

MARIE-ANN YEMSI **APPOINTED CURATOR** **FOR MOMENTA 2025**

Tiohtià:ke / Mooniyang / Montreal, Thursday April 4, 2024 – MOMENTA Biennale de l'image is pleased to announce the appointment of Marie-Ann Yemsi as curator for its 19th edition, titled *In Praise of the Missing Image*, which will take place in the fall of 2025. Yemsi proposes to explore the potentialities of missing images to renew narratives relating to time, history, and the world. The exhibitions, public programs, and publication will all be centred around this theme.



In Praise of the Missing Image

By Marie-Ann Yemsi

In a world saturated with images, some, strangely, are lacking. This edition of MOMENTA seeks to situate these lacunae in a historical perspective. Ever since the invention of photography and film, and their proliferation during the colonial expansion of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an ideological link was formed between these media and the construction of dominant narratives. This connection has been particularly evident in the production of figures of alterity – geographic, cultural, racial, economic – and in certain resulting historical blind spots. Narratives that fell outside this frame were swept away, and these stories have been either truncated or simply disappeared. With a focus on what is beyond our view – the silences and breaches in individual and collective memory – *In Praise of the Missing Image* will explore both contemporary challenges in relation to the image and the current consequences of the complex dynamics involved in constructing narratives. Which stories are told, how, and by whom?

Photo: Daniel Nicolaevsky Maria

Can the subaltern speak? wondered the Indian philosopher Gayatri Spivak in her celebrated essay. With this question at the core of its reflections, the Biennale aims to open up multiple perspectives for experimentation and speculation on the nature, uses, and production of missing images. Following traces and echoes from the thinking of Édouard Glissant, it deploys an archipelago of forms and ideas, emanating from a constellation of subjects, viewpoints, and artistic positions. A significant engagement with concepts of the archive, the document, traces of recollection, and body memory will underline their potential to build a repertoire of languages from which artists may draw to probe the univocity of dominant narratives. This reordering of collective and individual memories in contemporary narratives is aimed at re-establishing the voice of the Other and the memory of different knowledges, exploring their imaginaries, and revealing issues at stake in the enduring mechanisms of exclusion and marginalization. How to speak about ourselves on our own terms, be the subject of our own story within societies in which certain communities have been stripped of their lands, languages, cultures, or humanity? Linking collective struggle to the formation of the self, the artists will propose critical reflections often inspired by concepts such as hybridization, infiltration, fluidity, and fugitivity. They will create emancipatory images for new stories of the living, and bring to light personal narratives and collective histories that have been invisibilized, minoritized, marginalized, or erased.

Conceived as a gathering that will draw its strength from the active co-presence of many, the 2025 edition will open spaces for dialogue, hospitality, and the expression of struggles and solidarities wherein decolonial and feminist pedagogies and ancestral knowledge intersect. The narratives and gestures employed by these artists will evoke the vital necessity of bringing together diverse voices and stories, and will underline the transformative and healing experience of choosing consonant words and forms to speak of oneself. Through the unruly material of art, *In Praise of the Missing Image* invites us to imagine collectively the means, political and poetic, by which we may inhabit the impasses of the present and sketch out ways toward the future.

About the Curator

Marie-Ann Yemsi is an independent exhibition curator and contemporary art consultant based in Paris, France. With a degree in political science, Yemsi pays particular attention to theoretical, critical, and aesthetic productions in the Global South and develops multidisciplinary art programs at the intersection of the visual arts, performance, dance, music, and writing. Her projects focus on collaborative art practices and experimental forms, highlighting themes such as memory, history, gender, and identity in relation to contemporary political, social, and ecological issues. She has organized numerous international exhibitions including, most recently, the group exhibition *Ubuntu, a Lucid Dream*, at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, and Grada Kilomba's *A World of Illusions*, at the Norval Foundation in Cape Town, South Africa.

MOMENTA 2025 will encourage conversations, encounters, and exchanges initiated by a selection of artists from all over the world, with particular focus on artists from Quebec and Canada. Produced in collaboration with numerous exhibition partners, the exhibitions will present the work of more than twenty artists in total. The exhibitions will be accompanied by a publication and an extended program of activities for the public.

A call for submissions from Canadian artists will run from April 5 to May 14, 2024. All the details can be found at www.momentabiennale.com.

About MOMENTA

MOMENTA Biennale de l'image is a flagship Montreal event devoted to contemporary art. For 35 years, MOMENTA has been inviting artists and audiences from the world over to gather in the city's museums, galleries, and artist-run centres. Its activities include exhibitions, public events, and educational workshops that introduce participants to artists, both local and international, whose works pique curiosity and stimulate reflection.

– 30 –

Press relations

Guillaume Saur

guillaume.saur@momentabiennale.com

