



GHANA PAVILION AT THE VENICE BIENNALE 2019

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Features & Reviews



Venice Biennale

Ghana shakes up art's 'sea of whiteness' with first Venice pavilion

In curving galleries designed by David Adjaye, artists are putting Africa firmly on the biennale map



Charlotte Higgins

Wed 8 May 2019 19:20 BST



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The Venice Art Biennale, the world's most celebrated international art event, has a history that is inextricably bound up with colonialism.

Its first pavilion for the showcasing of a "national" art was established by Belgium in 1907. Britain followed soon after. European countries remain dominant at the event - at least numerically.

And although states such as China have in recent years begun to present prominent national pavilions, African countries have been thin on the ground. This year, however, that balance is subtly shifting: Ghana has burst on to the scene with an exhibition featuring artists based in the country and from its diaspora.

08 May 2019

The Guardian
Online

The paintings, photographs, films, sculptures and installations are presented in a series of deftly curving spaces designed by the architect Sir David Adjaye, whose most celebrated work includes the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington DC. He is also the architect of a planned interdenominational National Cathedral of Ghana.



▲ Ghana's cultural production is bigger than the punch it has internationally ... A visitor will walk by El Anatsui at the Ghana pavilion. Photograph: Tawana Fakir/FFF/Getty Images

The impulse to present a national pavilion came from conversations between him and art historian, filmmaker and writer Nana Oforiatta Ayim, the project's curator.

Their feeling was, said Adjaye, that "Ghana's cultural production is bigger than the punch it has internationally. That's what we said in our presentation to the government - that Ghana's cultural capital in the world is not being celebrated. And they supported us willingly."

The first-ever Ghana pavilion officially opened on Wednesday in the presence of the country's first lady, Rebecca Akufo-Addo. The artists shown include Turner-prize-nominated painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, and Nigeria-based, Ghana-born El Anatsui, who is exhibiting some of his glimmering sculptures made from reused bottle tops.

08 May 2019

The Guardian
Online



▲ Ghana's first lady, Rebecca Kuffuor Aducci, flanked by captains David Adjaye and Nana Oforiatta Ayem at the opening of the Ghana pavilion Photograph: David Kameyo/The Guardian

There is also a series of black-and-white studio portraits from the 1960s and 70s by Felicia Abban, now 83, who was Ghana's first professional female photographer. The lineup is completed by Ghana-based artists Ibrahim Mahama and Selasi Awusi Sosa, and British filmmaker John Akomfrah.

Akomfrah called the pavilion and its contents "a charismatic example in a sea of whiteness".

He added: "In my view, art is a dialogue. We have the biggest conversation on the planet here at Venice, and we wanted to be part of it. Not because Ghana is more unique than any other African country. We just wanted to do it as best we can."

08 May 2019

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▲ Paintings by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye at the pavilion. Photograph: David Levine/The Guardian

It can be a politically and intellectually fraught business to present a pavilion of “national” art at the Venice Biennale. Some countries use the event as an unapologetic opportunity for polishing a tarnished image.

Others, in an attempt to recognise their own histories, may find ways to undercut the inherent nationalism of the event – by, for example, inviting artists from other nations to show in their pavilions, or by representing less dominant voices from within their own borders. This year, for example, Canada and Finland have presented, respectively, Inuit and Sámi art in their national pavilions.

“A national pavilion may not be a straightforward idea if you started [at Venice] 100 years ago,” said Adjaye, “but Ghana is 60 years old, and learning how to be a nation. A national pavilion is really important in creating that narrative.”

08 May 2019

The Guardian
Online



▲ Ibrahim Mahama installation at the Ghana pavilion. Photograph: David Laundy/The Guardian

The exhibition is titled *Ghana Freedom*, after ET Mensah's song composed as the country was established in 1957, the first sub-Saharan African country to gain independence from colonial rule.

But the title might also be seen as a statement about artistic freedom, and about the freedom inherent in the idea of Ghana, which, as philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah writes in the exhibition's accompanying book, is a particularly "diffuse and diverse" country. Many communities inhabit Ghana, and many Ghanaians live outside its borders.

Oforiatta Ayim, who, with Adjaye, is also advising the Ghanaian government on establishing a new museum, said: "It feels bigger than an exhibition. We've all been fighting so hard to do what we're doing, and now we're doing it together. That's where the energy comes from."

● This article was amended on 9 May 2019. An earlier version referred to Finland presenting Suomi art; this should have been Sámi art.

11 May 2019

Financial Times
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visual art

Is the biennale sinking like La Serenissima?

The Venice showcase is fighting for a piece of the art market with huge works made of rubbish and barely a painting in sight, says **Rachel Campbell-Johnston**

The 58th edition of the Venice Biennale of Contemporary Art is already being called "the most boring biennale in the world". It is supposed to be the highlight of the city, but instead it is a waste of time, says Rachel Campbell-Johnston. What was she talking about?

There is not much light in the picture
The Venice Biennale is the highlight of the city, but it is a waste of time, says Rachel Campbell-Johnston. What was she talking about?



Recycled in all the ways

It's just the impression. "It's not" is the message of the French artist, Fabrice Hyber. "We get what we deserve," says Hyber. He has a message for the Venice Biennale, and it is not to be taken too seriously. He has a message for the Venice Biennale, and it is not to be taken too seriously.

The environmental crisis is making its mark
The Venice Biennale is the highlight of the city, but it is a waste of time, says Rachel Campbell-Johnston. What was she talking about?

Recycling is all the way
The Venice Biennale is the highlight of the city, but it is a waste of time, says Rachel Campbell-Johnston. What was she talking about?



Nothing like the Venice Biennale

and they are the only ones who are serious about the Venice Biennale. The Venice Biennale is the highlight of the city, but it is a waste of time, says Rachel Campbell-Johnston. What was she talking about?

He is a bright light in a dark world
The Venice Biennale is the highlight of the city, but it is a waste of time, says Rachel Campbell-Johnston. What was she talking about?

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Arts & Culture

Pavilions that jolt us between past and present

VENICE BIENNALE

A spectacular show full of visual beauty and talking points about race, identity, migration and the effects of colonialism

Matthew Collings

IF YOU don't know what the Guardian and Aristotle are, fair enough. If you don't think videos and robots can be art, then the Venice Biennale may not be for you. But if you are thinking of attending the biennial, here are the main talking points.

Watch out for the new Art and Architecture Pavilion. The Italian shows white without expressing itself by either separation from an imagined heritage or by inclusion. Some of the footage is lifted from YouTube material that seems stolen. For example, a young US police officer who is black, usually tries to respond to a handcuffed white man on the ground, who suddenly changes the mood of the scene. The responses are disorienting and lead, that drift into scenes of white people, who are often depicted as victims of racism or else quietly venting anger. The art is racist, too. It is a late approach to the race – perhaps highlighting their ally and well-documented attempts at persuasion, and a race that naturally give the viewer as the time forward and the leading variety of everything weapons – to make a something like point in a painting, something that is unexplained, various in its texture and tones. Disorienting in a

different way to Carl's Soap Myself, a transparent box as a virtualizing container against robotic upstarts. The robot is programmed by Chinese artist Sun Yuan and Peng to respond to a pool of red liquid from the ground to control the movements and firing it around. A portrait, transparent and void, resides on the glass walls in a moment of cleavage after a rupture in space. Maybe it's about the hidden original of the money available for art nowadays.

More sometimes than a line of these, but still meaning, is a strange or pained state. From by Los Angeles artist Kaari Ylänne. Dotted around its canvas walls forms an evocative miniature photograph. In the background, a blurred sense of being. There is No Such Thing As Outside. It is all an evocative set of playful mistakes, whose meanings include ocean, the US, the city, the city, and a clever sense of how we get where we do. It is if we are seen as a small because they are only built and because a USA like model of freedom. We are given only a false self to be said and done by somebody who isn't. A 75 high-tech with the given.



The boat will be a sign among signs. Venice is replete with visible reminders of militarism, colonialism and looting

It is not different, it provides no signs, nothing to indicate its role. It is a "bar boat". Or even to say if this particular object. In a location of epic proportions in which it looks perfectly natural, that. This has occupied critics to combine that people will not know what it is and will not care about it. It is not given its own name, so his intention is to be clear, but he clearly has ideas about history. One of the stories is that the boat of the Biennale has been a place with visible reminders of militarism, colonialism and looting. The three side itself is such a reminder because it is said for when it began, 125 years ago? Today it is all rich and privileged art, and as the line of the great from the past of separation, the movement is physical about standing for those excluded from the boat. Not just the ones who had it, but the part of the world excluded to cover the entire world for all this time. The Biennale is where Venice's own guard is based. One of their jobs is to keep migrants out. A month of domestic migrants played a role in the election of Italy's right-wing populist government. Biennale critics said each other that if no one will know what Our Boat is, at least it is part of the Biennale, then it can't make any critical comment, and it is not only intellectual but also disorienting, because people at the opening are and drunk and nervous and nervous. It is difficult to see it, but people not knowing or caring about what is right in front of them, a thing they would in fact

Confidential: for Marco Venturi, a Christiano Banti brought the following report which took with 800 migrants on board in 2016 to the Biennale

what is in themselves, so it is our own species. It is given with their belonging to land or to huge cities desert for them. Whatever is natural it seems to have a knowing industrial modernity near the sea if power takes over. What more is about life will soon be about profit alone. It is a picture of a modern world. She performs matters, making a point about evolution and how to invent new own culture. The prize for best national pavilion

figures in shadows and light. For every picture people do not only with black figures rather than white, but also with body brush strokes that can be interpreted as a means to create space but are significantly more than shadows. They are vigorous and active. The overall effect is a picture of a modern world. She performs matters, making a point about evolution and how to invent new own culture. The prize for best national pavilion

was an attempt at an open-ended form and then it is a sign among signs. Venice is replete with visible reminders of militarism, colonialism and looting. The three side itself is such a reminder because it is said for when it began, 125 years ago? Today it is all rich and privileged art, and as the line of the great from the past of separation, the movement is physical about standing for those excluded from the boat. Not just the ones who had it, but the part of the world excluded to cover the entire world for all this time. The Biennale is where Venice's own guard is based. One of their jobs is to keep migrants out. A month of domestic migrants played a role in the election of Italy's right-wing populist government. Biennale critics said each other that if no one will know what Our Boat is, at least it is part of the Biennale, then it can't make any critical comment, and it is not only intellectual but also disorienting, because people at the opening are and drunk and nervous and nervous. It is difficult to see it, but people not knowing or caring about what is right in front of them, a thing they would in fact

Biennale's most controversial artwork. This is the bulk of a fishing vessel in which 800 migrants were taken on board in 2016, brought to Venice's mainland airport, the Azzurra, by the Swiss architect artist Christiano Banti.

quite easily interpreted, is surely the whole problem of the migrant crisis. It is the reason it remains a crisis. This work could not be more on the wall of the Venice Biennale, which was held November 24 (thebiennale.org)

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Out of Africa
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17 May 2019

The Independent
Print

FRIDAY 17 MAY 2019

Section 2 / Features



ART HAS ITS PRICE

The organisers of the Venice Biennale are trying hard to downplay its commerciality – but the work is still for sale, discovers **Scott Reyburn**, if you know the right people



'Siti & Tisi (Marina)' by Marina Abramović, Tisi-Grazzini and Eugenio Riccardi-Gualtieri (IFA)

The Venice Biennale, the 58th edition of which opened to the public last Saturday, is the world's biggest and most influential survey of what artists currently make of the times we live in.

The event, lasting more than six months and spread across the whole of the historic Italian city, epitomises how conflicted today's art world feels about financial concerns. For some, particularly in officialdom, "la Biennale" should have the commerce-free purity of a museum. "We must not fall into the trap of letting ourselves be guided by the market," Paolo Baratta, the Biennale's president, said last month. The Biennale, he added, should avoid being suspected of "unethical selling strategies".

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For others, the event is also the world's biggest art fair, if you just know whom and how to ask.



'The Slinky Effect' by Kanan Aliyev and Ulviyya Aliyeva (IPA)

The main event, held in the Giardini gardens and the Arsenale, a former shipyard and arsenal, consists, as usual, of two elements. First, there is a sprawling international group exhibition, featuring a relatively pared-down selection of 76 invited artists or artist partnerships showing pieces in both the Central Pavilion in the Giardini and in the Arsenale.

This year's chosen curators, Ralph Rugoff, director of the Hayward Gallery in London, has given the latest edition the enigmatic title, "May You Live in Interesting Times". Second, there are contributions from 90 national pavilions.

This year, the organisers have made a conscious effort to dispel perceptions that the Venice Biennale is a commercial event. Labels in the main exhibition no longer credit the dealers who represent the selected artists. The temporary wooden walls constructed for the Arsenale group show have been left unpainted, to avoid it "looking too much like an art fair", Rugoff says on a tour of the exhibition.

Over in the national pavilions, the helping hands of commerce are also well-hidden.

Distinguished by the smell of smoked fish, and by the quality of the paintings, sculptures, photographs and videos on display, this is an exhibition where ostensibly nothing is for sale

The United States is represented by African American artist Martin Puryear, whose powerfully meditative sculptures in different media on the themes of slavery and liberty are a contrast with the exuberance of America's 2017 contribution by market star Mark Bradford.

Though Puryear had a solo show at MoMA in 2007, he is not particularly well-known internationally. Six months in the Venice spotlight will surely lead to a critical and financial re-evaluation.

But here, as well as elsewhere at the Biennale, art is discreetly available for sale. "We have placed some pieces, but we would be happy to sell others," says Jacqueline Tran, a senior director of the New York and Los Angeles gallery Matthew Marks, which represents Puryear and is listed in the American Pavilion's Leadership Support team. Tran adds that the sculptures were priced between \$1.5m (£1.2m) and \$4m (£3.2m).

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A performance of the Alteration Video artist group (EPA)

Ghana presents its first national pavilion at this Biennale, designed by the distinguished London-based architect David Adjaye. It displays six presentations by artists that include internationally acclaimed names such as El Anatsui, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye and Ibrahim Mahama, as well as Felicia Akpan, regarded as Ghana's first woman to be a professional photographer.

Distinguished by the smell of smoked fish (incorporated in Mahama's installation, *It Struggles Like Through the Canons of History*), and by the quality of the paintings, sculptures, photographs and videos on display, this is an exhibition where opportunity nothing is for sale.

But during the four-day preview, when droves of museum curators and wealthy private collectors were in Venice, gallery staff members, such as Elizabeth Lehoucq, founder of the October Gallery in London, which represents El Anatsui, were available at the pavilion, as they were at many other national ones.

Anatsui first gained international fame at the 2007 Venice Biennale, when Belgian gallerist Axel Verwoerd audaciously draped a huge metal foil cloth by the Ghanaian sculptor over the facade of the Palazzo Fortuny, like a gold tapestry ransacked from Byzantium. Three new, more manageably sized cloths by Anatsui hang in the Ghana Pavilion. Prices for these now start at about £5m, according to Giles Pippard, a specialist in modern and contemporary African art at Bonhams auctioneers in London.



'El Nombre de un País' by Mariana Telleria (AP)

Dealers are less in evidence at the Biennale's international group show, but there is a tendency to display artists' works in distinct groupings that at times resemble commercial gallery exhibitions. Five large paintings by Los Angeles artist Njideka Akunyili Crosby hang in a row at the Giardini, just as a show of her recent works is opening at the Victoria Miro gallery in Venice.

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Museums are lining up to buy Crosby's paintings, but prices for other artists could be obtained by email. Paris dealership Chantal Crossel quickly responds to a request for the cost of pieces by the technically innovative French sculptor Jean-Luc Moatière on show at the Giardini and the Arsenal. *Domestic*, a 2019 work that places a battered 19th-century terracotta sculpture of a praying girl on a steel table, is priced at €335,000 (£185,000), she says.

The high proportion of known quantities (at least in the art world), such as Moatière, George Condo, Henry Taylor, Christian Marclay and Cosby, has led some to question just who and how much there is to discover in Ragoff's selection of artists.

"It's just all the hot stuff," says Johannes König, a Berlin dealer who represents Natascha Söder Hagedorn, the selected artist at this year's German pavilion.

Art and the market are always connected, but maybe in the past, there was too much of a market

Others approve of the curator's selection. Patricia Savoretto Re Riccardone, a private collector with a foundation in Turin, Italy, says that 65 of the artists in the group show are represented in her own collection. "It's a confirmation of the choices I made when I was supporting artists at the beginning of their careers," she says.

For her, this edition of the Biennale feels less commercial than others in recent years. "Art and the market are always connected, but maybe in the past, there was too much of a market," adds Savoretto Re Riccardone, who notes that up until 1968, the event actually had its own sales office.

Arguably the least commercial - and most powerful - contribution of the entire Biennale comes from *Sea of Sea* (Marina), presented in the Lithuanian pavilion. It is one of more than 30 national presentations outside the Giardini and the Arsenal that are scattered across Venice and was announced in the triumph of the Golden Lion, the Biennale's highest honour.



'After Silence' by Zahra Al Ghazali (AP)

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Tucked away in an old naval warehouse, this mesmerizing installation-plus-performance consists of an opera sung continuously for eight hours a day by a chorus of affluent but alienated sunbathers relaxing on a sandy beach somewhere thousands of planet-warming air miles away.

"Lying here on the beach," the chorus chants, "wearing swimming suits made in the factories of China: Is this not a parody of the Silk Road?"

The historic Silk Road started and ended in Venice. With its thousands of wealthy collectors flying in to view, and sometimes even buy, the works of today's international art world, is the Biennale itself not just such a parody? Or is this just another sign of our "interesting" times?

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The Observer
Venice Biennale 2019

Venice Biennale 2019 review - preaching to the converted



Lucia Cunniff

#LuciaCunniffArt
Sun 12 May 2019 06:00 BST



86 / 31



There is much to praise from Ghana, India, France, and a stunning international pavilion. Less admirable is a true horror on the Arsenale...

The tide is rising. The ice caps are melting. The oceans are awash with trash. That is the main message from the Giardini in Venice, where the 2019 Biennale has just opened. But apparently we should not abandon all hope. For there is always birdsong, and another dance class.

This is what the international pavilions seem to be saying, over and over again. If I saw one doomed pavilion, the floor wrenched up, the walls torn down (ever so politely) to reveal the gardens beyond, I saw four. The entrance to the French pavilion is through the dug-out earth below, sending you back to nature. The Spanish pavilion sends you outside to witness the threatened vegetation beneath spouts of bright acid rain. In the German pavilion, a toxic brown stain pours down the walls to a thrumming soundtrack of inchoate menace. There are barren rocks everywhere.

12 May 2019

The Observer
Online

Vapour steams from the roof of the main international pavilion, plunging the gardens into Whistlerian fog. Vapour pours from the roof of the French pavilion too. Someone really needs to keep an eye out for these repetitions. In the Korean pavilion, they're teaching you ancient and modern dance steps in a sequence of captivating films. In Switzerland, the dance spools backwards, like some Michael Jackson pastiche, on a screen big enough for Leicester Square.

These moves are a retort to reactionary forces of every sort, or so we are told. The same is more obviously true of the transgender and non-binary dance class in *Brazil*, where they're jaunting their Lycra-clad curves to intoxicating music in a film called *Swinguerra* (get it?). Birds made of porcelain, glass or fabric alight on branches, sometimes accompanied by recorded song, sometimes actually alive and fluttering through art's version of nature as hopeful metaphors made literal.

One of them, snow-white and momentarily perched on a bit of rusty wire next to a dead bird, a cigarette stub in its beak, stares anxiously back at visitors to the first section of Laure Prouvost's French pavilion. All around it is a sea-green tide of cast glass, inevitably bobbing with discarded phones and bottles. This preaching to the converted, however, is only a prelude to an epic film in which Prouvost's visions of the sea arrive in mesmerising waves.

Immigrants sing songs of yearning to the ocean, through which fish speed, free as these people never are. A squid arrives in Venice, slithering up the steps to this very pavilion, which gradually fills with animals and songbirds. Acrobats, dancers and magicians perform a kind of liberation ballet - some apparently spilling out of the screen, somehow, to emerge right here among us - culminating in the euphoric sight of a man leaping from the roof into the open air. This was spellbindingly strange, a contemporary version of both *The Odyssey* and *The Tempest*.

Emerge through the spume of mist to the Canadian pavilion opposite and you're in a white-out of ice, and a dramatised apology to the Inuit for forcing them out of their Iglood territories. Featuring the great Danish actor Kim Bodnia, from *The Bridge* and *Killing Eve*, this film is a compelling recreation of historic events, but immensely too long at over an hour. The Biennale is not a cinema.

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Iceland, by contrast, is on fire with a spectacular cave of glowing multicoloured threads descending like iridescent icicles. This pavilion is always something of a send-up, a charming play on Icelandic sagas. Some things never change in Venice. Finland always rises above its allotted space, more of a shed than a pavilion, this time with a curious meadow of flora and fauna somehow blowing across its ceiling: a world turned upside down. Russia is always melodramatic, with a spectacular inferno of damned souls, sinister black automata rising and falling in scarlet hellfire.

There is never a queue for China, at the far end of the Arsenale docks, despite some extremely potent art (this year, ancient watercolours breaking into startling animation). There is always a queue for Britain.



▲ Part of Cathy Wilkes's show for the British pavilion. Photograph: Luca Taroni/Awakening/Getty Images

One at a time is probably the best way to see Cathy Wilkes's melancholy show, in any case. Any more might overwhelm her tiny figures, with their white discs for heads and their distended grey bellies, children of poverty and hunger. A mother of sorts is evoked in the stark white arms that rise out of a basin, as if petrified in the constant act of washing up, and in the headless figure in a green 30s dress that stands upon feet of clay.

Behind her lies another foot, perhaps the ghost of a lost child. There are faint red stains on the floor and a nameless bundle of rags. Some sort of narrative is building.

But the Belfast-born sculptor is nothing if not oblique. Lengths of tattered muslin invoke wedding veils and long-ago tea parties. Her frail figures seem to exist within a country house atmosphere of masters and servants, and the last room opens to numinous paintings and prints of what might be the Irish landscape. But it all feels wan and timid, for such a poet of an artist, rather than deliberately unfulfilled.

By chance, Sean Edwards's monologue for the Welsh pavilion seems to return to a similar past. Voiced by his mother, a lone parent scraping a living as a cleaner, you hear it broadcast among forests of carpet tracks and a hanging garden of quilts: a quiet and modest lament.

The grandest event of 2019, by general consent, is Martin Puryear's American pavilion; its masterpiece stands outside. A gigantic open-wood carving, in the form of a radial sunburst, it stretches across the forecourt like the rood screen of a church. But emitting from its circular sun - or possibly trying to consume it - is a great serpentine tail, slithering away to the ground. The work is called *Swallowed Sun (Monstrance and Volute)*, ideal for Catholic, neoclassical Venice.

12 May 2019

The Observer
Online

Inside, the 77-year-old sculptor has a gathering of past works, including his huge red Phrygian cap, revolutionary but also fragile, its vulnerable tip hanging low. Others carvings invoke Venetian fishermen's nets. Yet the assembly is oddly low key, nowhere near as powerful as his 2017 show [for London's Parasol Unit](#).

[India](#) has a superb inaugural pavilion, containing some haunting cabinets of curiosities that replay its colonial past. [Ghana](#) is here for the first time too, with films by [John Akomfrah](#) and eerie painted portraits of fictional black people by [Lynette Yiadom-Boakye](#). New nations arrive - Madagascar, with a funereal deluge of black tissue paper - but also depart. Algeria and Kazakhstan were both cancelled by their own governments at the last minute. Geopolitics is always in play here.

If there was a prize for the worst pavilion - and the competition is not small - it would surely go to Austria's garden of scarlet vagina-blossoms with shiny steel stamens. This is just crass. Far more disturbing - just as he likes it - is Christoph Büchel's "intervention" in the Arsenale. The Swiss artist has worked with Venetian authorities to install the rusted wreck of the fishing boat that sank near the Italian island of Lampedusa in 2015, with the loss of more than 800 migrants, many of them trapped in the hold.

This devastating relic is positioned right next to a cafe, where art-worlders in Ferragamo trainers gossip without paying the slightest attention. Not even half a moment of silence. To walk past this appalling conjunction is to hang one's head in shame. How can it possibly be presented here, of all places, as a memorial, still less an exhibit?

The saving grace of the 2019 Biennale is the sheer sympathy with which [Ralph Rugoff](#), director of London's Hayward Gallery, has curated the main international exhibition. Everything about it is human. Rugoff has reduced the number of artists, historically overwhelming, to around 80; half are women, for the first time; and equally unusual for this event, which often looks backwards, all are alive.

Here are tremendous images of Indian outsiders by night, spectral as ghosts in the rubble of Kolkata, by the photographer [Soham Gupta](#). And [Gauri Gill](#)'s extraordinary pictures of Rajasthani tribesmen wearing papier-mache masks based on their own sense of themselves as characters in a picaresque novel. Here is the black South African artist [Zanele Muholi](#) getting himself up as a black and white minstrel, or a tribeswoman with coils of sinister rope nooses for hair. And Christian Marclay's latest screen montage, *48 War Movies*, in which each spooling film blocks out part of the one beneath it in an infinite regression of violence.

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The Observer
Online

The timings are perfect. Mordantly ironic paintings by George Condo, holograph phantasms of an angel, that the eye and mind can hardly grasp, newly made by the young Parisian Cyprian Gaillard. A terrifically counterintuitive film by the Los Angeles artist Arthur Jafa, collaging footage of black-on-white violence, and its opposite, with the testimony of a reformed white supremacist. Art can take you anywhere, any time - even into outer space with an exquisite memorial to Robert Henry Lawrence by the Bahamian artist Tavares Strachan: just pinpoints of light in pitch blackness, describing a figure momentarily suspended as it falls to Earth, a radiant spaceman midway between drawing and sculpture. The death of the first African American astronaut is marked by a rising star of visionary art.

Five Venice show-stoppers



▲ A visitor leaves Laure Prouvost's French pavilion, Venice 2019. Photograph: Tiziana Fabi/AFP/Getty Images



French pavilion Enter through the ground, exit through a haze of vapour, swimming through a film of epic proportions in between: Laure Prouvost's wildly original homage to the sea, featuring glass oceans, operatic song and live performers is the high point of the 2019 Biennale.

International pavilion Curated by Ralph Rugoff, the most cogent portrait of contemporary art in years, from the civil rights films of LA's Arthur Jafa to Frida Orupabo's double-take collages of black women, Lawrence Abu Hamdan's sinister surveillance films and a twinkling memorial to the first African American astronaut.

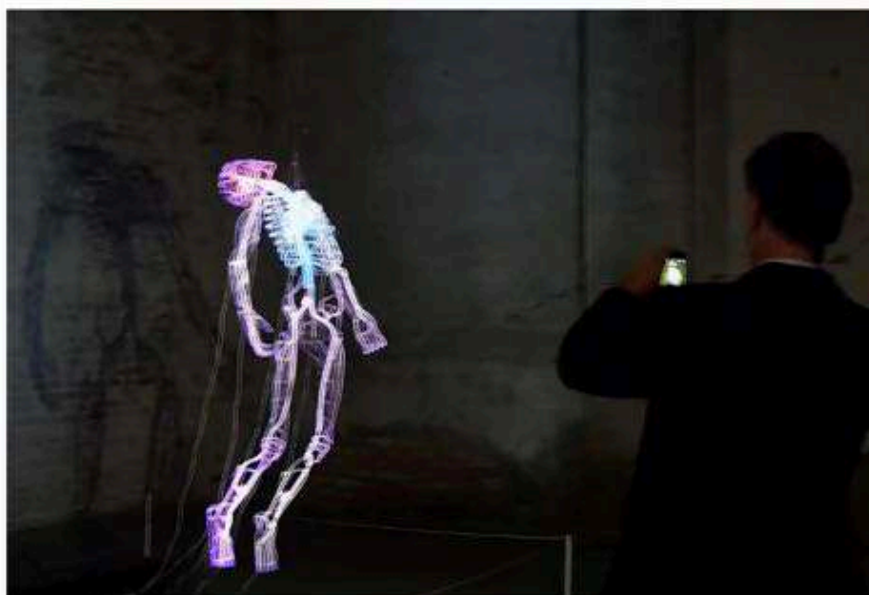
Ghana pavilion Ghana's first pavilion at Venice is extremely strong: featuring paintings by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, films by John Akomfrah, shimmering bottle-top hangings and tremendous black-and-white portraits from the 1960s by Felicia Abban, Ghana's first professional female photographer.

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American pavilion The veteran US sculptor Martin Puryear dominates the Giardini with his monumental outdoor sculptures. Inside, his colossal wood sculptures take off from Brancusi and Arp to allude to Haitian slaves, civil war soldiers and the nets of Venetian fishermen.

Polish pavilion A private jet turned inside out, the cockpit disembowelled so that all its controls dangle outside, the seats swinging dangerously in space. Roman Stańczak's *Flight* is an antidote to the luxurious superyachts and plutocratic wealth of the Biennale.



▲ 'Visionary': Tavares Strachan's installation in the international pavilion. Photograph: Tiziana Fabi/AFP/Getty Images



10 May 2019

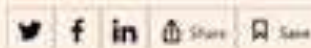
Financial Times
Online

Venice Biennale 2019 – young artists, stark contrasts and visual drama

The international art event lays bare sociopolitical faultlines like no other



LC15 15-12: an installation by film director Alexander Sokurov at Runway national pavilion © Michael Veitch



Topic
Feature

Jackie Wulfochliker 11 HOURS AGO



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08:34

Experimental
feature

Report a mispronounced word

Huge and desolate, it looms into view as you turn towards the Arsenale basin: the gashed, rusty blue hull of the boat of death in which 800 migrants lost their lives. The Tunisian fishing vessel sank in 2015, was recovered from the seabed and brought to rest in Sicily. On Monday it arrived in Venice's commercial port, crossed the Giudecca canal and entered the former Arsenale shipyard to become an art installation: Christoph Büchel's project "Barca Nustra", silent, ghostly, the most haunting thing in town. Seconds away, collectors' yachts, sleek and glossy, parade outside the Giardini.

Feedback

10 May 2019

Financial Times
Online

The 2019 Venice Biennale is a passage of unforgettable, stark contrasts, cacophonies and whispers, light and darkness; visual dramas laying bare sociopolitical faultlines as no other international art event can. That is especially so in this edition: for the first time in years, the main exhibition, Ralph Rugoff's *May You Live in Interesting Times*, is entirely contemporary, with almost all works made since 2010, and nearly half the artists aged under 40.

It is a high-risk strategy — no classic achievements to hide behind — yielding extremely varied results in the quality of individual pieces. But as a declaration of art's engagement with present realities, it is persuasive, and to encounter the best young artists pushing forward traditional forms in this context enthrals.

Twenty-eight-year-old Augustas Serapinas, who lives and works in Vilnius, has created in "Vygtas, Kirilas & Semionovas" the show's most beautiful sculpture: a brutalist ruin of building blocks constructed in material taken from a former Soviet nuclear power plant in Lithuania.

Thirty-year-old Soham Gupta's "Angst" series, monochrome nocturnal portrait photographs of Kolkata's homeless, transforms the documentary genre into expressionist theatricality: enshrouded in black, the gnarled, crumpled faces of his down-and-out collaborators are harshly spotlighted, absurdly heroic — think Fritz Lang, Samuel Beckett, not Diane Arbus.



'Barracostas', by Christoph Büchel, at Venice's former shipyards — The ship sank in 2015, trapping hundreds of migrants in its hold © Tiziana Feklan/REUTERS Images

10 May 2019

Financial Times
Online

Thirty-five-year-old Michael Armitage's latest fantastical canvases — luminous with fluid, gestural brushwork, a tropical palette and collage-like disrupted surfaces — depict carnivalesque scenes, veering between vitality and threat, before Kenya's 2017 elections. Re-appropriating western Modernism's exotic tropes to express 21st-century black experience, these are the strongest paintings in the Biennale exhibition.

Among Rugoff's established artists, real ambition is announced in the global scope of works pulling local resonances together. In the Arsenale, housing the more potent installations, Christian Marclay's impressive new "48 War Movies" layers movies featuring conflicts — from the American civil war to Iraq — on top of one other with just the outer edge of each visible, and all the soundtracks playing simultaneously, on shrieking infinite repeat: chaotic and endless, as war itself.

Top five national pavilions at Venice



Venice Biennale 2019

From Russia to The Philippines, here are the highlights of this year's event

Pass from here through a black curtain and you stand among soft disembodied voices chanting in Arabic, Hindi and Russian through microphones suspended in a lanterned grid resembling a dungeon. Shilpa Gupta's "For, In Your Tongue, I Cannot Fit" commemorates 100 imprisoned writers across the millennia, the title coming from the 14th-century Azerbaijani poet Nesimi.

History, despite Rugoff's insistent present tense, remains an animating force in those pieces which most evocatively express what the world feels like now. Sun Yuan and Peng Yu's "Dear" stands out within the Arsenale interior: a large silicon white chair, in imperial Roman style, raised and enclosed in a glass cage like a throne. Francis Bacon's caged popes screaming on their thrones spring to mind, but this chair's occupant is a black rubber hose activated every few minutes to whip the cage in a frenzy, hissing and scratching the surfaces, until, exhausted, it collapses in a coiled heap — the exercise of power as violent, frustrated, futile. Sun and Peng also show the compelling "Can't Help Myself", another caged robot shovelling and sweeping a bloodlike fluid which keeps oozing back, impossible to cover up.

Feedback

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Fit, In Your Turquoise, I Cannot Fit by Shripa Gupta & Nelo Rindimella

The Giardini is generally weaker. Surprisingly poor figurative paintings, sub-art-school — Nicole Eisenman, Jill Mulleady — are messily arranged among biennale clichés such as art collective Slavs and Tatars' placards of unreadable script and Rosemarie Trockel's pointless assemblies of objects. So much dead matter in a universe already overstuffed. The highlights here are two virtual pieces: Ian Cheng's artificially intelligent caterpillar splurging across a screen "Bob (Flag of Beliefs)" and — the poetic heart — Cyprien Gaillard's "L'Ange du Foyer", a multicoloured hologram of the winged, clawed, fanged spirit in Max Ernst's "Fireside Angel", painted in fear of fascism in 1937, which darts and pounces about the Giardini's shadowy, domed, mirrored central gallery.

Rugoff imposes no themes: his opening salvo, cloaking the Giardini façade in rising steam — Lara Favoretto's "Thinking Head" — advocates bewilderment, positing art as today's equivalent of the medieval mystic work *The Cloud of Unknowing*, where to unthink familiarities is to see afresh. It is an upbeat position: Rugoff is less confrontational than the late visionary Okwui Enwezor, curator of the Biennale's central exhibition in 2015. But, sharing Enwezor's seriousness of purpose, Rugoff's show is far more gripping than Christine Macel's lightweight Biennale in 2017.

Feedback

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Online



L'Ange du Payer by Caprice Gulland © Francesco Gull

What emerges in the broadest sense from Rugoff's "interesting times" is a shipwreck of political and cultural stabilities — migrant tragedies, proliferation of repressive regimes, new inequalities. These subjects dominate the mixed offerings at the national pavilions, although the best share determined optimism and resistance.

Feedback

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Misery, however, reigns atop the Giardini avenue, prestigious sites of the British, French and German pavilions, redolent of the world order when the Biennale began in 1895. *Sic transit* ... For Britain, Cathy Wilkes's sparse domestic installation of mannequins, lace scraps, diminutive vases of flowers, washing-up bowl and fragments of plastic limbs, is a joyless meditation on austerity Britain, growing ever smaller in global significance. It is at once self-righteous and meant to underwhelm, not a place you want to linger. Nevertheless, Wilkes's dignity, restraint and coherence set her apart from her immediate neighbours.

To the right, Natascha Süder Happelmann (a pseudonym questioning German identity and immigrants' desire to assimilate) reduces urban forms to meaningless rubble — consistently, German self-hatred bursts forth in this Nazi-built pavilion. To the left, in the French pavilion, Laure Prouvost recounts her journey to Venice in a twittering adolescent film, supplemented by objects as souvenirs. It is 2019's single worst, most self-indulgent pavilion, its watery motifs and jaunty marine title *Deep Sea Blue Surrounding You* an affront to Bachel's memento to suffering moored on the Arsenal.



'Cast Myself' by Sun Yuan and Peng Yu © Francisco Gali

Feedback

10 May 2019

Financial Times
Online

For the most troubled countries, bearing witness is the achievement. For Iraq at Ca' del Duca, a dead soldier cast from clay, shrunken, skeletal, costed in a parodic skin of medals, lies in a *mashouf*, the ancient Sumerian boat still used in Iraqi marshes, in Serwan Baran's "The Last General". The pavilion fronts the Grand Canal, which becomes in the imagination the waterway on which this little burial ship will travel to the afterlife.

Eloquent too are the absences. Algeria withdrew just weeks ago. And although Venezuela's exhibition is listed in the catalogue, no artists arrived. A 1950s cuboid masterpiece in pebbled concrete and glass designed by Carlo Scarpa, it stands dark and closed next to the Russian pavilion's bright cupolas: a warning that sometimes art cannot find a way through politics. Yet these absences serve to highlight the rich diverse voices, notably Ghana's inaugural pavilion and India's return, which have made it here against tough odds.

To November 24, biennecale.org



VISUAL ART

Is the Venice Biennale sinking like La Serenissima?

The Venice showcase is fighting for a piece of the art market with huge works made of rubbish and barely a painting in sight

Rachel Campbell-Jones

May 10, 2019, 14:51am, The Times



Melissa Mc Gill's Red Regatta



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The 58th edition of the biennale kicks off tomorrow. Art tourists face a ludicrously packed calendar of overblown festivities. "May you live in interesting times" is the theme chosen by the artistic director, Ralph Rugoff. The first interesting fact you will probably learn is that this is, in fact, not the Chinese curse that it is purported to be. The Chinese never said it. Its origin is English. Beyond that, what can you find out about the art work from this befuddling sprawl of a wonderful beast?



There's not much light in the darkness

There's little jollity this year in the Giardini where the biennale is held. And it's not because of the gloomy weather or the black wardrobe of the committed biennale-goer. The art world feels like a dystopian place. Pop into the central pavilion; it's the best place to take the general temperature. Crowds gawp at a massive robotic machine that, trapped like a zoo animal in its Perspex cage, restlessly flexes its mechanical muscles before swivelling to sweep up a pool of endlessly oozing blood. And that's just the beginning. "It's over," is the message of the French artist Antoine Catala. "We get what we deserve," is the announcement of Danh Vo from Vietnam. In the Swiss pavilion, an installation called *Heirloom* brings us face to face with a massive charred model of our planet. *The Sound of Music* it's not. The sad and the sinister, the downbeat and the doom-mongering – not to mention the downright apocalyptic – prevail.

The environmental crisis is making us miserable . . .

. . . which is horribly hypocritical, given that hundreds of artists have jetted across the planet to display work to inform us that we should be doing an awful lot more to save our doomed cosmic deathball. Ecologically concerned art is ubiquitous. From the crocheted coral reefs of Christine and Margaret Wertheim through Marina Abramovic's virtual reality contribution at the Ca' Rezzonico to the fleet of 50 boats with blood-red sails that, although not part of the biennale programme, are launched by Melissa McGill to remind us that the city to which we have all travelled is itself sinking beneath globally warmed tides.



10 May 2019

The Times
Online



Rust flasks installed in the former shipyard by Christoph Buechel
GTTT PHOTO

Forget diamond skulls, recycling is all the rage

I have never seen so much rubbish. And it's being recycled as art. Dead locusts, scrunched tin foil, old loo rolls and discarded hairbands are scattered about the British pavilion. Fag ends and eggshells and bits of old shoe leather have been dumped about France. Germany barely seems to have bothered to get itself built — visitors are accosted by a pile of collapsed rubble. In the Arsénale, although there are probably more photographs of refuse than there is rubbish, visitors are met by installations or images that appear to be the debris from an overturned dustcart. In our ecologically hyper-alert era the glory days of the diamond-encrusted platinum skull are over. The extravaganza is out of date.

We are up against a wall

Given that the giardino, housing an assortment of national pavilions, must pack more territorial borders into a square hectare than any other place on Earth, it feels ironic that artists all over the place are discussing the roles that barriers and boundaries play in our modern-day lives. Walls are a leitmotif: Eva Rothschild builds a wall of cast-concrete blocks for Ireland; Shilpa Gupta confronts us with a pair of endlessly swinging (and savagely spiked) mechanical gates; and the German pavilion is bisected by a soaring dam.



10 May 2019

The Times
Online

The ubiquitous boundaries are not always physical. Listen to *Walled Unwalled*, the audio recordings that earned Lawrence Abu Hamdan a place on the latest Turner shortlist. The plight of those who get trapped on the wrong side of such barriers is the point. The controversial Christoph Büchel puts these people in striking focus in his memorial to the migrant crisis, where he displays the massive rusted hulk of the shipwreck responsible for one of the greatest losses of life on the Mediterranean in recent memory. You may encounter this issue at its most immediate from the moment you arrive in Venice — look at the non-EU queue at Marco Polo airport. The line snakes round the barriers in a year when, apparently, hundreds of biennale contributors have found it all but impossible to secure visas.



Georg Baselitz, who often displays his work upside down, at the Galleria dell'Accademia



10 May 2019

The Times
Online

Rumours of painting's revival have been exaggerated

The much-vaunted revival of painting clearly hasn't flourished. For all that Rugoff has included a generous handful of daubers in his curated displays, in the national pavilions there is barely any oil-on-canvas to be spotted. If you are a traditionalist, don't let that worry you. Among the biennale's plethora of official "collateral" exhibitions, painting is abundant. A great not-to-be-missed retrospective of Arshile Gorky takes over the sumptuous baroque palace of Ca' Pesaro. Georg Baselitz becomes the first living artist to be presented at the grand Gallerie dell'Accademia. Luc Tuymans takes over the Palazzo Grassi with a disappointingly over-attenuated exhibition, but the delicate beauties of Helen Frankenthaler at the Museo di Palazzo Grimani more than make up.

