

April 12, 2016

Antarctica Gets Its First Art Exhibition



Russian artist Alexander Ponomarev warms up for the Antarctic Biennale | The Art Newspaper

You can see art almost anywhere these days, like abandoned subway stations in the dead of night. You can also see art of all kinds, like cats upon cats upon cats. And now you can see art in a place you've never been able to before: Antarctica. Scheduling is underway for the first Antarctic Biennale, a contemporary art exhibit on that icy continent, the very first, and perhaps only one, of its kind.

100 artists and scientists will travel for about 12 days on the Akademik Ioffe ship, creating art to be temporarily installed and shown at different places around Antarctica. The ship sets sail from the port of Ushuaia in Argentina to the Falkland Islands, and then it will pass through the Drake Passage near South Africa's Cape Horn, and go south from there.

"During these landings, the artists participating in the project will make objects, installations, performances, and stage actions. Their constructs are to be portable, designed to withstand relevant weather conditions and cause no hazard to the environment," said the biennale's commissioner, Russian artist Alexander Ponomarev. Each landing will be filmed.

Art displayed around the continent will eventually be displayed in museums and galleries around the world. The event is being fully funded by sponsorship donations.

“Antarctica is pure, remote, and mysterious – like art itself. This sublime continent is like a white sheet of paper on which artists from different countries and nationalities will try to write the new rules of cooperation,” Ponomarev added.

A project like this, though interesting and thought-provoking, may occur only once, though its being touted as a “biennial.” Nadim Samman, one of the event’s co-organizers, has doubts about whether the exhibit could happen again. “Who will go? Do we really have the resources? Ours is a topsy-turvy biennale, so perhaps we will go only once.”

Its rarity makes the event that much more special, so keep your eye out for its artworks as they begin to appear around the world later this year.