

Duygu Örs and Laima Rudusa in conversation



Figure 1. Re-enchantment, 2021, Joey Yu.

Duygu Örs, Education & Mediation Project Manager, Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art

Laima Rudusa, General Coordinator, Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art (RIBOCA)

Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art's 11th edition, curated by María Berrios, Renata Cervetto, Lisette Lagnado, and Agustín Pérez Rubio, opened slowly over 2020 with an Epilogue opening in summer 2020. RIBOCA2: and suddenly it all blossoms, curated by Rebecca Lamarche-Vadel, took place from May to October 2020, the Biennial adapted in to a feature film of recorded footage of exhibitions and a series of online discussions.

DÖ: Could you explain your position, and what you've been working on this year?

LR: I've had multiple positions. We're a small team that obviously grows substantially during a biennial year, and thus some aspects are in flux. I was the Public Programme Coordinator this year – our biennial year – which had an entirely new spin, as the public programme went online, but I'm also a constant team-member for the partnerships and grants departments, and as of this month, I'm moving on to the General Coordinator role.

LR: Were you able to follow what RIBOCA was up to? I know you had your own biennial to organise.

DÖ: I actually couldn't follow anything this year. Maybe you can tell me a bit about it?

LR: Quite early on, we realised we needed to rethink how the biennial was going to manifest itself within the current situation. Our curator, Rebecca Lamarche Vadel, together with our founder and executive director (the trio of the managerial team) decided to turn the biennial into a feature-length film. We'd still have all the artworks, albeit rethought due to issues of logistics and shipping. Thus we envisioned still having the biennial installed, but as a three-week film set. It was only in the summer that

we realised that we could actually have it open to the public as well, and have an exhibition as a film set. We were lucky that a lot of the work was actually new commissions, and so we changed a lot of the commissions to be created locally. The work was in many ways minimised from the initial plans and dreams, but it was a reaction to the reality. Rebecca often said that COVID was her co-curator.

For the Public Programme, which I was working on, the original plan was set for the entirety of the five months of the biennial. We were supposed to have weekly lectures given by thinkers from across the world. In this case, we didn't see any other feasible way but to put it online. And so, as the coordinator, it became a fast-track process of filming, recording and editing a weekly video lecture for the same time period.

DÖ: Was it live recorded?

LR: There was actually a medley. So, the very first one we had was live with CA Conrad, a poet from New York, who tuned in and had a conversation together with the curator and the associate curator. The next ones were pre-recorded, consisting of a 45-minute lecture and a Q &A with the associate curator. We immediately realised we just didn't want the lectures to look like Zoom, even though Zoom is the aesthetic of today, so our designer created a very new look from the recordings featuring a pink frame and key quotes visualised.

The best outcome, however, is the permanence: they're still all there. It's actually wonderful research material for students and young scholars due to the scope of the subject matter and the stamina of the speakers. Now a large part of my role is working with the archive and partnering with academic institutions for this repository of knowledge.

DÖ: Through academic databases? That's a real opportunity in pandemic times. You have a totally different approach to archiving because a lot of things are produced in a way that can function as an archive. For example, the Berlin Biennale also had a lot of video works, which wasn't anticipated in the beginning, but since many artists couldn't do their projects as planned, or the works couldn't travel, digital formats were the only solution.

LR: It's often easier.

DÖ: It creates, of course, a totally different atmosphere. But in terms of archiving or documenting, it was easier, since the work itself functions as the documentation.

LR: Could you tell me about your role? I know you do mediation and actually work in two art organisations, right?

DÖ: Yes, I work for the Berlin Biennale and the KW Institute for Contemporary Art. Both are actually under one umbrella association that has two parts, called Kunst-Werke e. V. I switched from KW to the Biennial team, but from now on I'm in both teams. It's the first time that there's been such a position. It was a step made in order to think of the mediation and outreach work in a more sustainable way. Since the biennial is every two years, the mediation and outreach work always has to start as a new project. That's why we're trying to bring the teams of both organisations together and then think of mediation in the longer term, so that when the biennial takes place, we can make use of the networks of mediation work already tried and tested at KW. It's a sustainable vision for working with different networks beyond time-limited biennale projects.

LR: So are you currently in the creating stage?

