

TBA21-Academy Leadership Bios

Francesca Thyssen-Bornemisza, Founder

An activist, philanthropist, and patron of the arts, Francesca Thyssen-Bornemisza has supported artists throughout her career in the production and creation of new work that fuel engagement with the most pressing issues of our times. Since 2002, Thyssen-Bornemisza has led Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (TBA21), a nonprofit foundation committed to commissioning and producing multidisciplinary art projects that defy traditional categorization and confront issues of social justice, including large-scale installations, sound compositions, endurance performances, and contemporary architecture. The TBA21 Collection includes major work and commissions by such artists as Monica Bonvicini, Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller, Claudia Comte, Olafur Eliasson, Cerith Wyn Evans, Amar Kanwar, Ragnar Kjartansson, Ernesto Neto, Rirkrit Tiravanija, and Ai Weiwei, among many others. In 2011, as an outgrowth of her work with TBA21 and her commitment to the environment and protecting our oceans, she co-founded TBA21–Academy with Director Markus Reymann.

Thyssen-Bornemisza has received numerous honors, including the Simmons Award for Philanthropic Excellence in 2015, the Merit Award in Gold of the Province of Vienna for her cultural engagement in Vienna in 2009, the Iceland’s Order of the Falcon in 2007, and the Montblanc de la Culture Arts Patronage Award in 1996. Her sustained commitment to the cultural realm extends a long tradition of collecting and philanthropy in the Thyssen family that dates back generations. Her father, Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza, was the founder of the Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum in Madrid, where she continues to serve on the Board.

Markus Reymann, Co-Founder and Director

As Director and Co-Founder of TBA21–Academy, Markus Reymann has forged the mission and program of TBA21–Academy, which fosters interdisciplinary dialogue and exchange surrounding the most urgent ecological, social, and economic issues facing our oceans today. Reymann leads the nonprofit’s engagement with artists, activists, scientists, and policy-makers worldwide, resulting in the creation of new commissions, new bodies of knowledge, and new policies advancing the conservation and protection of the oceans. Reymann has been integral in developing the vision for Ocean Space, a new collaborative platform for oceanic exchange and innovation located in the Church of San Lorenzo in Venice, Italy, and the creation of Ocean Archive, a new digital “colaboratory” operating at the intersection of scientific inquiry, artistic intelligence, and environmental advocacy. He has presented and participated in conferences internationally, including at the Starmus Festival (Bern), the Explorers Club (New York City), the annual UN Climate Change Conference, and the UNESCO International Ocean Literacy Conference. Reymann is the Chair of the Board of Directors on the Alligator Head Foundation, the Academy’s scientific partner which manages and oversees the East Portland Fish Sanctuary in Jamaica, houses a marine lab, and TBA21 –Academy’s residency program.

Stefanie Hessler, Curator

As Curator of TBA21–Academy, Stefanie Hessler has helped to develop the nonprofit’s cross-disciplinary artistic program, encompassing exhibitions, artist installations, and publications. Hessler curated TBA21–Academy’s first exhibition *Tidalectics*, which debuted at TBA21–Augarten in Vienna (2017) and subsequently traveled in expanded form to Le Fresnoy, Tourcoing (February 2018) and to Croatia (July 2018), in a two-part presentation at the Museum of Modern Art Dubrovnik and at the newly restored Franciscan Monastery on the island of Lopud. In 2017, she co-curated the festival and symposium *Fishing for Islands* at the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, with Chus Martínez and Markus Reymann. Hessler mostly

recently served as the curator of the investigative exhibition *Prospecting Ocean* by Armin Linke, presented at the Institute of Marine Sciences of the National Research Council of Italy (2018), and of *Moving Off the Land II* by Joan Jonas, which inaugurates the first phase of Ocean Space.

Other recent independent projects by Hessler include the curation of the 6th Athens Biennale (2018); *Sugar and Speed* at the Museum of Modern Art, Recife (2017); *Katja Aglert. Winter Event—antifreeze* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Santiago de Chile and at FLORA ars+natura, Bogotá (2015–16); *Tunnel Vision: 8th Momentum Biennial*, Moss (2015); and *Outside* at Index, Stockholm (2014). Hessler is a regular contributor to publications like *ArtReview* and *art agenda*, and has edited the anthologies *Life Itself*, published by Moderna Museet and Walther König (2016), and *Tidalectics: Imagining an Oceanic Worldview through Art and Science*, published by The MIT Press (2018) in collaboration with TBA21—Academy. She is currently writing the book *Prospecting Ocean* with a visual essay by Armin Linke, published by The MIT Press (forthcoming). Hessler is a guest professor at the Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm.