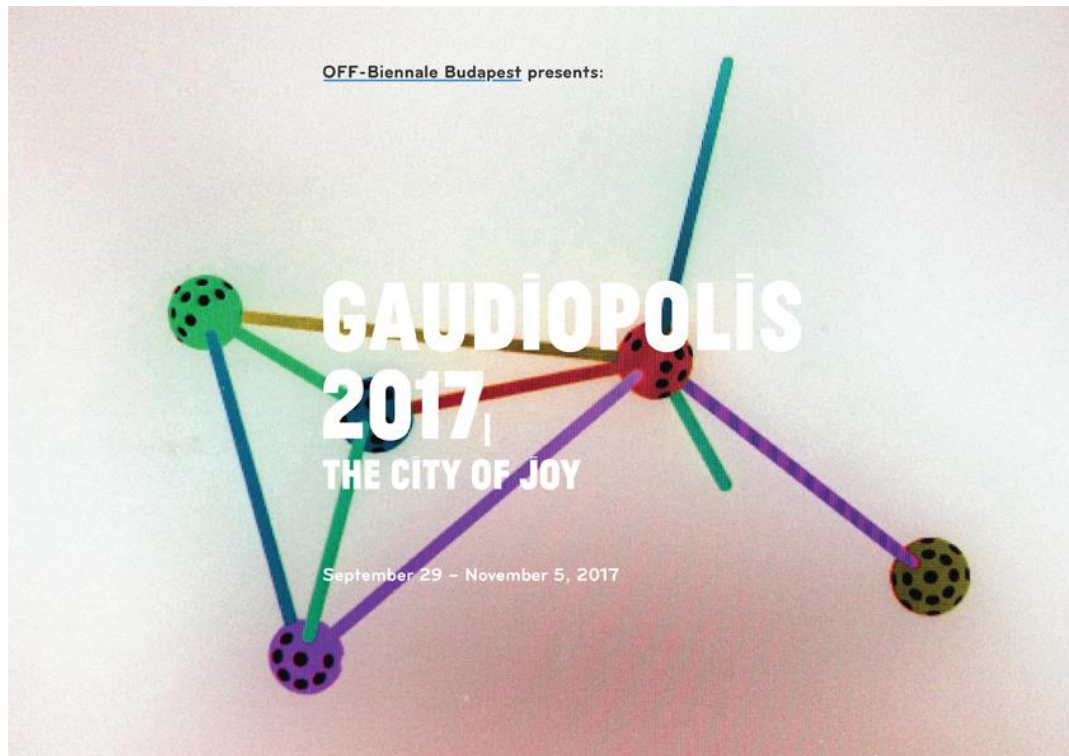


OFF-Biennale Budapest presents: Gaudiopolis 2017 – The City of Joy

September 29 – November 5, 2017

Budapest, Dunaújváros, Eger, Nagykanizsa, and Pécs, Hungary

OFF-Biennale Budapest, the largest civil, independent arts initiative in Hungary, is proud to present its second edition entitled *Gaudiopolis 2017*, which will open on September 29, 2017 with the participation of more than 120 Hungarian and international artists.



Unique among contemporary art biennials, **OFF-Biennale Budapest** is a grassroots endeavor that is based on the self-organization and a voluntary collaboration of artists, curators, other cultural and civil organizations, galleries, and students, among others. It aims to rebuild the base for a sustainable art scene in Hungary. OFF-Biennale's goal is to take an active part in the social discourse on public issues and to enhance the culture of democracy by the means of contemporary art.

Today, the allocation of state funding in Hungary is not transparent: professional considerations are frequently ignored and, in many cases, it serves to solidify political agendas. The lack of alternative funding sources has put contemporary art in Hungary in a very vulnerable position. OFF-Biennale strives to reduce the scene's dependence on the state in order to allow for critical art to be produced and seen, hence, it does not apply for Hungarian state funding, and stays away from state-run art institutions. It supports new artistic productions which otherwise would not be able to materialize in Hungary today.

