Marina Paulenka

Croatian-born curator and artistic director, based in Berlin

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More than twenty years of international work in photography, moving image and new media. She founded and led Organ Vida in Zagreb, directed Unseen Amsterdam and built the exhibition programme of Fotografiska Berlin from before its opening. Since 2025 she has worked independently. Drawing on a post-Yugoslav perspective and her research into the Non-Aligned Movement, she works with artists from Africa, Asia, Latin America and their diasporas.

Positions

Since 2025	**Independent curator**, Berlin
2026	**Advisor, artistic programme**, A Curated By, Paris, including a project in Kyoto
2022 to 2025	**Founding Director of Exhibitions**, Fotografiska Berlin Set the museum's artistic direction and led its exhibition programme from an eighteen-month pre-opening period onward. Initiated the Emerging Berlin Program and conceived Fotografiska Days, a festival and international conference.
2020 to 2022	**Independent curator** Chief curator for Futures, the European photography platform, curating *Hybrids* in Amsterdam (2021). Keynote curator of FORMAT21, Derby (2021). Member of the creative committee of Bristol Photo Festival (2020).
2019 to 2020	**Artistic Director**, Unseen Amsterdam Artistic director of the fair's 2019 edition, and led artistic strategy across the fair, Unseen Foundation, Unseen International and Unseen Media. Editor-in-chief of Unseen Magazine; co-developed the Living Room talks platform with the V&A and LagosPhoto.
2008 to 2019	**Founder and Director**, Organ Vida International Photography Festival, Zagreb Founded Croatia's leading platform for contemporary photography and led it until May 2019, through ten festival editions and the 2019 OFF programme, the conference *Untie the Knot: Redefining Normativity in Love*, organised with KONTEJNER. The Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb was its main partner. Founded the Marina Viculin Award, Croatia's first photography prize. Presented artists including Zanele Muholi, Pieter Hugo, Dana Lixenberg, Gillian Wearing, Roger Ballen, Hannah Starkey, Tomoko Sawada and Katalin Ladik. Led Organ Vida's part in the European projects *Parallel* (Creative Europe, 18 institutions in 16 countries), *REFEST* (Creative Europe) and *Lessons from 91* (Europe for Citizens).

Selected exhibitions

Independent

2026	Gabriel Selassie Tsagli, *Son of Kafui*, Gallery 1957, Accra
2026	Lebohang Kganye, *Rehearsal of Memory*, KYOTOGRAPHIE, Kyoto
2026	Erika Guadagnin, *Home Is Not a Question*, CdRF, Bucharest, Meeting Point
2022	Viviane Sassen, *Venus & Mercury*, Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb
2022	*Dangerous Bodies*, with Anna Ehrenstein, Marisol Mendez, Dragana Jurišić, Gloria Oyarzabal and Selma Selman, Kersgallery, Amsterdam
2022	Rahima Gambo and Denae Howard, *I can be changed by what happens to me. But I refuse to be reduced by it.* Fotofestiwal, Łódź, with Jeanne Mercier
2021	*Hybrids: Forging New Realities as Counter-Narrative*, exhibition and two-day international conference, Melkweg, Amsterdam, Futures; travelled to CentroCentro, Madrid, PHotoESPAÑA 2022
2021	*Matrix: Fluid Bodies, Unlimited Thoughts*, with Tabita Rezaire, Juliana Huxtable and Martine Gutierrez, QUAD, Derby, FORMAT21
2018	*Vigilance, Struggle, Pride: Through Her Eyes*, touring group exhibition, Maribor Art Gallery, Kunstquartier Bethanien Berlin, Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb and Bratislava, with Ahlam Shibli, Amak Mahmoodian, April Gertler, Hannah Starkey, Laia Abril, Lua Ribeira, Nina Berman, Nina Mangalanayagam, Nydia Blas, Sandra Vitaljić, Tasneem Alsultan, Tomoko Sawada and Zanele Muholi
2018	*Her New East*, with Selma Selman, Asiana Jurca Avci, Karla Jurić and Tatjana Radičević Planinčić, Gallery Galženica, Velika Gorica

