

## **Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev**

Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev is a curator and writer based in Rome, Turin and New York. She is currently the Chief Curator at the Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art in Turin and was the Artistic Director for the 16th Biennale of Sydney (2008). From 1999 to 2001 she was Senior Curator of exhibitions at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center – a MoMA Affiliate. Previously, she organised exhibitions as an independent curator in different countries.

As a writer she has been interested in the relations between historical avant-gardes and contemporary art and has written extensively on the Arte Povera movement, including in her book *Arte Povera* (London, 1999). She published the first monograph on the work of South African artist William Kentridge (Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels; Serpentine Gallery, London; MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 1998-1999), and the first monograph on Canadian artist Janet Cardiff (PS1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, 2001).

As an independent curator, she co-curated “Il suono rapido delle cose”, a homage to artist and composer John Cage for the Venice Biennale in 1993. For “Antwerp ‘93: European Capital of Culture” she co-curated the international survey exhibition “On taking a normal situation and retranslating it into overlapping and multiple readings of conditions past and present” at the MuKHA Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen (1993). In 1996, she curated the first large-scale survey on Italian post-war artist Alberto Burri (Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome; Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels; Lenbachhaus, Munich). In 1997, she organised “Città-Natura”, a city-wide exhibition of international artists in various locations of Rome including the Zoology museum and the Botanical gardens. She then co-curated “La Ville, le Jardin, la Mémoire” at Villa Medici in Rome (1998-2000), a three-year project which included new artworks by over one hundred artists.

As Senior Curator at P.S.1, she was the initiator and a co-curator of the first edition of “Greater New York” in 2000, a collaboration with MoMA, that marked a generation of new art. She then curated a historical exhibition on international art in the 1980s, “Around 1984: A Look at Art in the Eighties” (2000) and solo exhibitions including “Georges Adéagbo” and “Carla Accardi”.

In 2001, she curated the first retrospective exhibition of Janet Cardiff's works. Her last exhibition at PS1 was "Animations" that explored the ways artists today are using animation, both returning to early twentieth century utopian beginnings of the medium or approaching current digital programs.

She was appointed Chief Curator at the Castello di Rivoli Museum for Contemporary Art in January 2002. Her first project there was *Matrix.2* by Francis Alÿs, an automated answering system for the museum. In 2003, she curated the group show "The Moderns / I moderni" which explored modernist perspectives in the works of younger visual artists and sound artists from around the world. She curated a survey exhibition of works by *William Kentridge* in early 2004, an exhibition which toured in 2004/2005 to the Kunstmuseum K20 in Düsseldorf, the MCA Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Montreal, and the Johannesburg Art Gallery in Johannesburg.

In late 2004 she co-curated the group exhibition *Faces in the Crowd / Volti nella folla*, an exhibition exploring figuration as an avant-garde practice from Édouard Manet to today through paintings, sculptures, installation, photography, film and video works by over one hundred artists. In 2005 she co-curated *The Pantagruel Syndrome*, the first Turin Triennial which explored excess, gigantism and the fragility of our "pantagruelian" world, through two solo exhibitions (Takashi Murakami and Doris Salcedo) and a city-wide group exhibition of works by 75 younger artists from around the world.

She was the Artistic Director for the 16<sup>th</sup> Biennale of Sydney (June-September 2008). Titled *Revolutions – Forms That Turn*, this city-wide project hosted in various venues including The Art Gallery of New South Wales, the Museum of Contemporary art, Artspace, the Sydney Opera House and Cockatoo Island was a constellation of artworks exploring the impulse to revolt and the forms embedded in the etymology of the word 'revolution', and the relation and the gap between revolutionary art and art for the revolution from the early avant-gardes to today.

Christov-Bakargiev graduated Magna cum Laude from the University of Pisa, Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, in 1981. Her master thesis was on the relation between contemporary poetry and painting. She is married and has two children, Lucia and Rosa.