

La Biennale di Venezia

57th International Art Exhibition

"Viva Arte Viva"

Venice (Giardini and Arsenale), May 13th – November 26th 2017

Preview May 10th -11th -12th



Venice, May 10th, 2017 – The 57th International Art Exhibition, titled *Viva Arte Viva*, will open to the public from Saturday May 13th to Sunday November 26th 2017 (Giardini and Arsenale) and will be curated by **Christine Macel** and organised by **La Biennale di Venezia** chaired by **Paolo Baratta**. The **preview** will take place on May 10th, 11th and 12th, the awards ceremony and inauguration will be held on **Saturday, May 13th 2017**.

The Exhibition will also include **86 National Participations** in the historic Pavilions at the Giardini, at the Arsenale and in the city centre of Venice. **Three countries will be participating for the first time: Antigua and Barbuda, Kiribati, and Nigeria.**

The **Italian Pavilion** at the Tese delle Vergini in the Arsenale, sponsored and promoted by the **Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo**, Direzione Generale Arte e Architettura Contemporanee e Periferie Urbane, this year will be curated by **Cecilia Alemani**.

23 Collateral Events, promoted by non-profit national and international institutions, will present their exhibitions and initiatives in Venice during the 57th Exhibition.

The International Exhibition VIVA ARTE VIVA

The Exhibition offers a route that unfolds over the course of **nine chapters or families of artists**, beginning with two introductory realms in the Central Pavilion in the Giardini, followed by seven more realms to be found in the Arsenale and the Giardino delle Vergini. There are **120** invited artists from **51** countries; **103** of these are participating for the first time.

"La Biennale must present itself as a place whose method—and almost *raison d'être*—is dedicated to an open dialogue between artists, and between artists and the public."

This is how **Paolo Baratta, President of La Biennale di Venezia**, presents Biennale Arte 2017, explaining that "the 57th Exhibition introduces a further development. It is as though what has always been our primary work method—encounter and dialogue—has now become the theme of the Exhibition, because this year's Biennale is dedicated to celebrating, and almost giving thanks for, the very existence of art and artists, whose worlds expand our perspective and the space of our existence."

"Christine Macel has called it an Exhibition inspired by humanism. This type of humanism is neither focused on an artistic ideal to follow nor is it characterised by the celebration of mankind as beings who can dominate their surroundings. If anything, this humanism, through art, celebrates mankind's ability to avoid being dominated by the powers governing world affairs. These powers, if left to their own devices, can greatly affect the human dimension, in a detrimental sense. In this type of humanism, the artistic act is contemporaneously *an act of resistance*, of *liberation* and of *generosity*."

"There is another aspect of the 57th Exhibition – states **Baratta** - which alone qualifies it, above and beyond all the themes or narrations: of the 120 artists who have been invited to the Exhibition by our curator, 103 are participating here for the first time. Some are discoveries; many others, at least

for this year's edition, are rediscoveries. And these courageous choices, too, are a concrete expression of our confidence in the world of art."

"This year, direct encounters with the artists have assumed a strategic role, to the point of becoming one of the pillars of La Biennale, whose program is of unprecedented size and commitment. Our curator's main Exhibition is surrounded by the 86 pavilions of participating countries, each with its own curator, which will once more bring to life the pluralism of voices which is a hallmark of La Biennale di Venezia." (*The full text of Paolo Baratta is included in the Press Kit*)

Christine Macel has declared:

"Today, in a world full of conflicts and shocks, art bears witness to the most precious part of what makes us human. Art is the ultimate ground for reflection, individual expression, freedom, and for fundamental questions. Art is the last bastion, a garden to cultivate above and beyond trends and personal interests. It stands as an unequivocal alternative to individualism and indifference."

"The role, the voice and the responsibility of the artist are more crucial than ever before within the framework of contemporary debates. It is in and through these individual initiatives that the world of tomorrow takes shape, which though surely uncertain, is often best intuited by artists than others."

"*Viva Arte Viva* is an exclamation, a passionate outcry for art and the state of the artist. *Viva Arte Viva* is a Biennale designed with artists, by artists and for artists."

The Nine Trans-Pavilions

Each of the **nine chapters or families of artists** of the Exhibition "represents a Pavilion in itself, or rather a *Trans-Pavilion* as it is trans-national by nature but echoes the Biennale's historical organisation into pavilions, the number of which has never ceased to grow since the end of the 1990s."

"From the "**Pavilion of Artists and Books**" to the "**Pavilion of Time and Infinity**", these nine episodes tell a story that is often discursive and at times paradoxical, with detours that mirror the world's complexities, a multiplicity of approaches and a wide variety of practices. The Exhibition is intended as an experience, an extrovert movement from the self to the other, towards a common space beyond the defined dimensions, and onwards to the idea of a potential neo-humanism."

"*Viva Arte Viva* also seeks to convey a positive and prospective energy, which whilst focusing on young artists, rediscovers those passed away too soon or those who are still largely unknown despite the importance of their work."

"Starting with the **Pavilion of Artists and Books**, the Exhibition reveals its premise, a dialectic that involves the whole of contemporary society, beyond the artist himself, and addresses the organisation of society and its values."

"Art and artists are at the heart of the Exhibition, which begins by examining their practices, the way they create art, halfway between idleness and action, *otium* and *negotium*."

Open Table (Tavola Aperta), Artists' Practices Project, Unpacking My Library: a series of **parallel projects** and **performances** will animate the Exhibition following the same curatorial premise, which is to place artists at the art of the Exhibition.

