

*In the Beginning ... the Word became flesh*  
**Pavilion of the Holy See – Biennale Arte 2015**

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## ***In the Beginning ... the Word became flesh***

**Pavilion of the Holy See**

**Biennale Arte 2015**

**Arsenale di Venezia – Sale d’Armi nord**

**5-8 May 2015 Vernice**

**9 May – 22 November 2015**

**Press Conference**

**April 9th 2015, 11.30am**

**Sala Stampa Vaticana – via della Conciliazione, 54, Roma**



The Holy See participates this year for the second time at the *Biennale d’Arte di Venezia*, with a Pavilion inspired by the New Testament. *In the Beginning ... the Word became flesh* is the theme chosen by the Commissioner Card. Gianfranco Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture, at whose request the theme of the “Beginning” has been developed, passing from the 2013 edition’s reference to *Genesis* to that of the Prologue of the *Gospel of John*. Curated by Micol Forti, the structure of the Pavilion is articulated around two essential poles: firstly, the transcendent Word, which is “in the beginning” and which reveals the dialogical and communicative nature of the God of Jesus Christ (v. 1-5); and then the Word made “flesh”, body, bringing the presence of God in humanity, especially where it appears injured and suffering (v. 14). The encounter of these “vertical-transcendent” and “horizontal-immanent” dimensions is the heart of the research. The two “tables” of the Prologue of John’s Gospel are the basic inspiration for the artistic creations of three artists, who have been chosen after a long selection, in light of some precise criteria: the consonance of their own journeys with the chosen theme, the variety of the techniques used, their internationality, diversity and geographic and cultural provenance, and above all the open and evolutionary nature of their work. Monika Bravo (1964) was born and raised in Colombia, and today lives and works in New York; the Macedonian Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva (1971), currently lives and works in London; the photographer Mário Macilau (1984), was born and raised in Maputo, Mozambique, where he lives.

The catalogue of the Pavilion, edited by Micol Forti and Elisabetta Cristallini, (Italian-English – Gangemi Editore), together with an introductory essay by Gianfranco Ravasi focusing on the theme of the Pavilion, contains texts by Micol Forti, Elisabetta Cristallini, Ben Quash, Octavio Zaya and Alessandra Mauro.

Criteria of sobriety and economy have guided the project and installation of the Pavilion, realised by architect Roberto Pulitani; the costs are entirely sustained by Sponsors who have made this important project possible.

The official inauguration of the Pavilion takes place in the presence of His Eminence Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi on Friday 8 May, at 4.30pm.

A special App will be provided inside the Pavilion giving more information and you can follow the Twitter account: @PadVat\_Biennale.

Press office and information: email: [press@cultura.va](mailto:press@cultura.va), web: [www.cultura.va](http://www.cultura.va) - Twister Communications Group: Dott.ssa Maria Russo – email: [mrusso@twistergroup.it](mailto:mrusso@twistergroup.it) – cell. +39 3202797895.

Images of the Holy See’s Pavilion may be downloaded from the following link: <http://ftp.labiennale.org>.  
Account: biennale2015 - Password: biennale2015.

***In the Beginning ... the Word became flesh***  
**Pavilion of the Holy See – Biennale Arte 2015**

***In the Beginning ... the Word became flesh***

The desire to re-establish dialogue between art and faith continues after the experience of 2013, and there remains a great vivacity of interest in the international sphere concerning the relationship between the Church and contemporary art.

Following the first edition, the Pavilion of the Holy See at the 56<sup>th</sup> *Biennale d'Arte di Venezia* develops the theme of the “Beginning” with a movement from the Old to the New Testament, making the *Logos* and the *Flesh* the terms of a constantly living relationship.

With reference to *Genesis*, understood as Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation, which was the object of our reflection in 2013, we now have a new term of encounter in the Prologue of the *Gospel of John*. Two essential aspects of this meeting are highlighted: the transcendent Word is “in the beginning”, and at the same time reveals the dialogical and communicational nature of the God of Jesus Christ (v. 1-5), and the Word that becomes “flesh”, body, bringing the presence of God into the essence of humanity, especially where it seems injured and suffering (v. 14).

The descent to immanence is expressed in almost visual terms in the parable of the Good Samaritan, which is taken up in this context as a further thematic suggestion completely in perspective. The pages of the *Gospel of Luke* offer the image of a God present within a humanity oppressed in a human condition. God made flesh helps the injured man, who is marked by death and fragility.

The “vertical-transcendent” dimension of the *Logos* and the “horizontal-immanent” dimension of the “flesh” are axes of research in this sense. There is a need to refer to these as they cross over, to understand the single pieces of art, the dialogue that they create between each other within the exhibition space.

The terms of the Prologue of the Johannine Gospel inspire the thematic spaces into which the Pavilion is divided. They find the creations of artists who have been selected in light of the consonance of their current research journey with the chosen theme, for the variety of the techniques used, and for their geographic and cultural provenance.

*Gianfranco Card. Ravasi, Commissioner of the Pavilion*

***In the Beginning ... the Word became flesh***  
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*A dialectic dynamism in three voices*

There are two hubs around which the project for the Pavilion of the Vatican rotates and takes its form: the *Logos* and the *flesh*. The *Logos* establishes a relationship, a harmony, a mediation; the *flesh* imposes immanence, a track, a process of embodiment.

Their inseparable unity produces a dialectic dynamism, irregular, elliptical, abruptly accelerating, precipitously slowing down, to solicit in the artists as in the public, a reflection on a combination that lies at the root of humanity itself.

Three artists, all young, from different backgrounds, with different experiences, vision, ethics and aesthetics, brought together to give body to the *In the Beginning ...* evoked by the Prologue of John's Gospel.

Monika Bravo, a Colombian by birth, with international training but American by adoption, has skillfully come up and elaborated a narrative which can be assembled and reassembled on 6 screens and as many transparent panels, placed on strongly colored walls. Nature, the Word, written and spoken, and Artistic abstraction present themselves in every composition as active elements of a heuristic vision, open to a degree of uncertainty in the development of a new experimental perception of space and a sensory fullness, through the grace and the "manual" poetry with which the artist uses technological media.

The young Macedonian Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva's research blends craftsmanship, scientific knowledge and a powerful aesthetic vision. She has designed a monumental architectural installation for the Pavilion, whose "fabric" is almost a skin, a mantle, which welcomes visitors both in a physical and symbolic dimension at the same time. Realized with organic waste materials in a way which leads from the ready-made to the re-made, the artist creates a cloth that is both an embroidery and surface skin, physical presence and transparency, an instrument of suggestion and surprise.

