but being realistic about the asymmetry of power relations inside our specific cultural realm. Because by the time we got to the conclusions, it was obvious to me that this kind of gathering between big players and smaller communities could open opportunities to push the big players into new solidarity contracts. This did not happen, obviously, but at least the perspective presented itself as a possibility. What would happen if the next time we gather, we meet at round tables with the task of reaching agreements instead of having a museum director who is building a whole new immense museum that will bring down an ecosystem respond with Glissant's quotes to a group of speakers actively defending a respectful and sustainable relationship with the land they have been trusted with?

After the last dinner, many of us went for a drink at Freehand's hotel terrace. It was a beautiful night with a heavy blizzard, and we had good laughs and hoped we had more actual time together instead of running around LA to have 15 minutes to not actually see a show and not actually listen to our colleagues who were waiting for us to share their work. A curator from Uganda and I exchanged emails, sad of not actually having met but with the hopes to try to do it remotely.

As an organization, you are strategically placed to promote real change. Your immense work has taken you there. I congratulate you for enhancing the international landscape in which we can create a community and hope we can rely on it to continue this important conversation.

## Christina Li, Independent Curator, Kowloon, Hong Kong.



Frank Lloyd Wright has famously said “Tip the world over on its side and everything loose will land in Los Angeles.” Perhaps by design, CIMAM 2024 Annual Conference 2024 host city of Los Angeles – a sprawling horizontal urban landscape that is defined by the freedom of automobiles, open land and free market speculation – felt like a fittingly context for the three-day conference that stretched and drifted across vast geographies and proportions. Amidst the patchwork of practices brought together under the topic of sustainability, the most compelling ideas emerged from panellists and practitioners who worked antithetically to the

gargantuan scales that are mirrored in the host city, but rather devoted their work on own places and communities by building, and revitalising knowledges and relationships with and already embedded within the land they are stewarding.

In the panel *Economies of Sustainability: Ethics, Values and Resilience*, keynote speaker and CEO, Co-Founder of Shorefast on Fogo Island, Zita Cobb, channelled economist E.F. Schumacher’s ideas from *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics As If People Mattered* (1973), foregrounding the importance of the working in a natural scale, and by looking at sustainability as care. Schumacher’s foundational quote “Our task is to look at the world and see it whole.” resonated in Mophradat’s Director Mai Abu ElDahab’s impassioned and critical self-questioning as she reflected on her organisation’s *raison d’être*, embracing “thinking as a technology of care,” and on how it can offer critical support and facilitate opportunities that respond to the harsh conditions of survival that artists from the Arab world currently are faced with.

Mophrdat’s nimble approach in assembling support structures and being the connective tissue for precarious practices is embodied in Ibrahim Mahama’s institutions, shining light on the power of art as outreach in his home country of Ghana where he describes as “a place of surplus of loss, collapse and failures”. The collective studio practice and exhibition spaces served to excavate his country’s cultural histories from the material remnants, such as British-colonial trains and soviet-era planes acquired from Ghana’s ministries and private owners, repurposed to connect children and young people to the world of art and creativity while deeply rooted within their own living environment and history.

Bookending the conference, the last session of the day offered practices that disentangled from dominant institutional models and practices, at the same time, rather than sustainability, privileged questions around ways to sustain. Keynote speaker, Candice Hopkins starts with an acute observation about tendencies of turning to indigenous knowledge during crisis in colonial serves as an important backdrop as the day’s proceedings unfolded. In her presentation, “On Not Being A Museum”, she continues by radically proposing to break away from institutions that we have (dis-)inherited, as well as giving ourselves the permission to follow other protocols in the process. Her hyper-local perspective underpins Forge Project,

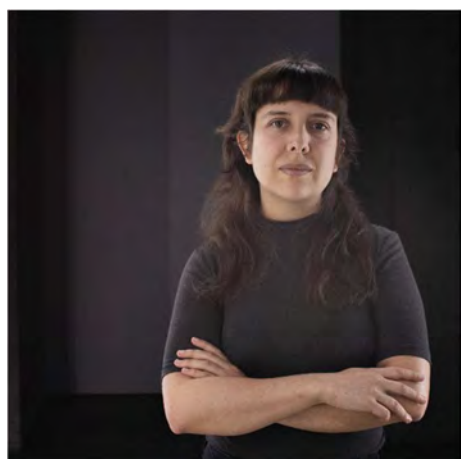


Native-led nonprofit organisation whose work is invested in upending systems formed through generations of settler colonialism and is a powerful example of how sustenance can be an embodied practice that can produce alternative models of institution building and programming.

The ensuing presentations revolved around dematerial practices and thinking. The speakers Edgar Calel, Maya-Kaqchikel artist and poet from Guatemala, Taloi Havini, artist from Bougainville Island and Aboriginal Australian artist, curator and activist, Djon Mundine, evoked the temporariness of objects as tokens of timekeeping (Calel), the importance of knowledge around and not on museums buildings (Havini) and the notion of things being so useful that they are ownerless (Mundine). These thoughts come as striking examples of how sustainability is a living philosophy, when reflected in tandem with observations posited by Chus Martinez, moderator of the afternoon panel of the first day. She deftly unpacked the ways sustainability has been being interpreted and reduced to a set of measures needed to be implemented from a capitalistic paradigm of efficiency, accountability and control, while highlighting the difference between sustainability as a reform of actions and transformation of philosophy and ethos.

How do we find our place within the problem of sustainability and the crisis of climate change afoot? Writing about the role of economics in *Small is Beautiful*, E.F Schumacher argued, “An entirely new system of thought is needed, a system based on attention to people, and not primarily attention to goods (...)” As we are confronted by pressing call for remedial solutions out of the sustainability conundrum, the profound generosity, care and love imbued within aforementioned projects thoroughly attuned to own scales and worlds show that embracing sustainability as a philosophy of sustaining and caring for people, rather than objects is the necessary ingredient to overhaul existing systems and imagine new models that better serve our communities and environment.

## Ana Ruiz Valencia, Junior Curator, Medellin Museum of Modern Art, Medellin, Colombia.



*Sustainable Futures. How? When? For Whom?* was held in Los Angeles from 6-8 December, 2024. As a grantee, I felt fortunate to take part in this event, meeting colleagues from all around the world and discussing the multiple layers of sustainability, both inside and outside of the conference sessions and speeches. I was happy to find that my fellow grantees were critical, well-informed, and led powerful processes and projects in their contexts. I want to thank The Getty Foundation and the Selection Committee at CIMAM for giving me this opportunity.

I am filled with questions that emerged during the conference. The reflections I share here aim to complement the discussions and intellectual effervescence of those days. I am especially interested in the interconnection between social, economic, cultural, and environmental layers when building sustainable practices within art institutions so we can —as the Brundtland Commission defined sustainability— "meet the

needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

The first day focused on practical actions toward mitigating environmental damage from some museum perspectives, such as reusing materials from previous exhibitions and working with lesser-impact materials. Some of these strategies are widely known by small and medium-sized museums because their limited resources make them a must. I coincided with several colleagues in that the most ground-breaking experiences to share about this subject need to be approached not only from a budget and technological approach but also critically think about institutional priorities and why museums exist in the first place. Paraphrasing Agustín Pérez Rubio's remark, let's be keen on not falling into greenwashing.

Kelsey Shell (MOCA), shared a very important idea: **start with values more than with motivations**. Are we consistently evaluating the values that define and mobilize us as communities and individuals? Do museum values coincide with the cultural and societal values of their contexts? Shell mentioned: "Get to know yourself first, then bring this to the community you belong to and to the organization you work with." To be loyal to our principles is the main thing we must guarantee without losing the ability to redefine, update, and revitalize them. When a society changes, museums need to respond to this, but museums are also places to mobilize societal change toward more sustainable worlds.

As art institutions committed to social justice, let's, for instance, connect our actions with structural discussions around energy use or climate change: What are the impacts for the Global South on the extraction of materials necessary for the energy transition? We may be aware that fossil energies need to be out of the equation as soon as possible. However, there are big implications to be addressed regarding the large-scale use of these transition materials—copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt, and other rare earth elements—about the loss of biodiversity, the threat to communities and environmental leaders' health and integrity, and competency for resources in low-income countries by companies coming from rich ones.

As art museums, we won't have the final word on this. However, we know how to be centers for intellectual and social exchange through cross-disciplinary thinking led by artists and thinkers. Museums can assume an active role and become fertile soil for new knowledge and collaborations to emerge.

Implementing degrowth strategies alone will not solve any of the planetary crises we are going through. They need to be implemented while facing the fundamental notion of museums as institutions anchored in the capitalist worldview—linked from its origins with extraction, accumulation, and legitimation of power structures—when creating a framework for sustainability in the Art world.

One of the recurrent subjects during the informal exchange was that of the collections and their pertinence to contemporary art museums. In several conversations, some people stressed the argument of collecting as a way of supporting artists by buying their works, while others (I include myself here) insisted on the importance of serving as facilitators for making better conditions for artists to create, that go beyond buying an existing artwork: creating space for commissions, residencies, fair payment when working with institutions, good production support, etc.

This does not mean that museums should stop collecting. As Suhanya Raffel cleverly pointed out during the first-day worktables, museums' collections do not only exist due to colonial looting or commercial lobby but "they also represent histories of resistance, collective

memory, and artistic heritage" and are important to preserve precisely because they are not part of hegemonic narratives. This is a very important issue that we cannot lose sight of.

Impressive presentations by Mark Bradford, Mai Abu ElDahab, Walid Raad, Candice Hopkins, and Ibrahim Mahama, as well as inspiring, thought-provoking talks by Edgar Calel and Zita Cobb, are directly concerned with the connections they have with the land and the peoples they are allied with and serve.

How is the funding for climate change or decolonization projects helping the actual work done by those communities and individuals who are putting their bodies, lives, and security to defend their territories and cultures? Is supporting their struggles out of reach from what museums can do about it, even when a lot of artists are activists too or belong to historically oppressed societies? As my colleague Maya Juracan (Curator at Biennial in Resistance in Guatemala) pointed out during our conversations, bigger museums might even give some of their budgets to support environmental activists or indigenous communities who are being chased in their territories. What does a land acknowledgment mean if it does not go hand in hand with the support of the living indigenous communities to have their lands back?

Keeping all this in mind, who are museums giving the power of enunciation and action? Are they ready to give up some of its privileges and let all those who are on the ground fighting for structural change and who have disproportionately faced the current crises share their knowledge and support their ideas with funding, actions, and internal changes? How are our institutions serving as platforms to speak out for those who know how to address the polycrisis the world faces right now? As Mark Bradford sharply mentioned, "everybody has to be at the table," and "you gotta listen to what your partner needs. It is key to give this first for the collaboration to be truly balanced."

I am aware that all these questions can be overwhelming and are indeed challenging to be addressed and solved right away. However, if we as an international organization are not posing and addressing them seriously, who will do it? An organization like CIMAM can lead the connection between museums from around the world and their expertise to promote collective change.

Many art exhibitions hosted by museums deal with social and environmental justice, political vindication, or decolonization. Museums must incorporate these ideas also from within, in the working conditions of artists and staff, equity and accessibility policies, and the real-life impact that our organizations can support at different levels and scales. We need to escape the dissonance between the discourses developed by artists, curators, and cultural spaces, and the actions and strategies that are implemented by institutions. Let's think about curatorial work and museology as situated practices, and art museums as institutions that are inserted in cultural, temporal, and geographical contexts. How to honor, nurture, and be nurtured by our local, regional, and global environments? The possible worlds that many exhibitions and critical texts have been mentioning during the last few years all around the world (especially in the global north) already exist and have existed for a long time. We need a closer listen.



## Aprille Tijam, Associate Director and Head of Exhibitions and Collections, Ayala Museum, Makati City, Philippines.



### *On the theme*

The theme *Sustainable Futures: How? When? For Whom?* remains critically relevant in the post-COVID-19 era. The pandemic's socio-economic impact continues to influence museum practice and redefine approaches to sustainability. Often equated with financial considerations—funding, sponsorships, budgets—sustainability at this year's conference was explored through broader, global perspectives. Clara Kim stated: "Sustainability looking through different lens", emphasizing the importance of "what it means to foreground? —new ways of doing things, more

holistic ways, and step outside of assumed knowledge".

The case studies presented underscored the importance of recognizing diverse infrastructures, resources, traditions, relationships, and expertise that shape sustainable development efforts in museum practices.



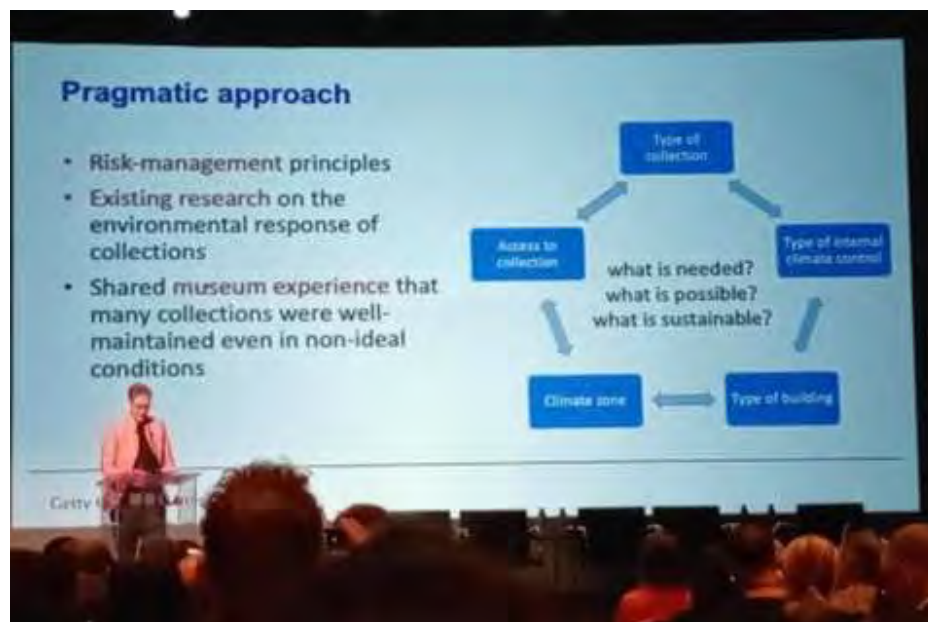
### *On the sessions*

Conferences bring people together. As CIMAM President Suhanya Raffel highlighted, they enable us "to work beyond borders to support sustainability." Clara Kim's observation about the "sheer magnetic power to bring people together" resonated deeply with the gathering's purpose—to engage, represent, and lead in addressing this ever-evolving issue. I concur with recommendations of Dr. Sook-Kyung Lee, Director of the Whitworth and

Professor of Curatorial Practices of the University of Manchester, to share pre-conference readings prior to the conference proper. This could significantly enrich discussions and enhance engagement during Question-and-Answer sessions. Given the diverse practices of museums from the Global North and South, prior access to relevant data could foster more meaningful, informed exchanges. Furthermore, representations of museums and practitioners from war-torn regions or Southeast Asia—where natural disasters such as typhoons and earthquakes, political instability, and other challenges prevail—would have added valuable perspectives to this year's conference.

Mark Bradford's presentation provided a very straightforward approach on how to be sustainable—bridging connections, bring people in, and believe in what you do. Similarly, the presentation Managing Collections Environment for a Sustainable Future (and Present) of Cecilia Winter, Senior Project Specialist, Getty Conservation Institute, emphasized

“sustainable, knowledge-based approach for climate control strategies are becoming more viable.... requiring synchronized shifts in policy, research and practice...And collaboration!”. Both highlighted the critical role of robust infrastructures and interdisciplinary collaboration—pragmatic principles directly applicable to my responsibilities as Associate Director and Head of Exhibitions and Collections overseeing administrative, exhibitions, collections, and institutional resources at Ayala Museum.



Managing Collections Environment for a Sustainable Future (and Present). Cecilia Winter, Senior Project Specialist, Getty Conservation Institute.

The interlude presentation *Two drops per heartbeat: A free-fall in the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection* of Walid Raad was particularly captivating. His research process as an artist-professor serendipitously annotating 237 points of relation with Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum in Madrid—a museum that I am very familiar with— was very inspiring. His discoveries offered an interesting perspective on advancing cultural heritage work through creative and knowledge-driven approach resulting to transformative level in sustainable knowledge base development.

### *On the organization*

I congratulate the CIMAM Annual Conference working committee for successfully organizing the conference across three venues—The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Hammer, and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). It was the first time for me to set foot on these museums. As a program manager myself, I recognize the logistics challenges to prepare program sessions and shuttle 300 participants between sites. I also commend the coordinator of the travel grants for efficiently handling documentations and timely release of flight and hotel bookings. Future grant recipients could benefit from additional support for airport transfers and travel insurance.

The Museum Tour Program was a highlight. I appreciated the opportunity to visit additional museums during this trip to Los Angeles. The provision of transportation to and from the selected museums or creative centers was very thoughtful. However, the tight schedule limited time for in-depth exploration and interpretive sessions. A more extended

duration at each museum would have enhanced the experience, especially for walkthroughs led by curators.

## *Conclusion*

Sara Zewde's presentation on Museum as Landscape framed museums as integral components of evolving cultural landscapes. The shifting models of the relationships between landscapes and museums represent the evolving relationships of the land and its people, the institutional legacies built and passed on from one generation to the next. Her assertion that "we are all just passing through" underscores our transient yet critical role as cultural heritage practitioners in preserving and transferring cultural legacies. The opportunity to engage in international conversations is an affirmation that we have shared visions, shared challenges, and shared solutions to navigate our responsibilities on sustainability.



Sara Zewde, Principal and Assistant Professor, Studio Zewde and Harvard University, New York City.

## *Acknowledgments*



At left: Aprille Tijam (Associate Director and Head of Exhibitions and Collections, Ayala Museum) with Joan Weinstein (Director, Getty Foundation). Photo at left by Mariles Gustilo.



I extend my gratitude to the Getty Foundation for their generous support of my participation in the 2024 Annual CİMAM Conference. I congratulate and thank CİMAM and its board members for their efficient organization of the event. Finally, I also thank Ayala Foundation, Inc./Ayala Museum, Philippines for their collaboration to support my attendance at this gathering of CİMAM members and museum professionals.

Photos by Aprille Tijam and Mariles Gustilo.

## **Armen Yesayants, Director of Exhibitions, Cafesjian Center for the Arts/Cafesjian Museum Foundation, Yerevan, Armenia.**



The 2024 CİMAM Annual Conference in Los Angeles marked a pivotal gathering for museum professionals worldwide, exploring the pressing theme of 'Sustainable Futures: How? When? For Whom?' This was my first time attending CİMAM and visiting Los Angeles, which added a layer of personal excitement and curiosity. As a travel grantee, I felt privileged to contribute to discussions on sustainability in art institutions and to represent my organization on a global stage. The conference not only fostered dialogue around climate action and inclusivity but also celebrated Los Angeles' vibrant art scene through studio visits and cultural

explorations.

Attending CİMAM 2024 was an eye-opening experience that affirmed the importance of global collaboration in addressing the museum sector's challenges. From rethinking governance and funding to embracing Indigenous perspectives, the conference offered a wealth of ideas to take back to the Cafesjian Center for the Arts.

I am grateful to CİMAM and its travel grant program for this opportunity and look forward to implementing these insights into our future projects. Together, we can create a more sustainable and inclusive future for museums worldwide.

I have made great connections not only among the grantees but also other participants of the conference. I was very happy and surprised to meet Marko Daniel from Fundació Joan Miró, who was one of the organizers of Tate Intensive in 2017 in London. He was the one who gave me a recommendation for Chevening Scholarship which later shifted my career. So I am grateful to CİMAM for this encounter as well.

Read Armen Yesayants' full report [following this link](#).

## Chahrazad Zahi, Independent Curator and Researcher, Marrakech, Morocco.



While writing this report in my living room in Marrakech, Guatemalan artist Edgar Calel's opening question, "Has the sun risen in your heart?", lingers on my mind as I make sense of the (mostly undecipherable) notes I scribbled hastily in my notebook during the three-day CíMAM 2024 Annual Conference in Los Angeles.

The Marrakech, Chi Xot, and Los Angeles triangle is one of many geographical entanglements that interwove throughout the conference. The keynote speeches and discussions traversed contrasting scales, shifting from local narratives and community-focused initiatives in Brussels, Tamale, and Guatemala City to the institutional frameworks of New York, Bilbao, Turin, and Munich. Together, these diverse contexts highlighted the pressing question of the conference: how can museums and cultural practices sustain the needs and realities of their localities? The conference unfolded across three institutional hubs, The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), the Hammer Museum at UCLA, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), and was a much-needed diverse gathering of "feelers and thinkers" (to borrow Eungie Joo's words) echoing the shifting and assembled nature of Los Angeles itself. --A city of overlapping histories and transformation, which, I must note, I learned much about thanks to my tour bus companion and curator, LA-based Ceci Moss, who described its curious past as a sanitarium capital and its troubled history with urban oil drilling. The following remarks are admittedly subjectively selected and scattered and cannot fully capture the complexities of the authors' interventions. For the inevitable loss of depth in this recounting, I can only apologize.