DÖ: Yes. We'll be working from now on for the next Berlin Biennale. The idea started with this biennial. The curators didn't want mediation to be separated from the curatorial concept. Of course, it's easy to say this, but there are already existing structures in place that make it difficult. There's already a difference between the mediation programme and the public programme. I don't know how it is in your case, but also the people who work on mediation and on the public program have different approaches. So what we tried to do with this biennial was not to separate and sub-divide the public. Because the way that it's somehow organised is that there's a public that needs education and mediation, and there's a public

that can just come into a public program.

LR: How do you make that distinction in terms of the definition?

DÖ: We produced a lot of concept papers to give the whole team an idea of what this could actually mean. We named the programme 'Exchange Programme', which was an umbrella for the public programme and the mediation programme. The teams and departments are separate, but the idea was about the value or the place or representation that each of these departments usually get through communication. We tried to establish this way of thinking, considering what the audience sees as one thing. It's a process. This vision can't be achieved with one biennial. You have to think in this way from now on and for every upcoming biennial. You also have to think of not one existing public, but different publics that have different experiences and needs, and each of these is valid. So there should be a public programme that acknowledges that there are different publics and that we want to create a biennial for different publics coming together, where everybody has their different needs and different approaches to what we're doing.

DÖ: I think these are necessary steps that we all have to take. And I'm also thinking about the work that needs to be done for the next biennial, which starts now. For the next one, it would be very interesting for the team to come together in understanding the variety of approaches towards a public programme as a joint idea. At the 11th Berlin Biennale, I was always saying that we should have an honest approach to what our audience is. I think there's an illusion that you'll bring different people in and you have to cater to these people through the mediation or education department. But we thought, 'Okay, no, let's be honest. In pandemic times, it's a local biennial,' But what does a 'local biennial' mean if the only translation that you have is in English? For all the video works, there was only an English translation. This is something that I'd also like to know about in your case: how you did it? Because at the end it was too expensive to translate, for example, from Spanish into English and German. So most of the times, it is only translated into English. This is quite common in the arts.

LR: The organisation has made it a point from the beginning that everything that we do is in three languages.

DÖ: Perfect.

LR: Having everything in all three languages was never even disputed. This was also a huge part of the public programme, and every single one of our online series of talks and conversations has been translated into Latvian and Russian via subtitles. So, you'll go on YouTube and you click your language. Our video editors looked at the statistics of how many people put on the subtitles when they watch, and it's close to nothing, so they asked us 'Are you sure we need to put all this time and effort into making these subtitles?' But for us, it's not about the majority, it's about accessibility. Our institution put it down as a must.

DÖ: I think this is how it has to be. This is about taking care of our audiences or our potential audiences. We had for example German local press writing about the biennial in German, and then local people came and they just found English subtitles. Particularly in the age of COVID, it's a majority local audience. It's very contradictory to say that this was a local biennial if you only address a public that's fluent in English. As your case shows, it won't change from one day to the next, but it's about giving the right sign and making it accessible, making more people aware that the exhibitions of a biennial are for them, even if they don't speak English.

LR: So would your mediators do a translation job, in terms of tours?

DÖ: This year we did English and German tours on the weekends. And we also had tours in Spanish, Portuguese and in Turkish. We scheduled them on a regular basis and more people than we could accommodate wanted to attend. With the hygiene regulations, only six or seven people could join a tour.

LR: Do you think that was a positive aspect, that the tours were smaller?

DÖ: I think so, yes. But, the way it was organised was a bit difficult because of the hygiene

regulations. You had to write your name on a list when you entered, so it was on a first-come-first-served basis. Because the biennial was only open for eight weeks, in some cases, we couldn't accommodate the people who didn't make it on to the list. This was something that I learned for the next time: to create a system that's adaptable within the running period. But you can never make it perfect. Because with the system we worked with, we wanted to make it accessible, so people wouldn't have to book online spots to attend a tour. We thought this would be a more accessible system.

LR: You were saying that your biennial took place in between the two waves, but how did you feel the impact of COVID onsite, apart from these smaller tour groups?

