

PUBLICS PUBLICS

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Annual Report

PUBLICS

2024

PUBLICS is a curatorial agency with a dedicated library, event space and reading room in Vallila. The organisation explores a “work together” institutional model with multiple overlapping objectives, thematic strands and collaborations. The space functions as the main office, as well as a public space, with a library of over 8000+ publications. PUBLICS hosts talks, events, exhibitions and performances in collaboration with other partners in the city, nationally and internationally. PUBLICS is an educational platform and a critical agency where artists, students and communities are invited to engage with social issues, as well as gain and share knowledge through various discourses. These initiatives develop in parallel with longer-term curatorial projects.

PUBLICS is a producer of new artistic projects driven by social concerns, and creates connections between diverse groups, as an open, ethically-led platform for critical debate and collaboration. PUBLICS operates under the Artistic Direction of Paul O’Neill together with team members, Program Manager Annabelle Antas, PUBLICS Youth coordinator Micol Curatolo and Library assistant Valentina Černiauskaitė.

PUBLICS YOUTH Advisory Board is a group of young adults working within our organisation. The project is a platform to engage with professional opportunities and learning experiences as part of a year-long paid position for 18-21 year olds. The members actively support both decision-making and implementation of PUBLICS annual program. In 2024, PUBLICS worked with its third Youth Advisory Board. As part of the Nordic network Future Futures with Index Foundation (Stockholm) and PRAKSIS (Oslo), they have developed the project ‘Reaching Out’, looking into film and moving images.

PUBLICS collaborative methodology aims to create an ecology and diversity of thoughts and experiences. In order to function as a multidimensional and multi-purposed organisation, PUBLICS prioritises working with collaborators whose practice supports intersectional dialogue. PUBLICS fills a middle area in-between the small (artist-led) initiatives and bigger institutions, by providing an important link, support and consultation. PUBLICS is dedicated to support dialogue between the local and the international artistic landscapes. PUBLICS pays an equal standard fee for every artist/curator/collaborator in four different categories. Annually, an elected board of professionals approves the mission, vision, and oversees the program policy.

PUBLICS is a constellation of practices which:

- Commissions, produces and curates exemplary public art and events
- Supports new collaborative models within the art world locally and internationally
- Identifies, promotes and advances new local and international networks
- Collaborates with artists and curators emerging from various different socio-cultural backgrounds
- Offers educational, civic and public resource
- Increases intersectional participation and debate urgent issues
- Activates and actualizes diverse publics for art
- Sustains small, flexible, content driven and discursive platforms

ACTIVITIES

In 2024 the core activities of PUBLICS were: Piloting and Launching The Centre For Curatorial Thinking; a new centre in the Nordic and Baltic region focusing on the significance of past and present thinking, knowledge, and critique within practices of the curatorial; PUBLICS events such as Parahosting and Coupling alongside a new initiative WITH; SHAPE platform as a means of supporting other local organisations and initiatives and PUBLICS YOUTH, an Advisory Board part

of network with PRAKSIS (Oslo) and Index (Stockholm) - three small-scale organisations dedicated to collaborating with young people to curate new models, formats and modalities for future publics.

In 2024, PUBLICS began the pilot year of The Centres activities in partnership with The Saastamoinen Foundation. Alongside PUBLICS Commissions, PUBLICS evolves around five program strands and develops:

PUBLICS Centre For Curatorial Thinking;
PUBLICS Library;
PUBLICS Events;
PUBLICS Youth Advisory Board, and Learning from its EU Networks;
SHAPE Art Map and Online Platform.

TIMELINE 2024

PUBLICS Commissions and Exhibitions:

1-20 May	WITH Askeaton Contemporary Arts exhibition
18-19 Jul	KMRU Stupor at Odysseus festival
28 Nov -	AA Bronson, General Idea & Art Metropole exhibition
28 Feb '25	

PUBLICS Centre For Curatorial Thinking Reading Group & Archival Exhibitions:

15 May	Maaretta Jaukkuri & Tominga O'Donnell
22 Aug	Maria Lind & Marti Manen and PUBLICS Youth
26 Sept	Brian Dillon, On Art Writing
9 Oct	Maria Fusco, On Art Writing
29 Nov	AA Bronson & Gareth Long

PUBLICS Events, Parahosting and Exhibitions:

9 Mar	PUBLICS YOUTH Takeover
13 Mar	Archive of Art School Dissent, Event and Panel Discussion
22 Mar	Paul Kuimet: Crystal Grid, Book Launch
27 Mar	Tale of Three Jewels, Film Screening
4 May	WITH Askeaton Contemporary Arts, exhibition opening
8 May	Studio Visits by Chih-Tung Lin, Book Launch
30 May	Replica Talk
14 Aug	Summer Fete, Book fair, sale & music event
16 Aug	On Shyness: A Finnish / Pan-African Approach, Conference
7-8 Sept	Not Going it Alone Talk with Paul O'Neill, part of Under the Leaf Book Fair
12 Sept	Nina Möntmann: Decentring the Museum, Book Launch in conversation with Paul O'Neill
18 Sept	Bright Ecologies, Book Launch
23 Oct	The Octopus, Book Launch
30 Oct -	The Future Futures Talk Show: Nordic Youth Symposium 2024
3 Nov	
29 Nov	AA Bronson, General Idea & Art Metropole, exhibition opening
3 Dec	VISUAL AIDS, Film screening
11 Dec	Library Break & end of the year party
12 Dec	PUBLICS YOUTH & NonCitizen, Film Screening event at NCP
16 Dec	Dear Society, Zine Launch and Performance



WITH Askeaton Contemporary Arts, photo by Aman Askarizad



AA Bronson, General Idea & Art Metropole, photo by Aman Askarizad

● KMRU Stupor

As part of Odysseus Festival (Odysseus is an adventurous music festival organized by We Jazz, which took place at Kulttuuritehdas Korjaamo) in Helsinki in 2024 Nairobi-born Berlin-based sound artist Joseph Kamaru, aka KMRU, shared his new work Stupor on the new Helsinki-based label Other Power. Commissioned by PUBLICS, Stupor comprises three original long form tracks as an original score to a future festival, Stupor is a sonic imaginarium that traverses spatial and temporal dimensions.