The *flesh* gains importance in the return to reality without falsification in the photographs of the thirty year old Mário Macilau. The series of nine photographs in black and white, taken in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, where the artist was born and works, are dedicated to the street children who still are living on the streets as means of survival. This is not a documentary, but a poetic work that transforms the relationship between the now and the past, the near and far, the visible and the invisible. The theme of the origin and the end of each artistic act is driven by the power of the photographic composition to confront the agony of the real.

*Micol Forti, Curator of the Pavilion*

## *In the Beginning ... the Word became flesh*

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### TESTI BIBLICI

#### **Prologue - Jn 1, 1-18**

<sup>1</sup>**In the beginning was the Word**, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. <sup>6</sup>There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

<sup>14</sup>**The Word became flesh** and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup>John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" <sup>16</sup>From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

#### **The Parable of the Good Samaritan - Lk 10, 25-37**

<sup>25</sup>On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>26</sup>"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" <sup>27</sup>He answered: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' " <sup>28</sup>"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

<sup>29</sup>But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "**And who is my neighbor?**" <sup>30</sup>In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup>A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup>So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup>But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. <sup>34</sup>He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. <sup>35</sup>The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' <sup>36</sup>**Which of these three do you think was a neighbor** to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" <sup>37</sup>The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

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**Artists and exhibited works**

**MONIKA BRAVO**

Born in Bogotá, Colombia, in 1964. Lives and works between New York and Bogotá.

[www.monikabravo.com](http://www.monikabravo.com)

*ARCHE-TYPES. The sound of the word is beyond sense*, 2015

Installation: LD monitor, transparent elements, painted wood panel, projection, media player, sound sensors, speakers; six elements, each of 440 x 230 cm

**ELPIDA HADZI-VASILEVA**

Born in Kavadarci, Macedonia, in 1971. Lives and works in Brighton, UK.

[www.elpihv.co.uk](http://www.elpihv.co.uk)

*Haruspex*, 2015

Installation: organic materials, structures and steel cables, 1150 x 1100 x 520 cm

**MÁRIO MACILAU**

Born in Maputo, Mozambique, in 1984. Lives and works in Maputo.

[www.mariomacilau.com](http://www.mariomacilau.com)

*Growing on Darkness*, 2012-2015

Series of 9 photos, 133 x 200 cm

Pigmented inkjet print on Hahnemühle cotton paper

## MONIKA BRAVO

**(Born in Bogotá, Colombia, in 1964 - lives in New York and Bogotá)**

[www.monikabravo.com](http://www.monikabravo.com)

Born and grown up in Colombia, Monika Bravo started to travel at a very young age, spending long periods in Italy, France, England before moving to New York, where she settled in 1994 and currently lives.

The openness and intellectual curiosity for the diversity of cultures, languages, expressions, is one of the main strands of both biography and artistic research of Monika Bravo, arose from different formative experiences, from fashion to photography. Her works, hardly summarizable or classifiable, often carried out with the support of screens, projections, digital players, are addressed to trace the common elements in which sink the differences, in the belief that the various languages of the arts can talk to, and chase each other, despite the distance, the times and places, from ancient techniques to technological innovations.

A constant interference is filled up among different forms of inspiration, from literature to architecture, from music to photography, from painting to the applied arts. In this “web of references”, sometimes only evoked and transformed by her artistic language, are always present the Colombian roots: the force of tradition, the religious and popular culture and the disruptive presence of colors. The universality of the abstract language becomes the meeting ground where the essentiality of patterned Colombian fabrics mingles with nature, or is reflected in the artistic research of Western culture (this last one, already become a “code”). In this new field, Monika can define a new poetics and a new world of shapes and colors, in which is possible to redefine, and to fray, the boundaries between cultures.

Personal shows and reputation at the international level have intensified in recent years, involving important exhibition in the United States (including the MoCA in Los Angeles and the main museums of contemporary art in New York: the MoMA, the Brooklyn Museum, the New Museum), and other countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Norway (Sternesen Museum, Oslo), United Kingdom (Tate Britain), Spain (Reina Sofia), Turkey and Korea (Seoul International Biennial of New Media Art). She has been involved frequently in public commissions in the US, including permanent video installations for Austin University, Texas, and Los Angeles International Airport.

In 2011 she founded the publishing house and digital platform *Two Leaves Editions*, developed with the aim to create an intersection of collaboration between artists and creative professionals.



## **DIDASCALIE MONIKA BRAVO**

### **Italiano**

1) Monika Bravo, ritratto, 2015

Foto Monika Bravo © Monika Bravo, Courtesy artista

2) Monika Bravo, particolare dell'installazione *ARCHE-TYPES. The sound of the word is beyond sense*, 2015, LD monitor con proiezioni e lastre trasparenti su pannelli in legno dipinto, proiezioni, cm 440 x 230, foto Monika Bravo © Monika Bravo, Courtesy artista

### **Inglese**

1) Monika Bravo, portrait, 2015

Foto Monika Bravo © Monika Bravo, Courtesy artista

2) Monika Bravo, part of the installation *ARCHE-TYPES. The sound of the word is beyond sense*, 2015, LD monitor, transparent elements, painted wood panel, projection, media player, 440 x 230 cm, photo Monika Bravo © Monika Bravo, Courtesy the artist

## ELPIDA HADZI-VASILEVA

(Born in Kavadarci, Macedonia, in 1971- lives in UK)

[www.elpihv.co.uk](http://www.elpihv.co.uk)

Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva (born 1971, Kavadarci, Macedonia) lives and works in England. She graduated in sculpture from Glasgow School of Art in 1996 and the Royal College of Art, London in 1998. Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva is a site-specific installation artist working across various media including sculpture, installation, video and sound, photography and architectural interventions. Central to her practice is a response to the particularities of a place; its history, locale, economy, environment and communities. She often uses materials that already have an existing link or history to the specific environment, which often results in new and unusual methods of working. Her materials range from the unusual to the ordinary and the ephemeral to the precious; they are often unexpected, and have included organic materials and precious metals.