DÖ: I personally think it was an opportunity, because it was a moment when you had to rethink the existing formats. For example, my focus is always to think about accessibility and the exclusivity of art spaces. I mean, even without COVID, I think not many local people would come to the biennial. Like many other contemporary art spaces, the Biennial is an exclusive space, a very specific setting. So my starting point is always to think of different publics. We did a lot of formats that happened unannounced. For example, a workshop that took place in a park and people don't even know that it was organised by the biennial. By unannounced, I mean, we didn't put it in a newsletter or on the homepage. Because by announcing this through your classical channels, you'll only get the 'newsletter people'. So we actually did a lot of things outside and with passers-by in a workshop situation. I think for mediation, the regulations that the pandemic brought up was also a kind of opportunity. Of course, when you do something outside, you have to take care of everyone involved. From those attending to the mediators, you have a responsibility. At the same time, you have to provide the mediators with opportunities to work. So it was a very tiring biennial because we didn't want anybody to lose their job. We found a system where all mediators could still work. We set a frame where the mediators could bring their own visions as to how to fill this frame with their approaches. This was done in an experimental way because we had a situation in which nobody knew how to do things.

LR: So would you say that COVID gave you an opportunity as a biennial to experiment and reconsider?

DÖ: I think so. I hope that we'll continue to reflect on it and take some things further. I would say that we tried to see it as an opportunity from the perspective of working with different publics.

LR: Did your management react quickly initially? In terms of the initial crisis management and planning, did you feel like you were in good hands?

DÖ: Personally, yes, structurally, I don't know. I really liked what you said about the virus being a 'co-curator'. It was a new situation for everybody. Not everybody's that fast in adapting or thinking of a new project.

I'm really curious to dig more into how you thought of a totally different exhibition format to deal with the situation. In Germany, we're still in this mood that everything's so sad and everything should be as it's always been: the exhibition, the openings, the artist talks etc. Yes, it is sad, but I feel, let's accept it now. The situation is what it is. We have to think about different ways of doing things and we just have to adapt, but I think the general mood was more, 'How can we find loopholes to still do the things we're used to?'

LR: Absolutely. It's hard to step away from plans. There was a moment in time when a lot of exhibitions went online and naturally, we're all starved of culture, but at the same time, the digital space is so oversaturated and it doesn't give you the same experience. And thus, as a curator or cultural manager, you still want to hold onto those dreams. And our exhibition was planned around the idea of re-enchantment as a reaction to all these dystopian futures and the many endings that the world supposedly goes through. So in many ways, the situation manifested what the curatorial statement was about, giving us an opportunity to show through actions how to function in equilibrium with the world. There is an end of a world, but it doesn't mean it's the end of the world. I was really, really proud of my workplace and

happy about our executive director, because when the news hit, her words were: 'Everyone go home, go to the countryside, take three weeks out. Just make sure your loved ones have their fridges stocked and everyone is safe. Make sure that your immune system is strong and we'll deliberate. And just call me if you need a chat, if you need a virtual hug.' Obviously all of us are invested in those dreams, so when you have to bury them, it's really difficult. But I think that loving and supporting the people you work with really helps you get through it. If you're having to re-imagine everything, it's beautiful to do that in a supportive team, because then you see the positives, and you accept the reality a lot more easily. I think that's definitely a key factor.

When the biennial actually opened, we were very careful about safety and thinking about who to fly out and who absolutely had to be there. And it was very brutal to say to artists that they didn't need to be here to install their work. And I think it was difficult for them, too. A lot of artists didn't want to, or couldn't fly out, or they were too scared. Now, we're used to having meetings on Zoom and being productive online and being able to converse every day. But obviously for a hands-on project it's difficult, yet we managed the remote communication well, I think.

DÖ: One of our artists even sent a video showing us how to open up the package and install the work. It was such a different way of installing an exhibition. We had a similar situation to yours, in the beginning. We were really taken care of by our director Gabriele Horn. She wrote comforting emails, made phone calls with detailed updates on the situation and certain decisions. No one had to quit their job. But during the installation period and then the opening of the biennial, it was a tough time and the team made a great job. With Corona tests, hygiene concepts and all these exceptional circumstances, no one has the right know-how, not even a director.

LR: How? [laughs] Who has those skills?

DÖ: Nobody. Nobody really knows.

LR: Yes, exactly. It's luck, it's openness to change. And then also being firm that you've made the right decision. Some of my colleagues felt confused at the beginning, just because they were told to go home and take care of their loved ones. They worried – did they still have a job? Our executive director very explicitly repeated, 'Everyone is still on the team, don't worry. We'll think of something, nobody is going anywhere.' Naturally, a lot of positions just sort of dissipated. One of my colleagues does HR and hospitality. There was no HR and hospitality to be done really. So then she was refashioned to assist in the communications department. And that was also really great: that people could change the particular role they were in.

DÖ: How was the installation phase for you?