Bigger is far from better

The biennale looks horribly overblown. The bigger, the bolder, the more brazen, the better is the maxim that appears. I was in the Arsenale when *Dear*, a vast artwork by Sun Yuan and Peng Yu, leapt into flailing action. A snakelike length of black hose dashed from the soaring imperial throne on which it had been sleeping it began lashing about noisily to be released. From that moment not another piece in the vicinity received any attention. All the energy was drained from the air. A few artists find ways around this. They make sure you must engage for more than the moment it takes to whip out a mobile phone and take a snap, by inviting you to become players in an immersive experience. Israel turns its pavilion into a hospital, issuing tickets for a visit to a consultant. Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster attracts patient queues for a virtual-reality trip into a trance-like realm. Buck the trend. Look for the calm, the quiet and the subtle. Among the most rewarding images that I stumbled across were the brown-ink drawings of Michael Armitage. Pages from a sketchbook that he kept while attending political rallies in Kenya speak in a language that has something of the power of Goya.



10 May 2019

The Times
Online

Is glass at the cutting edge?

Textiles and ceramics have had their turn. Has the time for glass come? In the world of fashion, transparency is à la mode. This year Adriano Berengo celebrates the tenth anniversary of his Glasstress exhibition with a display that, drawing on the expertise of Murano's craftsmen, looks set to launch an art world trend. Forget the dinky glass animals that you take home from Venice for your children. Nowadays, apparently, they are manufactured by the Chinese. And don't imagine the monstrous confections of Dale Chihuly. Berengo's studio, using the skills of two of the seven remaining glass masters on Murano, translates the visions of artists — Tracey Emin, the Chapman brothers, Ai Weiwei and Rose Wylie among them — into glass. The results can be stunning. This year, the studio will take over a 5,000 sq m site on the Lido, for which Thomas Schütte is designing a building. It could be the start of the next big art world thing.



Born, He and Eye at the Estimote Pavilion
GUY BILLBERG



10 May 2019

The Times
Online

Everyone is flocking to France

When you see dry ice pouring over its rooftop, don't assume the French pavilion has – like Notre Dame – just gone up in smoke. Be persistent. Creep round the back, past that pile of builders' debris, to enter the entrancing domain of Laure Prévost. Alighting on anything for inspiration – glass octopuses, lettuce, a little white dove that sits blinking on an old garden rake – she weaves a surrealist story about memory that, while admittedly incomprehensible, proves alluring. Among myriad things, it seems to be about masks – masks, puppets and mannequins are all over the biennale.

The name to nonchalantly drop

Ghana is the new kid on the block. This year it is launched on the contemporary art scene with its inaugural pavilion, designed by David Adjaye. It is entitled Ghana Freedom after a song composed by ET Mensah on the eve of the nation's independence in 1957. Here is proof that the excitement that surrounds African markets is not misplaced. A handful of its hippest artists feature: El Anatsui contributes a signature curtain of shimmering crown-caps; the poetic radical John Akomfrah presents a three-channel film projection; and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye displays hauntingly introspective painted "portraits" of anonymous people.

On top of all that talent, in the form of Felicia Ansah Abban, is that most sought-after art world asset: an elderly female artist rescued from decades of relative oblivion. Abban began her career in the Sixties as her nation's first female professional photographer, working for its first president, Kwame Nkrumah. More than 50 years later she has been rediscovered and, with plans to turn her studio into a museum, it is not some-all-but-forgotten president but a vibrant new artistic find that appears in the portraits on display in the Ghana pavilion.



10 May 2019

The Times
Online



Pablo Goya's *The Liver is the Cook's Comb*, 1794

Is the contemporary art market sinking?

Is the bubble about to burst in an absurdly inflated contemporary art market? For at least a decade people have been monitoring it, staring with the sort of trepidation with which you might watch a party entertainer blowing up a vast balloon. Again and again they have predicted that at the next puff it will pop. Yet from the Chinese auction-fuelled boom and the showy projects of the Emirates to the simmering of African markets (steadily bubbling but not yet boiling) and the rise of a homespun clutch of influential artists and galleries in Mexico, contemporary markets are expanding. Vast sums are sloshing around Venice, which, as host (since 1895) to the art world's most prestigious biennale, just about clings to its role as the purveyor of new trends to an art-transfixed public.

Venice has to fight for its place. It must make its mark with an ever-expanding array of competitors, Sao Paulo biennial being the most prominent. There are signs that it is flagging. The big dealers who once took a room at the Danieli for a week, who hogged all the tables at Harry's Bar, jet in and jet out again. They stay barely a night.



That doesn't necessarily mean the markets are flagging. You only have to pause for a while, watch Venice's biennale-goers passing, to see why. The little global bands of enthusiasts who in the old days would have gathered annually, have swelled in numbers. They have become a vast race. And for a week in Venice, they feel more like a nation. Its economy is determinedly propped up. So much has been entrusted to its financial markets. Collaborations between artists and consumer brands (Takashi Murakami and Louis Vuitton, for instance, or Damien Hirst and Levi jeans) are entrenched. Art's allure as investment increases as auction prices continue to break records. A host of financial advisers tout art as a good way to diversify.

Despite the mutterings of doom-mongers, contemporary art survived last year's volatile markets, but can it withstand further wobbles? The prices of individual artists — such as George Condo, the creator of the pointlessly oversized picture that greets visitors as they enter the Arsenale — have inflated at such a phenomenal rate that you can't help but see signs that it is dangerously overheated.

Like Venice, threatened by the temperature rises that affect the water level in the lagoon, the contemporary market must eventually subside. Look at Charles Saatchi, for instance, the adman turned collector who in large part created the British boom. Last month he appeared to take a significant step back from his loss-making gallery by handing control to a charitable trust of which he is not a trustee. If you think it will all last for ever I suspect you are living in a Disneyfied fantasy. In that case you will feel at home in Venice because that's what this once great trading port has become in our contemporary age. It has found that it has had to change to survive.

13 May 2019

Evening Standard
Online**VENICE BIENNALE 2019 HIGHLIGHTS, IN PICTURES****ARTS****Venice Biennale 2019 highlights:
Pavilions that jolt us between past and present****MATTHEW COLLINGS**

4 days ago

If you don't know what the Giardini and Arsenale are, fair enough. If you don't think videos and robots can be **art**, then the **Venice Biennale** may not be for you. But if you are thinking of joining the half-million visitors who will see this spectacular show between now and November, then here are the main talking points.

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Online

Watching prizewinner Arthur Jafa's *The White Album* is both a thrilling and painful experience. The video shows white selfhood expressing itself by violent separation from an imagined horrible Other. Some of the footage is lifted YouTube material that went viral. For example, a young US police officer who is black, stoically resists responding to a handcuffed white man on the ground, who endlessly chants the word "n*****" at her. Jafa shot beautifully grainy scenes of white bodies with tight close-ups on the faces, the expressions distanced and lost, that drift into scenes of white psychodrama. The latter are public displays of mania or else quietly seething anger ("I'm not a racist, but...").

Jafa's approach to pure rage — people's ugly venting, their silky and self-deluded attempts at persuasion, one crazed white nationalist's glaring silence as he films himself loading and reloading a variety of terrifying weapons — is to make it something like paint on a **painting**; amazing in all its manipulated variety, its textures and tones. Disturbing in a different way is *Can't Stop Myself*, a transparent box as big as a building containing a giant robotic spatula. The robot is programmed by Chinese artists Sun Yuan and Peng Yu to scrape up a pool of red liquid from the ground in convulsive movements and fling it around. A perpetual transparent oozing red residue on the glass walls is reminiscent of clean-ups after a torture session. Maybe it's about the violent origin of all the money available for art nowadays.

More humorous than either of these, but still menacing, is a strange expanded dolls' house by Los Angeles artist Kaari Upson. Dotted around its cartoonish forms are video monitors playing hilarious-horrible scenes of a dissolved sense of being. Titled *There Is No Such Thing As Outside*, it is all an evocative bit of playful nonsense, whose meanings include woman/self/domesticity gone wrong, and a clever theme of soul hunger, where our choices if we are women are unreal because they are only husks and formats: a USA false model of freedom. We are given only a fake self to inhabit, and all we can say and do seems to be said and done by somebody who isn't us. A 7ft high clitoris with five piercings is a comic prop in this funny/sad entertainment, a weirdo pantomime, in which women are being as nice as they can be, trapped in niceness.

13 May 2019

Evening Standard
Online



Ghanalan artists are extremely strong this year. [John Akomfrah](#)'s mighty three-screen video shows African life, including deep-sea creatures, the stars, awesome sunsets and elephants squelching through mud. He counters pleasure with intimations of finality. If a species of animal whose beauty overwhelms us is threatened, so is our own species. Migrants with their belongings in laundry bags cross desert terrain. Whatever is natural is seen to have a looming industrial modernity nearby, as if power takes over. Whatever is about life will soon be about profits alone.

Lynette Yiadom-Boakye's paintings seem equal amounts acting and sincerity. She appears to stage a masterpiece: it might be any western great painting from Titian to Manet, three centuries of figures in shadows and light. But every picture is populated not only with black figures rather than white, but also with lively brush strokes that can be questionable as a means to create space but are significantly more than a charade. They are vigorous and attractive. She never allows a picture to take more than a day. She performs mastery, making a point about exclusion and how to invent your own culture.

13 May 2019

Evening Standard
Online

The prize for best national pavilion went to Lithuania for an opera called *Sun and Sea*. It is sung by actors in swimming costumes. From on high, you look down on to a fleshy, sunny, sassy set, and listen to individual stories sung up to you in English, which gradually cohere into a swelling chorus. Created by three talents, an artist, writer and theatre director, the theme is humanity's indifference to eco-disaster.

Indifference is the paradoxical problem, according to art press gossip, of the Biennale's most controversial **artwork**. This is the hulk of a fishing vessel in which 800 migrants drowned in an accident in 2015, brought to Venice's medieval shipyard, the Arsenale, by the Swiss-Icelandic artist Christoph Büchel. Büchel deliberately provides no signage, nothing to indicate his title, *Barca Nostra*: "Our boat". Or even to say if this particular object, in a location of epic proportions in which it looks perfectly natural, is art. This has prompted critics to complain that people will not know what it is and will not care about it.

Büchel gives no interviews, so his intentions are mysterious, but he clearly has ideas about history. Over the six-month duration of the Biennale the boat will be a sign among signs. Venice is replete with visible reminders of militarism, colonialism and looting. The Biennale itself is such a reminder: how was it paid for when it began, 120 years ago? Today it is all rich and privileged fun, and now the boat is a great big reminder of separation, the remnants of a physical object standing for those excluded from the fun. Not just the ones who died in it, but the part of the world exploited to create the extra wealth for all this fun.

The Arsenale is where Venice's coast guard is based. One of their tasks is to keep migrants out. A myth of demonic migrants played a role in the election of Italy's right-wing populist government.

Biennale critics told each other that if no one will know what *Our Boat* is, or even that it is part of the Biennale, then it can't make any critical comment, so it is not only ineffectual but also disrespectful, because people at the opening are and drank and networked right beside it, oblivious to it. But people not knowing or caring about what is right in front of them, a thing they could in fact quite easily investigate, is surely the whole problem of the migrant crisis. It is the reason it remains a crisis. This work could not be more on the nail.

The Venice Biennale continues until November 24 (labiennale.org)

16 May 2019

The Independent
Online

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At Venice Biennale, the art's for sale, if you know the right people

The organisers of the Venice Biennale are trying hard to downplay its commerciality

Scott Reyburn | 15 hours ago | |

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The Lithuanian Pavilion, 'Sun & Sea (Marina)' of artists Lina Lapelyte, Vaiva Grainyte and Rigitė Nastziukaitė (EPA)

16 May 2019

The Independent
Online

The **Venice Biennale**, the 58th edition of which opened to the public last Saturday, is the world's biggest and most influential survey of what artists currently make of the times we live in.

The event, lasting more than six months and spread across the whole of the historic Italian city, epitomises how conflicted today's **art** world feels about financial concerns. For some, particularly in officialdom, "la Biennale" should have the commerce-free purity of a museum. "We must not fall into the trap of letting ourselves be guided by the market," Paolo Baratta, the Biennale's president, said last month in a statement. The Biennale, he added, should avoid being suspected of "compliance with selling strategies".

For others, the event is also the world's biggest art fair, if you just know whom and how to ask.

The main event, held in the Giardini gardens and the Arsenale, a former shipyard and arsenal, consists, as usual, of two elements. First, there is a sprawling international group exhibition, featuring a relatively pared-down selection of 79 invited artists or artist partnerships showing pieces in both the Central Pavilion in the Giardini and in the Arsenale.

This year's chosen curator, Ralph Rugoff, director of the Hayward Gallery in London, has given the latest edition the enigmatic title, "May You Live in Interesting Times". Second, there are contributions from 90 national pavilions.

16 May 2019

The Independent
Online



'The Slinky Effect' by Koenig artists Kanas Aliyev and Ulviyya Aliyeva (EPA)

This year, the organisers have made a conscious effort to dispel perceptions that the Venice Biennale is a commercial event. Labels in the main exhibition no longer credit the dealers who represent the selected artists. The temporary wooden walls constructed for the Arsenale group show have been left unpainted, to avoid it "looking too much like an art fair", Rugoff says on a tour of the exhibition.

Over in the national pavilions, the helping hands of commerce are also well-hidden.

The United States is represented by African American artist Martin Puryear, whose powerfully meditative sculptures in different media on the themes of slavery and liberty are a contrast with the exuberance of America's 2017 contribution by market star Mark Bradford.

16 May 2019

The Independent
Online

Though Puryear had a solo show at Moma in 2007, he is not particularly well-known internationally. Six months in the Venice spotlight will surely lead to a critical and financial re-evaluation.

But here, as well as elsewhere at the Biennale, art is discreetly available for sale. "We have placed some pieces, but we would be happy to sell others," says Jacqueline Tran, a senior director of the New York and Los Angeles gallery Matthew Marks, which represents Puryear and is listed in the American Pavilion's Leadership Support team. Tran adds that the sculptures were priced between \$1.5m (£1.2m) and \$4m (£3.1m).



A performance of the Alterazioni Video artist group (EPA)



16 May 2019

The Independent
Online

Ghana presents its first national pavilion at this Biennale, designed by the distinguished London-based architect David Adjaye. It displays six presentations by artists that include internationally acclaimed names such as El Anatsui, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye and Ibrahim Mahama, as well as Felicia Abban, regarded as Ghana's first woman to be a professional photographer.

Distinguished by the smell of smoked fish (incorporated in Mahama's installation, *A Straight Line Through the Carcass of History*), and by the quality of the paintings, sculptures, photographs and videos on display, this is an exhibition where ostensibly nothing is for sale.

during the four-day preview, when droves of museum curators and wealthy private collectors were in Venice, gallery staff members, such as Elisabeth Lalouschek, founder of the October Gallery in London, which represents El Anatsui, were available at the pavilion, as they were at many other national ones.

16 May 2019

The Independent
Online

Anatsui first gained international fame at the 2007 Venice Biennale, when Belgian gallerist Axel Vervoordt audaciously draped a huge metal-foil cloth by the Ghanaian sculptor over the facade of the Palazzo Fortuny, like a gold tapestry ransacked from Byzantium. Three new, more-manageably sized cloths by Anatsui hang in the Ghana Pavilion. Prices for these now start at about \$1m, according to Giles Peppiatt, a specialist in modern and contemporary African art at Bonhams auctioneers in London.

Dealers are less in evidence at the Biennale's international group show, but there is a tendency to display artists' works in distinct groupings that at times resemble commercial gallery exhibitions. Five large paintings by Los Angeles artist Njideka Akunyili Crosby hang in a row at the Giardini, just as a show of her recent works is opening at the Victoria Miro gallery in Venice.

Museums are lining up to buy Crosby's paintings, but prices for other artists could be obtained by email. Paris dealership Chantal Crousel quickly responds to a request for the cost of pieces by the technically innovative French sculptor Jean-Luc Moulène on show at the Giardini and the Arsenale. *Donatrice*, a 2019 work that places a battered 15th-century terracotta sculpture of a praying girl on a steel table, is priced at €135,000 (£118,000), she says.

16 May 2019

The Independent
Online

The high proportion of known quantities (at least in the art world), such as Moulène, George Condo, Henry Taylor, Christian Marclay and Crosby, has led some to question just who and how much there is to discover in Ragoff's selection of artists.



'El Nombre de un País' by Mariana Telleria is shown at the Argentine pavilion (AP)

"It's just all the hot stuff," says Johann König, a Berlin dealer who represents Natascha Süder Happelmann, the selected artist at this year's German pavilion.

16 May 2019

The Independent
Online

Others approve of the curator's selection. Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, a private collector with a foundation in Turin, Italy, says that 15 of the artists in the group show are represented in her own collection. "It's a confirmation of the choices I made when I was supporting artists at the beginning of their careers," she says.

For her, this edition of the Biennale feels less commercial than others in recent years. "Art and the market are always connected, but maybe in the past, there was too much of a market," adds Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, who notes that up until 1968, the event actually had its own sales office.

Arguably the least commercial – and most powerful – contribution of the entire Biennale comes from *Sun & Sea (Marina)*, presented in the Lithuanian pavilion. It is one of more than 30 national presentations outside the Giardini and the Arsenale that are scattered across Venice and was announced as the winner of the Golden Lion, the Biennale's highest honour.

Tucked away in an old naval warehouse, this mesmerising installation-slash-performance consists of an opera sung continuously for eight hours a day by a chorus of affluent but alienated sunbathers relaxing on a sandy beach somewhere thousands of planet-warming air miles away.

16 May 2019

The Independent
Online



'After Illusion' by Zohran Al Ghamdi is shown at the Saudi Arabia pavilion (AP)

"Lying here on the beach," the chorus chants, "wearing swimming suits made in the factories of China! Is this not a parody of the Silk Road?"

The historic Silk Road started and ended in Venice. With its thousands of wealthy collectors flying in to view, and sometimes even buy, the wares of today's international art world, is the Biennale itself not just such a parody?

Or is this just another sign of our "interesting" times?

© *New York Times*

15 May 2019

The Telegraph Luxury
Online

Every highlight from this year's Venice Biennale



Laura Piovetti, *Deep Sea* (Part Surrounding You) | *Was (Is) Who Profound* by Fardin al the Perich, Pavilion

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By Louisa Buck
15 MAY 2019 | 2:00PM

15 May 2019

The Telegraph Luxury
Online

There's an especially strong representation of painting; from Michael Armitage's responses to the 2017 Kenyan election executed on traditional bark cloth to Henry Taylor's depictions of personal and American histories and the richly layered domestic interiors and vivid portraits of Njideka Akunyili Crosby.

Also don't miss Arthur Jafa's chilling film 'The White Album' which explores whiteness and white supremacy, mixing YouTube, music videos and CCTV internet footage of white supremacists with exquisitely shot portraits of the white people he loves.

Among the international pavilions a high-point is Lithuania, with a pavilion that creates a beach inside a disused warehouse, complete with imported sand and crowds of holidaymakers. Viewed from a gallery above, these lolting, chatting sunbathers surrounded by their seaside clobber are in fact singing an opera based on their worries and concerns.

What begins as a charming eavesdrop into everyday ruminations unfolds over an hour into an ominous lament for the end of the world as the light changes and the work builds up to an apocalyptic finale. There was wide agreement that this mundane playing-out of the last day on earth - by theatre director Rūgėlė Barzdžukaitė, playwright Vaiva Grainytė, and composer Lina Lapelytė - was a worthy winner of the Golden Lion for best pavilion.



SeungJae's 10th, Barbara Wagner and Benjamin de Souza, at the Brazilian Pavilion

15 May 2019

The Telegraph Luxury
Online

Music of a very different kind pounds through the Brazilian Pavilion where artists Barbara Wagner and Benjamin de Barca are showing a film and photographs of three dance groups from Recife in North East Brazil who strut their stuff to the latest dance trends.

Set against the backdrop of the current regime, there's a particular political charge to the conspicuousness of these predominantly black, transgender and non binary bodies and as the title 'Swinguerra' suggests, these exhilarating dance routines are also a battle for freedom in the face of oppression.

Dance as a form of resistance seems to be a popular theme at this Biennale – Switzerland has a series of gender fluid dancers making subtly subversive gestures whilst inexorably moving backwards and Korea offers a series of dance routines both traditional and modern, which interrogate the past and look to the future.



Photographs and self-portraits by Felicia Abbate (left); DAVIS (right)

15 May 2019

The Telegraph Luxury
Online

One of eight African countries showing at Venice this year, Ghana makes a triumphant Biennale debut with a distinctive pavilion designed by the British Ghanaian architect Sir David Adjaye which has been inspired by West African architecture. Its walls are coated in earth specially shipped in from Ghana and its curved interlocking forms give each of the six artists – all of Ghanaian descent – their own separate but interconnected spaces.

There are shimmering sculptures by El Anatsui made from metal bottle tops and a powerfully pungent installation from Ibrahim Mahama incorporating the metal grilles used to smoke fish in Ghana's coastal and riverside communities.

Felicia Abban was Ghana's first professional photographic portraitist and is here showing both self-portraits as well as those of Ghanaian women in both Western and traditional African dress, while Lynette Yiadom-Boakye has made a powerful new series of her oil paintings of fictitious but oh-so-present individuals. There is also a new three-channel video installation by John Akomfrah and a video sculpture by emerging artist Selasi Awued Sosa.



Luise Pflüger, *Dojo*, 2018. Blue surrounding May 2019, La Biennale di Venezia at the French Pavilion. CREDIT: SIMONE GOSIA

15 May 2019

The Telegraph Luxury
Online

Another talking point is Laure Prouvost's French pavilion, 'Deep Sea Blue Surrounding You,' which immerses you in a carnivalesque oceanic extravaganza. Her installation mixes sculpture – breast shaped lamps of glass, sea creatures and rubbish afloat on a glazed blue floor – with performers – including a magician who hypnotizes pigeons – around a central film in which the artist and a motley gang of adventurers make their way by land and sea, horse and elephant, from the suburbs of Paris to the Giardini di Venice. The message seems to be that there should be no boundaries either national or imaginative and the film ends with a man leaping off the pavilion roof and into the open air.

Journeys of a different kind unfold in SaF05, the intensely personal film of Charlotte Prodger, the winner of last year's Turner Prize who is now representing Scotland in a 'collateral' pavilion housed in a working shipyard. SaF05 is the film's title as well as the name of a rare and elusive maned lioness which Prodger seeks in vain in the Okavango delta.



Charlotte Prodger, SaF05 video installation, at the Venice Biennale 2019. CREDIT: GUSTAVO CORTEZ

15 May 2019

The Telegraph Luxury
Online

But she's also journeying through her own past, filming in the Utah Desert, the streets of Glasgow and in the Highlands of Scotland, whilst her personal experiences and accounts of growing up as a queer teenager outside Aberdeen in the 1980s intertwine with these very various landscapes.

To coincide with the Biennale there is a plethora of shows in the city's museums and institutions - these include the paintings of Baselitz in the Arsenal, a retrospective of the late Arte Povera artist Jannis Kounellis at the Prada Foundation, and - notably - the Belgian Luc Tuymans in Palazzo Grassi.

This stunning exhibition of more than 80 paintings spans from the 1980's to the present and has at its centre a giant floor mosaic made especially for the palazzo's grand atrium. The title of the show, *La Pelle* - the skin - comes from a 1949 novel by the Italian writer Curzio Malaparte, set in wartime Naples when, as Tuymans has remarked, "Europe was in chaos just like today."

Always the master of the quiet understatement, Tuymans' spare oblique paintings hint at hidden trauma and, like so much of the best work currently to be seen in Venice, offer a very particular perspective from which to view and try and get to grips with our current 'interesting times.'

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AAT

Waldemar Januszczak

Art review: Venice biennale

The event's director, Ralph Rugoff, gives us interesting times in guides — but it's Joe and Archie Goeky that win the day



Nigeria Akinyili Cadier's *The Beautiful Ones*.
NIGERIA AKINYILI CADIER. COURTESY THE ARTIST, VICTORIA HHO AND DAVID ZWIENER

The Sunday Times, May 19 2019 12:00am



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The ancient Chinese curse "May you live in interesting times" is not, apparently, an ancient Chinese curse. It was invented at the end of the 19th century by Joseph Chamberlain, the Nigel Farage of his age, then conveyed by family osmosis to his sons, Austen and Neville, through whom it entered British discourse at prime-ministerial level.

19 May 2019

The Times
Online

In the 1930s, through the political efforts of Austen and Neville Chamberlain, it reached levels of historic pertinence you would have thought would be impossible to match. But no. Our own age is making a good fist of it. And by picking *May You Live in Interesting Times* as the theme of the 58th Venice biennale, its director, Ralph Rugoff, has pointed this event in a fruitful direction.

If ever an invented Chinese curse felt right, it is now. Nationalism, global warming, immigration, the Middle East, social media, plastic waste: they all pop up in Rugoff's twisty Venetian journey.

Even the false origins of the Chamberlain curse feel pertinent. Witness the storm of fake news that blew up on Twitter about the Lampedusa boat put on show here by Christoph Büchel to remind us of the fate of migrants off the shores of Italy. "Büchel is dancing on the graves of the dead," the keyboard warriors wailed. "There's no context, no explanation." But it was all there in the exhibition guide, all the figures, all the facts, all the information anyone needed to understand why an artist had selected a readymade tombstone as his biennale contribution. I felt nothing but accusation radiating from the skeletal wreck. And to think that up to 1,000 people had somehow been squeezed in there.

So yes, we live in interesting times. But not every artist at this biennale is as determined as Büchel to wrestle with the sins of our age. In the famous Giardini, where most of the national pavilions are gathered, the issues of the day had patchy coverage. "The world is fudidn, so let's dance," seemed to be the message of the Brazilian pavilion, where teams of energetic favelistas competed against each other in a two-screen *Brazil's Got Talent*. Even the Swiss, in their notably straight-edged pavilion, were energetically discoing.

19 May 2019

The Times
Online

But when it came to avoiding the biennale's theme and floating off into cloud-cuckoo-land, the British were, once again, world leaders. Our woman in Venice, Cathy Wilkes, has contributed an installation of spectacular feyness. Inspired by the bleaching and insubstantial light of Venice, she has scattered tiny things about the huge pavilion: a dead dragonfly, a broken twig, a crystal vase, a flowery plate. "It's like drinking a weak cup of tea," I heard two naysayers mutter as they wandered among the fragments, searching for something solid.

They were being unfair. With her quiet juxtapositions of sad objects, set among faded paintings that are little more than coloured air, Wilkes is mounting a poetic commentary on the fragility of life and the broken fate of womanhood. But yes, it is easy to miss. And her catalogue introduction —

"I solemnise and dignify the ghosts of interference which proceed from their origin and whip themselves up before me" — is world-class in its pretensions. Picasso used to say that art is a blind man's profession, but, judging by the recurrent evidence at this biennale, it is the writing hands of artists that need removing, not their eyes.

19 May 2019

The Times
Online



Cady Noyes in the Artist's Justice
100% ZINC/ALUMINUM/STAINLESS STEEL

19 May 2019

The Times
Online

Unfortunately, the French contribution that sits next door to Wilkes is a noisy success. Laure Prouvost's atmospheric installation forces us to sneak round the back of the pavilion and come in through the basement, as if we are illegal immigrants looking for somewhere to sleep. Inside, the waters of the Venetian lagoon have been recreated in pale blue resin studded with plastic bottles and dead fish, while a pair of live white doves sit discolorately on an iron bar sticking out of the pretend water, and a plastic pigeon pecks away at the surrounding detritus. Hello, Italy.

Prouvost has a film as well in the central gallery, in which a troupe of wandering bounty hunters set off across the ocean looking for happiness. All they find at the end of the voyage is the French pavilion before the crowds get here: empty, shadowy, messy. So it's all about migrants again. And the contrast between dreams and realities. I thought it would win the prize for best pavilion, but that went to the Lithuanians, who created a fake beach out of 35 tons of sand, on which a cast of singing holidaymakers lament the despoliation of the natural world.

Across the entire biennale, journeys and labyrinths are a favourite presentation mode. Art has clearly learnt from Alton Towers that the best way to keep a contemporary audience happy is to keep it moving and involved. The Chinese, the Israelis, the Italians all send us on hopeless shaggy-dog searches that lead nowhere. Even the Egyptians, bless them, are at it with a pretend burial chamber into which you descend like Indiana Jones through an alley of fake sphinxes with TVs in their heads.

At least it felt unmistakably Egyptian. Most of the pavilions were filled with an aesthetic art-pap, one part technology, two parts readymade, that seems determined to ignore national origins. It's as if everyone at the biennale had been to the same art school. And indeed they had.

19 May 2019

The Times
Online



Blowing up a storm Christoph Büchel's *Berta-Noores*
©2019 Hayward

Prouvost is a former winner of the Turner prize. Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, in the excellent Ghana pavilion, didn't win the Turner when she was nominated in 2013, but should have. Even the Saudi exhibitor, I was startled to read, studied at Coventry, while the Saudi curator was at Sussex. Never have I felt as strongly as I did here that the art world has now grown into a separatist nation, with its own politics, language, colonising ambitions, and a GDP to die for.

Perversely, even though so many of the exhibitors had passed through the British evening-class system, and even though Rugoff, in his day job, is director of the Hayward Gallery, in London, you needed to search with a magnifying glass for British presences in the biennale's main show. How Rugoff, who is American, can run the Hayward when he appears so unimpressed by the local art is baffling.

That said, he's a stylish and smart curator, and his big offering, split between the central pavilion of the Giardini and the Arsenale, is the best such show for many biennales. Full of surprises round every corner, unpredictable in its switches from painting to installation to film to performance, this visceral labyrinth keeps you on your toes as it swerves and feints around the Rugoff theme.

Distaff aesthetics dominate here. At the Arsenale, the South African Zanele Muholi presents a suite of giant self-portraits that loom up suddenly on towering walls. By intensifying the blacks, she weaponises her colour and turns it into a biennale war cry. Also effective is a suite of fake lifestyle photos by Martine Gutierrez, in which she plays the woman and a gang of sheep dummies play the guys.

But it's not all conflict between the sexes. The brilliant Njideka Akunyili Crosby produces portraits of her friends and family so warm and emotional that I wanted to jump onto the wall and hug them. Thank you, Njideka, for reminding us that there's still a place for soppyness in contemporary art, I'd forgotten.

And how brave of Mari Katayama, who had both her legs amputated when she was a child, to insist on recording her fractured normality in a series of charmingly shocking self-portraits. Difference is the new normal, she insists in a show hell-bent on making that point.

Listing the good things in Rugoff's feisty mixed show would take up most of this magazine. Away from the biennale proper, the tonnage of fringe exhibitions that has arrived in out-of-the-way warehouses and converted palazzos has also increased dramatically. How Venice stays afloat with the added weight of these uncountable artworks and barging curators is a true wonder of science. Frankly, it has grown too large, as if a biblical plague of black-suited, nonsense-spouting, canteen-clogging international epicureans had descended on this beautiful city.



19 May 2019

The Times
Online

One of the wonders of La Serenissima, however, is that you can always find artistic solitude if you search. And mixed in with the gimmicky upside-downers at the Baselitz show at the Accademia – the first by a living artist at the great Venetian treasure house – are moments of beautiful painterly adventure.

For deeper joys, gondola over to the dreamy Arshile Gorky exhibition at Ca' Pesaro, with its unexpected cache of Picasso-inspired early work. You may be the only one in there. And it will feel like heaven.

Gorky was an Armenian who found himself in the crossfire of the Turkish massacres of 1915, and ended up in America, where, unsurprisingly, he took an age to find his final style. Hence all the Picasso tributes. When he did get there, though, the hesitation and the anger seemed to flood out of him, and grace and delicacy flooded in. Poised in a fragile balance between figuration and abstraction, his mature paintings are as beautiful as American art ever grew. Can living in interesting times be good for you? Yes, it can.

[@JANUSZCZAK](#)

The Venice biennale continues until November 24

07 May 2019

The Guardian
Online



Venice Biennale 2019

Mournful and melancholy: Britain at the Venice Biennale

Northern Ireland-born Cathy Wilkes represents Great Britain despite her hatred of countries

Charlotte Higgins

Tue 7 May 2019 16:02 BST



36

At the Venice Biennale this year, visitors to the city's Arsenale will see a replica of the Lincoln Memorial's marble throne being thrashed, with vicious and terrifying force, by a rubber hose.

The work, by Chinese artists Sun Yuan and Peng Yu, is certainly one kind of response to an era of phallic power gone mad.

Cathy Wilkes, however, the artist officially representing Great Britain at the world's most celebrated international art event, has taken a completely opposite path. She has offered visitors something subtle, mournful and melancholy; something that might inspire not shock or amusement but contemplation and reflection.

07 May 2019

The Guardian
Online

The visitor enters a room dominated by a low rectangular structure, covered by a gauzy, semi-transparent material, that resembles a tomb. There are scraps of dried flowers and foliage atop it, a little like offerings.

As you move through the rooms, lit by soft natural light, there are sculptural figures of children with swollen bellies, and a woman in a green dress, "like a figure that is alienated from itself, not a representation of anything that's real", she said. Other rooms contain paintings in pale, smudgy tones; suggestions of domestic interiors with china plates on the walls; a structure that might remind you of a child's high chair.

Of the tomblike structure, she said: "I grieve for things over and over again for a long long time. The work is about repeatedly coming towards something, something you don't quite understand." Glasgow-based Wilkes, who guards her privacy fiercely, has not given an interview about her work since a single short film in 2008, when she was nominated for the Turner prize.



▲ An untitled picture of Cathy Wilkes (distributed in 2008), since when she has grown no wiser.
Photograph: Louise Pinnell/Tate Britain (NG/OPA)

Wilkes said that she had been "very uncomfortable" with accepting the British Council's invitation to represent Great Britain at the Biennale. "I'm not into countries - any countries," she said. "It's equally a bad idea for everybody, full stop." Wilkes, who was born in Northern Ireland in 1966, had accepted in the end on the grounds that "Great Britain isn't a worse idea than any other country as a concept ... I don't like borders. I know that from being a wee girl and experiencing that."

07 May 2019

The Guardian
Online

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She had "certainly" thought about turning down the invitation, regarded as the British art world's highest honour, bestowed in past years on Phyllida Barlow, Jeremy Deller and Sarah Lucas. She accepted in the end, "knowing that it's easier to say no, and more difficult to say yes."

Fiona Bradley, the director of Edinburgh's Fruitmarket Gallery and one of the expert panel who advised the British Council on Wilkes's selection, said: "It's a melancholy, dark work. There is the suggestion that dark things have happened, and might happen. And the membrane between different states - life and death, for instance - might be very thin. There is something both very wintry and very uplifting about it. It is low and quiet. She has given us something extraordinarily laden with potential for meaning, without dictating what that is. You bring your own meaning to it, in the moment that you encounter it."

The 58th Venice Art Biennale opens to the public on Saturday. It consists of two parts. The first is a huge central exhibition organised by an invited curator, in this case Ralph Rugoff, the director of the Hayward Gallery in London. This exhibition is titled *May You Live in Interesting Times* - a reference to the supposed Chinese curse that entered common parlance after Austen Chamberlain quoted it in the 1930s, alluding to the perils of fascism.

The second aspect is 90 national pavilions, organised by the individual participating countries, scattered around the city's public gardens (the Giardini) and its vast former arsenal (the Arsenale).

For visitors, the national pavilions represent an accelerated, if eccentric, world tour of contemporary art. For the nations themselves, the event is an important platform for the best of their artists, as well as an opportunity to conduct soft diplomacy through culture.

07 May 2019

The Guardian
Online

Should I scream or
call social
services? Cathy
Wilkes at Venice
Biennale review

★★★

 Read more

New national pavilions to be inaugurated this year include those of Pakistan, Madagascar and Ghana, and Saudi Arabia returns after a hiatus. The event might be said to act as a rough barometer of the ups and downs of geopolitics. Venezuela, in the thick of a political crisis, will be late opening its presentation this year.

Scotland and Wales present their own “collateral events”. This year they show work by Turner prize-winner Charlotte Prodger and Sean Edwards, respectively.

In the preview days of the Biennale, before the doors open to the public at the weekend, thousands of members of the international art world descend on Venice - everyone from artists and ill-paid curators to the shadowy billionaire owners of the yachts, registered in the Cayman Islands, that are moored in the Venetian lagoon alongside the Giardini.

04 May 2019

Financial Times Print

Out of Africa: six artists bring a

Ghana pavilion The country arrives in Venice with new narratives. By Carolyn Roux

There's no more fitting place to work with plaster than Venice, the waning island city. For the territories of Ghana's enigmatic spaces at the 2019 Biennale are unlikely to resemble the whitening walls of a 16th-century palace. Along with Pabellón and Madagascar, this is Ghana's first appearance at the Biennale, and under the guidance of the architect David Adjaye, and his team, the pavilion has been designed to be a "laboratory of ideas". It will have a series of allegorical characters representing the work of six artists.

"This really will be to discuss where you work in," says Adjaye, referring to the materials used as well as the pavilion's formal qualities, derived from the country's regional architecture, where cooking, sleeping and other activities take place in these traditional, "bamboo-like" spaces. "We're looking at what a national African pavilion can be, creating the context of a sub-Saharan country."

It's not always easy for African artists to have a presence in Venice, but reasons ranging from the economic and the geographic, to the inauguration of the Biennale's Africa Hall in 2017, Nigeria came. And as a private initiative, a show representing this year, and Africa has dropped out of the last edition.

The Ghana project, by contrast, is entirely supported by the industry of tourism. Both Adjaye and the two Ghana artists, Kwame Akpan-Ahmed and Seth Ofori-Atta, have been consulting with the Ghanaian government for several years about the restoration of new national museums and art institutions. Adjaye is building a new national cathedral in Accra, both are working on the reconstruction of a

Before film maker John Akomfrah, Ghana pavilion curator Seth Ofori-Atta



17th-century church into a museum. It seems that their influence has not finally subsided in taking messages about Ghana's contemporary cultural position further afield.

Obiwale Akpan invited Adjaye to create a show that offers the spotlight on a single contemporary artist living and working in Ghana, but arrived from Ghana's diaspora, curator of the 2015 Biennale and co-curator of this project until his death in March this year, changed his mind. "He said, 'You have to come out all your stories,'" she tells me over the phone from Venice, as the installation is nearing completion.

As a result, the six artists come from a range of disciplines. Pabellón was Ghana's first female professional portrait photographer, who worked for its first president following the country's independence from Britain in 1947. It depicted the country's most beautiful artist, with his legs tucked up, his eyes looking up to film at a woman. The painter Lynette Taylor-Banks has won numerous prizes, including the Picasso Prize, since she arrived in 1942, and was named artist for the Turner Prize in 2003. Her husband, as he had his own, died of cancer in 2004. The poet John Akomfrah, in the past decade, the younger brother, Mahomet and veteran artist David Adjaye have perhaps represented a more general and urgent view of the country's artistic practice.

Obiwale Akpan's paintings between the pavilions. The politics of representation and portraiture shared by Akpan and Taylor-Banks, for example, studies of memory, loss and the racialised work of Akomfrah and being the incorporation of existing objects,

slice of Accra to the Arsenal

lets one introduce in the past of 13 London and Malawi (the latter often unexplained) but in fact with the way of colonial trade).

The fact that only some of these artists actually live in Ghana is tied to the country's colonial past. Akomfrah was born in Accra, but moved with his family to the UK after the 1966 coup. Taylor-Banks was born in Britain, and, according to Obiwale Akpan, lived through Ghana for 20 years or so. "But it is part of her identity. When we're together we talk a lot about growing up elsewhere in Europe," she says. The curator instead grew up in Germany and the UK, though with his own links to Ghana, and speaks English.

"We're trying out what a national African pavilion can be, creating the context of a sub-Saharan country"

Seth Ofori-Atta, Pabellón and Pabellón's curator David Adjaye, who worked for the country's first president following the country's independence from Britain in 1947. It depicted the country's most beautiful artist, with his legs tucked up, his eyes looking up to film at a woman. The painter Lynette Taylor-Banks has won numerous prizes, including the Picasso Prize, since she arrived in 1942, and was named artist for the Turner Prize in 2003. Her husband, as he had his own, died of cancer in 2004. The poet John Akomfrah, in the past decade, the younger brother, Mahomet and veteran artist David Adjaye have perhaps represented a more general and urgent view of the country's artistic practice.

By David W. Johnson

Other first-timers at the Biennale

Following Ghana's return to the Venice Biennale will be the Dominican Republic, Malawi and Cameroon. Malawi is returning.

The first point of entry for Malawi arrived off the coast of Kenya. It was a collection of images, taken with a camera attached to a plane. For Malawi's first time the artist will bring objects on a solo return or voyage through the changing power dynamics of the state and its "re-nature".

Co-curated by the artist David Adjaye and Pabellón's curator David Adjaye, who worked for the country's first president following the country's independence from Britain in 1947. It depicted the country's most beautiful artist, with his legs tucked up, his eyes looking up to film at a woman. The painter Lynette Taylor-Banks has won numerous prizes, including the Picasso Prize, since she arrived in 1942, and was named artist for the Turner Prize in 2003. Her husband, as he had his own, died of cancer in 2004. The poet John Akomfrah, in the past decade, the younger brother, Mahomet and veteran artist David Adjaye have perhaps represented a more general and urgent view of the country's artistic practice.