Hadzi-Vasileva has exhibited extensively and realised numerous commissions nationally and internationally, in gallery spaces, museums and in the public realm. She was selected by the Ministry of Culture to represent Republic of Macedonia at the 55th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia in 2013 (*Silentio Pathologia*). Past sites and commissions include Pied à Terre, London; Gloucester Cathedral, Gloucester; Towner Gallery, Eastbourne; Southgate Shopping Centre, Bath; Swiss Embassy and the World Bank, Macedonia; Kilmainham Gaol Museum, Ireland; New Forest Pavilion at the 51st Venice Biennale and Public Room, Skopje.

Hadzi-Vasileva's artworks are in various private and public collections, *HA[SOFT]RD (2014)*, commissioned for Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (mima) and Engage as part of the Alexandra Reinhardt Memorial award, became part of mima's permanent collection. *Resuscitare (2013)*, a temporary commission for *artSOUTH*, has become a highly regarded installation and is now permanently located at Mottisfont Abbey in Hampshire, England.

Her work is regularly featured in news coverage and has been featured in a major article by Robert Preece in the American *Sculpture* magazine (April 2014): "...magical, disturbing and richly layered works with an aesthetic resonance." Editor Glenn Harper selected her, after seeing her installation *Silentio Pathologia* in Venice, with one other artist as his top two favorite exhibitions in the entire Venice Biennale, 2013.



## **DIDASCALIE ELPIDA HADZI-VASILEVA**

### **Italiano**

1) Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, ritratto, 2015  
© Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, Courtesy artista

2) Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, *Haruspex* (particolare), 2015, materiale organico  
Foto Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, © Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, Courtesy artista

### **Inglese**

1) Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, portrait, 2015  
© Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, Courtesy the artist

2) Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, *Haruspex* (detail), 2015, organic materials  
Photo Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, © Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, Courtesy the artist

## MÁRIO MACILAU

(Born in Maputo, Mozambique, in 1984 – lives in Mozambique)

[www.mariomacilau.com](http://www.mariomacilau.com)

Macilau started his journey as photographer in 2003 and went professional when he traded his mother's cell phone for his first camera in 2007, he specializes in long-term projects that focus on living and environmental conditions. As a documentary photographer he is committed to initiating positive change across different cultures, locations and perspectives, in his home country he uses his work to confront the reality of power, environment and cultural heritage that affect socially isolated groups and issues that define our times. Born 1984 in Maputo, Mozambique, where he lives and works, in the newly independent Mozambique, in the midst of the most critical phase of its civil war. His family struggled financially and moved from the Inhambane province to the capital, Maputo, in search of a better life. When he was 10 years old he began to work in a small market frequented by the middle/upper class where he became a street child, washing cars in the car park and helping to carry the groceries in an effort to support his family.

Mário Macilau's photography artwork focuses on political, social and cultural issues, linked to the radical transformations of the human kind in time and space. In his photography, he deals with the complex reality of human labor and the environmental conditions evolving over the times, using the images he captures as a form of visual confrontation that state a line of reflection to the reality. In his projects, he uses a variety of techniques and photographic processes, making his work consistent with the subject matter and his artistic identity. What makes his photographs recognizable is the capacity to invade the people's hearts and capture their feelings. The subjects come from different times, states of mind, surroundings, people and their stories that unfold over his eye, seeking what still remains unknown inside him.

Selection of Solo exhibitions: *Mário Macilau*, Galeria Belo-Galsterer, Lisbon 2013; *Taking Place*, Gallery Influx Contemporary, Lisbon 2012; *Life goes on*, Mediateca do BCI, Mozambique 2011; *Wood and Deforestation*, Kokopelli Festival Belgium 2011; *Terra de Boa Gente*, Instituto Camões, Maputo 2009.

Selection of Group exhibitions: *Pangaea*, Saatchi Gallery, London 2014; Dak'art Biennial OFF 2012; *Convergências*, Alliance Française, Madrid, Spain&King's Place, London, UK 2012; *BESPhoto*, Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil 2011; Bamako Biennial 2011, Mali.



## **DIDASCALIE MÁRIO MACILAU**

### **Italiano**

1) Mário Macilau, ritratto

© Mário Macilau, Courtesy artista

2) Mário Macilau, *A Fish Story*, fotografia dalla serie *Growing on darkness/ Crescendo na escuridão*, 2012-2015

Stampa a pigmenti su Hahnemühle cotton paper (es. 1/2), cm 133 x 200

Foto Mário Macilau © Mário Macilau, Courtesy Cataldo Colella

### **Inglese**

1) Mário Macilau, ritratto

© Mário Macilau, Courtesy artista

2) Mário Macilau, *A Fish Story*, photograph from the series *Growing on darkness/ Crescendo na escuridão*, 2012-2015

Pigmented inkjet print on Hahnemühle cotton paper (es. 1/2), 133 x 200 cm

Photo Mário Macilau © Mário Macilau, Courtesy Cataldo Colella

# *In the Beginning ... the Word became flesh*

**Pavilion of the Holy See – Biennale Arte 2015**

## Pavilion

### Commissioner

Gianfranco Card. Ravasi

### Deputy Commissioner

Pasquale Iacobone

### Curator

Micol Forti

### Scientific Committee

Elisabetta Cristallini

Micol Forti

Pasquale Iacobone

Antonio Paolucci

Antonio Spadaro

with

Francesca Boschetti

Rosalia Pagliarani

### Scientific Project

Elisabetta Cristallini

Micol Forti

### Organization Management

Fondazione per i Beni e le Attività Culturali  
e Artistiche della Chiesa

### Scientific Secretariat

Francesca Boschetti

Elisa Coletta

Federica Guth

Rosalia Pagliarani

### Participating Artists

Monika Bravo

Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva

Mário Macilau

### Architectural Design

Roberto Pulitani

### Realization

DIPE Costruzioni Srl

### Assurance

Cattolica Assicurazioni

### Press Office

Richard Rouse

Twister Communications Group

*Special thanks to Aldo Colella for the precious support*

## Catalogue

### Edited by

Elisabetta Cristallini and Micol Forti

### Essays

Elisabetta Cristallini

Micol Forti

Alessandra Mauro

Ben Quash

Gianfranco Ravasi

Octavio Zaya

### Editing

Francesca Boschetti

Elisa Coletta

Elisabetta Cristallini

Rosalia Pagliarani

### Translations

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Rosalia Pagliarani

Italian-English:

Peter De Muro

Richard Rouse

### Photo Credits

Foto © Monika Bravo

Foto © Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva

Foto © Mário Macilau

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## INTESA SANPAOLO PER LA CULTURA

Intesa Sanpaolo, assecondando una lunga e consolidata tradizione, è attivamente impegnata nel campo dell'arte e della cultura, nella radicata consapevolezza che il ruolo di un'impresa bancaria di rilevanza nazionale sia quello di concorrere non solo alla crescita economica, ma anche, e inscindibilmente, a quella culturale e civile del Paese.