Realised in-between Nairobi and Berlin, field recordings, bodily effects, and place-bound identities are navigated through interstitial spaces to form a veil of profound stillness. The album asks us to listen with our third ear, that is, to enter into an emergent space of extraordinary openness. The album points to a politics of movement and liminality, probing what it means to be Black and diasporic in an anti-black world. The tracks on the album are speculative notes to social architectures and environments the artist has traversed.

Released on October 20 2023, Composed by Joseph Kamaru, Mastered by Stephan Mathieu at Schwenbung Mastering, Original photos & artwork by Joseph Kamaru, Liner Notes by Bavisha Panchia, OBI Design (Publics identity presence) by Valerio Di Lucente, Design by Matti Nives

Co-produced by Performa / PUBLICS / Other Power

● WITH Askeaton Contemporary Arts exhibition

WITH Askeaton Contemporary Arts was the first event of a new expanding series of curatorial collaborations, projects or pairings, where PUBLICS comes together with another institution because of common or overlapping ideas, interests and concerns.

WITH: Seanie Barron, David Beattie, Jes Fernie, Michael Holly, Aino Lintunen, Amanda Rice, Elina Vainio.

Askeaton Contemporary Arts, an artist-led organisation from southwest Ireland, were in residency at PUBLICS, bringing a cohort of artists associated with their ongoing programme to audiences and the artistic community in Helsinki. Collectively entitled WITH Askeaton Contemporary Arts, this initiative showcases an intentional group of people living together, co-operating and sharing common interests, resources and work in the Irish countryside.

Emphasising oral histories, little known folklore and explorations of urgent ecological research, Seanie Barron's bespoke walking sticks, Jes Fernie's explorations of the ups and downs of being an artist working in Ireland, David Beattie's deep listening of ancient monuments feature. Michael Holly introduced his mapping of contemporary Irish landscapes and ecologies were presented beside Amanda Rice's spiralling narratives of extraction abroad by the Irish diaspora. More exchanges of artistic experience and social encounter feature in Michele Horigan and Sean Lynch's continuing curatorial and publishing activities, researching Askeaton Contemporary Arts' role and position in contemporary Irish and European society.

PUBLICS invited Finnish artists Aino Lintunen and Elina Vainio to exhibit WITH the Askeaton Contemporary Arts. Lintunen's and Vainio's recent works draw upon some loose commonalities, relational connections, kinds of woodiness of materials and processes, and joined by artist curator Sakari Tervo who runs the

exhibition platform Pitted Dates, in conversation with Paul O'Neill.

This event was supported by The Arts Council of Ireland's International Residency Initiative Scheme and The Embassy of Ireland, Finland.

PUBLICS TALKS,
EVENTS &
PARAHOSTING

● Archive of Art School Dissent, Event and Panel Discussion

PUBLICS hosted a panel discussion and workshop for Archive of Art School Dissent under our parahosting programme.

Hosts: Chris Evans, Academy of Fine Arts Researcher and Magnus Quaife, Academy of Fine Arts Professor in Artists Pedagogies

Invited panel: David Munoz Alcántara, Sezgin Boynik, Gavin Butt, Luis Guerra, Pauliina Pesonen, Elina Merenmies, Paul O'Neill, H Ouramo, Delphine Paul & Corin Sworn.

Rather than attempting to create an all-encompassing survey, the Archive of Art School Dissent aims to map particular genealogies consequent to a focused range of questions initiated through a series of live public events. The plan is to bring the discussion to a number of global locations to consider how trans-geographical entanglements between education, geo-economic circumstances, cultural conditions, and communities have led to dissent in art schools, how alterity has been articulated and how consequences have fed back into predominant or alternate systems of artists pedagogy. This event was the first in the series.

● On Shyness: A Finnish / Pan-African Approach

PUBLICS were thrilled to host one of the five workshops in collaboration with Uni Arts Helsinki and Lagos as part of the Finland Africa Platform for Innovation.

This series of five workshops, exploring the aesthetics of shyness, spanned a two-week period from August 11–24, 2024 and were produced in collaboration with selected arts organisations in the Helsinki area. The workshops consisted of a series of facilitating artist/curator-initiated exercises that open and explore varied dimensions of the concept of shyness.

Participants were invited to reflect on their own cultural and personal perceptions of what 'shyness' is/might be and to develop sketches towards artistic works, in collaborative groups, that explore these emerging understandings. The workshops were open to the public, by invitation from the host organizations, and to a wide-range of material practices and modes of working.

This series of workshops grew out of an ongoing, multi-year collaboration around experimental artist pedagogies between Uniarts Helsinki and the Centre for Contemporary Art in Lagos. The work is part of the Finland-Africa Platform for Innovation, FAPI (currently funded by the Ministry of Culture and Education, founded and coordinated by University of Turku).

Research group and workshop facilitation team:

- Bernard Akoi-Jackson, Painting and Sculpture, Art and the Built Environment, KNUST, Ghana
- Nontobeko Ntombela, Curatorial, Publics and Visual Cultures, Wits University, South Africa
- Odun Orimolade, Fine Art and Curatorial in the Yaba Art Museum, Yaba Tech,



Maria Lind & Marti Manen and PUBLICS Youth, photo by Aman Askarizad



The Future Futures Talk Show, Nordic Youth Symposium 2024, photo by Yelyzaveta Babaieva

Nigeria

- Meri Linna, Sculptor and Performance Artist, Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki, Finland
- Gesa Piper, Dancer and Dance Pedagogue, Theatre Academy, Helsinki, Finland
- Daniel Peltz, Time and Space Arts, Site and Situation Specific Practices, Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki, Finland (Uniarts Helsinki project-lead) -
- Oyindamola Fakeye, CCA Lagos, Nigeria (CCA Lagos project-lead)
- Taru Elfving, Writer and Curator, PRAXIS, Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki, Finland
- Alyssa Coffin, Interdisciplinary Artist and Curatorial Assistant for the Helsinki Shyness Workshops, Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki, Finland

● Replica Talk

Replica project was presented on May 30th, as part of the Islands and Seas art salon pop up at New Spring Garden, Pohjoisesplanadi 25-27 and as part of PUBLICS parahosting programme. REPLICA is a curatorial and research project founded in 2019 by Lisa Andreani and Simona Squadrito. REPLICA is an archive, a collection and a place where to exhibit and exchange artist's books and independent publications.