Settling in private apartments, vacant shops, industrial buildings, and public places, it invites the public to explore the city. OFF-Biennale was not conceived by following international biennale patterns; it has been tailored to—and will be re-invented each time to best serve—its local independent scene.

The first edition OFF-Biennale Budapest was launched in 2015 with the aim of re-establishing an independent Hungarian art scene. With a view to creating a common platform for its partakers, the biennale was realized on a grassroots and collaborative basis, without any support from, and outside the arts institutions of, the Hungarian government. The first edition of OFF-Biennale drew momentum from a joint struggle for the continuance of critical-minded and independent art and thinking in a social environment that witnessed increasingly antidemocratic, segregationist, xenophobic, and nepotistic tendencies.

During the five weeks of its presentation in spring 2015, the first edition of OFF-Biennale Budapest hosted nearly 200 programs, featuring more than 350 artists from 22 countries in more than 100 venues with more than 35 000 visits.

In late 2016, the curatorial team of the biennale won one of the most prestigious arts and culture awards in Central and Eastern Europe: a grant from the Igor Zabel Award for Culture and Theory, founded by ERSTE Stiftung Vienna.

In 2017, the second edition of OFF-Biennale outlined the thematic framework of *Gaudiopolis – The City of Joy*, that addresses crucial and intriguing issues having their bearing on both the present and the future.

Gaudiopolis (1945–1950), meaning ‘City of Joy’, was the name of a Children’s Republic founded in the aftermath of World War II in Budapest by Lutheran pastor Gábor Sztehlo. His orphanage provided shelter and home for hundreds of children regardless of their religion, social background, or nationality, who lost their parents and their homes to the war. Children dwelling in the ‘City of Joy’ formed their own government, elected their representatives, and adopted laws that applied to everybody (including teachers). Gaudiopolis achieved a certain level of self-sustainability through the residents’ common work. Although it did receive some funds from the state, it functioned independently until its 1950 nationalization.

This mini-republic of trust, generosity, responsibility, and care serves as inspiration to both the projects and the working method of OFF-Biennale. Even though war tragedies today reach Europe primarily through the stories of refugees or media reports, our micro- and macro-environment are infused with social and political crisis once again; that of liberal democracy, which is also manifest on the level of education. Thus, OFF-Biennale endeavors to reassess the implications of personal commitment, education, community development, and the sustainability of democracy, as well as rethink, in this context, the potential role of children, playfulness, joy—and art.

OFF-Biennale Budapest in 2017 will present nearly 40 projects in Budapest and other cities in Hungary. The programs will be in art galleries as well in studios, vacant store premises, private apartments, schools, and public spaces, and will occupy the city of Budapest in a variety of ways.

Projects (selection)

Endre Tót—a cult figure of the Hungarian neo-avant-garde—with a group of protesters will march in the streets of Budapest to showcase the joy of demonstration itself, an act he has been practicing since the seventies, when he left Hungary for Germany. Today everyone has the right to protest when in distress, but hardly anyone takes to the streets out of sheer joy. Although it might be advisable to demonstrate in times fraught with difficulties, on the brink of a crisis, we can still rejoice, also as a community. An act of joy and its public demonstration is a snub par excellence to an oppressive political system.



Endre Tót: Gladness Demonstration, Amsterdam, 1979. Courtesy of the artist and acb Gallery, Budapest

The street play *The Curfew*—a project by **Gergely László (Tehnica Schweiz)** and **Katarina Šević**—is also an alternative form of public demonstration. The members of the group will stop at busy public squares to perform their play as a speaking choir about the transfiguration of a group of security guards. They vow to give back the voice to the people from whom they previously took it away. **Manuel Pelmuș**'s project *Sketches of a Monument* is a series of re-enactments and live-transformations of public sculptures and monuments in Budapest. Together with the teenage participants of his workshop, they choose representations of historically well-embedded values or those propagated by the current political regime. They reinterpret and produce anew seemingly consensual ideas concerning social norms, values, and historically important moments while re-collectivizing concepts of the commons. **Szabolcs KissPál**'s exhibition entitled *From Fake Mountains to Faith (Hungarian Trilogy)* also examines the nature of political ideologies. His installation works as a case study, which aims to reveal the historical antecedents to which the current Hungarian state traces back its concept of the nation, and how it enforces this in society. The artists collective **Slavs and Tatars** presents an installation in the form of a pickle-juice bar, referring to the centuries-old kitchen tradition of pickling to ferment or turn sour the romantic