From top: John Akomfrah's 'Building Outside In', John Akomfrah's 'Building Outside In', John Akomfrah's 'Building Outside In'

work of both Akomfrah's return to a show entitled 'Building Outside In' will be an important contribution to the Biennale's history. It is a means of exploring the aftermath of the night-time slave trade, the color black and "aesthetically sensitive".

While Pabellón's pavilion is the Biennale's first appearance in Venice, the artist will bring objects on a solo return or voyage through the changing power dynamics of the state and its "re-nature".

Co-curated by the artist David Adjaye and Pabellón's curator David Adjaye, who worked for the country's first president following the country's independence from Britain in 1947. It depicted the country's most beautiful artist, with his legs tucked up, his eyes looking up to film at a woman. The painter Lynette Taylor-Banks has won numerous prizes, including the Picasso Prize, since she arrived in 1942, and was named artist for the Turner Prize in 2003. Her husband, as he had his own, died of cancer in 2004. The poet John Akomfrah, in the past decade, the younger brother, Mahomet and veteran artist David Adjaye have perhaps represented a more general and urgent view of the country's artistic practice.

Co-curated by the artist David Adjaye and Pabellón's curator David Adjaye, who worked for the country's first president following the country's independence from Britain in 1947. It depicted the country's most beautiful artist, with his legs tucked up, his eyes looking up to film at a woman. The painter Lynette Taylor-Banks has won numerous prizes, including the Picasso Prize, since she arrived in 1942, and was named artist for the Turner Prize in 2003. Her husband, as he had his own, died of cancer in 2004. The poet John Akomfrah, in the past decade, the younger brother, Mahomet and veteran artist David Adjaye have perhaps represented a more general and urgent view of the country's artistic practice.

Seth Ofori-Atta

03 May 2019

Financial Times
Online

Ghana arrives at the Venice Biennale, bringing new narratives with it

With the country's first appearance at the event, curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim is testing out what a national African pavilion can be



Ghana pavilion curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim

03 May 2019

Financial Times
Online

There's no more fitting place to work with plaster than Venice, the stucco-lined city. But the interiors of Ghana's exhibition spaces at the 58th Biennale are unlikely to resemble the shimmering walls of a 16th-century palazzo. Along with Pakistan and Madagascar, this is Ghana's first appearance at the Biennale, and under the guidance of the architect David Adjaye, soil has been imported from Ghana. Made into a render the colour of dark sand, it will line a series of elliptical chambers containing the work of six artists.

"You really will be in Ghana when you walk in," Adjaye says, referring to the materials used as well as the pavilion's formal quality, derived from the country's regional architecture, where cooking, sleeping and other activities take place in these individual, chamber-like spaces. "We're testing out what a national African pavilion can be, creating the context of a sub-Saharan country."

It's not always easy for African nations to have a presence in Venice, for reasons ranging from the economic and the geographic to the complexities of the Biennale system itself. In 2017 Nigeria came, but as a private initiative; it is not returning this year, and Algeria has dropped out at the last minute.

03 May 2019

Financial Times
Online

The Ghana project, by contrast, is entirely supported by the ministry of tourism. Both Adjaye and the pavilion's curator, Nana Oforiatta Ayim, have been consulting with the Ghanaian government for several years about the creation of new national museums and art initiatives (Adjaye is building a new national cathedral in Accra; both are working on the transformation of a 17th-century castle into a museum). It seems that their influence has comfortably extended to taking messages about Ghana's contemporary cultural position further afield.



File-maker John Akomfrah © Snoring Dogs Films/Luxon Gallery/Dick Heins

03 May 2019

Financial Times
Online

Oforiatta Ayim's initial impetus was to create a show that threw the spotlight on a single contemporary artist living and working in Ghana. But advice from Okwui Enwezor, curator of the 2015 Biennale and a consultant on this project until his death in March this year, changed her mind. "He said, 'You have to come out all guns blazing'," she tells me over the phone from Venice, as the installation is nearing completion.

As a result, the six artists cross generations and genders. Felicia Abban was Ghana's first female professional portrait photographer, who worked for its first president following the country's independence from Britain in 1957. El Anatsui is the continent's most bankable artist, with his largest bottle-top works fetching up to \$2m at auction. The painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye has won numerous prizes, including the Pinchuk Future Generation award in 2012, and was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2013. International acclaim has been delivered in spades to the film-maker John Akomfrah in the past decade. The younger Ibrahim Mahama and video-maker Selasi Awasi Sosu perhaps represent a more current and urgent view of the country's artistic practice.

“

We're testing out what a national African pavilion can be, creating the context of a sub-Saharan country

David Adjaye

Oforiatta Ayim sees pairings between the participants. The politics of representation and portraiture shared by Abban and Yiadom-Boakye, for example; stories of memory, loss and restitution in the work of Akomfrah and Sosu; the reappropriation of existing objects into new narratives on the part of El Anatsui and Mahama

(the latter often using tattered jute sacks to tell the story of colonial trade).

03 May 2019

Financial Times
Online

The fact that only some of these artists actually live in Ghana is tied to the country's colonial past. Akomfrah was born in Accra, but moved with his family to the UK after the 1966 coup. Yiadom-Boakye was born in Britain, and, according to Oforiatta Ayim, hasn't been to Ghana for 20 years or so. "But it is part of her identity. When we're together we talk a lot about growing up Ghanaian in Europe," she says. The curator herself grew up in Germany and the UK, though with frequent visits to Ghana, and speaks English, German, French, Russian and Twi (a Ghanaian language).

In 2011, however, she moved permanently to Accra. "It sometimes feels like everything happens in the diaspora," she says. "That's important and it's part of who we are. But now we need to focus on evolving work in our continent."

Adjaye agrees. "The idea of colonisation lingers, but it can't be 'bad past, bright future,'" he says. "We have to bring the past and present together now." His and Oforiatta Ayim's Venice installation — a classical regional architecture brought into service to show several strands of contemporary art — is a start.

May 11-Nov 24, labiennale.org

14 May 2019

The New York Times
Online

At Venice Biennale, the Art's for Sale, if You Know the Right People



"Hibernian Testosterone" by Martin Puryear in the American pavilion at the Venice Biennale. A senior director at Matthew Marks, the gallery that represents Mr. Puryear, said the works on display were priced between \$1.3 million and \$4 million.

Tatiana Fakh/Agenzia FotoPressa — Getty Images

By **Scott Reyburn**

May 14, 2019



VENICE — [The Venice Biennale](#), whose 58th edition opened to the public on Saturday, is the world's biggest and most influential survey of what artists currently make of the times we live in.

The event, lasting more than six months, and spread across the whole of this historic city, epitomizes how conflicted today's art world feels about financial concerns. For some, particularly in officialdom, "la Biennale" should have the commerce-free purity of a museum. "We must not fall into the trap of letting ourselves be guided by the market," Paolo Baratta, the Biennale's president, said last month in a statement. The Biennale, he added, should avoid being suspected of "compliance with selling strategies."

14 May 2019

The New York Times
Online

For others, the event is also the world's biggest art fair, if you just know whom and how to ask.

The main event, held in the Giardini gardens and the Arsenale, a former shipyard and arsenal, consists, as usual, of two elements. First, there is a sprawling international group exhibition, featuring a relatively pared-down selection of 79 invited artists or artist partnerships showing pieces in both the Central Pavilion in the Giardini and in the Arsenale.

This year's chosen curator, [Ralph Rugoff](#), director of the Hayward Gallery in London, has given the latest edition the enigmatic title, "May You Live in Interesting Times." Second, there are contributions from 90 national pavilions.



"A Column for Sally Herring," left, and "Ghosts Behind or Clattered Doubt?" two 2019 sculptures by MC Puryer in the American pavilion.
Marie Puryer, Matthew Marks Gallery and Bulfinch Square Park Conservancy, Boston, Mass.

14 May 2019

The New York Times
Online

This year, the organizers have made a conscious effort to dispel perceptions that the Venice Biennale is a commercial event. Labels in the main exhibition no longer credit the dealers who represent the selected artists. The temporary wooden walls constructed for the Arsenale group show have been left unpainted, to avoid it "looking too much like an art fair," Mr. Ragoff said on a tour of the exhibition last week.

Over in the national pavilions, the helping hands of commerce are also well-hidden.

The United States is represented by the African-American artist Martin Puryear, whose powerfully meditative sculptures in different media on the themes of slavery and liberty are a contrast with the exuberance of [America's 2017 contribution](#) by the market star Mark Bradford.

Though Mr. Puryear had a solo show at [MoMA in 2007](#), he is not particularly well-known internationally. Six months in the Venice spotlight will surely lead to a critical and financial re-evaluation.

But here, as well as elsewhere at the Biennale, art is discreetly available for sale. "We have placed some pieces, but we would be happy to sell others," said Jacqueline Tran, a senior director of the New York and Los Angeles gallery Matthew Marks, which represents Mr. Puryear and is listed in the American Pavilion's "Leadership Support" team. Ms. Tran added that the sculptures were priced between \$1.5 million and \$4 million.

14 May 2019

The New York Times
Online



"Opening of Time," a 2010 work by El Anatsui on display in the Ghana pavilion.
El Anatsui; David Levine

Ghana presented its first national pavilion at this Biennale, designed by the distinguished London-based architect David Adjaye. It displayed six presentations by artists that included internationally acclaimed names such as El Anatsui, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye and Ibrahim Mahama, as well as Felicia Abban, regarded as Ghana's first woman to be a professional photographer.

Distinguished by the smell of smoked fish (incorporated in Mr. Mahama's installation, "A Straight Line Through the Carcass of History"), and by the quality of the paintings, sculptures, photographs and videos on display, this is an exhibition where ostensibly nothing is for sale.

14 May 2019

The New York Times
Online

But during the four-day preview, when droves of museum curators and wealthy private collectors were in Venice, gallery staff members, such as Elisabeth Lalouschek, founder of the October Gallery in London, which represents El Anatsui, were available at the pavilion, as they were at many other national ones.

Mr. Anatsui first gained international fame at the 2007 Venice Biennale, when the Belgian gallerist Axel Verwoerd audaciously draped a huge metal-foil cloth by the Ghanaian sculptor over the facade of the Palazzo Fortuny, like a gold tapestry ransacked from Byzantium. Three new, more-manageably sized cloths by Mr. Anatsui hang in the Ghana Pavilion. Prices for these now start at about \$1 million, according to Giles Peppant, a specialist in modern and contemporary African art at Bonhams auctioneers in London.



"Donatrice," a 2019 work by the French sculptor Jean-Luc Moulène, is priced at 135,000 euros, a representative of the Paris dealership Chantal-Croiset sold.

Jean-Luc Moulène/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/Galerie Chantal-Croiset, Florian Klumpp

14 May 2019

The New York Times
Online

Dealers were less in evidence at the Biennale's international group show, but there was a tendency to display artists' works in distinct groupings that at times resembled commercial gallery exhibitions. Five large paintings by the Los Angeles artist Njideka Akunyili Crosby hung in a row at the Giardini, just as a show of her recent works was opening at the Victoria Miro gallery in Venice.

Museums are lining up to buy Ms. Crosby's paintings, but prices for other artists could be obtained by email. The Paris dealership Chantal Crousel quickly responded to a request for the cost of pieces by the technically innovative French sculptor Jean-Luc Moulène on show at the Giardini and the Arsenale. "Donatrice," a 2019 work that places a battered 15th-century terra-cotta sculpture of a praying girl on a steel table, is priced at 135,000 euros, or about \$152,000, she said.

The high proportion of known quantities (at least in the art world), such as Mr. Moulène, George Condo, Henry Taylor, Christian Marclay and Ms. Crosby, has led some to question just who and how much there is to discover in Mr. Rugoff's selection of artists.

"It's just all the hot stuff," said Johann König, a Berlin dealer who represents [Natascha Söder Happeimann](#), the selected artist at this year's German pavilion.



"Sun & Sea (Marina)" at the Lithuanian pavilion. The installation/performance was awarded the Biennale's top prize, the Golden Lion. [Andrius Vasilionis](#)

14 May 2019

The New York Times
Online

Others approved of the curator's selection. Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, a private collector with a foundation in Turin, Italy, said that 15 of the artists in the group show were represented in her own collection. "It's a confirmation of the choices I made when I was supporting artists at the beginning of their careers," said Ms. Sandretto Re Rebaudengo.

For her, this edition of the Biennale felt less commercial than others in recent years. "Art and the market are always connected, but maybe in the past there was too much of a market," added Ms. Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, who noted that up until 1968 the event actually had its own sales office.

Arguably the least commercial — and most powerful — contribution of the entire Biennale came from "Sun & Sea (Marina)," presented in the Lithuanian pavilion. It is one of more than 30 national presentations outside the Giardini and the Arsenale that are scattered across Venice and was announced as the [winner of the Golden Lion](#), the Biennale's highest honor, on Saturday.

Tucked away in an old naval warehouse, this mesmerizing installation-slash-performance consists of an opera sung continuously for eight hours a day by a chorus of affluent but alienated sunbathers relaxing on a sandy beach somewhere thousands of planet-warming air miles away.

"Lying here on the beach," the chorus chants, "Wearing swimming suits made in the factories of China/Is this not a parody of the Silk Road?"

The historic Silk Road started and ended in Venice. With its thousands of wealthy collectors flying in to view, and sometimes even buy, the wares of today's international art world, is the Biennale itself not just such a parody?

Or is this just another sign of our "interesting" times?

13 May 2019

The New York Times
Online

The Don't-Miss Shows and Pavilions at the Venice Biennale

There are more than 100 exhibitions and presentations taking place in this year's extravaganza. Our critic soaks up the highlights.



The Lithuanian Pavilion transforms the interior of a historic quayside building within the Maria Pia Military complex into an artificially lit beach scene — the backdrop of its opera for 20 voices. *Andrius Vlasinskas*

By **Jason Farago**

May 13, 2019



VENICE — When the yachts of billionaire collectors sail into the city and the vaporettos are full of hurried, multilingual aesthetes in head-to-toe black, it can mean only one thing: The Biennale is underway! The 58th edition of the world's oldest international art exhibition opened to the public on Saturday after a professional preview that saw far too many of us clamber from show to show, cocktail to cocktail.

13 May 2019

The New York Times
Online

As always, the Venice Biennale is a show of two halves. It consists of a principal international exhibition, curated this year by Ralph Rugoff and including about 80 artists; and a collection of 90 national pavilions, each organized independently of Mr. Rugoff's show. The pavilions are scattered in the Giardini, a park in the city's east, and in the Arsenale, a complex of former shipyards and armories; and elsewhere across town. A jury awards prizes to artists in both sections; this year, the top award, for best national pavilion, went to [a sensational performance piece by three artists from Lithuania](#).

Museums and foundations in Venice also put on their biggest shows during the Biennale, and in canalside palazzi rented for the season, you'll find a pop-up masterpiece here, some sponsored schlock there. Give yourself a week and you can make a solid dent, but don't neglect the churches and monuments all around you; when contemporary art lets you down, [there's always Tintoretto!](#)

We'll be publishing a full review of the 2019 Venice Biennale shortly — but here is a primer to this year's event, with a trio of the best national pavilions and some other important shows.

13 May 2019

The New York Times
Online

Ghana: 'Ghana Freedom'



Portraits by Felicia Abban, regarded as the first woman in Ghana to work as a professional photographer. The pavilion's walls of packed African soil were designed by David Adjaye. — Felicia Abban, David Adjaye

This is the first outing at Venice for Ghana, and the country's pavilion contains an almost irresponsible amount of artistic firepower: the Ghanaian-British architect David Adjaye has outfitted a section of the Arsenale with temporary internal walls of packed African soil; the philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah has written the lead catalog essay; and it features not one but six artists, including the filmmaker John Akomfrah and [the sculptor El Anatsui](#). It's a show of force, but, for a first national presentation, not so revelatory; Mr. Anatsui, for example, already won a Golden Lion here in 2015 for lifetime achievement.

The pavilion succeeds best by mapping the rich historical inheritance shared by Ghana's citizens and its diaspora. You can see it in Mr. Anatsui's three glorious meshes of bottle caps; in Mr. Akomfrah's video triptych of human and ecological violence; and in the cordial, soft-focus studio portraits from the 1960s by [Felicia Abban](#), regarded as the first woman in Ghana to work as a professional photographer.

10 May 2019

Mail Online
Online

Venice Biennale inspires deep thoughts on political issues

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

PUBLISHED: 11:27, 10 May 2019 | UPDATED: 11:38, 10 May 2019



VENICE, Italy (AP) - Fake news. Migration. Poverty. Global warming. Armed conflict.

Political issues that light up the airwaves and social media are getting a very open airing at the 58th Venice Biennale contemporary art fair, like so much laundry hung out to dry in the lagoon breeze.

American curator Ralph Rugoff, director of London's Hayward Gallery, titled the main exhibition "May You Live in Interesting Times," which opens Saturday and runs through Nov. 24. The title is itself an exemplary piece of fake news, delivered by a British lawmaker as Europe hurtled toward World War II as an ancient Chinese curse.

It was, in fact, made up. Yet, Rugoff notes, "it's had a presence in political discourse ever since."

Rugoff says contemporary art is particularly effective at unpacking the present-day specter of never-ending crises, by revealing complexity, ambiguity and conflicting emotions in a way that more traditional media often do not.

"Where do we have a space in our culture where this part of being human is given a place? It really exists in contemporary art," Rugoff said on a preview walk through the main exhibit, split between the Biennale's two main venues, in the leafy Giardini and the former Arsenale shipyard.

10 May 2019

Mail Online
Online



A woman walks past the wreck of the 'Barca Nostra' fishing boat, which sank in the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 with 700 migrants on board, is displayed at the 58th Biennale of Arts exhibition in Venice, Italy, Tuesday, May 7, 2019. The wreck is part of an artistic installation of Art, a project of artist Christoph Büchel. Political issues that excite newspaper, airwaves and social media, such as fake news, migration, poverty, global warming and armed conflict, are getting a very open airing at the 58th Venice Biennale contemporary art fair, which Saturday, May 11, and runs through Nov. 24, 2019. (AP Photo/Antonio Calanni)

Many of the 79 artists invited to participate in the main exhibition make very literal references to present-day woes.

Swiss artist Christoph Büchel transported a hulking smugglers' ship where 700 migrants perished in April 2015 to the edge of the Arsenale, exposing to viewers the gaping holes in the hull that caused it to sink in the Mediterranean. Chinese collaborators Sun Yuan and Peng Yu constructed a robot that mechanically spreads a blood-like substance evenly around. The impact of drug violence is portrayed in Teresa Margolies' razor wire-topped concrete wall "Muro Ciudad Juárez."

Zhanna Kadyrova of Ukraine used old tiles to create pieces of laundry that are hung outside the central pavilion, which Rugoff says serves as a reminder that while inside the building "there is a lot of heavy thinking and challenging art," ordinary life continues just outside, in the narrow Venetian alleyways where everyday flapping laundry is show of its own.

10 May 2019

Mail Online
Online

By juxtaposing art to provide comment on worldly events, Rugoff wants to create conversations and the Giardini Central Pavilion emits a vapor suggestive in a very literal way of thought processes, which in turn casts a veil of fog over the pavilion's facade, "questioning the authority of that institution."

In a Biennale that puts a real emphasis on the interactive experience of art, mist has emerged a major artistic medium across the sprawling exhibition, which extends into 90 national pavilions and manifold collateral events.

Israeli artist Aya Ben Ron has created a field hospital to treat social ills from domestic abuse to racism to occupation, which forces hurried visitors to slow down, take a number and wait their turn. Australian artist Angelica Mesiti uses film to examine ways citizens can assemble and communicate against the backdrop of fragile democracy. And American Martin Puryear explores liberty through a series of clear, declarative sculptures and installations that are a rebuke against racism and testosterone-driven power.

Beyond the Biennale, Marina Abramovic of Serbia asks whether empathy created in a virtual reality experience can motivate action against climate change.

The French pavilion also emits vapor, meant to create a dreamlike environment for the journey proposed by 41-year-old artist Laure Prouvoit, only the third woman to represent France at the Biennale.

Here is an immersive experience of film, performance and installations featuring, among other details, two living white seabirds pecking along a neglected seaside where Murano glass shoes representing humanity's castoffs lie alongside colorful sea life, representing the artist's concern about climate change and ecology, according to curator Martha Kirszenbaum.

Mist is also put to effective use inside the Indian Pavilion, which is a thematic tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, marking the 150th anniversary of his birth. Artist Jitish Kallat projects a 1939 letter written by Gandhi to Adolf Hitler, appealing to him to prevent war and addressing him as "friend."

Kallat said the "Dear friend" salutation projects Gandhi's message across time "and asks the reader to rethink what they ... can do to save the world from going to a savage state."

10 May 2019

Mail Online
Online

Ghana also is making its Biennale debut, one of only six African nations participating. The pavilion was designed by architect David Adjaye as a series of interconnected units that form a whole, recalling West African dwellings, while the late Okwui Enwezor, the 2015 Biennale curator who died in March, served as an adviser. It features all newly commissioned works, from sculpture, to film and photography, which will travel to Ghana after the Biennale for show.

"Things like this, I guess, is a form of self-politics. It is a way of representing your culture in a way other than political and economic," said curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim.

"We have so many pluralistic expressions, so many ways of being in Ghana, but often so often in the outside world, you just get one, and very often it is negative. This is very much how we represent ourselves to the world in all our plurality, in all our diversity, in all our different layers."

This story corrects the spelling of American artist Martin Puryear's name.



The wreck of the 'Barca Nostra' fishing boat, which sank in the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 with 300 migrants on board, is displayed at the 58th Biennale of Arte exhibition in Venice, Italy, Tuesday, May 7, 2019. The wreck is part of an artistic installation of Art, a project of artist Christoph Büchel. Political issues that excite newsprint, airwaves and social media, such as fake news, migration, poverty, global warming and armed conflict, are getting a very open airing at the 58th Venice Biennale contemporary art fair, which Saturday, May 11, and runs through Nov. 24, 2019. (AP Photo/Antonio Galanni)

10 May 2019

Mail Online
Online



Ghana pavilion curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim smiles during the 58th Biennale of Arts exhibition in Venice, Italy, Tuesday, May 7, 2019. Political issues that excite newspaper, airwaves and social media, such as fake news, migration, poverty, global warming and armed conflict, are getting a very open airing at the 58th Venice Biennale contemporary art fair, which Saturday, May 11, and runs through Nov. 24, 2019. (AP Photo/Antonio Calanni)



A man walks through the 'Fogscreen' installation by artist Jitish Kallat at the India pavilion during the 58th Biennale of Arts exhibition in Venice, Italy, Tuesday, May 7, 2019. Political issues that excite newspaper, airwaves and social media, such as fake news, migration, poverty, global warming and armed conflict, are getting a very open airing at the 58th Venice Biennale contemporary art fair, which Saturday, May 11, and runs through Nov. 24, 2019. (AP Photo/Antonio Calanni)

09 May 2019

BBC World Service
Broadcast

The screenshot shows the BBC News Summary app interface. At the top left is the BBC World Service logo. The main title is "BBC News Summary". Below the title, there's a navigation bar with "BBC News Summary Home" and a "More" link. The central area features a large red and white graphic of a globe. A "Listen now" button with a speaker icon is overlaid on the graphic. Below the graphic, the current episode is displayed: "2019/05/09 10:30 GMT". A description reads: "The latest two minute news summary from BBC World Service." To the right, it says "23 hours left to listen" and "2 minutes". There are "Download" and "Share" buttons. On the right side, there are sections for "Last on" (Thu 9 May 2019, 11:30 Local time, BBC WORLD SERVICE) and "More episodes". The "More episodes" section lists "PREVIOUS 2019/05/09 07:30 GMT" and "NEXT 2019/05/09 12:30 GMT", each with a speaker icon. At the bottom right, it says "See all episodes from BBC News Summary".

25 May 2019

BBC World Service
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The image shows a BBC World Service audio player interface. At the top, there is a green background with a portrait of Ibrahim Mahama, a Ghanaian artist, with his arms crossed. Behind him, the words "IN THE ST" are written in large, white, outlined letters. To the right of the portrait, the name "Ibrahim Mahama" is written vertically. Below the portrait is a black bar with a speaker icon and the text "Listen now". Below this is a white section with the title "Ghanaian artist Ibrahim Mahama" in bold. Under the title, there is a short description: "Ghanaian artist Ibrahim Mahama prepares work for Ghana's first National Pavilion at one of the world's most prestigious exhibitions, the Venice Biennale". To the right of the description, it says "Available now" and "27 minutes" with a clock icon. At the bottom left of the white section, there is a "Show more" link with a blue plus icon.

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Ghanaian artist Ibrahim Mahama

Ghanaian artist Ibrahim Mahama prepares work for Ghana's first National Pavilion at one of the world's most prestigious exhibitions, the Venice Biennale

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Hamish Bowles's Whirlwind Tour of the 2019 Venice Biennale



MAY 20, 2019 7:19 PM
by HAMISH BOWLES

I'd never been to Venice during the preview week of the Biennale, but with Venetian Heritage and Dior promising a ball at the fabled Palazzo Labia as the crowning glory of an action-packed few days, how could I resist?

In the past, I have enjoyed the Biennale in the relaxed aftermath of opening week—or even months afterward—so I was unprepared for the madness of the opening, with multiple parties every day and a frantic race to get from A to B in a city that relies on leisurely water transport and shanks' pony.

The evening I arrived, I went to the Prada Foundation's amazing installation of works by Jannis Kounellis, titan of the Arte Povera movement. One of the wonders of the Biennale is the opening up of so many beautiful places in the city, and after this I joined a dinner in the cloister of the Chiesetta della Misericordia in honor of Laure Prouvost and the French pavilion (sponsored by Chanel), and thence on to dessert at the Palazzo Nani Bernardo and its amazing private gardens, with the evening hosted by White Cube to celebrate artists including Georg Baselitz, Christian Marclay, Julie Mehretu, and Liu Wei.

20 May 2019

Vogue
Online

With barely two days to explore, I had to prioritize. I will save the national pavilions of the Giardini for a future visit, when visitor numbers have dwindled and the Venetian mood is more mellow—but I did spend time at the Arsenale, its principal warehouse space, intelligently curated by Ralph Rugoff, themed to the concept “May You Live in Interesting Times,” and endlessly intriguing and thought-provoking. Of the national pavilions here, I enjoyed discovering a near-century of India’s art movements—and Ghana’s, designed by starchitect David Adjaye and beautifully curated by Nana Oforiatta Ayim (with the late, great Okwui Enwezor as an advisor), was revelatory in every way.



Portraits by Felicia Abban in the Ghanaian Pavilion at the Arsenale.

Photo: Harish Bawa



20 May 2019

Vogue
Online

Outside in the blinding sun, Christoph Büchel's installation of the rickety pirate ship manned by traffickers—which crashed and sank in 2015 off the Italian island of Lampedusa—was absolutely chilling. Only 28 people survived, and somewhere between 700 to 1,100 migrants—many of them apparently (and almost unbelievably) crammed and locked into its tiny hull—perished at sea.

Lunch at Harry's Bar—a classic Venetian institution—with Cédric Reversade, then dashed to see the Edmund de Waal installation at the Ateneo Veneto, and then to the Ca'd'Oro, made even more beautiful by the amazing "Dysfunctional" exhibition orchestrated by the Carpenters Workshop Gallery, with highlights including Mantegna's 1490 *St. Sebastian* (now lit by Studio Drift's light-and dandelion-seed installation *Fragile Future 3*) and the engaging Verhoeven Twins's pearlescent blown-glass bubbles reflecting the waters of the Grand Canal and the gothic arches of this remarkable building.

20 May 2019

Vogue
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There was a golden opportunity to explore Arshile Gorky's work in a powerful retrospective at the Ca' Pesaro before heading to the Abbazia di San Gregorio. The ancient abbey in the pluperfect Venetian setting was gifted by Barbara Hutton to Cary Grant as a wedding present (she presumably had the state-of-the-art mid-century marble bathrooms, some framing perfect views of the Salute, installed for him). In this storied venue, Chahan Minassian of Chahan Gallery and Jorge Coll of London's Colnaghi had assembled an elegant collection of high-impact furniture designs, dynamic 1930s rugs, spiky Paul Evans pieces, and contemporary commissions (including Harumi Klossowska de Rola's beautiful gilded bronze Egyptian benches) alongside great old masters—a brace of Batoni portraits, a Canaletto, and Hendrick Munnik's *Hercules Freeing Prometheus* were notable among so many other treasures:



A bench by Harumi Klossowska de Rola—beneath a portrait by Pompeo Batoni from Colnaghi—at the Abbazia di San Gregorio.

Photo: Hannah Bowles



20 May 2019

Vogue
Online

That evening, Venetian Heritage had organized drinks at the Palazzo Grimani to unveil the miraculous new reinstallation of the Greek, Roman, and Renaissance statues that Cardinal Giovanni Grimani had arranged in a room of niches and plinths created by his architect, Michele Sanmicheli. Grimani subsequently gifted them to the Venetian state in 1587, and now—thanks to the efforts of Toto Bergamo Rossi and Peter Marino—they are presented as originally intended. The effect is absolutely breathtaking.

There were drinks on the terrace of the Danieli to celebrate Sandro Kopp's installation at the Palazzo Grimani of his mesmerizing portraits of the eyes of his friends and family. The evening ended for me in the nightclub of the Bauer—the city's default after-party venue during this week, where Isaac Ferry spun the discs through the night.

With a last gasp before the Dior ball the following day, I joined the Venetian Heritage group for a tour of the future galleries at the Accademia, which the organization has funded, and then the impressive Baselitz exhibition at the same venue—as well as the exhibition of exquisite Leonardo da Vinci drawings, including his *Vitruvian Man*, that I had no idea was in this collection.

20 May 2019

Vogue
Online

Another highlight of the Venetian Heritage members' itinerary was to follow: drinks in the piano nobile of the palazzo that master jeweler Attilio Codognato and his late wife restored so beautifully, revealing handsome beams and long-hidden terrazzo floors in amazing shades of brick red or ochre yellow, and filled with astonishing works by Twombly, Warhol, Carl Andre, Gilbert & George, and many others—most of them acquired soon after they were created from the artists themselves or their early gallerists, including Leo Castelli.



Chez Attilio Codognato, otherwise known as the Palazzo Giovannelli.
Photo: Harish Swaha



20 May 2019

Vogue
Online

Lunch chez Skylar McAlpine was another great treat. Author of the delectable *A Table in Venice: Recipes From My Home*, McAlpine is currently working on her second Venetian cookbook, with her photographs of one delicious dish after another taped up all around her bedroom as she planned the layout. We ate—deliciously, of course—surrounded by portraits of doges in the sumptuous dining room of Skylar's amazing apartment in the storied Palazzo Gradenigo. Then back to the Danieli to prepare for the Dior ball, my mind already crowded with the wonders of this city.

22 May 2019

CNN
Online

Venice Biennale 2019: Best of the national pavilions

Published 22:42 May 2019



© Getty Images/Alamy/Photo Disc/Getty Images

Written by **George Webster**, CNN Venice, Italy

22 May 2019

CNN
Online

There aren't many venues like the Venice Giardini. Set on the eastern edge of the historic city, the garden is home to dozens of pavilions built over the years to display the work of nations participating in the Venice Biennale — arguably the world's most important gathering of contemporary art.

If you're visiting for the first time, it can seem surreal. One moment, you're outside the Italianate-style British pavilion, built at the height of empire in 1909. Next, you're poking around the modest Finnish pavilion, a mid-century prefabricated box designed by celebrated architect Alvar Aalto.

There are 30 permanent pavilions in the Venice Giardini offering, at the very least, a crash course in 20th-century Western architecture and its associated ideologies. Those newer national participants without a permanent space must settle for rent smaller, and sometimes hard-to-find, venues around the city.

Which is to say that at every Biennale, politics, history and a healthy dose of national rivalry hang heavy in the air. And that's all before you've seen a single work of art.

While some dismiss the pavilion setup as an outdated anomaly, this year's exhibits show that it can still provoke a telling range of responses. Following the launch of the Venice Biennale's 58th edition last week, we look at some of the most interesting.

22 May 2019

CNN
Online

The new pavilion

Since the turn of the century, this historically Eurocentric event has drawn an increasing number of countries from across continents. But Africa remains conspicuously under-represented. Of the 87 nations participating this year, just eight are from Africa, and of those, only Egypt and South Africa have a permanent place.

So, it was gratifying to hear that the most commonly asked question during preview week was "Where's Ghana?"

Designed by the prominent British-Ghanaian architect David Adjaye and curated by filmmaker Nana Oforiatta Ayem (with strategic support from the late Okwui Enwezor, the first African to curate the Biennale in 2015), the inaugural Ghana Pavilion is an opening statement of considerable force.



A film by Lohit Avomish shows off the Ghana Pavilion. (Credit: CNN/Photo: David Laundy)

22 May 2019

CNN
Online

Named "Ghana Freedom," after the E.T Mensah song celebrating independence from British colonial rule in 1957, the pavilion explores the "legacies and trajectories of that freedom" through the work of six artists spanning three generations, according to the exhibition notes.

Some of them, like sculptor El Anatsui -- whose shimmering gold tapestry, made from broken bottle-tops, hangs across an entire wall -- are already giant figures on the global art stage. Others are less well-known, like Felicia Abban, considered Ghana's first professional female photographer, whose black and white studio portraits of 1900s women will surely attract new recognition for her work.

Adjaye's interlocking elliptical walls are finished with soil imported from Ghana, referencing, he said, the mud huts found in Sirigu, a village in the country's Upper East Region.



An installation by Ghanaian sculptor El Anatsui. Credit: David Laundy / El Anatsui/ David Laundy

As a whole, the pavilion offers a tactile, coherent expression of Ghana's past, present and future -- one that acknowledges the country's experience with colonialism but is not defined by it.

"The colonial is not the center of our history," said Oforiatta Ayim. "We have a long, long history that precedes colonialism, and we'll have a long future that proceeds it."

11 May 2019

BBC News
Online

Will Gompertz reviews the 2019 Venice Art Biennale ★★☆☆☆



Will Gompertz
Arts editor
@WillGompertzBBC

11 May 2019



This week's invite only "Private View" of the Venice Biennale (which opens today) was one weird affair. It was like being dropped into the middle of a Wes Anderson movie.

The place was heaving with characters. Artists, posers, dealers, curators, billionaires, bureaucrats, fakes, freeloaders, snobs, journalists, pseuds, hustlers, and narcissists all cramming themselves into tiny spaces and noisy halls to get a glimpse of some box-fresh contemporary art.

They are not a hip crowd like you might find at Coachella or XJAZZ in Berlin. They are more clamorous than glamorous. Art is a shared interest but not the thing that truly binds them. Money and status are the currencies that count. You don't need both, but you sure as hell need one or the other.

11 May 2019

BBC News
Online

This is a once every-other-year event that was established in 1895 to promote Italian art before morphing into an international exhibition with countries competing to be Best in Show.

Mussolini latched onto it in the 1930s as a way of promoting his fascist agenda, leaving a faintly uncomfortable air of nationalism around what is now a global contemporary art event based around nation states.

Nobody has time for anything more than a quickie.

Take a look, take a picture, post to Instagram, move on.

It is relentless.



Visitors experiencing the Japanese Pavilion, where recorders suspended from the ceiling are played by an algorithm

The spaces serving free alcohol always seem to be most popular. Or those that have suddenly become "hot" as word of some "amazing work!!!!!" spreads like a virus through the Giardini Gardens, which serve as the Biennale's picturesque base camp.

Anxiety levels are at fever pitch, fuelled by double espressos and a FOMO so profound that you can see the terror lurking in the eyes behind every pair of Tom Ford sunglasses.

11 May 2019

BBC News
Online

The scale of the event is staggering.

There are 90 national pavilions, each with its own bespoke exhibition featuring the work of an artist, or artists, commissioned to represent the host country.



Added to this is a colossal one-off exhibition spanning two massive buildings, which this year has been put together by a curator called Ralph Rugoff whose day job is running the Hayward Gallery on London's Southbank.

There's more.

As if the aforementioned wasn't enough to satisfy even the most insatiable art lover, there are myriad other off-site shows by those not invited to take part in the main event: a sort of Venice Biennale Fringe, I suppose.

No sane person needs this much art, it is totally overwhelming while, paradoxically, also frequently being totally underwhelming. If the Venice Biennale was a climbing rose it would have been hacked back to manageable proportions long ago.

But it is not.

11 May 2019

BBC News
Online

It is a hugely successful trade show-cum-visitor attraction, to which hundreds of thousands of tourists will venture over the long hot summer looking for meaning, guidance and some intellectual sustenance in our increasingly secular, divided, complicated world.

Will they find what they are looking for in the 2019 edition? You'd hope so. I did.

Not in the German Pavilion, which contains an austere post-industrial installation so earnest it is unintentionally funny.



Quite unlike the French Pavilion opposite, which is hilarious on purpose.

The Turner Prize-winning artist Laure Prouvost has created a surreal grotto full of love, humour and ebullient eccentricity. If the Venice Biennale is a theme park of sorts, then Prouvost's invitation to climb into the belly of an octopus is its star attraction.

You enter through a narrow back door and step into an excavated basement the artist and her bunch of merry pranksters dug in order to enter the locked Pavilion in January having tunnelled from the bed of Venice's Grand Canal. That's their story anyway. And by way of corroboration, they have laid out their evidence in the room above in the grubby form of dredged detritus such as old plastic bottles, rusted cans and stinking seaweed.

11 May 2019

BBC News
Online

The floor is light blue with a translucent, gummy surface that tricks you into thinking you're tiptoeing through dirty canal water. Go with the flow and it eventually leads you into the guts of the artist's eight-limbed cephalopod, which is very dark place.



An elegiac film plays amid scattered stone-effect chairs placed on a spongy carpet that genuinely feels as though it could be the lining of an octopus's stomach.

It's disconcerting. And nuts: an eccentric but sincere celebration of the wonderful gift that is the human imagination.

It might well win the top prize.

It'd get my vote.

But there is some strong competition. The Lithuanians have built an off-site beach complete with sunbathers whom you peer down upon as they break out into operatic song.

11 May 2019

BBC News
Online

The Lithuanian Pavilion has been transformed into a Sun and Sea Marina, where participants give a contemporary opera performance

And there was a lot of chatter about the Philippine Pavilion, which features an archipelago of glass topped platforms on which you walk and look down at household objects arranged beneath your feet. It was fine, but rather like the glass walkway, hardly shattering.

The Ghanaian Pavilion, on the other hand, is excellent and will give Prouvost's watery world a run for its money when it comes to the award of the coveted Golden Lion for Best National Pavilion.

It has been designed by the architect David Adjaye who has created a series of galleries of roughly-finished curved walls, on which hangs some first-class art. A group of El Anatsui's famous bottle-top wall hangings fill one space; behind them is a tear-inducing three-screen film by John Akomfrah that tackles climate change, imperialism, and the mistreatment of animals. And best of all, in the circular centre, are nine portrait paintings of imagined subjects by the talented Lynette Yiadom-Boakye (who was a Turner Prize runner up in 2013 the year Laure Prouvost won).

11 May 2019

BBC News
Online



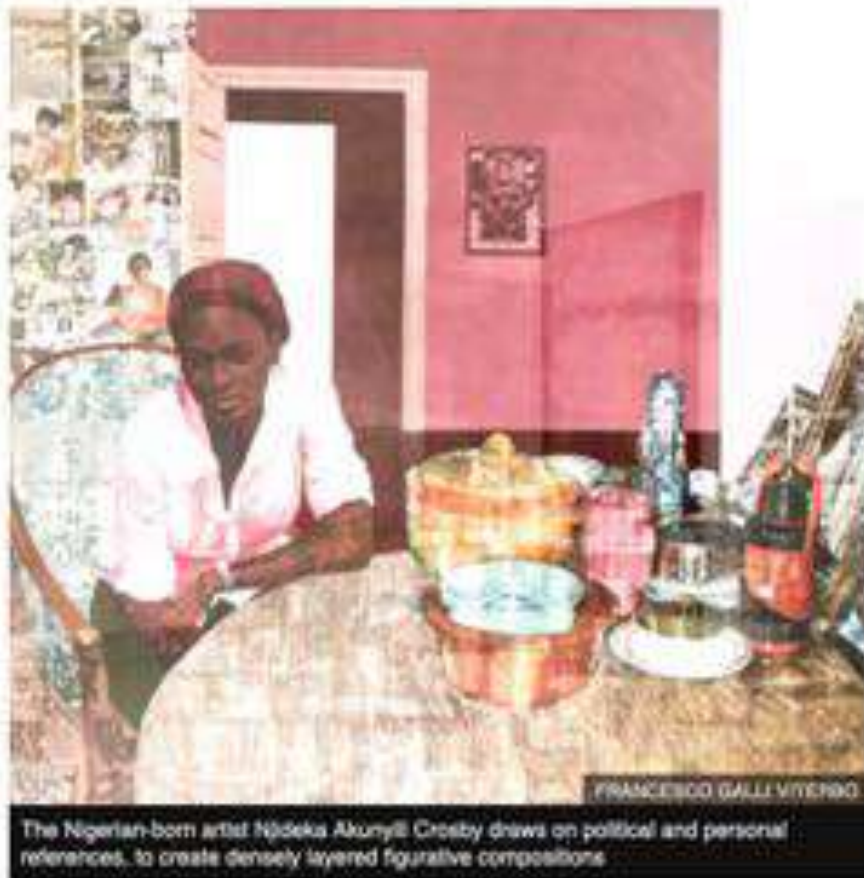
Other highlights include Michael Armitage's paintings (and sketches), which are in the main exhibition, as are those by rising star Njideka Akunyili Crosby.

Both are well worth seeking out, as is Arthur Jafa: three to see among a plethora of half-baked mechanical contraptions and dreary installations made by various artists who could be collectively known as Phil Hall.



