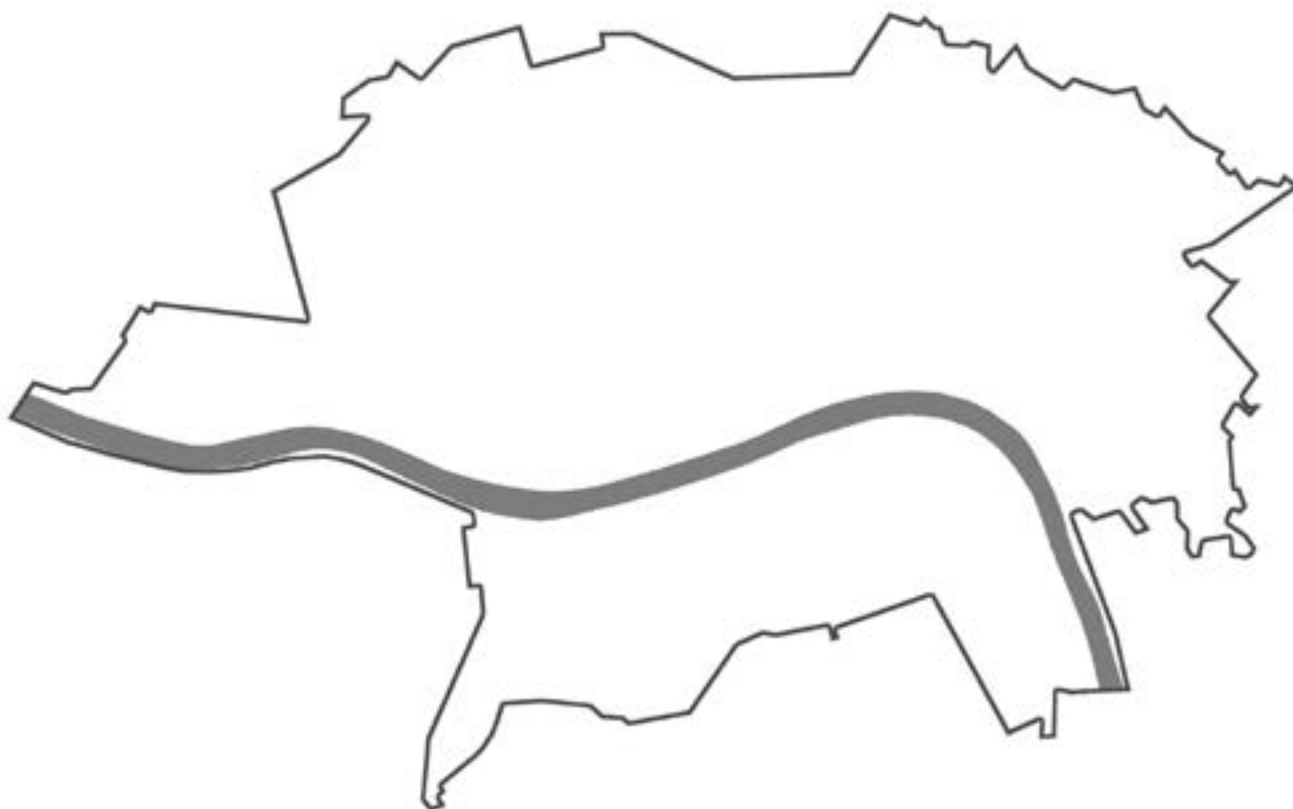


**Paris
Biennial
in Torun,
May 20-23,
2025,
Pres Kit**

"It may be that we are no longer within art today. Simply because we missed the moment when it transformed into something entirely different, something we do not know how to name. But one thing is certain: what we are doing today offers far greater possibilities."

Art in the Post-Artistic Era

Jerzy Ludwinski (Osieki, 1970)



Map of the City of Torun

The **Paris Biennale in Torun** takes place at the Contemporary Art Center of Torun and in other locations that appear — and do not appear — in the program.

