

HYUNDAI
TATE
RESEARCH
CENTRE:

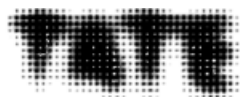
TATE MODERN
CONFERENCE

EXCEPTIONAL SPACES

THE COSMIC VISION OF ALEKSANDRA KASUBA

30 MAY 2026

NEW
PERSPECTIVES
ON GLOBAL
ART HISTORIES



in partnership with



Exceptional Spaces: The Cosmic Vision of Aleksandra Kasuba critically reassesses the work and impact of the Lithuanian-American artist. It looks at her position within art history, as well as in the expanded contexts of design, architecture and ecological studies, and the intersection of art, science and technology. Comprising presentations, panels and lecture-performances, the programme coincides with *Aleksandra Kasuba: Shelters for the Senses* at Tate St Ives, 2 May–4 October 2026. The first UK museum exhibition of Kasuba’s work, this retrospective was organised by Tate St Ives in collaboration with the Lithuanian National Museum of Art.

Kasuba (1923–2019) was forced to flee Lithuania in 1944, before the second Soviet Occupation. She arrived in the United States in 1947, eventually settling in New York. Her displacement informed her unique artistic vision, which united Lithuanian cultural traditions with the rebellious experimentation and innovation of New York. *Shelters for the Senses* spans seven decades of work exploring Kasuba’s artistic journey, from her early paintings and mosaics to her installations and architectural designs. Her love of the natural world is clear throughout her work, which was often inspired by shapes and forms such as shells, rocks, vegetation and marine life.

Kasuba felt that the exchange of ideas could push the boundaries of creativity and innovation. She explored this idea through collaborating with a pioneering

collective (Experiments in Art and Technology, or EAT), made up of artists, engineers and scientists, throughout the 1960s.

The programme will draw on key aspects of Kasuba's practice: her rejection of rigid, architectural geometry in favour of fluid, spatial constructions; her use of colour to evoke certain energies and resonances; her desire to foster more harmonious relationships between humanity and nature, and imagine alternative ways of living; and her pioneering creation of multisensorial environments, effectively laying the groundwork for immersive art.

This event is organised by the Hyundai Tate Research Centre: Transnational in partnership with Hyundai Motor, supported by the Lithuanian National Museum of Art.

10:00–10:20 | WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Nabila Abdel Nabi – Senior Curator, International Art (HTRC:T)

Anne Barlow – Director, Tate St Ives

Arūnas Gelūnas – Director General, Lithuanian National Museum of Art

*

10.20–10.55 | KEYNOTE

Elona Lubytė

In this keynote, Elona Lubytė discusses her scholarship on and relationship with Aleksandra Kasuba – an expertise drawn upon in the development of *Aleksandra Kasuba: Shelters for the Senses*, at Tate St Ives. She will speak not only to Kasuba, the artist, but also Kasuba, the woman, whom she first met in 2013.

The pair's subsequent collaborations included the recreation of Kasuba's pivotal *Spectrum, An Afterthought* (2014) based on an environment first created in 1975 as *Spectral Passage*, in San Francisco's de Young Museum; and the exhibition *Shaping the Future: Environments by Aleksandra Kasuba*, held posthumously at the National Gallery of Art in Vilnius in 2021.

Shaping the Future: Environments by Aleksandra Kasuba was the first extensive retrospective of Kasuba's work. It drew in large part from Kasuba's bequeath of 150 works made between 1942 and 2019, to the Lithuanian National Museum of Art. Organised chronologically around spaces crucial to the artist throughout her creative career, audiences travelled through Kasuba's life via her first stretch-fabric habitat without right angles, *Contemplation Environment* (1969–70), as well as her various homes. The first was her home Ginkūnai Manor, from which her family was forced to flee following the Soviet occupation of Lithuania in 1940. The second was her home in Manhattan, near Central Park, in which she built the *Live-In Environment* (1971): a phenomenological

experiment in living in open-ended, dynamic and meaningful relation to oneself and others. The last was Rock Hill House, New Mexico, the three-unit home and artist studio she built between 2001–05 and lived in until 2012.

Shaping the Future kickstarted a renewed, deserved appreciation of Kasuba’s spatial innovations and utopian artistic impetus. Subsequent exhibitions saw Kasuba’s work positioned alongside experimental 20th century spatial innovators, and a cohort of female visionaries in *Inside Other Spaces: Environments by Women Artists 1956–1976* (curated by Andrea Lissoni and Marina Pugliese). Such projects were powerful re-situations of Kasuba’s art within the context of Europe, as well as the 21st century contemporary art scene. They served to re-illuminate the unique power of Kasuba’s art: it’s exploration of an imaginary future, that might offer respite to the wandering soul.