Tale impegno si è tradotto nell'elaborazione di numerose iniziative culturali sia proprie che in partnership con importanti Istituzioni ed Enti locali. Da qui la volontà di **Intesa Sanpaolo** di sostenere in qualità di partner il **Padiglione della Santa Sede** nell'ambito della **Biennale di Venezia**.

Il Gruppo si focalizza su **Progetto Cultura**, il "contenitore strategico" delle attività culturali di **Intesa Sanpaolo**. In questo piano, rinnovato di triennio in triennio, una pluralità di interventi – temporanei e permanenti – trovano spazio e pianificazione certa, secondo precise linee programmatiche.

I valori che ispirano il progetto sono costituiti dalla tutela, valorizzazione, pubblica fruizione e diffusione della conoscenza dei beni artistici e culturali che costituiscono l'incomparabile ricchezza d'Italia.

Una delle direttrici lungo le quali si sviluppa il piano è la valorizzazione del cospicuo e prestigioso patrimonio storico, artistico, architettonico e archivistico del Gruppo, con l'intento di condividerlo con la collettività. Di qui la creazione di una rete di poli museali e culturali.

Le **Gallerie di Piazza Scala** a **Milano**, recentemente inaugurate, si affiancano alle **Gallerie di Palazzo Leoni Montanari** di **Vicenza** e alle **Gallerie di Palazzo Zevallos Stigliano** di **Napoli**, già operative da qualche anno. Sono tutti luoghi di fruizione dell'arte e di produzione della cultura, riuniti sotto il nome di **Gallerie d'Italia**.

Altra importante linea guida di Progetto Cultura è il contributo alla salvaguardia del patrimonio culturale del Paese. Questo impegno si concretizza attraverso la continuità garantita all'iniziativa **Restituzioni** avviata nel 1989: un collaudato programma di restauri dei beni artistici e monumentali italiani promosso, sostenuto e curato da Intesa Sanpaolo in

collaborazione le Soprintendenze. Il progetto, ormai ventennale, ha raggiunto oggi dimensioni e importanza nazionali, e ha permesso il recupero e la restituzione alla godibilità pubblica di circa 1.000 opere d'arte.

*Intesa Sanpaolo  
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e-mail: stampa@intesasanpaolo.com*

# *In the Beginning ... the Word became flesh*

Catalogue of the Pavilion of the Holy See  
56<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition of la Biennale di Venezia

edited by Elisabetta Cristallini and Micol Forti

Gangemi Editore, Roma

The catalogue, in a bilingual edition Italian/English, starts with a first section devoted to introductory essays by Gianfranco Ravasi, Micol Forti and Elisabetta Cristallini, which substantiate and develop the proposed theme, tracing the path of realization through the choice of ideas and artists.

The heart of the book is dedicated to the three artists and to the different parts of the Pavilion. Each work of art is accompanied by a scientific essay and a rich selection of large-scale photographs, which illustrates the process of theoretical and procedural realization, accompanying the reader on a journey within the project and the work in progress of the Pavilion. Octavio Zaya, art critic and curator in South America, introduces the section dedicated to Monika Bravo; Ben Quash, English biblical scholar and exegete, reads through the sacred texts the work of Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva; Alessandra Mauro, an expert in photography of international fame, introduces for the first time to the Italian public the work of Mário Macilau.

A final section is dedicated to the biographies of the artists, followed by a selection of solo and group exhibitions and updated bibliography.

Paperback

Size: 29,5 x 25,5 cm

Pages 176

Language: Italian and English



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## Visitors information

### Venues, dates and opening times

Venice, Giardini – Arsenale, from May 9<sup>th</sup> till November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015

Opening times: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Opening times: 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. Arsenale venue – all Fridays and Saturdays till September 26<sup>th</sup>

Closed on Mondays (except on May 11<sup>th</sup>, June 1<sup>st</sup>, and November 16<sup>th</sup> 2015)

### Advance sale

[www.labiennale.org](http://www.labiennale.org) (special fare available)

### Ticket office

Giardini – Opening times 10 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.

Arsenale (Campo della Tana) – Opening times 10 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.

From May 9<sup>th</sup> till September 26<sup>th</sup> on Friday and Saturday the Arsenale venue will be open till 8 p.m., opening times ticket office 10 a.m. – 7.30 p.m.

Last admission to the exhibition venues – 5.45 p.m.

Last admission to the Arsenale venue on Friday and Saturday till September 26<sup>th</sup> – 7.45 p.m.

### Visits

Special tickets are valid for more entries to both exhibition venues (Giardini and Arsenale), they are nominal tickets and to purchase them a valid ID must be shown at ticket offices.

Single Regular tickets are valid for one entry to each of the two exhibition venues (Giardini and Arsenale) and they can be used also on non-consecutive days.

**Special tickets** (purchase is only possible with a valid ID)

**Full Special 2days € 30** (pass valid for two consecutive days entry to both venues)

**Reduced Special 2days under 26 € 22** (pass valid for two consecutive days entry to both venues)

**Permanent pass € 80** (pass valid till 22<sup>nd</sup> November)

**Permanent pass students and Under 26 yrs. € 45** (pass valid till 22<sup>nd</sup> November)

### Regular tickets

**Full Regular € 25** (valid for one entry to each venue, Giardini + Arsenale, to be used also on non-consecutive days)

**Reduced € 22** COOP, CTS, ITIC, ISIC, FAI, Touring Club, Cinema Più, Venezia Unica city pass, Rolling Venice Card, Carta Giovani, Trenitalia Frecciargento/Frecciabianca ticket destination Venice (earlier 3 days max) and CartaFRECCIA members

**Reduced € 20** (over 65 yrs., military officers, Venice residents, ticket holders of the 43<sup>rd</sup> International Theatre Festival, of the 59<sup>th</sup> International Festival of Contemporary Music, or subscription holders of the 72<sup>nd</sup> Venice Film Festival)

**Students/ Under 26 yrs. € 15** (with current student ID or current ID card)

**Reduced € 15** (Biennale Card Gold and Platinum holders)

**Family Formula € 42** (2 adults+1 under 14 yrs+€14 for every possible further visitor under 14 yrs old)

**Adult groups € 16** (min. 10 people, booking required)

**Secondary school students groups € 10** (min. 10 people, booking required)

**University students groups € 14** (min. 10 people, booking required)

**Student groups from universities affiliated to the project “Biennale Sessions” € 20**

(min. 50 people, booking required - tickets/passes are valid to visit the two exhibition venues for 3 consecutive days)



la Biennale di Venezia

56. Esposizione  
Internazionale  
d'Arte

**Free admission:** up to the age of 6 (included), adults accompanying disabled visitors, nursery schools, primary schools and secondary schools participating in educational activities.