conception of fatherland and power. Pieces of the project introduce paternalist, nationalist visions from these countries with a sour, austere sense of humor, and advertise pickle juice, a well-known folk remedy as the sour, sobering cure for the delirium of power. The group exhibition *Forecasting a Broken Past* examines the possibilities of building better communities for the future. Instead of forming new terms of political vocabularies, the exhibition aims to reclaim and push forward certain attitudes from our history. The exhibition *Taking Time* focuses on the process of developing democratic structures by presenting three different artistic positions (**Giulia Bruno, Noline van Harskamp, Zolt Vászrhelyi & Kati Simon**), approaching three social experiments; remarkable democratic attempts of communication, education and self-government emerged in the last century. **Marvin Gaye Chetwynd's** performance produced for OFF-Biennale is an adaptation of Géza Radványi's film *Somewhere in Europe*. The film from 1948 is based on the story of Gaudiopolis, it unravels through the lives of a gang of orphaned children, from their brutal situation to finding a sense of freedom, empowerment, and belonging after World War II. Chetwynd's performance with the participation of children and young adults from Budapest transforms the narrative of the film into a communal experience.



Marvin Gaye Chetwynd: Uptight upright upside down, CCA, Glasgow, 2016. Photo courtesy of the artist and Julia Bauer

The *Air Factory* by **Pneuma Szöv.** is a cooperative playground-performance that thematizes public manipulation and social "mind-altering" mechanics, with the aim of transforming fears into super powers and refreshing the air of Budapest. The group exhibition *People Players* (exhibition artists: **Zbyněk Baladrán, Johanna Billing, Marvin Gaye Chetwynd, Ex-Artists' Collective, Danièle Huillet, Jean-Marie Straub, Ádám Kokesch, Eva Koťátková, Joanna Piotrowska**) revolves around the joy a game conveys, playing, and the soberness of discovery. The works at the exhibition also address the risks of idealizing games; transposing the heavy burdens of innocence on children, or using games in covering up the trap of an imprisonment in parallel worlds.

Participants

Expanding the methodology of many large-scale events, OFF-Biennale's curatorial team curates only a part of the program: besides commissioning and presenting projects, it also offers the possibility to stakeholders of the local scene to apply with projects through an open call process. The resulting program, presenting about 120 artists, is thus the common curatorial achievement of about 40 individuals and groups, and the biennale works as an umbrella that amplifies the voices of individual projects.