Sicilian Antigroup: a translocal study is a research project dedicated to the Sicilian Antigroup, a poetry movement born in 1968 and active until the 1980s around three cultural epicentres: Palermo, Trapani and Catania. Moved by the idea of poetry as revolutionary action, this group of poets proposed alternative politics and behaviours.

After a period of study in public and private archives and visits made to heirs and witnesses, in collaboration with PUBLICS, REPLICA shared with the public the international experiences made by the Sicilian movement, focusing in particular on the Convegna fra i Popoli del Mediterraneo, a series of seminars about poetry involving poets from all the Mediterranean area, and the publishing house Cross-Cultural Communications founded in New York by Stanley H. Barkan to spread traditionally neglected languages. After an introduction, a collective reading opened a discursive moment where it was possible to discuss a selection of poems. During the event, archival materials and publications from the Sicilian Antigroup was available to the public together with audio traces of poems read by Timo Performativo, Adriano La Licata and Carola Provenzano, respectively a performer, artist and curator from Sicily.

The project Sicilian Antigroup: a translocal study was supported by the Italian Council (12th edition, 2023), a programme for the international promotion of Italian art of the Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity of the Italian Ministry of Culture.

● Nina Möntmann: Decentring the Museum, Book Launch in conversation with Paul O'Neill

Publics invited and co-hosted at Amos Rex Nina Möntmann who discussed her new book Decentring the Museum along with Paul O'Neill and her contribution to Not Going it Alone: Collective Curatorial Curating. Nina and Paul were in conversation and Amos Rex's Head of Curatorial, Itha O'Neill moderated the conversation.

Nina Möntmann's timely book extends the decolonisation debate to the institutions of contemporary art. In a thoughtfully articulated text, illustrated with pertinent examples of best practice, she argues that to play a crucial role within increasingly diverse societies museums and galleries of contemporary art have a

responsibility to 'decentre' their institutions, removing from their collections, exhibition policies and infrastructures a deeply embedded Euro-centric cultural focus with roots in the history of colonialism. In this, she argues, they can learn from the example both of anthropological museums (such as the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum in Cologne), which are engaged in debates about the colonial histories of their collections, about trauma and repair, and of small-scale art spaces (such as La Colonie, Paris, ANO, Institute of Arts and Knowledge, Accra or Savvy Contemporary, Berlin), which have the flexibility, based on informal infrastructures, to initiate different kinds of conversation and collective knowledge production in collaboration with indigenous or local diasporic communities from the Global South.

For the first time, this book identifies the influence that anthropological museums and small art spaces can exert on museums of contemporary art to initiate a process of decentring.

● Bright Ecologies, Book Launch

Publics hosted Andrea Caretto and Raffaella Spagna as part of our parahosting programme as they launched their book *Bright Ecologies*. Andrea and Raffaella gave a presentation and were in conversation with Alessandra Pioselli, one of the book's curators and editors.

Bright Ecologies is the first overview of the artistic research of Andrea Caretto and Raffaella Spagna, an Italian artistic duo focused on site specific art project with a sensible attitude to the landscape, in a full-bodied monograph that interweaves interpretive and documentary approaches, critical and theoretical reading with the regist and reconstruction of a broad itinerary, through fact sheets and a rich apparatus of images.

Forerunners of art practices ecologically engaged with environmental issues, Caretto/Spagna identify art as the field of a radical experience of openness, undisciplined research and engagement with the "things" of the world: the earth, seeds, people, stones, the museum, the river, the quarry, the tree, microorganisms. *Bright Ecologies*. Caretto/Spain: Experiences, Forms, Materials traces and documents their 20 years of work, oriented by lines of research centered on care, transformation of matter and experiments on form, concretized in works, site-specific installations, workshops and residencies, actions and collective projects founded on encounter, process, gift, experiences of participation and co-authorship. Caretto/Spagna's artistic practice, shared since 2002, is marked by a philosophical, poetic and highly political matrix that expresses itself in the forms of activism and reflection on issues that are today at the center of international theoretical and artistic debate, in parallel with the rise of posthumanist and ecocentric philosophies, new materialisms and the growing alarm over climate change.

Structured in three parts, it opens with an essay by anthropologist Tim Ingold, with texts by the curators (Francesca Comisso, Cecilia Guida, Giorgina Bertolino) and a series of crossreadings (Riccardo Venturi, Giusi Diana, Alba L'Astorina, Marie-Anne Lanavère). The central section of the monograph is devoted to the archive, edited by Alessandra Pioselli in collaboration with Caretto/Spagna. Starting with key concepts, it is organized into ten sections: All Things That Are, Domestication, Dwelling, Soil as Experience, Matter in-formation, Abyssal Time, Water Mountains, Divinations, Dark Matters, and Museum as Ecosystem. The documentation of over 50 projects is followed by ten narratives, ten testimonies commissioned by the artists from people who directly participated in the different experiences. The conversation between Caretto/Spagna and Alice Benessia and the apparatuses constitute the third section of the monograph.



Nina Möntmann: Decentring the Museum Book Launch, photo by PUBLICS



PUBLICS YOUTH & NonCitizen, Film Screening event at Nordic Culture Point, photo by Yelyzaveta Babaieva

● The Octopus, Book Launch

PUBLICS with The Saastamoinen Foundation presented and launched *The Octopus: On Diversities, Art Production, Educational Models, and Curatorial Trajectories*, published in the book series of the University of Applied Arts Vienna Edition Angewandte by De Gruyter.