\*On Day 1, in his keynote address, Los Angeles-based artist Mark Bradford reminded us, "We are not coming to the table with the same tools (...) And yet, there is a threat of violence in everything we do." These statements challenge us to confront our complicity and our tools--no matter our good intentions, positionality or legitimacy to discuss the subject matter-- all while reckoning with the systems we strive to reimagine and make sustainable. Presenting a fresh take on the historical institution's relation to collection preservation, Cecilia Winter framed sustainability as relational rather than merely material, questioning our reliance on scientific evidence and conservation risk-assessments in driving change. Winter, alongside some of the speakers on Day 1, rallied around challenging the notion of the museum as a repository of static archives and reconstructing them as living ecosystems. "Preservation is deferred access", she stated. This temporal reframing deeply resonated and inspired a scenario of a museum where the objects are not solely approached by scientific measurements but are participants in the shared futures they seek to shape. The subsequent architectural keynotes of the first day allowed for conceiving the museum as a breathing part of the landscape. Michael Maltzan's newly completed Quamajuq in Winnipeg challenges the autonomy of the museum and the fortress-like institutional spatial structure. Sara Zewde, through her work on the Dia Beacon site, calls to imagine a museum where stewardship prevails over the dominion of land, objects, and narratives. Zewde favors openness with the landscape itself and calls for a building of a museum "of the land." Both architects rethink the

traditional paradigm of an ever-expanding museum, and both insist on incorporating indigenous design and facilitating native cultural expressions. Yet, can we think of this inclusion in a way that is not extractive of indigenous knowledge? How to reconsider a relationship between the museum and indigenous cultural practices? These questions were set to be further developed on Day 3.

\*The tension between locality and openness to the rest of the world surfaced strongly on Day 2, starting with Zita Cobb's touching personal account of her upbringing in Fogo Island, Newfoundland, Canada. Cobb presented an economic model in which tourism is in service to the community, and not the other way around. Quoting Gill-Chin Lim, she insisted on the necessity of creating a global network of intensely local places. This view challenges business models that steamroll the earth, its culture and the "mind-numbing sameness that we're doing to ourselves". Centering the place itself, asking it what it needs, with the intent to properly develop "the things that we have and the things that we love", is what leads to a world of "specific and joyful places". Soon after, Mai Abu ElDahab pulled us from the bubble of our reflective note-taking to the urgency of a world set on fire. She reflected on the relevance of sustainability in the face of persistent crises and the menacing silence of our global institutions. How to think of the future of the place in which she/one operates when the reality of Arab suffering is denied in the institutional consciousness?

This found echo in the closing remarks the next day, where Travel Grantees urged to bring to the table responsive curatorial strategies in a time of crisis. A hyper-locality that is deeply rooted and sustaining to the community yet open to the world was again the focus of the conversation between Ibrahim Mahama and curator Yesomi Umolu. I was fortunate to hear the artist himself comment on a set of recurring tropes in his projects that oftentimes elude commentators: precarity and temporality. His presentation of his projects in Northern Ghana spoke to these themes and their counterparts in material culture, communal life and architecture. The industrial ruins of the 20th century were the starting point of his talk. Once symbols of progress and modernity, they stand today as relics of broken promises and economic relapse. Against these failed centralized visions, Mahama's insistence on the hyper-local (building The Savannah Centre for Contemporary Art in Tamale, Ghana, for and by the community) establishes a methodological link between his public installations and the sustainable emancipatory social practice he proposes.

Much was told about an artist's role in affirming collective rights and, indeed, challenging the conventions of the public and private. This view was complemented by Andrea Fraser. Drawing from her ambivalent position as both an artist and a member of the board of directors of the ICA Los Angeles, Fraser gave a compelling invitation to governance structures to include artists and other stakeholders to re-articulate the museum's mission. Only then can we ensure the museum's long-term sustainability.

\* If we were to understand sustainability in its clinical meaning (merely in terms of environmental practices and toolkits), I thought to myself, this conference challenges the narrative of belatedness associated with my locale. For once, operating from my context, I'm at the forefront of sustainability, trained to be efficient and resourceful despite the lack of supporting infrastructure. This thought was challenged as I encountered the interventions of Candice Hopkins, Pablo José Ramírez, and Edgar Calel, who were not settling for platitudes. Sustainability, we were shown, is not a checklist but an embodied practice that demands



constant negotiation of ethics and values and a reactivation of the traditions of the custodians of the land. I was grateful to witness Candice Hopkins' talk, where she shared how we can learn from Indigenous knowledge when thinking about the practice and methodologies of curating. "The thing called the indigenous knowledge," Hopkins observed, "is the point where the logic of colonialism comes to crisis."

A line of thoughts that led to questioning the institutional focus on growth, which she called fundamentally "antithetical to life." Hers was a call to make space for Indigenous curatorial practices, which, as a result, has the power to transform institutions. In a series of poignant statements, her closing remarks warned us about the dominant trend of inclusivity and how it runs the risk of exploiting Indigenous knowledge. She highlighted how Indigenous communities are often treated as "anonymous consultants in times of crisis" and urged us to consider them in a way that benefits the practitioners and upholds their agency. The presentation of Pablo José Ramírez further commented on these points, drawing from José Esteban Muñoz's concept of the *Brown Commons*. He unpacked what he terms "a shift from representational frameworks to strategies of "performative enunciation" and collective commonality".

The *Brown Commons* as activated by Ramírez highlight connections, moving in between worlds, while still acknowledging specificity and questioning simplified models of identity representation. It found echo in Edgar Calel's projects on ancestral rituals. His practice illustrates the "performative enunciation" discussed by Ramírez, where repeated flux of rituals generates an enunciative, temporarily fixed stability of position and identity. Calel's project with Ultraviolet Projects and Tate titled *Ru k' ox k' ob'el Jun Ojer Naoj* (The echo of an ancient knowledge) established a historical precedent, as they reached an agreement in which the institution took custody of the artwork for 13 years as opposed to acquiring it. This talk brought us the form of performative enunciation that the ritual brings forth: a position where a crisis and its resolution are articulated, non-violently but nonetheless not passively, in an act of active transformation. A resistance to commodification which illustrates the radical potential of exhibiting *brownness* as a site of reparative rupture rather than containment.

The closing remarks returned to the themes of the three days, affirming that "working at the pace of trust" (Hopkins' invitation) is central to imagining sustainable, local models for the museum. They underlined the courage required to confront inertia, and envision a museum practice grounded in relational ethics.

As I left Los Angeles, I found myself mostly introspective about my research and my practice, shaped by my 'moving in between worlds'. A life-giving and unsettling sun has indeed risen in my heart, Edgar Calel, thank you for asking. The questions raised over these three days were not easy ones, nor were they meant to be. But perhaps that is the point: sustainability must be a guiding ethos and not a hollow promise. I am left with new questions to pursue. How to advocate for an intensely connected and yet hyper-locality? How do we direct institutions and decision-makers to move beyond the seduction of unchecked growth toward a practice embedded in the commons? This, I think, is the work: to trust in the collective, to keep asking, and to move slowly, at the speed of trust.

## Larisa Zmud, Independent Curator, Buenos Aires, Argentina.



Hegemonic European centers receive quotas and assistance, while the Global South does not receive the same support. This results in a homogenized view that overlooks the differences between the countries that make up the South and their situated realities. Instead of recognizing the particularities and challenges of each context, a unified mass is created that obscures the diverse local realities.

Moreover, there is massive support for travel grants from central and northern countries, but there are no specific resources for the Global South. This forces us to compete with profiles from the central countries. I was the only

Argentine participant, even though the same CIMAM event was held in Argentina last year.

It's also important to consider the ongoing attacks on cultural work in Argentina and raise awareness about what's happening. These spaces are crucial as cultural refuges, so we need to think about how to ensure their continuity.

To address a topic, it is essential not to limit the discussion to those people or institutions that "are already doing this." Instead, to truly problematize the issue, we must embrace diversity, which could involve considering the lack of resources, time, and the impossibility of thinking through the issue from certain perspectives. In this sense, the concept of sustainability is not merely about changing irrigation systems; it is about utilizing existing systems with recycled water, such as from toilets. The most sustainable approach, in fact, might be to refrain from constructing or doing anything at all—intervening only minimally with what is available and working with what we have.

Relying solely on the input of representatives from large institutions, major cities, or organizations with vast resources does not diversify the conversation. This approach often tends to be celebratory and overly optimistic, assuming that we are all on the same page, without considering the stark differences in our realities.

This brings us to the critical question: What does sustainability really mean? And, more importantly, who gets to speak on this issue? Is it only those who have the luxury of a "green team" or access to abundant resources? These are questions that challenge us to rethink not only the concept of sustainability itself but also the structures and inequalities that shape the conversations around it.

At the same time, there's a crucial distinction between expressing concern and actually taking meaningful action. For many of us in the Global South—particularly in Argentina right now—there is no time to simply reflect or strategize. We are in a situation where survival is the priority, and immediate action is necessary for our very existence. For us, the "end of the world" that is so often feared in the Global North has already happened, again and again, in our world. The crisis, the collapse, the end—it's something we've lived through many times. There's no time left for contemplation; the "end" is already part of our lived experience. This is one of the reasons why conversations after conferences were so rich for me: the feeling that we are a generation or at least a group that are asking questions outside of the very privileged narratives of the centres... and that we are not just asking questions, but that we have a sense of urgency and understand that it is about action.

The reality of the Global South is brutal, and the idea that we can delay action while thinking through idealistic, abstract solutions is no longer a luxury we can afford. What the Global North perceives as a looming catastrophe is something we've already endured and continue to endure. The urgency here is not about planning for a potential future, but about responding to the present, where time is running out, and where survival often depends on immediate, pragmatic action.

## Ramiro Camelo, Curator and Project Manager, Myymälä2, Helsinki, Finland.



### *Notes on the role of museums towards a more sustainable future*

Through keynote speeches, expert presentations and case studies at CIMAM 2024 Annual Conference in Los Angeles it became evident that large and medium-sized museums have become crucial players in the movement toward sustainability in the art world.

It must be recognised that the environmental toll of exhibition-making and its broader operational practices and day-to-day operation of museums as an industry is small compared with other sectors of cultural industries and entertainment.

However, museums are ready to embrace a variety of strategies to address their environmental impact. One can say that This shift is both reactive—responding to increasing calls for environmental responsibility—and proactive, aiming to position the museum as a transformative collective force for positive change in the campaign for climate action.

### 1. Greening museum energy consumption

Museums are increasingly adopting sustainable practices in their day-to-day operations on very different levels of engagement. The most common examples include reducing energy consumption, improving recycling, and embracing sustainable building practices.

- Increasing Energy Efficiency: Many institutions are upgrading their lighting systems to LED, from Halogenes and investing in energy-efficient climate control systems. The case studies presented by Daniel Vega (day 1, session 1) of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao show that the Guggenheim is a pioneer in sustainability. Some other Museums may follow this approach.

- Severe Waste Reduction: Waste minimization strategies, such as reducing single-use plastics, and recycling materials, have been implemented.

- Sustainable Architecture: Museums are incorporating green building certifications, ensuring that new buildings or renovations adhere to the highest environmental standards.

### 2. Sustainable and greener exhibition design

Creating museum exhibitions typically requires considerable resources, as the materials utilised for displays, lighting, and transportation significantly impact a museum's overall



carbon footprint. However, most museums are now taking steps to reduce the environmental cost of producing exhibitions:

- **Eco-Friendly Materials:** Many institutions are opting for sustainable or recycled materials in exhibition design. For instance, using biodegradable or non-toxic paints and opting for sustainable wood and recycled textile new composites.
- **Modular and Reusable Designs:** Exhibitions are being designed with modular elements that can be reused in different contexts, wall panels which are not fixed could be reused in many exhibitions
- **Digital and “DIY” Exhibitions:** Virtual exhibitions are becoming more common, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, but they have a lasting impact in reducing the need for physical travel and resource-intensive setups. Another option is creating the exhibition's artworks on-site and destroying them after the exhibition run. For example, Andrea Lissoni, (day 1, session 2) artistic director of Haus der Kunst, Munich, presented a case study in which all the artworks of “Inside Other Spaces. Environments by Women Artists 1956–1976” were produced at the museum and the materials were recycled at the end of the exhibition.

### 3. Reducing the carbon footprint of art transportation and shipping

The movement of artworks between cities and countries can be an environmentally taxing part of museum operations. Art institutions are rethinking their approach to transporting collections:

- **Local Sourcing of Art:** Museums are increasingly sourcing artwork from local artists or those within proximity, reducing the need for long-distance transport. Many of the speakers mentioned that several exhibitions in their museums were made only with their own collections and loans for museums within Europe, with artwork transportation made only terrestrial by lorry or maritime shipping.
- **Sustainable Transportation:** Where air shipping and travelling are unavoidable, art institutions are selecting eco-friendly shipping methods, such as carbon offset transport and using lighter, recyclable packing materials.

### 4. Partnership, advocacy and agency for stronger Impact

Museums are also playing an active role in advocating for broader climate change action. By aligning with global initiatives, partnering with environmental organizations, and engaging in public dialogues, art institutions are becoming more visible in the conversation around climate change.

- **Public Engagement:** Museums are using their platforms to educate and inspire audiences about environmental issues, through exhibitions, lectures, and workshops that explore the relationship between art and the environment. Kelsey Shell, from MOCA (day 1, session 1) (MOCA) insisted that the first step for advocacy on climate change in art institutions might be creating “Green teams” to develop Public programs and somehow involve communities and grassroots movements in discussion about the environment and climate change.

- Collaborations with Environmental Movements: Some institutions collaborate with environmental artists or participate in exhibitions that focus specifically on climate change and sustainability. For example in the context of the exhibition Joseph

Beuys: *In Defense of Nature*, The Broad has formed a collaborative partnership with North East Trees, a community-oriented non-profit organization dedicated to conservation initiatives across the city of Los Angeles, in order to facilitate the planting of 100 California native oak trees within the Chávez Ridge region of Elysian Park.

## Conclusion

Many art institutions and museums have a deep interest in sustainability however they lack a long-term strategy, and a road map and lack financial resources or qualified staff to engage in meaningful policies. Despite that as climate change accelerates and the world grapples with its consequences, museums and art institutions have the opportunity to be at the forefront of both reducing their environmental impact, decarbonization and advocating for broader cultural and societal shifts. By incorporating long-term sustainable practices into their operations, appointing consultants and experts, exhibition designs, and public engagement strategies, these institutions can help catalyze much-needed climate action while continuing to provide essential cultural enrichment and exhibition about the here and now. To sum up, Through both internal changes and external advocacy, museums can use their unique platform to drive meaningful conversations about the future of our planet and our natural environment.

## CODA

Perhaps the most connected exhibition with the theme of sustainability was “Joseph Beuys: *In Defense of Nature*” at the Broad. I must say that the exhibition is meaningful and totally timely because it highlights the legacy of Beuys and his deep commitment to issues of ecology, social activism, and the interconnectedness of art and nature. This exhibition is part of a broader initiative that includes “Social Forest: Oaks of Tovaangar” a public reforestation project that aims to plant native oak trees throughout the city of Los Angeles. The project is linked to Beuys's environmental philosophy that echoes ‘7000 oaks’ which Beuys initiated at Documenta in Kassel in 1982.

I was deeply surprised to notice that most of the attendees to the exhibitions, and the people waiting in the queue, when we visited, were young people, mostly high school students. I was wondering in which ways is possible for those young people could find points of contact and the relevance of the practice and ideas of Beuys today. I only can say that it's fascinating to see how Beuys' ideas, which were revolutionary in his time, continue to resonate with younger generations today.

## *Top 5 Most memorable questions of paradigms about sustainability at CIMAM 2024 from keynote speeches*

- Sustainability ≠ Sacrifice (hardship). Fiona Ragheb, LACMA
- How do we sustain broad partnerships? How do your partners feel heard? Mark Bradford, Artist
- How to start sustainable practices: use agency and imagination!
- (for example, artists-led environmental storytelling) Kelsey Shell, MOCA
- Can museums serve as catalysts for sustainability? John Kenneth Paranada, Salisbury Art Centre, University of East Anglia.

- “Sustainability is the possibility of a kinder society” Chus Martinez, CÌMAM board member.
- Bonus: “It matters who owns what” Zita Cobb. Fogo Island

## Milja Liimatainen, Curator, Helsinki Art Museum (HAM), Finland.



The theme of this year’s CÌMAM annual conference, *Sustainable Futures: How? When? For Whom?* focused on the vast topic of sustainability, particularly from the perspectives of ecological, social, and economic dimensions. The numerous, well-curated presentations explored the theme from various angles, showcasing a wide array of speakers. Topics ranged from practical approaches on museum techniques and compact community-oriented practices to attempts to rethink the museum as an institution. The selection of presenters mirrored this diversity, including representatives from large, established institutions and small-scale initiatives, with a delightfully significant number of artists too.

In this report, I primarily reflect on the discussions around ecological sustainability, as this resonates most strongly with my current projects. My aim is to elaborate on the themes presented and consider how they could be made even more comprehensive.

The most valuable takeaway from the conference was the opportunity to understand the immense diversity of institutions, initiatives, and actors within the museum field, as well as their varying starting points and challenges. No other conference I have attended has offered such a breath of viewpoints within such a concise timeframe. However, coming from the context of a European, publicly funded, mid-scale organization, I found that the questions raised by the speakers sometimes felt rather remote from the challenges familiar to me. From my perspective it seemed that many of the institutions represented were large museums with substantial private funding (e.g., Kelsey Shell / MOCA, Daniel Vega / Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Fiona Ragheb / LACMA). As one speaker noted, ecological sustainability often requires additional funding, but in Northern Europe – and especially in Finland with strong public funding and minimal donor culture – this funding must be sourced elsewhere.

Conversely, the very small initiatives introduced (e.g., Zita C Shorefast, Mai Abu EIDahab/Mophradat and Candice Hopkins / Forge Project), operate on a scale and logic quite different from that of established museums, which bear many responsibilities not determined solely by the institutions themselves.

Some of the responsibilities centering in my mind throughout the conference were the requirements and responsibilities directed to the institutions by their funders. For example, how do the set performance targets and measurable outcomes align with sustainability goals? This tension was evident in presentations on new construction projects (e.g., LACMA). I also wondered how this contradiction plays out concerning audiences and visitors. Instead of emphasizing “visitors”, the discussion frequently centered on



“communities” (as highlighted by Mark Bradford, Zita Cobb, Candice Hopkins and others), perhaps reflecting the North American context. In Europe, however, visitor numbers often remain a key performance metric directly tied to funding. Andrea Fraser touched on these fundamental discrepancies, but I would have welcomed a deeper discussion of this topic.

Candice Hopkins’ presentation offered a very valid formulation on how to rethink the museum establishment thoroughly anew but despite its sincerity remained slightly distant or perhaps even radical from an institutional perspective. Nonetheless, it felt very refreshing to hear her discussion around Forge Project’s Fellowship Program where there are no requirements for the participants to produce outcomes, or about the principles of the Forge Collection where the artist’s rights are at the center of all lending processes. The focus in all Forge Project’s operations lies clearly outside the art market, ownership models and the pressures of continuous growth.

All in all, I would have liked to hear more perspectives addressing museums’ core missions – collecting, exhibiting, and researching – and how these intersect with sustainability, particularly ecological sustainability. While collections were mentioned briefly, I had hoped for insights into how programming could evolve toward greater sustainability within the framework of established, often traditional, and somewhat rigid museum institutions. Many of the technical procedures presented on the first conference day (by e. g. Daniel Vega / Guggenheim Museum Bilbao and Cecilia Winter / Getty Conservation Institute) are most crucial when thinking about the ecological sustainability but seem nevertheless secondary compared to the program and the thematical choices a museum chooses to make: What does it wish to present? What does it wish to discuss with its audiences?

Technical measures must align with these broader goals, but meaningful progress – particularly in addressing the climate crisis – requires consistent and dedicated decisions about programming and the topics an institution chooses to amplify. This focus on the museum’s core functions and how to approach them sustainably seemed absent from many of the presentations.

Perhaps unexpectedly, a note that for me summoned many of my thoughts during the whole conference came from the very last respondent on the last day. This was Stephanie Rosenthal from Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, who, quoting Donna Haraway, concluded that sustainability is not so much about caring for nature for its own sake; it is fundamentally about preserving nature to ensure humanity’s survival on this planet. Should we wish to achieve anything within the field of ecological sustainability, perhaps this paradigm shift should also guide the sustainability efforts of the museum institutions.

## Ingrid Orman, Chief Curator of Exhibitions, Espoo Museum of Modern Art (EMMA), Helsinki, Finland.



As a recipient of the CIMAM 2024 Travel Grant, I had the privilege of attending the 56th Annual Conference held in Los Angeles, which brought together museum professionals, curators, and artists from around the world to explore the theme of sustainability in contemporary art institutions. The conference, titled *Sustainable Futures: How? When? For Whom?*, was a collaboration between the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), the Hammer Museum at UCLA, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).

The event was structured around three core themes: the role of art museums in addressing the climate crisis, reimagining museum collections and architecture within urban and social frameworks, and integrating indigenous perspectives into sustainable practices. As the conference unfolded over three days, I found certain moments particularly impactful, especially those involving Zita Cobb, Ibrahim Mahama, Edgar Calel and Cecilia Winter. Their insights were integral in shaping my understanding of how we can play a more active role in advancing sustainability.

### Day 1: *The Contemporary Art Museum and Climate Crisis*

The opening day at MOCA set the stage for urgent conversations about museums' role in addressing climate change. Mark Bradford's keynote was powerful, calling for immediate action and more active engagement from museums in climate action initiatives.

On this day, Cecilia Winter, Project Specialist at the Getty Conservation Institute, shared her thought-provoking insights on how conservation practices intersect with sustainability goals. Winter emphasized that conservation must be understood not only as the preservation of art and artifacts but also as a crucial means by which museums can reduce their environmental impact. She discussed how conservation efforts—from material selection to climate control and exhibition design—can contribute to a more sustainable museum environment. By embracing best practices in conservation, museums can reduce their carbon footprint and make more responsible choices regarding the care and display of collections.

### Day 2: *Economies of Sustainability*

The second day at the Hammer Museum featured the keynote by Zita Cobb, CEO of Shorefast. Cobb's talk on sustainable economic models in the cultural sector was one of the most compelling parts of the conference. Her work with Shorefast, which focuses on creating community-led economic models, provided a refreshing vision for how art institutions could embrace more ethical, localized, and long-term funding structures. Cobb's approach challenges traditional funding models and offers an inspiring alternative for cultural institutions to become more resilient in an ever-changing economic landscape.

