



Spring and Fall Semester 2022

## Contemporary Art Biennials: Symposium in Zurich and Study Trip to Venice

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View of the Arsenale, 58th Venice Art Biennale, 2019, with works by Otobong Nkanga and Zanele Muholi

As a field-configuring event, proliferating in cities around the world from Kampala to Kobe, the art biennial breeds anticipation, speculation and disdain. At times, biennials champion socio-political issues like Indigenous rights, climate change, economic and political crises, and increasingly engage with the notion of cultural representation. But the attempt to inspire critical debate is coupled with the struggle to reconcile the political aims of these events with the political economy of elite circuits of curators, artists, and critics. The inflation of capital involved in these markets is also coupled with exploitative practices employing precarious labor, and often form convenient alliances with tourism and real estate industries. This module covers these tensions around the art biennial over two semesters. In spring 2022, students will prepare and participate in a two-days symposium with international experts who will discuss the fraught significations of contemporary biennials. In fall 2022, we will take up these debates and explore them further in a field trip to the Venice Biennale.



### **Dates**

This module will take place over two semesters in 2022:

Spring semester 2022

- Preparatory session on May 17
- Symposium in Zurich on May 19 and 20

Fall semester 2022

- Excursion to Venice from October 13 to 16

These dates are mandatory and require in-person participation (subject to pandemic-related measures). A partial reimbursement of the costs may be possible depending on the institute and faculty.

### **Assessment**

In order to earn 6 ECTS credit points, students are expected to take part in all activities over the two semesters, to familiarize themselves with the topic through selected readings and prepare questions for the symposium, and to hold an oral presentation during the field trip in Venice.

### **Application**

This module cannot be freely booked. Interested participants send a short letter of motivation, clearly indicating their study programs (major/minor) and level (BA or MA), to [rosa.sancarlo@khist.uzh.ch](mailto:rosa.sancarlo@khist.uzh.ch) and [charlotte.matter@uzh.ch](mailto:charlotte.matter@uzh.ch) by **February 25, 2022**.