Edited by Basak Senova, the book shares contributions by Ruth Anderwald + Leonard Grond, Çelenk Bafra, Yane Calovski, Jonatan Habib Engqvist, Olfa Feki, Hristina Ivanoska, Johannes Jäger, Anne Klontz, Bronwyn Lace, Maria Lantz, Verena Miedl-Faißt, Maarit Mustonen, Marcus Neustetter, Egle Oddo, Barbara Putz- Plecko, Basak Senova, Renad Shqeirat, Bochra Taboubi, and Johan Thom and project texts by Noor Abed, Sophia Bellouhassi, Younes Ben Slimane, Férielle Doulain-Zouari, Eser Epözdemir, Els van Houtert, Bengü Karaduman, Marwa Manai, Verena Miedl-Faißt, Nondumiso Lwazi Msimanga, Maarit Mustonen, Jannis Neumann, Sofia Priftis, Alina Rentsch, Kim M. Reynolds, Julia Stern, Bochra Taboubi, and Conny Zenk. *The Octopus: On Diversities, Art Production, Educational Models, and Curatorial Trajectories* was designed by Funda Senova Tunali and Basak Senova.

This book is the accumulation of the Octopus Programme (2019-2022), which was designed as a guided research-based educational programme that encouraged artistic research and production-based collaborations in different geographical regions. The Octopus Programme developed new critical perspectives to process artistic research and practices while bridging and acknowledging: the diversity of socio-political realities, academic and non-academic intellectual models, institutional and alternative curatorial practices, accessed and distributed resources and facilities, and multiple knowledge production models. By merging the viewpoints of academic entities and contemporary art institutions, the programme developed a generative research methodology by creating an autonomous network.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Basak Senova is a curator and designer from Turkey. Curated the pavilions of Turkey and Northern Macedonia at Venice Biennale (2009/2015); 2nd and the 5th D-O ARK Underground Biennial (BiH) (2013/2019); Helsinki Photography Biennial 14; Jerusalem Show VII: Fractures (2014); the inaugural exhibition of B7L9, *Climbing through the Tide* in Tunis (2019); and served as Art Gallery Chair of ACM SIGGRAPH 2014, Vancouver. She acted as an advisory board member of the Turkish Pavilion in Venice Biennale, Istanbul Biennial, and the D-O ARK Underground Biennial (BiH). She serves on the editorial board of PASS, International Biennial Association's journal. Senova completed a long-term research-based project *CrossSections* that took place in Vienna, Helsinki, and Stockholm between 2017 and 2019. She is a Guest Professor at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, running the Octopus Programme.

● Visual Aids 'Everyone I know is Sick' film screening

PUBLICS partnered with Visual AIDS for Day With(out) Art 2024 by presenting *Red Reminds Me...*, a program of seven videos reflecting the emotional spectrum of living with HIV today. This event was co-hosted with Kenno Films (Helsinki).

Red Reminds Me... featured newly commissioned videos by Gian Cruz (Philippines), Milko Delgado (Panama), Imani Harrington (USA), David Oscar Harvey (USA), Mariana Iacono and Juan De La Mar (Argentina/Colombia), Nixie (Belgium), Vasilios Papapitsios (USA).

Through the red ribbon and other visuals, HIV and AIDS has been long associated with the color red and its connotations—blood, pain, tragedy, and anger. *Red Reminds Me...* invites viewers to consider a complex range of images and feelings

surrounding HIV, from eroticism and intimacy, mothering and kinship, luck and chance, memory and haunting. The commissioned artists deploy parody, melodrama, theater, irony, and horror to build a new vocabulary for representing HIV today.

THE CENTRE FOR CURATORIAL THINKING

In 2024 PUBLICS pilots and launches The Centre For Curatorial Thinking, a new centre in the Nordic and Baltic region focusing on the significance of past and present thinking, knowledge, and critique within practices of the curatorial.

With The Centre For Curatorial Thinking, PUBLICS provides a critical framework to engage different levels of expertise and local groups in the region and internationally, making visible, developing, and disseminating critical knowledge of curatorial practices with a wide range of institutions and actors.

Through The Centre For Curatorial Thinking, PUBLICS co-curates a program of archival exhibitions, listening sessions, and the Curatorial Reading Group. The aim of the centre is to provide a platform for local curators and art professionals to interact with international colleagues who have contributed to the evolution of innovative curatorial practices of the last sixty years or so. Selected participants from established museums, institutions and small-scale organisations met at PUBLICS to think, discuss, read, engage and listen with each other and with invited international guests who have contributed significantly to curatorial discourse and innovation in curatorial practices, art writing, and exhibition-making of the last decades. Each session of the Curatorial Reading Group was accompanied by an exhibition at PUBLICS of reading and archival material related to our pioneering guests beginning in Spring 2024. This is a space for thinking through ideas together, listening, and learning in dialogue with arts professionals and to develop their own programs, drawing on more ambitious, collaborative, and experimental examples.

The Centre For Curatorial Thinking has taken on many forms, including a dedicated Curatorial Reading Group, using PUBLICS Library as one of its main settings for a series of reading and listening sessions, and annual symposia. PUBLICS Library is the largest dedicated contemporary art curatorial library in Finland. This unique Library of 8000+ publications is one of the most important research libraries dedicated to curatorial research in the world, housing the most important books and catalogues related to contemporary art curating since the 1960s. The Curatorial Reading Group has comprised cross-generational events with pioneering curators and agenda-setting curatorial thinkers, to read with PUBLICS Youth and established art professionals from across the world, including leading curators, artist-curators, art-writers, collectives, and emergent curating practitioners. Curatorial Reading Group events will also tour across the region.

CCT Reading groups first Curatorial Pioneer guests invited in 2024 were Maaretta Jaukkuri and Tominga O'Donnell, Maria Lind & Marti Manen and PUBLICS Youth, Brian Dillon On Art Writing, Maria Fusco On Art Writing and AA Bronson and Gareth Long. Each session of the Curatorial Reading Group was accompanied by an exhibition at PUBLICS of reading and archival material related to our pioneering guests.