This keynote will be followed by a conversation with Anne Barlow, Director of Tate St Ives and co-curator of *Aleksandra Kasuba: Shelters for the Senses*.

*

11:00–12:05 | KASUBA AND ARCHITECTURE

This session explores the development of Kasuba’s architectural vision. She viewed sustainable architecture as a social instrument for new and joyful ways of living, rejecting right angles as symbols of social constraint. Interested in creating truly social spaces, Kasuba designed walls of public buildings in New York in brick, marble and granite, and began to experiment with tensile fabrics.

Kasuba began to experiment with immersive environments in the late 1960s. She worked with transparent materials such as Lucite to experiment with curved volumetric forms, in installations such as *Gateway* (1968) and the model *Cloud Room* (1969). She realised her first fully immersive, non-orthogonal environment in 1969:

Contemplation Environment, a new spatial configuration erected from stretchy, milky-white DuPont fabric.

Kasuba developed various architectural proposals from the 1970s through to the end of her life. Interested in the formal qualities of ancient and primeval structures, Kasuba incorporated vernacular building traditions, forms visible in nature and communal ways of living. Her focus on curved forms was a response to the confining verticality and regular grids of the streets of New York, compared to the expansive natural surroundings of her upbringing in Lithuania. Her work attempted to counterbalance the growing disorder of the world, and the strict order of modern spaces.

Driven by an interest in architecture's sensorial dimensions, she applied a utopian lens to the imagination of space as both experiential and structural. She designed environments inhabited by speculative dwellers residing in synergy with nature; social housing imbued with protocol for overcoming the alienation of the overdetermined world; and illuminated, cocoon-like tensile fabric structures, held taut by weights or suspended from rigid surfaces. Her immersive thresholds sought to engender states of perceptual suspension and transformation, and were grounded in the symbolic, kinetic and energetic associations of specific colours and sounds.

Kasuba's influence on contemporary architects is only beginning to be fully appreciated, but the impact of her experiments with light, colour and tension are evident in modern design. This panel brings together architects, designers and artists **Nikola Radeljković (Numen / For Use)**, **Valle Medina** and **Benjamin Reynolds (Pa.LaC.E)** and **Liz West**. Their practices each build upon and depart from Kasuba's in various ways, at once responding to and furthering the principles inherent to Kasuba's spatial imaginations – her so-called "elastic" utopian habitats.

Radeljković speaks to Kasuba's interrogations of the dynamics of tension and the evolution of forms. He explores the use of

elasticity and deformation within *Numen / For Use's Tape, Net* and *String Membrane* projects, through to their recent series of latex based objects and spaces.

Medina and Reynolds deliver a lecture-performance responding to Kasuba's conceptual mission of perceptual re-attunement, speaking in particular to the environments *Spectral Passage* (1975) and *The 20th Century Environment* (1973), and her text *The Seven Faces of Time* (2005). Discussing Pa.LaC.E's projects *Pastoral Complex*, *Zenith Boil*, and *Izumi & Iori* as correlative attempts to work through estrangement as an atmosphere, method and condition, they look to Kasuba's work as a model for retuning damaged relations between attention, intimacy, perception and the built environment.

Liz West reflects on Kasuba's equation of colour with sonic, emotional and spiritual qualities, to imagine new ways of living freely. She draws upon her project's *Our Colour*, *Gradient Remix*, *Hymn to the Big Wheel* and *Hundreds and Thousands*, to foreground the resonances between her work and Kasuba's in the crafting of luminous, immersive environments; the investigation of the psychosocial resonances of colour; and the manipulation of light and its intensity, to weave different spatial imaginaries.

The session is followed by a conversation and Q&A, moderated by Katrina Nzegwu (Assistant Curator, International Art).

*

12:05–12:20 | BREAK

*

12:20–13:15 | KASUBA AND ENERGIES

This panel expands upon Kasuba's fluid approach to perception.

Kasuba spanned the fields of art, ecology and technology. She drew upon the logic of cybernetics – the study of flows of control and communication within systems – to design immersive shapes that mirrored the unifying energy flow of living structures.