From May 20 to 23, 2025

Introduction.

The Paris Biennale in Torun is not merely an art event: it is a phenomenon that redefines the very notion of art. In the city of Jerzy Ludwinski, author of the visionary concept of the *post-artistic era*, artists and thinkers come together who, instead of creating works, create activities. No exhibitions, no art market, no curators, but with a real impact on reality. This is art without objects, yet full of content – a practice that happens here and now, often imperceptible at first glance, but real like a demonstration, a community garden, an unconventional gathering, or a collective climate action.

The Paris Biennale was initiated in 1959 by André Malraux, writer and Minister of Culture, as a counterbalance to the Americanization of French culture. It quickly became the most avant-garde art event in Europe. Over time, its innovative character was taken up by other artistic institutions, and in the 1980s, a lack of funding led to its interruption. At the beginning of the new millennium, the Biennale was reactivated by the artist Alexandre Gurita. Redefined, the Paris Biennale transformed into a *parallel institution* that does not follow the gallery framework, but that of the artists. It is a grassroots platform promoting what is called *invisual art*: art that is not reduced to an object, a work, or an exhibition. Just as Copernicus, born in Torun, showed that the Earth is not the center of the universe, the Biennale shows that the artwork does not have to be the center of art. Art can be a strategy, a relationship, a form of action, and above all, a communal process of thought and empathy.

The Paris Biennale in Torun also marks an important step toward sustainable cooperation between artists from Poland and France, in a context where the need for a united and strengthened Europe is more urgent than ever.

Co-organized by the Centre of Contemporary Art Znaki Czasu and the Faculty of Fine Arts of Nicolaus Copernicus University, the event brings together diverse creative approaches to create a space for reflection, action, and dialogue – in a spirit of empathy, ecology, and decolonial awareness. The Centre of Contemporary Art in Torun is an ideal venue for such an event of free expression, based on *invisual* and unconventional artistic forms. It does not so much display art as it activates it. This four-day gathering invites us to view art from a radically different perspective – not as a product, but as a practice aimed at changing the world.

The Paris Biennale in Torun also hosts a scholarly symposium on the future of art collections, entitled *What Kind of Art Collection for the Future?*, where artistic presentations intersect with contributions from theorists.

Decenterings.

A Historic Institution

Founded in 1959 by André Malraux, then Minister of Culture and a writer, the Paris Biennale was conceived as a meeting space dedicated to experimenting with the emerging forms of the art of the future. Its first edition, inaugurated on October 3, 1959, on the forecourt of the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, made a strong impression with *Méta-Matic 17* by Jean Tinguely, a motorized installation that produced drawings in series, emblematic of the avant-garde spirit of the time.

Over the decades, the Biennale has introduced major artists of the 20th and 21st centuries, including: Joseph Beuys, Magdalena Abakanowicz, David Hockney, Nam June Paik, Yves Klein, Marina Abramovic, Christian Boltanski, Joseph Kosuth, Valie Export, Anselm Kiefer, Christo, Daniel Buren, Gina Pane, among others. Many curators and art theorists have also contributed to its intellectual richness, such as Catherine Millet, Michel Ragon, Nathalie Aubergé, Pierre Restany, Guido Weelen, and Alfred Pacquement.

As a pioneer, the Paris Biennale was the first to present photography and video as full-fledged art forms, at a time when they were still seen as mere technical tools.

An Expanded Vision of Art

With the turn of the 21st century, the Paris Biennale broke free from the rigid frameworks of contemporary art to explore new artistic forms, imagined as hypotheses for possible futures.

Over the years, it has highlighted artists proposing new versions and definitions of art, such as Gary Bigot, Elisa Bollazzi, Gilbert Coqalane, Sylvain Soussan, Mariem Memni, Ricardo Mbarkho, Liliane Viala, Alexandre Gurita, Sasiwimon Paosanmuang, and others.