11 May 2019

BBC News
Online



Another tip should you decide to take on the Venice Biennale challenge: Carve out some time to see Edmund de Waal's installation at the Jewish Museum (about 30 minutes from the Giardini Gardens by Vaporetto) in the Campo Ghetto Novo.

The potter and author of the best-selling memoirs *Hare with the Amber Eyes* has made a delicate and thoughtful group of new work and placed it with sensitivity around the sixteenth-century synagogue, Canton Scuola.

11 May 2019

BBC News
Online



By the end of your marathon art trek you'll be ready to finish yourself off with a couple of large Betinis. The drink that is, not the painter.

UPDATE, Saturday 11 May: Winners announced! The Golden Lion winners of 2019 are Lithuania for national pavilion, and Arthur Jafa for individual artist. Congratulations to both worthy winners.

• [Follow Will Gompertz on Twitter](#)

20 May 2019

BBC Culture
Online

Kelly Grovier has trawled through the artworks on display at the 2019 Venice Biennale to pick out eight highlights, including sunbathers singing on a beach, the wreck of a cargo vessel, and 48 war films broadcast simultaneously.

By Kelly Grovier

20 May 2019

They loom large and drag you underground. Encountering some will make your heart sing while others will leave you in despair at the state of the world they reflect. One or two are breathtakingly beautiful. I'm talking, of course, about the myriad works of art on display in that grandiose gallimaufry of human creativity that explodes into excessive expression every other year: the Venice Biennale.

The tradition of summoning the world's greatest, most promising, and over-puffed artists to exhibit their work either in a central pavilion or an ever-expanding selection of national pavilions, dates back to 1895 (following an Italian-only event organised in the city two years earlier). In the ensuing century and a quarter, the Biennale has swollen in size and significance as the international art world synchronises itself to its odd-year cadence and calendar.

20 May 2019

BBC Culture
Online

Today, the slowly sinking former city-state is awash with eyes desperate for hints about which shows to prioritise. No one can see everything. Navigating the crush of official and fringe displays and exhibitions on offer can be more than a little daunting, as thousands of artists, curators, and gallerists – all candidates for regard – clamour for attention. Here, buzz is the currency of success. Some have it, some don't. What follows is a clutch of works and exhibitions in and around the Biennale that are worthy of the hype, the journey, and the queues.



20 May 2019

BBC Culture
Online

Ghana Pavilion, Arsenale

To wander the amberous chambers of Ghana's debut pavilion is a quasi-subterranean experience, one that conjures metaphors of rebirth and resurrection. Rich and ruddy soil, imported from West Africa, has been applied by Venetian plasterers to the curved walls of the curiously fluid space, transforming one's visit into a kind of excavation – an archaeology of beauty and truth. Designed by the Tanzanian-born architect David Adjaye, the pavilion showcases the work of six artists, including British painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye and the celebrated Ghanaian sculptor El Anatsui (metal tapestry, pictured). Yiadom-Boakye, who was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2013, is the daughter of Ghanaian immigrants to the UK and is best known for her hypnotic portraits of imaginary sitters summoned from the depths of the artist's unconscious. For his contribution, Anatsui has fashioned from wire and recycled bottle tops a series of stark and rumpled tapestries – forging from detritus exquisite works of humble majesty.

22 May 2019

Flash Art
Online

•INTERVIEW

On Failure, Decay, and New Forms of Responsibility. A Conversation with Ibrahim Mahama by [Antonia Alampì](#)

May 22, 2019



1 2 3

Ibrahim Mahama, "A Straight Line Through the Carcass of History 1649", 2019-18. Installation view at Pavilion of Ghana "Ghana Freedom", 58th Venice Biennale, 2019. Photography by Jim Lowe. Courtesy the artist, White Cube, London and La Biennale di Venezia.

Architecture, and the dissonance between its history, form and function is paramount to artist Ibrahim Mahama, representing Ghana at the 58th Venice Biennale. *A Friend* (2019), an installation encasing the tollgates of Porta Venezia in Milan probes at just this. Both tollgates, completely coated by jute sacks, exaggerate the gate's architecture, layer materials that reference Mahama's post-colonial perspective on the history of architecture, material and allocation of space, and speak of the invisible labor inscribed in the construction of such structures. Here, Antonia Alampì and Mahama discuss various aspects of his practice, focusing particularly on what is less obvious and evident in his pieces, such as their performative nature, how they act beyond the realm of the visible, and especially questions around redistribution of wealth so dear to his work.

22 May 2019

Flash Art
Online

Antonia Alampì: I would like to start by talking about the work you realized in Milan about a month ago, the installation *A Friend* (2019), in which an iconic building, namely the crossroads of Porta Venezia, was covered with jute sacks, relevant to various layers of its history. As you have done with various monuments, buildings, and sites of trade, transport, and/or exchange around the world, you encase the building with a second skin, producing an alternate identity for the site. It highlights – I believe – what often remains unseen, untold, uncelebrated. Being neither didactic nor apologetic, it engages with a multitude of histories of labor imprinted in the materials you use, altering the perception of spaces and the hierarchies of knowledge embedded in them. While the recurrent use of jute sacks and their meaning stands out, I am interested in how you approached the work more specifically from a sculptural and architectural perspective, in terms of volumes, lights, openings, and closures.

Ibrahim Mahama: When I was invited to create this site-specific work, all the reference materials I had were from either the internet or technical drawings. It can be particularly difficult to think about form and light if you haven't encountered the structure physically. In previous projects, like the National Theater of Ghana in 2016, I had access to architectural drawings while also making my own drawings on site, which led to the calculation of the volume of materials needed for it. After all, most of the sacks used in this project had already been used in other projects, thus gathering more meaning and character. The work, for me, also starts to form the architecture. I want to highlight the architecture within the structures I install. The sculptural-yet-painterly forms have to become evident within the installation – so I leave certain parts open. This covering creates a new sense of revelation, starting from when the sacks occupy the building and until they leave. The form is really important to me, as is the political aspect within the work. Making decisions in advance is crucial; but at the same time, there has to be room for impromptu decisions and practical choices that can be difficult. For this reason, some of the open areas are simply practical, in order to allow access to movement, because most of these structures are still active while the installation is happening. Artistic vision aside, it all comes down to negotiations at the end, which allows the artist to take certain responsibilities.

22 May 2019

Flash Art
Online

AA: I would also like to know what your experience was working in a political landscape rich in fake news and obscurantism about a variety of issues your work touches upon – from migration to the colonial past and neocolonial relations. I don't know whether I am imagining this, but your title read to me as a subtle comment.

IM: Yes, the title was meant in homage to Mariama Bâ, whose book *So Long a Letter* inspired the work. The translation into Italian reads as "a friend," which I thought was beautiful, particularly given the context. I have always used contradictions and paradoxes in my work, and I felt the title did just that while also proposing simple relationships. *A Friend* is simple, direct, yet complex, with lots of questions. Generally, there were mixed reactions to the work, as many people thought it challenged their perceptions. Others thought it was a complete disaster – that it was even degenerate. I welcome both perceptions, as these oppositions allow us to challenge our own assumptions on things. And there is always this comparison to Christo as a starting point for reading the work. I think the West needs to start learning how to read forms beyond their physical appearance.



① 2 3 4

Enshim Mahama, *Wagon, Site of Production*, National Locomotive Station, Western Region Ghana, 1997 - 2003. Photography by Enshim Mahama. Courtesy the artist.

22 May 2019

Flash Art
Online

AA: I am very curious also to hear more about your contribution to the Ghana Pavilion in Venice. I read, in the words of curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim, that the intent is "to explore more deeply the notion of Ghana as a country and as an idea," particularly since its independence from colonial rule in 1957. How are you approaching this complex starting point?

IM: The notion of independence is something I have been dealing with in my work since I started my artistic practice six years ago. Not just from the postcolonial perspective, but also from the perspective of the history of spaces, materials, and their life. There is so much decay within the world: sometimes these residues present unconventional versions of freedom that we don't look at – that's where my interest lies. The notion of independence in Ghana after 1957 is a complex and paradoxical one. On the one hand, like many states around the world, it appears to be progressive and conscious, while on the other hand full of rot. The inequalities written into everyday life – abandoned industries, architectural structures – produce forms that already question this notion of independence. The work presented in the Ghana Pavilion is titled *A Straight Line Through the Carcass of History 1649* (2016-19). It deals with objecthood, ranging from colonial productions, through the railway infrastructures in Ghana's history, to the invention of wooden grills. The installation attempts to combine multiple layers of history in one single frame, just as an object in its everyday life does.

22 May 2019

Flash Art
Online

IM: There is a real tendency for an artist to stay within the symbolic, but there is so much more to the contemporary that needs to be explored further. *SCCA TAMALE* was originally conceived as a studio space, a site of production in reference to many of the post- and pre-independence factory-like structures in Ghana that contributed immense labor to the formation of the state but were left to decay after the mid-1960s. The point has always been to use the contradictions inherent within the practice toward a new transformation. The values I inscribe within the work, and the relations of exchange it engages with, play a very important role; those are ideas I work with which allow me to make decisions that affect the relations of production within the real world. Redistribution is important to look at particularly, not from a philanthropic point of view but a more practical and ideological one. The lack of cultural institutions and spaces of criticality has led to a steady decline in both the intellectual and ethical realms of our contemporary society, something which artists and thinkers alike should take responsibility for. The point is to use the contradictions of the flow of capital in the art world to create spaces in Ghana that can eventually affect the material values within artistic practice and inspire the imagination of generations yet to emerge. I got a lot of this training from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi, where I had my BFA and MFA in painting and sculpture. The department of painting and sculpture doesn't just aim to produce artists, but practitioners who consider the conditions within the world and how these can be transformed in order to make the experience of art different. That, I think, is inspiring.

22 May 2019

Flash Art
Online



① 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Ibrahim Mahama, "A Friend". Curated by Maximiliano Giori. Installation view Casell' Dazzer Porta Venezia, Milan, 2016. Photography by Marco De Sotis. Courtesy Fondazione Nicola Trussardi.

AA: This might be related to the question above, but I know you feel a certain responsibility as an artist toward future generations. How do you see your role?

IM: I see myself as a contributor. I have learned a lot from blaxTARLINES KUMASI [a project space for contemporary art at KNUST, Kumasi] and its proposal of new models for making, inspired by history. As an artist using the failures and decay of modern society as a starting point for contemporary production, I feel a need to develop a practice that directly affects what is around us, and that is what I am trying to do in Tamale with SCCA TAMALE and its studio spaces. The question is how to create something that can contribute to an ideological shift across a generation. In fact, I tend to be more interested in children and generations to come than my own generation.

AA: Lastly, I am also curious to know what you think about how institutions and organizers in the West understand your work, and if you ever feel there is a gap between your intentions and those of Western commissioners — and if so, what are the main misunderstandings?

22 May 2019

Flash Art
Online

IM: There is a real difficulty in translating the long-term intentions of artists when there is so much concentration on the present. I think the issue has to do with the expectations of the art world, particularly from artists. We are constantly expected to produce what the art world is familiar with and can easily consume, which I think sometimes can be done, given we understand the nature of capital. But this cannot be the only form of experience. We need to propose new forms and also constantly expand the sensibilities of both art and the world at large. This requires more work and, unfortunately, most institutions are not ready to deal with that. That is why, for me, it is important to use failure as a starting point for production.

Brahim Mahama lives and works between Accra, Tamale, and Kumasi (Ghana). He is among the artists who represent Ghana on the occasion of the 58th Venice Biennale, 2019.

Antonia Alamó is a curator, researcher, and writer based in Berlin. She is artistic co-director of SAWY Contemporary and part of the curatorial team of Sorabeek 2020 directed by Boreventure Ndiung. She co-founded with Eliana Fokianaki the research project Future Climates, and with Caroline Ecklander and others the platform Toxic Commons.

↑ Nana Dzorlatta Ayem on Ghana's First Ever Pavilion at Venice, CA.
<https://www.contemporaryartmagazine.com/magazines/nana-dzorlatta-ayem-on-ghanas-first-ever-pavilion-at-venice/>

09 May 2019

Wallpaper
Online

David Adjaye designs first national pavilion for Ghana at the Venice Biennale



David Adjaye used earth transported from Ghana to plaster the walls of the pavilion exhibition. The lighting was designed by Danish engineering firm Steensen Mønting. Pictured here: Lynette Taylor-Bruce's *Just Another Day* (2000) series of oil paintings on linen and canvas. Photography: David Lavere. Courtesy of the artist, Chris Blom, London, and Jack Sherman Co.

Sir David Adjaye's design for Ghana's first national pavilion at the Venice Biennale brings earth and traditional architecture from Ghana to Venice. 'Ghana Freedoms' recognises the country's history, independence and global presence today, through the pavilion design and the ideas of the six artists on display, who span three generations.

The idea for the pavilion was sparked and facilitated by Adjaye and curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim, who were joined by art world tour de force Okwui Enwezor (1964-2009), who sadly passed away in March, as a strategic advisor.

13 May 2019

Vogue Living
Online

VOGUE LIVING + ARTS

Meet the women taking centre stage at the Venice Biennale in 2019

HEITZE JUDAH
15 May 2019

As well as achieving a balance of male and female artists for the first time, this year's Venice Biennale reveals plenty of entries that are both created and curated by women – a small but positive move away from the age-old art world boys' club. *Vogue Living* speaks to the key players at the pavilions.



Image: Curator Felicitas Thun-Hohesteinmund (left) and artist Renate Berthmann. Credit: Irina Gavrich

13 May 2019

Vogue Living
Online

The Venice Biennale has been running for well over a century, but it is only in this, its 58th edition, that its central exhibition has achieved an equal balance of male and female artists. As with so many things, the upper end of the **art** world has long been a boys' club. As well as the central exhibition, there are exciting **female artists** representing their countries in the national pavilions, among them Larissa Sansour for Denmark, Kris Lemselu for Estonia, and İnci Eviner for **Turkey**. There's no shortage of eminent female curators taking the reins either: Katerina Gregos, director of a number of biennials in her own right, is here in charge of the Croatian presentation; and writer and filmmaker Nana Oforiatta Ayim is heading up Ghana's first-ever pavilion.

Of the 87 national pavilions at this year's Biennale, there are 17 female curator-and-artist pairings, among them teams from Saudi Arabia, Germany and Argentina. Why do we need to celebrate them? Because it's taken a long struggle against entrenched prejudice for them to get there. Less than a decade ago, Georg Baselitz (who will be honoured in Venice this year with a retrospective at the Gallerie dell'Accademia) explained away the absence of women artists at the top end of the market: "Women don't paint very well. It's a fact." Thankfully, the art world is now changing, even if Baselitz isn't.



Image: Artist Angelica Mesiti. Credit: Zon Wimberley

14 May 2019

Vogue Living
Online

YOUNG LIVING + ARTS

An insider's guide to the 2019 Venice Biennale

HETTIE JUDMAN
14 May 2019

As the 58th edition, *May You Live In Interesting Times*-titled Biennale gets ready to open its doors, *Vogue Living* seeks out advice from those in the know on how to navigate the world's most influential art exhibition.



Image: Njideka Akongili Crosby, *The Beautiful Ones*. Credit: Victoria Miro & David Zwirner.

14 May 2019

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Running from early May until late November, the Venice Biennale is the crowning event of the international **art** calendar. During preview week, curators, collectors and critics inspect the sprawling exhibition programme in a FOMO-ridden panic that they might overlook some obscure highlight. After that, it's open to the ticket-holding public.

The Biennale is not one, but dozens of allied events, ranging from official national presentations through to scrappy pop-ups. Getting a grip on the who-what-where can feel overwhelming – but in a fun, art-saturated kind of way.



Image: Ghana Funtilian. Credit: Getty Images.

14 May 2019

Vogue Living
Online

At the heart is the Biennale exhibition – a monster of a thing, split over two venues in the Arsenale (a former shipyard complex dating back to the 12th century) and Giardini (a park) to the east of the city. This year, the whole thing is in the hands of curator Ralph Rugoff, New York-born director of the Hayward Gallery in **London**. Titled *May You Live In Interesting Times*, it promises a celebration of ambiguity, paradox and sleight of hand – the title is a bogus Chinese curse, reflecting a show that responds to “times in which fake news has real effects”, as Rugoff puts it.

Both the Arsenale and Giardini sites also house some of the 90 national presentations that will be staged this year. The Giardini are dotted with permanent exhibition pavilions: here you’ll find duo Barbara Wagner and Benjamin de Burca’s defiant and celebratory commission for Brazil, *Scinguerra*, and Laure Prouvost’s octopus-inspired film installation for France among the offerings.



Image: Luogo e Segni. Credit: Deffino Sisto Legnani & Marco Cappellotti.

14 May 2019

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At the Arsenale, national exhibitions occupy the far segments, beyond the main biennale exhibitions. Here you will find presentations by countries including Ireland – sculptures by Eva Rothschild – and Italy, this year curated by Milovan Farronato, director of the appropriately trend-setting Fiorucci Art Trust. Then there's the first (hotly anticipated) Ghana Pavilion, designed by David Adjaye and featuring works by El Anatsui, Ibrahim Mahama, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye and John Akomfrah, among others.

Don't overlook the national exhibitions scattered around the city itself. Every permanent gallery, museum and foundation in this art-drenched city is also rolling out special exhibitions: at Victoria Miro, new work by Njideka Akunyili Crosby in *The Beautiful Ones*; at Punta della Dogana, the poetic group show *Luogo e Segni* (Place and Signs); and at V-A-C Foundation, the exhibition *Time, Forward!* exploring progress and speed through art.



Image: Fondazione Querini Stampalia. Credit: Getty Images.

14 May 2019

Vogue Living
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Among the exceptional one-off projects this year is ceramic artist Edmund de Waal's *Parbleu*, a meditation on exile and language in two parts: an installation in porcelain, gold and marble in a 16th-century synagogue in the Venetian Ghetto, and a pavilion of books by exiled writers.



Image: Swingsetra film still. Credit: Barbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca.

14 May 2019

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Venetian Heritage is celebrating its 20th anniversary in style with *Dise* with a ball inspired by the art of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo. The evening features live performances with costumes designed by Maria Grazia Chiuri (proceeds go to the safeguarding and continuous restoration of Venetian art and culture). If you didn't get an invite to Saturday's exclusive event fear not, the non-profit organisation's exhibition *Domus Grimani 1594 – 2019*, a collection of classical statuary assembled by Giovanni Grimani in the 16th century has been installed in the extraordinary vaulted Tribuna at the Palazzo Grimani. This was where they were displayed almost five centuries ago during Grimani's lifetime; on his death in 1594, he left them to the city. The route through the Palazzo to the Tribuna has been restored, complete with some original furnishings, to evoke the building as it would have been in Grimani's time.

All these exhibitions are but snowflakes on the tip of the Venice iceberg – it's an extraordinary, if somewhat overwhelming, event and – like the city itself – full of discoveries, riddles and surprises.

But how to do it in style? We turned to seven Biennale experts for advice.

09 May 2019

Wallpaper
Online



Stephen Matheson's #AfricanLives Through the Curves of History 2017 (2016-18), made of recycled furniture, wood, shells, and archival materials, on display at the Ghanaian pavilion. Photography: David Levine. Credit: the artist and White Cube.

Named 'Ghana Freedom' after the song by E.T. Mensah composed in celebration of independence from British colonial rule in 1957, when the nation of Ghana was established, the pavilion is a proud moment for Ghana. For Oforiatta Ayim the pavilion represents 'finally moving out of the "postcolonial" moment into one we have yet to envision'.

The exhibition takes a global approach to nationhood, where the artists travel beyond borders, cross diasporas and trace migration, and the conversation feels liberated from the past, because the present is so multi-dimensional, creative and all-consuming.

Adjaye's aim was to bring the colours and textures of Ghana to Venice through the design – and to reflect on life in the country over the past century alongside the artists. The dynamism of the art works and their stories is echoed in the smooth curves of Adjaye's design. Visitors are welcomed in and led around elliptically-shaped spaces echoing the curved walls of traditional earth houses built in the village of Sirigu in the Upper East Region of Ghana.

09 May 2019

Wallpaper
Online



Felix Asha's display: *Untitled (Portraits and Self-Portraits) c. 1960-2011* - digital images generated from original prints, within the exhibition design. Photography: David Lomax. Courtesy of the artist.

The pavilion descends on the art and its visitors like an atmosphere, one of dry grainy heat and radiant warmth. The deep ochre colour of the walls - plastered with soil transported from Ghana - casts an amber glow upon the artworks and the rough texture absorbs light and muffles sound.

The Ghanaian pavilion, which can be found in the Arriglerie of the historic Arsenale, represents a historic moment for Ghana: 'We have arrived,' concludes the Honorable Catherine Afeku, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture for Ghana: ★

09 May 2019

Wallpaper
Online



A Straight Line Through the Canvas of Pictures 8040 (2016-18) by Graham Mahama. Photography: David Levens. Courtesy of the artist and BHW-Galer.



Detail of El Anatsui's Earth Shaking by Sea (2018) made of bottle caps and copper wire. Photography: David Levens. Courtesy of the artist.

09 May 2019

Wallpaper
Online



Just Arriving (Quartet) (2018) by Lynette Yiipoo Soates, a series of oil paintings on linen and canvas. Photography: David Lauder. Courtesy of the artist, Core-Mesa, London, and Jack Shikman Gallery, New York

13 May 2019

Architectural Digest
Online



The Ghana Pavilion, curated by Nana Oforiatta Ayim and designed by David Adjaye
Photo: David Levine

ARCHITECTURE

David Adjaye Used Ghanian Mud to Design the Pavilion at the Venice Art Biennale

AD met with the starchitect and spoke about the origins of the pavilion and where he plans to go next with his idea

13 May 2019

Architectural Digest
Online

By John Campbell

May 13, 2019



For its first time Ghana is making its mark at the Venice Art Biennale, which opens on May 11, with an impressive exhibition of six artists. Much of the excitement will swirl around a pavilion designed by Tanzanian-born and U.K.-based architect David Adjaye. On the occasion of its inauguration, *AD* met with Adjaye in Venice and spoke with him about the origins of the pavilion, his approach to designing it, and where he plans to go next with the idea.

With curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim and strategic adviser Okwui Enwezor, Adjaye (who was born in Tanzania as the son of a Ghanaian diplomat) first proposed the concept of a pavilion to Ghana's national government, knowing, as he puts it, "there are so many Ghanaian artists, both in Ghana and in the diaspora," but that, as he warns, "they were at risk of being missed." When the team pitched the idea to the government, the response was immediate: "They were shocked—this was something they didn't know was happening."

The pavilion, "Ghana Freedom," sets out to tell that story, drawing attention to the depth and range of Ghana's contemporary art by bringing together six artists: Felicia Abban, John Akomfrah, El Anatsui, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Ibrahim Mahama, and Selasi Awusi Sosu.

13 May 2019

Architectural Digest
Online



This work of art is composed of thousands of printing plates, bottle caps, and copper wires that were sewn together.

Photo: David Laundy

Conceding that most national pavilions tend to present the work of a single artist, Adjaye explained the curatorial decision to include a cohort of six: "This is a onetime opportunity that might not happen again, so we needed to come in with the best show—basically a museum show—to show the range not just to the international world but also to the Ghanaian world and to other African nations."

13 May 2019

Architectural Digest
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Located in the Arsenale, the pavilion is a series of connected rooms shaped by curved walls, wending around the structure's historic columns. The form—what Adjaye calls a "parametric ellipsoid"—is familiar in Ghana. As he explains, "it is based on a West African vernacular, the classical earth architecture of the Sahel." To create spaces that would foreground the art, Adjaye wanted to establish a sense of enclosure and interiority. "Most people know these forms as ruins, seen as photography from overhead. You never see these interiors."



A work by British painter Lynette Vladim-Boukye inside of the Ghana Pavilion.
Photo: David Levine

He made the walls with mud, using soil shipped from Ghana to Venice. "It's real Ghanaian earth," Adjaye says. "We brought the bags and we mixed it here." Working with local Venetian plasterists, he used a rough mortar, creating a textured surface. "Here's a moment," he says, "where we don't have to make boxes, the white cube, but to make spaces that create a way to understand the roots, the DNA, of this community."

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Speaking even before the pavilion formally opened to the public, Adjaye already had his sights set on the future. "This is not just a pavilion in Venice," he says. "It's a prototype for a potential national museum in Ghana. It's a fragment, a test, and Venice is the experiment ground." Adjaye is presently working with the government of Ghana on a design for a new *National Cathedral*, so with that direct line of communication, he says, "we are talking to the government about doing a national contemporary art museum."

He is encouraged by the results of this experiment. Gesturing to the standing-room-only crowd filling the pavilion's spaces, he says, "It seems to be a hit."

09 May 2019

Architectural Digest
Online

Exhibition

David Adjaye Unveils First-Ever Ghana Pavilion at Venice Biennale

Drawing upon myriad cultural references, Adjaye called the realization of this project "a dream come true."

By Nellia Bayq

May 8, 2018



"Untitled (Portraits and Self-Portraits)" by Felice Akpan, seen inside the Ghana Pavilion, curated by Nana Oforiatta Ayim and designed by David Adjaye, at the 58th Venice Biennale.

Photo: David Levine

09 May 2019

Architectural Digest
Online

The British-Ghanaian AD100 architect David Adjaye has a broad smile on his face. It's before noon and he is standing deep in the *Arsenale*, a former shipyard built in 11th-century Venice. This is where the *Venice Biennale* is hosting its first-ever pavilion of Ghana in its 124-year history.

"We made it!" exclaims Adjaye, as he stepped offstage at the inauguration, alongside Ghanaian first lady Rebecca Akufo-Addo. "This is a very special moment. It was a herculean effort to make this happen; this is not a small thing."

The Ghana Pavilion, which opens May 11, is titled "Ghana Freedom," and is named after a song by Ghanaian musician E.T. Mensah. A certain kind of freedom is seen in Adjaye's clay-covered Ghanaian pavilion, curated by Nana Oforiatta Ayim, where six artists are exhibited. Okwui Enwezor, the celebrated curator who passed away earlier this year, also consulted on the project.



El Anatsui's *Earth-Shaking to Ekoi*, made up of bottle caps and copper wires.

Photo: David Lauren

"Artists make what we do shine; I don't want anyone to forget that," says Adjaye. The exhibition features black-and-white photos by Felicia Abban, Ghana's first known female photographer, who worked for the president in the 1960s, alongside a yellow wall sculpture by Ghanaian artist El Anatsui, who weaves discarded tin cans into intricate, fabriclike artworks that muse on the power of recycling. British-Ghanaian artist Lynette Yiadom-Boakye is also showing her paintings, which detail imaginary portraits, one of which—*Just Among Ourselves*—depicts a group of men smoking.

09 May 2019

Architectural Digest
Online

Of all 54 countries in Africa, only eight have national pavilions in the 2019 edition of the Biennale, including Ghana, Madagascar, and Mozambique. Adjaye decided on covering the walls of this interior pavilion in clay, a natural deposit that can be found in the countryside.



Works by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye displayed inside the pavilion.

Photo: David Lawrence

"The clay is about Ghana arriving for the first time in Venice—it's actually the soil from Ghana," says Adjaye. The design of the pavilion draws viewers into a dark space with subtle lighting. Each artist's work is shown on oval-shaped walls; they're all connected to each other through small passageways attaching the round rooms. "Because it's the first pavilion, I wanted to bring an element that would bind the six artists together but use elements that would speak to the classical history of sub-Saharan Africa," he says. "Especially the Sahel and Savanna regions of Ghana, as the geography of those

It also ties into the personal history of Adjaye, who was born in Tanzania as the son of a Ghanaian diplomat, and lived in Egypt, Yemen, and Lebanon before his family immigrated to London, when he was just a child. Though he never lived in Ghana, he grew up as a child hearing stories from his father about his homeland. "It ties back to my father," says Adjaye. "It goes back to my childhood and hearing stories about Ghana as this incredible place. In the 21st century, we can bring a synthesis of that culture through the arts to the world. It's a dream come true."

09 May 2019

Artnet News
Online

On View

Ghana's Buzzed-About Venice Biennale Pavilion Is a Clear First Step in the Country's Bid to Become a Global Art Destination

The knockout pavilion, which includes work by John Akomfrah and Ibrahim Mahama, appears to be part of a bigger plan.

Julia Halperin, May 3, 2018



Installation view of *El Anatsui* in the Ghana Pavilion at the 58th Biennale di Venezia. Photo: David LaVine.

Throughout the Arsenale, the medieval dockyard complex that houses a number of national pavilions for the Venice Biennale, a common refrain can be heard echoing through the corridors: Which way to the Ghana Pavilion?

The West African country has made a splashy debut in the international art exhibition, which opened for previews yesterday. Its pavilion—a series of curved, interlocking chambers designed by architect David Adjaye—houses an all-star lineup, including new works by sculptor [El Anatsui](#), video artist John Akomfrah, and painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye. Nearly all of the art was commissioned especially for the occasion.

09 May 2019

Artnet News
Online



The installation by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye in the Ghana Pavilion at the Arsenal during the 58th International Art Biennale in May 07, 2019 in Venice, Italy. (Photo by Luis Zamora/Sestini/ig/Getty Images)

All this flash is by design. At the inauguration yesterday—which was attended by Ghana's First Lady, Rebecca Akufo-Addo—officials were unusually direct about their objective for the project: to enhance Ghana's position on the global stage and to increase tourism. This is art as a tool for soft power—a diplomatic tactic that many countries across the globe have stepped away from as governments continue to slash arts funding.

Ghana, however, is moving in the opposite direction. And it is well positioned to capitalize on the international growth of interest in art of the African diaspora. The budget for the country's ministry of tourism, culture, and creative arts rose 120 percent between 2014 and 2018, from just \$6.5 million to \$14.5 million, according to published government estimates. The latter figure is expected to more than triple by 2022, the documents state.

09 May 2019

Artnet News
Online

Enter the Biennale

The Venice Biennale project – designed to present Ghana as the “preferred tourist destination in sub-Saharan Africa,” the country’s tourism minister, Barbara Oteng Gyasi, said at the launch – is a part of this grand plan.

The pavilion’s debut also coincides with the so-called “Year of Return,” a major national marketing campaign launched to mark the 400th anniversary of the arrival of enslaved Africans to the United States. “We welcome our brothers and sisters of the diaspora home,” Gyasi said in Venice, encouraging all who were gathered there to visit Ghana.

The pavilion itself echoes the notion that those in the Ghanaian diaspora are an important part of the country’s story. Of the six artists in the exhibition, only three currently live in the country; one, Yladam-Boakye, was born in the UK.



Installation view of El Anatsui in the Ghana Pavilion at the 58th Biennale di Venezia.
Photo: David Laopa.

09 May 2019

Artnet News
Online

Both the curator of the pavilion, Nana Oforiatta Ayim, and the architect, Adjaye, have been working with the government for years on various other arts initiatives, including the construction of a new cathedral in Accra and the transformation of a 17th-century castle into a museum. An ultramodern, 240-acre cultural village is also underway in the capital.

The stakes are high. Although Cape Town and Marrakech currently boast more developed arts infrastructure than Accra, no city in Africa has emerged —as Hong Kong has in Asia— as the continent's clear art-market hub and international meeting place. And Ghana's economy has been looking up since the discovery of offshore oil deposits in 1982. This year, the International Monetary Fund projected its economy would grow 8.8 percent, making it the fastest-growing in the entire world.

What's in it?

Still, no country can become a cultural destination without good art and artists. But the Venice presentation makes clear that Ghana has those in spades.

One could spend hours in the pavilion, whose sand-colored walls are made with soil imported from Ghana. Each of the six artists chosen by Oforiatta Ayim (with input from legendary curator Okwui Enwezor, who served as an advisor on the project until his death in March) has an older or younger counterpart in the show—a parrny way to illustrate how Ghanaian artists of different generations are using similar media and genres to quite distinct effects.

The pavilion is framed by two artists who use found and cast-off objects as raw material: El Anatsui and Ibrahim Mahama. The former, a grand figure in the African art world, has created three new tapestries from his trademark smashed bottle caps. The largest, a wall-engulfing yellow work, references the damage gold panning has wrought on Ghana's rivers.

09 May 2019

Artnet News
Online



A Straight Line Through the Carcass of History by Ibrahim Mahama of the Ghana Pavilion. (Photo: TIJANA FASO/AFP/Getty Images)

Mahama, meanwhile, has created a bunker-like space constructed out of the mesh used to smoke fish – a reference to another water-based industry that has been transformed with the introduction of new technologies, which now threaten to damage the river ecosystem. The mesh cages are filled with maps, exercise books, and even bits of dried fish, creating what Oforiatta Ayim describes as “a visceral archive of the country.” (Believe it or not, the fish smell is evocative and not at all overwhelming—a true artistic feat.)



Installation view of John Akomfah in the Ghana Pavilion at the 59th Biennale di Venezia. Photo: David Lauder

09 May 2019

Artnet News
Online

The exhibition also presents two artists who work with video: John Akomfrah, a decorated London-based artist with multiple international exhibitions under his belt, and Selasi Awusi Sosu, an artist who has never had a major international exhibition.

Akomfrah's epic three-channel video, *Four Nocturnes*, and Sosu's video installation both seek to create a portrait of lost history through fragments. Akomfrah's work juxtaposes various episodes of violence in West Africa, from the German genocide of the Herero people to the mass slaughter of elephants, while Sosu traces the construction, investment in, and ultimate abandonment of glass factories after Ghana's independence.



Felicia Akpan's self-portraits at Ghana's pavilion. Photo: Julia Halgans.

09 May 2019

Artnet News
Online

The final duo, painter Yladam-Boakye and Felicia Abban, considered Ghana's first female professional photographer, is perhaps the richest pairing. Yladam-Boakye's portraits of imaginary figures – including one jubilantly opening the door in front of a wall of peacock feathers and another running elegantly through space – are one testament to the power of imagination to invent the self. Abban's photographs are another.

Abban was the personal photographer of the country's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, but also maintained a robust studio practice. She particularly liked taking self-portraits and photographs of other women in a wide variety of attire. Abban offers an energizing new narrative for West African studio photography (which has long been dominated by men like Seydou Keita, [Malick Sidibé](#), and Samuel Fosso), illustrating that art can be an effective way to present oneself to the world – which is a point that the nation of Ghana seems to be emphasizing on the whole.

13 May 2019

Dezeen
Online



David Adjaye creates earth-house pavilion for Ghana at Venice Art Biennale



Lizzie Cronk | 13 May 2019

[Leave a comment](#)

Curving galleries plastered with earth characterise Ghana Freedom, the country's national pavilion at the 58th Venice Art Biennale, designed by architect David Adjaye.

Now open in the Venetian Arsenal, Ghana Freedom marks the first time that the country has presented at the prestigious art event.

Modelled on traditional Guromsi earth houses, the Ghana pavilion comprises a series of interconnected oval-shaped galleries topped by a wooden roof. It contains artwork that celebrates the country's heritage and culture.

13 May 2019

Dezeen
Online



Ghana Freedom is the country's first pavilion at the Venice Art Biennale

"Being able to show the diversity and creativity of Ghana on an international scale is an incredible achievement, and one which showcases the talent that we have to offer," explained Adjaye.

"The commitment and inspiration shown by the president in commissioning this pavilion is a testament to what our country has to offer the art community."



It exhibits the work of six artists including Lynette Yiadom-Boakye

13 May 2019

Dezeen
Online

The narrative and name for the pavilion originates from the song Ghana Freedom, which was written by E T Mensah in 1957 ahead of the country's independence from the UK.

Curated by film maker Nana Oforiatta Ayim, the exhibits "examine the legacies and trajectories" of this time.



One of the oval-shaped galleries has a film projection by John Akomfrah

Visitors can expect to see large-scale installations by El Anatsui and Ibrahim Mahama, alongside portraits by Felicia Abban and Lynette Yizdom-Beakyie, a film by John Akomfrah and a video sculpture by Selasi Awusi Sosu.

The artwork adorns the walls of the galleries to evoke the intricate mud and chalk paintings found in the Gurunsi dwellings.



El Anatsui's artwork evokes intricate mud paintings found in Gurunsi dwellings

13 May 2019

Dezeen
Online

"It means a lot for us to have our first national pavilion at such a narrative-building event as the Venice Biennale, especially at this moment," explained Ayim.

"The conversation about nations is broadening in the face of issues of migrations; of us redefining our connections to our throughout our 'year of return'; of discussing what it might mean to have our cultural objects returned, and how we thus might redefine ourselves in the world; and of finally moving out of the 'postcolonial' moment into one we have yet to envision."



Large-scale installations by Ibrahim Mahama also feature in the pavilion.

David Adjaye is a British-Ghanaian architect and founder of Adjaye Associates, which has studios in both London and New York.

Alongside the Ghana Pavilion, the practice has recently completed the pink Ruby City art centre in Texas, and the African American Museum in Washington DC, which featured in his Making Memory exhibition at London's Design Museum.

Photography is by David Levent.

10 May 2019

Domus
Online

David Adjaye designs Ghana pavilion as “exchange between two cultures”

Adjaye discusses the first-ever participation of Ghana to the Venice Art Biennale: an earth-bound pavilion that brings together six artists.



10 May 2019

Domus
Online

This year marks the first participation of Ghana to the International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. "Ghana Freedom" brings together six artists in a show curated by Nana Oforiatta Ayim.

The title makes explicit reference to the song by E.T. Mensah, composed in the aftermath of the country's independence from the United Kingdom that took place on 6 March 1957 - first among the sub-Saharan countries of Africa to start the process of decolonisation. We discussed the interaction of the curatorial programme with the design of the pavilion with Adjaye: "The pavilion is in dialogue with the idea of Venice, a place that has an incredible mercantile and cosmopolitan history."

"The idea was not to design just a piece of architecture but I also wanted to talk about Africa being invited, and being acknowledged in its coming to Italy," he says. "So, the figure is a kind of form which is then coated into the soil of the earth."



El Anatsui, *Earth Shedding Its Skin* (2019). Courtesy of the artist. Photo David Levine

10 May 2019

Domus
Online

The pavilion consists of a lightweight frame system, clad with a thick layer of mortar and is shaped by two full ellipses and four half ellipses. Each element encloses the work of an artist.

The experience of the space results into a sum of interior spaces conceived as the negatives of what the architect described as Ghanaian classical structures: "There's also a danger that comes with these kind of classical rammed-earth structures: people call them "huts" and I find that quite disgusting. These earth-bound forms are being trivialised as kind of primitive."



John Akomfrah, The Elephant in the Room - Four Nocturnes (2019). Photo David Levene

The choice of the material bridges the Venetian and Ghanaian plastering traditions: "We brought the sand from Ghana, from a place just outside of Accra, and mixed it with a little bit of laterites cement, a system that is used traditionally on homes in the Sahel area of Ghana. We then got Venetian plasterers to put it up, to interpret this rough plaster technique. So it's really an exchange between these two cultures, where one brings the material and the other uses the technique."

10 May 2019

Domus
Online



Ibrahim Mahama, A Straight Line Through the Carcass of History 16-19 (2016-19). Courtesy the artist and White Cube. Photo: David Levine

From the outside of the structure inwards, the pavilion hosts El Anatsui and Ibrahim Mahama's installations, John Akomfrah's film projection, Selasi Awusi Sosu' video sculpture, Felicia Abban's photographic work, along with the work of the painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye (1935), understood as the core of the pavilion.

10 May 2019

Domus
Online



Felicia Abban, *Untitled (Portraits and Self-Portraits)* (c.1960-70s). Courtesy the artist. Photo David Levene

National participation: Ghana **Exhibition title:** Ghana Freedom **Opening dates:** 11 May - 24 November 2019 **Curated by:** Nana Oforiatta Ayim **Commissioner:** Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture **Artists:** Felicia Abban, John Akomfrah, El Anatsui, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Ibrahim Mahama, Sekou Awusi Sissu **Architect:** Sir David Adjaye **Venue:** Arsenale **Address:** Complesso Tonia, Venice, Italy

08 May 2019

Designboom
Online

david adjaye designs ghana's first pavilion, open at venice art biennale



ghana's first national pavilion at the [venice art biennale 2019](#) opens to the public on saturday. located in the artiglierie of the historic arsenal, it has been designed by UK-ghanian architect [david adjaye](#), and marks the first time ghana has participated in the event.



[just amongst ourselves \(2019\)](#), [lynette yladom-boakye](#) :
images courtesy of the artist
all photos by [david levine](#)

entitled 'ghana freedom', the ghana pavilion exhibition takes its name after [E.T. mensah's](#) song which marked the country's independence in 1957, rooted both in ghanian culture and its diasporas, large-scale installation, photography, film and video sculpture, introduce the country as a cultural powerhouse with a crop of six artists of ghanian descent.

08 May 2019

Designboom
Online



just amongst ourselves (2019), lynette yladom-boakye

a series of images from taken by ghana's first female professional photographer, felicia abban, trace gendered embodiments of modernity through dress politics. taken throughout the 1960s and 1970s, abban regularly produced self-portraits before attending dinner parties and political events. abban worked before, during, and after ghanalan independence and even worked worked as a photographer for ghana's first president, kwame nkrumah, for many years during the 1960s.



just amongst ourselves (2019), lynette yladom-boakye
image © designboom

08 May 2019

Designboom
Online

elsewhere, british artist lynette yiadom-boakye exhibits a collection of her oil paintings which depict imaginary black people. she uses race as something to manipulate, or reinvent, creating fictional subjects with a lack of fixed narrative, which leaves her work open to the projected imagination of the viewer.



yaw berko (2019), ef anatsui

no stranger to the biennale, former golden lion winner and artist ef anatsui presents his chainmail-like wall relief sculptures. thousands of printing plates, bottle tops and copper wires are woven together to create endless possible forms that tell rich and wonderful stories.