İbrahim Mahama's conversation with Yesomi Umolu was another highlight of the day. As an artist whose work addresses themes of labor, history, and environmental impact, Mahama brought a unique, artist-centered perspective to the conversation on sustainability. His insights emphasized that sustainability in museums should not just address the environment but also consider the social and economic implications of cultural production and consumption. Mahama's work and ideas urged attendees to think critically about how museums can become more engaged with and responsible to the communities they serve.

### Day 3: *Indigenous Perspectives and Worldviews*

The final day at LACMA offered a deep dive into the integration of indigenous knowledge systems into sustainable museum practices. Candice Hopkins' keynote provided an important framework for understanding how indigenous worldviews can reshape the way we think about art, ecology, and community. Presentations by artists such as Edgar Calel and Taloi Havini demonstrated the profound ways in which indigenous perspectives inform sustainable futures. These talks reinforced the idea that sustainability is not only a modern challenge but one deeply connected to ancient wisdom and cultural heritage.

### Reflections and Recommendations

Participating in the CİMAM 2024 Annual Conference was a transformative experience that broadened my understanding of sustainability within the context of contemporary art institutions. I was particularly inspired by the contributions of Zita Cobb, İbrahim Mahama, Edgar Calel and Cecilia Winter. Their perspectives on sustainable economic models, ethical community engagement, and conservation practices were especially valuable and highlighted the need for a more holistic approach to sustainability that encompasses not only the environment but also social and economic factors.

However, I would have appreciated more opportunities for informal interactions and deeper conversations with other professionals. Given the richness of the topics discussed, additional break- out sessions or smaller group discussions could have facilitated more direct exchanges. These types of settings would allow for more nuanced conversations and provide a space for participants to explore ideas in greater detail. More time to engage with peers would have also enhanced the collaborative nature of the conference, fostering stronger connections and a deeper sense of community among attendees.

In closing, I am deeply grateful to CİMAM and the Travel Grant Program supporters for making this opportunity possible. The insights I gained from the conference—particularly around the intersections of art, sustainability, and indigenous knowledge—have already begun to shape my approach to the work I do. The conversations and connections made during this event will undoubtedly continue to influence my professional journey, and I look forward to applying the strategies discussed to advance sustainability within the arts.

## Teesa Bahana, Director, 32° East, Kampala, Uganda.



Many of the conference highlights came from people working outside of museums, raising essential questions for museum practitioners to confront when thinking about sustainability.

Candince Hopkins' presentation focused on the potential of Not being a museum and thinking not about sustainability but about what sustains us. As we think about sustainable futures, the question really becomes what is it that we want to sustain? For me, throughout the conference there was a tension between attempts to sustain as much of the status quo as possible, and an embrace of the notion that not everything can and should be sustained.

When Mai Abu ElDahab from Mophradat spoke about the difficulties of imagining a 2026, let alone programming, I connected with that deeply. Up until that point, I was finding it challenging to connect with some of the previous presentations from large institutions who had long term strategies, budgets and personnel dedicated to sustainability. But Mai's foregrounding of Gaza, Ibrahim Mahama's reflections on decay and decline, and failure and collapse as material, and Walid Raad's incredible storytelling provided a place for me to sit with the uncertainty and disorientation of these times.

In times of great uncertainty, when we grasp for answers, possibilities become something real to hold on to. Zita Cobb shared a quote from Elinor Ostrom, "that which is possible in practice is possible in theory", and I think Zita's keynote On the Possibility of Place resonated so much with so many because of this. Mark Bradford, Ibrahim Mahama, Candice Hopkins, Manuel Segade, Sara Zewde and Zita Cobb all shared varied real world examples of work that begins with place and reimagines what institutions can do and can mean.

As a first time attendee of the conference, I hope that reimagining extends to the structure of the conference. That there is more time for just being together, and that we can rethink conference models to have more artistic sensibilities at the center. It was a treat to get to visit so many LA based arts and cultural institutions, but there was also so little time. In David Horvitz's garden on 7th avenue, I felt all the themes and tensions and possibilities collide. This project emerged from David Horvitz asking a landowner if their vacant lot could be made into a garden, for as long as it remained unsold.

From its very inception, it is unsustainable, its lifespan bound by the current realities of private property ownership. But while it lives, it is built to sustain nature, culture, and community, inviting all visitors to contribute to the wellbeing of the garden. We did not have much time to be in that garden, just as we did not have much time to be in community together as workshop attendees. There lay the tension of sustaining the structure of the conference program, and allowing for moments that sustain us.

I think for many of the CiMAM attendees, what sustains us in our work and in our lives is being with nature, witnessing how artists imagine things into being and being invited to co-create in community even while knowing it all might be taken away at a moment's notice.



## Martha Kazungu, Founding Director, Njabala Foundation, Kampala, Uganda.



The 2024 CIMAM Annual Conference in Los Angeles proved to be an enriching experience, offering valuable insights into contemporary challenges and emerging trends within the international museum field. The diverse program, encompassing lectures, exhibitions, and networking opportunities, provided a stimulating platform for dialogue and exchange.

Mark Bradford's keynote address on collaboration resonated deeply. He outlined a path towards more impactful social and educational programming, emphasizing the need to move beyond traditional models and foster genuine, sustained partnerships with communities. Bradford's focus on mutual benefits and long-term commitment challenged my own approach to collaboration, inspiring me to reconsider my practices at the Njabala Foundation.

Zita Cobb's keynote on "The Possibility of a Place" was equally impactful, highlighting the multifaceted nature of space and the importance of considering environmental sustainability, community well-being, and ethical practices in all our endeavors. Cobb's presentation, drawing on the inspiring example of Shorefast, a community-driven organization in Newfoundland, provided valuable lessons for the Njabala Foundation, particularly in terms of fostering sustainable and place-based initiatives.

The opportunity to encounter Simone Leigh's work in person was a highlight of the conference. Her powerful sculptures, on display at both CAAM and LACMA, offered a compelling exploration of Black womanhood, drawing upon African art and architecture. The materiality of her work, such as the raffia and cowrie shells in "Cupboard 2022," resonated deeply, evoking a sense of history, cultural identity, and the resilience of marginalized communities. The conference underscored the vital role museums play in addressing global challenges such as climate change, promoting social justice, and fostering intercultural understanding. It emphasized the importance of collaboration, innovation, and community engagement in navigating the complexities of the 21st century.

However, the conference also highlighted a significant gap: the underrepresentation of perspectives from the Global South, particularly Africa. With the exception of Ibrahim Mahama's presentation, voices from Africa were largely absent, creating an imbalance in the discourse. This experience underscored the stark realities of global inequality and prompted me to reflect on how the Njabala Foundation, a small, emerging organization, can navigate this challenging landscape and secure the resources necessary to fulfill its mission.

Moving forward, I am committed to translating the insights gained from this conference into my work at the Njabala Foundation. This includes exploring new collaborative partnerships, integrating sustainability considerations into our programming, and developing strategies to address the challenges of operating within a globally unequal system.

## Adriana Flores, Independent Curator and Director of Lava, Mexico City, Mexico.



### *Sustainability: for whom?*

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Ancestral cultures found solace and community around the fire. They gathered to share stories of the motion of celestial bodies, findings of animals and plants while exchanging seeds, and dancing to nourish the fire's spirit. They understood that the fire's preservation transcended its physicality; it fostered connection and shared the pulse of life. Tragically, today, the memory of an entire people, Palestine, faces erasure, symbolized by the very flames that once

brought communities together.

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The 56th CIMAM Annual Conference provided a crucial platform for examining the core concept of 'Sustainable futures,' specifically addressing critical questions: how, when, for whom?

Throughout the events, observing the diverse backgrounds of speakers, grantees, and members of the organizing committee, I questioned whether a shared understanding of 'sustainability' truly existed among all participants. Subsequent discussions with colleagues and grantees revealed that our approaches to sustainability were inextricably linked to our respective geopolitical contexts.

How can we envision potential and sustainable futures while avoiding the pitfalls of hegemonic thinking?

In her seminal 1938 work, *Three Guineas*, Virginia Woolf underscored the importance of developing a glossary of her own voice in order to frame her interrogatives around the patriarchal system and its underlying political structures. Similarly, Ursula K. Le Guin's 1969 novel, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, masterfully employs science fiction as a metaphor-tool for imagining alternative futures. Both authors challenge conventional parameters of literature and create their own methodology, by harnessing imagination to shape language and subvert dominant narratives.

I believe this year's CIMAM conference underscored the urgent need to address geopolitical tensions and reimagine our approaches, grounded in principles of social justice, climate action, and equity. Crucially, the need to reshape definitions and methodologies emerged as a promising starting point if we aim to envision a future that is inclusive and responsive to the diverse voices invited to gather around the fire.

## Fabiola Íza, Curator and Researcher, Mexico City, Mexico.



Zitta Cobb's inspiring presentation "Fogo Island: The Possibility of a Place" delved into her work with the fisher community of the eponymous small island in the easternmost part of what is now called Canada. Following the human and ecological disaster the mechanization of fishing brought about—provoking displacement, resource scarcity, and, overall, poverty—she set out to figure out the actual scale of things and work, along with the community, to find a way of life that is equitable, dignified, sustainable. Her project was driven, to a great extent, by her late father's words: He did not care what she thought, felt, or believed; he cared about what

she did.

Vis-à-vis the ecological disasters we are currently undergoing, what can museums do? Is it possible to achieve sustainable models for exhibition-making? In her keynote address, Cobb mentioned that sustainability is the practice of care, yet such a short word holds an extreme polyvalence. Leading museums, for instance, have gone to extreme lengths to devise models that care for the planet; these were carefully explained throughout the first session of the CIMAM 2024 Annual Conference, which carried a pragmatic, positivistic ring. In it, members from the "green teams" of different museums—an array of specialists in curation, conservation, museography, and handling, among others—shared the results of their research endeavors, offering concrete and well-research tools that can be followed to decrease an institution's ecological impact. Through such measurable and accountable actions, museums could diminish their carbon footprint even by two-digit percentages. However valuable, their insights—ranging from the practical reuse of materials (a standard in less affluent context) to renovating an entire grid of power supply and regulation—required significant economic investments that are a far cry from a degrowth model.

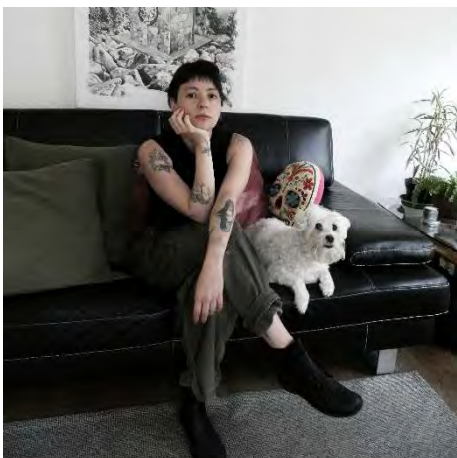
A brief yet forceful intervention by Chus Martínez provided a meaningful perspective to address how the pathways for creating a sustainable future are twofold: methodological and epistemological. While the former offers a straightforward course of action—subject to planning, execution stages, and accountability reports, much in the vein discussed above—the latter shows that museums and other art institutions stand on shaky grounds. The foundations on which they have been built are becoming increasingly feeble and should be subjected to careful revision. The following days explored various alternative models of being an institution—and, explicitly, not a museum—carried forward by artists, curators, and social entrepreneurs together with their communities at a hyperlocal scale that brought stimulating discussions to the table.

This assemblage of plural perspectives made evident that, depending on its scale, art institutions are on a different page regarding sustainability. If the predominant museum model of today is a replica of the business, corporate one—a situation that was thoroughly present within the context of California, the fifth largest economy in the world—there is little space for recalibrating its values. "Two drops per heartbeat: A free-fall in the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection," Walid Raad's lecture-performance, proved in a fascinatingly oblique manner the entanglements, contradictions, and limitations that model brings, carrying forward ways of

governance limited to non-systemic change. As conference delegates, we witnessed this riveting presentation on seats named after the host museum's patrons—the collision between the pragmatic and epistemological approaches was poignantly present: the idea of place upheld by the corporate museum model is predicated upon the concept of ownership. As architect Sara Zwede stated the previous day, most museums think about their land as part of their collections.

Conversely, I would like to follow a different path. Inspired by Candice Hopkins's engaging Keynote Speech in which she presented the Forge Project, a Native-led organization looking to reshape dialogues on Indigenous culture, I would propose to think of sustainability less as a plan than a social contract. That is, it should be understood as a bond that entails responsibilities among the members of a community; it is reciprocal with its peoples and its land, champions resource-sharing, the distribution of knowledge, and forms of redress. The CiMAM Conference was a nurturing context for reflecting upon such engaging ideas, and I cherish having had the opportunity to discuss with my fellow grantees, panelists, and other attendees what we, as a community, do.

## Fernanda Ramos, Independent Curator, Mexico City, Mexico.



### Who holds whom?

This year, the CiMAM Annual Conference was titled *Sustainable Futures: How? When? For Whom?*, a name that led me to reflect on the Spanish meanings of "sustentable" (sustainable) and "sostenible" (capable of being held). Is it possible to imagine more sustainable futures in a world where the neocolonial economy devastates ecosystems that act as the planet's vital lungs, displacing the communities who live there? These power structures are upheld by a capitalist economy that greenwashes its projects to justify the exploitation of mining zones, forests, and rivers in the name of progress and growth.

What enables our bodies—and those of non-human beings—to persevere? I am drawn to the concept of "holding" rather than "sustainability." *Holding up Futures... Who holds whom?* To hold signifies care as well as ethical, emotional, and political accountability. It also entails endurance and creating bonds to navigate current crises.

From this perspective, imagining sustainability within an economic system rooted in deceptive practices—creating the illusion of superficial change while perpetuating the exploitation of other bodies for the benefit of the highest bidder—feels contradictory. Coming from Mexico City, its vibrant and dynamic art scene might seem like a direct insertion into the logic of capital. However, the museums and independent spaces where I have worked have implemented strategies of resistance and adaptation in the face of extreme budget cuts.

This personal experience offers an alternative perspective on sustainability, one that goes beyond the megaprojects presented on the first day of the conference. For example, the Hammer Museum stands out, with a renovation process that spanned 25 years and offers free admission. But within its massive structure, is it truly a museum "for everyone"? In what ways



can it be considered sustainable? Meanwhile, the Guggenheim Bilbao replaced the lights in its infrastructure with LED bulbs, financed by a multimillion-dollar budget—a technically sustainable change. But is it sustainable in the long term? What companies are behind these transformations? Who funds change, and for what purpose?

The second day began with a keynote by Zita Cobb, who invited us to reflect on the concept of care: what we carry and care for when thinking about place. *"Dignity—and indignity—are experienced in place."* The place we come from, how we root ourselves in it, and what we give back reflects a reciprocal relationship that overturns the economic logic of capital in favor of a "nutritional economy." This approach encourages us to consider what we produce, from where, and with what impact. As Cobb noted: *"What matters is what we do."* In this sense, how we do it profoundly shapes our immediate networks.

Mai Abu ElDahab, director of Mophradat in Brussels, Belgium, took a more poetic approach by asking questions reflecting on: What is the purpose of what we do? Art, as a sensitive practice, is also embedded in systems of control, oppression, and the subjugation of other bodies. In the face of the supremacist war and extermination carried out by Israel in Palestine and Lebanon, we must ask ourselves: What is the significance of what we say, how we say it, and for whom? What can we stand against? Challenging hegemonic systems requires refusing to participate in initiatives that erase others' existence and are complicit in war economies.

The interview about Ibrahim Mahama's artistic and community practice with curator Yesomi Umolu helped decentralize the idea of the institution as an investment geared toward capital. In contrast, his Savannah Centre for Contemporary Arts in Tamale, Ghana, offers a model for imagining an institution rooted in care and people's needs. Conceived as a community and gathering center, far removed from the sacrality of museums in the Global North, its value lies not in its collection but in the people who inhabit and shape the space. This reimagining fosters a sensitivity that prioritizes resistance, solidarity, and community-building in the face of a violent system.

Beyond the climate crisis, this second day helped me recognize how cooperation and care are practices that can sustain one another. Outside the economy of capital, hierarchies, impositions, and violence, another form of nutritional economy exists. This economy reveals that survival depends on creating vital, local, and collective communities of exchange.

## Ílaria Conti, Executive Director and Chief Curator, La Nueva Fábrica (LNF), Santa Ana Antigua, Guatemala.



As a grant recipient of CIMAM, I am pleased to share this report outlining suggestions for future CIMAM conferences based on my experience and reflections after attending the 2024 CIMAM Annual Conference in Los Angeles. These suggestions aim to further enhance the critical value and inclusive perspectives of this significant event.

### Suggestions for Future Conferences:

1. **Encouraging Non-Mainstream Approaches:** Foster discussions and platforms that encourage participants to move beyond mainstream institutions. As a field we can significantly challenge established systems of institutional value.
2. **Deconstructing the Aura of Large-Scale Institutions:** Create space for critical dialogue about the dominance of large-scale institutions. This includes questioning their influence and exploring ways to amplify smaller initiatives that often remain overshadowed.
3. **Amplifying Smaller Institutions:** Ensure that smaller institutions have a voice in the conversation. While many artists from non-Western regions were represented at the 2024 conference, most institutional speakers were from Western institutions. Including smaller and non-Western institutions would create a diverse and more savvy dialogue.
4. **Reimagining Conference Formats:** Allocate more time for interactive sessions such as workshops and peer exchanges. These formats can provide practical tools, foster collaboration, and support skill-building among participants, making the experience more impactful.
5. **Reducing Presentation-Heavy Formats:** Reduce the emphasis on traditional presentations. Instead, integrate more dynamic formats, such as hands-on activities, institution “matching”/“speed-dating”, breakout groups based on themes, etc. to enhance engagement and knowledge-sharing.
6. **Providing Actionable Tools and Resources:** Focus sessions on delivering practical takeaways, exercises, etc. Attendees would benefit from additional resource-sharing and methodologies that they can implement directly in their institutions or practices.

The CIMAM Annual Conference is a vital platform for shaping the discourse around contemporary art institutions. By implementing these suggestions, future conferences could become even more inclusive, engaging, and impactful. I am grateful for the opportunity to attend and contribute to this important dialogue, and I look forward to continuing to be involved in CIMAM and its activities.

**Aditya Lingga Rohadi, Assistant Curator, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art di Nusantara (Museum MACAN), Jakarta Pusat, Indonesia.**



Los Angeles, a city where the glamour of Hollywood collides with the pressing realities of climate change, offered a unique stage to explore sustainability. With its sprawling urbanization, vibrant social diversity, and the complexities of modern life, LA serves as a global microcosm—brimming with innovation yet rife with contradictions. Perhaps the city itself is a living laboratory, showcasing how art, communities, and the environment might, or at least try to, harmonize for a sustainable future.

The first day began with a lively discussion on how museums can act as agents of change. Andrea Lissoni introduced six pillars of transformation, including discursive programs, transformative exhibitions, and internal public spaces—all designed to foster dynamic, inclusive, and community-focused art institutions. Meanwhile, Michael Maltzan emphasized the role of museum architecture as a medium for bridging local culture and ecology, creating spaces that are both dynamic and attuned to the needs of their communities. Framing the conversation within the context of sustainability, Mark Bradford underscored the importance of fostering enduring collaborations, asking pointedly, "How do we sustain what we do?" A sharp reminder that sustainability is not just about launching great initiatives but ensuring they endure and thrive over time.

The second day delved deeper into the dynamics of power and sustainability. Andrea Fraser posed a challenging question: how can art institutions genuinely and authentically reflect the values of sustainability? This is no small task, especially given the yawning chasm of global inequality—where wealthier nations enjoy abundant resources while many in the Global South are left patching the metaphorical roofs of their cultural institutions. Fraser emphasized that sustainability isn't just a matter of adopting lofty principles but requires a fundamental reshuffling of power within the very kitchens of these institutions.

In this context, Zita Cobb offered a concrete example through her community-based economic model on Fogo Island, demonstrating that sustainability is about forging strong social and cultural connections. This resonates deeply with Cecilia Winter's reflection from the first day: "Should we prioritize the needs of future privileged communities over the needs of underserved populations today?" A question that becomes critical for the Global South, where sustainability often clashes with the urgency of addressing basic needs.

By the end of the second day, Walid Raad introduced a conceptual dimension, challenging how dominant narratives can be reconfigured through art. In his performative lecture of *Two Drops per Heartbeat*, Raad demonstrated that art can serve as a potent tool to question entrenched power structures, forming a perfect duet with Fraser's critique of institutional hierarchies. Together, they remind us that sustainability isn't a fashionable accessory but a profound effort to rethink and refine the existing systems.

The final day expanded the conversation, spotlighting Indigenous art and community as the beating heart of cultural sustainability—a theme that felt like a collective call to "go back to the roots," quite literally. Pablo José Ramírez took a challenge at neoliberal multiculturalism, critiquing its grandiose appearances, often lacking in structural change. He urged for Indigenous art to be a catalyst for systemic transformation, not just an exotic decoration relegated to the gallery's forgotten corners. Edgar Calel and Candice Hopkins then brought the dialogue closer to home, emphasizing the preservation of cultural heritage and the spiritual connection to land—a grounding reminder that sustainability often begins under our very feet. Taloi Havini added a new dimension, laying bare the ways colonialism has unraveled matrilineal systems, deftly linking art, identity, and the endurance of communities. These ideas wove seamlessly into a shared thread of sustainability, braiding history, physical spaces, and community into a harmony of thought that had already begun resonating on the first day.