LR: It was in the summer. We started installation two months before opening in August. So in June, everything was already being set up. We'd had an office there and the build-up had started in the spring already, but the build-up was meant to be towards an exhibition setting. And we'd reduced the duration to three weeks. Obviously, you don't want to pump in a lot of money for structures that are only up for three weeks. We had architects from Estonia and the beauty of these architects is that their whole concept was not to build from new materials. They wanted to reuse what was already on site. And so, they just changed their concept around, but it was still in line with their ideals. And what was beautiful was that they used rubble as signposts. And for a film, you can do a lot of illusionary work. You don't need walls per se. So just accepting the fact that things aren't permanent, our whole world changed into these temporary moments. And I love that that came through.

It was, I think, late June or early July when we realised we could open it to the public, and then suddenly we had to scurry to catch up with the time we'd lost. We could have workshops, for example, and we could have mediators and, suddenly HR began to think, 'Okay, we need venue staff.' And we needed the curator on site, obviously. So we flew her out from Paris and she isolated for two weeks and didn't see anyone, and had several tests. We also knew that there were particular performance artists that we

needed. Because that's an art that can't be translated into another media or format. So several flew out and isolated and then prepared their work. For example, Bridget Polk, who's from the US was there the whole time. She isolated with her wife for two weeks, and then she was onsite every day, performing work. And so, our whole structure of decision-making was to go for the ideal situation until we heard otherwise, and then take it down a notch or refashion it. So naturally, there'll be new restrictions as to how many people are allowed to gather, but we're going to aim for the rules that we have right now and just be ready to react immediately.

By the time the opening came about, we were allowed to have a thousand people gather within our square footage. The biennial was taking place in an old port building, which was humungous. So that was also an accidental benefit in terms of COVID restrictions, because you could always keep a distance from other viewers. There were huge windows for trucks to drive through that are constantly open, which was another key aspect: they're constantly open to the elements. So we couldn't have any fine work on paper, but there was this natural ventilation. It also meant that our mediators froze, and developed colds, but in terms of safety against this particular disease, we were set! But that was an accident.

DÖ: And how was it with the public? Did you see a change in your public?

LR: We realised we had to work 'hyperlocal', which is the term that everyone is using. So we focused more on the local press than we would have done. I mean, we have good partnerships locally, but the international press is naturally a significant partner if you're talking about biennials, since they're global projects.

We certainly had a lot more seniors, even though it was a difficult terrain to walk over. This might have been down to the fact that one of the artworks pulled in a lot of local crochet women – sadly, only women, but crocheters of various ages. And a lot of them came with their friends.

DÖ: This is good, I think. What working practices or ideas would you keep, when the pandemic is over and there's no other virus in line? Or will it be back to business as usual?

LR: Well, working locally is important to our biennial, it's in our mission statement. And I think COVID helped us work on our own mission statement even more, which is great. And so obviously, we'll keep working on that and not forget it and not let it get overshadowed by the global outlook.

What did you find the most difficult aspect?

DÖ: When there was the first lockdown in Germany, there were new regulations every two weeks: ten people are allowed, no seven, no fifteen, wear masks, children can come, can't come ... We constantly had to change our concept. We decided to come up with a structure that would work with every possible status of the regulations. That was the hardest part, to think of a framework so loose that it could happen in any case. But I think we were quite successful in this, in terms of the public programme.

We had a lot of formats working inside and outside, where people would move in between the spaces by themselves and come out and meet the mediator again, for example. Everything only happened by working closely together across departments. I've never experienced it to this extent in exhibitions before. For the mediation work, we needed to know the design of the exhibition because otherwise we couldn't plan the mediation formats, and the communication department needed exact information about what and how to communicate, because it had to do with hygiene and security. There was a constant dialogue, which was very valuable and should be taken forward into the next editions. Most of the time the exhibition is ready and then people expect your mediation work to start with everything given.

How did you handle the ticket situation? Was it free or did people have to get a ticket?

LR: We decided to have tickets just to keep the flow in check. It was very, very affordable, a lot cheaper than other years.

DÖ: It was the same in our case. People would have to buy a time slot.

LR: So their visits were timed?

DÖ: Yes the entrance time, but you couldn't say 'You have to leave after two hours'.

LR: Did it work, the timed entry?

DÖ: It worked. The team did a great job in calculating the numbers depending on the venue. But I think there's still a lot to learn from this time. For example, to also take care of the guards in terms of the hygiene measures, because they play a crucial role in keeping these measures working. They have to count how many people come in and they have to tell the visitors to wear a mask or to wait outside because there are already five people inside. So the hospitality is on their shoulders. But it's always the same in every art institution, with or without Corona: we have to work in a more collaborative way with the guards.

