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<https://www.if.institutfrancais.com/en/institutional-news/the-french-presence-in-venice-on-the-occasion-of-the-58th-edition-of-the-art>



## The French presence in Venice on the occasion of the 58th edition of the Art Biennial

### Visual arts

More than a century after its creation in 1895, the Venice International Art Biennial, a historic event and the oldest "biennial" in the world, enjoys an incredible dynamism. In fact, the previous edition, led by the French curator Christine Macel, curator at the Centre Pompidou National Modern Art Museum, saw its visitor numbers increase by more than 23% and as a result more than 615,000 visitors were able to visit the international exhibition and the French Pavilion. This figure confirms the importance of this unparalleled international event, which brings together more than 80 countries, and which also remains the major artistic event that accelerates or confirms the international scale of a career or the potential of an artist's oeuvre. During the professional days, more than 23,500 international professionals came to discover the offerings of more than 200 artists. In the unique context offered by the Biennial, each project becomes a window of visibility for the artists participating in it. And there are many projects that, within the Biennial or at the level of the city, bring together curators and artists from France or living in France.

## In the International Art Exhibition

Ralph Ruggof, Director of the Hayward Gallery in London, curates the International Exhibition's 58th edition. His project is entitled *May You Live in Interesting Times*.

Rather than a theme, he wishes to highlight works that “challenge our existing thought habits and open our eyes to new readings of objects and images, gestures and situations..

### **French artists or artists living in France invited to the international exhibition**

- Neil Beloufa (born in 1985 in Paris)
- Antoine Catala (born in 1975 in Toulouse)
- Nicole Eisenman (born in 1965 in Verdun)
- Cyprien Gaillard (born in 1980 in Paris)
- Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster (born in 1965 in Strasbourg)
- Jean-Luc Moulène (born in 1955 in Reims)
- Tarek Atoui (born in 1980 in Lebanon)
- Ryoji Ikeda (born in 1966 in Japan)
- Cameron Jamie (born in 1969 in the United States, working in Paris and Cologne)

*The presence of these artists in the international exhibition, the Gardini and the Arsenale, is supported by the Institut français.*

## In the national pavilions

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In addition to the French Pavilion, which this year hosted an unprecedented project by artist Laure Prouvost, accompanied by curator Martha Kirszenbaum, several national pavilions featured French curators:

- **Vincent Honoré**, Director of Programming and Exhibitions at the MOCO, Montpellier Contemporary, is the curator of the Republic of Kosovo Pavilion.

Artist Muja and curator Vincent Honoré present a video installation built around the memory of the Kosovo war, which interrogates the role of the media in creating collective narratives in times of conflict.

- **Alicia Knock**, Curator and Manager of Acquisitions at the Pompidou Centre, is the curator of the Albanian Pavilion. Artist Driant Zeneli and curator Alicia Knock present the exhibition *Maybe the cosmos is not so extraordinary*. At the heart of Driant Zeneli's work is the redefinition of failure, utopia and dreams. Through film storytelling and performance, he questions humanity's obsession with its own limitations.

- **Charlotte Laubard**, Professor and Head of the Visual Arts Department at the HEAD in Geneva, is the curator of the Swiss Pavilion, appointed by the Swiss foundation for culture Pro Helvetia.

She presents a project with artists Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz. "Based on an interrogation of the concept of gender, Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz question the standards that govern our representations and our life in society. The strength of their work lies in the fact that they do not limit themselves to a criticism or establishing a deconstruction. Their installations, films and performances are designed as devices intended to invent other ways of being in the world, which would no longer be divided by categorisations and binary identities. "

## **French artists or artists living in France in the national pavilions**

- **Boukova Rada**, born in 1973 in Bulgaria, who lives and works in Paris, represents **Bulgaria** with the artist Lazar Lyutakov.

Curator: Vera Mlecheveska.