The conference served as a critical reflection on the challenges of sustainability—like opening a puzzle box where each piece raises more questions than it answers. Manuel Segade highlighted the necessity of cross-institutional collaboration as a key to success, while discussions from various speakers demonstrated how art can act as a catalyst for global dialogue. The collective vision of the participants was a hopeful conclusion: despite the obstacles on the path to sustainability, there is a shared determination to take action. As Mark Bradford aptly stated, "We all are not coming to the table with the same tools, but we're all coming to the table with the same desire to be here." This sentiment encapsulated my intellectual and emotional journey throughout the conference—my mind was enriched by diverse and profound perspectives, while my resolve was ignited to seek tangible solutions.

The conference was not merely an intellectual exchange but a resounding call to action. The question now is: how far are we willing to go to take bold steps, and are we truly prepared to face the consequences of every decision we make?

## **Maria Consuelo Cabrera, Instructor and Independent Curator, Department of Art Studies, College of Arts and Letters, University of the Philippines, Quezon City, Philippines.**



### ***Locating In(ter)dependent Practice within the CIMAM Community***

When I applied for the CIMAM's travel grant, I had a multi-pronged motivation as a hybrid practitioner. In our context in the Philippines, it is very common for artists like me to eventually take on curatorial roles and develop our practices as artist-curators. Having this background allows me to understand the ebb and flow of art-making and the curatorial within the intricate balance, questioning, and challenging of the interdependency in theory and practice. I am also an independent curator. My experience in museum work is rooted in working in collections management, exhibitions, public programs, and projects presented in museums. These experiences equipped me with an understanding of the administrative, philosophical, social and political roles necessary within and outside museum environments. On top of this hybrid praxis, I am also an educator in a state



university wherein all my extension creative work is transformed into pedagogical devices and made legible through teaching and academic writing. The CiMAM theme that centers on sustainability as an integrated and holistic approach in museology while foregrounding artistic endeavors calcifies most of my major concerns in navigating the place of contemporary art, not only in cultural work, but most importantly in the continued shaping of Philippine art that is sensitive to global-local discourses wherein the museum is a significant platform.

### *Individual and Collective Agencies*

What set the tone of the conference for me was Mark Bradford's keynote presentation when he narrated his failures and successes in working with institutions and communities. It situated the gathering of museum workers as a learning opportunity wherein artists courageously and productively confront traditional hierarchies that are present to make art production possible. Bradford emphasizes that the hyperlocality of his process can bring about sincere and grounded collaborations built upon empathy and making space for others. The succeeding discussions on institutional efforts in addressing sustainability in the context of environmental and ecological crisis illustrated the kind of efforts museums can do, given proper and adequate resources and motivation. It was interesting to know about what well thought out responses to the call for carbon neutrality in museum operations can look like. They were attempts to set the so-called best practices in the field. The afternoon session centered on architecture and placemaking that shapes museum publics and engagement. The presentations also illustrated possibilities of visionary thinking in terms of spatial relationships that boosts and literally and metaphorically scaffolds the curatorial in its exhibition-making strategies. This is an important discussion for curators especially in the digital age wherein physical space can become a secondary option for aesthetic experiences. The first day, for me, demonstrated the importance of conscious utilization of individual and collective agencies to propel organizations and efforts to first, locate themselves in the broad alliance for environmentally ethical practices; second, to gear towards working on mindful operations to execute and uphold this kind of ethical practice; and third, to extend help to fellows in the field who are having difficulties and limitations for various internal and external reasons.

### **James Luigi Tana, Curator, Arts Writer, Educator, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, Manila, Philippines.**



This year's three-day long CiMAM Annual Conference in Los Angeles had been a productive exchange of insights and informed opinions about sustainability. It became apparent that institutions of different scale and nature have their own approach to sustainability when it comes to institutional operations, may it be through conservation, acquisition, or both. Convened during PST Art in Los Angeles, the thematics around sustainability seemed to be a deliberate and perhaps a strong positioning to understand contexts (instead of seeking concrete solutions) in the merging of art and science.

From the onset of the conference, Chus Martinez raises her doubts pertaining to sustainability, whether its practical application operates as a methodology or a philosophy. I personally feel like the conference allowed us to gather and share our concerns, conditions and state of being, not necessarily to seek answers from one another, but to take pause and listen earnestly– the first important step– and to eventually ask more questions. How flexible is the structure of our museums? What are the tangibles and intangibles that we are attempting to conserve? How do we withstand crises in solidarity with the rest of the world?

Cecilia Winter proposes to shift our attitude from anticipating loss of value in art to value creation when it comes to our collective decision-making. Museums, as per Kelsey Shell, are spaces of time and reflection. However, in an era of global crises, it has been an endless race against time. It makes me wonder how our individual and more so our collective efforts could potentially take us ahead of the curve as we all grapple with our own perceived notions of permanence and the temporary in developing a more sustainable art ecosystem. Time, an inextricable element, then becomes central to the development of sustainable models.

Having heard from colleagues and leaders of major institutions and community-led art spaces, there's this realization that there are gaps, big ones, in the infrastructures and structural framework of our museums that need to be bridged and addressed. I would like to view these gaps as interstices– as spaces for negotiation and as common grounds for interconnectedness among us. As Candice Hopkins noted in her speech, the state of not being a museum relies on “how we can host rather than how we can accumulate.” In essence, there's sustainability in sharing truth and transferring knowledge. There's sustainability when even the best approaches and practices are put into question and challenged. I would like to believe that the CiMAM conference has served its purpose: to create a valuable moment for expression of truths and for production of knowledge that further inspire action in sustainability; all of these are possible through one's openness.

## Silja Leifsdottir, Exhibition Curator, Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen, Norway.



The recent three-day conference was an inspiring and thought-provoking experience, where I had the privilege of attending through a travel grant, generously provided by OCA – Office for Contemporary Art Norway. It brought together professionals from diverse backgrounds to engage in meaningful discussions about art, institutions, and sustainability, all while providing opportunities to connect and learn from peers.

The conference began with a remarkable talk by Mark Bradford, who emphasized the importance of creating safe spaces for art. His wise reflections on listening deeply, empowering communities, and breaking hierarchies set the tone for the event. Bradford's focus on the artist as the cornerstone of transformative change resonated deeply. Chus Martínez posed a pivotal question: *Is sustainability a method or a philosophy?* Her inquiry underscored the need for context-specific definitions of sustainability. This nuanced

perspective was crucial, as sustainability varies significantly depending on geography, financial circumstances, and political contexts. I felt that beginning the conference with a more focused discussion on the primary theme of sustainability might have enriched the dialogue, especially given the diverse audience and their varying backgrounds.

Zita Cobb shared insights drawn from her work on Fogo Island. Her reflections on prioritizing “development” over “growth” struck a personal chord. Coming from a small town above the Arctic Circle, I found her ideas particularly poignant as they echoed challenges faced in my own community post-industrialization. Manuel Segade presented a case for the political institution, challenging the idea of art institutions as neutral, “blank canvases” that aim to be inclusive for all. His argument made me think of the necessity of defining *who* a safe space is truly for, and the inherent limitations of attempting to be everything for everyone. This was a vital reminder of the complexities surrounding inclusivity and institutional roles. One of the most impactful sessions was Mai Abu ElDahab’s lecture, which took the form of a series of questions. Queries such as “Whose interests are we tethered to?” and “How to be moved (in the context of war)?” urged us to reflect on the privilege many of us have in planning for the future, while acknowledging that for others, even thinking about 2026 is a luxury. This poignant reminder of the diverse realities faced by our colleagues lingered with me throughout the conference.

Candice Hopkins eloquently discussed the concept of “not being a museum.” Her reminder to “move at the speed of trust” and prioritize the hyper-local while staying rooted in history was both grounding and inspiring. Pablo José Ramírez’s exploration of his curatorial methods was another highlight, offering practical insights into his thoughtful and innovative approaches. I also found Taloi Havinis’ talk on matriarchal structures and the importance of echoing the past as we step into the future interesting. Her emphasis on listening to artists and anchoring institutional change within individual minds left a lasting impression. Edgar Calel did a great presentation on how (his) indigenous knowledge can be presented within a capitalistic art world. And having worked with Edgar Calel on a recent exhibition, I can be a witness to how working with, and listening to, artists such as Calel can make a huge impact on an institution, changing it within and not to be forgotten; changing the minds of the individuals in the institution, anchoring this change in the most sustainable and perhaps effective place; inside our body and minds.

The afternoons were filled with exceptional exhibitions and tours, which enriched the conference experience. Standouts included “Scentia Sexualis” at ICA LA, exhibitions at The Hammer Museum, the George Washington Carver Project at CAAM, and the visit to the Brand Library & Art Center in Glendale. These exhibitions offered a dynamic extension of the conference themes and provided further opportunities for dialogue and reflection.

I left the conference feeling deeply grateful and energized. The chance to meet colleagues from diverse geographies and backgrounds was invaluable, as were the informal conversations during meals, taxi rides, and bus journeys. These exchanges offered unique insights into institutions, politics, and projects I had not encountered before. This experience has left me with fresh perspectives and a renewed commitment to fostering meaningful connections, networks and changes within the arts sector. It will undoubtedly serve as a foundation for developing myself further as a curator and enhancing my contributions to the field.

## Irene Pernille Snarby, Ph.D. Candidate, Curator, The Arctic University of Norway (UiT), Tromsø, Norway.



I have had the honor of getting one of CiMAMs travel grants by the Norwegian OCA and was, therefore, able to travel from the North of Norway, also known as Sápmi, to Los Angeles, USA. Here, I had the pleasure of hearing great talks from different angles of sustainability from museum workers and artists and seeing spectacular exhibitions throughout Los Angeles.

The organizers of the CiMAM conference have done tremendous work to give us the opportunity to experience as many relevant talks and exhibitions as possible. With a program of just three days, we were busy from early morning until bedtime. And sometimes, we had to run through interesting exhibitions to be able to keep the program. In this report, I will focus on the talks I have heard since I had far too little time to evaluate the exhibitions. Still, I feel that I could not have used my three conference days better.

The talks and lectures about sustainability seem both urgent and important. Keywords of who and what is included and excluded, how work is action on how we see our future, the importance of staying connected, how to protect intellectual freedom, the importance of agency, and a holistic perspective on sustainability are highly relevant. The climate and carbon footprint of the audience was one of the topics also discussed by the panel. Here, I missed the voice of the small museums in remote locations. Like the one I used to work in, for instance, The Sámi Museum in Kárášjohka, Norway. The rich and important art collection here does not have a venue for showing what it contains, the most interesting contemporary art made by Sámi artists. Every art piece must be on the road to be exhibited. People living in the village can not see their own artist's work. They must travel to experience this. And a bus stop outside the museum would not help as there is only one bus a day, and no train or boat. How can these small museums connect with and benefit from knowledge from the bigger museums, and vice versa?

The second day opened with a great keynote from the Canadian businesswoman and social entrepreneur Zita Cobb. She told us how she had lived for three centuries on Fogo Island on the Labrador coast. She grew up without electricity, and all her community lived in a certain kind of fishery that, in the nineteen sixties, was run over by modern trawlers, resulting in local people having to reconsider how to survive. How could they strengthen the communities and economies? They found a way by developing without growing, but rather deepening. Making their location relevant by serving the place they live, through art projects, and careful tourism. The thought behind is that everything is passing except the past, and what matters is what you do. That sustainability is care. And by this they managed to turn money into fish again.

The third day was time for the Indigenous people to talk, and this session made everything connect for me.

It started with a keynote talk from Candice Hopkins, a Carcross/Tagish First Nation independent curator, writer, and now an Executive Director and Chief Curator of the



Forge Project in New York. This is a Native led organization whose mandate is to cultivate and advance Indigenous leadership in art and culture. It is a non-profit organization working to upend political and social systems formed through generations of settler colonialism. They acknowledge that they are situated on the unceded homelands of the Moh-He-Con-Nuk, the Peoples of the Waters that Are Never Still. This land and its people are timeless, and they pay honour and respect to this history and to the Elders-past, present, and future.<sup>[1]</sup>

For them it is vital to investigate what sustains them, and while being hyperlocal, they move at the speed of trust, in consensus making, and giving back with no strings attached. They share food, farm projects, and knowledge, building a pathway of reparations.

They work closely with knowledge holders to show how knowledge is transferable through generations that can benefit the community.

The involved artists are informed before the loan so they can accept or oppose whether their work can be part of other projects. And the fees always go to the artists.

The botanic part of the museum area is about returning to the domestic plant life. They use dormant seeds that are local and beneficial and share plant knowledge, considering the land that they are on. This has resulted in a sustainable garden where not only the birds but also the insects are returning. In the nighttime, the sound of contented insects is so loud that they sometimes must close the windows to be able to sleep inside. This is what Hopkins calls the sound of not being a museum.

Later in this Indigenous session, we heard about sustainable communities, Indigenous Perspectives, and world views, art, and ecology, and how things we do matter. The importance of looking at the past as we walk into the future

Maya-Kaqchikel, visual artist and poet from Chi Xot, San Juan Comalapa, Guatemala, Edgar Calel, talked about his works and how not everything is for sale. We must understand that the gifts we are given do not last forever. Calel works with rituals for spirits to come back to our bodies, and bringing this into contemporary art.

The last speaker was artist, curator, activist and writer Djon Mundine. He is a member of the Bundjalung people of northern New South Wales in Australia. He spoke about how curating is to care, and that we want to make stories that are both universal and personal, and that the artist has the terminal voice. He also spoke about the dark history of colonial Australia, and how Indigenous spirituality is still being ignored. Australia is still a colony, but it will always be aboriginal land.

This session gave us very strong stories of how to listen, and learn how to care for, and respect what we have been given. To learn from Indigenous knowledge and spirituality can help us in our quest of being more sustainable and to have a future for years to come. We need to scale down and grow deeper, not bigger. The most sustainable thing people and museums can do today is to cooperate with and listen to the nature rather than tame and oppose it.

<sup>[1]</sup> <https://forgeproject.com/> seen 19.12.2024

## Eva Rowson, Director Bergen Kjøtt, Bergen, Norway.



### *Are we listening?*

*“What is the difference between hearing and listening? Can you imagine listening beyond the edge of your own imagination?”*

--- Pauline Oliveros, *Quantum Listening*, 2022.

### Are we listening? Really listening?

As Pauline Oliveros says, listening is activism. But do we often *avoid* this kind of activist listening, as we know that we may hear truths which are uncomfortable and challenge the way we have always done things?

The themes and questions of the 56th CİMAM Annual Conference in Los Angeles to explore *Sustainable Futures: How? When? For Whom?* require a lot of listening. More than 30 hours of listening in 3 days from many speakers and peers from around the world, from different institutions and from different practices. Answers to these questions could shape our futures of work, economy, society and life. But perhaps more importantly, it is these questions that we need to keep listening to. To listen in the way that Oliveros calls *Deep Listening: the foundation for a radically transformed social matrix, in which compassion and love are the core motivating principles guiding creative decision making and our actions in the world.*

*Feminism: we hear what each other can hear.*

*Feminism: we hear each other hear how we are not heard.*

*Feminism: we are louder not only when we are heard together, but when we hear together*

--- Sara Ahmed, *Feminist Ears*, 2022

How do we engage in active listening in a conference like this? We rely on several tools which construct the listening experience – such as: How are the talks programmed? Who talks first? Who talks last? Who is given a microphone? Who is unable to hear? Who is not heard?

Mark Bradford started the conference by advocating for listening as key to our work as cultural organisers. He said we need to listen to what our communities need – and make sure they know they are not just listened to, but *heard*. It might not be sexy or made for an art world, but it's vital to make the partnerships more equitable.

Deep or active listening also acknowledges that we do not all hear the same, we do not all share the same values and we come from different practices and lands which shape how we listen - or don't listen. The concept of sustainable futures – as Teesa Bahana, director of 32° East Ugandan Arts Trust, said on the last day – is not the same for all of us. Even if we all want to imagine that, gathered together in the conference room of the 56th CİMAM Annual Conference, we “are all on same page” in our quest for sustainable futures, globally we are experiencing environmental, economic and societal disaster in vastly unequitable ways. And therefore to answer the question of the future of sustainability also requires us to listen in more equitable ways.

*These things we're hearing cannot fall on closed ears.*

--- Michelle LaVallee, National Gallery of Canada,  
in her response to  
*Sustainable Communities: Indigenous Perspectives  
and Worldviews*,  
56th CIMAM Annual Conference.

For those of us descended from colonisers, we come from a very active practice of *un*-listening. In the first day of conference, the large, privately-funded museum world welcomed us to Los Angeles. In the following days in visits around the city, the artist-run spaces, non-profits, community-nourishing organisations introduced us to the ancestors of these stolen lands of the Tongva, Kizh, Chumash and more: lands which are now known as Los Angeles. These ancestors and caretakers were honoured and they were heard.

In the final day of the conference on *Sustainable Communities: Indigenous Perspectives and Worldviews*, the speakers acknowledged the those who took care of and sustained indigenous lands before they were colonised. Candice Hopkins ended her presentation about the Forge Project in New York by talking about how she can hear the insects coming back in the field outside, which has been re-wilded and re-sown by indigenous neighbours and practitioners. For her, this is the sound of sustainability. Of listening to the elders of these lands, who understand both their past and their future more intimately than perhaps our environmental-condition-measuring-tools ever could.

If we had started with this section at the beginning of the conference, would we already be listening in a different way? Would the speakers from the large museums and foundations even change their presentations after actively listening to how we honour where we stand today? That one day of the programme was dedicated to indigenous perspectives was refreshing and vital. But the fact it was siloed into a specific section and structured to be heard at the end of the conference, meant that already the conditions for deep listening were conditioned by the colonial museums we heard at the beginning. Curator, writer, artist and activist Djon Mundine also asked why we only listening to indigenous communities in times of crisis?

For us to take sustainability really seriously, maybe we need to undo everything we have ever known in order to start thinking differently. This is the founding principle of the artist collective Crenshaw Dairy Mart that we visited, who are present on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples, the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar. Their values are: *Ancestry, Abolition, Healing*. As Sara Zwede also spoke of during the conference: Change is necessary for sustainability – but how much are we willing to change, how far and for whom?

In an international museum conference, what would it mean to totally undo the continuing value judgements about what work is creative and transformational? To hear from museum workers who usually do not attend or speak here? To invite the workers who are fundamental in enacting, sustaining, maintaining our sustainability work - but who also often go uncelebrated, or even unacknowledged.

The cleaners, catering teams, front of house, maintenance workers, gardeners, economists, human resource teams. How far can our aims for sustainability actually go in changing the world, when we still do not hear from the workers who will enact this sustainability in our employment contracts, supplier agreements, waste management protocols? When we talk about sustainability in the conference hall, but throw away our plastic lunch boxes into the trash one hour later? When we talk about equitable listening, but not everyone can hear well at the roundtable discussion as there is no microphone?

What are the tools which will move us from *hearing* about sustainability in a conference to *listening*?

*“While focus is often placed on making statements, capturing history, and the importance of free speech, listening is radically key to facilitating dialogue, understanding, and social transformation.”*

--- Curatorial Statement, *The Listening Biennial*, 2021

During our visit to the Palm Springs Art Museum, the Senior Curator told me that out of her window in nearby Snow Creek she can see the plants on the desert mountain literally burning in the summer. In the 25 years since she has lived there, the plants have always come back to life. But now in the last few years, they are burned beyond hope. Later that night, we heard the sprinkler maintaining the lush gardens of the homes of private collectors and the green golf course of the Tamarisk private members club - and we didn't say anything.

The world – and the 56th CİMAM Annual Conference – is full of contradictions and differences. We need to listen together, listening deeply beyond our own spheres of work, life and imaginations, to really hear these differences. There were many answers proposed to the questions of *Sustainable Futures: How? When? For Whom?* during the 3 intense and generous days of the conference. But the conference left me thinking less about *what* we listened to and more how we construct the conditions to make sure we are deeply listening to each other, our communities, the world. And then, what we do next.

## Deniz Kirkali, Curator and Co-Founder, Garp Sessions, topsoil, İstanbul, Türkiye.



I attended the CİMAM Annual Conference 2024 titled “Sustainable Futures: How? When? For Whom?” between the dates of 6 to 8 December, 2024 in Los Angeles as a Travel Grantee. The conference program kicked off with an inspirational opening speech by Mark Bradford in which he elaborated on ways of sustaining various partnerships in his projects and how to create safe spaces and prioritize the desires of his partners. His triangles which he used as a tool to elaborate on some complex relationships that he built and sustained in some of his large-scale projects set the tone in terms of where to begin when we're thinking of sustainable

futures and really understand the various stakes at hand.

Then, we listened to the experiences and efforts at sustainability of some large sized institutions across the globe such as Guggenheim Bilbao and LACMA. The presentation of



John Kenneth Paranada, the Curator of Art and Climate Change at the Sainsbury Center was a highlight for me in terms of the scope of their research on climate sciences. Being partly based in London, I am very much interested in visiting the Sainsbury Center for their upcoming show in March and learning more about his practice there. Sara Zewde's presentation introduced the term "museum landscape" which is an interesting cultural lens into the earth that I will be thinking about. Chus Martinez brought up some very important questions during the panel discussion and invited us to imagine a process for a provocative set of questions. I also found the discussion on development versus growth to be quite a significant moment of the day.

On the second day of the conference, the opening presentation by Zita Cobb, the CEO and co-founder of Shorefast at Fogo Island was one of the highlights of the whole conference for me. I am extremely impressed by the work they are doing there and their phrase "turning money into fish" will be a concept I will be thinking about in relation to my own curatorial practice around certain localities. Their question "What do embodied, social and meaning-seeking creatures need?" also heavily resonated with me.

Mai Abu ElDahab, director of Mophradat, an institution that is doing remarkable work in the region, reminded the importance of staying relevant and being moved by what one does. I really appreciated how their programme doesn't merely react to the existing conditions but initiates and create new encounters and approaches to these conditions. We also listened to a beautiful clip from a performance by Haig Aivazian and Noor Abed. Artist presentations by Ibrahim Mahama, Edgar Calel and Taloi Havini were very interesting perspectives to working with communities, finding alternative ways to collaborate, create rituals and offerings within the art contexts and in doing so provide alternative to mainstream modes of production and display.