LR: Absolutely. We didn't have to think about this, because we had kilometres and kilometres of territory. The visitors spread out like ants.

DÖ: It sounds like it was a perfect space for this kind of biennial.

LR: It was! And it was chosen and selected purely for its aesthetic values and then happened to really work for COVID because we had the three floors of this humungous space. And that was just one portion of the wider territory. We had these huge meadows that had been seed bombed and we had performances in them. But it was a very long experience. You needed at least two hours to see the exhibition, but it was actually a five-hour experience. And that's really quite difficult. Also, we simplified the whole experience, to avoid gathering. We'd planned to have two cafés, one with a full kitchen. In the end, we had one small vegan café that served poke bowls and sandwiches and wine and coffee, but it wasn't adequate in this vast space. The sad reality is, you plan for COVID, you don't expect big numbers, but in the end when people do come, they still expect that experience, even though they know the situation of the world.

DÖ: It was the same with us. For example, we could only have seven people at a time in the children's workshops. And then some parents were like, 'But why are there so few people? This is so exclusive,' And we said, 'It's the regulation. We can't do it.' And they said, 'But these children go to school with thirty children or they go into the playground with fifty children.' I said, 'Yes, but every place has different regulations, so we have to adapt to the ones for museum spaces.'

How did you deal with sound? You had a big space. That's so different. But did you have headphones or how did it work?

LR: In some of the spaces we had headphones, but mostly not. How do you keep everything sanitary and safe?

DÖ: We worked with individual headphones, which was interesting because it was so quiet in the exhibition. No chatting. This was an interesting feeling. On an exhibition visit, you talk to people, you see people, you have a wine or a coffee. But COVID reshapes everything.

LR: Another thing that was really quite fun is that a lot of our audience members were dogs, because we were pet friendly and so they were everywhere. And I think this is also a reason why locally, we gained some traction and attention – people wanted to come because finally, there was a place they could go with their dog, because generally you can't go into exhibitions with dogs.

DÖ: No, you can't.

LR: A lot of artists have dogs and a lot of curators have dogs.

LR: Obviously people do have allergies, but in our venue, there was so much air passing through. But we're a really dog-friendly office. At one point, we had five dogs in the office, so having a lot of team members with dogs, it was a given that the biennial had to be dog-friendly.

DÖ: And are you working now on the next one?

LR: We actually currently have a lot of archival work to do. I think it's wonderful that our management considers the proper shaping of the archive a very significant portion of our jobs, instead of rushing to the next show. And a lot of our work now is also on the movie, which will come out at the beginning of 2021. An exhibition takes place in a certain time and space, but a movie is something that will go on and will hopefully go to film festivals next year. That would be great. That's sort of our next step. But yes, we are

thinking about when we can plan for the next biennial.

DÖ: We have to adapt to a situation like this somehow, and try to find creative solutions. I'm not saying everything has to be online, but we have to plan differently. The architecture of an exhibition has to be wider now – we have to be able to open windows. I think we have to focus on these things and be prepared in case something like this pandemic situation happens again.

LR: Absolutely. We've learned a lot in thinking about the choreography of the audience, and we didn't have that experience before. And because the number of cases in Latvia was so low, and the borders were closed for so long, we really lived in this bubble, where we thought we were safe. So if you look at the RIBOCA images, where crowds of people are following the curator for a tour, nobody's wearing a mask. You wouldn't believe, looking at those images that that was 2020. But it felt like there was no COVID, because we didn't have to restrict the number of people in the space; crowds of people would come and they would hang out in groups and watch the sunset. We were lucky in the timing, because just a few weeks later a case occurred in a museum just down the road and it closed for several weeks and it got really bad reports in the media, even though it wasn't the museum's fault.

But because this exhibition was created in unison with COVID, the show was different from how it was imagined. And there're a lot of ghosts in this exhibition. Even our exhibition guide had the artist's original idea, and then it was crossed out, and then the transformed concept was presented.

DÖ: Wow, that's nice.

LR: One could see what the idea had been, and what it is now.