Fotografiska Berlin

2025	Helga Paris, *für uns*, with Udo Kittelmann
2025	Lebohang Kganye, *Le Sale ka Kgotso*
2025	Šejla Kamerić, *EX YOU*

2025 Viviane Sassen, *The Body As Sculpture*, EMOP Berlin
2025 NONOTAK, *FLUX*, facade installation
2024 Shirin Neshat, *The Fury*
2024 Eli Cortiñas, *The Machine Monologs, Part I: The Storm*
2024 Joanna Dudley, *We Will Slam You With Our Wings*
2024 MAOTIK, *In Search of Equilibrium*
2023 Candice Breitz, *Whiteface*
2023 Juliana Huxtable, *–USSYPHILIA*
2023 *Cultural Fabric: Rereading the Relationship Between Art and Fashion Practices*, exhibition, conference and film programme, Fotografiska Days, Atelier Gardens

Unseen Amsterdam

2019 Unseen Amsterdam, 8th edition, Westergas: 53 galleries, 19 of them new, from regions including Ghana, Iran and Turkey; a programme including *Woven Matters*, on textiles in photography, with Zohra Opoku, Joana Choumali and Mous Lamrabat, and the ING Unseen Talent Award
2019 Tabita Rezaire, *Vortex of Infinity*, Transformatorhuis, Westergas

Organ Vida, Zagreb

2018 *Engaged, Active, Aware: Women's Perspectives Now*, 10th edition, Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb, with Lea Vene. Solo exhibitions including Laia Abril, Nina Berman, Amalia Ulman, Arvida Byström, Anna Ehrenstein and Monica Alcazar-Duarte
2017 *New Citizens*, 9th edition, Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb, with Dana Lixenberg, Pieter Hugo, Cristina de Middel, Anouk Kruithof, Katrin Koenning and Dragana Jurišić
2015 to 2016 *Revelations*, 8th edition, with Phillip Toledano; *Boundaries*, 7th edition, with Rob Hornstra and Arnold van Bruggen

Teaching, talks and juries

Teaching Royal Academy of Art The Hague, ECAL Lausanne, UdK Berlin, Zurich University of the Arts, Manchester School of Art, Utrecht School of the Arts, Domus Academy Milan, LABASAD Barcelona, Fondazione Modena Arti Visive, Academy of Dramatic Art Zagreb

Talks Paris Photo, Les Rencontres d'Arles, 1-54, Investec Cape Town Art Fair, MEP Paris, EXPOSED Turin, PHotoESPAÑA, FOTODOK, Inside Out Centre for the Arts Johannesburg, CdRF Meeting Point Bucharest, Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb

Juries and nominations Prix Pictet, Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize, Joop Swart Masterclass, Magnum Photos, Prince Claus Fund, Fotomuseum Winterthur, Sarajevo Photography Festival (jury, 2025), PhotoVogue Festival (reviewer, 2023 to 2025), Les Rencontres d'Arles, PHotoESPAÑA, FORMAT, BredaPhoto, Fotografia Europea, Photoworks, Encontros da Imagem, Riga Photomonth, Fotofestiwal Łódź, Triennial of Photography Hamburg, Fotobookfestival Kassel

Selected writing

2026 Catalogue essay, Lebohang Kganye, *Rehearsal of Memory*, KYOTOGRAPHIE
2026 Exhibition text, Gabriel Selassie Tsagli, *Son of Kafui*, Gallery 1957, Accra
2022 Essay on Tanja Ostojić, *Looking for a Husband with EU Passport*, Foam Magazine #62
2021 Curatorial text, *Hybrids: Forging New Realities as Counter-Narrative*, Futures 2021 catalogue
2019 “The Land of Healing”, on Tabita Rezaire, Unseen Magazine
2018 Exhibition text, *Her New East*, Gallery Galženica, Velika Gorica
2018 *Why Exhibit? Positions on Exhibiting Photographies*, Fw:Books
2017 “Position of Festivals and Fairs in Contemporary Photographic Practice”, University of Novi Sad
2016 *Transformations: Exploring Changes in and Around Photography*, Viewbook

Recognition, education and memberships

2025 Kyoto Retreat, residency, Kyoto
2019 Centre for Women's Studies Award, *The Other Home*
2018 Lucie Award, Curator/Exhibition of the Year, for *Engaged, Active, Aware: Women's Perspectives Now*, with Lea Vene

Education MA Photography, Academy of Dramatic Art, University of Zagreb; MA Graphic Design and Printing, University of Zagreb; Centre for Women's Studies, Zagreb; Political School for Artists, BLOK curatorial collective, Zagreb

Member IKT, International Association of Curators of Contemporary Art; Oracle, the annual international conference for photography curators