

**NORDIC  
COLLABORATION**

**التعاون النوردي**

**SOMETHING  
ELSE III**

**بينالي شيء آخر**

**THE CITADEL  
CAIRO 2023**

**القاهرة/القلعة**

الإصرار بدافع البهجة

أفرانغ نوردلوف ماليكيان  
إيدا إيدايدا  
إكرام عبد القادر  
ليف هولمستراند  
مكسيم حوراني  
سالاد هيوله  
سيغريد هولموود  
تامارا دي لافال  
تيريزا ليكبيرج وكاتيرينا  
سيهيدي  
تيريزا تراوري دالبيرج  
فاليريا مونتي كولكه

تقييم  
باور إيكروث وسارة روسلينج

## PERSISTENCE THROUGH JOY

AFRANG NORDLÖF  
MALEKIAN  
IDA IDAIDA  
IKRAM ABDULKADIR  
LEIF HOLMSTRAND  
MAXIME HOURANI  
SALAD HILOWLE  
SIGRID HOLMWOOD  
TAMARA DE LAVAL  
THERESA LEKBERG &  
KATERYNA SEHEDA  
THERESA TRAORE  
DAHLBERG  
VALERIA MONTTI COLQUE

CURATED BY  
POWER EKROTH &  
SARA ROSSLING

تهويمات رمزية - الرقص  
باستعمال يديك

آنا جوليا فريدبورنسدوتير  
أسديس سيف غونارسدوتير  
سيغريدور دورا يوهانسدوتير  
غودجون كيتيلسون  
أستا فاني سيغورداردوتير

تقييم  
بريتا غودجونسدوتير

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ÁSDÍS SIF GUNNARSDÓTTIR  
SIGRIDUR DORA JOHANNSDÓTTIR  
GUDJON KETILSSON  
ÁSTA FANNEY SIGURÐARDÓTTIR

CURATED BY  
BIRTA GUDJONSDÓTTIR

الجماهير المتحولة

ألغا ويليمارك ميساروس  
ديك هيدلوند  
فاتيما معلم بالتعاون مع  
سوفيا جيرنبيرج وإيلينا وولاي  
هانا ويلدو  
ماكدا إيمباي  
ماين أرنيل  
مار فييل  
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ALVA WILLEMARCK MESAROS  
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COLLABORATION WITH SOFIA  
JERNBERG AND ELENA WOLAY  
HANNA WILDOW  
MAKDA EMBAIE  
MALIN ARNELL  
MAR FJELL  
SARA KAAMAN  
TONY KARLSSON SAVCI

ORGANIZED BY  
HANNA WILDOW

بدون عنوان (تشابه عائلي)

إيفا سفانبلوم  
لينه بيرج  
لوتس-راينر مولر  
ماريتا إيسوبل سولبيرج  
ماتي إيكيو

تقييم  
ليف-ماجني تانجين

## UNTITLED (FAMILY RESEMBLANCE)

EVA SVANELOM  
LENE BERG  
LUTZ-RAINER MÜLLER  
MARITA ISOBEL SOLBERG  
MATTI AIKIO

CURATED BY  
LEIF MAGNE TANGEN

بإخلاص حقيقي لا يأتي إلا من الحب الصادق للقاهرة ومشهدها، بادر المنظم والفنان معتر نصر وكبير أمناء المعرض سيمون نجامي وأصر على إقامة حدث فني معاصر عالمي متكرر من الطراز الرفيع هنا. أقيمت النسخة الأولى من بينالي في عام ٢٠١٥، والثانية في عام ٢٠١٨، وتمكنت النسخة الثالثة بطريقة ما من النمو على الرغم من النكسات العديدة وحتى الجائحة. تحمل هذه النسخة من بينالي «شيء آخر» ٢٠٢٤ عنوان «ماذا بعد؟» الذي يقدمه نجامي، وهو من دعا العديد من القيمين الفنيين الدوليين لإنشاء مراكز تحت هذه المظلة. وبينما تقع مسؤولية توجيه السؤال «ماذا بعد؟» في النهاية على عاتق الجمهور، فلقد صاغ كل من القيمين المدعويين من منطقة البلدان النوردية وجهة نظره بشأنه. كان لدى القيمين الفنيين من أيسلندا والنرويج والسويد أساليب وفرص مختلفة لتقديم ثلاثة معارض منفصلة ومساحة للأداء خلال بينالي، وقد أصبح التعاون بين القيمين الفنيين من البلدان النوردية ممكناً من خلال الاهتمام المشترك والانخراط في التبادل داخل الفعالية وإمكانية الإتحاد في التعبير عن الاحتفال بالفن وقوته المطلقة والعالمية. في هذا الكتالوج المشترك، يقدم كل من القيمين الفنيين باور إيكروث وسارة روسلينج وبيرتا جودجونسدوتير وليف-ماجني تانجين مقاربتهم القيمة الفنية للثيمة البيئالية من خلال نص قصير وتقديم الفنانين بسيرهم الذاتية وصور لأعمالهم المجهزة. يتضمن الكتالوج أيضاً برنامج أداء منفصل مع فنانيين سويديين تنظمه الفنانة هانا ويلدو لتوحيد الجهود وتغطية الحضور النوردي في بينالي القاهرة.

نعرب جميعاً عن خالص امتناننا للجهود والخطوات التي قام بها معتر نصر وسيمون نجامي ولكل الفنانين المشاركين - بدونكم لما كان لدينا شيء!

باور إيكروث وسارة روسلينج  
المحررين

## A SHARED SPACE / SWEDISH, ICELANDIC AND NORWEGIAN ART ENCOUNTERS AT SOMETHING ELSE III OFF BIENNALE, CAIRO

With the true dedication that only comes from a genuine love for Cairo and its scene, the organizer and artist Moataz Nasr and chief curator Simon Njami have initiated and insisted on a recurring international contemporary art event of high caliber here.

The first edition of the biennial happened in 2015, the second in 2018, and has somehow managed to grow despite numerous setbacks and even a pandemic. The third edition of Something Else Off Biennale, 2024, is named *What Then?* by Njami, who has invited numerous international curators to create hubs under this umbrella. While the responsibility to pick up on the question “What then?” ultimately lies on the audience, the invited curators from the Nordic region have each formulated their take on it.

The curators from Iceland, Norway, and Sweden have all had different approaches and opportunities to present three separate exhibitions and a performative space within the biennial. The collaboration between the Nordic curators is made possible through a common interest and engagement in an exchange within the event and the possibility of uniting in expressions of celebration of art and its boundless and nationless strength.

In this joint catalog, curators Power Ekroth, Sara Rossling, Birta Gudjonsdottir, and Leif-Magne Tangen each present their curatorial approach to the biennial theme and introduce their collaborating artists with bios and installation images. The catalog also includes a separate performance program with Swedish artists organized by artist Hanna Wildow. Additionally, there a list of Nordic-based artists invited by Simon Njami, with the aim to join forces and cover the Nordic presence in Cairo.

We all express our sincere gratitude to the efforts and strides by Moataz Nasr and Simon Njami and to all participating artists – without you, there would be nothing!

Power Ekroth and Sara Rossling  
Editors

**WHAT THEN?  
SOMETHING ELSE, 2023  
SIMON NJAMI**

*The work is done,' grown old he thought,  
'According to my boyish plan;  
Let the fools rage, I swerved in nought,  
Something to perfection brought';  
But louder sang that ghost, 'What then?'*

The world has been through a lot of challenges. Maybe more than ever, we feel how fragile we are. Wars, global warming... And Covid 19 came. And we thought, like in all those moments we were reminded of our fate, that things would change. That things would never be the same anymore. That we have learned our lessons. But we learned nothing. After all those millennial fears, we went back to business. As usual. Showing our very nature, made of hypocrisy and greed.

Art did not wait for Covid 19 to react. It did not wait for any war to express all of human nature, in its beauty and in its weakness. From the dawn of our earth, some people have been trying to decipher what lies inside our unconscious. What is the very nature of our desire, fear and pride? The first paintings in parietal caves were meant to address something that could not physically be reached. It meant to sing a song never heard before. That very song Ernst Bloch was referring to:

*This book introduces us to our figure and to our unity in germ; their song is already heard deciphered on the sides of a simple pitcher, deciphered as the a priori latent theme of all "plastic" art and the central theme of all magic of music, deciphered finally in the last encounter with oneself, in the elucidated darkness of the lived moment, as it suddenly opens up and perceives itself in the unconstructable question, the absolute question, the very problem of the We.*

If art has a function, it is probably to rebuild the connections between people, above all ideologies, religions and politics. It is to reach out and bring together all positive energies in the world in order to reconsider our engagements and our priorities. Art, as a universal language, is the only field of activity that speaks to all, without preconception. It has always started from the beginning. From the first breath and the first question. From the first smile and the first gaze. From the first sign painted ever.

In this historical site, we are going to convey ancient memories in order to dream of new futures. It has always been foolish, as suggested by the poet W.B. Yeats, to ever think that the work was done. The work is never done. On the contrary. It is a never-ending process of awareness and actions. There is always something else to be discovered, something else to be formulated, something else to be invented. This is our commitment.

We shall respond to the question posed by the poet. *What Then?* Our answer will be *Something Else*.

# PERSIST- ENCE THROUGH JOY

كتبت الكاتبة والفيلسوفة والناشطة أودري لورد على مستوى أنثوي وروحي عميق: «يشكل تقاسم الفرح، أكان جسدياً أم عاطفياً أم نفسياً أم فكرياً، جسراً بين المشاركين وذلك يمكن أن يكون أساساً لفهم الكثير مما هو ليس مشترك بينهم، ويقلل خطر اختلافهم».

تعترف لورد بالطبيعة التحويلية للبهجة الجماعية وطريقة بناءها لعلاقات تتجاوز المكان والثقافة. تعمل فعالية «شيء آخر» في بينالي القاهرة بمنطق مماثل لما يمكن أن يفعله المجتمع الفني من خلال جمع الفنانين والقيمين الفنيين والجماهير من كل صوب وحذب معاً في قلعة صلاح الدين القروسطية. لا يعني «الإصرار» في المجال الثقافي حماية التقاليد المحافظة، بل يتعلق الأمر بأهمية الإبداع المتكرر لدى الجمهور باعتباره استراتيجية رغم ما يواجهه من صعاب أو معارضة. لذا، دعونا نستدعي قوتنا الكامنة التي تشير إليها لورد على أنها «المورد الذي يكمن داخل كل واحد منا، والمتأصل بثبات في قوة مشاعرنا غير المعلنة أو غير المعترف بها». ودعونا نحتفل جماعاً بإمكانية الغد المجهول في مقاومة التكهنات المظلمة حول المستقبل.

سارة روسلينج

تحتفل فعالية «الإصرار بدافع البهجة» بمرونة الفنانين والعاملين الثقافيين في مواجهة التحديات الممنهجة، حيث أنهم يرسلون الإشارات ويتشاركون ويتكيفون مثل الصراير ليس للبقاء على قيد الحياة فحسب، بل للإزدهار كذلك. يجسد هذا المعرض قضيتنا المشتركة، ويعرض قدرة الروح الإنسانية على إيجاد البهجة حتى في ظل الشدائد، كما يعكس مزيج مجتمع الميم (LGBTQ+) من الاحتجاج والبهجة اللذان يظهران في مسيرات الفخر، مما يخلق التمكين التحويلي. يتخطى «شيء آخر» الحواجز ويعزز الشمولية ويوحد الفنانين من خلفيات متنوعة، لأنه منصة ينطلق فيها الخيال بحرية ملهمًا الأمل والمثالية. وما التزام الفنانين بالتعبير الثقافي بلا رقابة إلا التزامًا تجاه الإنسانية. تمثل هذه الفعالية دليلاً على الوحدة والمرونة والقدرة على إيجاد البهجة وسط التحديات. في الوحدة والفرح، نجد القوة للتغلب على الصعاب وإلهام الآخرين.

باور إيكروث

## الإصرار بدافع البهجة

## PERSISTENCE THROUGH JOY SARA ROSSLING

The joy of collectively coming together around a table, sharing food, a political manifestation, or a festival is a yearning for togetherness and curiosity, celebrating a joint moment without necessarily sharing the same perspectives. Large-scale cultural events are commonly described as transformative experiences by those participating, bringing feelings of connectedness and a willingness to help others. In a period of abrupt changes, uncertainty, and media scaremongering about the future, gatherings in public are more crucial than ever to fuel a plural society, meet others, and disseminate thoughts. Following a pandemic, the worst thing we can do to ourselves is to continue to ‘keep our distance’ and stay in isolation.

On a deeply female and spiritual plane, writer, philosopher, and activist Audre Lorde writes in *Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power*, “The sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual, forms a bridge between the sharers which can be the basis for understanding much of what is not shared between them, and lessens the threat of their difference.” Lorde acknowledges the transformative nature of collective joy and how it builds relationships beyond place and culture. Something Else Off Biennale, Cairo operates on a similar logic of what community in art can do by bringing artists, curators, and audiences from all over together at the medieval Islamic Citadel of Saladin. Overlooking the city, on top of the Mokattam mountain, the historic fortress Citadel resembles a town on its own. Inviting the off-biennial to this landmark site says something important about trust. The city hosting the biennial allows the Citadel and its architecture to become something else that brings forth new ways of being, artistic visions, and future imaginations.

From a Swedish perspective, in autumn 2023, trust is at stake, as individuals’ trust in public society is threatened. The Swedish government has proposed a new law that requires public employees to report individuals without

a residence permit. The law will restrict undocumented migrants’ access to their fundamental human rights. If implemented, this will undermine democracy and significantly diminish trust in state institutions. It will scare people from joining public events and visiting public hospitals, schools, and libraries, thus not having the possibility to get aid, education, or meet others. The social exclusion will worsen for these people, already ‘invisible’ and fragile in society.

In ancient Egypt, inspired by the cycles of nature, the Egyptians saw time in the present as a series of recurring patterns. The myths describe the actions of the Egyptian gods as a means of understanding the world around them. Festivals and religious ritual offerings to the gods were essential to handling the unknown future. From a secular view, we know it is not gods who rule the future. With a large portion of imagination and simultaneously an understanding of the smallness of humanity, it lies in our hands to push for social justice and change. Looking back at our ancestors’ decisions and actions from where we are standing in our current time of several new global challenges, the biennial asks us: *What then?*

Our task is to encourage each new generation never to stop taking their rights to the commons and speak up for everyone’s right to public space — go out, see with your own eyes, seek answers to your questions, make acquaintances with strangers, and share joy. Persistence in the cultural sphere is not about protecting conservative traditions. Rather, it is about the importance of recurrent creativity in the public as a strategy despite difficulty or opposition. So, let’s call out our inherent power that Lorde refers to as “a resource that lies within each of us, firmly rooted in the power of our unexpressed or unrecognized feeling.” And let’s collectively celebrate the potential of an unknown tomorrow to withstand dark speculations about the future.