08 May 2019

Designboom
Online



opening of time (2019), el anatsui

anatsui transforms materials chosen for their poverty, drawing connections between consumption, waste, and the environment. anatsui became an international sensation following the 2007 edition of the international art exhibition, where the artist transformed the facade of the palazzo fortuny,



a straight line through the carcans of history 1649 (2016-19), ibrahim mahama

08 May 2019

Designboom
Online

Yemeni sculptor Ibrahim Mahama exhibits a continuation of 'a straight line through the carcass of history' installation. Bringing together materials, including smoked fish mesh, wood, cloth and other archival objects, he draws from various origins and geographical contexts to confront the supposed linearity of historiography.



a straight line through the carcass of history 1649 (2016-19), Ibrahim Mahama

Mahama is best-known for his urban-scale installations which consist of hundreds of jute sacks, a commentary on Ghana's historic economic relationship with other countries. Mahama was recently invited to Milan by the Fondazione Nicola Trussardi where he wrapped two neoclassical tollgates in Porta Venezia.

08 May 2019

Designboom
Online



glass factory II (2019), selasi awusi sosu

glass factory II (2019) by selasi awusi sosu comprises a three-channel colour and black-and-white-video installation. using glass bottles, she creates ghostly holographic re-stagings of the now defunct glass bottle manufacturing process in ghana.

also being exhibited is short film by british artist and filmmaker john akomfrah titled ' the elephant in the room - four nocturnes'. the three-channel video installation has been co-commissioned by the ministry of tourism, arts and culture of ghana, sharjah art foundation and smoking dogs films with support from lisson gallery.

08 May 2019

Designboom
Online



the elephant in the room – four nocturnes (2019), john akomfrah

curated by film-maker nana oforiatta ayim, artists are exhibited throughout a series of elliptically-shaped interconnected spaces. each one draws inspiration from classical structures in ghana and is plastered with locally-sourced earth.

'being able to show the diversity and creativity of ghana on an international scale is an incredible achievement, and one which showcases the talent that we have to offer', sir david adjaye says. 'the commitment and inspiration shown by the president in commissioning this pavilion is a testament to what our country has to offer the art community.'

08 May 2019

Designboom
Online

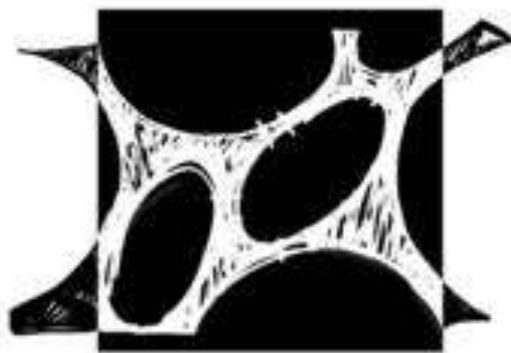


image courtesy of adjaye associates

alongside the exhibition, the ghana pavilion exhibition also includes a publication with a preface by president nana addo dankwa akufo-addo. there will be a series of platforms during the 58th international art exhibition in venice, and 'ghana freedom' will travel from venice to accra after the closure of the exhibition in november.

18 May 2019

Art Daily
Online

Ghana's first pavilion opens at La Biennale di Venezia



Ibrahim Mahama, *A Straight Line Through the Carcass of History 1649*, (2016–19). Smoked fish mesh, wood, cloth, and archival materials. Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and White Cube. Photo: David Lewne.

VENICE.- The first [Ghana Pavilion](#) at the 58th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, under the patronage of Ghana's President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, opened to the public on Saturday 11 May 2019.

Entitled "Ghana Freedom," after the song composed by E. T. Mensah on the eve of the independence of the new nation in 1957, the pavilion examines the legacies and trajectories of that freedom by six artists, across three generations. Rooted both in Ghanaian culture and its diasporas, the pavilion exhibition includes large-scale installations by El Anatsui and Ibrahim Mahama; representation and portraiture by prominent photographer Felicia Abban and painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye; and a three-channel film projection by John Akomfrah and a video sculpture by Selasi Awusi Sosu.

18 May 2019

Art Daily
Online

Situated in the Artgalerie of the historic Arsenale, the Ghanaian pavilion is designed by Sir David Adjaye. Each artist exhibits in elliptically-shaped interconnected spaces, which draw inspiration and are plastered with locally-sourced earth, from classical structures in Ghana.

In addition, the Ghana Pavilion exhibition includes a publication with a preface by President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo; foreword by Honorable Catherine Afeku, and contributions by Sir David Adjaye, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Nana Oforiatta Ayim, Okwui Enwezor, Taiye Selasi, Hakeem Adam, Adjoa Annah, Mae-ling Lokko, Kukuwa Manful, Larry Ossei-Mensah, and Mavis Tetteh-Ocloo. There will be a series of platforms during the 58th International Art Exhibition in Venice, and "Ghana Freedom" will travel from Venice to Accra after the closure of the Exhibition in November.

Nana Oforiatta Ayim, curator of the pavilion, said, "It means a lot for us to have our first national pavilion at such a narrative-building event as the Venice Biennale, especially at this moment. The conversation about nations is broadening in the face of issues of migrations; of us redefining our connections to our diasporas throughout our 'year of return'; of discussing what it might mean to have our cultural objects returned, and how we thus might redefine ourselves in the world; and of finally moving out of the 'postcolonial' moment into one we have yet to envision.

Sir David Adjaye says, "Being able to show the diversity and creativity of Ghana on an international scale is an incredible achievement, and one which showcases the talent that we have to offer. The commitment and inspiration shown by the President in commissioning this pavilion is a testament to what our country has to offer the art community."

Honorable Catherine Afeku, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture says, "This is a historic moment for us in Ghana. Arts and culture are the very soul of a nation, and with our maiden entry to the Venice Biennale, under the leadership of His Excellency, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, I can say, we have arrived."

13 May 2019

House & Garden
Online

NEWS

David Adjaye used Ghanaian mud to design the pavilion at the Venice Art Biennale

The architect discusses the origins of his pavilion and where he plans to go next with his idea

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED BY ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST



DAVID LEVINE

13 May 2019

House & Garden
Online

For its first time Ghana is making its mark at the Venice Art Biennale, which opened on May 11, with an impressive exhibition of six artists. Much of the excitement will swirl around a pavilion designed by Tanzanian-born and U.K.-based architect David Adjaye. On the occasion of its inauguration, AD met with Adjaye in Venice and spoke with him about the origins of the pavilion, his approach to designing it, and where he plans to go next with the idea.

With curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim and strategic adviser Okwui Enwezor, Adjaye (who was born in Tanzania as the son of a Ghanaian diplomat) first proposed the concept of a pavilion to Ghana's national government, knowing, as he puts it, "there are so many Ghanaian artists, both in Ghana and in the diaspora," but that, as he warns, "they were at risk of being missed." When the team pitched the idea to the government, the response was immediate: "They were shocked — this was something they didn't know was happening."



© David Adjaye

13 May 2019

House & Garden
Online

The pavilion, "Ghana Freedom," sets out to tell that story, drawing attention to the depth and range of Ghana's contemporary art by bringing together six artists: Felicia Abban, John Akomfrah, El Anatsui, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Ibrahim Mahama, and Selasi Awusi Sosu.

Conceding that most national pavilions tend to present the work of a single artist, Adjaye explained the curatorial decision to include a cohort of six: "This is a onetime opportunity that might not happen again, so we needed to come in with the best show — basically a museum show — to show the range not just to the international world but also to the Ghanaian world and to other African nations."

Located in the Arsenalé, the pavilion is a series of connected rooms shaped by curved walls, wending around the structure's historic columns. The form — what Adjaye calls a "parametric ellipsoid" — is familiar in Ghana. As he explains, "it is based on a West African vernacular, the classical earth architecture of the Sabel." To create spaces that would foreground the art, Adjaye wanted to establish a sense of enclosure and interiority. "Most people know these forms as ruins, seen as photography from overhead. You never see these interiors."



Photo: © 2019

13 May 2019

House & Garden
Online

He made the walls with mud, using soil shipped from Ghana to Venice. "It's real Ghanaian earth," Adjaye says. "We brought the bags and we mixed it here." Working with local Venetian plasterists, he used a rough mortar, creating a textured surface. "Here's a moment," he says, "where we don't have to make boxes, the white cube, but to make spaces that create a way to understand the roots, the DNA, of this community."

Speaking even before the pavilion formally opened to the public, Adjaye already had his sights set on the future. "This is not just a pavilion in Venice," he says. "It's a prototype for a potential national museum in Ghana. It's a fragment, a test, and Venice is the experiment ground." Adjaye is presently working with the government of Ghana on a design for a new National Cathedral, so with that direct line of communication, he says, "we are talking to the government about doing a national contemporary art museum."

He is encouraged by the results of this experiment. Gesturing to the standing-room-only crowd filling the pavilion's spaces, he says, "It seems to be a hit."



May 2019

The Art Newspaper
Print

VENICE BIENNALE 2019 Pavilions



Mark Wallinger's *My name is India*, also known as *My name is India* (2019)

Mark Wallinger's *My name is India* (2019) is a large-scale artwork that features a large Indian national flag waving on a tall pole against a blue sky. The artwork is a commentary on the role of the artist in a globalized world and the importance of national identity.

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From prestige to passé?

National pavilions in Venice have long been criticised as anachronistic. But for nations newer to the event, just getting to the Biennale is an achievement. **By Tim Cornwell**

A small selection of the Venice Biennale's artist pavilions are set to open over the course of the month. The pavilions are a mix of traditional and modern architecture, reflecting the diverse nature of the event. The pavilions are a mix of traditional and modern architecture, reflecting the diverse nature of the event.

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"These man-made borders that are meant to define the art scene are mad"

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National pride, national shame and the 'post-national': three pavilions exploring identity

<p>India</p> <p>Mark Wallinger's <i>My name is India</i> (2019) is a large-scale artwork that features a large Indian national flag waving on a tall pole against a blue sky. The artwork is a commentary on the role of the artist in a globalized world and the importance of national identity.</p>	<p>Italy</p> <p>The pavilions are a mix of traditional and modern architecture, reflecting the diverse nature of the event. The pavilions are a mix of traditional and modern architecture, reflecting the diverse nature of the event.</p>	<p>The Netherlands</p> <p>The pavilions are a mix of traditional and modern architecture, reflecting the diverse nature of the event. The pavilions are a mix of traditional and modern architecture, reflecting the diverse nature of the event.</p>
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03 May 2019

The Art Newspaper
Online

National pride, national shame and the 'post-national': the question of identity at the Venice Biennale

National pavilions in Venice have long been criticised as anachronistic. But for nations newer to the event, such quibbling can seem like a luxury

TER CORNWELL

3rd May 2019 11:49 BST



Mark Wallinger's *Supremacy* (1996), the Union Jack flag in Ireland's colours, flew over the British Pavilion in 2001
© Mark Wallinger

At each edition of the Venice Biennale, artists and curators set out to prove that the national pavilions are an anachronism—the nationalistic shadow of a darker history in an era of a global market for art. Some artists' efforts have left their mark on the history of the Biennale, including Hans Haacke, who famously broke up the floor of the Nazi-era German Pavilion in 1983, or the UK artist Mark Wallinger, who flew the Union Jack flag—in Ireland's colours—over the British Pavilion in 2001.



03 May 2019

The Art Newspaper
Online

Three pavilions exploring identity



Eric Komaroff's Study for Black Feminist #1 will be on display in the Dutch pavilion. Photo: Gert Jan van Rooij



03 May 2019

The Art Newspaper
Online

Ghana

Ghana is making its Venice Biennale debut *of* with a bold statement of national pride. Its exhibition, *Ghana Freedom*, is named after the *Highlife* hit song celebrating the West African nation's independence from British colonial rule in 1957. But it also channels the strength of its post-colonial diaspora, as two of the six participating artists—John Akomfrah and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye—are based in the UK. As is the pavilion's designer, David Adjaye, the architect of the planned National Cathedral of Ghana and a new museum in Accra, where the show will later travel.

Iraq

The Iraq pavilion confronts the dark side of nationalism in the solo show *Fatherland* by the Iraqi-Kurdish painter Serwan Baran. Exercising his past experience as a conscripted soldier and a war artist tasked with glorifying Iraq's military victories, Baran depicts army generals as brutal, nightmarish figures in new paintings and a life-sized sculpture. These images will be collaged with Iraqi military uniforms given by the families of soldiers killed in the Iran-Iraq war, the second Gulf War and the war against Islamic State.

The Netherlands

The "post-national" presentation of the Netherlands, *The Measurement of Presence*, deconstructs the Biennale's legacies of nationalism and universal Modernism. Two artists of Surinamese descent, Bemy Jungerman and Iris Kenmil, are making new works influenced respectively by the Afro-Suriname Winti religion and utopian black feminism, as well as by the Dutch Modern art movement De Stijl. The show is conceived in tribute to the Suriname-born artist Stanley Brown, who died in 2017.

12 May 2019

NZZ am Sonntag
Print

Rettet die Kunst vor der Politik!

Die 58. Kunstbiennale Venedig bietet ab heute Sonntag den Besuchern Werke, die sich mit den Problemen unserer Zeit auseinandersetzen. Die zentrale Ausstellung zeigt: Es ist ein Kreuz mit der Gegenwartskunst. Von Gerhard Mack



An der Biennale des Ungleichheit (Marina Abramovic)

Zentral auch in der Biennale 2019 sind Werke der Post- und Neo-Expressionisten. Das Ziel, die Biennale nicht nur als Ausstellung zu betrachten, sondern als Plattform zu nutzen, die die Öffentlichkeit zu Themen wie Klimawandel, Migration und Gender, die von den Künstlern als Teil der Biennale betrachtet werden, ist ein Ziel. In diesem Sinne sind auch die Werke der Künstlerinnen, die die Biennale als Plattform nutzen, zu sehen.

Während diese Künstlerinnen sich mit Themen wie Klimawandel, Migration und Gender auseinandersetzen, ist es ein Ziel, die Biennale nicht nur als Ausstellung zu betrachten, sondern als Plattform zu nutzen, die die Öffentlichkeit zu Themen wie Klimawandel, Migration und Gender, die von den Künstlern als Teil der Biennale betrachtet werden, ist ein Ziel. In diesem Sinne sind auch die Werke der Künstlerinnen, die die Biennale als Plattform nutzen, zu sehen.

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Flucht, Migration, die Folgen des Klimawandels sind die zentralen Themen der Biennale. Die Künstlerinnen setzen sich mit den Problemen unserer Zeit auseinander. Die zentrale Ausstellung zeigt: Es ist ein Kreuz mit der Gegenwartskunst. Von Gerhard Mack

Während diese Künstlerinnen sich mit Themen wie Klimawandel, Migration und Gender auseinandersetzen, ist es ein Ziel, die Biennale nicht nur als Ausstellung zu betrachten, sondern als Plattform zu nutzen, die die Öffentlichkeit zu Themen wie Klimawandel, Migration und Gender, die von den Künstlern als Teil der Biennale betrachtet werden, ist ein Ziel. In diesem Sinne sind auch die Werke der Künstlerinnen, die die Biennale als Plattform nutzen, zu sehen.



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11 May 2019

Il Sole 24ore (Italy)
Online

89ª BIENNALE VENEZIA

Il Ghana rilegge la sua storia attraverso l'arte

di Sara Dotti Agostini



Ghana: Yidorm Bissaye, Just Amongst Ourselves (2018), series of paintings, oil on linen and canvas, Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist, Corvi Mora, London, and Jack Shorrock Gallery, New York. PHOTO: David Luvene

Una delle più attese novità della **89ª Biennale di Venezia**, l'approdo in laguna del padiglione del Ghana, ha soddisfatto le aspettative. Situato all'Arsenale, è stato concepito come una rappresentazione plurale e transgenerazionale, su suggerimento del curatore ed ex direttore artistico della Biennale di Venezia e dell'**Haus der Kunst di Monaco di Baviera**, **Okwui Enwezor**, consulente del progetto e purtroppo mancato pochi mesi fa dopo una lunga malattia. "Volevo portare un artista sconosciuto, ma Enwezor mi ha spiegato che essendo la prima volta era importante raccontare il Ghana con un progetto corale e includere anche artisti della diaspora e già noti al panorama internazionale" ricorda la curatrice **Nana Oforiatta Ayim**, direttrice della piattaforma istituzionale **Arto Institute of Arts and Knowledge** ad Accra e incaricata direttamente del padiglione insieme all'architetto **David Adjaye OBE** dal Ministero per il Turismo, l'Arte e la Cultura ghanese. La collaborazione tra i due proseguirà anche dopo la Biennale di Venezia, per convertire un castello del XVII secolo situato nella capitale Accra - e finora destinato a uso governativo - nel nuovo museo di arte contemporanea nazionale nei prossimi due, tre anni.

11 May 2019

Il Sole 24ore (Italy)
Online



Felicia Abbau, *Greenback (Portraits and Self-Portraits)* (c. 1960-1964). Digital images generated from original prints, 50 x 40 cm. Courtesy the artist, photo David Levine



All'inaugurazione del padiglione c'era tutto il gotha dell'arte internazionale confermando un interesse per la scena artistica ghanese che è nell'aria da ormai alcuni anni. Nella mostra, infatti, ci sono ben quattro artisti veterani della Biennale – il Leone d'Oro alla carriera **El Anatsui** (2007/15), **John Akomfrah** (2015), **Lynette Yiadom-Boakye** (2013) e **Ibrahim Mahama** (2015) – tutti protagonisti di nuove commissioni site-specific per il padiglione, insieme a **Felicia Abbau**, la prima fotografa professionista ghanese e fotografa personale del primo presidente **Kwame Nkrumah**, e **Selasi Awusi Sosa**, artista originaria di Kumasi laureata al prestigioso **Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST)** come Mahama e Anatsui. "Questo padiglione è una riflessione sul Ghana attraverso le opere di tre generazioni di artisti" racconta la curatrice, e aggiunge: "il superamento del colonialismo dal punto di vista della storia non significa che non ci saranno altre influenze culturali o politiche, per questo il loro lavoro indaga il concetto di autodeterminazione."

11 May 2019

Il Sole 24ore (Italy)
Online

Nel titolo del padiglione, Ghana Freedom, risuonano i ritmi dell'omonima canzone di **E.T. Mensah**, e un percorso di liberazione del paese dalle influenze del colonialismo, delle gerarchie razziali e della tratta atlantica degli schiavi che mise da subito l'arte al centro della creazione di una nuova identità nazionale ghanese e pan-africana. Il Ghana, infatti, ha ottenuto l'indipendenza dalla potenza coloniale britannica nel 1957, ed è stato il primo presidente - **Kwame Nkrumah** - a costruire subito istituzioni come l'[Istituto per gli Studi Africani](#), il Centro Culturale Nazionale del Ghana, l'Arts Council del Ghana e la Film Corporation. È in questo clima culturale di ampio respiro che opera Felicia Abban (1935), il cui studio fotografico ad Accra sarà presto trasformato in museo. A Venezia, accanto al suo lavoro in studio ci sono convincenti autoritratti degli anni '60-'70, scattati prima di uscire per serate glamour, lei stessa personaggio di una nascente scena sociale ghanese, un po' **Jackie Kennedy** e **Cindy Sherman** ante litteram.

A rappresentare il Ghana della diaspora ci sono, poi, i ritratti pittorici di **Lynette Yiadom-Boakye**, privati di specifici richiami geografici e culturali, dalla galleria newyorkese **Jack Shainman** intorno a 100mila euro. E ancora la monumentale video-installazione di **John Akromfah**, visto di recente al [New Museum](#) di New York, fondatore del **Black Audio Film Collective** (1982) a Londra e rappresentato dalla galleria internazionale [Lisson](#). L'opera, estremamente suggestiva, parla di identità frammentate intrecciando vicende umane e animali attraverso mitologia e metafora. Ma il padiglione esprime anche un legame profondo con la terra attraverso l'uso del fango locale per costruire gli spazi architettonici dedicati a ogni artista, e riverbera particolarmente nelle indagini dei materiali come medium estetico. **Selasi Awusi Sosu** affronta il valore economico e sociale del vetro nel tessuto industriale ghanese, mentre **El Anatsui** - in mostra all'[Haus der Kunst](#) di Monaco di Baviera fino al 28 luglio - ha costruito, invece, un iconico arazzo con tappi di bottiglia, un tentativo di sutura di ciò che esiste per evocare i rapporti tra identità culturale, schiavismo e globalizzazione. Anche Anatsui è rappresentato dalla galleria newyorkese Jack Shainman e in asta il suo top price è «Recycled Dreams (Uniting the World with a Stitch)», c.2005, passato per la cifra record di 1.095.593 € (senza buyer's premium). Infine, ci sono le reti da pesca di Ibrahim Mahama - recente protagonista della scena artistica milanese con una monumentale installazione di sacchi di juta ai caselli di Porta Venezia prodotta dalla [Fondazione Nicola Trussardi](#) - da intendere come mappe del lavoro e del commercio internazionale che ci ricollegano alla questione della tratta degli schiavi.

11 May 2019

Il Sole 24ore (Italy)
Online

"Abbiamo conosciuto Ibrahim Mahama nel 2011 durante la sua residenza a **Gaswork**, centro d'arte che presenta nuovi talenti internazionali a Londra" ricordano le sue galleriste **Chiara Rusconi** e **Francesca Migliorati** di **A Palazzo** Brescia. Poi sono arrivati gli inviti di **Saatchi**, della Biennale di Venezia (2015) e di **Documenta 14** (2017). Le sue installazioni di sacchi di juta partono da 50mila euro in su per 3 metri di base. "Ma non sono estrazioni di opere più grandi, ognuna è unica e ha una precisa autonomia estetica e concettuale" continua Chiara Rusconi. Grazie al successo di critica e collezionismo, Mahama ha potuto dedicarsi anche alla costruzione di un centro d'arte, il **Savannah Centre for Contemporary Art (SCCA)**, inaugurato appena due mesi fa a Tamale, dove è nato. "Il fermento della scena artistica ghanese di cui tutti parlano non è solo merito delle iniziative del presidente, **Nana Akufo-Addo**, fervente collezionista d'arte, né tantomeno si rispecchia nel successo di spazi commerciali come **Galerie 1957** dell'imprenditore alberghiero **Marwan Zakhem**" spiega Francesca Migliorati. "Si tratta di una realtà solida, costruita dal basso tra Accra, Kumasi e Tamala, che beneficia immensamente dell'impegno di Mahama e di molti altri, come l'artista **Dorothy Amenuke**, unica voce femminile di **KNUST**, e della curatrice **Robin Riskin**."



10 May 2019

The Art Newspaper
Online

Lynette Yiadom-Boakye gets a Tate survey and will show works in Accra

Nine new works by the ubiquitous UK artist are in the Ghana pavilion at the Venice Biennale

GARETH HARRIS

10th May 2019 13:14 BST



Lynette Yiadom-Boakye's *Elephant* (2004) © Lynette Yiadom-Boakye



10 May 2019

The Art Newspaper
Online

Rising star Lynette Yiadom-Boakye is due to show works in Ghana later this year and at Tate Britain in 2020 where a major survey of her work will launch next spring (19 May-31 August).

The London-based painter is showing nine newly commissioned works at the Ghana pavilion which is making its debut at this year's Venice Biennale (until 24 November); some of her works will go on show at the National Museum of Ghana in Accra when the pavilion exhibition tours after the Biennale ends. Other artists included in the pavilion presentation, entitled Ghana Freedom, include John Akomfrah, Ibrahim Mahama and Felicia Abban.

The Ghanaian pavilion, located in the Artiglierie of the historic Arsenale, has been designed by the prominent UK-Ghanaian architect David Adjaye of. The pavilion curator is the Ghanaian writer and art historian Nana Oforiatta Ayim. They are both working on a number of cultural initiatives aimed at boosting the profile of the west African country.



Lynette Yiadom-Boakye's *Just Amongst Ourselves* series (2009)
Courtesy the artist; Lovell Akona, London; and Jack Shulman-Gallery, New York Photo: David J. Evers



10 May 2019

The Art Newspaper
Online

Early last year, Adjaye also unveiled his designs for the new interdenominational National Cathedral of Ghana, which will be located near the Osu Cemetery in Accra. Adjaye is collaborating with El Anatsui, Yvonne Koma and Chris Ofili to create site-specific works for the interior. The cathedral will house a gallery and 5,000-seat auditorium.

The Tate show meanwhile will bring together more than 80 paintings and works on paper dating from 2003 to today. "Through her focus on the depiction of imagined black characters Yvonne Koma's paintings raise important questions of identity and representation," a Tate statement says.

In 2010, the artist told *The New York Times* that her compositions are "suggestions of people... they don't share our concerns or anxieties. They are somewhere else altogether."

08 May 2019

A-n
Online



08 May 19

Venice Biennale 2019: Debut Ghana pavilion with six artists including John Akomfrah and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye

Ghana marks its debut at the Venice Biennale with a pavilion in the Arsenale designed by architect David Adjaye.



The debut national presentation from Ghana features work by six artists and is designed by the British architect David Adjaye.

Entitled 'Ghana Freedom', after the song composed by E.T. Mensah on the eve of the country's independence in 1957, the pavilion sets out to examine the legacies of that freedom.

08 May 2019

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Online



The pavilion draws on both Ghanaian culture and its diaspora and includes work by the filmmaker and Artes Mundi 5 winner John Akomfrah and the painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye.

The exhibition also includes large-scale installations by El Anatsui and Ibrahim Mahama, work by the photographer Felicia Adiban, and a video sculpture by Selasi Awusi Sosu.

08 May 2019

A-n
Online



Alomran, whose *Vertigo Saw* in [Dewi Erwezo's 2015 International Exhibition](#) was a huge Venice 1H, presents a three-channel film projection. *The Elephant in the Room – Four Nocturnes* (2015). Yabon-Boskye is exhibiting a series of new portrait paintings titled *Just Amongst Ourselves*.

Situated in the Arsenal, the pavilion consists of a series of elliptically-shaped interconnected spaces with the artists having a space each. The walls of the pavilion are plastered with Ghanaian earth.

08 May 2019

A-n
Online



The pavilion's curator, Nana Oforiatta Ayim, said: "It means a lot for us to have our first national pavilion at such a narrative-building event as the Venice Biennale, especially at this moment."

"The conversation about nations is broadening in the face of issues of migrations; of us redefining our connections to our diasporas throughout our 'year of return'; of discussing what it might mean to have our cultural objects returned, and how we thus might redefine ourselves in the world; and of fruitfully moving out of the 'postcolonial' moment into one we have yet to envision."

Ghana is one of four debut nations at this year's Venice Biennale, with the others being Pakistan, Madagascar and Malaysia. The Dominican Republic is participating for the first time with its own pavilion, while Saudi Arabia returns after an eight-year absence.

The Venice Biennale 2019 runs from 11 May to 24 November 2019. www.labiennale.org

13 May 2019

World Architecture
Online

Ghana's First National Pavilion Designed By David Adjaye Opens At Venice Art Biennale



Ghana Architecture News · May 13, 2019 · 03:36 · 922 Views



The first **Ghana** Pavilion has been opened at the 58th International Art Exhibition of Venice Art Biennale to the public on Saturday 11 May 2019 under the patronage of Ghana's President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. The Venice Art Biennale, themed as "May You Live in Interesting Times", takes place from 11th May to 24th November 2019 in Venice.

13 May 2019

World Architecture
Online

Ghanaian-British architect **David Adjaye** designed first **Ghana Pavilion**, entitled "Ghana Freedom," after the song composed by E.T. Mensah on the eve of the independence of the new nation in 1957, examines the legacies and trajectories of that freedom by six artists, across three generations.



Felicia Abban, *Unframed (Portraits and Self-Portraits)* (c. 1960–70). Digital images generated from original prints, 50 × 40 cm. Courtesy the artist, image © David Lavere

Rooted both in Ghanaian culture and its diasporas, the pavilion exhibition will include large-scale installations by El Anatsui and Ibrahim Mahama; representation and portraiture by prominent photographer Felicia Abban and painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye; and a three-channel film projection by John Akomfrah and a video sculpture by Selasi Awusi Sosu.

Situated in the Artiglierie of the historic Arsenale, in the pavilion each artist will exhibit in elliptically-shaped interconnected spaces, which draw inspiration and are plastered with locally-sourced earth, from classical structures in Ghana.

13 May 2019

World Architecture
Online



© Kwame Agyepong. Yaw Berko (2018). Aluminum printing plates, bottle tops and copper wires. Dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist. Image © David Lawrence

In addition, the Ghana Pavilion exhibition will include a publication with a preface by President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo; foreword by Honorable Catherine Afeku, and contributions by Sir David Adjaye, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Nana Oforiatta Ayim, Okwui Enwezor, Teye Selasi, Hakeem Adam, Adjoa Armah, Mae-ling Lokko, Kwakuwa Manful, Larry Ossei-Mensah, and Mavis Tetteh-Ocloo.

There will be a series of platforms during the 58th International Art Exhibition in Venice, and "Ghana Freedom" will travel from Venice to Accra after the closure of the Exhibition in November.

13 May 2019

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El Anatsui: Earth Shedding its Skin (2018). Bottle caps and zipper wires. Dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist. Image © David Levine

"Being able to show the diversity and creativity of Ghana on an international scale is an incredible achievement, and one which showcases the talent that we have to offer," said Sir David Adjaye.

"The commitment and inspiration shown by the President in commissioning this pavilion is a testament to what our country has to offer the art community."



El Anatsui: Opening of Time (2018). Bottle caps and zipper wires. Dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist. Image © David Levine

13 May 2019

World Architecture
Online

Nana Oforiatta Ayim, curator of the pavilion, said: "It means a lot for us to have our first national pavilion at such a narrative-building event as the Venice Biennale, especially at this moment. The conversation about nations is broadening in the face of issues of migrations; of us redefining our connections to our diasporas throughout our 'year of return'; of discussing what it might mean to have our cultural objects returned, and how we thus might redefine ourselves in the world; and of finally moving out of the 'postcolonial' moment into one we have yet to envision."



Ibrahim Mahama: *A Straight Line Through the Carcass of History* (2016–19). Smoked fish mesh, wood, cloth, and archival materials. Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and White Cube. Image © David Levine

Honorable Catherine Afeku, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture said: "This is a historic moment for us in Ghana. Arts and culture are the very soul of a nation, and with our maiden entry to the Venice Biennale, under the leadership of His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, I can say we have arrived."

13 May 2019

World Architecture
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Lynette Yiadom-Boakye: *Just Amongst Ourselves* (2019) series of paintings oil on linen and canvas. Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist; Coni-Mora, London, and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York. Image © David Levine



Lynette Yiadom-Boakye: *Just Amongst Ourselves* (2019) series of paintings oil on linen and canvas. Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist; Coni-Mora, London, and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York. Image © David Levine

13 May 2019

World Architecture
Online



Isabell Mathema, *A Straight Line Through the Carcass of History* (2016–18). Limited fish mesh, wood, cloth, and archival materials. Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and White Cube. Image © David Levere



John Akomfah, *The Elephant in the Room - Four Narratives* (2019). Three-channel HD color video installation. T.J. Gould. *Four Narratives* is a new commission for the inaugural Ghana pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition of Venice Biennale 2022. Co-commissioned by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Ghana, Sherjah Art Foundation and Jovoking Days Films with support from Liaison Gallery. Image © David Levere

13 May 2019

World Architecture
Online



John Akomfrah: *The Elephant in the Room – Four Nocturnes* (2013) Three-channel HD color video installation, 7.1 sound. *Four Nocturnes* is a new commission for the Inesqueit Ghana pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition of la Biennale di Venezia. Co-commissioned by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Ghana, Shegah Art Foundation and Smoking Dogs Films with support from Lisson Gallery. Image © David Levine

Exhibition facts

Commissioner: Ministry Of Tourism, Arts And Culture

Curator: Nana Oforiatta Ayim

Architect: Sir David Adjaye OBE

Strategic Advisor: Okwui Enwezor

Top image: Felicia Abban. *Untitled (Portraits and Self-Portraits)* (c. 1960–70s). Digital images generated from original prints. 50 x 40 cm.

Courtesy the artist. Image © David Levine

10 May 2019

Art News
Online

Don't Turn Away: An Unrelenting, Uneven Venice Biennale Shows Artists in a Time of Crisis

BY [Andrew Russett](#) POSTED ON 10/10/19 1:44 PM



A fishing boat that sank in the Mediterranean Sea in 2015, killing most of the more than 800 estimated people aboard. It is on view at the Venice Biennale in a project by Christoph Büchel.

PHOTOS: ANDREW RUSSETT, EXCEPT WHERE NOTED

The defining display at the 58th Venice Biennale is not an artwork. It is a fishing boat, with huge gashes in its hull, that is now stationed in the Arsenal, the old dockyards of the Venetian Republic. Designed to carry about 15 passengers, it sank in the Mediterranean Sea in April 2015, with more than 800 migrants who had left from Tripoli, Libya. All but 27 died. The artist Christoph Büchel has brought the vessel here in a project called "Banca Nostra" (Our Boat). It rests on a metal frame next to a café with no signage or explanation.

What can one possibly say about what is essentially an empty mass grave? It is the last thing that hundreds of people—adults and children—touched before drowning. It is much smaller than the luxurious yachts docked alongside the Giardini about a mile away. Its presence feels at once obscene and essential at the most closely watched art exhibition in the world. And it marks just one of the crises now transpiring elsewhere around the globe.

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After the close of the Biennale, in November, the ship will return to Augusta in Sicily, where it has been stored since being recovered, and eventually a memorial for the tragedy will be built. Great monuments invite viewers to reflect on their ideals, and to measure their actions against them. They are, in some sense, tests. In a year that has seen more than 400 migrants die in the Mediterranean, and the American president laugh about shooting asylum-seekers along the U.S.–Mexico border, the test presented by that future memorial is one that we are now failing.



An installation view of the 58th Venice Biennale's main show, "May You Live in Interesting Times," in the Central Pavilion in the Gardens. At left, Teresa Margolín's *Mura Coloré Juárez*, 2018; at right, Sun Yuan and Peng Yu's *Can't Help Myself*, 2016. Photos by Christian Murday are on the back wall.

The boat is the most direct—some might say appallingly so—invocation of the contradictions of the present moment in the Biennale's main exhibition, "May You Live in Interesting Times." The show's curator, Ralph Rugoff, who runs the Hayward Gallery in London, has eschewed a unifying thesis, but in fact his show of roughly 80 artists and teams feels remarkably coherent in its themes, which include a heavy emphasis on trauma.

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Art News
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All hell is breaking loose in the show. In the half of it on view in the Arsenal, two monstrous figures greet visitors in George Condo's *Double Elvis* (2019) as explosions and gunshots spill out of a room hosting Christian Marclay's *48 Hrs Merveil* (2019). These films of combat are nested one inside the other, in concentric rectangles, and they loop in an illegible, cacophonous haze. The effect is transfixed, but it quickly wears you down.

Here more images from the Giardino section of the Venice Biennale.

In the show's other half, situated in the Giardino's Central Pavilion, the skylight in its grand dome has been blacked out, cloaking the soaring room it covers in darkness. A projection of a menacing demon by Cyprien Gaillard glows at its center, surrounded by the deformed concrete bodies of Yu Ji and works by Danh Vo that include huge mirror-surface paintings that Peter Bonda has splashed with paint. The Enlightenment is giving way to the Middle Ages.



Photographs by Zoran Mijic in the Arsenal section of the 58th Venice Biennale's main show, "They Who Live in Interesting Times," Philip Rugoff. The show's curator has divided his exhibition into two parts — "Proposition A" in the Arsenal and "Proposition B" in the Giardino. Almost every artist appears in both, usually with a different kind of work.

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Walls are everywhere. Rula Halawani has shot black-and-white photos along tall ones built by Israel around Palestinian areas; Teresa Margolles has transported long rows of cinderblocks from Juárez, Mexico, topped with barbed wire and speckled with bullets; voice actors in a video by Lawrence Abu Hamdan imitate interviews with survivors of Syria's Saydnaya prison, discussing how sound travels through the building; and a motorized metal gate by Shilpa Gupta slams against its wall every minute or so, plaster and paint falling to the ground.

Some of the work is painfully literal or obvious or uninteresting—like Gupta's fence, Nabuqi's giant faux billboard for a tropical vacation, and Gabriel Rico's bland assemblages. But Rugoff deserves curatorial credit for keeping to a minimum the kind of text-heavy conceptual work that tends to dominate such grand exhibitions. His exhibition is weirdly uneven—the Arsenal is elegantly installed and judiciously paced, while the Central Pavilion in the Giardini is jam-packed and jumbled, doing a disservice to many works—but the show overall resounds with astonishing visual moments.

[See more images from the Arsenal section of the Venice Biennale.]

In superb, slick new Ed Atkins videos, a baby and a monk are in tears, and bodies are falling from the sky, piling up atop a hamburger bun. Jon Rafman has blue PowerPoint-style cartoon people tumbling through a landscape that resembles bruised skin and being pushed about by machines like widgets in a factory. Sun Yuan and Peng Yu offer a giant robot brush that sweeps around a blood-red liquid, splattering it about.

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John Ralston, *Disasters (After the Sea) 2018*, 2018.

Elsewhere, mercifully, such in-your-face effects are balanced by artists with more nuanced aims, like preserving histories, whether on a grand or a personal scale, in stories that range from optimistic to elegiac. Njideka Akunyili Crosby is showing jaw-dropping new portraits of herself and her family (she also has an excellent show of work at Victoria Miro gallery in Venice), and Henry Taylor has painted scenes of life in modern America: a white business executive being hauled off in handcuffs, a group of black women watching the funeral of a victim of the bombing of the 16th Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963.

10 May 2019

Art News
Online

This is a very American Biennale (almost a third of the artists work in the U.S.), and our country's enduring racism is a central issue. Arthur Jafa's *White Album* charts the fears of white Americans around race in a series of found video monologues, while Kahlil Joseph's *BLK NW3* intercuts more videos, music, and interviews with black art luminaries to create narratives of black life. They're two of the Biennale's best works. (The strong presence of black American artists is complemented by an essential exhibition of the legendary *AmCOBRA* group outside of the Biennale at Ca' Faccanon, a grand Venetian palazzo.)

Amid nods to the political nihilism, violence, and homogenizing corporate power of today, the Biennale evinces a commitment to an old-fashioned sensibility: that freedom comes down to self-presentation and being able to be oneself in public. Martine Gutierrez, a Latina trans woman, shows herself in Helmut Newton-like fashion fantasies, and Mari Katayama frames her image in elaborate photographic tableaux that include prosthetic body parts and present her amputated legs.



Paintings by Lyvette Yvonne-Douglas in Obama's profile, designed by David Aronson, at the Venice Biennale.

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Alex Da Corte reprises his captivating three-hour video installation *Rubber Pencil Devil* (2018), a standout work of the 2018 Carnegie International, in which he dons costumes from Mr. Rogers to Eminem, inhabiting cultural tropes and savoring them. The South African photographer Zanele Muholi paints her skin a darker shade of black and poses in a variety of guises in large images hung throughout the Arsenal.

One wishes that the late Felicia Abban, Ghana's first professional photographer, would have been able to see Muholi's work. On display in the Ghana Pavilion—the first for the country in a Venice Biennale—her self-portraits in different outfits are similarly, gloriously charming. They appear alongside the all-star team of John Akomfrah, El Anatsui, Ibrahim Mahama, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, and Selasi Awzai Sossu. My only complaint: the clever structure of interlocking carved walls designed by architect David Adjaye is not big enough to give all the work ample space. Regardless, the pavilion is one of this year's best—and proves a moving tribute to Okwui Enwezor, the project's adviser, who died in March.



Barbara Wiegner & Benjamin de Buma's rotating video installation *Swinguer* at the Ecuador Pavilion.

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Art News
Online

Also remarkable is Brazil's pavilion, for which Bárbara Wagner and Benjamin de Burca assembled an irresistible two-channel music video—part documentary, part scripted—in collaboration with dance groups that specialize in *brega*, *batidas de malica*, and *ringswing*. At one point, the dancers, many of whom are gender non-binary, cry: "Pleasure!" That could be a rallying cry for some of the most memorable work in this Biennale, which shows artists joyfully improvising and teasing out the political potency of play.

In Singapore's pavilion Song-Ming Ang screens an uproarious and quite touching video of children performing a recorder piece of their own creation, and in the main show, Tarek Atoui has produced a constellation of handmade instruments that enchant as they buzz and whirl and murmur. Atoui's work is provisional and a little precarious, a bit like Nairy Baghramian's ingenious, awkwardly shaped, vaguely corporeal forms in the Central Pavilion.



Martin Puryear, *A Column for Sally Hemings*, 2018, in the U.S. pavilion in the Garden.

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Online

And then there is the inimitable Martin Puryear, who has staged a restrained, stunning exhibition in the U.S. Pavilion titled "Liberty/Liberty" that features eight immaculate wood sculptures. A tall lattice façade stands in front of the building, which was inspired by Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. It's made with lines that slope up to a circular form, from which a frightening swirl of dark wood emerges. Inside the building is a large red Phrygian cap—a symbol of emancipation. In the small central room, *A Column for Sally Hemings* (2019) is named for the slave of Jefferson who was the mother to five of his children. The memorial of sorts is a spare, disquieting sculpture of two pieces joined together: a dark cast-iron shackle atop a poplar Doric column painted white.

With 90 national pavilions, a sprawling main show, dozens of other exhibitions, and so many other events and performances in Venice, it is ultimately impossible to make any grand single pronouncement or identify an overarching message for it all, but if there is one feeling that pervades the Biennale this year, it is a sense of loss, of things disappearing.

For the New Zealand



Installation view of "Dane Mitchell: Post War" in the New Zealand pavilion of the Venice Biennale, with a visitor steadily bringing out things that have disappeared or gone unnoted.