Kasuba's vision of the world was cosmic and transcendental – she saw each (human and non-human) being as a vital constituent of a profound, larger whole. Exceeding in spirit the limitations of the modernist forms with which she worked, her designs drew upon what she deemed to be the Earth's fundamental elements: a near-absence of parallel and orthogonal lines, as well as sensorial abundance.

For Kasuba, architecture was a living, embodied philosophy in practice. Her understanding of the human-environment relationship bordered on the mystical. She conceived of the world as an open system comprised of numerous energy events; this notion revealed the influence of cybernetic thinking on her work, upholding dynamic exchange as a medium via which agency is distributed between external systems and the individual. With particular reference to her immersive installations, her multisensory experiences operated adjacent to the realm of the spiritual, premised upon frameworks grounded in acts of sensing and sense-making.

This approach is evident in works such as *Shell Dwellers* (1989): a series of collages in which biomorphic shell-like living structures blend harmoniously into natural environments, occupied by fictional communities who have successfully resolved their contradictory relationships to more-than-human worlds. In her manifesto *Utility for the Soul* (1970) she draws a 'retreat house', in which residents' interactions with natural processes activated by the environment, create responsive feedback that serves to heighten attention, recognition, balance, coordination and spatial awareness. Her cartoon-like series *A Life* (2012–13) positions The Walker – a figure that would recur throughout her work, across her life – in a series of drawings that oscillate between stylised

visualisations and symbolic diagrams, interpreting life forces, events and movements. The series attempted to answer a question that permeated her entire career: “How to live with the visible and invisible forces humans captured in symbolic images long before they could them into words”¹

Bringing together **Lucia Pietroiusti** and **Nina Wexelblatt**, this panel explores the importance of systems of exchange to Kasuba’s work. Contributing to the broader rethinking of modern systems, Kasuba rejected dualisms and scientific objectivity, instead privileging performativity, interconnection and the diffuse transfer of energy. This presentation explores Kasuba’s union of scientific and spiritual structures to imagine alternative ways of living freely and communally with one another, and our environments; her union of meaning-making and the earth’s eternally flowing energies, to create spaces grounded in shared systems of embodied meanings.

*

13:15–14:15 | LUNCH BREAK

*

14:15–15:05 | INSIDE OTHER SPACES

In 1975, Kasuba presented the work *Spectral Passage* as part of *The Rainbow Show*: a unique curatorial endeavour grounded in a territorial approach, spanning the Fine Art Museums of, and various other institutions across San Francisco. Installed in the de Young Museum, the immersive installation occupied a crucial intermediary position both within *The Rainbow Show*, and Kasuba’s career. Envisioned as a phenomenon to be experienced rather than necessarily interpreted, it marked a shift in Kasuba’s work towards forms that sought to engender states of perceptual suspension and spatial immersion. Exploring mental and bodily perception and dematerialisation, it is exemplary of Kasuba’s

creation of “non-ordinary mind-spaces”: entities designed to transport audiences to different sensory planes.²

Almost 40 years after its initial presentation, *Spectral Passage* was recreated for the exhibition *Inside Other Spaces: Environments by Women Artists 1956–1976*: an event central to the renewed attention paid to Kasuba’s work in recent years, held at Haus der Kunst München between September 2023 and March 2024. Co-curated by Marina Pugliese (art historian and Director of MUDEC, City of Milan) with Andrea Lissoni (Artistic Director of Haus der Kunst München), *Inside Other Spaces* highlighted the fundamental contributions of 12 female artists to the history of environments: immersive spaces designed to transport audiences to different sensory planes. Retracing the steps of all the organisations featured in *The Rainbow Show*, *Inside Other Spaces* also recuperated various documents and ephemera from the city of San Francisco’s archives, otherwise absent from the annals of the de Young Museum.

This session brings together **Marina Pugliese and Adomas Narkevičius**, in discussion of the significance of principles of space and placemaking to their respective curatorial practices. In her presentation, Pugliese situates the curation of *Inside Other Spaces* within the broader scope of her research into artistic environments. She touches upon the crucial role played by Kasuba’s environment in the overall framework of *The Rainbow Show*; the wider critical importance of female artists working with notions of spatiality, and at the intersection of art and architecture; and the importance of reinvigorating lost, immersive artworks for novel publics.