## PERSISTENCE THROUGH JOY POWER EKROTH

Cockroaches not only possess extraordinary survival abilities, such as enduring nuclear radiation, living headless for weeks, and holding their breath for up to five or seven minutes, but they also have the remarkable capacity to signal fellow cockroaches about potential food sources, enabling them to assist one another. This concept is undeniably inspiring. Among our circle of friends and family, we now use the term ‘cockroach’ as a verb. For instance, when someone suggests, ‘With the government’s impending implementation of slimmed-down cultural policies, we should start “cockroaching” right away,’ it implies that we, including our fellow cultural workers in the country in question, must find ways to fund our work, even if it means tighten our budgets. Most importantly: we must persist doing what we do and let nothing stop us. This simply because we have to in order to mentally survive, and because it is the only—and right—thing to do. Once one commits to the idea of “cockroaching”, surrendering is simply not an option. Instead, we adapt with resilience and resistance, and, most crucially: to help each other out.

In the cultural sphere, we grapple not only with survival instincts, but also with the very essence of humanity, harnessing both our intellect and emotions. Thus we require something beyond, something that transcends and amplifies our resistance and resilience. Personal, systemic, or structural hardships should not merely be endured; they must be overcome, or at least partially so. While the strategy of unwavering persistence can be a triumph in itself, mere survival often lacks vivaciousness. We need to get angry, we need to get loud, we need to be smart and respond to obstacles in a way that will help rectify things but we also need to live. An exemplary model is the LGBTQ+ community, which seamlessly intertwines politically charged protest with expressions of joy, as seen in their triumphant PRIDE parades. In these parades, all are welcome, and discrimination is forbidden. Solidarity, protest, and joy are woven into a tapestry that embodies the core of collective strength, forg-

ing a transformative empowerment in the face of adversity.

Artists and cultural workers’ commitment to art is about their commitment to life and humanity, to never underestimate the importance of the right to imagine, create, and distribute diverse cultural expressions free of censorship or interference. This is exactly what we come together to celebrate at Something Else. The joy of dreaming about what is not there (yet), about finding new ways though the unimaginable, to inspire and envision hope and utopia – together.

The unique platform of the Off Biennale Something Else transcends barriers of language, culture, and background, making it a powerful tool for promoting inclusivity and building bridges across diverse communities. It allows artists from different corners of the world, with very different backgrounds and walks of life to come together to celebrate art and life. This is a joy that can provide a potent source of inspiration that fuels creativity and allows artists to produce work that speaks to the human experience – or even challenges societal norms.

Like the resilient cockroach, cultural workers come together, signaling to one another, sharing resources, and finding ways to not only survive, but thrive. This exhibition is a testament to the commitment to our shared cause, and a celebration of the human spirit’s capacity to find joy, even in the most challenging circumstances. ‘Persistence Through Joy’ is a reminder that in unity and joy, we find the strength to overcome, to imagine, and to inspire.

# UNTITLED (FAMILY RE- SEMBLANCE)

يعكس هذا النص، المدون في جزيرة دورسي، جنوب غرب شبه جزيرة بير، قدرة الإنسان على التكيف مع البيئات القاسية ظاهريًا، فهو يتحدى وجهات النظر العرقية ويحث على التعاطف مع طرق الحياة المتنوعة. أثناء نشأة المؤلف في أرخبيل لوفوتين، لم يشمل تعليمه تاريخ سكان ساحل منطقة الشمال (ساميو الساحل). تشير فكرة آرنيس القائلة بأن «من المؤلف أن تفكر» إلى الانزعاج الناتج عن التشكيك في المعتقدات الراسخة بعمق. وهذا يعكس «التشابه العائلي» عند فيتجنشتاين، حيث تتشارك الكلمات في سمات دون تعريف صارم لها. ترشد هذه الأفكار التفسير في هذا المعرض الذي يضم فنانيين من خلفيات متنوعة. تدعو أعمال ماتي أيكيو وليني بيرج ولوتر راينر مولر وماريتا إيروبييل سولبيرج وإيفا سفانبلوم إلى التأمل في المفاهيم المتشابهة والعلاقة بين الإنسان والطبيعة.