DÖ: I like the idea of showing how the projects changed. This was something that I felt was sad in our case, because the original ideas weren't shown. This is an interesting point. Why can't we show the process? For example, in our case, the 11th Biennial was always communicated as a processual project because we opened before the big exhibition with a project space. But what do you consider as a process in the context of a global art biennial? I think a process needs to be visible – for example, when you show that projects changed, or the difficulties you experienced. In many cases in the art world in general, we polish a lot of things to make them shinier, but I think, especially in these pandemic times, we have to learn from difficulties. I'm so interested in showing how it worked in a certain space in comparison to another one. What does this mean? Right now, we have to talk not only about how successful the exhibitions are, but also about the practicalities in visiting exhibitions and making exhibitions and learning from different contexts.

LR: Absolutely. And then thinking about the local aspects. I mean, in the installation, all the teams were local. We just did everything we could do onsite and amongst ourselves. And for the movie we needed a professional film crew and a director. And so the film director who was selected was a highly acclaimed local director. So that's an interesting example of the sort of collaborations that come about. And, just like you were saying, there's this beautiful aspect of going into parks and into open spaces and having these impromptu workshops. I think that's so magical. We got the magic of learning completely new realms. So not just experimenting, but learning. We were involved in a seemingly constant crisis management in our daily planning and operation. You were saying that you didn't want to do all the extra work of having four different scenarios, which makes perfect sense. You saved yourself from superfluous and at times useless planning aspects. We didn't do that. We were flexibly but also concretely planning for the main idea and then altering it if needed and reacting to the news. There'd be news coming in every week, and because of that, it did become like crisis management.

DÖ: We had to be flexible.

LR: Yes. Flexible, with team support.

I have one more question. How important was it for you and your team to think about how other international biennials were dealing with the pandemic and what was happening elsewhere? Or were you really focused on what you were doing?

DÖ: Not many decided to do the exhibition, so we couldn't really learn from others. We were looking at how people dealt with the job situation of the mediators, how to take care of the team and give them the possibility to work. This is something that we researched a lot in different contexts, because as we all know, the first ones that had to go were positions like mediators.

LR: We were constantly feeling the pulse and asking, what are others doing? Even though the situations were so different. But we said 'Venice is still happening. Well then, we can't even consider ours not taking place', but then 'Oh, they've postponed.' So in many ways we were taking the advice of the world, but in the end, obviously we made our own decisions.

I want to say thank you. I really enjoyed this discussion I feel like I have support from the wider network of biennials.

DÖ: Yes it was really lovely. Thank you so much.

Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Arts participation in "Perennial Biennial" project activities is supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia.

Duygu Örs and Laima Ruduša

Duygu Örs studied cultural studies in Berlin, Frankfurt/Oder and Istanbul. She works on postcolonial urban studies, Kurdish studies, and critical museology. Since 2019, she has been in charge of the mediation and outreach work of the Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art and since 2018, she also works for the mediation of KW Institute for Contemporary Art.

She is currently focusing on the intersections that arise from her various fields of interest that shape her mediation practice. Always politically motivated, she is concerned with formats that are institutionally and culturally established, their accessibilities and exclusions. She is interested in the atmospheric and sensory aspects of spaces, especially in the exhibition spaces.

Oriented to these and other questions, was the exhibition on Kurdish art as a form of resistance, *bêwelat – the unexpected storytellers* (nGbK, Berlin, 2021), on which she worked curatorially, and the artistic-research project on anti-discriminatory curatorial practices (CCC – curating through conflict with care) which she co-organised.

Laima Ruduša studied Art History in Boston, and completed her Master's degree in Münster, where she probed questions of nationalism and identity within Post-Soviet Latvia's art-exhibiting practices. She held creative, managerial and coordinator roles in contemporary arts organisations in Boston, London and Riga, and has experience teaching and translating (among her translated works: *Gallery 427 year book* in 2020, the *FotoKvartals Latvian Photography* 2016 to 2019, and others). Before joining the Riga Biennial, Ruduša worked as the Executive Director of Kim Contemporary Art Centre which followed after taking a professional pause devoted to being the architect of childhood, and a domestic coordinator. Previously she worked as a Project Manager at Kim, where she managed the Nordic Baltic Art School program for the 55th Latvian National Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, headed a partnership with an LU Anthropology Course that flourished into an Arts Education Symposium, and coordinated twenty exhibitions a year. Ruduša has experience in non-profit galleries, an artist's studio, university art spaces, even a commercial gallery. She is interested in stories and their creative expression, interconnections of objects and ideas, and gets a buzz from the 'a-ha' moments of life.