Finally, I am very happy to have seen Walid Raad's performative intervention, which was very original, interesting, thought-provoking and somehow a very creative way to address some of these concepts and concerns that were brought up during the three-day conference. It was a great way to shift to a different registrar and engage with an artistic practice while staying with the complicated questions we were working through. Overall, I really enjoyed most of the presentations and tried to find ways to connect them to my own curatorial practice and the kind of spaces and encounters I create. The points that were raised during the General Assembly in terms of giving voice to younger, emerging professionals who might operate in quite different contexts, institutions of smaller scale and who have varying needs and expectations were very important and fruitful for further conferences.

## Esra Özkan, Independent Curator, İstanbul, Türkiye.



### Day 1: Introduction and Initial Impressions

The conference began with a brief introductory session and breakfast in the morning. This networking session proved to be highly beneficial, enabling me to establish connections and engage in conversations with attendees throughout the day.

### Presentations and Inspiring Highlights

#### Example of Guggenheim Bilbao:

- The presented examples were inspiring, both in terms of architectural approaches and technical solutions. Their report, particularly addressing topics like carbon footprint, climate control parameters, and LED lighting, was concise and informative, offering fresh perspectives in the field.

#### Mark Bradford's Presentation:

- Mark Bradford's artistic practice and presentation were deeply inspiring.

#### Olafur Eliasson's Exhibition:

- Visiting the exhibition was a remarkable experience. Having previously visited his exhibition at İstanbul Modern, I found the installations here distinct and innovative.

#### Haus der Kunst:

- Another notable presentation from the first day.

### Networking and Evening Program

- The morning networking session allowed me to form new connections, which I continued to develop throughout the day. The evening dinner organized by Getty Foundation was a unifying experience.

### Special Inspirations

- The *Experiments in Art and Technology* exhibition was particularly captivating, featuring works by artists such as John Cage and Robert Whitman.

### Day 2: New Perspectives

The second day began with presentations at the Hammer Museum.

## Noteworthy Presentations

### Fogo Island Project:

- Presented as an extreme model, this project categorized its framework under *Sacred Capital Value*, including *Cultural Capital*, *Natural Capital*, *Physical Capital*, *Human Capital*, and *Social Capital*. The community-centered growth and economic development strategies were particularly impressive.

### İbrahim's Presentation:

- The projects implemented in Ghana provided an opportunity to observe approaches from a different geography. This presentation offered a refreshing perspective beyond Western-centric narratives.

### Mai Abu Eldahab:

- Her presentation and the models she introduced were highly insightful.

### Visits

- The exhibition at the Hammer Museum was impactful.
- Visits to NASA JPL and RedCat were instrumental in understanding the relationship between technology and art. They also contributed to my curatorial development by exposing me to contemporary projects and enabling interactions with artists working in these fields.

## Day 3: Closing and Key Topics

The final day of the conference centered around discussions prompted by the question "Whom?"

## Highlighted Discussions

### İndigenous Crisis in America:

- The underrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the art world emerged as a significant point of awareness. This highlighted the need for more collaborative production in art.

### Western Theology and Neoliberalism:

- Discussions on these subjects facilitated an exploration of the historical connections between art and society.

### Edgar Calel:

- The examples shared by the Guatemalan artist were profoundly inspiring.

### Candice Hopkins:

- Her talk on acknowledgment, territory, and solidarity was particularly impactful.

## Alex Alonso Díaz, Director, fluent, Santander, Spain.



In the following notes, I tackle the framework and predicaments under which CìMAM's 2024 Annual Conference proposition unfolded the notion of "*Sustainable Futures*". If there is such a thing as a shared horizon for both ecological and social sustainability in a globalized art field, (for whom?) is this work changing the nature of institutions? (how?).

I attended the conference believing that this organizational–institutional work is all the more relevant because, due to the increased level of exposure and pain after Oct 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, traditional (state and corporate) infrastructures need to undertake increasing transformations. Due to its inherent contradictions within a globalized sense of visibility (radically rooted in its colonial nature), museums and art institutions face the challenge of firmly committing their tissues in situated contexts, reorienting desire, and decolonizing life. And yet all these commitments, desires and responsibilities are intrinsically connected and embedded, with their echoes transversally cutting across race, economy, spirituality, gender, species, social classes, epistemologies, and capacities; thus, showing their effects in multiple and interconnected territories: from Palestine to South Africa, from the US to Israel, Rusia, Brazil, or China.

During the first conference day, the highly corporate and neoliberal use of language creates a sense of discontent. In informal conversations with colleagues and friends, we discussed our lack of interest in producing a normative, abstract theory of creative institutionality (creativity as in offering alternatives within the systems' dysfunctional logics, in opposition to imagination as in moving towards unknown radical possibilities). While I would argue that contributions like the one by the Guggenheim's Deputy Director for Exhibitions and Conservation, Daniel Vega diminished the vibrancy, richness, and urgency of what we mean when we speak of sustainability, more technical narratives like Cecilia Winter's (Project Specialist at the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles) were paradoxically more connective. Amid the generalized atmosphere of neoliberal paralysis within a highly colonized language, I believe that the microscopic scale to which Winter attended and its sense of situatedness allowed her approach to offer visions that resonated with complex translocal experiences —both comparative and connective—of organisations and curators from a diverse array of territories.

Similarly, both Zita Cobb and Manuel Segade on the second day, explored different forms and tactics to experiment with alternative forms of belonging. Both of their narratives, contributed to sifting the general ambience of the Conference to swift towards a more helpful climate, allowing the attendees to envision other forms of institutionality that resist colonialism through infrastructural regeneration (in the case of Manuel Segade's re-conception of the museum's operative body at MNCARS) and the imaginative recuperation of precolonial cultural forms (in the work that Zita Cobb is doing at Fogo Island). These contributions made visible long-silenced communities, pointing to other potential futures while using and hacking powerful cultural structures to foster the movement of experimental institutionalism (within the conference's schedule, but also metaphorically), setting the



ground for those who spoke on the third and last day. This sort of increasing climax, (one in which different identities and ontologies are organized in a self-contained way), made me wonder what would it mean to procure a more diverse approach in the organization of the panels. What type of space and conversation does this similarity of voices produce? Would it have brought more interaction, exchange and friction to scale things differently? Would these types of engagement have contributed to enrich the Conference's purposes?

Finally, the third day brought a group of practitioners who make tangible and work with long-silenced, censored histories of marginalized communities, pointing to potential futures that are already here. In all of their presentations, I felt like they all responded to a basic lack of the Western system, or to its failure to establish just and inclusive institutions (racialized, classed, and gendered). In that sense, in their contributions, the mechanisms of oppression were hacked as forms from where to resist neoliberal processes of politico-institutional transformation. The actors in this third day were a diverse group of people who resonated into a kind of heterogeneous imaginational body (resisting and germinating) that is fighting against multiple intersectional forms of violence committed by states and capital. After two days of speculating on possible strategies to create institutions that are just and caring (while in some cases reproducing the politics we want to step back from), the visions that were shared on the last day (Edgar Calel's and Candice Hopkins' were particularly remarkable for me) proofed the potential of radical imagination as a site for an emerging political takeover that goes beyond institutional boundaries and language. The institution procuring the role of art in life and not within the institution, as the ultimate responsibility of such institution.

Transforming and re-instituting this kind of process holds many promises, but also faces certain predicaments that were exposed throughout the Conference. As efforts at moving towards sustainability have been shown, alliances and the pooling of resources are bulwarks against unpredictability, especially for vulnerable populations. As both Calel and Hopkins pointed out, situatedness and presence unconsciously play a part in the larger global context, while in nurturing interdependent communities. This type of strategy creates spaces "where small-scale solidarity economies scale up into larger ones," while maintaining a kind of "real intelligence and ethics" that enables different communities to understand, respond and care for this changing environment that we inhabit, procuring closeness and familiarity.

Frameworks such as the CIMAM Annual Conference tend to be professionally-mediated environments in which discussions need to touch ground. However, when small, informal infrastructures unfold their authenticity, I believe that the potential of scaling-up ethics and commitment may lead to sustainable togetherness. This is what I hope for future Conferences: contribute to elude ossifying bureaucracies, reorient desire and produce a sense of joy that could lead to tangible transformations.

**Patricia Sorroche Quesada, Head of Exhibitions, Museu Tàpies, Barcelona, Spain.**



Sustainability, why, when, and for whom? CİMAM Annual Conference 2024 addressed questions that prompt institutions to rethink how they can face the current situation that has emerged from their deep-rooted connection with capitalist neoliberalism. Thus, sustainability, not only understood in terms of ecological efficiency, compels us to think in terms of labor, affective, and social relations as key elements to question the art system and the role of museums.

How can we address a museum-institution that was both the result and the paradigm of capitalism within the art world? Does art only exist within the institution-museum? How can we approach and redirect the art model that the West created and developed from positions of discursive hegemony? What other models are currently operating in art that do attend to the condition of sustainability? What do we mean when we speak of sustainability within the institution?

From all these questions that arose from the various talks and conferences that took place in Los Angeles, along with the exhibitions or projects I had the opportunity to visit, which proposed moving beyond the institution and understood how other spaces of enunciation work, I propose this text. I will attempt to develop, from the axiom, only a few thoughts or ideas that might help identify and propose a new epistemology or a possibility of redefining or re-founding certain concepts or categories that are understood to be outdated or exhausted in their current formula.

## **Contextual Framework: Museums of the End of the Century and Their Expansion into the Present**

### **1. How can we confront a museum-institution that was the result and paradigm of capitalism within the art world?**

The collective imagination we have of the museum institution was built throughout the 20th century as a result of a process of Western secularization. In this context, the museum positioned itself as the place where the contemporary art heritage it was responsible for was housed, safeguarded, and disseminated. In the 1990s, there was a perfect communion between art and architecture, leading to an expansive boom in museum institutions, particularly in Europe and the United States. Many of these were conceived as contemporary art museums. Progress, combined with a booming Western economy, promoted the construction of these grand cultural containers, which proposed the exhibition and legitimization of a collective imagination through contemporary practices that followed the hegemony of the discourse of Art History itself. In this way, museum institutions solidified a History without other narratives and became megalithic architectural standards within the art system. All of this added another layer of capitalism and neoliberalism to an art market that had long been experiencing an unchecked surge in terms of surplus value, worth, and capital.

Given this assertion, undoing or reversing the very system of success that the West has created seems like a difficult and far from simple task. The urgency of the moment pushes us to give rapid responses, formulating constituent ideas without time for reflection. Perhaps, it is not about making existing institutions more efficient or more sustainable in terms of ecological efficiency; rather, what we need to question is the very institution-museum model—questioning

the parameters, conditions, and obligations these museums have created within a capitalist system.

Perhaps the first step has been the inclusion of other narratives, histories, practices, and cosmologies within the stories legitimized by the institution-museum. As Boris Groys pointed out, anything susceptible to being musealized becomes part of the capitalist museum-institution, where the system absorbs and co-opts any possibility that challenges or disrupts it, as we will see later. However, visualizing and narrating these alterities within museums has allowed the inclusion of voices that were once excluded from Art History.

## **The Market and its Political-Economic Condition**

This is further compounded by the contradictory condition of growth in museums today, which corresponds to acquisition policies that have accelerated and increased in recent years. A clear consequence of this has been the proliferation of fairs, biennales, etc., which wildly promote the buying and acquisition of artworks. This rush to buy in order to increase the institution's collection has led many museums created in the 20th century to exhaustion and overexploitation of their resources, both spatially, in storage, in environmental conditions, and with human and technical resources. However, despite the evident saturation in these museums, the policies remain expansive and not restrictive or restorative of the system.

This reasoning and discussion bring the focus of the debate to question the necessity of "collecting," while also emphasizing whether everything "must be preserved." But thinking in these terms would lead us to the dismemberment of some of our imaginaries. As Walid Raad proposes, there is always a game between simulacra, fiction, and reality in institutional discourses. Some of them have questioned this preservation and custodianship condition to minimize ecological impact and ensure sustainability within the buildings. This was highlighted in Andrea Fraser's presentation on the growth of museums in relation to their environmental impact over the last years and what the possible consequences might be.

## **Affective and Social Sustainability within the Institution**

Is it possible, in this context, to engage in a process of reflection to reconfigure and reconstitute institutions? The concept of sustainability goes beyond the efficiency of resources to include the sustainability of workers, both in terms of their labor conditions and the environments in which they work. The insufficiency of financial support in many institutions has led to staff reaching the brink of collapse as a result of overexertion and the productivity pressures to which these institutions are subjected. The very concept of sustainability may need this space for dialogue to address the challenges institutions must face in order to offer solutions that align with new institutional models. This period of latency also responds to the urgency of reformulating how institutions are organized, what governance models are in place, and what the economic policies for programming are.

Manuel Segade proposed a review of the genealogies of the Museo Reina Sofía from a more systemic and holistic perspective, but above all, he called for a new organizational restructuring of the staff. This proposal advocated for the creation of dialogue spaces within a non-hierarchical system. It suggests a new framework for action in both leadership and

programming policies. At the same time, it advocates for multilingualism in the museum as spaces for meeting and shared governance.

## **Towards New Institutionalities. Context and the Emergence**

If there is one thing we have noticed, it is that the system is reconfiguring as new voices become more visible; and these voices not only propose new ways of deconstructing hegemonic history, but also offer other institutional possibilities, both in their economic and political-social conditions. The memories of the future and postcolonial narratives are excluded from the traditional institution, which resists deconstructing established forms of exhibition and visual representation. The challenge of the future lies in creating new, synchronous spaces that can facilitate the recovery of historical absences and marginalized voices.

This new institutionalization, first and foremost, breaks with the epistemology of the word, seeking, instead of the institution, a place for listening and emotional engagement with narratives and practices. Thus, its condition involves restoring to artistic practice its transformative power rooted in social justice. But above all, it actively addresses intersectional practices of race, gender, and class, opening up artistic discourses and practices that resonate within communities previously underrepresented in the institution, with the will to decolonize art. Although in recent years museums have made efforts to include other voices, they remain far from being places where these voices can truly reconfigure themselves and speak from their own terms.

The context in which these new institutionalities arise is very different from that of the end of the century. This shift allows for the reconfiguration of exhibition spaces as well as artistic production. The project by Zitta Cobb at Fogo Island follows many of the lines we have outlined, such as community, land, sustainability with the environment, and the return of artistic practice to local communities. The exhibition *Cybersexologies* at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles reflects on sexual dissidences through digital mechanisms in a globalized context; or the *Art + Practice* project offers the Afro-descendant or African-American community a place from which to narrate their stories and communities; or the Crenshaw Center, which proposes an active struggle against abolitionism from an ecosystemic perspective. All these projects respond to a new way of approaching the world from art—an art that is more inclusive, just, and socially conscious, rooted in social intersectionality. In this new context, the museum is just another artifact, and the narratives have been displaced to be understood in other contexts and places of reflection and interaction.

## **Acknowledgments**

I am deeply grateful to the CIMAM Board for giving me the opportunity to confront the different realities that the institution is going through at this moment, and to consider the urgency of the challenges that must be addressed in the coming years. My practice involves questioning the institution by proposing new models for narrating and making visible counter-narratives. Being in Los Angeles has allowed me to expand my knowledge and establish new perspectives. I am extremely grateful for allowing me to be part of these debates and this reconfiguration of the contemporary art museum.



## André Luiz Mesquita, Curator, Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand (MASP), Sao Paulo, Brazil.



*Sustainability? Yes, but for whom?*

*Climate justice and social justice*

André Mesquita

Curator, Museu de Arte de São Paulo - MASP

Perhaps this report, written from insights gained during some of the symposium's presentations, carries a somewhat personal tone rather than being a very formal or strictly academic text. After all, we spent three days together in Los Angeles, surrounded by a hundred people, from 8 AM to 8 PM. Over this time, we developed a certain intimacy in our conversations, didn't we? We talked about work, but we also shared life stories, journeys, dreams, and aspirations. For me, a symposium should be a collective practice, a micro-political space that, as the Brazilian psychoanalyst Suely Rolnik often says, manages to "give voice to the movements of desire." Often, discussions spilled over onto the hotel rooftop. More than just an intellectual presence at the symposium, each of us brought our body into every conversation — sometimes sitting in an auditorium, other times crossing the city's freeways on a bus, heading to museums and alternative spaces. That's why it might make sense to view this account not only as something intended for CÍMAM but also for the community of people with whom I shared these intense days.

First of all, I would like to express my deep gratitude once again for being a CÍMAM 2024 travel grantee. It is an immense honor, and I can already say that it was a rich learning experience.

I'm writing this report on a scorching afternoon in São Paulo. As we all know, the world is facing a growing climate crisis. Here, rain falls during unexpected months, and the sun burns on days when it shouldn't. We live under the weight of these unforeseen effects in our daily lives. Today, a friend shared news that, in a way, connects to our CÍMAM symposium in California. The British trip-hop band Massive Attack canceled their performance at the 2025 Coachella Festival. More than just a musical issue, the band has always remained committed to its activism for sustainability. According to the band members, Coachella fails to meet its ecological commitments, being an unsustainable event that uses vast amounts of water for irrigation in a private area where the festival takes place.[\[1\]](#) An important detail: the event happens in Palm Springs, the same desert region where part of the symposium group visited the day after our gathering in Los Angeles. I couldn't join that trip, but inspired by the investigative approach of Walid Raad, which we saw in his presentation at the symposium, I began reflecting on the possible connections between Massive Attack, Coachella, Los Angeles, Palm Springs, and CÍMAM. At first, the common thread seems to be the tension between resource extraction and the demand for a sustainable future. Art, music, and culture, as vibrant and urgent fields, are territories of battle, discussion, and engagement on these issues. After days of reading about wars and environmental racism, listening to Massive Attack, and reading about desert music festivals, I still wonder: what agreements and

commitments truly emerge from the symposium in Los Angeles? And for whom, in the end, is living and working truly sustainable?

The word "sustainability" echoed throughout CIMAM 2024. Economic sustainability, resource sustainability, sustainable practices, sustainable networks — all of this while we work and live in a world that is already nearing the unsustainable. We know that this word was long ago hijacked by corporate discourse aimed at selling a company's "best practices." In Brazil, for example, it's common to see companies promoting their "green capitalism" in advertisements and on the stock exchange, presenting themselves as ethically sustainable, yet perversely exploiting resources in the Amazon rainforest — a program of mass destruction with colonial roots. On our side, as art workers, we understand that we need to increasingly create agreements and protocols for more responsible practices toward the environment. We know the way is so long, and much still needs to be done. But do words like "sustainability" still make sense for what we wish to claim and transform? If we are going to continue talking about sustainability, perhaps it is urgent to renew an ethical-political commitment focused on social justice.

As the Indigenous philosopher Ailton Krenak once said, the discourse on sustainability is often nothing more than "personal vanity" — you recycle waste, ride a bike, consume less plastic, eat organic food, but all of this is done as an individual act in a world that already carries centuries of violence, ecocide, environmental disasters, and collapses.<sup>[ii]</sup> I thought a lot about Krenak during the symposium, especially when I saw the presentation by Daniel Vega, Deputy Director for Exhibitions and Conservation at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. The creation of a "green team" at the museum, addressing logistical and economic issues like measuring the carbon footprint, reusing wood and exhibition showcases, or using virtual couriers for artwork loans, is commendable. However, the "Bilbao effect" that spread across the art world a few years ago—the idea of a museum regenerating a degraded area—always needs to be analyzed with caution, as it is often linked to real estate speculation and tourism. In some way, that presentation reminded me of the work of another investigative artist, Allan Sekula, who spent years photographing and highlighting the global economy that circulates across the oceans, transported by cargo ships. Sekula and Raad seem so close in their methods, both trying to bring us connections that, for a moment, might seem unusual or even impossible.

Sekula photographed the devastating effects on the village of Popotla in Baja California when 20th Century Studios built a set for the filming of *Titanic* (1997), with a huge freshwater tank and a ship. The tank was installed near a fishing village where people lived without access to running water. The construction of the tank altered the salinity of the natural pools and completely harmed the region's economic activity, which depended on shellfish fishing. For Sekula, the arrogance of the entertainment industry exploiting that location is part of a (nearly) secret history of how the seas connect exploitation and neoliberal extractivism in vulnerable areas. Following this trajectory of navigation, Sekula arrived in Bilbao, where he photographed the Guggenheim, whose architecture (created by Frank Gehry) he describes as "the Los Angeles export product, a leviathan of California postmodernity beached on the derelict riverfront of the economically-depressed maritime-industrial capital of the Basques."<sup>[iii]</sup> For Sekula, Guggenheim Bilbao is much closer to the fantasies and lights of Los Angeles than we imagined.



Allan Sekula, *Twentieth Century Fox set for Titanic and mussel gatherers, Popotla from "Dead Letter Office"*, 1996-1997



Allan Sekula, *Bilbao, from TITANIC's Wake*, 1999/2000

This reflection on the Guggenheim Bilbao, in light of Sekula's images and insights, brings us face to face with a central institutional issue that still needs to be discussed. Creating "green teams" or protocols for resource use in a museum only makes sense if it's not motivated by institutional vanity (yes, museums are also extremely vain). I mean that many museums still have not adopted systematic strategies and plans in the face of the climate crisis because they lack genuine social responsibility policies, often treated merely as voluntary measures rather than policies that are effectively implemented. There is no sustainable change if these projects do not include and understand the effects of museums on communities and their surroundings, as well as policies for valuing and caring for their workers.