● AA BRONSON, GENERAL IDEA & ART METROPOLE

PUBLICS with our final Curatorial pioneer guests AA Bronson and with Gareth Long co-curated the first exhibition to focus upon the entangled relationship



Maria Fusco, On Art Writing, photo by Aman Askarizad



Maaretta Jaukkuri & Tominga O'Donnell, photo by Aman Askarizad

between AA Bronson, the artist group General Idea's publishing and distribution practice, and one of their most enduring artworks: Art Metropole. The exhibition comprised artworks, publications, rare editions, archival material, and a selection of General Idea films from 1977-85: Pilot (1977); Hot Property (1978/80); Test Tube (1979); Cornucopia (1982); Loco (1982) and Shut The Fuck Up (1985). PUBLICS hosted a satellite pop-up of Art Metropole's bookstore throughout the exhibition.

Established in 1974, Art Metropole operates the oldest and longest-running artist-run centre that publishes, promotes, exhibits, archives, and distributes artists' books, multiples, and related media in the world. The exhibition design centres around an installation artwork by Long providing a space for looking, reading and lounging at PUBLICS Library in Helsinki.

AA Bronson (born Michael Tims, 1946) was one of the founding members of artist group General Idea, together with Felix Partz (born Ronald Gabe, 1945–1994), and Jorge Zontal (born Slobodan Saia-Levy, 1944–1994). The three met in Toronto in 1969, drawn to the city's blossoming countercultural scene. General Idea started as an anonymous group before crystallising into an intentional three-part group

Art Metropole was founded in 1974 by General Idea as a division of Art-Official Inc., (est. 1972). Art-Official's founding mission was to facilitate and document collaboration and exchange of ideas between artists, and served as the non-profit publisher of General Idea's File Magazine (1972–1989). Art Metropole was conceived as a related artist-run centre and collection agency devoted to the documentation, archiving and distribution of all the images.

PUBLICS LIBRARY & LEARNING PROGRAM

PUBLICS is an educational resource where critical learning, knowledge production and discursive programming are integral to its curatorial approach. At PUBLICS, contemporary art production, and discursive practices are in constant dialogue through its multiple learning strands. Taking the form of PUBLICS Library, and its public programme of Talks, Events and Commissions, these overlapping strands are organised alongside PUBLICS YOUTH program, placing art education, critical research and publicness at the centre of curatorial practice.

In 2024, PUBLICS Library has grown significantly through gathering new materials related to the Curatorial Reading Groups, donations, book launches and events. We have also launched and sent 4 Library newsletters, focusing specifically on the activities in and around the Library.

Each session of the Curatorial Reading Group was accompanied by a selection of publications available at PUBLICS and as a list online on our website. Each selection reflects the key publications from invited guests and hosts of the Reading Groups. At the end of the year we have published a new Library Guide in relation to our final Curatorial Reading Group, that is available on our website.

In 2024, the Library kept on growing and expanding through generous donations. Besides the donations by artists, curators and cultural workers of the local and international, we received a series of publications from Freelands Foundation after their team visited PUBLICS in June 2024. Freelands Foundation believes art to be central to a broad and balanced education, and a right for everyone. They are driven by a conviction in the vital role of learning and making to foster creativity, resilience, criticality and problem-solving that empowers and equips us for the future.

We have also received a generous donation from Paper Visual Art (PVA) this year. Established in 2009, Paper Visual Art (PVA) has been publishing journals, books, and online texts that focus on visual art, contemporary culture, and literature. You can find both their latest publications & magazines in our collection at PUBLICS.

Our open Library days continued every Wednesday from January to June and from August to December. We welcomed more than 200 visitors and facilitated more than 15 Library bookings for groups and individuals. We hosted student, researcher and visiting professional groups and gave introductions to our Library activities. In 2024, we brought most attention to Curatorial and Art Writing sections, with most new books becoming part of the mentioned categories.

In addition to the material library, PUBLICS hosts events linked to the library, as well as educational and collaboration-based research projects. PUBLICS Library is a space dedicated to critical social thinking, learning, education, representing concepts, theories and practices of curating contemporary art, education, history of curating, culture and social theory, public art and activism. The library includes 8000+ books, catalogues and other printed matter. The online catalogue holds information on all titles and makes the Library accessible prior to the visit. PUBLICS Library is open once a week on a regular basis with consistent opening hours and by appointment. Visitors are provided with a space to read, learn, discuss and research. To keep the library up-to-date, new titles are bought monthly, incorporated into one of sixteen existing categories. Throughout the year, PUBLICS Library offered the possibility for student groups, classes, visiting guests, artists and curators and research groups to visit our facilities with an in-depth introduction to the materials of our Library collection and PUBLICS program.

PUBLICS has organised a series of events emphasising the importance of publishing, including book launches with publishers, authors and designers; Coupling, a series of collaborations between two or more artists that are deeply linked to the library as a starting point or a source of materials, ideas and possibilities; and a Reading Group with invited guests which highlights selected books from the Library.