Grounded in his recent research into the archives of the Untamed Fashion Assemblies (UFA), undertaken on the occasion of his co-curation of the Latvian Pavilion at the 61st Venice Biennale, Narkevičius considers how spatial habitats and environments can affect perception and effect social transformation. The pavilion features an installation by the artist duo MAREUNROL’S, and

archival materials from UFA founder Bruno Birmanis. It conceives of UFA as an in-between space of play, freedom, and overlapping temporalities, exploring the role of utopian thinking in moments of uncertainty. Looking to Kasuba's *Global Village (Geodesic Village). Architecture as a Social Instrument. I* (1971), *Live-In Environment* (1971) and *Spectral Passage* (1975), Adomas reads Kasuba's "space-making" alongside UFA's "gathering of the untamed" as rehearsals for imagining novel, less alienated ways of living.

*

15:05–15:20 | BREAK

*

15:20–16.00 | DIGITAL FERMENTATION

Sanchit Bembi presents a lecture-performance, incorporating an iteration of his installation *Digital Fermentation*. First shown at the 2025 London Design Festival, *Digital Fermentation* mirrors the artist's own sensory experience, possessed of synaesthesia (or "blended senses") and visual snow syndrome— a neurological condition creating constant, flickering white, black, transparent or coloured dots across the visual field, like television static. Uniting lights, smells, textures and sounds, Bembi's installation speaks to Kasuba's creation of 'sensory-enhancing spatial circumstances', playing with the material, sonic and chromatic to explore journeys through life.

Digital Fermentation comprises a webcam that takes in a real time feed from the gallery, directly translating sound to colour as audiences speak, sing, clap and make other noises, manifesting in a shifting, projected image. The complete installation will feature four sandstone speakers in each corner of the space. Corresponding to the reactive projection, they will disperse a scent in response to the various sonic frequencies generated by the audience's movement. The prototype version presented here

brings together the webcam and an example of one of the speakers. Bembi invites audiences to engage with the installation's various elements, watching as their gestures create a playful, fluid relief; discovering the materiality and mechanics of the speakers, and the affective potentialities of diffused aroma.

At the core of the installation is a lack of fixity, speaking to the shifting fields of perception, materiality and meaning that underpinned Kasuba's practice. Bembi foregrounds the idea that different bodies in the space, speakers created from different stones, and different audio frequencies can contribute to a work constantly in flux, making and remaking experience anew in different contexts. In this way he draws upon Kasuba's creation of a "different politics of the senses", enabled by synaesthetic associations – the creation of a living system containing a spectrum of energies, that transmit and translate meaning amongst the senses.³

Please note that this presentation includes the diffusion of artificial fragrance. Those with sensitivities, allergies or asthma may wish to take necessary precautions.

*

16:00–16.15 | CLOSING REMARKS

Asta Radikaitė – Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to the United Kingdom and Portugal

Anne Barlow – Director, Tate St Ives

*

NOTES

¹ From Lanier F. Graham's papers on *The Rainbow Show*.

² L. Graham, 'Kasuba's original Spectral Passage in San Francisco's Rainbow Show. A Short History'.

³ Silvia Casini, 'Synesthesia, Transformation and Synthesis: Toward a Multi-Sensory Pedagogy of the Image', *The Senses and Society*, vol.12, no.1, 2017, pp. 1–17.

BIOGRAPHIES

Participants

Adomas Narkevičius is Founding Director of Upė Foundation. His research focuses on the limits of representation, and the 'untimeliness' of postwar and contemporary art, in the Baltic region and beyond. He is the co-curator of the Latvian Pavilion at the 61st Venice Biennale, 2026. Previous positions include Curator at Cell Project Space, London (2021–25) and Curator at Rupert, Vilnius (2016–2019).

Dr Elona Lubytė is an art historian and Curator of the Lithuanian Contemporary Sculpture Collection at the Lithuanian National Museum of Art. Her research explores the modernisation of Lithuanian visual art in the second half of the 20th century. She is a Professor within the Department of Art History and Theory, Vilnius Academy of Arts, and a member of the Lithuanian National Section of AICA (Association for International Art Criticism).

Liz West is a British artist, whose vivid environments mix luminous colour and radiant light. Using a variety of materials, she blurs the boundaries between sculpture, architecture, design and painting to create playful and immersive works. She has been commissioned worldwide by institutions and organisations including Natural History Museum, London Design Festival, and Paris Fashion Week; and has presented solo exhibitions at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Farol Santander São Paulo, and more.

