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## **consonni, independent publishing house and cultural space in Bilbao selected for documenta 15**

- The internationally renowned exhibition opens in June 2022 in Kassel, Germany**
- The curators of documenta 15 were invited by the Etxepare Basque Institute in February 2020 to learn about the Basque region**

The independent Bilbao publishing house and cultural centre, consonni, was selected to take part in the acclaimed international exhibition, documenta 15, opening in June 2022 in Kassel, Germany. This is the result of the work carried out by the Etxepare Basque Institute as part of the ZABAL programme, whose aim is to develop international networks to promote and facilitate exchange and long-term collaboration between creators, professionals, stakeholders and local and international institutions.

The curators of documenta 15, the Indonesian collective ruangrupa, were invited to experience the Basque context in February 2020. The programme was launched in 2019, and since then a number of contemporary art professionals have been invited to visit the Basque Country to engage directly with local artists and explore possible partnerships.

To bring the initiative to fruition, the Institute has the support of Artingenium, the art office headed by Lourdes Fernández, who works in project management in the field of local and international contemporary art.

During ruangrupa's visit to our country, the programme organisers arranged for them to meet 15 stakeholders from the Basque context. In addition, they presented the idea of documenta 15 at the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum.

One of the agencies that shared their work experience with ruangrupa was consonni, a publishing house and cultural centre that ruangrupa visited in Cortes Street in the San Francisco neighbourhood of Bilbao. It was there that conversations began for a possible collaboration between consonni and this collective for the project in Kassel.

The independent publishing house and cultural centre is a veteran of the Basque art scene. In December 2021 consonni will celebrate their 25th anniversary. They have been producing critical culture since 1996 and are currently committed to the written word as well as other formats, as shown by the radio work they have been active in promoting for years. From the extended field of art, literature, radio and education, they publish books, podcasts and produce multiple cultural activities in collaboration with numerous partners and cultural organisations and artists.

### **consonni's role in documenta**

The Bilbao publishing house will be involved as the artistic editor of the guides for the international exhibition, and present artistic project in the form of a literary book.

This project sets out to rethink how books are published in the art world, not only in terms of content, but in the forms of publishing production and distribution.

Through this initiative, they will apply the idea of collective work, the common thread that runs throughout this edition of documenta, as a theme and a way of working. This project will bring international writers into dialogue with each other and create a network of independent international publishers who will work together. In addition, literary fiction will be introduced to convey concepts that will be explored in the

exhibition. In this way, consonni participates with its usual way of working, bringing the intersection of art and literature to documenta.

### **Upcoming visit: Shanghai Biennale**

The programme, interrupted after months of pandemic, was resumed last August and will feature guests from other biennials and art centres around the world.

Following Ruth Estévez, curator of the São Paulo Biennial in 2019, and the ruangrupa collective in 2020, the programme will host Marina Otero Verzier, member of the curatorial team of the 13th Shanghai Biennale, from 15 to 17 November.

Over the course of four days, Otero Verzier will have contact with several artists and creative centres, and will give a talk on 16 November at Artium, where she will give a presentation open to the public on the Shanghai Biennale which ended last March.

### **About documenta and ruangrupa**

The international documenta exhibition takes place every five years in the German city of Kassel. It was founded by the artist, lecturer and curator Arnold Bode in 1955, to leave behind the dark times of Nazi culture and the wounds of World War II, and to bring Germany to the forefront of international modern art. The most recent editions of documenta have hosted works by international artists, achieving worldwide popularity. Each edition runs for 100 days, which is why documenta is also known as "the 100-day museum".

The ruangrupa collective from Jakarta, Indonesia, made up of ten artists, was selected to curate documenta 15 slated for 2022. This group was founded in 2000 with an eye to placing art in an urban and cultural context and to develop projects that mix art with social sciences, politics and technology. The intention is to cast a critical eye on contemporary conflicts in Indonesia. In these twenty years, ruangrupa has participated in international events such as the biennials of Gwangju, Istanbul, Singapore and São Paulo, as well as the Pompidou Centre in Paris and the Sonsbeek art exhibition in Arnhem, Netherlands.



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For the exhibition's 15th edition, they have focused on the idea of collective work, and have developed a concept they call *Lumbung*. Lumbung is the name of a system of collective rice collection and storage often used in Indonesian communities to make rice available in the future as a shared resource. In their words: "we want to create a globally oriented and cooperative multidisciplinary art and culture platform that will extend beyond the 100 days of documenta 15." Just as documenta emerged in 1955 to help heal the lingering wounds of the Second World War, the 15th edition will focus on current wounds that have their roots mainly in colonialism, capitalism and patriarchal structures, and set them against models of collaboration that enable people to have a different world view.

During the process, ruangrupa will work with curators, technologists and economists, and with projects and organisations from different parts of the world. The hope is that these participants will first incorporate their views into their own contexts and then display them in Kassel.

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