LOCAL OUTREACH FOR THE LIBRARY

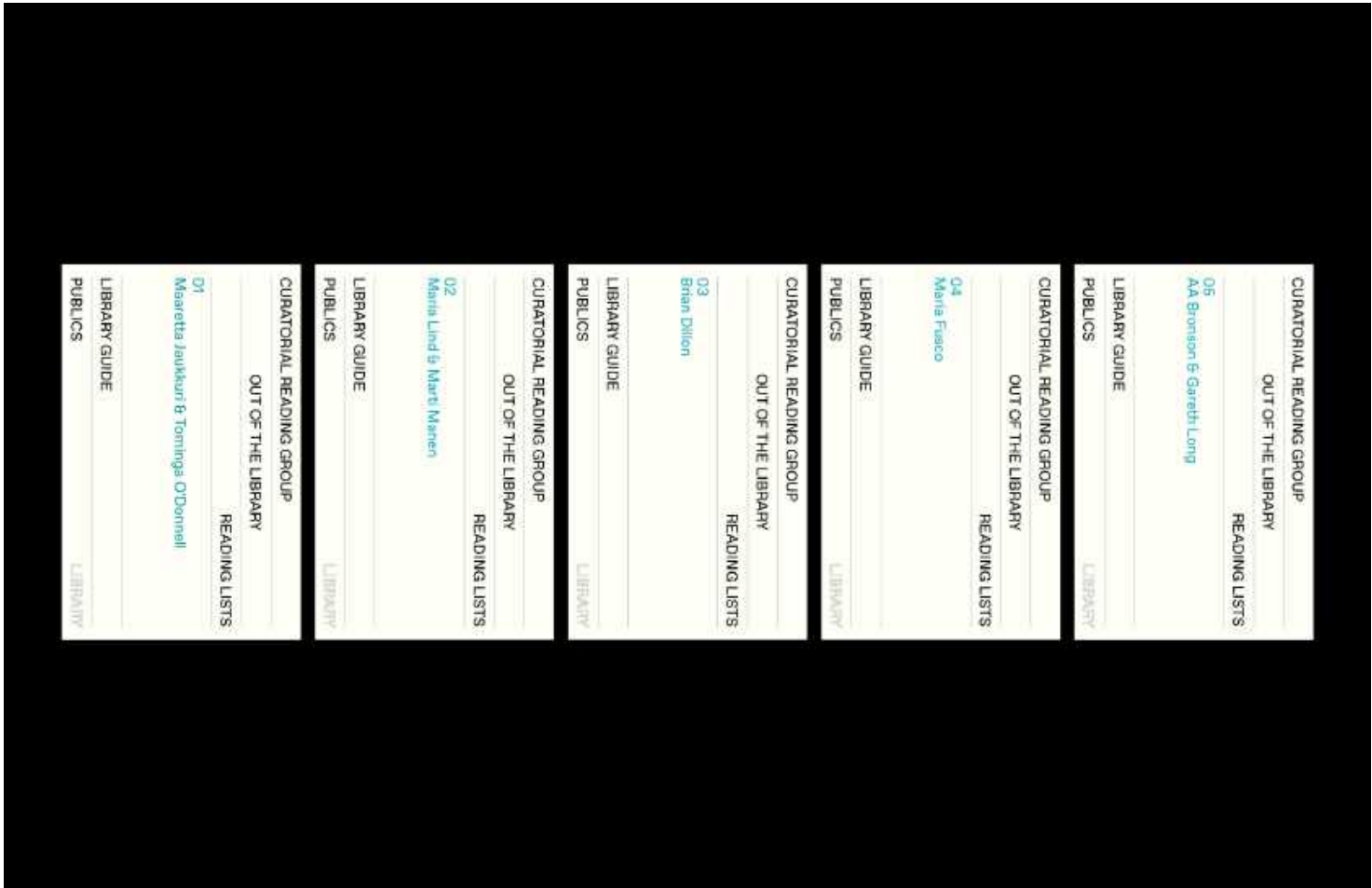
Outreach of the Library has been made through activation of the collection through The Curatorial Reading Groups, newly published Library Guide, visits to major art institutions, academies and universities in Helsinki and Finland, newly established Library newsletter and hosting various groups of guests and visitors.

In 2024 Publics developed National Outreach for The Centre For Curatorial Thinking and Publics Library Activities and visited amongst others regionally; Titanik, Turku Art Museum, Serlachius Museum, Pori Art Museum, University of the Arts, Anti Festival, Paimio Sanatorium, Amos Rex, Seinäjoki Taidehalli.

International / Nordic and Baltic Outreach for The Centre For the Curatorial Thinking & Library activities Latvian CCA, Estonian CCA, Vilnius Academy of Arts, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway, Munch Museum, Oslo, Norway, PRAKSIS, Oslo, Norway, Maaretta Jaukkuri Foundation, Lofoten, Norway, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden, Index, Swedish Foundation for Contemporary Art, Stockholm, Sweden, HDK-Valand, University of, Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden, Frelands Foundation, London, UK, Simian Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark, KOS Museum of Art in Public Spaces, Koge, Denmark, Museum Why Network, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, LCCA Riga, Latvia, Estonian Centre for Contemporary Art, CCA, Tallinn, Estonia, Vilnius Academy of Arts, CAC Vilnius.



PUBLICS Library, photo by Aman Askarizad



Library Guides, design by Valerio Di Lucente

In 2024, PUBLICS has recruited the third Youth Advisory Board: Akanksha Bhat, Arnab Ghurde, Helena Massuda Garcia, Isabella Oropeza, Joanna Lagerblom, Kaius Kuhmonen, Linh Dan Vu, Matilda Järvi, Yelyzaveta Babaieva, and Yu Yue. Micol Curatolo was the coordinator of the project.

PUBLICS Youth is a collective of creatives (18-21 year old) working together to implement, question and expand how young people and cultural organisations cooperate in the local and international art scene. The activity of the Youth Advisory Board 2024 is part of the project Reaching Out (2023-2026) with PRAKSIS Teen Advisory Boards (Oslo) and Index Teen Advisory Board (Stockholm). Reaching Out questions and expands how cultural organisations connect with and address new young audiences. The three Boards constitute the Nordic creative youth network Future Futures.

● INTRODUCTION TO CURATORIAL THINKING

The Youth Board participated in PUBLICS' newly launched Centre For Curatorial Thinking by attending the reading groups and events programmed for the Centre, being introduced to local and international curators. In August, they hosted the space to welcome curators Maria Lind and Marti Manen.

● THE FUTURE FUTURES TALK SHOW & THE NORDIC YOUTH CONFERENCE 2024

As part of our Nordic Youth Network, the Youth Board focused on filmmaking and the moving images as a medium to tell, communicate, document and understand the present. At the end of October, they travelled to Stockholm hosted by Index Foundation and their Teen Advisory Board. During their stay, the Youth Board met with their fellow members to prepare for the recording of The Future Futures Talk Show. The live event took place in Konstfack with guest speakers Roxy Farhat, Malin Hüber and Vanja Sandell Billström. The event edited into three talk show episodes available online.

In this unconventional format, The Future Futures Talk Show brings together young creatives, artists and filmmakers to discuss how film can redirect our gazes.