Curator **Lucia Pietroiusti** is Head of Research & Emergence at the future Hartwig Museum, Amsterdam, opening in 2028, and in 2027 will be the Curator of the 6th Autostrada Biennale (Prizren, Kosovo). Until August 2025, Pietroiusti was Head of Ecologies at Serpentine, London, where she founded the General Ecology project (2018-2025). She is the curator of the Golden Lion winning Lithuanian Pavilion at the 2019 Venice Biennale, *Sun & Sea*.

Marina Pugliese is an art historian, and Head of Public Art and Director of MUDEC (Museum of Cultures), Milan. She has founded Museo del Novecento (2010), MUDEC (2015) and started the Public Art Department of the City of Milan (2020). She co-curated the award-winning exhibitions *Lucio Fontana Ambienti/Environments* (2017 Pirelli Hangar Bicocca, Milan) and *Inside Other Spaces. Environments by Women Artists 1956-1976* (2023, Haus der Kunst München).

Nikola Radeljković is an industrial designer and founding member of Numen/For Use, alongside Sven Jonke and Christoph Katlzer. First formed in 1998, the collective works across the fields of conceptual art, scenography, and industrial and spatial design. The group explores material systems, immersive environments, and the relationship between human perception and physical structures. A key part of their practice involves creating objects and concepts without fixed functions, resulting in hybrid and experimental works.

Nina Wexelblatt is Visiting Assistant Professor of Art History at the University of California, Riverside. Her research focuses on postwar artists' experiments with remote control, automated labour systems, and satellite telecommunications. She has a PhD in History, Theory and Criticism of Art from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and has held curatorial positions at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.

Valle Medina and **Benjamin Reynolds** are co-founders of Pa.LaC.E, a spatial practice based between Basel and London. Pa.LaC.E addresses collaborative estrangement, and deprivation as a productive strategy. Working across space, installation, film, writing and pedagogy, they envision both virtual and built environments and phenomena. They convene High Holdings at the Royal College of Art, a framework examining intimacy and psychic life amidst our overabundance of information. Pa.LaC.E has published two major monographs: *Paris Hermitage* and *Zenith Boil*.

Sanchit Bambi is a mixed-media artist working across digital photography, film and interactive art. His practice emerges from living with synaesthesia and visual snow syndrome. These experiences have led him to develop a play-based methodology, bridging sensory experiences and treating the camera and digital processes as collaborators. His work has been exhibited at Conditions Studio, the Design Festival and Serpentine Gallery.

Convenors

Anne Barlow is Director, Tate St Ives. Formerly Director of Art in General, New York, she held curatorial roles at the New Museum, New York and Glasgow Museums, Scotland. She has organised exhibitions including Małgorzata Mirga-Tas, Outi Pieski and Petrit Halilaj, and was Curator of the 5th Bucharest Biennale and the Samdani Art Award at the 2023 Dhaka Art Summit. In 2025, she participated in the Experimenter Curators' Hub in Kolkata, India.

Arūnas Gelūnas is a Lithuanian artist, scholar, curator, and Director General of the Lithuanian National Museum of Art. He served as Commissioner of the Lithuanian Pavilion at the 60th Venice Biennale and has curated exhibitions on Soviet dissident art and Japanese popular culture. His previous positions include Minister of Culture of Lithuania (2010–2012) and Vice-Rector of the Vilnius Academy of Arts (2004–2010). He has published extensively on art, philosophy and cultural theory.