ليف ماجني تانجن، جزيرة دورسي/دبلن/ترومسو

## UNTITLED (FAMILY RE- SEMBLANCE)

The first question is: Where?

This text is written on the island of Dursey, at the southwestern tip of the Beara Peninsula. It's a small island, in the ocean, connected to Ireland only via a cable car. Outside there is a storm. In general, there is lots of wind here. My initial reaction is 'why and how does anybody live here?' (there are only a handful of people doing so). And this is not that extreme, an environment just more rustic and in the middle of the ocean than what I am used to. This I find typical for us humans. We are not only able, but at times also willing to live in places that others would perceive as hostile and uninhabitable.

This is the start of a white, middle class north-european man who discovers, much like a four year old, that there are other perspectives than their own. For too long people like myself have taken their own lack of knowledge as a moral high ground to judge others and their ways.

Now, I did grow up on a small island, as a part of the Lofoten archipelago, in a town today known for scenic tourist photos. Back in the 1980s there was only fishery. The largest season wise cod fishery in the world. The export of dried and half dried cod to other countries was for many hundred years one of the most important export incomes of the state of Norway. One of the neighboring islands has one of the largest viking museums in the world. This I learned about in school, the fishery, and the vikings. No one ever mentioned the fact that if we go back beyond the 18th century, the western part of the archipelago was mainly inhabited by a sea-sami population.

The second question is: Why?

As philosopher Arne Næss once claimed, «it hurts to think», because we humans have an urge to try to understand what we yet have understood – or even 'seen'. I would explain it as the discomfort or pain that arises when individuals deeply contemplate complex and chal-

lenging ideas, especially those related to the environment, ethics, and the human-nature relationship. It reflects the cognitive and emotional strain that can come with questioning deeply ingrained beliefs and societal norms.

As the title of this exhibition suggests, the meanings of words often do not have a single, precise definition. Instead, words in a language are connected to each other through a network of overlapping similarities, like the members of a family who share certain traits but not a set of defining characteristics. This is borrowed from Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*.

So, this ambiguity and the discomfort associated with it align with both Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblance (where concepts are interconnected through overlapping similarities) and Naess' idea that it can be mentally taxing to grapple with these intricate and multifaceted concepts. Wittgenstein's 'family resemblance' emphasizes the interconnectedness of concepts through overlapping similarities, while Naess' "it hurts to think" underscores the discomfort experienced when deeply contemplating complex ideas. When applied together, these concepts highlight the challenging nature of grappling with abstract and multifaceted concepts, especially in areas like philosophy, ethics, and environmental thought.

These two, maybe combined, is a like a guide to how to maneuver this exhibition I hope that we are able to put together for the biennale, of works by Matti Aikio (Sápmi), Lene Berg (Berlin/Oslo), Lutz-Rainer Müller (Leipzig/Oslo), Marita Isobel Solberg (Tromsø) and Eva Svaneblom (Tromsø).

Dursey Island/Dublin/Tromsø  
Leif Magne Tangen

# بدون عنوان (تشابه عائلي)

**GLYPHIC  
REVERIE –  
DANCING  
WITH YOUR  
OWN HANDS**

**تهويمات رمزية –  
الرقص باستعمال  
يديك**



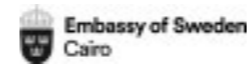
# MORPHING MASSES

*morphing masses* is a performative space that searches for various modes of collective transformation. Nine Swedish artists meet in the gap between visual and performance art to connect and diverge matter, bodies, time, and space. Individual works are performed, leaving traces and tangling through each other, gradually unfolding into a spatial exhibition that will remain during the biennale's exhibition period. *morphing masses* has been initiated and organized by artist Hanna Wildow and is created collectively by the participating artists.

الجماهير المتحولة

## COLOPHON

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gen, and Hanna Wildow.  
Photography: Juan-Pedro Fabra Guemberena  
and the artists.



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