

CONTOUR 11 BIENNALE

Contour Biennale relaunches on 5 September 2026 with 11th edition curated by Sofia Lemos

**Contour Biennale 11: *The Eyes of the Heart and the Soul of the World*
curated by Sofia Lemos
Mechelen, 5 September – 1 November 2026**

Press preview: 3 September 2026 at 12 pm
Opening drink: 5 September 2026 at 6 pm

Weekend programme on 5 September and 6 September 2026

MECHELEN, 6 August 2026 — **Contour Biennale returns this autumn with its 11th edition. This focused relaunch edition marks the return of Belgium's leading biennale dedicated to moving image. Curated by Sofia Lemos and titled *The Eyes of the Heart and the Soul of the World*, Contour Biennale 11 will take place from 5 September to 1 November 2026 across heritage and cultural sites in Mechelen, bringing together international artists around themes of transformation and imagination.**

***The Eyes of the Heart and the Soul of the World* by Sofia Lemos** brings together artists from diverse geographical contexts, whose works explore **transformation, imagination**, and the power of images to shape how we experience ourselves and the world.

The participating artists are **Gabriel Abrantes, Mariana Caló & Francisco Queimadela, June Crespo, Rodrigo Hernández, Özgür Kar, Ayoung Kim, Lucia Martinez Garcia, Tuán Andrew Nguyễn, Claudia Pagès Rabal, Laure Prouvost, Kivu Ruhorahoza & Christian Nyampeta, Lisa Spilliaert, Ana Vaz, and Yuyan Wang.**

The **press preview** will take place on **3 September at 12 pm at Kunsthal Mechelen** and will include a guided tour by the curator. The biennial will publicly open on **Saturday, 5 September** with guided tours by the curator, a discussion with participating artists **Laure Prouvost** and **Yuyan Wang** moderated by film theorist **Teresa Castro**, and an **opening reception at 6 pm at Kunsthal Mechelen**, with welcome words by Alderman for Culture **Kristof Calvo**, Minister of

Culture **Caroline Gennez**, Curator Sofia Lemos and Director Heidi Ballet. The opening weekend will continue on Sunday, 6 September, with a collective rest led by **Rodrigo Hernández** at Stiltetuin and a conversation with philosopher Michael Marder.

Sofia Lemos previously held curatorial positions at TBA21 — Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Nottingham Contemporary, 2nd Riga Biennial, Galeria Municipal do Porto and collaborated on the public program of Contour Biennale 8 (2017). Her project was selected for expanding beyond conventional formats, her **extensive international experience**, and her sensitivity to the biennale's transitioning structure.

With the return of Contour Biennale, Mechelen will once again become a **vibrant hub for contemporary art**. As the Biennale's committed partner and main venue, **Kunsthall Mechelen** plays a central role in the project, while the newly opened contemporary art space **TACK TICK** launched by TICK TACK (Antwerp) will host part of the exhibition. Contour Biennale, Kunsthall Mechelen and TACK TICK **join forces in creating a stage for artistic experimentation and public engagement** in the city.

The biennale will activate heritage and cultural locations. The route will start at **Kunsthall Mechelen**, and continue to the following locations: **TACK TICK**, **dmvA Architects** and **De Noker**. Alongside temporary installations, this edition includes a new permanent public artwork by **Rodrigo Hernández**, installed in the **Silent Garden at the Archbishop's Palace**. The artwork was commissioned by the City of Mechelen in **collaboration with Kunsthall Mechelen and Alderman of Culture Kristof Calvo**. This forms part of a collaboration with the City of Mechelen that will continue in future editions of the biennale.

Throughout the exhibition, the programme will include activities tailored to different communities and focus groups, including students, children, families, and visitors with sensory needs.

Curator Sofia Lemos: *"Over the past months, I have been excited to work closely with artists in developing the projects, moods, and intensities that will shape this edition, as well as to collaborate with the newly formed biennale team throughout the process."*

Contour Biennale relaunches with a new organisation

Since 2003, the Contour Biennale has grown into a cornerstone of Belgium's contemporary art landscape and remains one of only two biennales in Europe that is dedicated to moving image.

Following the discontinuation of the biennale after its 2023 edition, prompting concern within the Belgian and international arts community, a group of Belgium-based cultural workers founded the non-profit organisation **vzw Contouristen** to secure Contour Biennale's future, with Kunsthall Mechelen as its main partner.

The organisation received project funding from the **Flemish Government** for the 11th edition of Contour Biennale, as well as **co-production and other forms of support from several organisations**, including Kunsthall Mechelen, Kunstencentrum nona, TACK TICK, Academie Mechelen, NW Aalst, Argos, Beursschouwburg, Kunstenpunt, KASK & Conservatorium, escautville, STUK, WIELS, Auguste Orts, Courtisane, dmvA architecten, Emmaüs vzw, Studio PARA, Studio RGB, and Bureau BoschBerg.

Under the direction of Heidi Ballet, Contour Biennale returns with a renewed organisational structure and works on building a sustainable future for the biennale.

Director Heidi Ballet: *“With a group of fellow curators we decided to build a new future for the biennale. The relaunch of Contour Biennale marks not only the continuation of a cultural legacy spanning more than two decades, but also a renewed commitment to creating a platform where international curators and artists can make a statement about our world today in the historical city of Mechelen, and inspire future generations of curators, artists and audiences.”*

Participating Artists

Gabriel Abrantes

b.1984, North Carolina, USA. Lives and works in Lisbon, Portugal.

Mariana Caló & Francisco Queimadela

b. 1984, Viana do Castelo, Portugal / b. 1985, Coimbra, Portugal. Live and work in Porto, Portugal.

June Crespo

b. 1982, Pamplona, Spain. Lives and works in Bilbao, Spain.

Rodrigo Hernández

b.1983, Mexico City, Mexico. Lives and works in Paris, France and Mexico City, Mexico.

Özgür Kar

b.1992, Ankara, Turkey. Lives and works in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Ayoung Kim

b. 1979, Seoul, South Korea. Lives and works in Seoul, South Korea.

Lucia Martinez Garcia

b. 1994, Geneva, Switzerland. Lives and works in Paris, France and Geneva, Switzerland.

Tuấn Andrew Nguyễn

b.1976, Saigon, Vietnam. Lives and works in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Claudia Pagès Rabal

b. 1990, Barcelona, Spain. Lives and works in Barcelona, Spain.

Laure Prouvost

b. 1978, Lille, France. Lives and works in Brussels, Belgium.

Kivu Ruhorahoza & Christian Nyampeta

b. 1982 / b. 1981, Kigali, Rwanda. Live and work in Kigali, Rwanda / in New York, USA.

Lisa Spilliaert

b. 1990, Tokyo, Japan. Lives and works in Ghent, Belgium.

Ana Vaz

b. 1986, Brasília, Brazil. Lives and works in Paris, France.

Yuyan Wang

b. 1989, Qingdao, China. Lives and works in Paris, France.

Press invitation details

Join us on **3 September 2026 at 12 pm** for a presentation of the new organisation by Heidi Ballet, an introduction to Contour Biennale 11 by Sofia Lemos followed by a visit to Stiltetuïn where you will discover a new permanent artwork by Rodrigo Hernández. You will also have the opportunity to visit the five exhibition venues ahead of the official opening weekend.

Address: Kunsthall Mechelen, Onder-Den-Toren 12, 2800 Mechelen

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