

Kassel, December 18, 2024

Press Release: Naomi Beckwith appointed as Artistic Direction of documenta 16

The Artistic Direction of the forthcoming documenta 16 has been decided: "Naomi Beckwith was selected by the international Finding Committee and appointed by the Supervisory Board." This was announced by the Managing Director of documenta und Museum Fridericianum gGmbH, Andreas Hoffmann, at a press conference held in Kassel today, Wednesday. documenta 16 takes place in Kassel from June 12 to September 19, 2027.

Naomi Beckwith is Deputy Director and Jennifer & David Stockman Chief Curator at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation in New York where she oversees collections, exhibitions, publications, curatorial programs, and archives and provides strategic direction within the international network of affiliate museums. Previously, she has held curatorial positions at the MCA Chicago and the Studio Museum in Harlem. A graduate of the Courtauld Institute of Art, Beckwith has organized and co-organized acclaimed exhibitions and monographic projects such as the award-winning *Howardena Pindell: What Remains to Be Seen* (2018, MCA Chicago, US); *The Freedom Principle: Experiments in Art and Music, 1965 to Now* (2015, MCA Chicago, US); and was a member of the curatorial team realizing *Grief and Grievance: Art and Mourning in America*, an exhibition conceived by the late curator Okwui Enwezor (2021, The New Museum, New York). Her exhibitions, lectures, and publications have centered on the impact and resonance of Black culture on multidisciplinary practices within global contemporary art. A scholar and art historian, Beckwith has been a visiting professor at Northwestern University and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (both Chicago, US). She has received fellowships at the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program (New York) and the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia (US). Beckwith was awarded the 2024 David C. Driskell Prize in African American Art and Art History by the High Museum of Art in Atlanta (US). She is also currently leading the curatorial team at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, on their Fall 2025 exhibitions, known as the "American Season".

On the occasion of her appointment, Naomi Beckwith says: "It is the honor of a lifetime to be selected as Artistic Director for documenta 16. documenta is an institution that belongs to the entire world, as much as it belongs to Kassel, as well as an institution that is in perpetual dialogue with history as much as it is a barometer of art and culture in the immediate present. I am humbled by the breadth of this responsibility and equally excited to share my research and ideas with this storied and generous institution: one that affords space and time for focus, deep study, exploration, experimentation, and awakenings for artists, curators, and audiences alike."

On behalf of the six-member Finding Committee, Yilmaz Dziewior, Director of Museum Ludwig in Cologne, and Mami Kataoka, Director of the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, explained the choice today as follows: "It was not easy to reach a decision. Our discussions reflected the complexity and entanglement of the current situation of documenta. We are convinced by Naomi Beckwith's expertise and international curatorial experience. Her proposal for documenta 16 addresses artistic practices that give us tools to think possible futures together."

"Over the past few months, we have worked purposefully on reorienting the documenta organization and laid many good foundations. The fact that today we can present Naomi Beckwith as the new Artistic Direction for the forthcoming documenta 16 exhibition in Kassel in 2027 marks the start of a new future for documenta," said Lord Mayor Sven Schoeller, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of documenta und Museum Fridericianum gGmbH. "I warmly welcome Naomi Beckwith to the documenta city of Kassel and, just like the entire art and cultural sphere, I look forward with excitement and anticipation to her artistic concept. I would like to thank the high-caliber group of candidates and all those involved in the selection process. They have done documenta a great service in a difficult situation."

Timon Gremmels, Hessian Minister of State for Science and Research, Arts and Culture, emphasizes: "Today marks the successful conclusion of the realignment of documenta. We were able to attract a high-caliber Finding Committee, which has chosen an excellent Artistic Direction. Openness, a sense of community, and the unifying power of art already characterized the work of the Finding Committee and likewise form the basis of Naomi Beckwith's practice. With the implemented reform of documenta, the city and state have laid a good foundation for the future of the world art show. We have struck a good balance between freedom of art and discourse and protection against anti-Semitism and discrimination. I look forward to documenta 16 in summer 2027 and to many art-loving visitors in my home city of Kassel."

Andreas Hoffmann would like to thank all members of the international Finding Committee for their great commitment: "With their dedication, the Finding Committee has demonstrated a great sense of responsibility for contemporary art and documenta at this very special time. The intense exchange between the members has led to a forward-looking choice for the Artistic Direction. This has laid the foundation for us to move forward decisively and with anticipation towards documenta 16 and for Kassel to once again host the art world and its international audience in 2027."

The Finding Committee of documenta 16 is made up of the following members:
Yilmaz Dziewior, Director of Museum Ludwig in Cologne
Sergio Edelsztein, independent curator, Berlin and Tel Aviv
N'Goné Fall, independent curator and expert on cultural policy, Paris/Dakar

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Gridthiya Gawewong, Artistic Director of the Jim Thompson Art Center, Bangkok
Mami Kataoka, Director of the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo
Yasmil Raymond, independent curator, Frankfurt am Main

Please download press material here:
https://www.documenta.de/files/Presskit_2024-12-18.zip
You can follow the press conference here:
<https://www.youtube.com/live/jjJhHx22Lti>

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