Marius Kwint: 300-word statement for REF Submission 2018


*Frontiers Reimagined: Art That Connects Us* was an official Collateral Event of the *Venice Art Biennale in 2015*, held at the 16th-century *Museo di Palazzo Grimani*, the only Roman-style palazzo in the city. Featuring 44 artists from 25 countries, it was the first official cooperation between the Italian Ministry of Culture and the Biennale.

In his book *Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson identified the collective imagination as an instrument of nationalism. *Frontiers Reimagined*, by contrast, proposed the artistic imagination as a means of transcending such limitations and boundaries, addressing global challenges and cultural collisions through creative problem-solving.

The exhibition was based on the lifelong researches into the response of artists to empire and globalization by the art historian, curator, gallerist and film-maker Sundaram Tagore – an international quest that over the previous 26 years frequently involved scholarly dialogue and curatorial collaboration with the co-curator, Marius Kwint.

Kwint’s role in this exhibition included concept development, researching, selecting and commissioning several of the artworks, liaising with artists, obtaining grant funding, writing the rationale of the 85-page Biennale application document, key exhibition panels, and one of the underpinning essays in the 120-page catalogue. He also gave supporting lectures and talks.

The artists ranged from emerging talents such as the Haitian-Swiss activist artist Sasha Huber and Iranian abstract calligrapher Golnaz Fathi, to international superstars such as the Bulgarian environmental artist Christo, Brazilian photographer Sebastião Salgado and the late American neo-Dadaist Robert Rauschenberg, who was a pioneer of cultural interchange through art. At least six new works were specially commissioned for the exhibition.

*Frontiers Reimagined* was rated by *The Art Newspaper* high among the top five outside the main Arsenale and Giardini areas; *ArtsHub* (Australia) labelled it ‘certainly’ ‘the most successful collateral show’. It attracted over 25,000 visitors over the period: extraordinary numbers for a collateral show.

The Venice Art Biennale is the world’s premier contemporary art event and comprises approximately 90 national pavilions and exhibitions, with a further 44 official collateral shows of grouped and solo artists in 2015, and many more unofficial exhibitions and events around the city that the Biennale always attracts.

[Statement body 349 words]