### **Educational**

**Guided tours, theoretical and practical thematic-educational itineraries, laboratories and creative workshops.**

Available in Italian and many foreign languages.

Booking required, average duration 1h 45', 2 h.

The service is fee-paying, entry ticket not included

**Adults :** 1 venue € 90 – 2 venues € 150

**Universities :** 1 venue € 70 – 2 venues € 120

**High schools:** 1 venue € 60 – 2 venues € 100

**Elementary and Junior High schools:** 1 venue € 60

**Nursery schools:** 1 venue € 50

**Creative workshops for families:** Workshop - fee per child 1 venue € 5

### **Guided tours without reservation**

Guided tours for individual visitors in Italian or in English 1 venue € 7 and for 2 venues € 10.

Activities available on set days and times. Schedule and on-line purchase on our website

[www.labiennale.org](http://www.labiennale.org)

### **Art + Theatre formula**

During the 43<sup>rd</sup> International Theatre Festival (30 July>9 August 2015) concessionary tickets for both events will be available

### **Art + Music formula**

During the 59<sup>th</sup> International Festival of Contemporary Music (2>11 October 2015) concessionary tickets for both events will be available

### **Art + Cinema**

During the 72<sup>nd</sup> Venice Film Festival (2>12 September 2015) concessionary tickets will be available for set screenings for groups of visitors of the 56<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition

### **Visitors services**

**Arsenale:** Infopoint, free cloakroom, services for families, stroller and baby carrier free rental, changing table, nursing and feeding station, family lounge

**Giardini:** Infopoint, free cloakroom, services for families, changing table, feeding station

Small-sized animals on leash are admitted to the green area at Giardini

### **Services within the Exhibition (Giardini and Arsenale)**

Bar, restaurant, bookshop

**Catalogue:** Marsilio Editori

**Web site:** [www.labiennale.org](http://www.labiennale.org)

### **Booking and information**

Guided visits, groups, schools

mon/fri from 10 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

T. +39 041 5218 828 -F. +39 041 5218 732

[promozione@labiennale.org](mailto:promozione@labiennale.org)

[www.labiennale.org](http://www.labiennale.org)

**la Biennale di Venezia**  
**56<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition**  
**curated by Okwui Enwezor**



## *All the World's Futures*

**Venice** (Giardini and Arsenale), **May 9<sup>th</sup> - November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015**  
(Preview May 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015)

*Venice, March 5, 2015* – The **56<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition** entitled *All the World's Futures*, curated by **Okwui Enwezor** and organized by **la Biennale di Venezia** chaired by **Paolo Baratta**, will be open to the public from **Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015** at the Giardini della Biennale and at the Arsenale. The **preview** will be held on **May 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>**. The awards ceremony and the inauguration will take place on **Saturday May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015**.

**90 National Participations** will be exhibiting in the historical Pavilions at the Giardini, at the Arsenale and in the city of Venice. The **countries participating for the first time in the Exhibition** are **Grenada, Mauritius, Mongolia, Republic of Mozambique** and **Republic of Seychelles**. Other countries are participating this year after years of absence: **Ecuador** (1966, then with the IILA), the **Philippines** (1964), and **Guatemala** (1954, then with the IILA).

The **Holy See** will again be participating with an exhibition to be held at the **Sale d'Armi**, in the spaces that the Biennale has renovated for new permanent pavilions.

The **Italian Pavilion** at the Arsenale, organized by the **Italian Ministry for the Cultural Heritage and Activities**, with **PaBAAC** General Direction for the Landscape, Fine Arts, Architecture and Contemporary Art, will be curated by **Vincenzo Trione**.

**44 Collateral Events**, approved by the curator of the International Exhibition and promoted by non profit national and international institutions, will present their exhibitions and initiatives in various locations within the city of Venice.

### **The International Exhibition**

The 56<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition will form a unitary itinerary that starts at the Central Pavilion (Giardini) and continues at the Arsenale, with over **136 artists** from 53 countries, of whom 89 will be showing here for the first time.

“This is our 56<sup>th</sup> edition. The Biennale is now 120 years old, and year after year it moves forward and builds on its own history, which is formed of many memories but, in particular, a long succession of different perspectives from which to observe the phenomenon of contemporary artistic creation.”

**Paolo Baratta** introduces this year's edition with these words, recalling that “Bice Curiger brought us the theme of perception, of ILLUMInation or light as an autonomous and revitalizing element, and Massimiliano Gioni was interested in observing the phenomenon of artistic creation from within, and turned his attention to the inner impulses that drive mankind and the artist to create images and bring representations to life.”

“The world before us today exhibits deep divisions and wounds, pronounced inequalities and uncertainties as to the future. Despite the great progress made in knowledge and technology, we are currently negotiating an ‘age of anxiety’. And once more, the Biennale observes the relationship between art and the development of the human, social, and political world, as external forces and phenomena loom large over it. Our aim is to investigate how the tensions of the outside world act on the sensitivities and the vital and expressive energies of artists, on their desires and their *inner song*. One of the reasons the Biennale invited Okwui Enwezor as curator – **Baratta** states - was for his special sensitivity in this regard.”

“Curiger, Gioni, Enwezor, a trilogy in a sense – **President Baratta** recaps - three chapters in a research process engaged by la Biennale di Venezia to explore the benchmarks that can help us formulate aesthetic judgments on contemporary art, a “critical” question following the demise of the avant-gardes and “non-art”.”

“Okwui does not claim to pass judgement or prognosticate; his wish is to bring together arts and artists from throughout the world and from different disciplines, to instate a Parliament of Forms, as it were. A global Exhibition where we may question or at least listen to artists. **136 artists** have been summoned, of **which 89 for the first time. They come from 53 countries, and many of them from geographical areas that we** paradoxically insist on defining as peripheral. Of works on display, **159** are expressly realized for this year edition. This will also help us uncover the latest tendencies regarding the geography and routes taken by contemporary art, thanks to a special project focusing on the *Curricula* of the artists operating around the world. A Parliament for a Biennale of varying and intense vitality, therefore.”