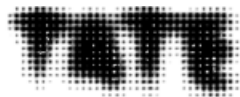
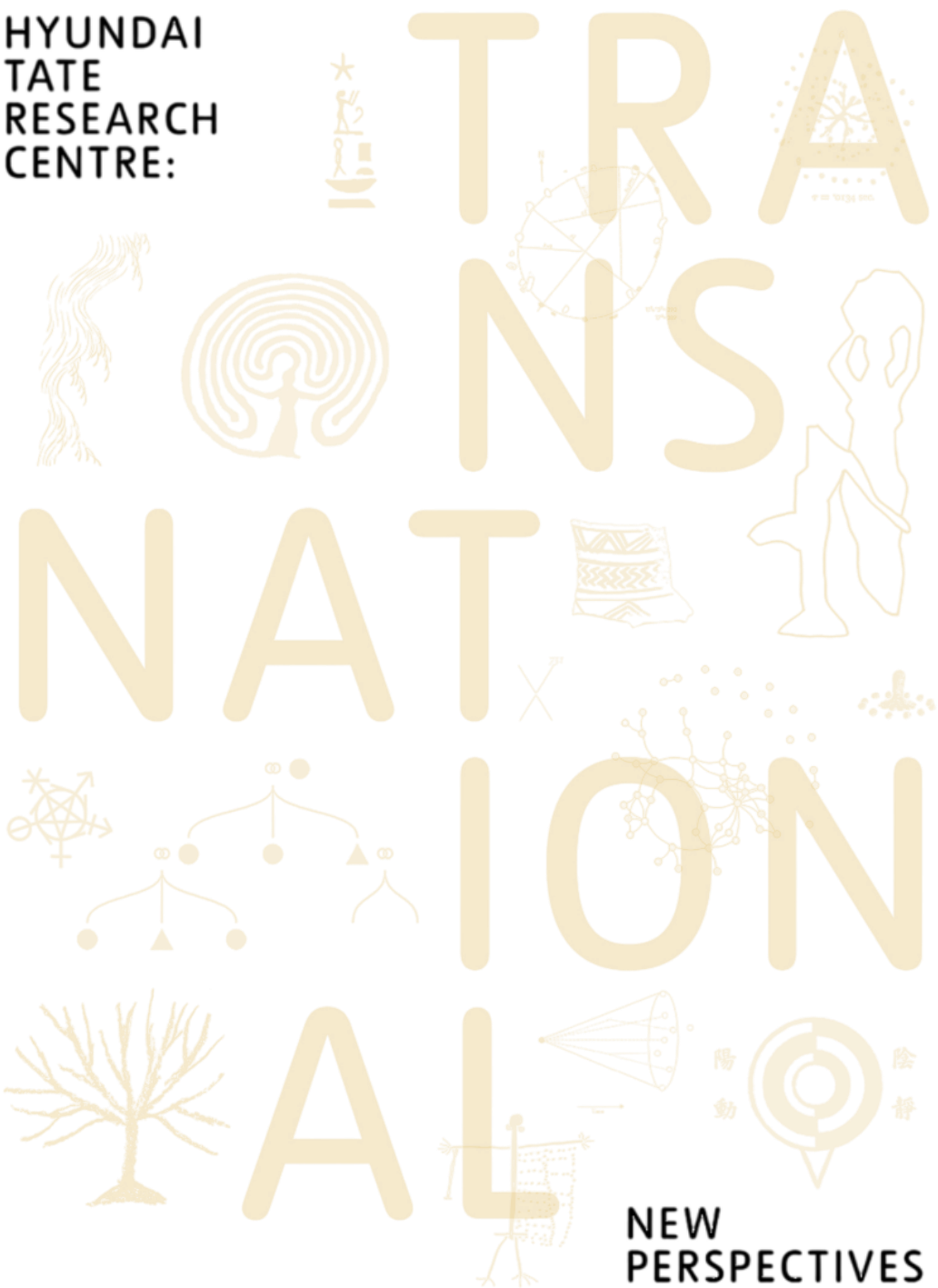
Asta Radikaitė is the Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to the United Kingdom, and the Portuguese Republic. She previously served as Lithuania's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark and as non-resident Ambassador to Iceland from 2021–2025. With nearly three decades of diplomatic experience, Asta has held a number of senior positions within Lithuania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She also served as Minister Counsellor (Antici) at Lithuania's Permanent Representation to the European Union in Brussels.

Jarelle Francis is a curator with an MA in Curating Contemporary Art from the Royal College of Art. He works as an Exhibitions Assistant and has previously held the same position at The Centre for British Photography. In 2023 he founded Meadow, a nomadic project space which works with emerging artists to produce new solo exhibitions.

Katrina Nzegwu is Assistant Curator, International Art at Tate Modern. She has worked across exhibitions, site-specific sculptural commissions and live performance, with a focus on community-based praxis. She has written for platforms and places including Elephant, The London Magazine, Burlington Contemporary and emergent, and is part of the creative collective When They Meet.

Nabila Abdel Nabi is Senior Curator, International Art, Tate Modern. She leads the Hyundai Tate Research Centre: Transnational, and the Middle East North Africa Acquisitions Committee. She has worked on exhibitions including *The Genesis Exhibition: Do Ho Suh: Walk the House, Hilma af Klint & Piet Mondrian: Forms of Life*, and *The Making of Rodin*, as well as major collection displays including *The Shape of Words*, *Anna Boghiguan* and *Farah Al Qasimi*.

HYUNDAI
TATE
RESEARCH
CENTRE:



in partnership with



NEW
PERSPECTIVES
ON GLOBAL
ART HISTORIES