



58th International Art Exhibition

## BIENNALE ARTE 2019 MAY YOU LIVE IN INTERESTING TIMES

### THE 58TH EXHIBITION

Open to the public from Saturday May 11th to Sunday November 24th **2019**, at the Giardini and the Arsenale, the **58th International Art Exhibition**, titled *May You Live In Interesting Times*, will be curated by Ralph Rugoff and organized by La Biennale di Venezia chaired by Paolo Baratta. The pre-opening will take place on May 8th, 9th and 10th, the awards ceremony and inauguration will be held on Saturday May 11th 2019.

### THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION THE INVITED ARTISTS

«The title of this Exhibition could be interpreted as a sort of curse – stated **President Paolo Baratta** - where the expression “interesting times” evokes the idea of challenging or even “menacing” times, but it could also simply be an invitation to always see and consider the course of human events in their complexity, an invitation, thus, that appears to be particularly important in times when, too often, oversimplification seems to prevail, generated by conformism or fear. And I believe that an exhibition of art is worth our attention, first and foremost, if it intends to present us with art and artists as a decisive challenge to all oversimplifying attitudes.»

«Twenty years have passed since, in this same location, I presented my first Exhibition -**President** said - after the Biennale underwent major reform in 1998. Let me tell you, they have been *very interesting times*. At the beginning we were criticized for the presence of the pavilions, considered old-fashioned in times of cosmopolitanism and globalization, we live in times where some people raise the doubt that cosmopolitanism might also have been a way for the most influential cultural and political realities to exert a sort of *soft power*. We are an international exhibition that since those years put the word “open” and “plateau of humankind” as the subtitle for all the following biennials.»

«During these years, we have increased the number of visitors and found a new partner. Over the course of the past years, the double cost of transportation in the lagoon obliged us to ask for additional support, and our expressions of gratitude and our wall labels included many market participants. The increase in the number of our visitors has allowed us to considerably cut back on this practice, as you can see in the drastic reduction in our expressions of gratitude, both when presenting the works and in the catalogues. Our visitors have become our main partner; more than half of them are under 26 years of age. Calling notice to this result seems to me the best way to celebrate the twenty years which have passed since 1999.»

«We want to offer them an open gym - **Baratta** concludes - where they can feel involved in encounters with the works and the artists, in the direct discovery of the “other” which the work of art offers. To us, it is important that, when entering the exhibit, the “public” becomes “visitors,” who then become “viewers” of the works. First, the necessary disorientation, then the involvement, followed by the discovery; it is almost a fencing drill. To share this direction is one of the reasons we have asked Ralph Rugoff to collaborate with us on this twentieth anniversary.»

The Exhibition will develop from the Central Pavilion (Giardini) to the Arsenale, and will include **79 artists** from all over the world.

**Ralph Rugoff** has declared: «*May You Live in Interesting Times* will no doubt include artworks that reflect upon precarious aspects of existence today, including different threats to key traditions, institutions and relationships of the "post-war order." But let us acknowledge at the outset that art does not exercise its forces in the domain of politics. Art cannot stem the rise of nationalist movements and authoritarian governments in different parts of the world, for instance, nor can it alleviate the tragic fate of displaced peoples across the globe (whose numbers now represent almost one percent of the world's entire population).»

«But in an indirect fashion, perhaps art can be a kind of guide for how to live and think in 'interesting times.' The 58<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition will not have a theme per se, but will highlight a general approach to making art and a view of art's social function as embracing both pleasure and critical thinking. The Exhibition will focus on the work of artists who challenge existing habits of thought and open up our readings of objects and images, gestures and situations. Art of this kind grows out of a practice of entertaining multiple perspectives: of holding in mind seemingly contradictory and incompatible notions, and juggling diverse ways of making sense of the world. Artists who think in this manner offer alternatives to the meaning of so-called facts by suggesting other ways of connecting and contextualising them. Animated by boundless curiosity and puncturing wit, their work encourages us to look askance at all unquestioned categories, concepts and subjectivities. It invites us to consider multiple alternatives and unfamiliar vantage points, and to discern the ways in which "order" has become the simultaneous presence of diverse orders.»

