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For immediate release:

## Busan Biennale 2020

*Words at an Exhibition* 《열 장의 이야기와 다섯 편의 시》  
*an exhibition in ten chapters and five poems*

September 5–November 8, 2020

**Organized by Artistic Director, Jacob Fabricius. Busan Biennale 2020 Invites  
Over 80 Fiction Writers, Poets, Musicians, and Contemporary Artists to Imagine a Dynamic Portrait  
of the City Across Three Key Venues**

BUSAN, SOUTH KOREA—The 2020 edition of the Busan Biennale is pleased to announce its artistic theme, organized by Artistic Director Jacob Fabricius, of the exhibition opening this September. *Words at an Exhibition – an exhibition in ten chapters and five poems* examines the city of Busan to expand the various spectrums of a metropolis through artistic expressions. For the 2020 exhibition, ten fiction writers and one poet were invited to write on the characteristics of the city of Busan as a conceptual basis for selecting the artists, each responding through new commissions and existing works within the context of the exhibition. The authors—which represent different generations, genres, and writing styles—have each created and written fictional layers around and about the city, some with direct reference to Busan, others through indirect and ephemeral urban tales involving the locale. Mixing past, present, and future, the artists and writers involved in *Words at an Exhibition – an exhibition in ten chapters and five poems* use Busan as a backdrop in ways that create a narrative that simultaneously combines reality, history, and imagination through experiences of contemporary fiction, a focus on soundscapes and film works, as well as paintings, photographs, sculptures, and site-specific installations.

“I am fascinated by the complexity of Busan, its history, and rapid urban development,” said **Jacob Fabricius**, Artistic Director, Busan Biennale 2020. “It is such a captivating challenge to imagine this exhibition through the prism of contemporary art, and merge it with the realms of literature, sound, and the visual. We have been challenged by the harsh Covid19 pandemic, but many artists have found new ways of researching and examining the city”

The title of the exhibition is derived from the Russian composer Modest Mussorgsky’s (1839–1881) *Pictures at an Exhibition* (1874). This suite of ten piano compositions is a sonic depiction of ten works by the artist Viktor Hartmann, a friend of Mussorgsky, who passed away in 1873. At its core, *Pictures at an Exhibition* is an homage and a remembrance for Viktor Hartmann. Borrowing this approach of translation—from one artistic expression into another medium—the 2020 Busan Biennale will transform the exhibition into an act of homage that extends across writing, sonic artworks, and contemporary commissions.

We are proud to announce the participation of the following:

Writers: Hyesoon Kim, Hye-Young Pyun, Solmay Park, Mark von Schlegell among others

Artists: Min Jung Song, Yongsun Suh, Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys, Bianca Bondi, Monica Bonvicini, Wonhee Noh, Aziz Hazara, Mercedes Azpilicueta, Jimin Bae, among others

Busan Biennale 2020 will be held across three venues that span the old town, Yeongdo Harbor, and Eulsukdo in an attempt to summon the diversity of the city and its history. The selected exhibition spaces encompass exact locations mentioned in the fictional texts and poems. To come as close to some of the places mentioned in the short stories—which include sites such as 40 stairs, the American Cultural Center (currently Busan Modern History Museum), Gukje Market, and Jagalchi Market, among others—spaces located in the central area of Jung-gu have been selected as exhibition sites. The Yeongdo bridge, shipyards, Kangkangee Villages, and Bongrae Cathedral are likewise mentioned in the stories—to represent these, a warehouse space in the harbor has also been selected as an exhibition venue. The final site, which will act as the main venue for this edition of the Busan Biennale 2020, is the Museum of Contemporary Art, Busan (MOCA), located on Eulsukdo, and represents the western part of Busan.



Min Jung Song, 'TALKER' Installation view at Young Korean Artists 2019, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, South Korea. Courtesy of the artist

### About the Venues

The audience will be able to tour significant areas and symbols of the modern Korean history by walking from Jung-gu and the original city center to the bridge connecting Jungang-dong and Yeongdo. The areas represent both the history and the vast growth and development of Busan and South Korea. In Yeongdo, an industrial port area, visitors can discover migration and transport based on economic revival. In Eulsukdo, located in the estuary of the Nakdong River where rivers flow into the sea, audiences will discover the possibility of mixed cultures. Above all, the attempt to connect the two islands through urban historical aspects and cultural values—between Yeongdo and Eulsukdo— will be conducted for the first time for this 2020 edition in the history of the Busan Biennale.

## About Artistic Director



Jacob Fabricius (photo: Stammers Kontor)

The 2020 Busan Biennale Artistic Director, Jacob Fabricius, is currently the Artistic Director at Kunsthall Aarhus, Denmark. Fabricius previously served as Director at Malmö Konsthall, Sweden (2008–2012), and as Director at Kunsthall Charlottenborg in Copenhagen, Denmark (2013–2014). Fabricius has curated numerous international exhibitions including solo exhibitions by Kerry James Marshall, Rivane Neuenschwander, Cecile B. Evans, Beom Kim, Keren Cytter, Superflex among others. He has also produced a number of international exhibitions and projects in public spaces. Fabricius is the founder of the publishing company Pork Salad Press and the newspaper project Old News.

## About Busan Biennale

The Busan Biennale is an international contemporary art show that integrated three different art events held in the city in 1998: the Busan Youth Biennale, the first biennale of Korea that was voluntarily organized by local artists in 1981; the Sea Art Festival, an environmental art festival launched in 1987 with the sea serving as a backdrop; and the Busan International Outdoor Sculpture Symposium that was first held in 1991. The biennale was previously called the Pusan International Contemporary Art Festival (PICAF) before it launched. The biennale has its own unique attribute in that it was formed not out of any political logic or need but rather the pure force of local Busan artists' will and their voluntary participation. Even to this day their interest in Busan's culture and its experimental nature has been the key foundation for shaping the biennale's identity. This biennale is the only one like it in the world that was established through an integration of three types of art events such as a Contemporary Art Exhibition, Sculpture Symposium, and Sea Art Festival. The Sculpture Symposium in particular was deemed to be a successful public art event, the results of which were installed throughout the city and dedicated to revitalizing cultural communication with citizens. The networks formed through the event have assumed a crucial role in introducing and expanding domestic art overseas and leading the development of local culture for globalized cultural communication. Founded 38 years ago, the biennale aims to popularize contemporary art and achieve art in everyday life by providing a platform for interchanging experimental contemporary art.