Manuel Segade's participation in the symposium was particularly relevant. Segade, Reina Sofía Museum director, highlighted the work developed within the framework of the "Museo Situado" project. This project is characterized by a network of collaboration between collectives, activists, and local associations in the Lavapiés neighborhood, where the museum is located, promoting gatherings such as assemblies, workshops, community events, music, and film screenings. Segade reminded us that the creation of this network between local communities and the museum began in March 2018, after protests in Lavapiés following the death of Senegalese immigrant Mame Mbaye. Mbaye died of a heart attack after being chased for hours by the police. Perhaps, more than questioning whether the "Museo Situado" evokes a "sustainable practice," the most relevant issue is understanding that true ecological

awareness only arises when we recognize that environmental change must also be social—a principle we can find outside the museum world in various discussions promoted by anarchists, theorists of social ecology, and communalism. Inside the museum, as Segade pointed out, such discussions further amplify and challenge class conflicts, the visibility of different subjectivities, resource distribution, and the public nature of an institution. Discussions that reorganized, recombined, and remade an institutional ecosystem and its field of forces and disputes.

With all its paradoxes, difficulties, and contradictions, a museum is undoubtedly a space where neoliberal projects, precariousness, conservatism, and still unsustainable practices intersect. However, creating protocols, openings, and careful agreements with the surrounding communities so that they become part of this institutional space seems to be an opportunity to establish alliances. The reuse of materials and the adoption of sustainable strategies, in themselves, are not enough to repair the effects of neoliberalism in a museum in a city like Bilbao. Likewise, the community attitude of a museum towards the migrant diversity of an increasingly gentrified neighborhood, like Lavapiés, cannot correct the state's violence against migrant lives. More than talking about mandatory reparations, it is necessary to openly discuss (with both consensuses and dissensions) the social responsibility of museums as spaces for formation, education, care, and the collective construction of resources and knowledge. These reparations are manifold and involve decades—in fact, centuries—of racial and epistemic violence, issues that go beyond the field of art because living under capitalism is, yes, unsustainable. Here, one word that appeared in some of the discussions at the symposium now seems to make sense: *interstice*. In my view, we should think of museums and cities not only as physical spaces but as social spaces of relationships and struggles that act in the interstices of everyday life. Interstices represent what remains of resistance in large cities, fighting against normativity, regulation, and homogenization. The interstice is political in itself and seeks to break with the classic and normative organization of a city or institutional space. The provisional and often uncertain status of an interstice allows for glimpsing and experimenting with other forms of creating a space open to collaboration and cooperation.

During the discussions at CÍMAM, which focused on the relationship between museums and the climate crisis, with an emphasis on Cecilia Winter's excellent presentation from the Getty Institute on the international challenges of conservation policies, and also in the panel discussing sustainability economies, my perception was that the symposium did not treat the environment or ecology merely as a curatorial theme or something related to the collections, as if a museum's art collections or exhibitions could solve or illustrate these issues. In reality, what we have been discussing since the symposium in Los Angeles are much more concrete issues: ensuring basic essential rights when talking, at the very least, about sustainability within museums. We are talking about guaranteeing dignified working hours, adequate working conditions, fair wages, career development, investments in training and research processes, and policies for diversity and inclusion related to gender, race, and disability. Thus, implementing practices aligned with human rights principles should not be a mere game of appearances or a superficial response to social pressures, which often result in marketing strategies such as pinkwashing, artwashing, and greenwashing, as if these were enough to meet social demands and absolve institutional culture of its civic duties. True change must be a collective and continuous commitment.



Still on interstices, it was truly uplifting to start CìMAM with the keynote speech by Mark Bradford and to hear Candice Hopkins' presentation on the final day of the meeting. It was uplifting because I felt the symposium did not take the route of discussions that assert "there is no alternative!" nor was it seduced by the simplistic and normative idea that sustainable policies would merely be a capitalist strategy for "progress." On the contrary, the meeting proposed constructive and thought-provoking reflections.

Bradford, in particular, addressed at least two essential points that highlight the potential of collaboration in these interstices. First, he repeatedly emphasized the importance of creating a safe space for collaboration and work, stressing the value of community and the need for an active process of listening. Second, Bradford argued that the artist must take a leadership position in negotiations between work and institutions—in other words, he spoke about a more equitable relationship between artists and the structures that engage with them.

For me, it was especially enriching to expand Bradford's presentation by visiting the exhibition *KAOS Theory: The Afrocosmic Media Arts of Ben Caldwell*, a collaboration between the California African American Museum and the Art + Practice foundation, driven by Bradford. The exhibition was dedicated to presenting and exploring, through images, films, and initiatives, the work and influence of filmmaker and cultural activist Ben Caldwell, with a focus on his work at the KAOS Network, a media arts hub. This visit was significant because it allowed direct contact with the community context and artistic production of South Los Angeles, offering a practical understanding of how Bradford's initiatives manifest in these spaces, which are occupied and shaped by community histories. This is an aspect I felt was missing during the Los Angeles symposium—it would have been extremely enriching if we had visited more spaces and projects like the one we saw in that exhibition. The practical experience of these initiatives offers a deeper understanding of the impact and relevance of artistic practices in the social and community context, something that deserves more exploration in meetings like CìMAM.

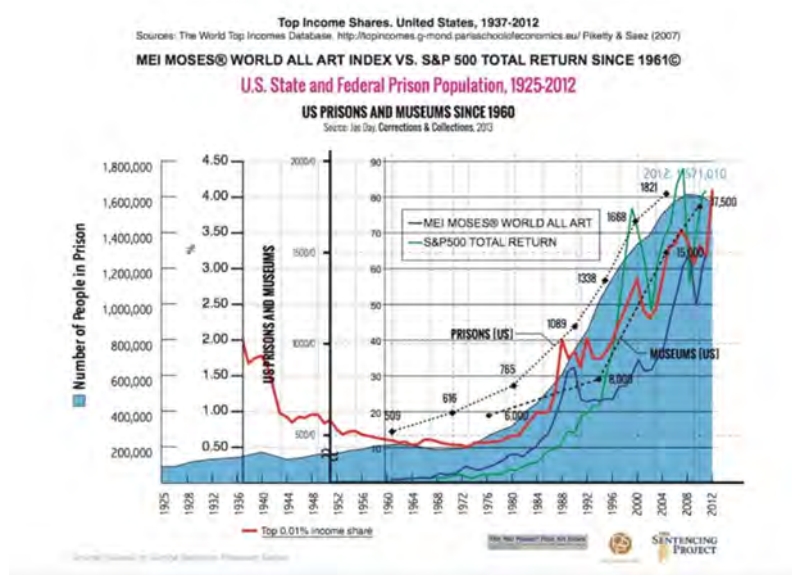
Candice Hopkins delivered one of the most memorable presentations of the symposium. She discussed a project she is working on as its director, a project that refuses to be labeled as a museum, proposing a distinct form of organization. The Forge Project, initiated in 2021, is situated in the ancestral homeland of the Moh-He-Con-Nuck. Hopkins advocates for temporality over permanence, and instead of creating a fixed museum, she proposes a fluid and dynamic space. This model allows for a flexible relationship between the organization of collections, artist residencies, research, and activities involving food, care for the land, seeds, plants, and agriculture—everything immersed in a deeper curatorial practice. Hopkins' presentation led me to reflect on the concept of time, or rather, on another kind of time. In traditional museums, time runs against us: everything is urgent, everything must be immediate, almost decisive. The Forge Project invites us to think about another ecology—an ecology of time and of care. A time that, for me, evokes the concept of "ancestral time" proposed by Brazilian writer Leda Maria Martins, which, according to African cosmoperception, is a time that does not follow progressive linearity. On the contrary, this ancestral time is spiral: everything goes and everything returns, in a continuous movement of knowledge that reshapes and accumulates.<sup>1</sup> The attention to community and the transmission

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<sup>1</sup> Leda Maria Martins, *Performances do tempo espiralar: Poéticas do corpo-tela*. Rio de Janeiro: Cobogó, 2011, p. 206.

of knowledge, as reported by Hopkins, made me reflect on the need to inhabit this other time in the face of the crises we are going through.

Perhaps you have noticed, dear CÍMAM, throughout this report, my intention to draw attention to the fact that we held a symposium on museums in a city like Los Angeles. At every moment of this meeting, whether during museum visits or while walking through the city, I found myself reflecting on the countless stories I've heard, read, or still need to learn about the social, racial, and political struggles in LA—stories of insurrections, uprisings, riots, battles, and clashes in a deeply segregated territory. In some way, it was shocking but not surprising to hear Andrea Fraser talk about the governance structures of museums, displaying a chart that correlated the explosion of the incarcerated population in the United States with the growth of museum income. At that moment, I paid attention to the hundreds of people in the audience, carefully recording the chart with their cell phones. Fraser's investigations have always been an invitation to expose the hypocrisy of the art system. Listening to Fraser, it was impossible not to think, once again, about the social and geographical context of the symposium—yes, we are in Los Angeles. This thought immediately led me to the research of geographer Ruth Wilson Gilmore, who revealed that the prison population in California grew by about 500% between 1982 and 2000. African Americans and Latinos make up two-thirds of the 160,000 prisoners in the state, most of whom come from Los Angeles.<sup>2</sup>



index ii, 2014, graph. Photograph: Andrea Fraser.

These numbers stayed with me during the symposium, and I couldn't help but think that, while we were discussing ecologies, it was also necessary to evoke the perverse ecologies of fossil capitalism—one of which is undoubtedly the so-called "carceral ecology." According to T. J. Demos, prison ecology is shaped by police violence, racial capitalism, lawfare, social media algorithms, and states of exception in finance. One example of this can be seen in Atlanta, Georgia, where the state is investing millions in building a police training facility for counterinsurgency tactics. This facility is being built in an ecological reserve, on Indigenous land, and protests from climate activists against the project are violently repressed by the police.<sup>3</sup> Another moment during the symposium where this theme resonated in me was during the visit to the *Free the Land! Free the People!* exhibition at the Crenshaw Dairy Mart. There, I spoke with the curator about the construction of a geodesic dome as part of a project

<sup>2</sup> Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *California Gulag*. São Paulo: IGRAKNIGA, pp. 51-52.

<sup>3</sup> T. J. Demos, "Counterinsurgent: Cop City, Abolition Ecology, and the Aesthetics of Counterreform". <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/143/590415/counterinsurgent-cop-city-abolition-ecology-and-the-aesthetics-of-counterreform>.

that connects discussions on food insecurity, homelessness, and the prison-industrial complex. We talked about the need to create spaces for discussing social justice, environmental crisis, and penal abolitionism.

Can social justice be thought of without thinking about climate justice? No, it cannot. Whether through community projects, activist denunciations, museums open to the community, or institutional commitments in the face of the climate crisis, the art field needs to dedicate more time and energy to these intersections. In this sense, I believe that an essential strategy for dealing with the crisis is also to bring to the forefront and connect scattered episodes, hidden stories, and investigate the intricacies of fossil capitalism. Walid Raad, in his performative presentation at CİMAM, brought these insights while investigating the art collection of Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza. Like Fraser, Sekula, and Raad, we need artists willing to create narratives that connect like diagrammatic stories. This is crucial work, and we also need to do this as curators, researchers, and writers. The connection between various actors, institutions, groups, governments, and episodes seems to always be a necessary action, one that inspires us to continue diagramming our own research and knowledge. So, dear CİMAM, perhaps the time has come, after this symposium, for us to start building our solidarity networks, so that discussions can translate internationally into concrete actions—profoundly spiral actions and, we hope, more transformative. Shall we take this step together?

## **Jina Kim, Project Director, Space for Contemporary Art, Seoul, Republic of Korea.**



The 56th edition of CİMAM's Annual Conference addressed the subject of sustainability and explored practical strategies that cultural institutions can adopt to respond to global challenges such as climate change, social inequality and economic instability. The three-day program included 3 keynote speakers, 17 perspective presentations, panel discussions, a breakout session, and tours to art museums and galleries. As a first-time attendee of the CİMAM conference, I was able to witness the urgent discussions and dialogues on forging new models of sustainable practice in the cultural sector, and was deeply inspired by the diverse approaches proposed. When it comes to art, the term “sustainability” takes on many meanings, and this nourishing program was an opportunity for me to broaden my

understanding of it. Moreover, it was a chance to learn through the experiences of other institutions and different models of collective action about the many factors that need to be taken into account, such as logistics, architecture, landscaping, finance, local ties, and so on.

Among the topics and presentations, the discussions on exploring innovative models for economic sustainability and community building were of great interest to me as they are closely related to my field of work. The content that Zita Cobb brought to the table touched on both of these subjects. In her powerful keynote presentation titled “The Possibilities of Places,” Cobb presented the history of the fishing community of Fogo Island and how they adopted a model to sustain long-term goals for self-reliance while deeply involving the residents. The business model was extremely idealistic but proved to be feasible, and inspired me to employ it in my future projects to come.

As a curator based in South Korea, I am focused on stimulating actions for sustainability in relation to the diversity of Asia’s cultural and historical heritage. One of the major curatorial practices that I am involved in is the Real DMZ Project. The Real DMZ Project is a contemporary art project that explores the visible boundaries of the Demilitarized Zone and the border region between North and South Korea. We especially engage with the many rural communities in the region, and as artist Mark Bradford pointed out that community projects should not be a one-time interaction, we try to build an active and sustainable relationship. Cobb’s case provided me the insight to adopt practical models that aim for inclusive development for a sustainable future when working with the diverse communities in the border regions of Korea.

By coming together and interacting with art professionals who represent an incredibly rich array of cultures, societies, histories and environments in LA, the Annual Conference allowed me to learn, discuss and hear different perspectives on common concerns and challenges, and also introduce the Korean art scene to the other participants. In particular, the conference enabled me to build and strengthen networks with international art professionals and to develop a more structured framework for my ongoing curatorial practice to achieve sustainability. The new knowledge gained from the conference will strengthen my research and develop my career, and I hope that new collaborations will emerge with the many new colleagues I met during the conference to achieve a sustainable future.

Lastly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Byucksan Cultural Foundation for their generous support that allowed me to join the CIMAM Annual Conference, to CIMAM for the amazing opportunity, and to my colleagues in Korea for their trust.



# Feedback and Evaluation.

## What did attendees think about CìMAM 2024?

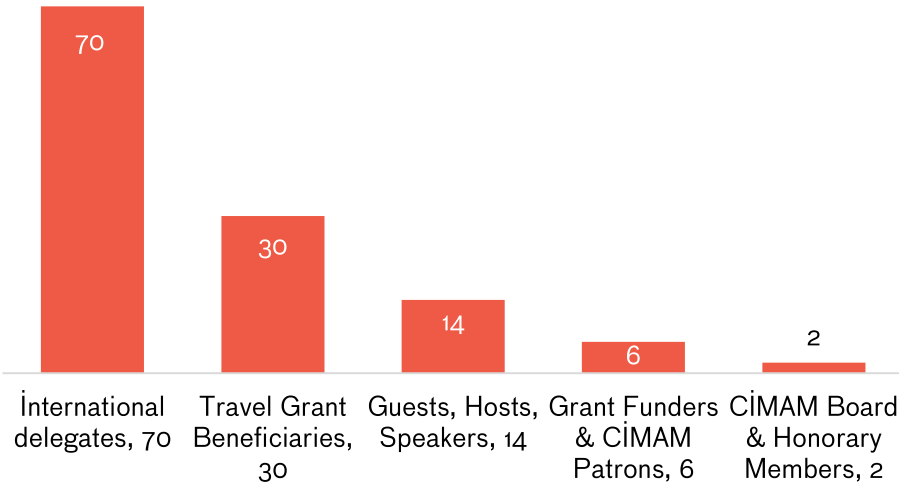


After every conference, CìMAM sends an online evaluation survey to all the delegates who attended the conference.

*We are grateful to the professionals who took the time to fill in the CìMAM conference online evaluation form and gave us constructive feedback that will help us in designing the contents and format of next year’s CìMAM Annual Conference.*

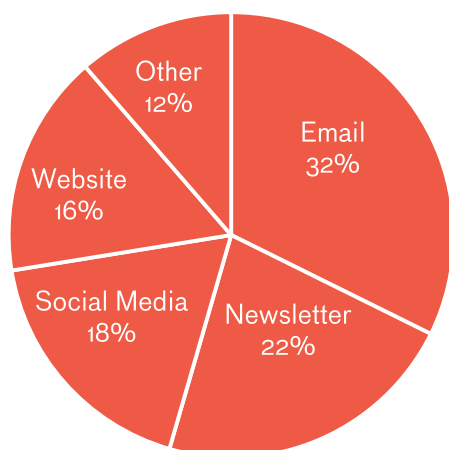
In 2024, we received 122 anonymous completed evaluation forms out of the 277 professionals who attended the CìMAM 2024 Annual Conference.

57% of the answers submitted come from general conference delegates, while replies from Travel Grant beneficiaries represent 25% of the responses received.



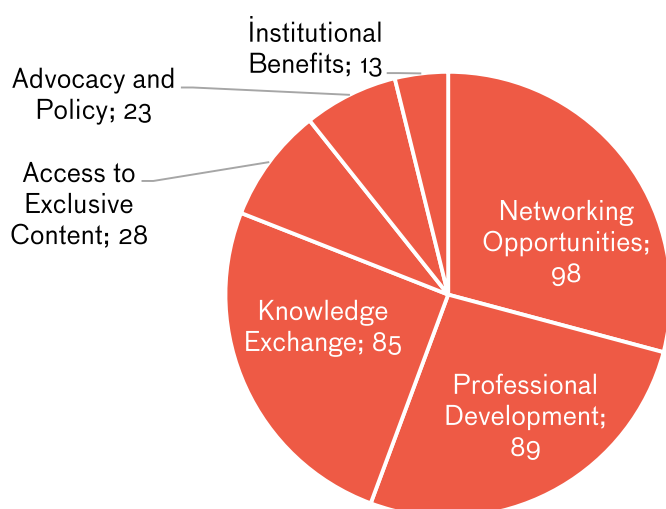
From the CìMAM Executive Office, we much appreciate the feedback on the 2024 conference organization, and will work hard on the forthcoming CìMAM conference. Below is a summary of the evaluation survey.

### How did you hear or learn about this conference?



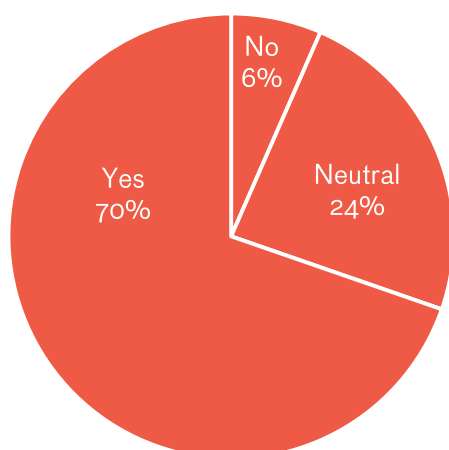
Email and Newsletter are the most effective ways to communicate with CIMAM conference participants, followed by social media.

### What were the main reasons for attending this conference?



The three main key reasons chosen by participants for attending the CIMAM Annual Conference were: *Professional Development*, *Networking Opportunities*, and *Knowledge Exchange*.

### Did the conference fulfill your expectations (yes, neutral, no)?



## What did you particularly like about the conference?

Here's a summarized list of what the 122 participants who filled out the evaluation form expressed they liked most about the CIMAM 2024 Annual Conference:

### *Engaging Speakers:*

- Inspirational talks by Mark Bradford, Zita Cobb, Candice Hopkins, Edgar Calel, and others.
- Indigenous perspectives on Day 3 and presentations on sustainability.
- Performative lecture by Walid Raad.

### *Rich Content and Discussions:*

- Diverse perspectives on sustainability, governance models, and museum practices.
- Inclusion of Indigenous and minority voices and artist-led presentations.
- Practical examples of sustainability in action.

### *Networking Opportunities:*

- Meeting and exchanging ideas with international colleagues and professionals.
- Warm, engaging, and inspiring interactions.

### *Tours and Experiences:*

- Architectural tours exploring Los Angeles beyond typical venues.
- Museum visits, artist studio tours, and post-conference desert tour.

### *Diversity and Representation:*

- Participants and speakers from various global institutions.
- Balance of large and small institution perspectives.

### *Organization and Hospitality:*

- Smooth coordination by host institutions and CIMAM team.
- Thoughtful program design with opportunities for informal discussions.





The feedback received showcases the event's success in providing valuable content, meaningful connections, and an inspiring platform for global museum professionals, here are some literal quotes:

"The experience has been nothing short of transformative, offering not only enriching dialog, but also an inspiring sense of connection and purpose."

"Delegates! Great selection of good museums and a lot of directors. It's a rare opportunity to meet and exchange ideas and experiences. Great studio tours. Good speakers!"

"A good mix of panel discussions, and opportunities to see art."

"I really enjoyed the diversity of panelists; I feel it was a perfect blend of different worlds of art and political and social contexts."

"As a collections professional, my day-to-day is very solitary. The CİMAM conference was very inspiring and gave me a newfound appreciation for all the amazing work that museums, curators, artists, and other professionals are working on within the global art world. I have attended other conferences in the past, but CİMAM was different: the delegates were so kind and warm and eager to engage in conversation."

"Connecting with global colleagues."

"Engaging in deep, rich, and meaningful conversations with PEOPLE who are navigating the same complex systems and institutions. Inspiring."

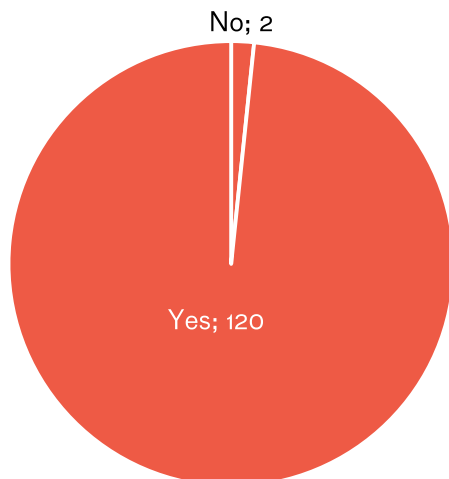
"I enjoyed an exceptional level of camaraderie and warmth between all the delegates I interacted with. The host institution's level of organization and hospitality was excellent, totally top-notch. The CİMAM team's performance was outstanding and remarkable. Now I must say I feel honored and proud to be a CİMAM member."