“Everything here is exhibited against the backdrop of the Biennale’s 120-year history. Fragments of the past of various kinds may be found in every corner, given also the fact that the Biennale is active in Art, Architecture, Dance, Theatre, Music, and Cinema. (...) To borrow the words of Walter Benjamin, the Biennale hosts “dialectical images”.

“And once again, I am glad – concludes **Baratta** - that I did not listen to the regrettable considerations made in 1998 claiming that the exhibition with foreign pavilions was outmoded and should be done away with, perhaps in favour of a white cube, an aseptic space in which to erase history, exercise our abstract presumptions, or offer hospitality for the dictatorship of the market. It is our multi-faceted, complex reality that helps us avoid perils such as these. The great mountain of the fragments of our history grows year by year. Opposite stands the even greater mountain of all that was not shown in past Biennales.”

(The full text of the *Forward* by *Paolo Baratta* is included in the Press Kit)

After having explained in October the main topics of *All the World’s Futures* (*Curator’s Statement* is included in the Press Kit), **Okwui Enwezor** has explained one movens for his project as follows:

### **The ARENA**

“In 1974 la Biennale di Venezia, following a major institutional restructuring and the revision of its rules and articles of constitution, launched an ambitious and unprecedented four-year plan of events and activities. Part of the programs of 1974 were dedicated to Chile, thus actively foregrounding a gesture of solidarity toward that country in the aftermath of the violent coup d’état, in which General Augusto Pinochet overthrew the government of Salvador Allende in 1973. Bringing practitioners across the fields of visual art, cinema, music, theater, dance, and performance, the events of the 1974 Art Biennale were spread across the entire city of Venice. Today, this remarkable and transformative episode in the history of the Biennale is largely forgotten.”

“The dedication of the program of events to Chile and against fascism remains one of the most explicit attempts, in recent memory, by which an exhibition of the stature of the Art Biennale not only responds to, but courageously steps forward to share the historical stage with the political and social contexts of its time. It goes without saying that, in view of the current turmoil around the world, that the *Biennale's Eventi del 1974* has been a curatorial inspiration.”

“In response to this remarkable episode and the rich documentation it generated, the 56<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition: *All the World's Futures*, will introduce the **ARENA, an active space dedicated to continuous live programming across disciplines** and located within the **Central Pavilion in the Giardini**. The linchpin of this program will be the epic live reading of all three volumes of **Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*** (Capital). Here, *Das Kapital* will serve as **a kind of Oratorio** that will be continuously read live, throughout the exhibition's seven months' duration.”

“**Designed by** award-winning Ghanaian/British architect **David Adjaye**, the ARENA will serve as **a gathering-place of the spoken word**, the art of the song, recitals, film projections, and a **forum for public discussions**. Taking the concept of the Sikh event, the Akhand Path (a recitation of the Sikh holy book read continuously over several days by a relay of readers), *Das Kapital* will be read as a dramatic text by trained actors, directed by artist and filmmaker **Isaac Julien**, during the entire duration of this year Art Biennale.”

“Carrying out the concept of “**Liveness: On Epic Duration**,” the **Art Biennale has commissioned several new scores and artists' performances**, to be presented continuously in the ARENA. Here, we are especially interested in the concept of the song and the potential for the human voice to be an instrument that carries forward the pace of a narrative.”

“**Olaf Nicolai** is developing a new performance work that draws inspiration from Luigi Nono's two-part composition *Un volto, e del mare / Non consumiamo Marx* (1968), an innovative piece for voice and magnetic tape, as well as the Italian composer's later attempts to develop a critical and political statement by means of music, drawing inspiration for his lyrics from Cesare Pavese's poems, from wall writings seen in the streets of Paris, and even found voices which he randomly recorded live during street demonstrations!

**Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige** will present a daily reading of their artist book *Latent Images: Diary of a Photographer*, the third part of their *Wonder Beirut* project. In addition to its text, this book includes thirty-eight photographic plates selected from among hundreds of reels of film exposed, but until now never developed, by the Lebanese photographer **Abdallah Farah** between 1997 and 2006.

**Jason Moran's STAGED** will map and investigate the tempos of work songs sung in prisons, fields, and houses. In a sampling of songs that inmates sing while working in the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, the tempos range from 57 to 190 beats per minute.

**Jeremy Deller** will explore the question of life and working conditions in factories, based on archival materials from the nineteenth century through the present.

**Charles Gaines's** new original master composition for the Art Biennale is derived from his most recent body of work, *Notes on Social Justice*, a series of large-scale drawings of musical scores from songs, some borrowed from as early as the American Civil War (1860–1865) and others dating from the mid twentieth century.

**Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc** will present in the Art Biennale a temporary memorial to the music and personality of the legendary African American musician, singer, and composer Julius Eastman (1940–1990), whose singular and inimitable contribution to contemporary, avant-garde classical music will be on display in the ARENA throughout the Exhibition.

**the TOMORROW** will focus their attention on *Das Kapital*, not just as an abstract field of logical and economical devices, but rather as a potential repository of stories and figures. In the Art

Biennale, the TOMORROW will attempt to imagine the characters and the figures that could make use of Marx's toolbox in the contemporary context. *Tales on Das Kapital* is a search for non-modern subjects to play the *Capital Drama*. The TOMORROW will offer weekend seminars, during which the focus will turn to the narrative and epic dimension of Marx's book."

"The focus on live performances and actions will extend in the Central Pavilion beyond the ARENA and into the Biblioteca della Biennale, where **Mounira Al Solh's** *NOA (Not Only Arabic)*, a limited-edition periodical founded in 2008, will be made available for solo viewings that must be arranged by appointment. During the preview (May 6–8), also at the Biblioteca, **Lili Reynaud-Dewar** and her students will read a selection of texts from the mid 1990s to today—analysis, testimonies, manifestos—dealing with notions of intimacy, vulnerability, and promiscuity in the context of the AIDS epidemic."

"Connecting the 56<sup>th</sup> Art Biennale's two main venues, the Giardini and the Arsenale, **Saâdane Afif's** performance piece *The Laguna's Tribute: A Corner Speaker in Venice* will be staged at the corner of Via Garibaldi and the Grand Canal. Spectators there will see and hear a local Corner Speaker either read a text or sing the lyrics of songs composed by friends of the artist."