10 May 2019

Art News
Online

For the New Zealand Pavilion, Dane

Mitchell has assembled a list of millions of objects, sights, and sensations that no longer exist or are on their way out, and he is having a computer read them, item by item, with its voice transmitted to speakers hidden around Venice and the words printed onto paper in an empty library. "The sound of ancient Hebrew being spoken," I heard. Also: "The sound of a manual credit card imprinter."

At the Fondazione Prada, a beautiful, melancholy retrospective of Jannis Kounellis has worn shoes lining the floor and a jacket and a hat hung on a coat stand that will never be picked up. At a narrow 16th-century church, the Vanhaerents Art Collection is showing *The Death of James Lee Byars* (1994), a large room covered with gold leaf, bearing an empty funeral bier, that Byars himself made while he was dying of cancer.

10 May 2019

Art News
Online

Life is wasting away. Robotic people repetitiously go about their business—a chef rolls dough, a woman rocks in a rocking chair—in the mordant and darkly funny Belgian Pavilion conceived by Jos de Gruyter and Harald Thys. And the British Pavilion by Cathy Wilkes is desolate, filled with hastily-there sculptures of people, some porcelain dishes on the wall, and an oddly familiar scent. It feels like walking through an abandoned house you once knew well and stumbling over only partially remembered events.



James Lee Byrnes, *The Death of James Lee Byrnes*, 1954, at the Chiesa di Santa Maria della Visitazione, presented by Verhaerent's Art Collection at a traditional event of the Venice Biennale.

The island nation of Kiribati has devoted its pavilion to work focused on the grim fact that it may cease to exist because of climate change, and Naiza Khan, representing Pakistan for its first time in the Biennale, does the same for Manora Island, in elegant brass sculptures based on maps of flooded land.

10 May 2019

Art News
Online

A United Nations report released earlier this week stating that one million species are at risk of extinction probably contributed to my read of the art in Venice. It certainly made it all the more melancholy to be at a gargantuan centuries-old church late one night and watch Joan Jonas perform a piece about the oceans, reading from a scroll a long list of fish next to a screen with heartbreaking, lascivious underwater footage.



Joan Jonas, *Moving Off the Land*, 2019, Ocean Space, Chiesa di San Lorenzo, Venice. Performance with Sue Moh and Francesco Migliaccio. Commissioned by TBA21-Academy.
PHOTO: MONA NICCA / © JOAN JONAS

Inside that airy room, part of a new initiative called *Ocean Space*, Jonas was pure magic, donning paper costumes, pointing fish with a long brush, and dancing about in front of clips of starfish and jellyfish. She seemed to be searching for a way to make art fulfill a recuperative function, to not only memorialize a loss but to create something out of it. It is an art about refusing to surrender.

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I had a similar sensation viewing works by Anicka Yi in Rugoff's show—ambitious systems made with unusual, unpredictable materials, including algae. In the *Arsenale*, Yi is showing bulbous lanterns that hold flickering animatronic moths. They're positioned above pools of liquid, and they look alive. Everything is in serie balance, but you sense that things could go wrong at any second.

Such bitter knowledge is captured uncannily in *San & Sea (Marina)*, a rich operatic production by Lina Lapelytė, Vaiva Graimytė, and Rugilė Baradžiuskaitė in the Lithuanian Pavilion, which is the Biennale's surprise hit. The team has constructed a beach on the first floor of an old warehouse in the *Arsenale*, and one watches a dozen or so singers, who are reclining on beach blankets, from the second floor. They are focused on their vacations, but reality



Performance *San & Sea (Marina)* by Lina Lapelytė, Vaiva Graimytė, and Rugilė Baradžiuskaitė in the Lithuanian Pavilion, May 9, 2019.

keeps intruding. "This year the sea is as green as a forest," the chorus intones near the conclusion, with a touch of noble sorrow. "Eutrophication! / Botanical gardens are flourishing in the sea— / The water blossoms. / Our bodies are covered with a slippery green fleece / Our swimsuits are filling up with algae."

10 May 2019

Art News
Online

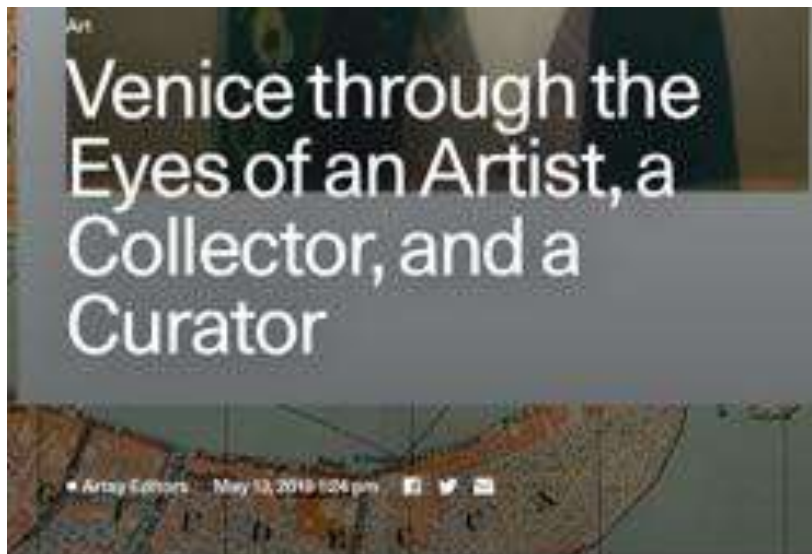
It's a depiction of awe in the face of oncoming destruction: a sentiment very resonant for 2019. But it is also a vision of a new community forming, of people banding together and waking up. What other option is there? The storms, we know, are going to get worse.

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13 May 2019

Artsy
Online



It's hard to fathom what it's like to visit the Venice Biennale until you experience it firsthand. Art is ubiquitous, from the two main venues—the Giardini and the Arsenale—to ornate palazzos and churches across the city. And particularly during the opening week, the art-world crowd is ubiquitous, too.

For artists, art professionals, and collectors, the Venice Biennale is an opportunity to scope out the current state of contemporary art on a global scale, to catch up with peers and colleagues, and to celebrate the exhibiting artists.

As the 58th Venice Biennale opened its doors last week, we asked attendees to capture the sprawling, international event through their own perspectives. We gave Polaroid cameras to an artist, a curator, and a collector—[Chloe Wise](#), [Larry Ossei-Mensah](#), and [Tiffany Zabladowicz](#)—and asked them to share a day at the Biennale through a series of snapshots.



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Artsy
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Larry Ossei-Mensah

Susanne Feld Hilberry Senior Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art
Detroit; co-founder of ARTNOIR

Larry Ossei-Mensah took us into a day of seeing art, peers, and artists at the Arsenale and Giardini. In the morning, he attended the inauguration of Ghana's first-ever national pavilion. There, he caught up with artists including Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, John Akomfrah, Ibrahim Mahama, and Arthur Jafa. After, he ventured through the two venues of curator Ralph Rugoff's "May You Live in Interesting Times." He was drawn to works by Kablél Joseph, Michael Armitage, Henry Taylor, Martine Gutierrez, and Sabsam Gupta. The day wound down at the American pavilion, with the sculptures of Martin Puryear.



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Jon Gray and Chef Pierre Serrao of culinary collective Ghetto Gastro Bx Flexin' in front of El Anatsui's masterful installation at the Ghana pavilion. The exhibition, "Ghana Freedoms," was curated by Nana Oforiatta Ayim and designed by David Adjaye.



13 May 2019

Artsy
Online



Longtime friends, artists John Akomfrah and Arthur Jafa (who won the Golden Lion for best artist in the central exhibition), at the Ghana pavilion.



13 May 2019

Artsy
Online



Artist Ibrahim Mahama in front of his incredible installation at the Ghana pavilion.



13 May 2019

Artsy
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Photographs by Felicia Abban, whose career spans almost 50 years and who is considered Ghana's first female professional photographer.



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Curator Hans Ulrich Obrist in front of Lynette Yiadom-Boakye's work at the Ghana pavilion.



13 May 2019

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Online



Jon Gray of Ghetto Gastro and artist Lynette Yiadom-Boakye celebrating and catching up...

20 May 2019

Port Magazine
Online

Venice Biennale: Tidy Narratives Come Unstuck

Billie Muzaben reports from this years Venice Biennale, where fantasies and realities intermingle



Exhibiting artist's work according to national lines feels outdated, kind of quaint, troubling and regressive – the atmosphere and architecture caught somewhere between the posturing of the Eurovision Song Contest and an American university frat quad. Monumental faux-Grecian pillars prop up Neo-Classical palaces of knowledge, interspersed with striking, Modernist projects by the likes of Carlo Scarpa and Bruno Giacometti across the Giardini, the traditional site of the Venice Biennale since its first edition in 1895.

20 May 2019

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20 May 2019

Port Magazine
Online



Laure Provost,
Deep Sea Blue
Surrounding
You / Vous Et
Bleu Profond Te
Fouilles, French
Pavilion at the
58th Venice
Biennale, 2014.
© Giacomo
Conza

The assurance of permanence – the invoking and performance of history through architecture that's felt amidst the pavilions – is played upon in the biennale's theme this year, defined by artistic director Ralph Rugoff. *May You Live in Interesting Times* refers to what was thought, in the 1930s, to be a Chinese curse. British MP Sir Austin Chamberlain referenced it in a speech, and it has since been invoked by various politicians and writers, although it turns out it was probably made up by a British diplomat. Of the title, Rugoff wrote in his introduction: "It's an ersatz cultural relic, and yet for all its fictional status it has had real rhetorical effects in significant public exchanges. At once suspect and rich in meaning, this kind of uncertain artefact suggests potential lines of exploration that are worth pursuing at present, especially when the 'interesting times' it evokes seem to be with us once again." The guiding principle, and title for the exhibition, which runs across the Giardini and Arsenale, principally tackles divisions in society and social discourse. Acting in sort-of opposition to the historic set up of national pavilions in its want to make room for connections, contradictions and complexities, rather than straight-forward narratives about place, context and ownership. Its confident embodiment of a fake or exaggerated history undermines our assurances – rather than suggesting that art might have any answers to such problems, it embraces its position as something that sits between pleasure and critical thinking. Rugoff writes: "*May You Live in Interesting Times* springs from a belief that interesting art creates forms whose particular character and delineation raise questions about the ways in which we mark cultural boundaries and borders. Intelligent artistic activity involves creating forms that call attention to what forms conceal, and the functions that they fulfil. The exhibition highlight(s) art that exists in between categories, and which questions the rationales behind our categorical thinking."

20 May 2019

Port Magazine
Online



Ghana Pavilion
at the 58th
Venice
Biennale, 2019
Photography
David Lewiss

The performance programme, co-produced by the Delfina Foundation, does precisely this; activating the in-between spaces of the Biennale with “diverse, hybrid practices spanning music, movement and visual art”. It’s one of the first of its kind at the Biennale, Rugoff’s show also departing from tradition in its exhibiting of the same 79 artists across both locations – with practitioners including Arthur Jafa, Slavs & Tatars, Martine Gutierrez, Zhana Kadyrova and Alex da Corte – and the fact that all of the artists are alive. In an interview with *The Art Newspaper*, he said: “As a curator you have a lot more control when you’re dealing with dead artists, obviously, but it was a lot more interesting for me to be in dialogue with the artists I was working with”. In a statement on the performance programme, the artists involved are described as: “interrogating identity politics through the concepts of nationality, gender, and intersectionality. They consider the architecture of representation and how language, as articulated through the body and the voice, can reaffirm or refuse conventions”. In the opening week, Alex Baczynski-Jenkins, boychild, Paul Maheke, Nástio Mosquito, Florence Peake & Eve Stainton, Victoria Sin and Zadie Xa performed across both the Arsenale and Giardini, interrupting the solid narratives of place set up by the Biennale’s structure, and disrupting the harried crowds.

20 May 2019

Port Magazine
Online



Laure Prouvost,
*Deep See Blue
Surrounding
You / Vous Ce
Bleu Profond Te
Pondre, Foulek
Pavilion at the
58th Venice
Biennale, 2019.*
© Giacomo
Comas

The French Pavilion's *Deep See Blue Surrounding You*, by Laure Prouvost, curated by Martha Kirszenbaum, also foregrounds ambiguities – and a sense of geography that's split between fantasy and reality. Prouvost is known for combining performance, video and sculpture in funny, poetic, immersive works that favour contemporary fables over fixed truths. In *Deep See Blue*, she presents a film described as “an escapist journey both tangible and imaginary, towards an ideal elsewhere” – filmed

between the Paris suburbs, Marseille and Venice, among other locations – it's set within an environment inspired by the metaphor of an octopus, (a being that carries its brains and senses in its tentacles). The attention to detail, which repeat viewers of Prouvost's work will have come to expect, is what really draws viewers into the work, and drew the crowds in. Rather than entering the exhibition through the front door, viewers are encouraged to trail around the side of the building, through a forested area of the park, and through a back door that leads into the basement of the pavilion. Starting in 'the belly of the beast', you then move upwards to a room laid in watery resin, littered with seaweed, leftover objects from the film, glass eels and octopi, before moving through stepped layers of silver curtains into the grotto where the film is shown, with installations and performances occurring along trails on either side – the furniture and objects “performing” just as much as the people in the film, and those among the installation. Although light and joyful in feeling, *Deep See Blue* is more than just a fun, fantastical road trip; it represents an invitation to “melt into a liquid and tentacular universe among different unveiled and shared realities”, and challenges the idea of a fluid, globalised world. Echoing Zygmunt Bauman's theory of liquid modernity, which “erodes anchored ties between people and bodies by revealing the fragility of a society based on individualism and constant change”, *Deep See Blue* encourages us to be accepting of a “multiple self” without fixed truths.

20 May 2019

Port Magazine
Online



Ghana Pavilion
at the 58th
Venice
Biennale, 2019.
Photography
David Levine

The Ghana Pavilion, at the *Arsenale*, also seeks to take another look at simple narratives about modernity. Titled *Ghana Freedom*, the pavilion is curated by Nana Oforiatta Ayim, with interior architecture by Sir David Adjaye OBE, and the late Okwui Enwezor as a strategic advisor. It's the first time Ghana has exhibited as an official pavilion at the Biennale, and its core focus is on examining the "legacies and trajectories" of its freedom as an independent nation since 1957. Oforiatta-Ayim described the pavilion's significance, "especially in this moment", in a press release accompanying the exhibition: "The conversations around nations is broadening in the face of issues of migrations; of us redefining our connections to the diasporas throughout our 'year of return'; of discussing what it might mean to have our cultural objects returned, and how we thus might redefine ourselves in the world; and of finally moving out of the 'postcolonial' moment into one we have yet to envision". The pavilion is showing works by Felicia Abban, John Akomfrah, El Anatsui, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Ibrahim Mahama, Selasi Awusi Sosu; in elliptically-shaped, interconnected spaces. Named after the song composed by E. T. Mensah, *Ghana Freedom* examines the legacies and trajectories of that freedom, and how it continues to impact the artists involved, who span three generations of people rooted in Ghanaian culture and its diasporas.

P O R T

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Designed by Adjaye, the space is symbolic of classical earth house structures, and, importantly, is not a simulation; it's anti-spectacular, in that it places you within the interior of the space, rather than viewing from the 'exotic' exterior. The works shift between film, installation, photography and painting; from soft focus studio portraits, to studies of human and ecological violence, installations of bottles laid on the ground and wall hangings of caps, and atmospheric paintings in muted tones. The interior architecture, and the socio-political context that underpins the curation, gives the exhibition a sense of continuity without overwhelming the work, or pulling it into any strict narratives.



20 May 2019

Port Magazine
Online

Hillary,
Kenneth
Goldsmith
curated by
Francesco
Urbano Ragazzi
© Giorgio De
Vecchi-Gerda
Studio

Outside of the main body of the Biennale, above the Despar supermarket in Teatro Italia, Cannaregio, Kenneth Goldsmith has installed a model of parts of the White House Oval Office, and printed almost 60,000 pages of documentation of the emails sent from Hillary Clinton's private server. In *HILLARY: The Hillary Clinton Emails*, curated by Francesco Urbano Ragazzi, Goldsmith wanted to demystify the hysterics surrounding Clinton's emails

from her time as Secretary of State: "And what of them? Not much. They're unclassified... they're a shrug", he wrote in the accompanying exhibition guide. By confronting his audience with the physical artefacts, "you can see for yourself how utter insignificance can be manipulated into tragically historical significance".

The exhibition, the second curated by Francesco Urbano Ragazzi at Despar, which opened in 2016 after a period of renovation, reflects upon the intermingling between public and private space in the age of mass digitalisation (before being a supermarket, the former cinema had been a university building, and then fallen into disrepair). The furniture for the 'reading room' behaves more like a digital render than actual structures, and the Oval Office furniture and textiles mimic the originals so well that it also somehow hovers in the space, rather than feeling entirely placed there. The clintonemail.com archive is printed in books, and as a stack displayed on a grand desk, accompanied by films from the Uboweb archive, founded by Goldsmith, which play on small screens on the balcony, and are projected beneath the original cinema lights once each evening.

P O R T

20 May 2019

Port Magazine
Online



Hillary
Kennedy
Goldsmith
curated by
Francesco
Urbano Ragazzi
© Giorgio De
Vecchi-Gold
Studio

The exhibition, Goldsmith says, "is the first public appearance of the emails", having turned into a sort-of ghost in full view. "The pile of paper is rather unimpressive, rebotting Trump's efforts to make them monumental", says Francesco Urbano Ragazzi. "In this way, Goldsmith creates an anti-monument to the folly of Trump's heinous smear campaign against Clinton." It's this focus on the anti-monument, on moving away from clear conclusions, singular interpretations and tidy narratives, that provides the closest thing to a defining feature of the Venice Biennale, or our interesting times.

12 May 2019

Observer
Online

Why Ghana Chose 'Freedom' as the Theme of Its Venice Biennale Debut

By Mariana Fernandez • 05/12/19 9:02am



Work by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye at the Venice Biennale's Ghana Pavilion. Photo: P. F. / Getty Images

Ghana's much-anticipated debut at this year's Venice Biennale is a powerful celebration of the complexities of African contemporaneity and cultural vibrancy in a space that has provided painfully restricted platforms for African practitioners.

The all-star lineup of artists and organizers includes art historian and filmmaker Nana Oforiatta Ayim as the pavilion's curator, British-Ghanaian architect David Adjaye behind its design, and the late Okwui Enwezor, who was the 56th Biennale's artistic director, as its strategic advisor.

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Online

The exhibition is titled "Ghana Freedom" after the song composed by E.T. Mensah on the eve of the country's independence from Britain in 1957, an allusion to the legacies and trajectories of freedom explored by the six cross-generational artists on view, but also to the biennale's inextricable legacy of colonialism. The Europe-dominated event has historically struggled to attract African participants: this year, only eight African countries will have pavilions at Venice, of which only two of them, Egypt and South Africa, have a permanent space.



Work by Felicia Akpan at the Venice Biennale's Ghana Pavilion, photo: [Photography](#)

The Ghana Pavilion comes at a time that Oforiatta Ayim describes as of particular importance to narrative building in relation to the country and to Africa as a continent. "The conversation about nations is broadening in the face of issues of migrations, of us redefining our connections to our diasporas throughout our 'year of return', of discussing what it means to have our cultural objects returned and how we thus might redefine ourselves in the world, and of finally moving out of the 'postcolonial' moment into one we have to envision," she said in a statement.

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Running from Saturday, May 11 to November 24, the pavilion features a heavy-hitting selection of multigenerational Ghana-based and diasporic artists. There are large-scale installations by El Anatsui and Ibrahim Mahama, portraits by Turner Prize nominee Lynette Yiadom-Boakye and photographer Felicia Abban, a three-channel film projection by John Akomfrah and a video sculpture by Selasi Awusi Susu.

Each artist will exhibit in one of the elliptically shaped, interconnected spaces of the David Adjaye-designed pavilion at the Artigliere of the Arsenale. Adjaye, whose famed design of Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington D.C. was inspired by African Yoruba crowns, here too takes influence from classical West African structures. The pavilion is plastered with locally sourced earth imported from Northern Ghanaian Gurunsi earth house structures, whose sculptural qualities and geometric motifs continue to shape art and culture in the region.



Work by El Anatsui at the Venice Biennale's Ghana Pavilion. Tom Fildes/Arca

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Observer
Online

"Being able to show the diversity and creativity of Ghana on an international scale is an incredible achievement, and one which showcases the talent we have to offer," Adjaye said in a press release.

The Ghana Pavilion is entirely supported by the Ministry of Tourism, with whom Adjaye and Oforiatta Ayim have been consulting for several years on the establishment of new art initiatives in the country. Adjaye recently unveiled plans for the new National Cathedral of Ghana, a ceremonial landmark that will serve for people of all faiths to gather and worship and for which Adjaye is collaborating with artists like El Anatsui and Lysette Yiadom-Boakye on site-specific works.

"This is a historic moment for us in Ghana," said Ghana's Tourism Minister, Barbara Oteng Gyasi, in a public statement. "Arts and culture are the very soul of a nation and with our maiden entry to the Venice Biennale...I can say, we have arrived."

Observer's inaugural Business of Art Observed on May 21st in New York is the premier event for art industry professionals. Join us for a half-day of talks, live debates and networking sessions with key industry players. The world's leading art firms, galleries, museums and auction houses will converge to share what's disrupting the industry today. Don't miss out, [register now](#).

17 May 2019

The Conversation
Online



One of the most powerful images of this year's Venice Biennale is Christoph Büchel's *Barca Nostra*, 2019 (2019).
Bloomberg 19th of April 2019. [La Strada Magazine](#)

As we face pressing global issues, the pavilions of Venice Biennale are a 21st century anomaly

May 17, 2019 2:16pm EDT

Felicity Farnet, LWJBY



The [58th Venice Biennale of Art](#) opened last weekend, the world's first and still largest biennale exhibition in a field that now numbers over 100 major events internationally. It is often referred to as the Olympic Games of art, a comparison grounded both in its establishment and repute.

While the selection of artists for Venice is a much more subjective process than the selection of athletes for the Olympics, both see each nation put forward its "best" practitioners for a once-in-a-lifetime event that is anticipated worldwide and watched by millions.

THE CONVERSATION

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When it began in 1895, the Venice Biennale aimed to reestablish the city as a fixture on the Grand Tour by drawing visitors away from the foul-smelling canals around San Marco to the Gardens to the east of city. With the Salon exhibition in Paris becoming increasingly conservative and less fashionable by the 1890s, it was also an opportunistic moment for Venice to reclaim its artistic renown in Europe.

This year the international exhibition is curated by New York native, London-based curator and Hayward Gallery director Ralph Rugoff and contains the work of 79 artists. However it is the national pavilions, of which there are 92 this year, that make up the majority of the Biennale in terms of real estate, volume and public interest.

The pavilions require each of the participating countries to assume curatorial, production and funding responsibility for their exhibition, which typically feature just one or a small number artists' work. In addition to its long history and colossal scale, it is this national pavilion format that distinguishes the Venice Biennale from the scores of biennales elsewhere.



The Australian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. © 2019, Turner

THE CONVERSATION

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Online

In times of global conflict, the Venice Biennale, like the Olympics, offers an opportunity for nations to come together in a spirit of shared participation and dialogue. Unfortunately, however, the national pavilion model discourages cross-cultural dialogue, instead fostering a separatist mentality that inevitably results in competition between nations. (Indeed, the most sought after prize at the Venice Biennale is the Golden Lion Award for the Best National Pavilion, won this year by Lithuania.)

A glamorous graveyard

The international art world's glamorous graveyard to national cultural identity, the Biennale Gardens are an anomaly in our globalised 21st century. The perpetuation of this Victorian era perspective of the world is in part due to architecture: within the Gardens, the historic centre of the exhibition, 30 nations each have a discrete gallery ("pavilion") to house their biennial art exhibition.



The Gardens at the Venice Biennale. Photo: Twitter

When the Gardens were deemed fully occupied a generation ago, countries seeking to exhibit at the Biennale commandeered spaces in the event's second venue, the sprawling Arsenale complex of former shipyards, or rented spaces in deconsecrated churches and palazzi across the city.

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The Arsenale complex. © J. F. P. / Contrasto

Australia was one of the last nations to be granted a plot in the Biennale Gardens, in 1988. Since then, a succession of mostly one-person Australian pavilion exhibitions have demonstrated the international calibre of Australian art, or have attempted to convey a sense of Australian culture, or both.

The cultural background of this year's representative, Angelica Mesiti, typifies that of many international contemporary artists today. She is of Italian heritage, lives in Paris and makes work across the world, most recently in Aarhus, Denmark for her piece in last year's Adelaide Biennial, and in Rome and Canberra for her current Venice Biennale work.

Mesiti is exhibiting an immersive video installation on the subject of democracy, a fitting subject given the state of global politics today and the promise of the Venice Biennale as a forum for open dialogue. Filmed inside the senate chambers of both countries, "Assembly" is viewed from inside an amphitheatre constructed within the pavilion. The audience looks across to each of the three screens in an architectural design that in its circularity and red palette evokes a legislative assembly.

THE CONVERSATION

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Angela Meier, *ASSEMBLY*, 2019, production with three-channel video installation in architectural environment. Commissioned by the Australia Council for the Arts on the occasion of the 58th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia. Photo: Davide Tullio Lorenzini. For and with Andrea Schiavone Gallery.

In deploying the pavilion as a conversation pit, Mesiti not only refers to the ties between Australia and Italy – both personal and in the setting of the Biennale – but also to the idea of a pavilion itself. Traditionally a pavilion is a place of shelter, a temporary structure offering respite on a journey or refuge from the elements.

It implies safety and sanctuary, a meaning complicated at the Venice Biennale by the word “national”, which in current times evokes “nationalism” and its associated extremism. Mesiti has created a forum for exchange within the confines of the Australian pavilion: the challenge for the Venice Biennale is to overcome the existing disconnection between national pavilions to make the event more conducive to genuine exchange.

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Greed and trauma

It was noted at a symposium in Venice last week that if all the countries in the world had a pavilion in the Gardens, it would be more densely populated than Hong Kong. Given that the world's population has more than quadrupled since the Biennale began, it makes sense to invite all the world's countries into the Biennale Gardens. A densely populated community of shared pavilions would better reflect modern times, while also offering the potential for collaboration and exchange between nations.

Like Australia's entry, very few of the national pavilions in this year's Biennale claim to embody the national character of their country. Venezuela is one exception: the political unrest in that country has rendered its pavilion empty, the artworks having failed to arrive.



Venezuela's pavilion stands empty. Photo: Reuters

Another exception is Ghana, one of a handful of first-time pavilions at this year's Biennale. Designed by London-based, Ghanaian architect David Adjaye in a style that references African vernacular architecture in its sand-coloured walls, this unusually expansive pavilion accommodates the work of six artists across three generations.

THE CONVERSATION

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Lyette Wilson-Rivale. *Just After the Dawn* (2019). Series of paintings, oil on linen and canvas. Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist, Cecil Ming, London, and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York. Photo by David Laundy.

The outstanding work is filmmaker John Akomfrah's sweeping visual narrative depicting violence in Africa over generations, including the mass slaughter of elephants, and breathtaking footage of threatened natural land and marine environments. It is a scathing indictment of human greed and malice that has global resonance.



John Akomfrah. *The Elephant in the Room -- Four Histories* (2018). Three-channel HD video installation, 1:1 sound. *Four Histories* is a new commission for the Inaugural Ghana Pavilion at the 59th International Art Exhibition of Venice Biennale. Co-commissioned by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Ghana, Shaper Art Foundation and Smoking Orbits Film with support from Union Gallery. Photo: David Laundy.

THE CONVERSATION

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At a time when sovereignty of international waters is contested, it can be difficult to define where nations and their concomitant responsibilities begin and end. As part of the curated international exhibition, Swiss-Icelandic artist Christoph Büchel has towed to Venice an infamous Libyan fishing vessel that in 2015 sank between Libya and Lampedusa, killing up to 1,000 migrants trapped in its hull.



Christoph Büchel *Sant'Antonio*, 2019-2018. [See Christoph Büchel's website](#)

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The title, "Barca Nostra (Our Boat)" refers to the Italian government's 2013 Mare Nostrum (Our Sea) policy, instigated in response to the number of doomed migrant ships.

The sight of the rusted vessel in the Arsenale, surrounded by military and recreational watercraft on one side and by cappuccino-sipping Biennale visitors on the other, has a powerful impact on those few viewers cognisant of its story.

More than any artwork in the exhibition, by rendering visible what is generally hidden from public view, its presence encapsulates the danger, tragedy and trauma of forced migration.

It is these global issues that find shared platforms in this year's Biennale and that make for the strongest and most relevant works – themes around political, refugee and climate crises abound. These are the new thematic "pavilions" of the 21st century.

09 May 2019

Artforum
Online

DIARY

PERSONS OF INTEREST

May 09, 2019 • Venice • Kate Sutton at the 58th Venice Biennale



Ralph Rugoff and Paulo Barata.

INTERESTING. Few words have such angular ambiguity, signifying both a viewer's interpretive generosity while subtly acknowledging that the thing in question just might not be that good. Ralph Rugoff, the artistic director of the fifty-eighth Venice Biennale, which opened Tuesday to select press and professionals, played on the word's double meaning in the title for his show, "May You Live in Interesting Times," a phrase attributed as an "ancient Chinese curse," but, like, the Ivanka Trump/fortune cookie variety, with no actual "ancient" or "Chinese." The dash of Orientalism was either snarkily intentional from the start, or simply reclaimed as snarkily intentional after news of the title riled tempers east of the Urals.

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So how's the exhibition itself?

Interesting.

Rugoff has packed his show of roughly eighty artists with whizzbang Instagrams-in-waiting, through an eclectic survey of exclusively living artists that felt more like someone had emptied Chelsea and the Lower East Side (the new, tonier one, not the one from seven years ago) into the Giardini's Central Pavilion. But after a day of mulling it over, I decided this zeitgeist approach could be a throwback to the biennial's days as a salon rather than a definitive statement on our life and times. Rugoff might argue that this is his point: In an age of "fake news" and myriad malleable perspectives, consensus is no longer possible. Even his exhibition is divided in two, with Proposition A in the Arsenale and Proposition B in the Giardini.

In the absence of a strong thesis or even a clear curatorial vision, what we get is call and response. A grid in an Avery Singer work sails smoothly over a sculpture by Carol Bove to match the lattice on the back of a chair in a Njideka Akunyili Crosby painting. Got it. Who doesn't love an inexplicable migration of forms? But this pattern of simple "like" meets "like" can go wrong, too. Halil Altindere's *Space Refugee* project, which looks into the fascinating story of Syrian astronaut Muhammed Ahmed Faris, is coupled with Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's dispiriting diorama *Cosmosrama*, because, well, Mars. In a central chamber, Julie Mehretu's new abstractions are juxtaposed with portraits by Henry Taylor and George Condo because . . . painting? And the violence conjured by Frida Orupabo's cutout figures and memorialized by Teresa Margolles with a wall removed from a school in Juárez is caricatured by a set of Christian Marclay screenprints and a giant robot mopping bloodlike goo by Sun Yuan and Peng Yu ("Look into the provenance of that work," an in-the-know New Yorker warned me, eyebrow raised conspiratorially. "It's a scandal it's even here.")

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Throughout the main show, there's a refreshing diversity, free of any particular critical lens. There is a preponderance of images of people of color (or, in the case of Arthur Jafa's spellbinding *The White Album*, pink people), including in some of the show's best works. (I had a hard time tearing myself away from video works by Khalid Joseph and Stan Douglas.) But the lack of a strong political throughline can also be troubling. In a sure-to-make-headlines maneuver, Christoph Büchel parked a recovered fishing boat on the shores of the Arsenal. This same ship left Tripoli in April 2015 only to sink in the Mediterranean Sea, taking with it over eight hundred would-be migrants. "Raising awareness," "starting a conversation"—there are plenty of amenable euphemisms for this piece, but the reality is, Büchel succeeds in serving up these people's terrible deaths as a backdrop for selfies on the way to yet another Bellini. (#Venice #VeniceBiennale #Bellini #ArtLife #LoveMyLife #SoSadforMigrants #InterestingTimes.)

Anyway, on to the national pavilions. At the top of everyone's list this year is Ghana, which debuted with a mini-biennial of a group show by powerhouse curator Nana Oforiatta-Ayim. Admittedly, my first response to this mighty roster—works by El Anatsui, Ibrahim Mahama, Felicia Abban, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, and Selasi Awusi Soza, topped off with a fresh stunner from John Akomfrah, all installed in a pavilion designed by David Adjaye—was "slow your roll, Ghana! Save something for next time." Emerging from the Akomfrah, however, what could I want but more? Perhaps no accident, the Ghana Pavilion was advised by the late, great Okwui Enwezor, who directed the Biennale's 2015 edition and whose indomitable spirit still lingers over the city. (Was I the only one who heard his belly laugh outside the Daniela?)

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Other favorites for the Golden Lion included Martin Puryear's contribution to the US, "Liberty," a mature and fully realized mix of material confidence, historic insight, and spatial authority. I marveled at how light and airy Cathy Wilkes made the British Pavilion feel, then caught sight of Delfina Foundation's Aaron Cezar ducking furtively behind the French Pavilion. Cezar is behind the Biennale's low-key performance program, and thus probably more in the know than anyone, so naturally I followed in pursuit, only to be stopped in my tracks by a beautiful young man, who looked me up and down, then chuckled: "It would be better to come by elephants, eh?" A clear sign I was about to have An Artistic Experience. From a live dove swooning over a glass pigeon to a waifish dancer casually shimmying through the crowd to a tunnel purportedly being dug to the British Pavilion, Laure Prouvost's grots of a French Pavilion riffs on sociologist Zygmunt Bauman's concept of "liquid modernity." Apparently, the roof-mounted fog machine had to be switched off after it threatened havoc on Stanislav Kolibal's streamlined reliefs next door at the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic Pavilion. (Fans of fake fog, take heart, as Lara Favaretto sent another artificial mist from the entrance to the Central Pavilion.) All in all, France's pavilion certainly had a lot of swagger, but as for substance, the only thing clear was that Prouvost and her video's photogenic cast are more self-actualized than the rest of us.

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The push against nationalist narratives could be felt all around the Giardini. For Germany, Natascha Sadr Haghghighian presented under the pseudonym Natascha Süder Happelmann, a Teutonic twist on her name that nods to nationalist expectations and sloppy publicists. Canada is represented by the Inuit initiative Isuma, which gives a voice to the First Nations people on the continuing encroachment and exploitation of their land by . . . Canada. In Finlandia (now edited to just read "LAND"), a parade of Sámi walking sticks by Ouzi Pieski preceded the Miracle Workers Collective joint collection of short films, *The Killing of Čáhceráigga*. And in perhaps the strongest statement of all, the Venezuela Pavilion was simply closed.

Gender is frequently in the foreground, and not just in Austria, where Renate Bertlmann's spunky *Discordo Ergo Sum* ("I dissent, therefore I am") tended a garden of rose-tipped knives aimed at the patriarchy. The Saudi Pavilion featured Jeddah-based artist Zahrah Al Ghamdi in a show curated by Eiman Elgibreen. "Two women are behind the Saudi Pavilion," Alia Al-Senussi told me at the Art Basel cocktail. "You have no idea how hard they must have worked to pull that off." It was also an all-woman affair in Korea, another of the potential Lion Contenders. The agile curator Hyunjin Kim brought together video works by siren eun young jung, Hwayon Nam, and Jane Jin Kaisen in an installation that wrapped skillfully around the pavilion and into the garden, where Nam had planted hydrangeas, among other plants brought from home. Angelica Mexiti brought her "Assembly" to Australia, Larissa Sansour delivered a solid Danish Pavilion, and I heard rousing things about Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz at the Swiss Pavilion. (Unfortunately there was an issue with the projection while I was there. "Is the image supposed to be static?" I texted a friend. "Definitely not," she shot back.) There were no such snags at the exuberant Brazil Pavilion, where Barbara Wagner and Benjamin de Burca's "Swingueria" (an amalgam of *guerra* and the dance movement *swingueria*) filled the Giardini's "other half" with an infectious beat that felt as "of the moment" as anything I'd seen.

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Artforum
Online

That evening the social rigmante began in earnest, with Marian Goodman cocktails at the Fortuny gardens and showroom; a garden party at the Hotel Metropole for the Office for Contemporary Art Norway and the Nasjonalmuseet; and dinners for Ian Cheng, Antoine Catala, and Anicka Yi hosted by Gladstone, Pilar Corrias, and 47 Canal; Adrian Gbenie by Thaddeus Ropac; Martine Gutierrez by Ryan Lee; Neil Beloufa presented by Kamel Mennour, Mendes Wood DM, François Ghebaly, and ZERO at the Palazzo Tiepolo; and Pablo Vargas, at the Palazzo Mocenigo Casa Nuova, hosted by Labor Gallery's ebullient Pamela Echeverria, who had brought with her the world-renowned chefs behind Cosme, Enrique Olivera and Daniela Soto-Innes. Everyone had recommendations: Lithuania's ambitious indoor opera set on an artificial beach in the never-before-used Marina Militare or the come-hither grotesqueries of Kris Lemsalu at the Estonian Pavilion. Charlotte Prodger's coming-of-age video at the Scotland for Venice exhibition. Cocksure surveys of Luc Tuymans at the Palazzo Grassi and of Jannis Kounellis at the Fondazione Prada. And the Psychiatric Hospital Museum of San Servolo is bringing various symposia, including one on gender and sexual outlaws—part of Shu Lea Cheang's Taiwan Pavilion, curated by the philosopher and activist Paul B. Preciado—and another hosted by the Association of Neuroaesthetics as part of SAVVY Contemporary's yearlong project "Ultrasanity: On Madness, Sanitation, Antipsychiatry and Resistance," which invites artists and neurologists to mediate on "madness" as both a tool for discrimination and a strategy for the evasion of social restrictions.

On the subject of madness, this morning, I took a break from writing to witness the flyover of the world's largest jet, advertised by the Open Group as part of the Ukrainian Pavilion. The intention was to have the plane cast literal shade across the entire Giardini. The overcast sky seemed to obviate any shadows, and yet, magically, just before noon the skies cleared and I dashed outside, camera in hand, to Viale Garibaldi, craning my neck at the sound of every passing motorboat or roller bag. After fifteen minutes, it was official: I am still not very good at telling fact from fiction.

11 May 2019

Archi Panic
Online

DAVID ADJAYE UNVEILS FIRST-EVER GHANA PAVILION AT VENICE BIENNALE

The first Ghana Pavilion in Venice features artists across three generations capturing the nation's culture and diasporas. British-Ghanan Architect David Adjaye has created an elliptically shaped pavilion imbued with the country's colours and textures.

10
minutes



MAY 11, 2019

ARTS CULTURE DESIGN
TRAVEL HOME



Felicia Abban @ The Ghana Pavilion, Venice Biennale 2019, design by David Adjaye. All photos by David Levine.

11 May 2019

Archi Panic
Online

Venice 2019 – Visiting the **58th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia**, it's about exploring the culture and creative expression of different countries. While at Arsenale and Giardini you can find almost all European pavilions along with prominent exhibitions from the USA, Japan, China, Canada, Brazil and more, African countries are under represented. But something is shifting. This year, Ghana presents its first national pavilion hosting an exhibition rooted both in Ghanaian culture and its diasporas.

- **RELATED STORIES:** [Read more about Venice Biennale 2019 on Archipanic...](#)



Lynette Yiadom-Boekye.

Entitled *Ghana Freedom*, after the song composed by E.T. Mensah on the eve of the country's independence in 1957, the exhibition at the Arsenale examines the legacies and trajectories of that freedom by six artists, across three generations.

11 May 2019

Archi Panic
Online



10
Ibrahim Mahama



The pavilion is designed by British Ghanaian architect [Sir David Adjaye](#).
Plastered with locally-sourced earth, the elliptically-shaped
interconnected spaces enveloping the artists' displays are inspired by
the country's traditional structures.



Felice Alban...

11 May 2019

Archi Panic
Online

"Being able to show the diversity and creativity of Ghana on an international scale is an incredible achievement, and one which showcases the talent that we have to offer." Says Sir David Adjaye who have recently completed the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and is working on the National Cathedral of Ghana in Accra, a 5,000-seat auditorium beneath a dramatic concave roof.



Ibrahim Mahama.

Ghana Freedom features large-scale installations by Nigeria-based, Ghana-born – and Golden Lion winner – **El Anatsui**, who exhibits sculptures made from reused bottle tops. **Felicia Abban**, Ghana's first professional female photographer, presents black-and-white studio portraits from the 60s and the '70s. On display also a three-channel film projection by **John Akomfrah** exploring the relativities of loss and restitution and a video-sculpture by **Selasi Awusi Sosu**.

11 May 2019

Archi Panic
Online



El Anatsui.

The creative line up is completed by oil paintings by Turner-prize-nominated painter **Lynette Yiadom-Boakye** who depicted imaginary black people. **Ibrahim Mahama** brings together different materials, such as smoked fish mesh, wood, cloth and other archival objects to confront the supposed linearity of historiography.



John Akomfrah.

11 May 2019

Archi Panic
Online

The Ghana pavilion curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim says: "The conversation about nations is broadening in the face of issues of migrations, of us redefining our connections to our diasporas throughout our year of return; of discussing what it might mean to have our cultural objects returned, and how we thus might redefine ourselves in the world; and of finally moving out of the 'postcolonial' moment into one we have yet to envision."



Selasi Awuzi Senua

The first Ghana Pavilion at the Biennale Arte 2019 is promoted by the country's Ministry of Tourism, Art and Culture under the patronage of President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo.

All photos by David Levené - courtesy of Ghana Pavilion.



10 May 2019

YTMedia (China)
Online

暴走威尼斯 | YT竟然在双年展上了一堂历史课?