Noor Abed, Noor Abu Arafah, Akademia Ruchu, Ádám Albert, Can Altay, Gábor Altorjay, Architecture Uncomfortable Workshop, Artmagazin, Orsolya Bajusz, Zbyněk Baladrán, Levente Bálványos, Taysir Batniji, Péter Bencze, Barna Benedek, Kata Benedek, Anca Benera & Arnold Estefan, Márton Bertók, Johanna Billing, The Board of the School of Free Printing, Andrea Bódis, Virág Bogyó, Lőrinc Borsos, Márta Branczik, Giulia Bruno, Imre Bukta, Tamás Buvári – Kinga Turós-Máté, Marvin Gaye Chetwynd, Anetta Mona Chişa & Lucia Tkáčová, András Cséfalvay, Dávid Demeter, Tamás Don, Róza El-Hassan, Sári Ember, Jumana Emil Abboud, Ágnes Eperjesi, Miklós Erhardt, Katalin Éri, Gábor Erlich, Katalin Erdődi, Ex-Artists' Collective (Tamás Kaszás, Anikó Loránt), Gábor Fábrián, Adrienn Fejes, Valér Fekete, Stano Filko & Alex Mlynárčik, finger group, Andreas Fogarasi, FreeDoc / Gabriella Csozó, Márk Fridvalszki, Flóra Gadó, Tibor Gáyor, Erna Gergelyi, Kitti Gosztola & Bence Pálinkás & Fanni Hegedűs, Tomislav Gotovac, Ferenc Gróf, Ábris Gryllus – János Brückner – Márton Emil Tóth – Zsófia Tamara Vadas, Dávid Gutema, Katalin Haász, István Haász, Inas Halabi, István Halmi-Horváth, István Harasztý, Shuruq Harb, Nicoline van Harskamp, Mona Hatoum, Judit Hidas, Lili Hitka – Zsófia Kormos – Lia Lőrinczy – Dániel Helyes – Dénes Peták – Barnabás Zemlényi, Ane Hjort Guttu, Csilla Hódi, Andy Holden, Balázs Byron Horváth-Kertész, Kristóf Kovács and the TELEP team, Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub, Adelita Husni-Bey, Binelde Hyrcan, Richard Ibghy & Marilou Lemmens, Sanja Iveković, Sven Johne, Nikita Kadan, David Karas, Ildikó Kele, Antal Kelle, Botond Keresztesi, Lara Khaldi, Adám Kiss-Balbinat, Szabolcs KissPál, Ádám Kokesch, Július Koller, Csenge Kolozsvári, Eva Koťátková, Jiří Kovanda, Kata Krasznahorkai, Krisztián Kristóf, KwieKulik, László (Lafu) Ladány and Syporca Whandal, Antal Lakner, László Lakner, Little Warsaw, Gergely László – Katarina Šević, Eszter Lázár, Armin Linke, Péter Lowas, Virág Lődi, Virág Major, Mihály Maljusin, Alexander Manuiloff, Ferenc Margl, Andor Maruzsenszki, Dóra Maurer, András Mengyán, Szilárd Miklós, Dávid Mikulán, Csaba Molnár, Gyula Muskovics and Andrea Soós, Annamária Nagy, Edina Nagy, Csilla Nagy, Zsófi Nagy, Judit Nem's, Csaba Nemes, Lilla Neményi, Jüri Okas, Márton Pacsika, Daniela Patti – Levente Polyák, Neša Paripović, Ewa Partum, Manuel Pelmuş, Gergő Pintér, Joanna Piotrowska, Pneuma Szöv., Áron Porteleki, Krisztián Puskár, Khalil Rabah, Bea Piros Rostás, Vanda Sárai, Péter Sarkadi, János Saxon-Szász, Andi Schmied, Kati Simon & Zsolt Vásárhelyi, Eszter Sipos and Csaba Árpád Horváth, Slavs and Tatars, Borbála Soós, Mladen Stilinović, Lana Stojićević, Students of the course How to Make a Work of Art, Subversive Film, János Sugár, Márton Szarvas, Lilla Szász, Viktor Szeri, Kamilla Szíj, Kornél Szilágyi, Hajnal Szolga, Beatrix Szörényi, Péter Szörényi, Erika Szurcsik, Gustave Tiger, TPSRPRT, tranzit. hu, Dominika Trapp, Olja Triaška Stefanović, Hajnalka Tulis, Endre Tót, Balázs Máté Tóth, Zsuzsanna Tóth, Csaba Vándor, Emese Váradi, András Wolsky, Piotr Wysocki – Dominik Jałowiński

Team

Leader of OFF-Biennale: Hajnalka Somogyi

Curators: Nikolett Erőss, Róna Kopeczky, Livia Páldi (2016), Hajnalka Somogyi, Eszter Szakács, Borbála Szalai, Katalin Székely

Art mediation: Nóra Böhrer

PR and Communication: Gabriella Rothman, Gergely Nagy

International communication: Eszter Szakács, Borbála Szalai

Archive: Zoltán Dragon

Financing and Administration: András Bognár

For the detailed program please visit <http://www.offbiennale.hu>

For further information please contact Eszter Szakács and Borbála Szalai at program@offbiennale.hu

Main supporters

The main cooperation partner of this year's OFF-Biennale is GfZK – Museum of Contemporary Art Leipzig. The cooperation project is funded by the German Federal Cultural Foundation.