"A number of performance works will also be presented in the Arsenale, beginning with a new project by **Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla**, *In the Midst of Things*, in which a choral group will perform an arrangement of Joseph Haydn's oratorio *The Creation*."

"In the Corderie, **Theaster Gates** will activate his new multimedia installation *Martyr Construction*, a work addressing the question of the recurring dissolution and demolition of church parishes in African American and Hispanic neighborhoods across the United States."

(See I. Notes on the Program and Projects of the Exhibition in the Addendum to the Curator's Statement. Both are included in the Press Kit)

## **SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

"While the central focus of *All the World's Futures* is on an extensive body of new works commissioned from artists specifically for the 56<sup>th</sup> Art Biennale—an unprecedented range of projects exhibited for the first time—the Exhibition will also pay close attention to a selected iteration of historical perspectives by artists both living and deceased. Organized as **small anthologies**, these compact surveys range from a series of text-based neon sculptures by **Bruce Nauman**, dating from 1972 to the early 1980s, to an atlas of **Harun Farocki's** filmography, which totals 87 films. In addition, the Art Biennale will present works by such seminal figures as the photographer **Walker Evans**, with a complete set of the original edition of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*; from filmmaker **Sergei Eisenstein** to multimedia artist **Chris Marker**; installation artist **Isa Genzken** to sculptor-composer **Terry Adkins**; author-film director **Alexander Kluge** to installation artist **Hans Haacke**; conceptual artist **Teresa Burga** to performance artist **Fabio Mauri**; sculptor **Melvin Edwards** to painter **Marlene Dumas**; artist-activist **Inji Efflatoun** to earthworks artist **Robert Smithson**, painter **Emily Kngwarreye** to film director **Ousmane Sembène**; sculptor **Ricardo Brey** to conceptual artist **Adrian Piper**; painters **Tetsuya Ishida** to **Georg Baselitz**."

"This gathering of practices from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and North and South America searches for new connections in the artists' commitment to examining the human condition, or exploring specific ideas and areas of production within the artists' oeuvre."

"**The Invisible Borders Trans-African Project**, for example, is an artist-led organization founded in Nigeria in 2009 that assembles African artists—mainly photographers, writers, and filmmakers—with the zeal and passion for social change, to reflect upon with the question of borders and its implications in 21<sup>st</sup> century Africa. The Invisible Borders will present in the 56<sup>th</sup> Art Biennale a *Trans-African Worldspace*, a survey of their platform's recent and ongoing photographic

and audiovisual production, which will be periodically generated and incorporated into their presentation throughout the seven months of the exhibition. Moreover, the group will present in the ARENA their feature length documentary *Invisible Borders 2011, The Film*, followed by a discussion on the State of Things in the trans-African contemporary art scene and the critical ideas at the center of their practice.

**Abounaddara** is an anonymous collective of Syrian filmmakers working on impromptu documentaries, otherwise known as “emergency cinema.” Abounaddara has long reflected on the right to the image. They employ an aesthetic of do-it-yourself and disorientation, self-producing their films and distributing them online to avoid political censorship and the formatting dictates of the media and entertainment industries. Since its founding in 2010, Abounaddara has released a series of short documentaries celebrating the daily life of ordinary Syrians. In the wake of the March 2011 popular uprising, they began to produce a short film every Friday, an ongoing initiative that relies on the voluntary commitment of a network of filmmakers who work in secret, for reasons of security. At the Art Biennale Abounaddara will present a video installation featuring a selection of films from their prolific body of work, and will premiere a new film every Friday in the ARENA.“

(See II. A Note on the Special Presentations of *All the World's Futures* and IV. A Note on the Special Projects featured in *All the World's Futures* in the Addendum to the Curator's Statement. Both are included in the Press Kit)

### **Biennale Sessions, a project for universities**

The **Biennale Sessions** project will be held for the sixth consecutive year, following the success of its previous editions. This initiative is dedicated by la Biennale di Venezia to universities and academies of fine arts, and to institutions that develop research and training in the arts and in related fields. The goal is to offer favourable conditions for students and teachers to organize three-day group visits for fifty people or more, offering reduced price meals, assistance in organizing their journey and stay, and the possibility to organize seminars at the Exhibition's venues free of charge.

### **Educational**

**Educational** activities will again be offered for the year 2015, addressed to individuals and groups of students of all levels and grades, to universities and academies of fine arts, and to professionals, companies, experts, art lovers and families. These initiatives aim to actively involve participants in both Guided Tours and Creative Workshops.

### **Exhibition Architecture**

To conceive and organize the choreography of the Exhibition spaces, the exhibition architecture, is designed by **David Adjaye** and members of Adjaye Associates.

### **Publications**

The **Catalogue** of the **Biennale Arte 2015** is published in two volumes. The **first** describes the International Exhibition in a lengthy essay by the curator, divided into chapters that feature the narrative biographies of the invited Artists and the images of their works. **Volume two** is dedicated to the National Participations and the Collateral Events. The **short guide** is an essential tool for visiting the Exhibition: it contains information on all the Artists, the National Pavilions and Collateral Events. The graphic design of the Exhibition and its editorial products are by **Chris Rehberger** and his Double Standards studio in Berlin. Both the exhibition catalogue and short guide are published by **Marsilio Editori**.

The 56<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition is carried out thanks to **Swatch**, partner of the event.

ENEL main sponsor, **JTI (Japan Tobacco International)**, **Vela-Venezia Unica**, **illycaffè** and **VEDE-Venice Excellence Design**. We would also like to thank **Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP**, **Adecco** and **Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane**.

Our thanks go to the Ministry for the Cultural Heritage and Activities, which at a difficult time for our country's public finances has continued to offer its decisive support, and to the local institutions that in various ways support la Biennale, the City of Venice and the Regione del Veneto. We also extend our thanks to the Marina Militare and the Venice Soprintendenze.

We would also like to thank our many Donors, who have been particularly important to the realization of the 56<sup>th</sup> Exhibition.

Our special thanks go to the curator Okwui Enwezor and to his entire team.

And finally, we would like to thank the highly professional staff of the Biennale, whose members work with great dedication on the realization and management of the Exhibition throughout its six-and-a-half month duration.