2019年05月10日

1487年,葡萄牙航海家迪亚士奉国王之命,带领船队寻找去往马可波罗提到的东方“黄金乐土”的海上通道。从而开辟了新航线。随后,经济和文明高速发展,一场带着硝烟和侵略的漫长噩梦也由此开始。这期间,有一些人以思想做为武器,抗争霸主的绝对权力,也有一些人用生命证明着自己身上的颜色,试图扭转那些歧视与不公。

百年之后,人们终于从梦中醒来,沉浸爱与和平,音乐,影像,绘画...之中,享受着当代艺术的独特美感,纪念着历史留下的文化遗产,也未雨绸缪地幻想着未来世界的模样。

威尼斯双年展带我们感受当代艺术盛况的同时,也带领我们走进一场穿越历史的对话。这里是YT对2019威尼斯双年展报道的第三期。我们继续穿梭于水城的各个艺术展馆,感受这个有趣的时代。



10 May 2019

YTMedia (China)
Online

甘伯池 2
加纳馆
Ghanaian Pavilion



甘伯池 2 加纳馆 Ghanaian Pavilion 意大利威尼斯双年展

这次的双年展为世界各国的文化展示提供了更大的舞台。来自遥远的非洲西部国家——加纳，终于在第58届威尼斯双年展上完成了其国家艺术的处女秀。第一个加纳馆在加纳总统纳纳·阿多·丹夸阿库福-阿多（Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo）的赞助下举行。



10 May 2019

YTMedia (China)
Online



*Richard Mkhama, A Single Line Through An Labyrinth Gallery, 2017, cloth, ink, enamel
for work, wood, cloth and architectural details.*

加纳馆位于历史悠久的机械岸中。由戴维·阿贾伊 (David Adjaye) 爵士设计。每一位艺术家的作品都将在椭圆形的交互空间中展出。这些空间从加纳的古鲁建筑中汲取灵感，并用当地来源的泥土覆盖，充满了浓厚的非洲风情。



*Elaine Deason-Blair (c. 2000-2001) (Africa 2011), series of paintings on silk and
cotton, Ghanaian, wooden Country, 40 years.*



10 May 2019

YTMedia (China)
Online

15世纪，被称为“黄金海岸”的加纳成为了残忍的跨太平洋奴隶买卖的中心。抵抗英帝国的斗争直到20世纪。1956年，加纳独立。这座名为“加纳自由”的展馆里展出了六位艺术家用三代人的视角审视了自由的历史和轨迹。展出作品既立足于加纳文化，也结合其离散地。展览将包括艾尔·安纳祖（El Anatsui）和伊卜拉欣·马哈马（Ibrahim Mahama）的大型艺术装置作品；著名摄影师费利西亚·阿班（Felicia Abbas）和画家利奈特·伊阿德姆·博阿基耶（Lynette Yiadom Boakye）的肖像代表作；约翰·阿科姆弗拉（John Akomfrah）的电影频道和瑟拉西·欧西·塞索（Selasi Awusi Sosu）的视频作品。加纳旅游、艺术和文化部长凯瑟琳·阿夫库（Honorable Catherine Afeke）阁下说：“这是加纳的历史性时刻。艺术和文化是一个国家的灵魂。随着我们首次进入威尼斯双年展，在总统阁下的领导下，我可以这样说，我们已经到达了。”



John Akomfrah, 'The Shipyard in the Storm' (2019), Photo: James W. Whitehead

特别要提的是，加纳馆的战略顾问是刚刚过世的策展人奥奎·恩维佐（Okwui Enwezor）。他曾经策划了2015年威尼斯双年展。相信开幕式上会有许多不胜唏嘘的感叹之言。

12 May 2019

Das Erste (Germany)
Online

Ghanas erster Pavillon



Ghanas erster Pavillon | Video verfügbar bis 12.05.2020 | Bild: BR

Lange Zeit wurde Kunst als das definiert, was die sogenannte westliche Zivilisation an Kulturleistung hervorbrachte. Afrika und Asien wurden mehr oder weniger nicht wahrgenommen. Und wenn dann als touristische Kunst, Volkskunst halt. Das ändert sich seit einigen Jahren und es wurde auch höchste Zeit, dass ein Land wie Ghana zum ersten Mal bei der Biennale einen eigenen Pavillon bespielt. Es ist eine absolute Bereicherung.



Kunst aus Ghana | Bild: BR

12 May 2019

Das Erste (Germany)
Online

Ein Wandteppich aus Müll

Ein Wandteppich. Zusammengesetzt aus Müll. Mit ähnlichen Großformaten sorgt der berühmteste Künstler Afrikas El Anatsui weltweit für Furore. Kunst aus Ghana ist plötzlich sehr sichtbar.



Nana Oforiatta Ayim | Bild: BR

"Wir haben alle so lange gekämpft, jeder auf seine Art und Weise", sagt die Kuratorin Nana Oforiatta Ayim. "Nicht, um hier her zu kommen, aber zu einem Platz wie diesem, wo wir alle versammelt sind. Im Zentrum der Welt. Oder: im Zentrum einer Welt. Dass wir uns gegenseitig feiern können. Mit der Unterstützung unseres Landes, unserer Regierung. Gleichbedeutend mit jedem anderen Land in der Welt."

Felicia Abban war die erste Fotografin in Ghana in den frühen Fünfziger Jahren, als das Land noch unter dem Kolonialnamen "Goldküste" bekannt war. Seitdem porträtierte sie das erstarkende Selbstbewusstsein.

12 May 2019

Das Erste (Germany)
Online



Kunst aus Ghana | Bild: BR

John Akomfrah hat seine Videoarbeit "Four Nocturnes" mitgebracht. Schwebende, traumartige Sequenzen. "Ich wollte die Arbeit fortsetzen, die ich in den letzten sechs, sieben Jahren getan hatte. Ich wollte drei Erzählungen zusammenbringen. Oder drei Begebenheiten. Die Erzählung über die Migration in der Sahelzone, um nach Europa zu gelangen. Die Geschichten von wandernden Elefanten, die ihren Platz suchen und die Migration, die es aufgrund des Klimawandels gibt. Wie sich das Wettersystem ändert. Gibt es eine Möglichkeit diese drei Erzählungen miteinander zu kombinieren?"



John Akomfrah | Bild: BR

12 May 2019

Das Erste (Germany)
Online

Die Eltern von Akomfrah waren im antikolonialen Kampf. Der Vater wurde getötet. Mit vier kam Akomfrah nach England. Es ist nicht unsere Schuld, dass ihr uns nicht wahrgenommen habt, sagt er, wir waren immer da. Wir waren immer stark. "Es hat eine Weile gedauert, bis wir anerkannt wurden. Sind wir glücklich darüber? Na klar. Macht es uns aber auch ein bisschen traurig? Absolut. Viel zu lange wurde die Moderne als eine weitgehend europäische, nordamerikanische Angelegenheit angesehen."



Kunst aus Ghana | Bild: BR

Der erste Auftritt von Ghana bei der Biennale in Venedig. Endlich bröckelt die Deutungshoheit und Dominanz der westlichen Kunstwelt. Wurde auch Zeit.



Kunst aus Ghana | Bild: BR

Stand: 12.05.2019 22:11 Uhr

14 May 2019

The New Statesman (Ghana)
Online

GHANA @ VENICE BIENNALE 2019: THE COUNTRY MAKES ITS FIRST EVER OFFICIAL APPEARANCE AT THE TOP ART FESTIVAL

PRISCILLA OWUSU AND NANA YAA MENSAH / 14 MAY 2019 /

HITS: 458



14 May 2019

The New Statesman (Ghana)
Online

The **2019 Venice Art Biennale**, which opened formally on Saturday in the historic Arsenale, is host this year to Ghana's first national pavilion. The event in Italy is one of the top events in the global fine art calendar every other year.

The **2019 Venice Art Biennale**, which opened formally on Saturday in the historic Arsenale, is host this year to Ghana's first national pavilion. The event in Italy is one of the top events in the global fine art calendar every other year.

Ghana's exhibition space in the **Artiglierie** was designed by the UK-based architect **Sir David Adjaye**, who designed the Oslo Peace Centre and the Smithsonian National Museum of African-American History and Culture in Washington, DC. Ghanaian artists have shown at past Biennales – **Ei Anatsui** won a Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the 2015 show – but this is the first time Ghana has participated in the event as a country.

"**Ghana Freedom**", the Ghana Pavilion exhibition, takes its name from **E T Mensah's** song to mark independence in 1957.

The display itself is rooted both in Ghanaian culture and Ghana's life in the diaspora. Six artists of Ghanaian descent introduce Ghana as a cultural powerhouse with large-scale installation, film and video work, painting, sculpture and photography.

14 May 2019

The New Statesman (Ghana)
Online

Ghanaian officials from the Ministry of Tourism who have championed the project are very direct about their objective: "to enhance Ghana's position on the global stage and to **increase tourism**". The launch on May 8 at the Palazzo Benzon on the Grand Canal was graced by the First Lady, **Rebecca Akufo-Addo**, who expressed great pleasure at being able to lend her support.

Ghana's debut in Venice also coincides with the Year of Return, a landmark series of cultural events across Ghana, starting in Jamestown, Accra, to mark the 400th anniversary of the arrival of enslaved Africans in the United States.

Big Six

The six artists on show at Venice were selected by the young Ghanaian curator **Nana Oforiatta Ayim**, founder of the Anso contemporary art gallery and information centre in Osu. She had guidance in steering the idea to success from the Nigerian curator **Okwui Enwezor**, director of the groundbreaking 2005 **Documenta** art festival in Kassel, Germany.

Enwezor, a distinguished figure in contemporary art, served as a strategic advisor on Ghana's bid until his untimely death in March. Three of the artists chosen for the 2019 exhibition – **John Akomfrah**, **Ei Anatsui** and **Ibrahim Mahama** – showed at the 2015 Biennale, co-ordinated by Enwezor.

John Akomfrah, OBE, a celebrated London-based artist with multiple international exhibitions and awards under his belt, has worked in film for the past three decades, launching his career and the pioneering **Black Audio/Film Collective** with highly politicised art documentaries such as 1987's **Handsworth Songs**.

14 May 2019

The New Statesman (Ghana)
Online

The renowned Ghanaian sculptor El Anatsui trained in Ghana but has had much of his working life in Nigeria; his studio is in Nsukka. This is his third outing to Venice; he first showed at the 2007 Biennale. His work – both conventional sculptures and light-catching wall hangings fashioned from thousands of flattened bottle tops – fetches top prices on the art market. **New World Map** set the tone, selling at Bonhams, the London auctioneer, for \$850,000 in 2012. Other work since has fetched up to \$2 million. The wall hangings are particularly sought after by leading institutions; **Sasa** (2004) is in the collection of the Centre Pompidou, Paris, and the British Museum owns various works by him.

The work of Ibrahim Mahama, who also previously showed at the 2015 Biennale, and who has been making waves on the global art scene for the past ten years, informs the feel of Adjaye's pavilion design. The brown, curved walls of the space, coated with a render made with soil from Ghana, nicely complement Mahama's works made from wood and jute sacks.

The Carnegie Prize-winning painter **Lynette Yiadom-Boakye** produces fictional portraits from her base in London. She was shortlisted for the British **Turner Prize** in 2013 and Tate Britain is planning a major retrospective of her work for next year. Her paintings also go on display this year at the **National Museum in Accra**.

14 May 2019

The New Statesman (Ghana)
Online

Felicia Abban, now 83, is a cultural legend. She was Ghana's first female professional photographer, setting up her first studio in 1956 in Accra, and worked in the 1960s as **Kwame Nkrumah's** personal photographer. Ano hosted the first public exhibition of her work in 2017. The sixth artist, Selasi Awusi Sosu, teaches fine art at the University of Education in Winneba, and uses video and sound in his own work to create suggestive, holograph-type installations.

The UK's *Guardian* newspaper described "Ghana Freedom" as "shaking up the sea of whiteness" that is Venice's usual hallmark. Gallerists have welcomed it, anticipating that it will have a marked impact on foreign interest in Ghanaian fine art and Ghanaian culture in general.

* *The Venice Biennale runs until 24 November 2019. The Ghana National Pavilion is in Section 73 of Arsenale-Artiglierie, Giardino delle Vergini, Venice. Details: labiennale.org*

* *"El Anatsui: Triumphant Scale", curated by Okwui Enwezor and Chika Okeke-Agulu, is at Haus der Kunst, Munich, until 28 July 2019, and then tours to Doha, Bern and Bilbao. Details: <https://hausderkunst.de>*

15 May 2019

Prime News (Ghana)
Online

Ghana's David Adjaye used mud to design the pavilion at Venice Art Biennale (PHOTOS)

Date: 15 May 2019 By: MUSAIB YAKUBU



Ghana's David Adjaye used mud to design the pavilion at Venice Art Biennale (PHOTOS)

Ghana's David Adjaye has stolen the headlines at the Venice Art Biennale, after using mud to design the pavilion.

Curving galleries plastered with earth characterise Ghana Freedom, the country's national pavilion at the 58th Venice Art Biennale, designed by architect David Adjaye.

15 May 2019

Prime News (Ghana)
Online

Now open in the Venetian Arsenal, Ghana Freedom marks the first time that the country has presented at the prestigious art event.

Modelled on traditional Gurunsi earth houses, the Ghana pavilion comprises a series of interconnected oval-shaped galleries topped by a wooden roof. It contains artwork that celebrate the country's heritage and culture.



"Being able to show the diversity and creativity of Ghana on an international scale is an incredible achievement, and one which showcases the talent that we have to offer," explained Adjaye.

"The commitment and inspiration shown by the president in commissioning this pavilion is a testament to what our country has to offer the art community."

15 May 2019

Prime News (Ghana)
Online



The narrative and name for the pavilion originates from the song Ghana Freedom, which was written by E T Mensah in 1957 ahead of the country's independence from the UK.

15 May 2019

Prime News (Ghana)
Online

Curated by film maker Nana Oforiatta Ayim, the exhibits "examine the legacies and trajectories" of this time.



Visitors can expect to see large-scale installations by El Anatsui and Ibrahim Mahama, alongside portraits by Felicia Abben and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, a film by John Akomrah and a video sculpture by Selasi Awusi Sosu.

The artwork adorns the walls of the galleries to evoke the intricate mud and chalk paintings found in the Gurunsi dwellings.

15 May 2019

Prime News (Ghana)
Online



"It means a lot for us to have our first national pavilion at such a narrative-building event as the Venice Biennale, especially at this moment," explained Ayim.

"The conversation about nations is broadening in the face of issues of migrations; of us redefining our connections to our throughout our 'year of return'; of discussing what it might mean to have our cultural objects returned, and how we thus might redefine ourselves in the world; and of finally moving out of the 'postcolonial' moment into one we have yet to envision."

15 May 2019

Prime News (Ghana)
Online



David Adjaye is a British-Ghanaian architect and founder of Adjaye Associates, which has studios in both London and New York.



14 May 2019

Okay Africa
Online

BY DAMOLA DUROSOMO
May 13, 2019 10:05 AM EDT

POPULAR +



From [Africa's National Pavilion 'Freedom' at the Venice Biennale](#). [Digital image generated from original photo by Chris Cum. Download the photo.](#)

Photos: Inside Ghana's First-Ever National Pavilion at the Venice Biennale

The "Ghana Freedom" pavilion, designed by David Adjaye is the first of its kind at the international art exhibition and features the works of six prominent Ghanaian artists.

The 58th Venice Biennale, a top destination for international design, art, architecture and more is underway now in the Italian city.

This year, Ghana unveiled its first-ever national pavilion, designed by none other than star Ghanaian architect **David Adjaye** and curated by Ghanaian art historian **Nana Oforiatta Ayim**.

Commissioned by President **Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo** and the country's Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture with the strategic supervision of **Olayiwola Enweze**, the pavilion—which opened to the public this past Saturday (May 11)—has been named "Ghana Freedom" after the popular independence song by **E.T. Mensah**.

14 May 2019

Okay Africa
Online

The pavilion features the work of six Ghanaian artists who embody this spirit of freedom, including photographer **Febela Abban**, painter **Lynette Yiadom-Boakye**, pioneering sculptor **El Anatsui**, as well as visual artists **Ibrahim Mahama**, **Selasi Awusi Sossu**.



Lynette Yiadom-Boakye *Just Amongst Ourselves* (2019), series of paintings on linen and canvas. Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist; Covi-Mira, London, and Jack Chalmers Gallery, New York. Photo by David Levens.

"Being able to show the diversity and creativity of Ghana on an international scale is an incredible achievement, and one which showcases the talent that we have to offer," says Adjaye of the history-making earth-house pavilion which he designed to reflect West African heritage and "illustrate the elliptical forms" used architecturally by people across the diaspora.

"The commitment and inspiration shown by the President in commissioning this pavilion is a testament to what our country has to offer the art community," he adds.



John Akomfrah *The Elephants in the Room: Nocturnals*. Co-commissioned by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Ghana, Sharjah Art Foundation and Smoking Dogs Films with support from Lison Gallery. Photo by David Levens.

14 May 2019

Okay Africa
Online

Gloria Ayim, described the spirit of African unity evoked by Ghana's first president **Kwame Nkrumah** as an inspiration for her curatorial work. "It means a lot for us to have our first national pavilion at such a narrative-building event as the Venice Biennale, especially at this moment," says Gloria Ayim. Adding that she pulled from an intergenerational pool of artists to relay both the struggle and growth of Africa's first independent nation.



El Anatsui: Yee Benre (2018) Aluminum printing plates, bottle tops and copper wires. Dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist. Photo by David Levine

"The conversation about nations is broadening in the face of issues of migrations; of us redefining our connections to our diasporas throughout our year of return; of discussing what it might mean to have our cultural objects returned, and how we thus might redefine ourselves in the world; and of finally moving out of the 'postcolonial' moment into one we have yet to envision."

The Venice Biennale runs through November 24. Check out more installations from the "Ghana Freedom" pavilion below.

14 May 2019

Okay Africa
Online



Selassie Awula Simu Class Factory 3 (2008) Three-channel colour and black-and-white video installation with glass bottles, stereo sound. Courtesy of the artist.

Photo by Davide Lavigne



© Anatour Earth Shedding its Skin (2013) Bottle caps and copper wires. Courtesy of the artist.

Photo by Davide Lavigne

14 May 2019

Okay Africa
Online



Stephen Makorra, *A Straight Line Through the Carcass of History*(2016-18) Smoked fish, meat, wheat, cloth, and archival materials. Courtesy of the artist and White Cube.

Photo by David Lewent



Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, *Just Amongst Ourselves*(2018) Series of painting oil on linen and canvas. Courtesy of the artist, David Abata, London, and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

Photo by David Lewent

08 May 2019

Quartz Africa
Online

Ghana and Madagascar debut at Venice Biennale with themes of modernity and dynamism



By Fiwasi Oyarifi Asiedu - May 8, 2019



John Ajorhota's work at The Ghana Pavilion, curated by Nana Okudzua Agyemang and designed by David Adjaye, at the 58th Biennale di Venezia, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy.

Only eight African countries—Egypt, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa and Zimbabwe—will have [national pavilions](#) at the 2019 Venice Biennale, [down by one from 2017](#). But for Ghana and Madagascar, it will be a debut showcase for their pavilions and artists at the biennale.

The 2019 biennale opens in Venice on Saturday, May 11 and runs to Nov. 24.

Ghana's pavilion has been designed by Ghanaian-British architect Sir David Adjaye using soil, imported from Ghana. Adjaye is well known for designing the [National Museum of African American History and Culture](#) in Washington DC.

08 May 2019

Quartz Africa
Online

Curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim has brought together six artists that cross gender, generational and geographic divides. The artists includes those living and working in Ghana and those of Ghanaian ancestry in diaspora (like British-Ghanaian filmmaker John Akomfrah), especially poignant as the country marks 2019 as the Year of Return to encourage a return home of its own diaspora and the descendants of enslaved Africans around the world.

"Ghana has a cosmopolitan history. People went out to study, for work and some went for political reasons, in exile, so this idea of diaspora is very much part of what our nation is," says Ayim.



Lynette Jackson-Sankofa: The Ghana Pavilion, curated by Nana Oforiatta Ayim and designed by David Adjaye, at the NMA's Biennale 2019. (Source: Biennale) Venice, Italy

08 May 2019

Quartz Africa
Online



©) Abstract art at The Sahara Pavilion

Madagascar's pavilion will feature work from only Joël Andrianomearisoa, a mixed-media artist, under the themed "I have forgotten the night."

Curators Rina Ralry Ranaivo and Emmanuel Daydé [hope its participation \[pdf p.3\]](#) will project a more positive image of the island nation to the world.

"It is a sign of dynamism and modernity for the Malagasy nation. It reflects a positive image of the country at national and international levels, despite the all too frequent pre-dominance of either exotic or miserable images associated with it," they say in the press statement. "It is a message of hope and willingness to put the creative forces of Madagascar in the mainstream of the world."

But the world famous contemporary art fair has struggled to attract black and African artists to its event despite recent global interest in African art. In Africa, only Egypt and South Africa have a permanent space at the biennale.

An attempt to redress the historical absence of African artists at the biennale led to the creation of an African Pavillion in 2007 which [ultimately received widespread criticism](#) for bundling up an entire continent into a monolith.

08 May 2019

Quartz Africa
Online

The Kenya Pavilion has on two consecutive occasions (2013 and 2015) been made up of majority Chinese artists, drawing condemnation from the Kenyan government. After a strong first pavilion showing in 2012, Nigeria will not return to this year. Its previous unsuccessful attempt in 2015 at being at Venice was blamed on 'election year' uncertainties affecting funding.

African artists' inability to fund participation in fairs outside the continent, has given rise to homegrown art fairs and cultural institutions seeking to fill the void; bringing the international art world closer to home.

They include the Dakar Biennale (Dak'art) in Senegal which was started in the 1992, Art X in Lagos, the Lagos Biennale and the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa in Cape Town which opened in 2017.

Previews

13 May 2019

Focus Kultur (Germany)
Print



13 May 2019

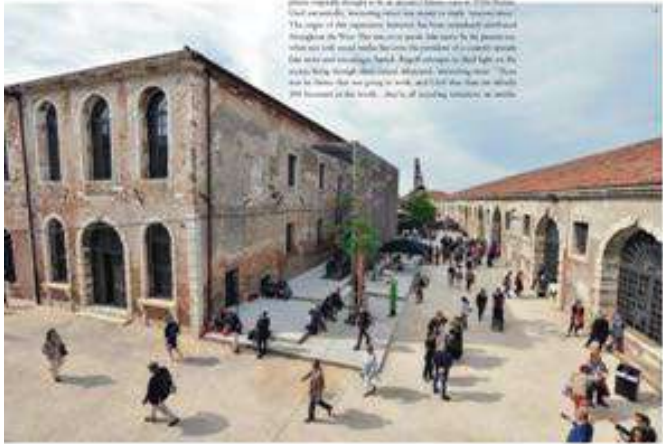
Focus Kultur (Germany)
Print

The collage consists of several magazine pages from Focus Kultur (Germany). The top left page features an article titled "Eiwelchen, Transgender und ein Phantom - diese Pavillons sollte man in Venedig besuchen" with a photo of a woman in a crown. The top middle page shows two women in white lab coats and a hat, with a caption "Eigentlich sind wir hier, um die Kunst zu bewahren". The top right page shows a man in a red suit, with a caption "Luisa Pardini hat ein neues Werk, das sie als 'Phantom' bezeichnet". The middle left page has a photo of a woman in a red top and black skirt, with a caption "Die Kunst ist ein Spiegelbild der Gesellschaft". The middle right page shows a man in a blue shirt, with a caption "Luisa Pardini hat ein neues Werk, das sie als 'Phantom' bezeichnet". The bottom left page features a photo of a person in a blue suit, with a caption "Die Kunst ist ein Spiegelbild der Gesellschaft". The bottom middle page shows the entrance to the Venice Biennale, with a caption "Die Kunst ist ein Spiegelbild der Gesellschaft". The bottom right page shows a person in a yellow suit, with a caption "Die Kunst ist ein Spiegelbild der Gesellschaft".

LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

From the Venice Biennale art fair format, designed at the turn of the 20th century, to the 150th anniversary of the founding of the city of Venice, and the city's status as the site of the 58th Venice Biennale, and also as a venue for international exhibitions, all around the 150th anniversary of the 19th Venice Biennale.

The Venice International Exhibition of the City of Venice was held in 1875, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of the city. From the exhibition in 1875, the Venice Biennale has become the world's most important international art exhibition, with the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019. The Venice Biennale is the oldest and most important of the world's major art exhibitions, and was the first to be held in a permanent building. The Venice Biennale is the oldest and most important of the world's major art exhibitions, and was the first to be held in a permanent building. The Venice Biennale is the oldest and most important of the world's major art exhibitions, and was the first to be held in a permanent building.



It is a pleasure to see the Venice Biennale, which has been held in Venice since 1875, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of the city. From the exhibition in 1875, the Venice Biennale has become the world's most important international art exhibition, with the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019. The Venice Biennale is the oldest and most important of the world's major art exhibitions, and was the first to be held in a permanent building. The Venice Biennale is the oldest and most important of the world's major art exhibitions, and was the first to be held in a permanent building.



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June 2019

Harpers Bazaar Art (Korea)
Print



이탈리아의 예술가인 피에트로 리오니는 1970년대부터 1990년대까지 다양한 매체를 사용하여 작품을 제작했다. 그는 조각, 회화, 사진, 그리고 설치 미술에 관심이 있다. 그의 작품은 종종 사회적 비판과 인간의 조건을 탐구한다.



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10 May 2019

Financial Times
Online

The top five national pavilions at the Venice Biennale

From Russia to the Philippines, here are the highlights of this year's event



Jackie Whiffleschlager 8 HOURS AGO



Ghana: 'Ghana Freedom'

A terrific inaugural pavilion, designed by David Adjaye as a labyrinth of cellular spaces built in ochre Ghanaian soil, still smelling of the earth, in which dialogues buzz between different generations, media, diaspora and Ghana-based artists. El Anatsui's new yellow/silver bottle-top cascade "The Earth Shedding its Skin" is the star exhibit. Implying destruction of the land as we dig for profit, it connects to the bright images of swaying wheat in John Akomfrah's new film staged in the adjacent room, and centred on the survival of elephants.

15 May 2019

The Guardian
Online

'The Glastonbury of art': Venice Biennale 2019 - in pictures

A hypnotised live dove, a migrant boat, a cow on rails, a Lithuanian beach ... the Guardian's David Levene on how he captured the vast art fair

● [Mawkish monuments and the beach from hell: our verdict on this year's arts celebration](#)

David Levene

or [@levenephoto](#)

Main image: Flight of fancy ... Lucie Proussot's birds, one of which is real. Photograph: David Levene/The Guardian

Shot 15 May 2019 07:00 BST



Untitled installation by Felicia Abban in the Ghana pavilion, designed by David Adjaye

Levene says: 'I shot it with a tilt-shift lens, allowing an intense wide-angle sweep'



13 May 2019

AnOther
Online

The Best Things to See at the 2019 Venice Biennale

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY / ANOTHEE USE



Installation view of Olafur Eliasson, the Icelandic Pavilion at the 15th International Art Exhibition - la Biennale di Venezia 2019

Photo: Ugo Caruso © Archivio Artistico / Skopje

From a moving sculpture of a never-ending merry-go-round to an under-the-sea themed installation, the Biennale has arrived in Venice once again, and 2019's programme is as exciting as ever

MAY 13, 2019

TEXT: David Howie

13 May 2019

AnOther
Online

The 58th edition of the **Venice Biennale**, [May You Live in Interesting Times](#) curated by Ralph Rugoff – from London's very own [Hayward Gallery](#) – proves to be as interesting as its title promises. Venice is an easy city to get lost in, and it's easy to see why Proust dubbed the city's labyrinth of alleyways a network of "innumerable slender capillary lines". This is a living city, a water-bound body propped on ancient tree trunks that has supported innovative art since the festival's conception in 1895. It may be small but the Italian island is a beating heart for creativity – it has been for years. Here are a few things to look out for this year if you find yourself lost in *La Serenissima*.

Noteworthy debuts

The Biennale grows constantly, yet 2019 has still managed to be a year of noteworthy debuts. The original premise of the national pavilions feels both quaint and uncomfortable in a world in which the idea of nationhood has taken on a more sinister meaning, yet when so many are eager to build walls, building bridges and opening up 'national' spaces to previously absent voices feels essential and important. *I Have Forgotten the Night* is the debut for the [Madagascar pavilion](#), a soundscape of eerie recordings paired with a striking paper installation. The piece focuses on memory, history and the process of recording – themes that also run through the new [Pakistan pavilion](#) with the work of [Naiza Khan](#). Her project *Manara Field Notes* is a vivid visual history of the Pakistani island. [Ghana](#) has taken a more multifaceted approach, presenting a range of six artists together instead of a single representative. It says a lot about the confidence Ghana has in the creativity it can bring to the Biennale, and given the lack of representation from Africa until recent years, its unveiling feels long overdue.

13 May 2019

AnOther
Online



Photo: art, 15/3, 2019 - © Laura Prouvost

Incredible installations

May You Live in Interesting Times, a phrase known to many as an ancient curse of purportedly Chinese origin, may feel like it lives up to its reputation given the current state of the world. Several artists clearly feel the same way, presenting projects that engage directly with the contemporary political and environmental climate. France's subversive sea-themed film installation from Laure Prouvost explores the changing expanse of the oceans, a theme which feels particularly pertinent given Venice's own sinking status as sea levels rise. Dane Mitchell, representing New Zealand, instead turns our attention to the effects of climate change on the earth with his foreboding forest of lists, which sees large broadcast 'trees' planted all over the city. Each distributes a list of lost things: words, creatures, and utopias to name a few.

13 May 2019

AnOther
Online

For Lebanese artist [Nadim Karam](#) the cyclical state of conversations in politics fuelled the creation of a large-scale kinetic sculpture, [Politics of Dialogue: The Merry-Go-Round](#), which - you guessed it - goes round and round with no clear conclusion (Brexit, anyone?). Eva Rothschild at the [Irish pavilion](#) takes on similar themes with [The Shrinking Universe](#), an immersive environment that turns viewers into participants: the key ingredient? Uncertainty.



Sun, Tea and Sand at the Lithuanian Pavilion, 2019. Photography by Artforum Archive via @artforummagazine

Unexpected interiors

The Biennale has burst its metaphorical banks in relation to its original setting. First based in what Peggy Guggenheim dubbed "a lot of very ugly buildings put up in the time of Mussolini" on a long strip of green at the end of the main island, in 2019 the Biennale is celebrated all over the city.

AnOther

13 May 2019

AnOther
Online

Venice is filled with incredible architecture, and as more countries join each year, more and more of the city comes to life with hidden exhibitions as old or privately owned buildings are revived by artists from every corner of the globe. This year alone sees the reopening of a 9th-century church, a former Murano glass furnace, and a 15th-century palazzo. Even Palladio's 16th-century Renaissance creation San Giorgio Maggiore gets a makeover this year by the painter [Sean Scully](#), who intends to transform the interiors as well as exhibiting new work. A former warehouse on the Giudecca will uncover its soft side thanks to the Icelandic artist [Hrafnhildur Arnardóttir](#) (better known as [Shoplifter](#)), who has filled the old workspace with her signature synthetic hair to create a surreal neon cave, complete with heavy metal soundtrack. When you're tired of dancing, stop off at the [Lithuanian pavilion](#) to rest weary feet, where 35 tons of sand have been transported to create a private beach. The Lido might have some competition this year.



photo: 2019 - AnOther Venice

13 May 2019

AnOther
Online

Tall tales

Whether it's ancient stories like that of Dido and Aeneas that have inspired modern artists to create a reactive exhibition called *Heartbreak* at Ca' Del Duca, or [Italy's pavilion](#) using the seminal essay *The Challenge to the Labyrinth* by Italo Calvino to explore the very limits of language, it's evident that communication is key this year. The [national pavilion of UAE](#) sees award-winning poet and film-maker [Nujoom Alghanem](#) present an installation that interweaves her contemporary Arabic poetry with the language of film to explore the theme of displacement. For [Edmund de Waard](#), displacement and language are expressed even more opaquely with his personalised library [psalm](#), which brings together books by exiled writers in the heart of Venice's ancient Jewish Ghetto. The custom-made porcelain pavilion, with a gold-leaf detailed exterior, houses 2,000 books from Ovid to present day – the "poetry of exile" in his own words – with the names of lost libraries like that of Aleppo and Mosul inscribed on its outer walls. This year it's clear the power of words is taking centre stage. Art may be a universal language, but it's important to explore the intricacies of the other languages we live by.



Mattias MOG, Erik Engvall / Via Warrens MOG

13 May 2019

AnOther
Online

Unmissable performances and live art

Body language takes on a whole new meaning this year with a dynamic performance art programme, the first in the Biennale's history. Although logistics have made establishing performance art throughout the six-month long event impossible, the artistic director is eager to bring living artists into the exhibition for at least the first and final weeks. As well as a line-up of performances within the Teatro alle Tese and Teatro Piccolo Arsenale, artists will perform all over the Biennale, reappropriating walkways and other previously unused liminal spaces like never before. Canadian artist Zadie Xu will even process directly through the Giardini with her *Grandmother Mago*, a dance drama based on the Korean mask dance *Taichum*. Living art also encompasses a range of musical performances; one particularly striking piece is titled *Territorial Symphonies*. Created by the Lithuanian artist Indre Serpytyte, it works to draw attention to the Biennale's strange nationalistic hierarchy. Guests will be serenaded by a brass band playing the anthems of countries whose pavilions lie outside the Giardini walls, in a fanfare against ancient privilege. While you listen you might spot some red sails, which means you've stumbled across members of the *Red Regatta*, an entire fleet of fifty Venetian *vega al terzo* boats created by the artist Melissa McGill. Those interesting times of the Biennale's title? They urge experience.

May You Live in Interesting Times, the 58th Venice Biennale, is open until November 24, 2019.

13 May 2019

Conde Nast Traveler
Online



The **Venice Biennale**, a massive contemporary art exhibition that takes over the city from May to November every two years, is basically the Super Bowl of the **art world**. It's a glitzy spectacle that brings together work from boundary-pushing contemporary artists from all over the planet. This year's edition is titled "May You Live in Interesting Times," and focuses on artists who are working in a variety of media and challenging viewers to reconsider their perspectives. It's a beautifully curated, diverse, genuinely exciting show. But here's the thing: there's an overwhelming amount of stuff going on.

The Biennale itself is split between two main venues, the **Arsenale**, a massive former shipyard, and the **Giardini**, a leafy garden at the edge of the city. Each venue has one main exhibition hall, where work by the artists invited by this year's curator are displayed, and multiple national pavilions, where participating countries select an artist (or group of artists) to represent what they've defined as their most significant contribution to the contemporary art discourse of the moment. On top of that, there are even more national pavilions scattered around the city. And then there are all the collateral events—often just as exciting, if not more so—at museums, *palazzi*, pop-up spaces and commercial galleries from **Giudecca** to Castello.

13 May 2019

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Installation View 'Largo e Segni' from Erikaan Ferrada at Punta della Dogana

Jeffrey Soto Lapson and Marco Cappellari

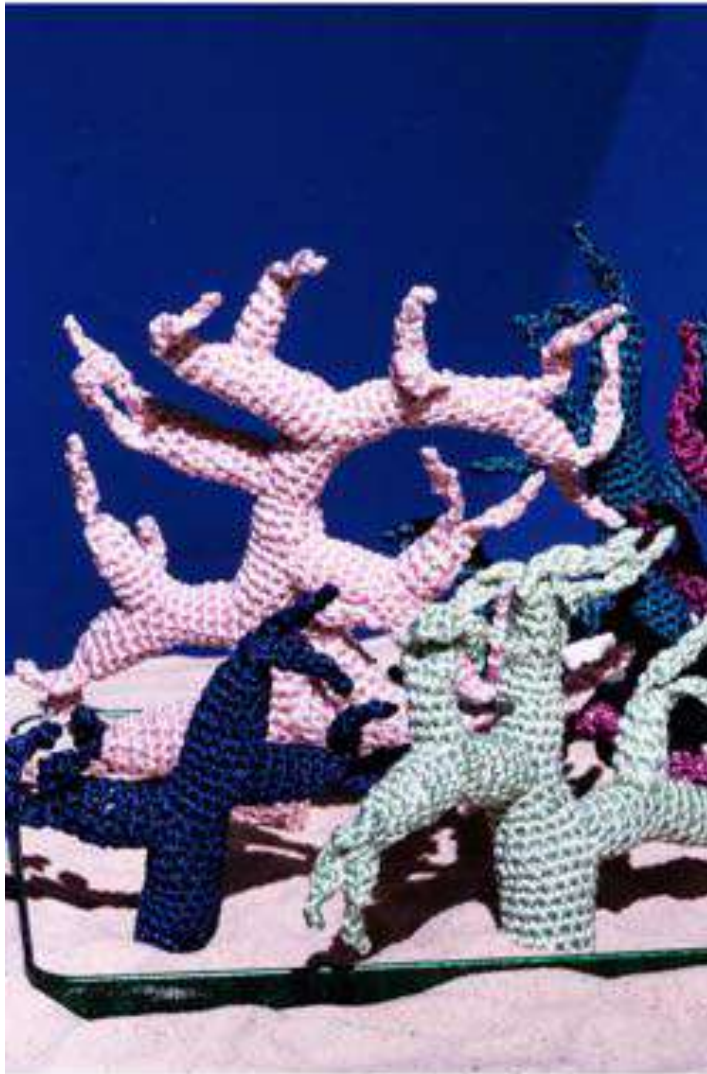
In a city that's already infamously difficult to navigate, planning a visit can feel more than a little daunting (even to a reporter with multiple lists, a decent sense of direction, very comfortable walking shoes, and a relatively strong grasp of the local language). We broke it down: here's how to see as much of the good stuff as possible, while maintaining your sanity, no matter how much time you have.

If you have half a day

One cool thing about this year's Venice Biennale is that all of the 79 invited artists have work on display in both of the main exhibition venues. So if you only want to spend a few hours checking things out, pick one of them and skip the national pavilions altogether. The Giardini is a bit more accessible, in terms of both content and scale. There's a hologram by Danh Vo that seems to bend the laws of physics, a stunning video piece by Arthur Jafa, and lots of thoughtful, intimately scaled installations, like the crocheted and beaded coral reefs by Christine and Margaret Wertheim. The Arsenale is enormous, and contains some of the show's more out-there work, like an interactive virtual reality experience by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster (worth the wait, seriously) and a delightfully unhinged video installation by Alex Da Corte.

13 May 2019

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Manufactured coral from Christine and Margaret Wertheim

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13 May 2019

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Online

If you have one full day

This is where being highly strategic is key to your Biennale success. Get to the Giardini right when it opens at 10 a.m. and go straight to the French pavilion, under which the artist Laure Prouvost dug a tunnel to the neighboring British pavilion, a visceral political gesture that had people lining up for up to an hour during previews. Then, do a quick visit to the Japanese, Nordic, and British pavilions before making the rounds at the main exhibition hall.

At this point, depending on how solid your breakfast was, you may be tempted to stop for lunch. If you're not feeling it yet, grab a coffee and a snack at one of the fine-not-amazing cafés you'll pass on the way to the Arsenale (it's about a 10 minute walk from one entrance to the other) just so you have a little extra fuel. If you're starving, head to **Al Covo**, a low-key restaurant that serves classic Venetian seafood and exceptional *coglò*, and is about a five minute walk from the Arsenale entrance.

Once you get to the Arsenale, hit the main pavilion first. (If you haven't had lunch at this point, there's a surprisingly good café located right at the end of it that serves light-but-nourishing fare like main course salads and "spaghetti al pomodoro".) Then, continue through the national pavilions lined up immediately after it (**Ghana**, a first-time Biennale participant this year, is particularly amazing) and spend some time walking around the waterfront grounds and hanging out in the sunny patch of grass next to Tomás Saraceno's soothing sound installation. Finish the day at the Lithuanian Pavilion, in an old military building a short walk from the Arsenale grounds. The winner of this year's Golden Lion award, it's a surreal 13-person opera performed by what appear to be people sustaning on a giant beach installation made of sand imported from the Baltic Sea.

13 May 2019

Conde Nast Traveler
Online



Inside the Ghara pavilion at the Venice Biennale

Paula Formisano

If you have 36 hours

Repeat the above for day one. Then, spend the second day checking out a few of the most buzzed-about collateral exhibitions, beginning in Santa Croce, which is home to the fabulous **Palazzo Venart** hotel, and making your way down to the tip of Dorsoduro (all on the Southwestern side of the Grand Canal). Start at Ca' Tron, where the Future Generation Art Prize showcases 21 immensely talented artists under 35, including the Lithuanian video artist Emilija Škarnulytė. It's about a five minute walk from there to Ca' Corner Regina, the Venetian headquarters of the **Prada Foundation**, where a retrospective of Arte Povera artist Jannis Kounellis has filled the crumbling palace with installations involving blowtorches, carts, and live music.

13 May 2019

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Online



Works from Italian photographer Andrea Azevzu.

[Andrea Azevzu/Contrasto LA Biennale di Venezia](#)

Make your way south, and stop for lunch at Trattoria **Antiche Carumpane** (another seafood-heavy Venetian spot with delicious fried zucchini and a rustic vibe) before continuing onward to the **Gallerie dell'Accademia**, where they're exhibiting work by a living artist for the first time: large-scale portraits and lovely art historical drawings by the German painter Georg Baselitz. Take the vaporetto to San Giorgio Maggiore and start in the church, where the artist Sean Scully constructed a monumental felt sculpture in the nave. Don't miss his contemplative water colors, tucked into a side room on the left. Next door, at the Cini Foundation, check out the show devoted to Alberto Burri's warped plastic and cracked *grasso* paintings. If you have any stamina left, finish up at Punta Della Dogana, where "Laogo e Segni," a group show, includes heavy hitters like Louise Bourgeois and Roni Horn alongside relative newcomers like Hicham Berrada.