Open Table (Tavola Aperta)

Each Friday and Saturday of every week, during the six months of the Exhibition, artists will host an *Open Table (Tavola Aperta)* and meet visitors over a casual lunch to hold a lively conversation about their practice. These bi-weekly events will be organised in two dedicated spaces refurbished for this purpose, in front of the Central Pavilion of the Giardini and in the new Sala d'Armi in the Arsenale. The *Open Table (Tavola Aperta)* events will be live-streamed on La Biennale's website.

Artists' Practices Project

In the Central Pavilion at the Giardini and in the Sale d'Armi at the Arsenale a space will also be created for the *Artists' Practices Project*, including a series of short videos made by the artists about themselves and their way of working.

"These two parallel projects – commented Macel - are open to all artists of Biennale Arte. All National Pavilions are welcome to host their own *Open Table (Tavola Aperta)* event on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and to add videos to the database on the artists."

Unpacking My Library

Finally, the project titled *Unpacking My Library*, inspired by Walter Benjamin's essay published in 1931, allows the artists of *Viva Arte Viva* to compile a list of their favourite books. This is both a way to get to know the artists better and a source of inspiration for the public. The list of books will be published in the Exhibition at the Central Pavilion and in the catalogue. The books listed by all the participating artists will be available to visitors at the **Stirling Pavilion in the Giardini**.

Special Projects and Performances

Besides the main Exhibition in the Central Pavilion and in the Arsenale, several **Special Projects and Performances** have been commissioned especially for the Giardini, the Giardino delle Vergini and other Exhibition venues. A dense programme of approximately twenty performances will be held during the opening week. The performances will all be live-streamed on La Biennale's website. The videos will remain on view in a dedicated multimedia room in the Central Pavilion and in the Arsenale.

THE COLLABORATION WITH THE V&A

For the second year in a row, La Biennale di Venezia collaborates with **the Victoria and Albert Museum, London** on the **Pavilion of Applied Arts**, located in Sale d'Armi of the Arsenale. The Pavilion, titled "**Display – between art and arts & crafts**", is conceived by La Biennale di Venezia with the advice of Bice Curiger, and curated by Cuban-American artist and sculptor **Jorge Pardo**, whose work blends art and design together.

FORTE MARGHERA PAVILION

La Biennale will include the **Forte Marghera Pavilion** as part of Biennale Arte 2017, after the positive outcome of last year's first experience for Biennale Architettura. Whereas last year the Pavilion focused on a specific theme, it is now an integral part of the Exhibition curated by director Christine Macel: it hosts two works by **Marie Voignier**, two videos allowing the artist to have a direct and exclusive conversation with the visitors. "**All**" the artists that take part in the 57th International Art Exhibition are also featured here, each with a short video made for the **Artists' Practices Project** in which they discuss their work, inclinations and practice. We wish to thank the Accademia di Belle Arti of Venice, the Fondazione Forte Marghera and the City of Venice, for allowing us to use the Pavilion.

BIENNALE SESSIONS, the project for Universities

The **Biennale Sessions** project will be held again for the eighth consecutive year, following the success of its previous editions. This initiative is dedicated by La Biennale to institutions that develop research and training in architecture, the arts and related fields, and to Universities and Fine Arts Academies. The goal is to offer favourable conditions for students and teachers to organise three-day group visits for fifty people or more, offering reduced price meals, the possibility to organise seminars free of charge at the Exhibition venues, and assistance in organising their journey and stay.

EDUCATIONAL

Educational activities will again be offered for the year 2017, addressed to individuals and groups of students from schools of all levels and grades, from universities and fine arts academies, and to professionals, companies, experts, architecture fans and families. These initiatives aim to actively involve participants in both **Guided Tours** and **Creative Workshops**.

PUBLICATIONS

The **official catalogue**, titled **VIVA ARTE VIVA**, consists of **two volumes**.

Volume I is dedicated to the International Art Exhibition, and is edited by Christine Macel.

Volume II is dedicated to the National Participations, the Special Project and the Collateral Events.

The **Exhibition Guide** is conceived to accompany the visitor through the exhibition. The **design of the graphic identity** of Biennale Arte 2017 and the layout of the books are by Studio **deValence**, Paris. The 3 books are edited and published by **La Biennale di Venezia**. (*See document attached*)

LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2017: Festivals and Biennale College

During the whole duration of the Exhibition, the other activities of all the sectors of La Biennale will also take place: in June, the **11th International Festival of Contemporary Dance** (directed by Marie Chouinard); in July and August, the **45th International Theatre Festival** (directed by Antonio Latella); between late August and early September, the **74th Venice International Film Festival** (directed by Alberto Barbera); in October, the **61st International Festival of Contemporary Music** (directed by composer Ivan Fedele); not to mention the important “college” activities which have been organised for each sector. Many of these initiatives will take place at the Arsenale, inside the venues of the International Art Exhibition itself.

The 57th International Art Exhibition was made possible by the support of **Swatch**, partner of the event.

Sponsors: **Artemide**, **JTI (Japan Tobacco International)**, **Vela-Venezia Unica**, **Bloomberg Philanthropies**, **illycaffè**, **COIMA**, **i-AMFoundation** and **Trenitalia Gruppo Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane**.

Thanks to **Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP** and **Garage San Marco**.

We would like to thank the Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo, the regional Institutions that each in their own way support La Biennale, the City of Venice and the Regione Veneto.

Our thanks go to our Donors, who are essential to the creation of the 57th Exhibition.

We are especially grateful to Christine Macel and all her team. And finally we would like to thank the highly professional staff of La Biennale, who work with such great dedication on the organisation and management of the Exhibition.

Official website of Biennale Arte 2017: www.labiennale.org

Official hashtag: **#BiennaleArte2017**

THE IMAGES of the 57th International Art Exhibition may be downloaded at the following link:
<http://ftp.labiennale.org> | Username: biennale2017 | Password: biennale2017

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