



PRESS RELEASE

CYLAND MediaArtLab presents the International Media Art Festival CYFEST-15.

Theme: **Vulnerability**

Dates: September 2-18, 2023

Location: Yerevan, Armenia

Venues: HayArt Cultural Center, Yerevan Botanical Garden, Institute for Contemporary Art (I.C.A. Yerevan).

CYFEST is one of Eastern Europe's largest international media art festivals. Founded by a group of independent artists in 2007, its primary mission is to support interdisciplinary collaboration, dialogue, and experiments, examine various visual languages and technological cultures and present them to a wide audience. CYFEST unites professionals in the field of art and representatives of scientific communities: artists, curators, engineers, programmers, media activists, and theoreticians.

CYFEST is a nomadic cultural event. Since 2013, its exhibitions, concerts, performances, video screenings, lectures, and master classes have been held all over the world: in the U.S.A. (New York, San Francisco, Miami, Minneapolis, Arizona, and Alaska), Armenia (Yerevan), Belgium (Brussels), Brazil (São Paulo), Great Britain (London, Dartington), Germany (Berlin), Spain (Barcelona), Italy (Venice, Caserta), Columbia (Bogota, Manizales), Finland (Helsinki), France (Paris), South Korea (Gwangju) and Japan (Fukuoka).

The first CYFEST constituted a small program of events. The festival exposition opened with Andy Warhol's installation *Silver Clouds* contributed by the artist's museum in Pittsburg (U.S.A.). The festival has also been memorable by the exhibition *History of the E.A.T. 1960–2000*, dedicated to the lab *Experiments in Art and Technology* of engineers Billy Klüver and Fred Waldhauer and artists Robert Rauschenberg and Robert Whitman. In subsequent years, CYFEST has consistently expanded, becoming more comprehensive and complex. From 2007 to 2023, over 350 artists and collectives participated in it. Among them are the pioneers of electronic music, some of the more influential experimental musicians in U.S. history: David Rosenboom, Phill Niblock, and Al Margolis; Austrian post-conceptual artist, curator and theoretician of media art, director of Z.K.M. Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe Peter Weibel; artist, founder, and editor-in-chief of *e-flux* journal Anton Vidokle; innovative video artist Bjørn Melhus; conceptual artist and author of the first *total installations* Irina Nakhova and others. The festival projects in Venice and New York in 2019-2022, organized in collaboration with Kolodzei Art Foundation, united works of contemporary artists with creations of the XX century classics: Erik Bulatov, Ilya Kabakov, Mihail Chemiakin, Ernst Neizvestny, Francisco Arana Infante, Valentina Povarova, Lydia Masterkova and others.

Since 2020, CYFEST has collaborated with the International Society for the Arts, Sciences, and Technology *Leonardo*, contributed to the *Leonardo Journal* and organized *LASER Talks*. The last issue of *Leonardo*, put out by the M.I.T. Press, contains texts of the world-renowned French artist whose work enacts the most significant biotechnological and trans-personal metamorphosis in the history of art ORLAN and the internationally recognized multi-disciplinary collective of artists, designers, and writers *Slavs and Tatars*.

CYFEST-15 in Yerevan is dedicated to (anti)fragility of human and non-human body, biological, social and cyberspaces, stories and scenarios of the future as well as confrontations and relationships with the world in a state of transition.

«Vulnerability is a natural quality of any human being. What is paradoxical is that it is precisely on this that the self-awareness and personal dignity of a human being seems to be based. Acknowledgment of one's vulnerability makes us truly stronger. Expressing one's desires, reevaluating personal boundaries, and questioning are actions that entail a certain risk but also help to overcome the fear of being rejected or misunderstood. They prepare us for submerging into entropy without fear, but also without superfluous hope, and for meeting destruction face to face. By recognizing our vulnerability, we also discover our empathic ability — this feeds our ethical responsibility towards others, society, and the environment.»
— Elena Gubanova, Silvia Burini.

The festival's participants will count over 60 authors from 15 countries: Armenia, Belgium, Great Britain, Hungary, Spain, Italy, Columbia, Mexico, Netherlands, Russia, U.S.A., Finland, France, Switzerland, and Japan. Among them are the artist, one of two authors showcased in the first national pavilion of Armenia at Venice Biennale in 1995 **Samvel Baghdassarian** (1956-2017); An early champion of electronic techniques, the acclaimed multidisciplinary artist who redefines the boundaries between the arts and sciences **Fabrizio Plessi**; artist, stage designer and participant of the 53rd Venice Biennale **Irina Korina**; Hungarian experimental duo that works with hyperphysical interfaces, programmable materials, and augmented textiles **EJTECH**; Finnish multimedia artist and researcher of visuality **Tuula Närhinen**; Swiss artist that creates network-oriented interactive projects **Marc Lee**; artist, photographer and author of the project *Last Whispers* that was co-presented by UNESCO and *The Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* **Lena Herzog** and many others.

The main venues of the festival will be HayArt Cultural Center, Institute for Contemporary Art (I.C.A. Yerevan) and Yerevan Botanical Garden that, for the first time in history, will welcome media- and sound-installations and objects in its greenhouses.

FESTIVAL CURATORS

Anna Frants, Elena Gubanova, Sergey Komarov, Alexandra Dementieva, Victoria Ilyushkina, Nazareth Karoyan, Valentino Catricalà, Silvia Burini, Edgar Amroyan, Jérôme Nivet-Carzon.

CYFEST-15 is organized by CYLAND International MediaArtLab in partnership with HayArt Cultural Center and Institute for Contemporary Art in Yerevan (I.C.A. Yerevan). The project's general sponsor is **One Market Data**.