A graduate of the École Nationale des Beaux-arts de Paris in 2002, Rada Boukova has participated in numerous group exhibitions both in France and abroad. She is represented in France by the Patricia Dorfmann gallery.

- **Angelica Mesiti**, born in 1976 in Australia, who lives and works in Paris, represents **Australia**.

Curator: Juliana Engberg.

Angelica Mesiti works with video, performance and installations. For the [Australian Pavilion](#), she presents the video installation *ASSEMBLY*. Angelica Mesiti is represented in France by the Allen gallery.

## « Collateral Event »

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- **The death of James Lee Byars, Zad Moulaka in conversation**

from May 11th to November 24th

Zad Moulaka is a Lebanese composer and artist living in France. He represented Lebanon at the 57th Venice Art Biennial and was invited to play at the French Pavilion's Studio Venezia by artist Xavier Veilhan.

On the occasion of the 58th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennial, the Santa Maria della Visitazione Church will host "The Death of James Lee Byars", the second major presentation of the Vanhaerents Art Collection outside Belgium, with installations by James Lee Byars and Zad Moulaka "The death of James Lee Byars" (1982/94) was created to host a show based on previous works exploring the artist's "departure" from the real world. The facility features a gold-leafed room where Byars executed his symbolic death with a glass sarcophagus and five crystals left in the shape of his body. The performance instructions read as follows: "Lie down and get up quietly." This shimmering space invites a contemplation of the state of being from another world, not only that of transcendent death, but also of the Orient, whose beauty he evokes.

## Other exhibitions

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- ***Looking for Utopia***

Curators Bianca Cerrina Feroni and Melania Rossi

from 10th May to 8th July 2019

The exhibition will take place in the public spaces of the Novecento Palace. She explores artists' utopias, never-begun projects, dreams of works that haven't seen the light of day or that deal with the unfinished and the impossible. "Utopia is on the horizon. I take two steps forward, and she takes two. I take ten steps, she takes ten more," wrote Eduardo Galeano. As we cannot reach the horizon, utopia serves precisely "to drive us forward".

The exhibition brings together 19 artists, 5 of whom live and work in France:

Alterazioni video - **Jean Bedez** - Hans Bellmer - Elisabetta Benassi - **Gerard Béreby** - Elvio Chiricozzi - Jan Fabre - Sophie Ko - Dan Graham - **Maud Maffei** - **Fabien Mérelle** - Luigi Ontani - Simone Pellegrini - Robert Polidori - **Cecile Reims** - Georges Rousse - Pietro Ruffo - Delphine Valli - Fabio Viale

- ***The Beautiful Travels of Mœbius - By way of Venice***

from 11th May to 24th November 2019

Architecture Studio CA'ASI, Cannaregio 6024, Campiello Santa Maria Nova 30121 Venice

The exhibition is the result of a unique collaboration between Architecture Studio and Mœbius Production. It is the result of reflections on travel, particularly in Italy. Mœbius admires and reproduces the cities he has passed through, both in their architecture and in their Roman atmosphere – futuristic gondolas, Venetian costumes and stone palaces can be found scattered through his work.

- **Philippe Parreno, *Displacing realities***

A solo video exhibition in the Louis Vuitton space

## Other projects in Venice

- **From Venice to Bamako**

**Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung**, independent curator and artistic director of SAVVY in Berlin, is the curator for the Finnish Pavilion. He will be the next Commissioner for the Bamako Encounters (2019 - 2020), organised by the Ministry of Culture of Mali with the support of the Institut français.

- **Madagascar is coming to Venice!**

The first Malagasy Pavilion will be dedicated to the work of Joël Andrianomearisoa, born in 1977, who works between Paris and Antananarivo. Joël Andrianomearisoa is represented in France by the Magnin-A Gallery.

**Emmanuel Daydé (French)** will be the curator for the Madagascar Pavilion, after being curator for the Lebanese Pavilion in 2017, along with **Rina Ralay-Ranaivo**.

