

The places to biennale

As India becomes the latest destination to lay on a spectacular homage to the art world, **Nicola Iseard** rounds up *the* cultural events for the year ahead

MARRAKECH

When 29 February-4 March 2012

What Artists, film-makers, musicians and writers from across the globe descend upon the city for five days of performances, screenings and talks. Titled *Surrender*, the 2012 event will be held in venues including the Theatre Royal, ESAV Film School and Djemaa el-Fna square.

Don't miss The main arts exhibition, titled *Higher Atlas*, will be held at El Badi Palace. As well as suggesting 'a cartography of the beyond', the title also refers to the Atlas Mountains, which are visible from the 16th-century palace.

Besides the biennale? The Koutoubia Mosque is a must-visit for its mighty 69m high minaret – a masterpiece of Islamic art. Access inside is denied to non-Muslims, but one of the doors on the east wall is always open and you can peek through. marrakechbiennale.org

BERLIN

When 27 April-1 July 2012

What Held in one of Europe's most vibrant cultural cities, the Berlin Biennale is all about experimental contemporary art, with forward-thinking exhibitions, sculptures, live performances and installations.

Don't miss The details are being kept firmly under wraps, but we've been told that the 'experimental and context-specific exhibition' at the KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin's Mitte District is a must-see.

Besides the biennale? Nab a table at Grill Royal (grillroyal.com), an art-themed restaurant buzzing with local artists and collectors. It's renowned for its steaks, views of the Spree and witty art collection (look out for the papier mâché shark jaws en route to the ladies' room). berlinbiennale.de

BUCHAREST

When 25 May-22 July 2012

What Every two years, a guest curator – next year it's Glasgow-born Anne Barlow – is selected to gather an array of artists, who collaborate to put on this fiercely ambitious festival of contemporary art. Incorporating film screenings and educational programmes, it avoids 'art spaces', and is instead held in universities and public sites across the city.

Don't miss The line-up has yet to be announced,



but previous headliners have included Yoko Ono and Romania's own Lia Perjovschi. The venues are expected to include the National Geology Museum, Botanical Gardens, National Centre of Dance and Herăstrău Skate Park.

Besides the biennale? Head to the Velvet Underground, a club and wine bar inspired by the Pop Art concept (the owner is a fan of Andy Warhol) and filled with modern art. The music ranges from hip-hop and funk to golden oldies. bucharestbiennale.org

SYDNEY

When 27 June-16 September 2012

What It's one of the world's oldest biennales (dating from 1973). As well as a three-month exhibition, there are public tours, artist talks and film screenings, showcasing work from both Australian and international artists. Venues include the Art Gallery NSW, the Museum of Contemporary Art and Pier 2/3.

Don't miss A short ferry ride from the city, Cockatoo Island is a World Heritage-listed former prison and shipyard, and is the Biennale's largest exhibition venue.

Besides the biennale? Head to the funky ArtHouse Hotel (thearthousehotel.com.au) for a life-drawing class (Mondays at 6pm; bring your own materials). Afterwards, sip a cocktail in the Gallery Bar, with its moody lighting and ever-changing artworks. biennaleofsydney.com.au



PattucciPhoto/Getty Images; Lepkowski Studio Berlin; Bucharest Biennale; Image from the installation of Angela Ferreira and Asa Sonjasdotter, 2010. Courtesy Pavilion – Journal for politics and culture © GR Digital 2 User; Ricardo Lanzarini cómo llegar a las masas? Photograph: Ricardo Lanzarini; Abajar, 1997/2010 by Cildo Meireles – Biennial de São Paulo 2010 courtesy of Fundação Biennial de São Paulo

Clockwise from left Curators of the 2012 Marrakech Biennale, Carson Chan and Nadim Samman; *Cómo llegar a las masas?* by Ricardo Lanzarini at the Sydney Biennale; Abajar, 1997/2010 by Cildo Meireles at Bienal de São Paulo; Chinese fishing nets at Kochi, Kerala; the 2010 Bucharest Biennale; Berlin's Grill Royal

SÃO PAULO

When September-December 2012

What Founded in 1951, the Bienal de São Paulo is the second oldest art biennale in the world (after Venice) and is held in the striking Cicillo Matarazzo pavilion in the Parque do Ibirapuera.

Don't miss Luis Pérez-Oramas – curator of Latin American art at the Museum of Modern Art in New York – has been selected as chief curator, so we're expecting an impressive line-up.

Besides the biennale? Treat yourself to a slap-up supper at the Canvas Restaurant at the Hilton São Paulo Morumbi, an award-winning restaurant themed like an artist's studio with a suspended art gallery above the tables. bienal.org.br

KOCHI AND MUZIRIS, INDIA

When November 2012

What Sixty-five artists from 45 countries will be represented at India's inaugural festival of international contemporary visual arts – the largest public art event in the country.

Don't miss The contemporary art on show at Durbar Hall, the original royal courthouse of the Maharaja of Kochi in Kerala. It's currently undergoing painstaking, top-to-toe renovations.

Besides the biennale? Refuel on tea and cake in the tranquil courtyard of the Kashi Art Café (kashiartgallery.com), an institution in Fort Kochi that doubles as an art gallery displaying the work of local artists. kochimuzirisbiennale.org

SWAP SHOP

Create space in your case for Moroccan goodies by donating your old things

Take a trip to Morocco and it's likely you'll end up having a rummage in one of the country's enticing souks. But there's only so much you can fit into your suitcase. Enter a new initiative, Leave Your Wardrobe in Morocco, set up by Brits Jeremy Davies and Paolo Barbieri. 'About five years ago we bought a house in Essaouira and decided to set up Project 91, a charity to help young people complete their education and find jobs,' Davies says. 'Leave Your Wardrobe raises funds for it. We ask tourists to offload any items they may not want, which we sell in our shop, Mashi Mushki. We've had everything



HOW TO SPEND YOUR DIRHAMS

- Rugs and local art can also be found at Mashi Mushki, alongside the second-hand clothing. The owners contribute a percentage of profits from all non-donated goods to Project 91. dar91.com

- Raffia sandals and shoes in natural colours as well as popping shades of pink, green and orange from Miro Abihssira, a designer working out of Essaouira. Rafia Craft, 82 rue d'Agadir, Essaouira.

- Handmade leather handbags from Poupalitz, a Tunisian fashion designer based in Essaouira and Paris. poupalitz.com

- Bedouin sequined wedding blankets and other homewares from Atelier Moro. Run by Colombian Viviana Gonzalez, it sells everything from kaftans and handbags to picture frames, cutlery and jewellery. 114 Place du Mouassine, Marrakech. Ring the doorbell for access.

- Collections from new designers can be found at La Galerie, beneath one of Marrakech's favourite eateries La Terrasse des Epices. It's a chic group of mini boutiques run by some of Morocco's most interesting designers. 15 Souk Cherifia, Sidi Abdelaziz, Marrakech.