In resonance with these emerging practices, theorists, philosophers, and art critics are developing new reflective and philosophical frameworks, including Coline Periano, Paul Ardenne, Loli Tsan, Ghislain Mollet-Viéville, Corina Chutaux, Éric Monsinjon, Rose Marie Barrientos, and Robert Storr.

The Biennale conceives art as an expanded notion, no longer limited to the production of objects. It highlights approaches that diverge from established canons, based on invisible art as a mindset. Invisible art (which exists neither as a material nor immaterial work) embodies a

paradigm shift and positions itself beyond contemporary art. By blending genres, dissolving boundaries, and redistributing roles, the Paris Biennale brings art to light in unexpected places.

A Horizontal Institution

The Paris Biennale is characterized by its horizontal organization. Artists are treated as true partners, deciding how their proposals are presented and actively participating in the Biennale's decision-making processes. It operates as a critical mass of free initiatives that, when networked, gain collective strength. It adapts to the artistic practices it promotes and moves wherever they emerge, in a spirit of reciprocity.

A Decentered and Decolonial Approach

The Biennale is not limited to Paris. It decenters itself around the world to activate artistic potential within specific contexts, without imposing a Western model of art. Its approach is rooted in a decolonial perspective, working with local cultural specificities. Decentering here means the ability to step back from one's own perspective to understand that of others, a crucial skill for critical thinking. Rather than exporting a Western model of art, the Biennale acts in direct collaboration with territories, bringing to light original proposals often invisible to traditional circuits.

An International Presence

Since 2009, the Paris Biennale has decentered itself across various international contexts:

Nicosia (2009)
 New York (2011)
 Réunion Island (2013)
 Burundi (2014)
 Beirut (2016)
 Guatemala (2017)
 Luxembourg (2018–2020)
 Bangkok (2025)
 Torun (2025)

Upcoming editions are also planned in Geneva, Kyrgyzstan, Istanbul, and Shanghai in 2025 and 2026.

Decenterography.



Map of the Paris Biennale's decenterations in various international contexts:

Nicosia (2009)
New York (2011)
Réunion Island (2013)
Burundi (2014)
Beirut (2016)
Guatemala (2017)
Luxembourg (2018–2020)
Bangkok (2025)
Torun (2025)

Upcoming:

Kyrgyzstan (2025)
Geneva (2025)
Istanbul (2026)

2009, Nicosia.



Paris Biennale in Nicosia

From October 19 to 25, 2010

Reinventing the terminology of art

Urban billboards throughout the city.

2009, Nicosia.



Paris Biennale in Nicosia

From October 19 to 25, 2010

Reinventing the terminology of art

Inauguration by the delegate of the Minister of Culture and Education, Elvira Demosthenes.

2011, New York.



Paris Biennale in New York

From September 26 to October 3, 2011

Lecture by Nancy Barton, Director of the New York University School of Art

2011, New York.



Paris Biennale in New York

From September 26 to October 3, 2011

Lecture by Robert Storr, Director of the Yale University School of Art and former curator at MoMA (Museum of Modern Art, New York), followed by a series of lectures and discussions with the university's students.

2016, Beirut.



Paris Biennale in Beirut

From June 27 to July 3, 2016

Espace 21. The project by Noémie Benatto, a practitioner at Iheap, consisted of organizing an exhibition of her photographs, which lasted only for the duration of a 30-minute opening. During this time, the audience was invited to tear down the photos and take them home.

2017, Guatemala.



Paris Biennale in Guatemala

From November 1 to 11, 2017

Advertising on a rotating disc in a hypermarket.

2017, Guatemala.



Paris Biennale in Guatemala

From November 1 to 11, 2017

Centro Cultural de España in Guatemala. Method for formulating a project in 280 characters by Maria Jimenez.

2017, Guatemala.



Paris Biennale in Guatemala

From November 1 to 11, 2017

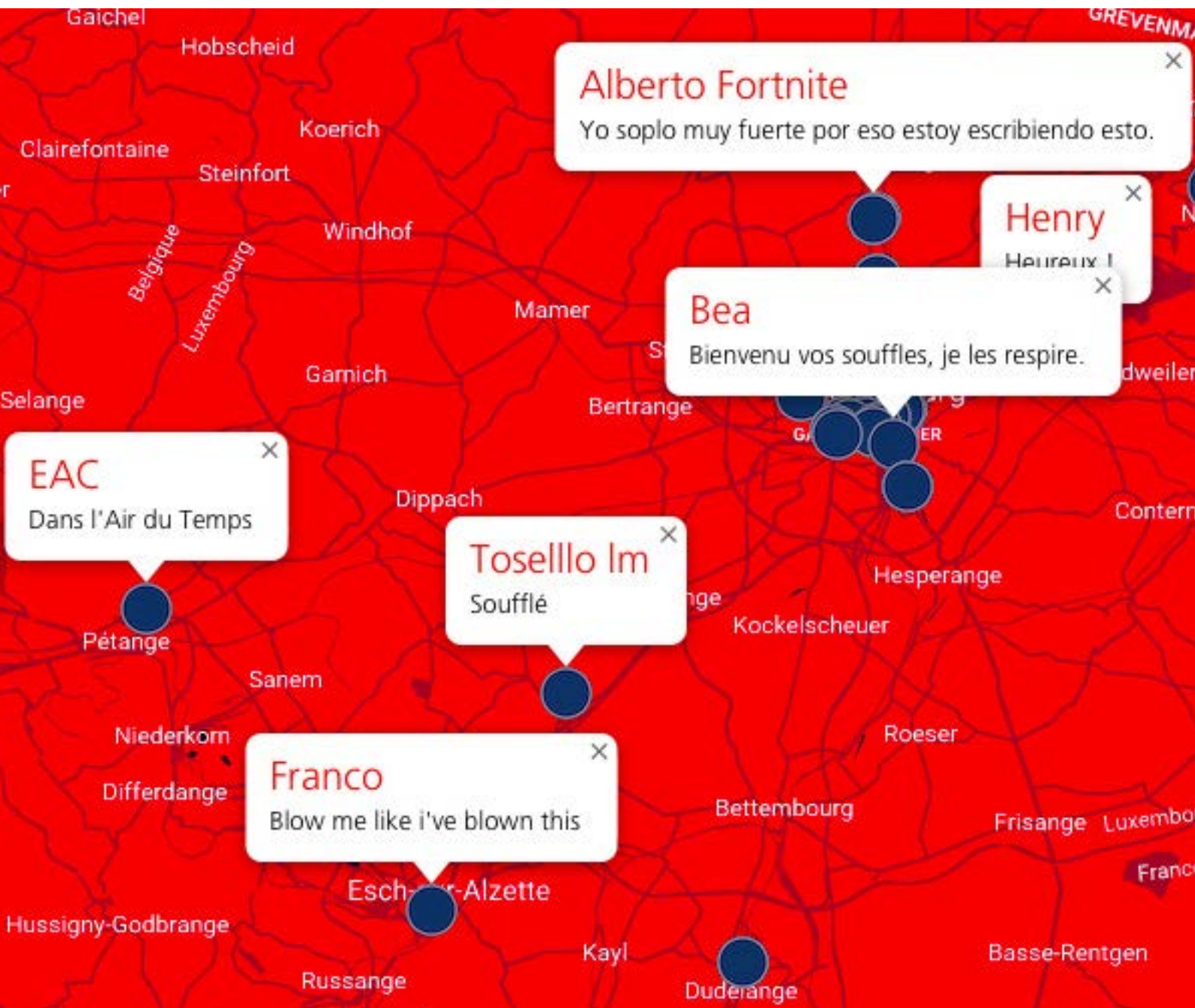
Meetings at the National Museum of Art of the City of Guatemala.