Episodes:

- 'On Controlling the Narrative'

By Index Teen Advisory Board with artist Roxy Farhat

- 'How Exposure Shapes Perspectives'

By PRAKSIS Teen Advisory Board with film producer Malin Hüber

- 'How to Film the Present?'

By PUBLICS Youth with artist Vanja Sandell Billström

● PUBLIC FILM SCREENING EVENTS

On December 12th, the Youth Board hosted a curated screening of short films that explored relations to home and the land while experiencing migration. The shorts were by young filmmakers based in Finland and Sweden and have been selected in collaboration with Noncitizen, a collective exploring border politics, moving images, and art. The event was produced with the support of Nordic Culture Point.

The Future Futures Talk Show and the Youth Board's collaborative short film will

premiere in their end of tenure event 'The Observer Effect', at PUBLICS on March 8th 2025.

● WORKSHOPS

Throughout the year, they worked with artist Shubhangi Singh to engage with experimental filmmaking. In a series of workshops, they analysed films and videos, discussing how storytelling is built. They worked in groups on developing a concept and storyline for short films, which they shot and edited collaboratively. The Youth Board also met researcher Leo Custódio, who hosted a workshop on the functioning of popular and mass media, and how this can be redirected to communicate and sustain change by communities that face marginalisation.

SHAPE HELSINKI ART MAP

SHAPE Art Map, a website resource for Helsinki's contemporary art landscape, a mapping of art spaces and public events across the city, bringing together established art institutions, commercial galleries, artist-run spaces as well as smaller initiatives and support structures has been run and maintained by PUBLICS throughout the year.

The platform has been updated manually once per week, gathering data on events and exhibitions from various websites and platforms and inputting it. Alongside the website, selected entries of SHAPE have been featured weekly on Instagram and Facebook platforms. We have delivered and organised stickers & poster rounds, bringing SHAPE attributes to each directory member in June, August, September and November. We have done 2 rounds of paid monthly Instagram & Facebook campaigns for SHAPE Art Map, both in the spring and autumn.

This year, we have hired a programmer to help us improve the accessibility and functionality of SHAPE Art Map. After the changes and updates, the website provides easier access from the main page to the directory, displays all given entries under each venue, and displays a newer calendar version with better calculation functions under events and exhibitions sections.

From January 2024, SHAPE moved to an annual subscription-based platform with varying subscription plans, depending on the type and capacity of the institutions listed in the directory. The shift to an annual subscription model began in October 2023 and continued until early spring 2024. Annual subscription plans have been adjusted according to the scale of each organisation, starting with museums and large scale institutions and following with commercial galleries, non-commercial galleries and middle-scale institutions and artist-run spaces. Each plan offers features such as weekly updating events and exhibitions to the platform, featuring and profiling of each institution on social media channels, receiving ongoing promotion of SHAPE Art Map visible through other platforms, including paid and sponsored advertisements nationally and internationally. PUBLICS continued to maintain the platform and manage subscriptions case by case in 2024.

Shape Art Map directory consistently features around 100 organisations in Helsinki city and is updated monthly by offering a possibility for new spaces to join the platform. We continue to spread the word about SHAPE via our ongoing campaigns and various communication channels.



CCT: Brian Dillon, photo by Aman Askarizad



Replica Talk, photo by Valentina Černiauskaitė

STATISTICS

Throughout 2024 PUBLICS developed and commissioned in total large scale new 3 commissioned works, held 26 events and 5 Curatorial Reading Groups and 6 exhibitions as part of The Centre For Curatorial Thinking. PUBLICS collaborated with 101 individual cultural workers, artists and professionals. In 2024 PUBLICS employed 4 salaried members of staff, 1 curatorial Fellow from Riga, 10 PUBLICS Youth Advisory Board Members who met 12 times over the year and 7 Board Members who met up to 6 times and two internships for 1-3 months. We had consistently between 60-100 people attend our events including the parahosting events, commissioned exhibition openings, parahosting events, book launches and artists talks and library events. Our library opened its doors every Wednesday and attracted visitors on average between 5-15 per session. 15 group and individual bookings to library from the academies and art schools as well as abroad in such cases the numbers were 15-20 per session. The reading group's attendance was between 20-25 people per session. During months when PUBLICS was open for commissions and exhibitions events and the AA Bronson, General Idea and Art Metropole exhibition we had on average 20+ people per day week.

Our social media channels are steadily growing with our PUBLICS instagram followers 6300 by the end of 2022 and by the end of 2024 over 8000. Our PUBLICS instagram channel on average reaches views of 130,000 every quarter and engages 20,000 accounts. On Facebook PUBLICS has 5700 followers and 16,000 views reached per quarter, 800 views via each post and post engagement is 130. We sent a monthly newsletter in 2024 to over approximately 1300 subscribers and our mailing list has over 3000 active subscribers in total. In November of 2024 we began a bi-monthly library newsletter focusing on all things related to The Library and The Centre for Curatorial Thinking activities, they will continue in 2025.

SHAPE Art Map platform had 23,500 page views per January-November and 16,000 sessions per January-November, with 50% desktop, 2% tablet and 48% mobile version viewers. Top referrals to SHAPE website were Instagram, My Helsinki, Facebook App, Publics, ChatGPT, Linktree, E-flux, Helsingin Sanomat, Toimen Silma, Sculptors gallery, Suomen Taidegraafikot, NOBA.ac – kõik kunstist! Top countries were Finland, United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Italy, Netherlands, France, Denmark and Estonia. SHAPE Art Map profile on Instagram had an average of 59,596 views over a 90 day period in 2024 with 55% followers and 45% non-followers. Top locations of followers and interacting profiles are Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa and Turku. We get 687 interactions per last 90 days on average with 368 accounts engaged on average, with a reach of approximately 12,750 accounts. The profile has grown to more than 2730 followers by the end of the year 2024.

FUNDING

As PUBLICS confirms a more long term collaboration with Saastamoinen Foundation to advance and further develop The Centre For Curatorial Thinking as a networked institution in the making, and through its public activities to include a series of four new large scale annual symposia 2025-2028, along with the future expansion of PUBLICS Library towards a strategic future partnership with Saastamoinen Foundation.

