

# Mari Spirito

## **Mari Spirito Paragraph Biography**

Mari Spirito is Executive Director and Curator of Protocinema, a cross-cultural, ambulatory art organization commissioning and presenting exhibitions and public programs in Istanbul and New York, which she founded in 2011. In 2023 co-curated *Art, Ancestors, Ghosts & The Dead* convening on attitudes towards death across cultures; curator of *The Myth of Normal, A Celebration of Authentic Expression* group exhibition at MassArt Art Museum, Boston, forthcoming in October; and completed Contemplative Care Foundations Program, New York Zen Center. In 2020, developed and presented a new exhibition model *A Few In Many Places*, a multi-city group exhibition, Beirut, Istanbul, Berlin, Montreal, and Philadelphia, that maintains a foot in physical real-life in each community, while utilizing far-reaching digital support structures, thoughtfully-local and globally interconnected. In 2021, this format took place in Seoul, Bangkok, Istanbul, New York, Santurce, and Guatemala City, all of these interventions use sustainable exhibition-making models of reducing exploitation (of natural resources, labor and knowledge) and consumption (no shipping or flying). In 2015 she initiated the Protocinema Emerging Curator Series Mentorship program, which partnered with The Clemente Soto Véllez Cultural & Educational Center, New York, in 2022. From 2013 to 2018 she programmed the Conversations program for both Art Basel and Art Basel Miami Beach. Spirito served as International Advisory Committee Member for the Inaugural High Line Plinth Commissions, New York, 2017; curator/director of Alt Art Space, Bomonti, Istanbul 2015 - 2017; Advisor to the 2nd Mardin Biennial, Turkey, 2012; director of 303 Gallery New York from 2000 - 2012. She is on the Board of Participant Inc, New York, and holds a BFA from Massachusetts College of Art, Boston.

In 2020 Spirito was commissioning curator of Theo Triantafyllidis' *Anti-Gone* mixed-media performance premiered at Sundance Film Festival, New Frontier; *Artist Making Music* a video by Sub-Botnick (Ahmet Öğüt & Maru Mushtrieva) co-commissioned with inaugural Asia Society Triennial: "We Do Not Dream Alone", 2021. In 2019 wrote *Flies Bite, It's Going To Rain* catalog text on Vajiko Chachkhiani's installation of the same name; curated public talks for Beijing Art Summit, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing. UCCA, 798 Art District. Faculty for Independent Curators International (ICI) Curatorial Intensive, Bangkok; guest curator, Alserkal Arts Foundation Public Commission, Dubai, with Hale Tenger, 2018. Launched Protocinema Screening Tour 2017. Protocinema partnered with Artspace, Sydney for "Australia and Turkey Visiting Curators Initiative", 2014. Spirito is on Advisory Committees of: AGYU, Art Gallery of York University, Toronto; Art Unlimited Magazine, and Boarder\_less, Istanbul.

## **Commissions and/or Long term Projects with:**

Doug Aitken, Abbas Akhavan, Can Altay, Andreas Angelidakis, Vahap Avşar, Hera Büyüktaşçıyan, Rossella Biscotti, Burak Delier, Latifa Echakhch, Kathryn Hamilton/Sister Sylvester, David Horvitz, Köken Ergun, Dominique Gonzales-Forester, Jorge González Santos, Katherine Hamilton/Deniz Tortum, Burak Kabadayı, Onur Karaoğlu, Jacob Kassay, Michelle Lopez, Gülşah Mursaloglu, Mike Nelson, Brian O'Connell, Ahmet Öğüt, Lara Ögel, peersathttp.net, Stéphanie Saadé, Rania Stephan, Mika Tajima, Hale Tenger, Hasan Özgür Top, Welcome to Ogasawara collective.

*In traditional formatt:*

**Executive Director, Curator Protocinema** 2011 - present

Executive Director and Curator of Protocinema, nonprofit 501(c)3 is a cross-cultural art organization that commissions and presents site-aware art around the world, based in Istanbul and New York. Research, programming, fundraising, manage micro-team, budget, communications, and social media and board.

**Critic**, Rhode Island School of Design, Department of Sculpture, Part Time Faculty, 2023 Fall

**Visiting Curator**, MFA Visual Art, Vermont College of Art, 2023 and 2021

**Speaker**, Açık Diyalog İstanbul, Curating Contemporary Art Seminar Program, 2020-present

**Launched Protodispatch 2022**, a monthly digital publication with Laura Raicovich, featuring personal perspectives by artists addressing transcontinental concerns, filtered by where they are in the world, with Artnet, Argonatlar (Turkey), Ground Control (Thailand) as long-term publication partners, 5 million monthly users from over 239 countries and territories.

Launched **Protocinema Screening Tour**, in 2017, a one hour program of single-channel video art that travels annually, to venues such as: Torino Film Festival, Turin; Kundura Sinema, Istanbul; Rampa, Porto; SculptureCenter, Long Island City, New York; sub; Cinémathèque de Tangier, Tangier; Lumbardhi, Prizren, Kosovo.

International Advisory Committee, **Inaugural High Line Plinth Commissions**, New York, 2017

**Curator, Art Basel, Conversations** 2013- 2018

Curator for both Art Basel and Art Basel Miami Beach, programming a series of conversations over four days: 23 talks for Basel, 19 talks for Miami, by developing subjects around current issues, selection of speakers, such as Global Patrons Council, VIP Relations and Marketing. Topics concerning the global contemporary art scene, producing, collecting, and exhibiting art, as well as Market and/or Collector interests, issues.

Juror on Art Basel Crowdfunding Initiative 2014 - 2016

**Director-Curator Alt Art Space, Bomontiada**, Istanbul 2015 –2017

Director and Curator of a multi-corporate sponsored exhibition space for visual arts, performance and public programs. Research, programming, promoting, and management of teams, installation, budget and commissioning of new works.

**Protocinema Emerging Curator Series** 2015-present

Created, managed, fundraised and nurtured a series of exhibitions with emerging curators with an international mentor system.

**Advisor 2nd Mardin Biennial**, Turkey 2012

Collaborated with curators Paolo Colombo and Lora Sarıaslan

Participant **Independent Curators International**, Curatorial Intensive on Site-Specificity at Instituto Inhotim, Brazil, 2012.

**Director 303 Gallery**, New York 2000- 2012

Director representing twenty-five international artists, producing artworks, mounting and promoting exhibitions, managing staff of 22, placing artwork by gallery artists in private and public collections.