2018/20, Luxembourg.



Paris Biennale in Luxembourg – From October 1, 2018, to September 30, 2020 – *The air that I breathe, you will breathe one day* – Artist Gary Bigot initiated this edition of the Biennale in the form of an app that allowed users' breaths to be geolocated. The audience would blow into a mobile phone, computer, or tablet, and then observe their breath displayed in real-time on a world map. It was also possible to leave messages. Status of breaths on November 4, 2019, at 9:45 AM.

2018/20, Luxembourg.



Paris Biennale in Luxembourg

From October 1, 2018, to September 30, 2020

The air that I breathe, you will breathe one day – Artist Messages left by the audience-users. Detail.

2025, Bangkok.



Paris Biennale in Bangkok

From February 21 to 28, 2025

Emptying the mind to rethink art

Group photo of some of the artists and organizers.

2025, Bangkok.



Paris Biennale in Bangkok

From February 21 to 28, 2025

Emptying the mind to rethink art

Poster at the entrance of the auditorium of Silpakorn University - Faculty of Painting, Sculpture, and Graphic Arts
Conference: *What art school for the future?*

2025, Bangkok.



Paris Biennale in Bangkok

From February 21 to 28, 2025

Emptying the mind to rethink art

Mai Pen Rai, The Art of Letting Go

Workshop by Sasiwimon Paosanmuang

River City Bangkok

Partners.

The Paris Biennale in Torun was made possible thanks to the commitment of **Anna Kompanowska**, Director of the Contemporary Art Center of Torun, as well as the support of **Filip Pregowski**, PhD, DSc, Professor at Nicolaus Copernicus University and Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts.

Organization: **Alexandre Gurita** (Paris Biennale), **Maciej Kwietnicki** (Faculty of Fine Arts, Nicolaus Copernicus University), **Arek Pasozyt** (Faculty of Fine Arts, Nicolaus Copernicus University), **Tomasz F. de Rosset** (Faculty of Fine Arts, Nicolaus Copernicus University).

Coordination: **Renata Sargalska** (Contemporary Art Center of Torun)

The **Faculty of Fine Arts at Nicolaus Copernicus University**, founded in 1945 after World War II, was established thanks to professors mainly from the universities of Vilnius and Lviv, which had recently been incorporated into the Soviet Union (respectively in Lithuania and Ukraine). Today, the faculty offers a comprehensive education, structured around three main areas: the artistic field, with teachings in painting, graphic design (including digital media), art pedagogy, and interior architecture; the theoretical field, including art history, heritage studies, and art criticism; and finally, the field of conservation-restoration, focusing on painting, sculpture, stone materials, paper, and leather. Professor Filip Pregowski is currently its dean.



The Faculty of Fine Arts at Nicolaus Copernicus University of Torun

Complementary to this academic institution, the **Znaki Czasu Contemporary Art Center**, inaugurated in June 2008, stands out as one of the most dynamic and innovative venues in Poland fully dedicated to contemporary art. Located in a modern building in the heart of the city, the Center embodies a strong commitment to creating a vibrant, accessible space oriented toward the future of artistic creation. Focusing on contemporary, intermedia, and interdisciplinary practices, it offers an eclectic and rigorous program that highlights both Polish and international artists. As a space for dialogue and the confrontation of ideas, the Center encourages intersections between visual arts, new technologies, performance, design, and theoretical research. Its aim is to foster critical reflection on major issues of our time through the lens of artistic creation. In addition to its temporary exhibitions, the Center develops a wide range of activities: lectures, seminars, artist residencies, educational programs for all audiences, publications, and the development of a collection representing current art. By promoting intercultural exchange and creating an environment conducive to creative exploration, it has established itself as a leading hub for the contemporary art scene, both nationally and internationally.



Znaki Czasu Contemporary Art Center, Torun

Biennale de Paris

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