PUBLICS also receives Erasmus + 3 year funding 2023-2025 for PUBLICS Youth TAB network project and continued local funding for operations from Taite ja Helsinki City. PUBLICS received an increase from 20k to 50k Funding from Taite for 2025.

PUBLICS also received smaller amounts of funding such as Mobility Funding from NCP for developing Baltic networks as part of the Centres activities, funding from Suomalais-ruotsalainen kulttuurirahasto and Suomalais-tanskalainen

kulttuurirahasto to bring CCT network partners to Finland for the Curatorial Reading Groups in 2024.

PARTNERSHIPS

As PUBLICS hosts The Centre For Curatorial Thinking to instigate dialogue between local, regional, and international thinkers, with the following steering group; Pilvi Kalhama, Executive Director, EMMA, Espoo Museum of Modern Art; Prof Mick Wilson, HDK-Valand, University of Gothenburg; Prof Bassam El Baroni, Department of Art and Media, School of Arts, Design and Architecture, Aalto University; Marti Manen, Director, Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, Stockholm; Antra Priede, Vice-rector for Academic Affairs, Art Academy of Latvia; Kati Laakso, Executive Director, Finnish Culture Institute in New York ; Anne Szefer Karlsen, Professor Curatorial Practice, University of Bergen, Norway; Maria Arusoo, Director of Estonian Centre for Contemporary Art (Kaasaegse Kunsti East Keskus) and Solvita Krese, Director of The Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art (LCCA).

The series of Curatorial Reading Groups and The Centre for Curatorial Thinking also pilots and expands in collaboration with a network of Local and International collaborations, museum institutions, local organisations and actors in Helsinki and the curatorial network of 100+ cultural actors in the Nordic- Baltic regions actively taking part in the Centres programme already since 2023- venues such as and not exclusively: Finland - M-CULT, MIF, Bioart Society, Pitted Dates, Anti Festival, Kenno Films, Palo Productions, Rab-Rab Press, Rooftop Press, KHAOS, Saastamoinen Foundation, Emma Museum, Amos Rex, Kiasma, Titanik, Aalto University, UniArts Helsinki, Pori Museum and The Serlachius Museum, Denmark - The Museum Why network, Simian gallery, KOS museum, Sweden - Valand University, Index - Contemporary Art, Moderna Museet, Norway - University of Bergen, Norway, Munch Museum-Oslo, Praxis, Baltic regions; LCCA - Latvia, Academy of Fine Arts, RUPERT, Estonia, CCA Estonia; Freeland's Foundation (UK).

Other ongoing partners; Aalto University, Academy of Fine Arts, Academy of Moving People and Images, Amos Rex, Artists at Risk, CCA Estonia, Finnish Culture Institute in New York, The Finnish Institute in London, Flock Network, Frame Finland, Globe Art Point, Index Foundation, Institute of Modern Art (IMA), Keep It Complex, Kiasma, Kohta Kunsthalle, Latitudes, Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, Lugemik, MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Narva Residency, NCP, Nida Art Colony, NO NIIN, Other Power, PALO art productions, Performa, PRAKSIS, Rab-Rab Press, Rooftop Press, Saastamoinen Foundation, Shimmer, The Showroom, Studio Julia, TAXISPALAIS Kunsthalle Tirol, Third Space, Uniarts Helsinki, University of Valand, We Jazz.

ADMINISTRATION

The supporting association behind PUBLICS is Checkpoint Helsingin Tukiyhdistys, born in 2013 in a moment where the political imagination was open to envisioning the economic and cultural benefits of making a grand investment in the arts. Instead of putting the energy into criticising, the association has taken this momentum seriously and worked towards the most interesting roadmap enabling the local cultural field to develop in dialogue with the international scene. In 2024 the association changed its name to PUBLICS ry and board members were Pilvi Kalhama (chair), Adelaide Bannerman, Taru Elfving, Bassam El Baroni (vice chair), Saara Hacklin, Kati Laakso and Pilvi Takala.

In 2024 we employed 10 Publics Youth Advisory Board Members, 7 Board Members, 4 salaried staff and 2 assistant interns and 1 curatorial fellow.



AA Bronson, General Idea & Art Metropole, photo by Aman Askarizad



PUBLICS YOUTH Takeover, photo by Aman Askarizad

In 2024 the board met 5 times. The Spring meeting was held on May 28th at Publics and online. The Annual General meeting was held on 17th December, the board met at PUBLICS. PUBLICS had two full-time employees, artistic director Paul O'Neill (1/1–31/12/2024), program manager Annabelle (31/1–31/12/2024). The organisation employed Valentina Černiauskaitė 3 days/week from January until December 2024 as coordinator of the Library and SHAPE Helsinki. Micol Curatolo was employed 2 days/week as coordinator of the PUBLICS Youth Advisory Board from January until December 2024. Valerio Di Lucente has been our visual designer and consultant ongoing since 2017. Diana Mikane worked with us from August until March 2025 under the ACADEMIA support programme for young professionals in the creative industries. Sofia Dalen and Dua Rizvi from UniArts Helsinki have done their internships at PUBLICS for 2 and 1 month respectively.

In 2024 PUBLICS confirmed continued partnership with The Saastamoinen Foundation from 2023-2028. Support also came from Erasmus+ Youth in Action program of European Union (Future Futures project developed in partnership with Index and PRAKSIS 2023-2026), Arts Promotion Centre Finland, The City of Helsinki, and Nordic Culture Point as well as Kulturfond Denmark-Finland, Kuturfond Svergie-Finland and NCP Baltic Travel grant and the Creative Europe Program (Open Up developed in partnership with 7 institutions across Europe) for the final payment of our OPEN UP project (2020-2023).



WITH Askeaton Contemporary Arts, photo by Aman Askarizad



CCT: Reading List by Maria Fusco, photo by Tuukka Kaila

Sturenkatu 37-41 4b
00550 Helsinki

publics.fi
@publicsfi