Official website of the 56<sup>th</sup> Exhibition: [www.labiennale.org](http://www.labiennale.org)

Official hashtag: **#biennalearte2015**

**THE IMAGES** of the 56<sup>th</sup> Exhibition may be downloaded at the following link:

<http://ftp.labiennale.org>

*Account:* biennale2015

*Password:* biennale2015

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# la Biennale di Venezia

## 56<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition



Foreword by Paolo Baratta

*President of la Biennale di Venezia*

The 56<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition of la Biennale di Venezia will open on May 9<sup>th</sup>, a month earlier than recent editions. With its inauguration, we celebrate the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Exhibition (1895).

The curator's International Exhibition will expand from the Central Pavilion at the Giardini (3,000 sq.m.) to the Arsenale (8,000 sq.m.) and, in addition, to external areas. The extensive array of foreign participant countries (90, compared to 58 in 1997) will virtually gather around our curator's great International Exhibition; 29 of them will be in the historic pavilions in the Giardini, 30 in the spaces dedicated to the various national participations within the Arsenale (where restoration work continues on 16th century buildings) and the rest in other buildings in Venice, accompanied by 44 Collateral Events, presented by non-profit organisations and admitted by our curator.

The press dossier provides further useful information, and also includes our warm thanks to a variety of public bodies, our partner Swatch, sponsors, and the many people who will have so enthusiastically and with such dedication worked towards the realisation of the exhibition and its operation in the six and a half months to November 22, 2015. In particular, our thanks go to Okwui, to his assistants, and all the professional figures within the Biennale.

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Having expressed my thanks, I would also like to briefly introduce the Exhibition from my privileged vantage point within the Biennale.

This is our 56<sup>th</sup> edition. The Biennale is now 120 years old, and year after year it moves forward and builds on its own history, which is formed of many memories but, in particular, a long succession of different perspectives from which to observe the phenomenon of contemporary artistic creation.

Let us cite just two examples:

Bice Curiger brought us the theme of perception, of ILLUMInation or light as an autonomous and revitalizing element, together with the notion of the relationship between artist and viewer: focusing on an artistic concept that emphasizes intuitive knowledge and enlightened thinking, as a means to hone and develop our perceptual capacity and consequently our ability to dialogue with art.

Massimiliano Gioni was interested in observing the phenomenon of artistic creation from within, and turned his attention to the inner impulses that drive mankind and the artist to create images and bring representations to life; works that are necessary to the artist and to create a dialogue with others. He investigated the utopias and anxieties that lead mankind to the inescapable need to create. The Exhibition opened with a utopian Encyclopedic Palace and Jung's *Red Book*.

The world before us today exhibits deep divisions and wounds, pronounced inequalities and uncertainties as to the future. Despite the great progress made in knowledge and technology, we are currently negotiating an "age of anxiety". And once more, the Biennale observes the relationship between art and the development of the human, social, and political world, as external forces and phenomena loom large over it.

Our aim is to investigate how the tensions of the outside world act on the sensitivities and the vital and expressive energies of artists, on their desires and their *inner song*. One of the reasons the Biennale invited Okwui Enwezor as curator was for his special sensitivity in this regard.

Curiger, Gioni, Enwezor, a trilogy in a sense: three chapters in a research process engaged by la Biennale di Venezia to explore the benchmarks that can help us formulate aesthetic judgments on contemporary art, a "critical" question following the demise of the avant-gardes and "non-art".

Okwui does not claim to pass judgement or prognosticate; his wish is to bring together arts and artists from throughout the world and from different disciplines, to instate a Parliament of Forms, as it were.

A global exhibition where we may question or at least listen to artists.

136 artists have been summoned, of which 89 for the first time. They come from 53 countries, and many of them from geographical areas that we paradoxically insist on defining as peripheral. Of works on display, 159 are expressly realized for this year edition. All of this will help us uncover the latest tendencies regarding the geography and routes taken by contemporary art, thanks to a special project focusing on the Curricula of the artists operating around the world.

A Parliament for a Biennale of varying and intense vitality, therefore.

We know that evoking the dramatic facts and occurrences that characterise the present also means admitting history. The present, after all, demands to be understood through the signs, symbols, and recollections that history accords us and from which we draw a sense of desperation but also of illumination. It also means evoking fragments of our recent and remote past, which must not be forgotten.

The Biennale unquestionably provides a very special stage for this exercise; everything here is exhibited against the backdrop of the Biennale's 120-year history. Fragments of the past of various kinds may be found in every corner, given also the fact that the Biennale is active in Art, Architecture, Dance, Theatre, Music, and Cinema; they are also treasured in its Archivio Storico, in the images this conserves, in its catalogues, and in its buildings. For this precise reason, even the international pavilions, built at different times and thanks to different initiatives, constitute a very different venue to that of a traditional exposition. To borrow the words of Walter Benjamin, the Biennale hosts "dialectical images".

And while on the subject of Benjamin, Okwui recalls his description of Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus* in his programme, do you remember? "His face is turned toward the past. Where a chain of events appears before us, he sees a single catastrophe. [...] The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead [...]. But a storm is blowing from Paradise and has got caught in his wings [...]. This storm drives him irresistibly into the future."

I feel compelled to evoke this image briefly and imagine the expression of Klee's angel on those entering the Biennale who, surprised and fearful, observe all the specks and shards of the past deposited in this place where memory, time, and space combine. But I am consoled by the fact that every two years a new storm of energy drives us "irresistibly into the future".

And once again, I am glad that I did not listen to the regrettable considerations made in 1998 claiming that the exhibition with foreign pavilions was outmoded and should be done away with, perhaps in favour of a white cube, an aseptic space in which to erase history, exercise our abstract presumptions, or offer hospitality for the dictatorship of the market.

It is our multi-faceted, complex reality that helps us avoid perils such as these.

The great mountain of the fragments of our history grows year by year. Opposite stands the even greater mountain of all that was not shown in past Biennales.

In this regard, we often hear mention of Aby Warburg and his interpretative practices. In order to better understand a work, he would place many other works that had some bearing on it next to and around it. "Mnemosyne" is the name he used to refer to this quest: Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory (and we might well say that the Biennale is one of the favourite residences of Mnemosyne).

In every Biennale, the presence of our curator, alongside the different voices of the curators of the various pavilions, contributes to the emergence of an important value, the pluralism of voices. "Parliament of Forms". And what should a parliament be if not a plurality of voices?

Finally, in the more intimate Biennales as in the ones that more dramatically draw in history, what is important is that the Exhibition must always be seen as a venue for free and independent dialogue.

Paolo Baratta, *President of la Biennale di Venezia*