"It offered me an opportunity to meet museum practitioners from the US. I have a stronger network with museums and practitioners in Europe and Asia. New perspectives gained in understanding the theme of the conference."

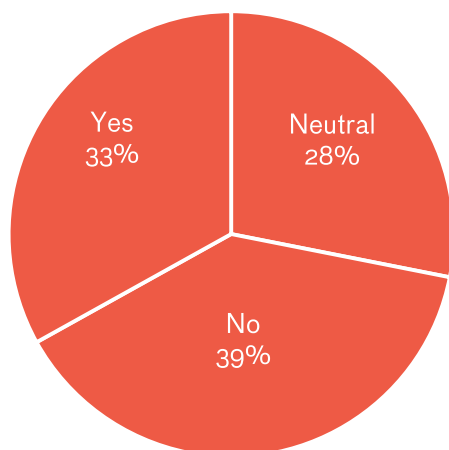




## Would you recommend CiMAM's Annual Conference?



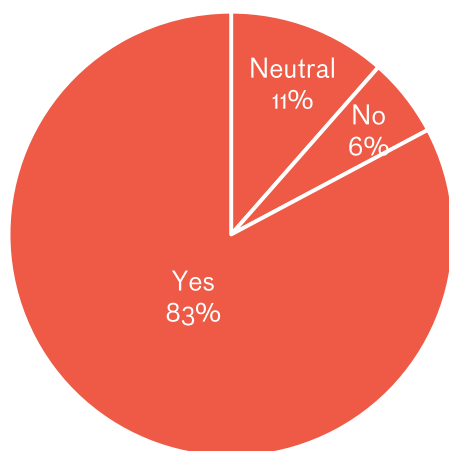
## Time and format of sessions were adequate (yes, neutral, no):



### Suggestions for Improvement:

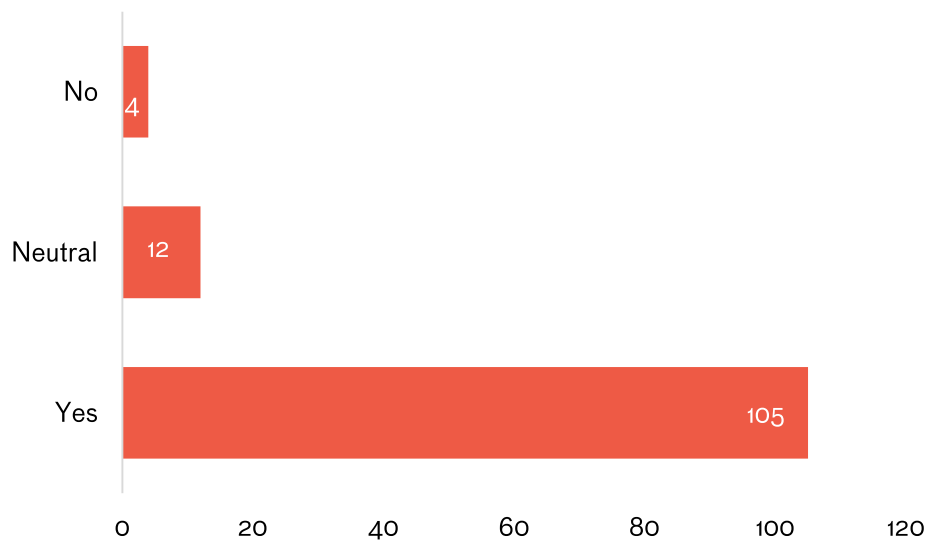
- More structured and consistent breakout sessions for deeper dialog.
- Additional time for discussions and knowledge-sharing among participants.
- Improvements in session pacing (breaks every 1.5–2 hours).

## The topics were relevant to your professional interests (yes, neutral, no):



- 74% of the 122 participants who filled out the evaluation form expressed they gained new insight on the topics discussed.
- 54% were fully satisfied with the selection of panelists,
- while 35% felt neutral about this aspect.

Do you believe that the CiMAM conference has effectively maintained a fair and equitable gender balance among its invited speakers? (yes, neutral, no)



What are your key takeaways from the speaker presentations?

This summary captures the rich and complex discussions around sustainability, institutional transformation, and inclusivity, and the conference's emphasis on actionable change, community relevance, and rethinking traditional models for a more sustainable future.

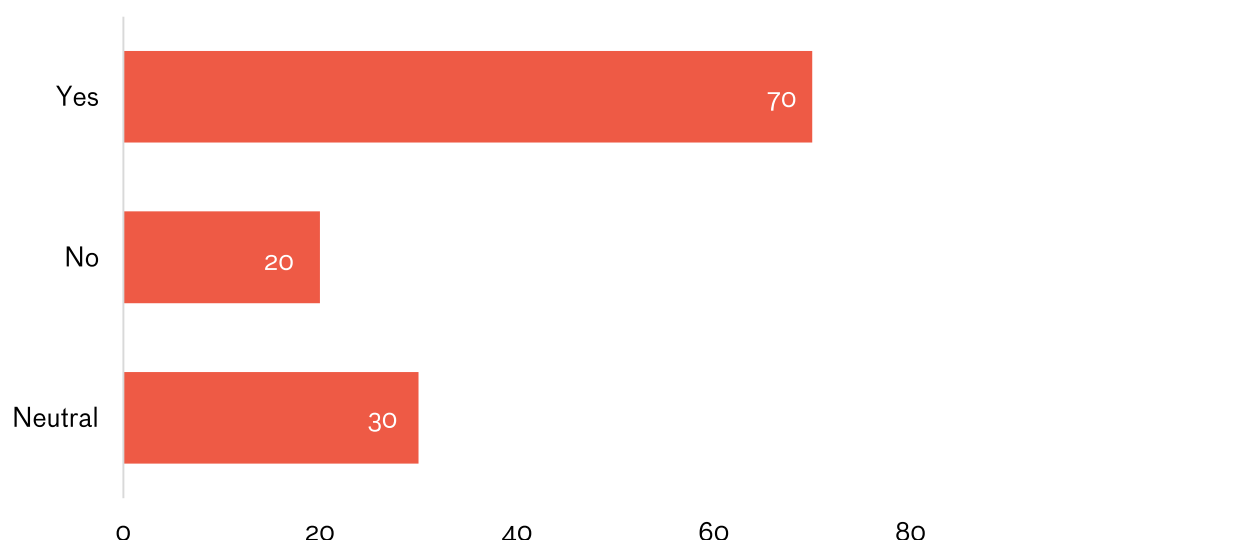
- Institutions must reflect on their role within their local environment, integrating community needs, and including diverse voices, particularly indigenous and non-Western perspectives.
- Museums should adapt to the context in which they operate, considering “the land, the seeds, and the skies” and consulting First Nations Elders and local experts.
- “Museums should adapt to life, not vice versa.”
- Sustainability is multifaceted, encompassing environmental, ethical, and social dimensions. It involves reimagining permanence, embracing resilience, and considering the scale of operations.
- A shift from perpetual growth to understanding the “natural size” of an institution is essential. “What is the natural size of something?” (Zita Cobb).
- The arts must address hierarchies of power, ensuring equitable collaborations and safer, more inclusive spaces. Power must be redistributed, particularly in exchanges between local and global contexts.
- “Move at the speed of trust.” (Candice Hopkins).

- Smaller institutions and artist-led initiatives often provide more responsive and sustainable models, as they work closely with local communities and available resources.
- Attendees expressed a desire for greater representation of Global South perspectives and smaller organizations in such conferences.
- “Sustainability answers are not truly emerging from rich institutions/countries.”
- “Institutions that are focused on their immediate communities are best situated to tackle sustainability in a truly sustainable manner.”
- Examples of actionable solutions included forming “Green Teams,” rethinking gallery climate standards, and creating frameworks for ethical philanthropy.
- Presentations from artists like Ibrahim Mahama showcased art as a driver for community development and self-reliance.
- “Turning fish into money – and money back into fish.” Zita Cobb
- Sustainability must go beyond logistics to become a mindset and philosophy. Art can inspire new imaginaries and alternative futures for museums and their communities. “Resilience over sustainability.”

Visit to Joshua Tree National Park, during the post-tour to the desert.



Does the CÌMAM conference foster a diverse, inclusive audience that reflects global socio-political realities and encourages rich dialogue and idea co-creation? (yes, neutral, no)



Are there any sustainable practices in organizing conferences of this nature that you would like to suggest or share with us for future CÌMAM events?

Sustainable Practices Suggested:

“Consolidate locations for each day by neighborhood to minimize bus travel.”

“Less traveling by bus, even if it means fewer places to visit.”

“Shorter panels (3 hours is too long); more breaks and discussions.”

“Offer virtual or hybrid participation to reduce travel emissions.”

“Offset carbon emissions from flights and evaluate cities for sustainability before selection.”

“Partner with local cooperatives and support small-scale farmers for catering.”

“Support local farmers and small-scale businesses in food sourcing.”

“Replace plastic badges with recyclable paper options.”

“Serve meals on reusable plates; avoid single-use plastics.”

“Show which waste is recyclable and provide clear instructions for delegates.”

“The importance of small gestures is equally significant as bold strategies.”

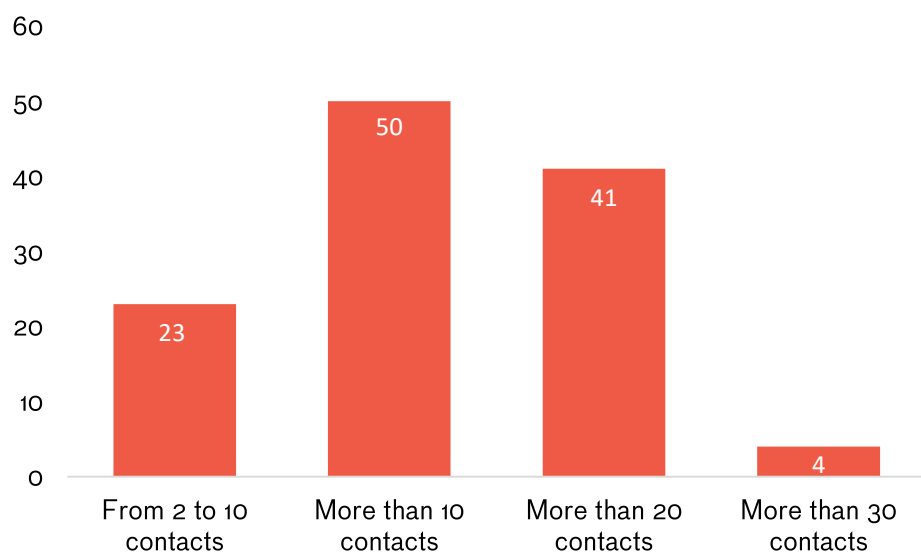
These suggestions emphasize a holistic approach to sustainability, combining logistical changes, carbon reduction, and mindful planning:

“Zero packaging, 100% recyclable products, and online discussions to sustain connections and conversations post-conference.”

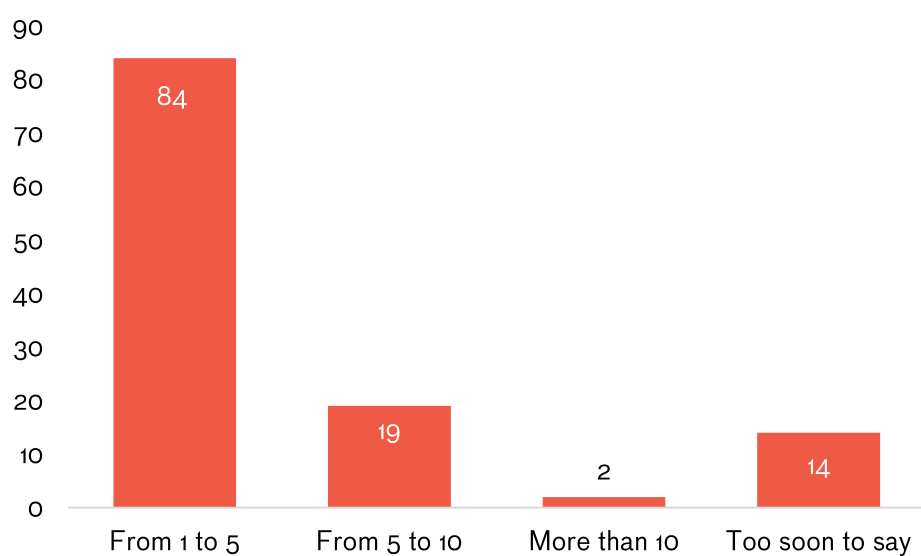




Roughly how many new contacts have you made during this conference?



How many new professional collaborations do you think might emerge after attending this conference?



## Are you likely to participate in CİMAM's next Annual Conference?

75% of the participants who filled in the evaluation form expressed their intention to participate in CİMAM's next Annual Conference, while 35% were unsure.

The main reasons expressed by participants for not attending or being unsure of attending the next CİMAM annual conference are: budget constraints, travel distance, and scheduling conflicts.



Rita Gonzalez, Clara Kim, Stephanie Rosenthal, Taloi Havini, Edgar Calel, Djon Mundine, Pablo José Ramirez, Candice Hokins, Michelle LaVallee, Kitty Scott, and Joselina Cruz.

## General Comments and Suggestions for upcoming CİMAM Annual Conferences:

Based on the general feedback from CİMAM 2024 annual conference participants, several recurring themes emerged regarding the structure, content, and inclusivity of the event. Overall, participants acknowledged the efforts and expressed gratitude to the conference hosts, the dedication of the Contents Committee who work voluntarily, and the small conference executive team consisting of 3 locals and 4 CİMAM office members:

- **Need for More Interactive Sessions and Breaks:** Many participants requested a more balanced schedule that allows for interactive sessions, networking, and breaks. Long, uninterrupted sessions were cited as exhausting, with some participants suggesting movement or breathing exercises between panels to refresh attendees.

“Please keep presentations to a minimum. Focus on actual working and discussion.”

- **Opportunities for Collaboration and Networking:** Attendees stressed the importance of creating more spaces for participants to connect, particularly through breakout sessions or regional groupings. This would allow for more dynamic interactions and networking, especially for new members or those unfamiliar with the community.

“More opportunities for networking.”

- **Inclusivity and Global South Representation:** Participants urged CIMAM to ensure more voices from the Global South are included, not just as attendees, but also as speakers and contributors.

“CIMAM contents committee needs to have a First Nations representative.”

- **Reimagining the Conference Format and Content:** Participants voiced the desire for more innovative formats, less formality, and more time for meaningful discussions. A suggestion was made to introduce a “sister museum program” for year-long exchanges and collaborations.

“Make the conference less formal to create opportunities for discursive interaction among members.”

- **Improved Logistical Planning:** Several participants expressed that the conference lacked sufficient time to visit exhibitions and participate in all activities comfortably.

“More time to actually see the exhibitions. If little time, give us less shows.”

- **Diversity of Perspectives and Topics:** There was a strong desire for more cross-disciplinary conversations, with some suggesting speakers outside of the museum world, such as business leaders or researchers from other fields.

“Speakers outside of the museum world are needed, like business people or researchers from different fields.”

*“Thank you so much for those wonderful days! It is one of the most important encounters for the cultural sector across the world.”*



# Carbon Footprint Report of the 2024 Annual Conference



GHG emissions from the CÍMAM Annual Conference in Los Angeles have been quantified using the *Gallery Climate Coalition Calculator*, considering the event dates and activities across three venues in Los Angeles from December 6th to 8th, 2024.

CÍMAM identified the primary sources of emissions associated with the event, leading to a total carbon footprint of 573.05 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e, which represents a 31.72% increase from the 2023 conference in Buenos Aires (435 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e).

While the total footprint increased, it is important to note that the number of participants also grew from 248 attendees in Buenos Aires to 280 in Los Angeles, reflecting a 12.9% increase in attendance. However, the per capita emissions also rose slightly, from 1.75 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e per participant in 2023 to 2.04 tons in 2024, emphasizing the need for continued sustainability improvements.

## Emissions Breakdown

### Flights as the Largest Contributor

- Air travel accounted for 543.789 tCO<sub>2</sub>e, stemming from 233 flights to and from Los Angeles.
- This represents over 95% of the total emissions, making it the most significant factor in the event's footprint.



While flights have the highest impact, in-person gatherings remain essential to CIMAM's mission of fostering critical discussion, knowledge exchange, and debate within the modern and contemporary art museum sector. Bringing together museum professionals in different cities each year also strengthens artistic activity, activates networks, and consolidates relationships between institutions and cultural stakeholders.

### **Accommodation as the Second Highest Impact**

- Emissions from accommodation reached **133.952 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**, highlighting the importance of selecting eco-certified hotels and promoting shared stays.

### **Materials, Surface Travel and Catering**

- Materials used for the conference generated **64.959 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**, reinforcing the need to work with recycled material that can be reused simultaneously after the event, minimize material use, and transition to digital formats wherever possible.
- Surface travel (local transportation) contributed **9.618 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**.
- Catering emissions were measured at **1.83 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**, highlighting the need to prioritize locally sourced, seasonal, and plant-based options to reduce the environmental impact.

### **Energy and Digital Activities**

- The energy consumption across all venues was **0.0421 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**, reflecting efficient energy use.
- Digital activities accounted for just **0.008 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**, reinforcing the benefits of reducing printed materials and maximizing online resources.

### **Total Carbon Footprint and Reduction Strategies**

The total footprint of 573.05 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e underscores the need for strategic emission reduction efforts while ensuring the continued success of CIMAM's mission.

- **Flight Optimization:** Aligning the conference with other cultural events to reduce the necessity of multiple trips.
- **Sustainable Accommodation:** Strengthening partnerships with certified sustainable hotels.
- **Material Reduction:** Eliminating single-use materials and ensuring that any printed materials have a second life—either coming from recycled sources or being repurposed for artistic projects.
- **Local Transportation Strategies:** Encouraging shared airport transfers.
- **Paperless Initiatives:** Expanding digital resources and communication tools to eliminate unnecessary printed materials.

### **Scope 3 Emissions and Future Commitments**

The majority of emissions fall under Scope 3, which includes transportation, accommodation, materials, and waste, with travel being the most significant contributor. (Note: CO<sub>2</sub>e refers to carbon dioxide equivalent, a unit for measuring different greenhouse gases in terms of their global warming potential.)

While the increase in emissions correlates with higher attendance, CİAMAM remains committed to refining sustainability strategies for future conferences. The goal is to ensure that professional gatherings continue to serve their purpose while actively reducing their environmental impact and keeping per capita emissions as low as possible.



Andrea Fraser, Manuel Segade, Mai Abu EIDahab, Aram Moshayedi, Yesomi Umolu, and İbrahim Mahama.

# Communication and Visibility

The CİMAM 2024 Annual Conference and Travel Grant Program achieved significant international visibility through a coherent communications strategy. Announcements and updates were disseminated via the CİMAM newsletter, website, social media accounts, and coverage in national and international media outlets.

*This multi-channel approach ensured outreach before, during, and after the conference, solidifying its presence in the global art museum community.*

As part of this visibility effort, acknowledgments for the support received from conference sponsors and CİMAM Patrons were communicated in all the aforementioned formats and communication channels and were prominently displayed on the auditorium screens during the three days of the event.

These contributions will also be recognized in the CİMAM Annual Publication (conference proceedings), distributed online via [cimam.org](http://cimam.org).

The communication strategy was built on three key channels:

- Press
- Social media and website
- Email marketing (CİMAM Newsletter and e-flux)

## Annual Conference Communication Campaign

The communication campaign for the Annual Conference began on **April 16, 2024**, with the announcement of registration dates. Early Bird registration started on April 29, followed by general registration on May 15.

CİMAM 2024 Annual Conference, Los Angeles, December 6 to 8, 2024.

The 56th CİMAM Annual Conference  
in Los Angeles to explore

***Sustainable Futures***

***How? When? For Whom?***



Co-hosted by The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), the Hammer Museum at UCLA, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), and with major support from the Getty Foundation.



The 56th CİMAM Annual Conference  
Los Angeles December 6 to 8, 2024

*Sustainable Futures:  
How? When? For Whom?*

**Early Bird  
Registration  
for CİMAM's  
Institutional Members**





## Key highlights of the conference campaign:

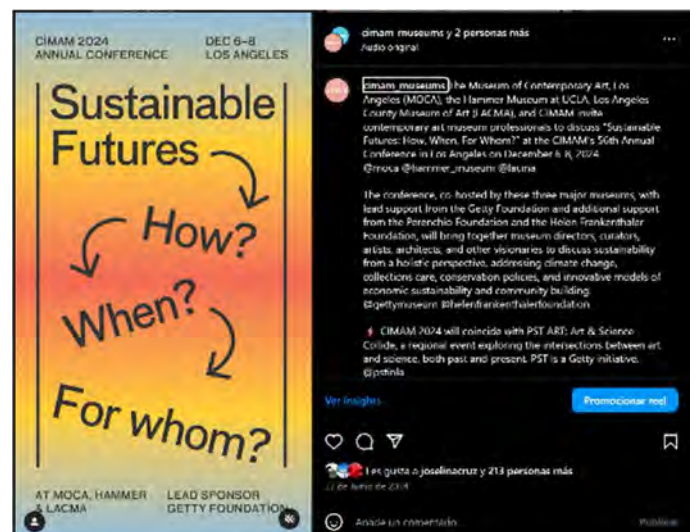
- **Press:** This year's press efforts resulted in 9 news stories dedicated exclusively to the conference content, including 2 interviews with speakers.
- **Social Media:** The conference gained significant traction on social platforms:
  - **Reach:** 201,607
  - **Engagement:** 55,728
- **Content Produced:** 47 pieces

This represents a remarkable 68% increase in visibility compared to 2023, underscoring the growing interest within the museum sector.

## Conference Press Coverage



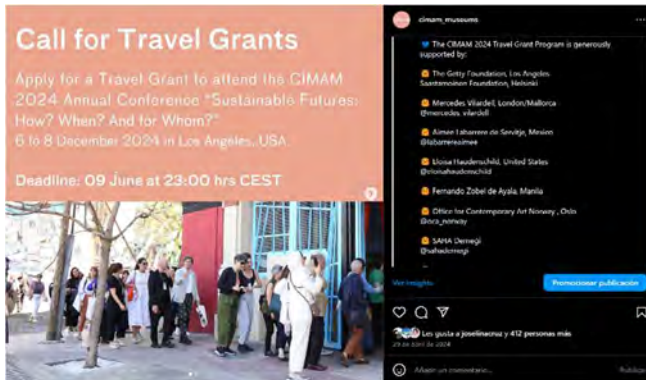
## Conference Social Media





## Travel Grant Program Communication Campaign

The Travel Grant Program campaign launched on **April 29, 2024**, with a coordinated announcement across newsletters, social media, and a targeted press campaign. Applications closed on June 9.

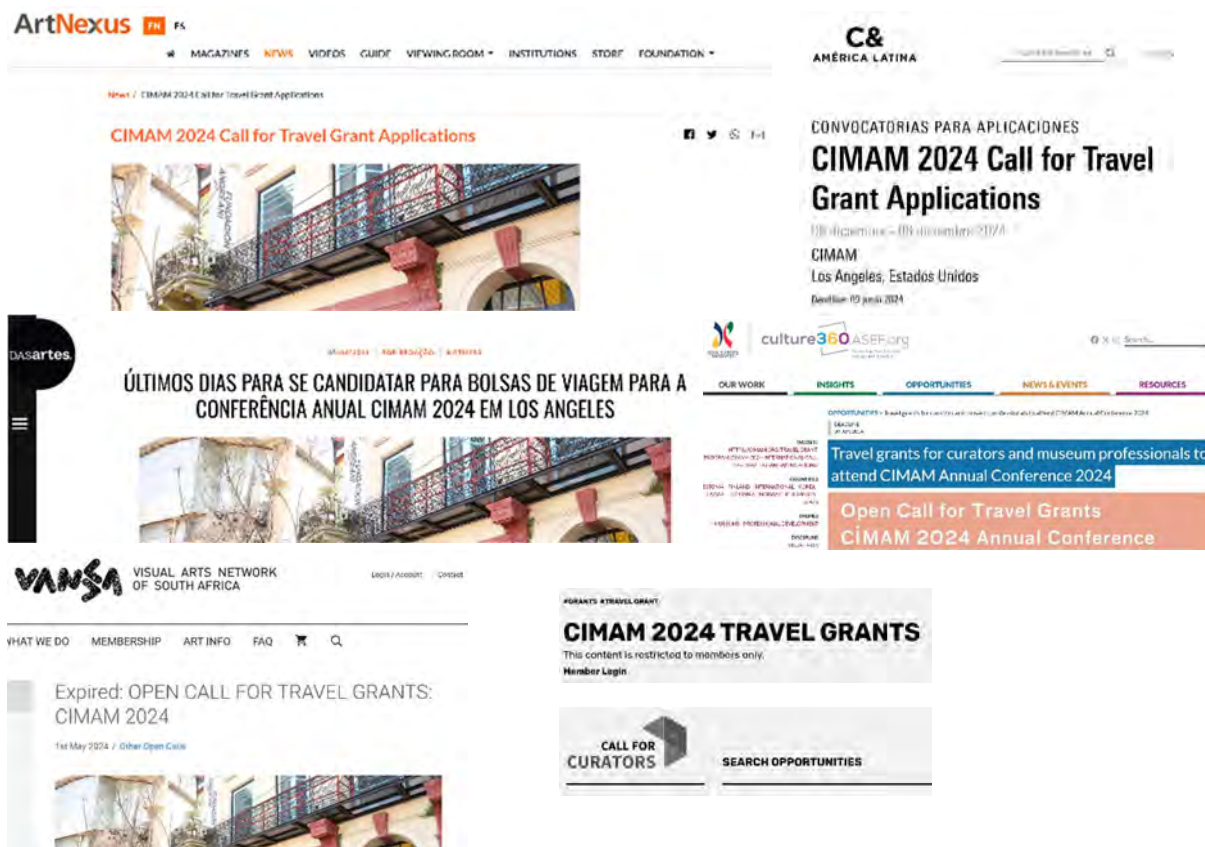


Key outcomes include:

- **Press:** 18 news items were published in art media, reaching geographically segmented audiences.
- **Social Media:** The campaign maintained visibility through ongoing posts and updates, including highlights of the program's beneficiaries, extending until December 1.
- **Reach:** 38,510
- **Engagement:** 22,902
- **Content Produced:** 18 pieces

Engagement figures slightly increased by 3%, reflecting a more interactive audience this year.

## Travel Grant Press Coverage



## Travel Grant Program Social Media

### CiMAM'S 2024 Travel Grant Beneficiaries



**2024년 CiMAM 연례 회의 참석을 위한 여행경비 보조금 신청자 모집**  
(Los Angeles, 12월6일-8일)

국제현대미술위원회(CiMAM: International Council for Museums and Collections of Modern Art)는 유네스코, 국제현대미술위원회, 그리고 2024년 CiMAM 연례 회의 개최를 지원하기 위해 여행경비 보조금 신청자를 모집합니다.

신청 기간: 11월 10일(월)부터 12월 1일(수)까지

본 프로그램은 (Dyckman Foundation)의 지원을 받아 운영되며, CiMAM 후원회에서는 유네스코, 국제현대미술위원회, 그리고 2024년 CiMAM 연례 회의 개최를 지원하기 위해 여행경비 보조금 신청자를 모집합니다.

### Call for African curators and directors of contemporary art museums

Apply for a Travel Grant to attend the CiMAM 2024 Annual Conference "Sustainable Futures: How? When? For Whom?" 6 to 8 December 2024 in Los Angeles, USA.

Deadline: 09 June at 23:00 hrs CEST

With the support of Mercedes Villaseñal, Dulcia Hauschildt, and the Getty Foundation.



### Call for curators and directors of contemporary art museums from Spain and Brazil

Apply for a Travel Grant to attend the CiMAM 2024 Annual Conference "Sustainable Futures: How? When? For Whom?" 6 to 8 December 2024 in Los Angeles, USA.

Sustainable Futures  
How? When? For Whom?

Deadline to apply: Sunday, 9 June, at 23:00 hrs, CEST



## Social Media Engagement

**Saziso Phiri** · **Leader in the visual arts curating exhibitions and programmes and...**

I had a great time at the conference, which was my first for CiMAM, and a perfect opportunity before winding down for the end of the year.

A lot was learned through the panels and keynotes about how we work sustainably, for the sake of our communities, the environment, artists, and the future of the institutions and organisations we work for and with. I am very grateful for the inclusion of content in relation to indigenous histories and care. Real conversations were had that our experiences are not the same, and that there is no one size fits all approach to sustainability, but there are so many ways in which we can have an impact for our stakeholders, from our colleagues, to artists, and audiences/communities in which we work.

Alongside the conference we had the opportunity to explore Los Angeles' institutions and organisations from the giant venues to grassroots organisations, seeing major and thought provoking exhibitions and blockbuster collections, many which were part of PST Art, as well as sights in the California desert that are innovative in their ways of connecting art with nature, and acknowledging the indigenous lands.

Many new professional relationships were also formed with peers from all corners of the globe. Many thanks to CiMAM International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art and all the organisers, staff, partners and host organisations for a wonderful and insightful experience.

I would 100% recommend my peers to attend one of these conferences. The next one is in Turin in November 2025.

**CiMAM International Committee for Museums and Coll...**  
3,798 followers

CiMAM Awards 34 Travel Grants to Attend its 56th Annual Conference in Los Angeles

This year's conference, "Sustainable Futures: How? When? For Whom?", will

**CiMAM 2024 Travel Grant Beneficiaries**

Comment as CiMAM International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art...

**Lorena Vicini** · **Executive Manager of Strategy and Transformation**

As former grantee, I can assure it is an amazing opportunity to make connections and learn a lot about museums around the world. Thank you, CiMAM International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art and congratulations to the 2024 Grantees!

**CiMAM 2024 Travel Grant Recipient**  
**Armen Yesayants**  
Director of Exhibitions  
Calefian Center for the Arts  
Yerevan, Armenia

Armen Yesayants is an art historian, art historical manager, lecturer, and curator based in Yerevan, Armenia. He participated in various local and international conferences, workshops, and programs, including Creating Contemporary Art Exhibitions at Whitechapel Gallery, London (2016), and Tate Institute Art Masters at Tate Modern, London (2017). Since 2012, Armen has been associated with the Calefian Center for the Arts (CCA), serving as the Director of Exhibitions since 2018.

We are excited to meet Armen and all the other Travel Grantees in Los Angeles!

**@cimamyes**  
@calefiancenter

**CiMAM 2024 Travel Grant Recipient**  
**Patricia Sorroche**  
Head of Exhibitions, Museu Tàpies  
Barcelona, Spain

Previously, I worked at MACBA for almost 20 years.



## Email Marketing

As part of the Annual Conference and Travel Grant Program communication campaign, **six newsletters** were sent to CIMAM's database of **4817 subscribers**, three exclusively dedicated to each program. Importantly, each newsletter also reinforced the other content, highlighting their direct connection and synergy. This strategic integration ensured that both initiatives received robust attention across all communications.



**Total Impact:** The six newsletters collectively reached 26,144 impacts.

### Campaign Details:

- **April 16:** Announcement of the title for the CIMAM 2024 Annual Conference in Los Angeles.
- **April 29:** Launch of the call for Travel Grant applications for CIMAM 2024.
- **May 15:** Announcement of speakers for CIMAM's Annual Conference 2024 in Los Angeles.
- **June 5:** Last call for Travel Grant applications and celebration of World Environment Day.
- **July 3:** Announcement of additional speakers joining the CIMAM 2024 Annual Conference.
- **September 10:** Introduction of CIMAM's 2024 Travel Grant beneficiaries.

This campaign demonstrates a well-coordinated communication effort, effectively engaging the audience and driving interest in both, the Annual Conference and the Travel Grant Program.

## Links to the Conference and Travel Grants Press Coverage

### Annual Conference

<a href="#">PAGINA 12</a>	GENERAL	09/01/2024	Argentina
<a href="#">ARTSHUB</a>	ARTS	30/01/2024	Australia
<a href="#">EL MUNDO</a>	GENERAL	08/02/2024	Spain
<a href="#">ARTE INFORMADO</a>	ARTS	19/04/2024	Spain
<a href="#">CULTURE CONNECT</a>	ARTS	19/04/2024	International
<a href="#">ARTS HUB</a>	ARTS	05/05/2024	Australia
<a href="#">ARTSHUB</a>	ARTS	14/05/2024	Australia
<a href="#">e-flux</a>	ARTS	26/06/2024	International
<a href="#">CULTURE 360</a>	ARTS	27/06/2024	Asia
<a href="#">FORUM PERMANENTE</a>	ARTS	01/07/2024	Brazil
<a href="#">ARTE INFORMADO</a>	ARTS	05/07/2024	Spain
<a href="#">ARTS MANAGEMENT</a>	ARTS	05/07/2024	UK

## Travel Grants

<a href="#">CULTURE 360</a>	ARTS	03/04/2024	Asia
<a href="#">ON THE MOVE</a>	ARTS	03/05/2024	International
<a href="#">VANSA</a>	ARTS	03/05/2024	Africa
<a href="#">EXHIBART</a>	ARTS	07/05/2024	Spain
<a href="#">CALL FOR CURATORS</a>	ARTS	08/05/2024	International
<a href="#">ARTINFOLAND</a>	ARTS	09/05/2024	International
<a href="#">CULTURE FUNDING</a>	ARTS	09/05/2024	Africa
<a href="#">CONTEMPORARY AND</a>	ARTS	10/05/2024	Latin America
<a href="#">CULTURE 360</a>	ARTS	17/05/2024	Asia
<a href="#">HÍPERMEDULA</a>	ARTS	29/05/2024	Argentina
<a href="#">ARTNEXUS</a>	ARTS	30/05/2024	Latin America
<a href="#">ARTNEXUS</a>	ARTS	30/05/2024	Latin America
<a href="#">DAS ARTES</a>	ARTS	06/06/2024	Brazil
<a href="#">TRYBE AFRICA</a>	ARTS	06/06/2024	Africa
<a href="#">MENTORAS CREATIVAS</a>	ARTS	06/06/2024	Latin America



Visit to Sunnylands Center & Gardens, Palm Springs.



# CiMAM TV and Conference Proceedings



Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Suhanya Raffel, and Michael Govan.

After each CiMAM Annual Conference, the proceedings are edited and published online to make the contents – both as key contributions, and as reference material for the research and production of contemporary art knowledge – available to anyone through the CiMAM website.

The Annual Publication is a sustainable project that takes into consideration the importance of documenting and making knowledge accessible in the long term to modern and contemporary art professionals worldwide.

As a result, the publication is a compendium that puts together the knowledge and the discussions that have been developed throughout the CiMAM Annual Conference arising from the annual theme.

Moreover, being accessible online, makes it easier and faster to distribute and

share with anyone interested in contributing positively to interconnecting professionals worldwide with the latest contemporary art museums' research.

*Since 2005, the CiMAM conference proceedings have been available at [cimam.org](http://cimam.org) to everyone interested, and since 2012, the videos of the conference sessions are posted at CiMAM TV, our Vimeo channel where everyone interested can watch the presentations for free.*

The video-recorded presentations of the invited speakers to the CiMAM 2024 Annual Conference are available on the CiMAM TV channel. On our Vimeo channel, everyone interested can watch the presentations for free.

CiMAM's website is an important repository of knowledge and resources. Both the Annual Publication and the video recordings are archived on the CiMAM website without an expiration date.

→ Browse CiMAM's conference contents, [watch the videos](#), and read the [conference proceedings](#).

# Acknowledgments



Members of the CIMAM 2023-25 Board present in Los Angeles.

As a largely volunteer-driven organization, our achievements would not be possible without the generous contribution of individuals and organizations who support CIMAM year after year. Their support is essential to the ongoing success of CIMAM.

*CIMAM would like to express its heartfelt gratitude to its Major Patrons, Founding Patrons, Patrons, and Supporters for their loyalty, their belief in CIMAM, and their continued support.*

CIMAM creates long-term partnerships with our patrons based on trust, mutual knowledge, and congruence between CIMAM's values and those of our patrons.

CiMAM is proud of counting on the support of such a remarkable group of patrons. Their commitment inspires us and sustains our collective efforts to make the modern and contemporary art museum sector vibrant, resilient, and forward-looking. We are deeply grateful to all of you for making CiMAM's existence possible!

#### Benefactor

- Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani

#### Major Patrons

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- Mimi Brown, Hong Kong
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- Bozar Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels, Belgium
- Zita Cobb, Joe Batt's Arm, Fogo Islands, Canada
- Bridget Grant Pirrie, Sydney, Australia
- Colección FEMSA, Nuevo León, Mexico

### CiMAM 2024 Travel Grant Funders

- The Getty Foundation, Los Angeles
- Saastamoinen Foundation, Helsinki
- Mercedes Vilardell, London/Mallorca
- Aimée Labarrere de Servitje, Mexico City
- Eloisa Haudenschild, United States
- Fernando Zobel de Ayala, Manila
- OCA – Office for Contemporary Art Norway, Oslo
- SAHA, İstanbul
- Consulate General of Brazil, Los Angeles
- Byucksan Cultural Foundation, Seoul

### CiMAM 2024 Rapid Response Webinars

- The Getty Foundation, Los Angeles

### CiMAM e-card in-kind provider

- MembershipAnywhere, Washington

The 15 members of the Board of CiMAM 2023-25 work on a volunteer basis throughout the triennial. They oversee the everyday operations and projects of CiMAM.

- Suhanya Raffel, President of CiMAM, Director of M+ (Hong Kong).
- Bart de Baere, Secretary General of CiMAM, General and Artistic Director M HKA—Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen (Antwerpen).
- Zeina Arida, Director, Mathaf (Arab Museum of Modern Art), Doha, Qatar.
- Suzanne Cotter, Director, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney, Australia.
- Joselina Cruz, Director/Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD) Manila, Philippines.
- Amanda de la Garza, Artistic Deputy Director, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (MNCARS), Madrid.
- Leevi Haapala, Dean, Academy of Fine Arts, University of Arts, Helsinki, Finland.
- Clara Kim, Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, USA.
- Malgorzata Ludwisiak, Artistic Director, The Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Poland.
- Chus Martinez, Director, Art Gender Nature Institute, Basel, Switzerland.
- Victoria Noorthoorn, Director, Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- Agustín Pérez Rubio, Independent Curator, Madrid, Spain.
- Kamini Sawhney, Independent Curator, Bangalore, India.
- Kitty Scott, Strategic Director, Fogo Island Arts / Shorefast, Toronto, Canada.
- Yu Jin Seng, Director (Curatorial, Research & Exhibitions), National Gallery Singapore, Singapore.



CiMAM's Executive Team based in Barcelona, Spain.

- Inés Jover, Director, CiMAM Executive Office.
- Isabel Sozzi, CiMAM Administration and Production.
- Mireia Branera, CiMAM Administration and Production.
- Mireia Azuara, Head of Communication and Sustainability.

## 56th CiMAM Annual Conference

### *Sustainable Futures: How? When? For Whom?*

6–8 December 2024

MOCA, Hammer, LACMA

Co-organized by

The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA)  
CiMAM

Co-hosting Institutions

The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA)  
Hammer Museum at UCLA  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA)

Lead Sponsor

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Generous support

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Additional Support

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Hosting Support

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Jarl Mohn, Founder of MAC3

Additional support by

Spanish Ministry of Culture

## Los Angeles CÌMAM 2024 Annual Conference Team

### Direction

- Clara Kim, Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

### Production

- Ines Jover, Director, CÌMAM Executive Office, Barcelona, Spain
- Mireia Branera, Production, CÌMAM Executive Office, Barcelona, Spain.
- Isabel Sozzi, Production, CÌMAM Executive Office, Barcelona, Spain.
- Mireia Azuara, Communication and Sustainability, CÌMAM Executive Office, Barcelona, Spain.
- Nicola Lee, Conference Production Manager, CÌMAM 2024 Annual Conference, Los Angeles, USA.
- Stacy Perez, Curatorial Administrator, Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles (MOCA), Los Angeles, USA.

### CÌMAM's Conference Identity

- Rogier Delfos Studio, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

### The CÌMAM 2024 Content Steering Committee

- Clara Kim, (Chair of the Content Committee), Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.
- Suzanne Cotter, Director, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney.
- Joselina Cruz, Director/Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD) Manila.
- Amanda de la Garza, Artistic Deputy Director, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (MNCARS), Madrid.
- Rita Gonzalez, Terri and Michael Smooke Curator and Department Head Contemporary Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles.
- Aram Moshayedi, Interim Chief Curator, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.
- Kitty Scott, Strategic Director, Fogo Island Arts / Shorefast, Toronto.

### Off Site Visits in Los Angeles

- PST ART: Art and Science Collide
- The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA
- HAMMER Museum at UCLA
- The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA)
- Getty Center
- REDCAT
- The Broad
- The Brick
- Institute of Contemporary Art
- Vincent Price Art Museum (VPAM)
- The Eames House
- The MAK Center for Art and Architecture at the Schindler House
- Hollyhock House & Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery

- Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA)
- Art + Practice
- David Horvitz' 7th Ave Garden
- Crenshaw Dairy Mart Art Center
- California African American Museum (CAAM)
- Autry Museum of the American West
- Jet Propulsion Laboratory and Brand Library & Art Center
- Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA)
- El Pueblo Historical Monument

List of Artists' Studios visited on Monday 9 December 2024

- Rodney McMillian
- Charles Gaines
- Joey Terrill
- Elliott Hundley
- Paul McCarthy
- Andrea Bowers
- Tala Madani
- Nathaniel Mellors
- Kelly Akashi
- Christina Quarles
- Todd Gray
- Kyungmi Shin
- Rosha Yaghmai
- Analia Saban
- Lita Albuquerque
- Judith F. Baca
- Alison Saar

# Post-Conference Tour to the Desert

## 9-10 December 2024

### Co-organized by

Clara Kim

Jenny Gil

CiMAM

### Post-Conference Tour Hosts

- Desert X
- Sunnylands Center & Gardens
- Palm Springs Art Museum
- High Desert Test Sites
- Members of the Tamarisk Country Club: Susan and Rod Lubeznik, Mihail Lari and Scott Murray, Sally and Jon Kovler, Lori and Howie Friend, Jay Hart and David Mazer, Susan and Lonnie Edelmet, Craig Hartzman and James John, Jeff Joyce and Bill Rogers, Donna and Jim Pohlard, Steve and Janet Anixter, Marilyn Loesberg, Rob Levine and Larry Ginsberg, Karen Fox, Jerry Spellman and Chet Robachinski, Bob and Jane Clark.

### Visits during the post-conference tour to the desert

- Sunnylands Center & Gardens
- Palm Springs Art Museum
- Albert Frey's Aluminaire House
- Joshua Tree National Park
- High Desert Test Sites
- A-Z West by Andrea Zittel
- Noah Purifoy Desert Art Museum
- Institute of Mentalphysics
- Boxoprojects



# CiMAM – International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art

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CiMAM's graphic identity & CiMAM 2024  
Conference graphic design by Studio Rogier Delfos.