(<https://www.labiennale.org/en/art/2019/artists>)

#### NATIONAL PARTICIPATIONS

The Exhibition will also include **90 National Participations** in the historic Pavilions at the Giardini, at the Arsenale and in the historic city centre of Venice. **Four countries will be participating for the first time at the Biennale Arte:** Ghana, Madagascar, Malaysia and Pakistan. The Dominican Republic exhibits for the first time at the Biennale Arte with its own national pavilion.

The **Italian Pavilion** at the Tese delle Vergini in the Arsenale, sponsored and promoted by the **Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali** - Direzione Generale Arte e Architettura Contemporanea e Periferie Urbane, will be curated this year by Milovan Farronato.

(<https://www.labiennale.org/en/art/2019/national-participations>)

#### COLLATERAL EVENTS

**21 Collateral Events** which are admitted by the curator and promoted by non-profit national and international bodies and institutions, take place in several locations; they offer a wide range of contributions and participations that enrich the diversity of voices that characterizes the Biennale.

(<https://www.labiennale.org/en/art/2019/collateral-events>)

#### SPECIAL PROJECTS

- **Forte Marghera Special Project, Mestre Ludovica Carbotta**, one of the artists taking part in the International Exhibition, has been invited by Ralph Rugoff to expressly make a work in Forte Marghera, inside the building called the Austrian Polveriera.

- **Applied Arts Pavilion Special Project, Arsenale, Sale d'Armi Marysia Lewandowska** is the artist set to exhibit in the Pavilion of Applied Arts located in the Arsenale, Sale d'Armi. The project, renewed for the fourth consecutive year, is the result of the collaboration between La Biennale and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

#### BIENNALE SESSIONS

For the tenth consecutive year, La Biennale dedicates the **Biennale Sessions** project 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 organize three-day group visits for fifty people or more, offering the possibility to organize seminars free of charge at the Exhibition's venues, and assistance in organizing their journey and stay.

#### EDUCATIONAL

For the past decade, La Biennale di Venezia has been devoting increased attention to learning activities, and has developed a growing commitment to so-called "*Educational*" initiatives addressed to the audience of its Exhibitions', to universities, young people, and children, from schools at all levels.

In the past two years, La Biennale's great 57<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition and 16<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition had **114,814** participants in *Educational* activities in total, amongst whom **68,794** were youngsters.

A broad *Educational* programme has been scheduled for 2019 as well, addressed to individuals and groups of students, children, adults, families, professionals, companies, and universities. All the initiatives aim at actively involving the participants, and are led by professional operators, carefully trained by La Biennale di Venezia. They are divided into two categories: **Guided Tours** and **Workshop Activities**.

#### PUBLICATIONS

The **official catalogue**, titled **May You Live In Interesting Times**, consists of **two volumes**.

**Volume I**, curated by Ralph Rugoff, is dedicated to the International Exhibition. **Volume II** is focused on the National Participations and the Collateral Events. The **Exhibition Guide** is conceived to accompany the visitor through the Exhibition. The **graphic identity** of the Biennale Arte 2019 and the layout of the books are designed by Melanie Mues, Mues Design London. The three books are edited and published by **La Biennale di Venezia**.

PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

The 58<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition was made possible by the support of **Swatch**, **Partner** of the event.

**Main Sponsor** of the 58<sup>th</sup> Exhibition is **illycaffè**.

Sponsors: **JTI (Japan Tobacco International)**, **Artemide**, **Vela-Venezia Unica** and **Seguso Vetri d'Arte**.

Our thanks go to **Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP**.

MENTIONS

We would like to thank the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, the regional Institutions that each in their own way support La Biennale, the City of Venice, the Regione Veneto, the Archaeology, Fine Arts, and Landscape Services for the City of Venice and the Lagoon, the Military Marine.

Our thanks go to our Donors and to the International Councils and Organizations, who are essential to the creation of the 58th Exhibition. Particularly our thanks go to Ralph Rugoff and to all his team. And finally we would like to thank the highly professional staff of La Biennale, who work with such great dedication on the organization and management of the Exhibition.

**#BiennaleArte2019**

**#MayYouLiveInInterestingTimes**

LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA



ART 2019



ARCHITECTURE 2020



CINEMA 2019



DANCE 2019



MUSIC 2019



THEATRE 2019



HISTORICAL ARCHIVES



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