13 May 2019

Conde Nast Traveler
Online



Outside the Giardini complex at the Biennale

FRANCESCO CARROTTI/GETTY IMAGES; LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

If you have three days

Follow the above for days one and two. Then hit the exhibitions on the other side of the canal, starting with the Luc Tuymans show at Palazzo Grassi, where the artist has created basically the opposite of the Damien Hirst show that took place there two years ago, with faded and blurred paintings in soft grays and washed-out pinks, and a site-specific mosaic installation on the ground floor. Stop for a quick lunch of fried "morce" crafts, grilled octopus and potatoes at [Bacaro Da Fiore](#), just off of Campo Santo Stefano, before continuing on to [Palazzo Grimani](#), where massive color-washed paintings by Helen Frankenthaler contrast with the building's ornately painted interiors.

13 May 2019

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From London based Jesse Darling

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Other quick tips

There are so many more things happening all over the city. If something catches your eye en route from one place to another, dip your head in. You never know, it could be a fun revelation. Don't even think about wearing heels. You will regret it. Use the "vaporetti" to get to and from the main venues. Try and get a solid breakfast in your system before leaving your hotel. Take photos of the wall text next to work by artists that you liked, to jog your memory later. Once you've seen so much of it, it's really easy to forget what's what, and having a photo with their name and info makes for an easy reference. Most importantly, enjoy the spectacle of it all, and don't forget to stop for a spritz or two along the way.

10 May 2019

Vogue
Online

ARTS & LIFESTYLE

An Insider's Guide To The Venice Biennale

A jewel in the crown of the international art scene, the Venice Biennale runs from early May until late November. Here, seven Biennale experts share their insider tips with *Vogue*— from what to see to where to eat.

by HETIE JUDAH

3 hours ago



Running from early May until late November, the Venice Biennale is the crowning event of the international art calendar. During preview week, curators, collectors and critics inspect the sprawling exhibition programme in a FOMO-ridden panic that they might overlook some obscure highlight. After that, it's open to the ticket-holding public.

The Biennale is not one, but dozens of allied events, ranging from official national presentations through to scrappy pop-ups. Getting a grip on the who-what-where can feel overwhelming – but in a fun, art-saturated kind of way.

At the heart is the Biennale exhibition – a monster of a thing, split over two venues in the Arsenal (a former shipyard complex dating back to the 12th century) and Giardini (a park) to the east of the city. This year, the whole thing is in the hands of curator Ralph Rugoff, New York-born director of the Hayward Gallery in London. Titled *May You Live In Interesting Times*, it promises a celebration of ambiguity, paradox and sleight of hand – the title is a bogus Chinese curse, reflecting a show that responds to “times in which fake news has real effects”, as Rugoff puts it.

10 May 2019

Vogue
Online

Both the Arsenale and Giardini sites also house some of the 90 national presentations that will be staged this year. The Giardini are dotted with permanent exhibition pavilions: here you'll find duo Barbara Wagner and Benjamin de Burca's defiant and celebratory commission for Brazil, Swinguerre, and Laure Prusvost's octopus-inspired film installation for France among the offerings.

At the Arsenale, national exhibitions occupy the far segments, beyond the main biennale exhibition. Here you will find presentations by countries including Ireland – sculptures by Eva Rothschild – and Italy, this year curated by Milovan Farronato, director of the appropriately trend-setting Fiorucci Art Trust. Then there's the first (hotly anticipated) Ghana Pavilion, designed by David Adjaye and featuring works by El Anatsui, Ibrahim Mahama, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye and John Akomfrah, among others.

Don't overlook the national exhibitions scattered around the city itself. Every permanent gallery, museum and foundation in this art-drenched city is also rolling out special exhibitions: at Victoria Miro, new work by Njideka Akunyili Crosby in *The Beautiful Once*; at Punta della Dogana, the poetic group show *Luogo e Segni (Place and Signs)*; and at V-A-C Foundation, the exhibition *Time, Forwards!* exploring progress and speed through art.

Among the exceptional one-off projects this year is ceramic artist Edmund de Waal's *Psalm*, a meditation on exile and language in two parts: an installation in porcelain, gold and marble in a 16th-century synagogue in the Venetian Ghetto, and a pavilion of books by exiled writers.

17 May 2019

FAD Magazine
Online

FAD Magazine Venice Biennale Top 10

May You Live In Interesting Times at the 58th la Biennale di Venezia

Words & Images Lee Sharrock

There are some tough yet critical themes running through the 58th la Biennale di Venezia. The 2019 edition is curated by Ralph Rugoff and inspired by an ancient Chinese proverb which turned out to be a fallacy. Very appropriate for the unsettled times we are living through, where global economic disparity, alternative facts, migration and accelerated global warming are some of the most urgent topics concerning humanity and its future.

For more than 80 years respected Western authors and politicians including Arthur C. Clarke and Hillary Clinton have referred to the 'May you Live in Interesting Times' as an ancient Chinese curse, yet it transpired that the phrase was not an authentic Oriental proverb, but a fabricated statement which could be seen as an 'Orientalism' created in the Occident, or a version of Colonialism that could be viewed as one of the first examples of 'Fake News' before Trump made the term ubiquitous.

17 May 2019

FAD Magazine
Online

The 58th edition of la Biennale di Venezia presents art produced during a Post-Truth Era, and many of the artists selected for the central exhibitions at the Giardini and Arsenale succeed in capturing the zeitgeist of 2019 and addressing the critical issues of contemporary society. In the words of James Baldwin *Artists are here to disturb the peace*, and indeed the artists selected for the 2019 Venice Biennale have produced work which is either polarising or thought-provoking, and many of the artists encourage us to question our own world view. One of the more controversial exhibits is the positioning of the wreck of a ship which sank near Lampedusa in 2015, resulting in the death of over 800 migrants. Swiss artist Christoph Buchel is 'exhibiting' the ship during the Biennale. This repositioning of a tragedy as an artwork could be seen as distasteful, but the main purpose of its display in Venice during the Biennale is to confront humanity with its mistakes, and attempt to stop us burying our heads in the sand about the devastating loss of human lives as thousands of people continue to escape poverty or persecution by crossing the Mediterranean.

There are also some captivating satellite exhibitions outside of the central Pavilions exploring the Biennale's theme, as well as other contemporary topics such as gender disparity and colonialism. The inaugural India and Ghana Pavilions, along with the 2nd edition of the Native American Pavilion, are a positive first step on the long road to redressing the imbalance of the Western perspective of our world and our history.

17 May 2019

FAD Magazine
Online

An intuitive curator, Ralph Rugoff has shaken up the conventional format of Venice Biennale with two parallel exhibitions featuring different work by the same artists: at the Arsenale he presents 'Proposition A', with 'Proposition B' at the Giardini. The artworks selected for the Arsenale and Giardini represent differing modes of each individual artists's practice.

Lithuania were awarded the The Golden Lion for Best National pavilion for 'Sun and Sea (Marina)', a fabricated beach complete with musical soundtrack and sunbathers which provides light relief from some of the heavier themes of the Biennale, while US Artist Arthur Jafa won the Golden Lion for Best Participant for his mammoth sculptures that dominate the central exhibition of the Arsenale.

It's impossible to see everything in the city during the Biennale, with a total of 90 national exhibitions presented around the island on top of the main Giardini and Arsenale exhibitions, but the good thing is that the Biennale di Venezia continues until 24 November, so there is plenty of time for art lovers to visit now that the frenzied Vernissage days are over and the inner sanctum of the art world are onto the next stop on the global contemporary art trail.

17 May 2019

FAD Magazine
Online

3 Ghana Pavilion, Arsenale

Ghana's first foray into the Venice Biennale is accomplished and educational. Titled 'Ghana Freedom' and curated by Nana Oforiatta Ayim, it features paintings, photography, video and sculpture created by Felicia Abban, John Akomfrah, El Anatsui, Lynette Yiadom Boakye, Ibrahim Mahama and Selasi Awusi Sosu. These are all installed within a bucolic structure designed by British-Ghanaian architect David Adjaye.

'Ghana Freedom' takes its name from E.T. Mensah's song composed to celebrate the country's independence. Artists from different generations including Felicia Abban who is in her 8th decade, through to younger artists Ibrahim Mahama and Selasi Awusi Sosu, provide different perspectives on the post-Colonial history of Ghana, and showcase the cultural renaissance of Ghana and its diaspora since independence.

Adjaye's fitting architectural structure was created from Ghanaian soil transported to Venice to recreate the traditional earthen dwellings found in West African villages. Adjaye said of the design: *The pavilion's design is influenced by historic Ghanaian architecture and it creates a cyclical space that connects different generations of artists as a labyrinth. Architecture here is a form rooted in tradition, but it is also something that expands and grows.*

17 May 2019

FAD Magazine
Online

Standout pieces are the exquisite wall coverings created by El Anatsui from recycled bottle caps and copper wires, and Ibrahim Mahama's sculptural creations referencing consumption and waste, and its detrimental impact on the environment.

Until 24 November.

<https://www.abiennale.org/en/art/2019/national-participations/ghana>

13 May 2019

Elephant
Online

The Five Pavilions You Have to See at the Venice Biennale

The prospect of exploring all possible national presentations is more than a little daunting. From a French underwater universe to Ghana's hotly anticipated debut, these are the must-see Venice pavilions. Words by Holly Black



Laure Prouvost, *Deep See Blue Surrounding You / Voir Ce Bleu Profond*, French Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale, 2018. © Giacomo Cozzi

The national pavilions at the Venice Biennale are probably the most famed aspect of the world's oldest art festival. What began as a symbol of staunch nationalism, projecting a thoroughly Eurocentric outlook, has become a point for contention and celebration in equal measure. Increasingly, the teams behind these pavilions attempt to explore the multiple facets of cultural identity and notions of nationhood, all the while vying for attention within a pressure cooker of contemporary art spread across the Giardini, the Arsenale and further throughout the city. The prospect of exploring all possible national presentations is more than a little daunting. Here are five of the best examples we found.

13 May 2019

Elephant
Online



El Anatsui. The Ghana Pavilion, curated by Nana Oforiatta Ayim and designed by David Adjaye, at the 58th Biennale di Venezia, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy. Photograph by David Levine

Ghana

Ghana's national pavilion debut is a tour-de-force, presenting six artists rooted in "Ghanaian culture and its diasporas". The space's earthen architecture is designed by David Adjaye, with work presented in elliptical spaces that manage to feel like vignettes into individual yet interconnected worlds.

Ibrahim Mahama's mixed-media installation *A Straight Line Through the Carcass of History* fills the air with the aroma of dried fish, while El Anatsui's enormous bottle-cap-and-copper sculptures crawl across the walls. Meanwhile, paintings by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, as well as studio photographs from Felicia Abban—widely viewed as Ghana's first female professional photographer—trace a lineage of joyous portraiture.

10 May 2019

i-D
Online

8 must-see exhibitions happening in and around the Venice Biennale this summer

From the first major Italian survey of Armenian-American artist Arshile Gorky to Ghana's star-studded debut pavilion, here are the events you won't want to miss.

By [Marina Romanic](#) | May 10 2019, 4:38pm



On grounds: Ettore Sottsass and Marco Zanuso during the 1986 Venice Biennale at Ca' Rezzonico. Venice, 8 May - 8 July 2019. [photo.com.au](#). Photo: Luke Walker

This summer, as ambitious installations and sprawling exhibitions fill historic palazzos and institutions across Venice for the 58th Biennale (running from May 11 to November 24), we've gathered a selection of the must-see events happening within the official Biennale and at affiliated venues all over the city.

10 May 2019

i-D
Online



Pavilion of Ghana, Ghana Freedom. 58th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, May You Live In Interesting Times. Photo: Italo Fardoullet.

National Pavilion of Ghana, Artigliere of the Arsenale through November 24, 2019

Ghana is making its much-anticipated debut at the Venice Biennale with an all-star cast of artists and organizers. Curated by art historian and filmmaker Nana Oforiatta Ayim, the David Adjaye-designed pavilion takes the form of elliptically shaped spaces plastered with soil imparted from Ghana. In the multi-generational selection of heavy-hitting artists will be installations by El Anatsui and Ibrahim Mahama, a three-channel film projection by John Akomfrah, and a video sculpture by Selasi Awusi Sasi. The pavilion also includes contributions by Felicia Abban, the country's first professional female photographer, and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, the 2013 Turner Prize nominee whose tender portraits of fictional black characters will be the subject of a major survey at London's Tate Britain in 2020.

07 May 2019

WhiteWall
Online

Everything You Need to Know About the 2019 Biennale Arte in Venice

By Whitewaller

The 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, “May You Live in Interesting Times,” will take place from May 11 through November 24, 2019. Curated by Rolph Rugoff, the Biennale Arte 2019 welcomes 79 artists from all over the world to present works at the Giardini and the Arsenale, as well as around other venues in Venice. Special for this year is the decision to have each artist present two works—one at the Giardini and one at the Arsenale—to show the duality of their creativity.

“The 58th 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,” said Rugoff. “Artists who think in this manner offer alternatives to the meaning of so-called facts by suggesting other ways of connecting and contextualizing them.”

07 May 2019

WhiteWall
Online

This year, there are 90 national participations in the historic pavilions at the Giardini, at the Arsenale, and in the historic city of Venice. First-timers include five new countries—Algeria, Ghana, Madagascar, Malaysia, and Pakistan. And for the first time, the Dominican Republic will host its own national pavilion.

"Twenty years have passed since, in this same location, I presented my first Exhibition," said **Paolo Baratta**, President of La Biennale di Venezia. "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[s] 'open' and 'plateau of humankind' as the subtitle for all the following biennials."

09 May 2019

WhiteWall
Online

Whitewaller Venice 2019: The Ultimate Guide to the 58th Biennale Arte Pavillions by Country

By Whitewaller

On May 11, the 58th Biennale Arte kicks off in Venice, remaining open to visitors through November 24. Curated by Ralph Rugoff, this year's edition [entitled "May You Live in Interesting Times"] presents 91 international exhibitors and 79 artists from all over the world, displayed across the Giardini and Arsenale.

09 May 2019

WhiteWall
Online



John Akomfrah
Wheats: Seven Ambiguities of Colonial Disenchantment
2018
Three channel HD colour video installation, 7.1 sound
72 minutes
© Smoking Dogs Film
Courtesy Ullrich Gallery

GHANA

"Ghana Freedom"

Curated by: Nana Oforiatta Ayim

This year marks the first Ghana Pavilion at the Biennale Arte, and it will take place under the patronage of Ghana's president, Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo. Titled after the E. T. Mensah song composed before the nation's 1957 independence, "Ghana freedom" follows the legacy of freedom as navigated by six artists from three different generations. Connected by the space's design, the artists will examine their national culture as well its diaspora: El Anatsui and Ibrahim Mahama will do so in installations, photographer Felicia Abban and painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye in portraiture, and John Akomfrah and Selasi Awusi Sowa in a film projection and video-sculpture, respectively. The pavilion is designed by architect Sir David Adjaye.

09 May 2019

The Spaces
Online

What to see at the 2019 Venice Biennale

From a 'hairy grotto' to a beach opera



Islandic Pavilion 2019. Photography: Elisabet Davidsson

The 58th Venice Biennale opens to the public this weekend, taking over the city with its cacophony of installations and exhibitions that play with space and the senses, and ponder curator Ralph Rugoff's title, 'May You Live in Interesting Times'.

We've rounded up our highlights from the Biennale's storied grounds - as well as a cache of satellite shows worth a visit - from a sobering shipwreck to a beach opera.

THE SPACES

09 May 2019

The Spaces
Online

The Ghana Pavilion



Photography: David Levine

It's the first time Ghana is participating in the international art festival, and the country has enlisted British-Ghanaian architect David Adjaye to design its national pavilion at the Arsenale's Artiglierie. Inspired by the Gurunsi earth houses of northern Ghana and Burkina Faso, the pavilion comprises a series of elliptical spaces that are plastered with earth. It hosts inaugural group exhibition, 'Ghana Freedom', with large-scale installations from Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, El Anatsui, Ibrahim Mahama, Selasi Awusi-Sosu, and John Akomfrah, that explore Ghana's cultural impact.

Biennale D'arte di Venezia, Arsenale, Venice

22 May 2019

Dezeen
Online



10 unmissable installations and exhibitions at the Venice Art Biennale 2019



Natashah Hitti | 22 May 2019

1 comment

With the 58th Venice Art Biennale now underway, design reporter Natashah Hitti picks out the exhibitions, pavilions and installations that are most likely to appeal to architects and designers, from giant hands to an artificial beach.

Having grown steadily since its establishment in 1895, the Venice Art Biennale has become a city-wide event, with many works on show outside the two main exhibition venues, the Giardini and Arsenale.

This year's biennale is titled *May You Live In Interesting Times*. According to curator Rugoff, the theme encourages artists to explore how art can be "a kind of guide for how to live and think" in today's "precarious" world.

"At a moment when the digital dissemination of fake news and 'alternative facts' is corroding political discourse and the trust on which it depends, it is worth pausing whenever possible to reassess our terms of reference," said the American curator.

The responses include a machine that sweeps blood and a refugee boat. Here are 10 of the best:

22 May 2019

Dezeen
Online



Ghana Freedom by David Adjaye
Ghana Pavilion, Arsenal

Architect David Adjaye designed the first-ever Ghana Pavilion, which comprises a series of interconnected oval-shaped galleries topped by a wooden roof. The space is based on traditional Gurunsi earth houses, in a celebration of the country's heritage.

Called Ghana Freedom, the exhibition takes its name from the song composed by ET Mensah when Ghana gained independence in 1957.



10 May 2019

The Art Newspaper
Online

Venice Biennale 2019: the must-see pavilions in the Arsenale

The former shipyards house many of the star national displays this year, here are some of the best.

ALISON COLE, JULIA NICHALSKA, NANNAN MCGEVERN,
JOSÉ DA SILVA and GARETH HARRIS
10th May 2019 06:44 BST



Brazilian Marlene's *A Straight Line Through the Curves of History* (2006-18) made of smoked fish mesh is on show in the Ghana pavilion

Courtesy the artist and White Cube. Photo: David Levens



10 May 2019

The Art Newspaper
Online

Ghanaian Pavilion

Ghana Freedom, El Anatsui, Ibrahim Mahama, Felicia Abbas, Lynette
Yiadom-Boakye, John Akomfrah, Selasi Awusi Sosu

Ghana's first national pavilion is a triumph—and there is a palpable sense of pride as you enter its welcoming spaces. It began as a conversation between the curator Nan Oforiatta Ayim and the architect David Adjaye, with the late and much lamented curator Okwui Enwezor as the strategic adviser and presiding spirit. After what Adjaye describes as a “herculean effort”, it came into being. The mud structure, which is inspired by West-African buildings, is made out of soil shipped from Ghana. It smells of Ghana and gives the pavilion its grounded quality. Its elliptical, interlocking forms give each of the featured artists, all of Ghanaian descent, an individual space, while also setting up links between them. And what a line-up it is: El Anatsui and Ibrahim Mahama contributing large-scale installations; portraits by Ghana's first known female photographer Felicia Abbas and the painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye; the heavyweight filmmaker John Akomfrah with a newly commissioned three-channel film installation; and film-sculpture from Selasi Awusi Sosu—enjoying her first outing in the international arena.

The title is a reference to the song composed by E.T. Mensa on the eve of the country's independence in 1957; Ghana became the first sub-Saharan country to free itself from colonial rule. There is struggle and growth as the consequences of freedom unfold: loss, wanton destruction and restitution; elements of movement and diaspora. In Anatsui's hands, waste is transmuted into something precious (*Earth Shedding its Skin* is made of bottle caps and copper wires), while Akomfrah's film *The Elephant in the Room*, vividly brings all these themes together. The juxtaposition of Abbas's early self-portraits and Yiadom-Boakye's imaginary portraits of people who do not exist reveals the curator's idea that perhaps “the ultimate freedom is the freedom of the imagination”.

15 May 2019

Designboom
Online

the venice art biennale's 15 best national pavilions



the 58th international art exhibition of la biennale di venezia, held in locations throughout venice, italy, opened to the public on may 11. titled 'may you live in interesting times', the venice art biennale will remain open until november 24, 2019. planning a trip? here's what you won't want to miss.

designboom selected the 15 best presentations (listed in alphabetical order) out of a total of 89 national participations in the historic pavilions at the giardini, at the arsenale and in the city centre of venice. all images by designboom, if not otherwise stated.

you might also want to see our dedicated instagram coverage: [@venice.art.biennale!](#)

15 May 2019

Designboom
Online

ghana

felicia abban, john akomfrah, el anatsui, lynette yiadom-boakye, ibrahim mahama, and selasi awusi sosu
'ghana freedom' curated by nana oforiatta ayim
@ arsenale



ghana's first-ever national pavilion at the venice biennale – the show titled ghana freedom, after the song composed by E.T. mensah on the eve of the birth of the new nation in 1957, in the elliptically shaped pavilion, designed by sir david adjaye, examines the legacies and trajectories of that freedom by six artists, across three generations. a triumphant tribute to the country's deep cultural roots. new tapestries by el anatsui, three-channel films by john akomfrah and selasi awusi sosu. self-portraits and studio images of felicia abban, paintings by lynette yiadom-boakye and a cabinet installation 'a straight line through the carcass of history' by ibrahim mahama includes smoked fish, adding a distinct fragrance to the space :-). the pavilion is dedicated to the former biennale curator curator okwui enwezor and will travel all the way to ghana to be shown there. take your time and watch 'the elephant in the room - four nocturnes' (2019) by john akomfrah.

10 May 2019

Galerie Magazine
Online

The 5 Most Talked-About Pavilions at the 58th Venice Biennale

From Laure Prouvost's tunnel to the fake beach at the Lithuanian Pavilion, here are the exhibitions getting all the buzz

By HILY PERLSON
MAY 10, 2019



The 58th Venice Biennale, titled "May You Live in Interesting Times," and curated by Ralph Rugoff, opens to the public Saturday, May 11. In the preview days leading up to the opening, visitors have been robustly speculating on this year's winner of the prestigious Golden Lion, which is awarded to the national pavilion with the most compelling exhibition (the previous award went to Anne Imhof at the German Pavilion). While the jury is still out—the announcement will be made at a press conference on Saturday—several national representations are already getting tons of buzz—not to mention hours-long lines to get in. Here are the five most talked-about pavilions at this year's Venice Biennale, in no particular order.

10 May 2019

Galerie Magazine
Online



Ibrahim Mahama, *A Straight Line Through the Carcass of History 1649; 2016-19*.
Photo: David Lewis, Courtesy the artist and White Cube

1. Ghanaian Pavilion

***Ghana Freedom*: El Anatsui, Ibrahim Mahama, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Felicia Abban, John Akomfrah, and Selasi Awusi Sosu**

This is Ghana's first time participating in the Venice Biennale with a national pavilion. To match the momentous occasion, it enlisted a star-studded group to collaborate, including the late Okwui Enwezor as strategic advisor, and David Adjaye as the exhibition's architect. Curated by art historian and writer Nana Oforiatta Ayim, the museum-quality show is titled *Ghana Freedom*, after the song composed to celebrate the new nation's independence in 1957.

10 May 2019

Galerie Magazine
Online



El Anatsui, *Earth Shedding Its Skin*, 2019
Photo: David Levens, Courtesy of the artist

Works by six artists representing three generations are shown in individual yet interconnected spaces, all but one historical position are newly commissioned. El Anatsui's massive tapestries of cast-off materials are draped over the walls of the medieval dockyards of the Arsenale. Ibrahim Mahama's sculptural installation—consisting of wood, cloth, and smoked fish mesh—resembles a dilapidated library and emits a scent of burnt organic matter.

Recommended: Galerie's Guide to the 58th Venice Biennale

There are new paintings by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye set in dialogue with studio photographs of women from the 1960s-70s by Felicia Abban, Ghana's most prominent professional photographer. The third pairing is between celebrated video artist John Akomfrah, who created a three-channel video installation, and artist Selasi Awusi Sosu's video sculpture, with both artists considering the violence and losses—of life, nature, industry—suffered in the West African country.



10 May 2019

Artsy
Online

The Venice Biennale's 10 Best Pavilions in the Arsenale and Giardini

• Casey Lesser May 10, 2019 12:06 pm   



Installation view of Louis Phlippon's "Grandi Coralli Blu" surrounding "You/We/Us/They/Phlippon/Le/londe," for the France Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale, 2019. Courtesy of Institut Français.

The best way to take the pulse of contemporary art worldwide may be by visiting the Venice Biennale's national pavilions. Representing a "plurality of voices," as Biennale president Paolo Baratta said at a press conference on Wednesday, these spaces are fertile ground for artists to address the current state of their countries and the world at large. And at the 58th Venice Biennale this year, alongside Ralph Rugoff's exhibition, "May You Live in Interesting Times," artists are sending cogent messages to their governments, encouraging community, and telling fresh stories that build empathy. Here, we share the 10 most dynamic and captivating pavilions in the Arsenale and Giardini.



10 May 2019

Artsy
Online

Ghana

Felicia Abban, John Akomfrah, El Anatsui, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Ibrahim Mahama, and Selasi Awusi Sosu, "Ghana Freedom"

Curated by Nana Oforiatta Ayim

Arsenale



Installation view of the Ghana Pavilion, "Ghana Freedom," featuring Felicia Abban, United, Plurality and Self-Portrait (c. 1980-85), at the 56th Venice Biennale 2019. Photo by David Lauma. Courtesy of the artist.



10 May 2019

Artsy
Online

Ghana's first-ever national pavilion at the Venice Biennale is a triumphant tribute to the country's deep cultural roots, through six of its beloved artists. Ghana gained independence in 1957 under President Kwame Nkrumah, a great supporter of the arts, explained curator Nana Ofofiatta Ayim at the press preview. The title comes from a song by E.T. Mensah, an artist Nkrumah supported, "which speaks of the freedom Ghana gained at the time," Ayim said, "and this exhibition explores how that freedom has manifested itself and how it's evolved in different forms and patterns over time."





10 May 2019

Artsy
Online

Architect [David Adjaye](#), who designed the space—a series of elliptical, interlocking galleries—described the artists' efforts as "herculean." And it shows. The first gallery is cloaked in sprawling new tapestries by [El Anatsui](#). The next rooms hold three-channel films by [John Akomfrah](#) and [Selasi Awusi Sowa](#), respectively. A full gallery is dedicated to the magnetic self-portraits and studio images of pioneering photographer [Felicja Abban](#)—widely considered the country's first professional female photographer. There's also a showcase of paintings by [Lynette Yiadom-Boakye](#), who, Ayim explained, creates work to "normalize the black body, in a global canon that has historically excluded it."

And the final space beholds a hulking installation by [Ibrahim Mahama](#), *A Straight Line through the Caravan of History 1649* (2016–19). The wood-and-mesh, cabinet-like structure includes smoked fish, adding a distinct fragrance to the space, as well as a visual link to the Ghanaian delicacy. The pavilion is dedicated to its late strategic advisor, curator [Okwui Enwezor](#). After the Biennale, the pavilion will travel to Ghana to support domestic tourism efforts.

09 May 2019

Sothebys
Online

ART FAIRS

Five Pavilions You Must Visit at the Venice Biennale

BY CO. BLENKINS | MAY 9, 2019

The Venice Biennale is arguably the most important art show in the world. In its 58th edition, this year's Biennale has once again brought together artists from around the world to take the temperature of where contemporary art is today. Here are five pavilions it's worth making a beeline for when you come to Venice.

It is fair to say that in every year the approach taken by each national pavilion varies wildly and they rarely form a coherent statement and that is part of the Biennale's pleasure and strength. This year is no different.

09 May 2019

Sothebys
Online

4. The Ghana Pavilion in the Arsenal is one of the most exciting and most talked about pavilions in the Biennale. It is the first time Ghana have taken part in the Biennale and the result is stunning. They have managed to include a number of artists from installations by [Eli Agyei](#) and Ibrahim Mahama, an exceptional chamber of paintings by [Layette Tiadom-Benkye](#), photography by Felicia Abbar, film from John Akomfrah and a video installation from Selasi Awusi Sossu.



IMAGES FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: FELICIA ABBAR (UNTITLED (PUSH) (MUSE AND SELF PORTRAIT)), ELI AGYEI (704 - @ THE ARTIST PHOTO DANIEL LYNE), SELASI AWUSI SOSSU (SCALE FACTORY II) 2018 @ THE ARTIST PHOTO DAVID LEVINE.

The work is connected by intentionality and energy which is brought together in a space of interlocking walls designed by Sir David Adjaye. The show is called Ghana Freedom after a song by E.T. Mensah composed on the eve of the independence of the new nation in 1967 and the pavilion is an invocation and exploration of what that freedom means.

13 May 2019

Christies
Online



How to spend 72 hours at the Venice Biennale

As the greatest art show on earth gets underway, Jessica Lack makes a whistle-stop tour of the Giardini and the Arsenale to bring you the best of what's on offer — from V to E

13 May 2019

Christies
Online

E is for E.T. Mensah

The title of Ghana's first-ever national pavilion is taken from the 1957 song *Ghana Freedom*, which was composed by highlife musician E.T. Mensah on the eve of the nation's independence from Britain. Inside architect Sir David Adjaye's curving galleries are six artists from Ghana and its diaspora, revealing a diverse artistic culture that includes the paintings of [Lynette Yiadom Boakye](#) and [El Anatsui](#)'s brilliant textured sculptures made from bottle tops and other recyclables. *Ghana Freedom* — [Arsenale](#)



Pavilion of Ghana, Ghana Freedom, 98. Triennale Internazionale d'Arte, La Biennale di Venezia, May 14th 2019. [Viewing from Courtyard La Biennale di Venezia](#)

10 May 2019

Artnet News
Online

The 10 Absolute Best National Pavilions at the Venice Biennale

From Ghana's star-studded debut to Lithuania's delightful and chilling opera about climate change, here's what you won't want to miss.

artnet News, May 10, 2019



Billie Jean King (2018) by Barbara Wagner and Benjamin de Meuse at the Ghana Pavilion at the 2019 Venice Biennale.

The Venice Biennale is often referred to as the art-world Olympics. Countries from around the world descend on the Italian city to show off the best contemporary art their country has to offer—and to compete to win the coveted Golden Lion for best national pavilion. Around 90 countries participated this year, a record high.

Because it's impossible to see all 90, we've rounded up our favorites below. Here are the national pavilions not to miss.

10 May 2019

Artnet News
Online

Ghana



The installation by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye in the Ghana Pavilion at the Arsenale during the 58th Venice Biennale. (Photo by Luca Zanon/Anadolu/Getty Images)

Ghana Freedom

Artists: Felicia Abban, John Akomrah, El Anatsui, Ibrahim Mahama, Selasi Awusi Sosu, and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye

Curator: Nana Oforiatta Ayim

Location: Arsenale

If the Venice Biennale offered an award for rookie of the year, the Ghana Pavilion would undoubtedly win it. Its new space—a series of curved, interlocking chambers designed by architect David Adjaye—houses an all-star lineup of work, including shimmering bottle-cap tapestries by sculptor El Anatsui, a sweeping video tracing West Africa's violent history by John Akomrah, and new portraits of imaginary subjects by painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye. While most of these artists will be familiar to the international audience (and these works offer a chance to see them at their best), the exhibition also offers an opportunity for discovery. A video installation tracing Ghana's abandoned glass factories by the little-known Selasi Awusi Sosuan gestures to the depth of contemporary talent coming out of the country, while gripping black-and-white portraits by Felicia Abban—considered Ghana's first female professional photographer—offer a glimpse of an art historical canon in the process of recalibration.

13 May 2019

Artnet News
Online

Art Industry News: Why Art-World Scammer Anna Delvey Isn't Sorry + Other Stories

Plus, the fight over Robert Indiana's estate intensifies and a fracas temporarily shuts down the Lithuania Pavilion at the Venice Biennale.

artnet News, May 13, 2019

COMINGS & GOINGS

Monaco Prince's Foundation Announces Award Shortlist – The Fondation Prince Pierre de Monaco announced that the three artworks shortlisted for its international contemporary art prize: Yto Barrada's *Tree Identification for Beginners* (2017); **Golden Lion winner** Arthur Jafa's *Love Is the Message, The Message Is Death* (2016); and Rayyane Tabet's *FRAGMENTS* (2016–ongoing). The €75,000 (\$85,000) prize is awarded to a contemporary artist every three years. ([Press release](#))

Jaume Plensa Installs His Sculpture on a Sacred Mountain – The Spanish sculptor has installed a work entitled *Anne* in the atrium of the basilica of Santa Maria de Montserrat in Catalonia. The large mesh sculpture of a girl with her eyes closed will be in place through November. "It is a reflection of the relationship of the earthly individual with the spiritual," Plensa said during its inauguration. ([El País](#))

Lynette Yiadom-Boakye Is Getting a Tate Survey – The London-based artist, whose imagined portraits were a highlight of the Ghana Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, will be the subject of a major survey at Tate Britain next spring (May 19–August 31, 2020). The show will present more than 80 paintings and works on paper by the artist from 2003 to the present. ([The Art Newspaper](#))

10 May 2019

Artnet News
Online

From the Venice Biennale's Highlights to Anna Delvey's Prison Sentence: The Best and Worst of the Art World This Week

Catch up on this week's news — fast.

Caroline Goldstein, May 10, 2019

BEST

Ahead of the Auctions – Next week kicks off the spring auction cycle, where more than \$1 billion worth of art will hit the auction block, including pieces from the collection of late publishing tycoon Si Newhouse.

Letters from Camp – We scouted the pink carpet for the best iterations of the camp aesthetic, from Ezra Miller to Katy Perry. Plus, see inside the Met's Costume Institute, where the curators trace the evolution of camp, from Oscar Wilde to Ru Paul.

Ghana's Debut – The African country's first foray at the Venice Biennale is just the beginning of an international pitch for art relevance.

12 May 2019

W Magazine
Online

Venice Biennale 2019: All the Art That's Making Italy Even More Instagrammable

by Stephanie Edmund

May 12, 2019 12:21 pm

Cover: © Getty Images/Chris Wedel



Even before it officially opened on Saturday, the 2019 *Venice Biennale* had already put Frieze Week to shame. The number of participants may pale in comparison to those who took over *New York City* earlier this month, but the 79 artists featured in "May You Live in Interesting Times," the main exhibition of the biennale's 58th edition, are particularly significant; for the first time, half of those who contributed works to the *Corderie dell'Arsenale*, a former shipyard, and the Central Pavilion of the *Giardini* are women.

12 May 2019

W Magazine
Online

According to the curator Ralph Rugoff, rather than sticking to a specific theme, each of the works *reflects* “the precarious aspects of existence today.” Still, themes have already begun to emerge—particularly in the realm of international crises such as migration, surveillance, and one that’s particularly poignant for the city of Venice: global warming.

But all that’s just the beginning of the biennale’s sprawl over the city. Ninety nations have also set up individual pavilions to showcase their own curated exhibitions—including, for the first time, Ghana, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Madagascar. (For the time being, the entrance to Venezuela’s pavilion is still *pedicled*, amid the political turmoil between the country’s disputed president, Nicolás Maduro, and Juan Guaidó.) Still, even among such company, several artworks are *generating enough buzz* to set themselves apart—and not just in Italy. Here, a guide to those that have managed to *take over Instagram feeds* across the world.

Shoplifter, aka Hrafnhildur Arnardóttir, has transformed Iceland’s pavilion into this year’s selfie destination of the biennale. Her installation, titled *Chromo Sapiens*, is essentially a makeshift grotto shrouded by strands upon strands of synthetic multicolor hair, echoing with a soundtrack by the Icelandic heavy metal band HAM.

In a perplexing and rather disturbing turn of events, the Swiss-Icelandic artist Christoph Büchel has created another selfie destination, in the form of a massive fishing boat. In stark contrast to Venice’s *ostentatious fleet* of superyachts, the vessel that Büchel has displayed is more or less a *mass grave*: the real-life vestiges of the deadliest Mediterranean shipwreck in decades, which claimed the lives of more than 800 migrants when the fishing vessel crashed into a cargo ship en route from Libya to Italy, in April of 2015. Unsurprisingly, its resurrection has already made for quite a bit of controversy.

12 May 2019

W Magazine
Online

This year's Golden Lion winner for national participation can be found near the Arsenale in another former naval site taken over by three Lithuanian artists: Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė, Vaiva Grainytė, and Lina Lapelytė. With the help of 35 tons of Lithuanian sand, they've transformed the venue into a fake beach for *Sun & Sea (Marina)*, a performance piece made up of "beachgoers" singing an opera about climate change.

Another showstopper is *The Death of James Lee Byars*, a gilded tomb created by the titular artist in 1994, while he was dying of cancer, installed at the center of the Église Santa Maria della Visitazione.

On a lighter note, the artists Cyprien Gaillard and Tavares Stratchan have both illuminated the biennale with light-based installations. Whereas Stratchan's contribution of a neon skeleton hangs from the ceiling of the Arsenale, Gaillard's is only fleetingly present; his take on Max Ernst's *Fireside Angel*, painted in 1937 as a critique of fascism, is essentially a hologram.

The Philadelphia-based artist [Alex Da Corte](#) also turned to neon for a portion of his installation, which references figures from Mister Rogers to Bart Simpson to Prince.

Meanwhile, outdoors, Lorenzo Quinn brought his signature monumental hands back to Venice. The last biennale found them rising from the depths of one of the city's many canals to [grasp onto a building](#) as a call to action for addressing climate change. This year, his installation *Building Bridges* evolved into something slightly more hopeful; Quinn hopes that the six 50-foot-tall structures spread the message of "overcoming differences and build[ing] a better world."



Venice Biennale 2019: The 7 Buzziest Things to See

By Heidi Stone
May 10, 2019 3:12 pm
Photo: M. Bennett



The 58th edition of the *Venice Biennale*, opening this weekend, features 90 pavilions and an exhibition, curated by Ralph Rugoff, titled "May You Live in Interesting Times," which takes the Chinese curse as a starting point for a show featuring artists changing our world in a time of political upheaval. But take it from us: The parable of this summer ought to be, "If a pavilion has a long line, it's usually worth the wait." The biennale, which runs until November 24, in Venice's Giardini and Arsenal, and in 21 venues across the sinking city, is more than just a call and response to the daily news cycle. This 2019 edition is filled with dance protests, queerpo video art, an app for climate change, and a rave made of synthetic hair. Here is a roundup of the buzziest artworks, from Ireland, Taiwan, Brazil, and beyond.

10 May 2019

W Magazine
Online

Ghana Freedom at the Ghana pavilion



Installation view of *The Emigrant at the River*, 2019, by John Akomfrah, at the 58th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, 2019. Photo by David Levine.
David Levine

Never in the Venice Biennale's 124-year history has Ghana had a pavilion, until now. For the inaugural exhibition, the Ghanaian-British architect **David Adjaye** has designed six circular rooms with walls covered in clay from Ghana. Six artists are on view as part of "Ghana Freedom," which lifts its name from a song by the 1960s crooner E.T. Mensah, written after the country gained its freedom in 1957. Works include portraits by the painter Lysette Boakye-Yiadom, which hang salon-style; photos by Felicia Abban; and a three-channel video by John Akomfrah, who combines footage from Ghana's countryside with historic moments in African politics. Ghana is the eighth African country to participate in the Venice Biennale (Mozambique is also participating for the first time in 2019).

13 May 2019

Artlyst
Online

Venice Biennale 58: From Climate Change To Automatonics – Paul Carter Robinson

13 May 2019 / Art Catalogues Features, Photo Features / Art Ticks overview, Ralph Ruggoff, Venice Biennale 58 / [M](#) / [f](#) / [W](#) / [D](#) / [E](#)



13 May 2019

Artlyst
Online

My Picks: I'm going to leave the best for last as there were several pavilions of note.



Ghana Pavilion Venice Photo: P. C. Robinson © Artlyst 2019

Ghana Pavilion

Ghana was my favourite it was housed in a space designed by Sir David Adjaye and includes new work by sculptor El Anatsui, video artist John Akomfrah, painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye and Ibrahim Mahama. All created new work for the pavilion.



Madagascar Pavilion Venice Biennale Photo: P. C. Robinson © Artlyst 2019

09 May 2019

Culture Whisper
Online

Venice Biennale 2019



By Emily Spore on 05/2019

The world's oldest biennale is set to open its doors this May with its 58th instalment. Art, in all its guises, will be presented through 91 national pavilions spread across the Giardini and Arsenale, accompanied by dozens of satellite events dotted throughout the city.

With so much to see, the Venice Biennale can be a heady, overwhelming experience. And there's something to be said for getting lost in the crowds or happening upon a church that has been transformed into an art gallery. But to give you an insight into this year's top picks, we have brought together a selection of some of the most exciting projects on offer, in what might just be the art capital of the world.

The Venice Biennale runs from 11 May to 24 November.

09 May 2019

Culture Whisper
Online



What You Need to Know

This is the art world's largest event and this year's title is *May You Live in Interesting Times*. We certainly do, and the art going on display is set to deal with a whole range of issues, from gender and religion to borders and migration.

The Biennale gives countries and individuals the opportunity to express identities and values that are rarely aired in a political forum. Algeria, Ghana, Madagascar, Malaysia and Pakistan will be joining the event for the first time.

Ralph Rugoff, currently the director of the Hayward Gallery in London, will be curating the biennale and American born artist **Jimmie Durham** will be awarded the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement. Durham is an essayist, sculptor, poet and performance artist with a strong interest in human rights.

09 May 2019

Culture Whisper
Online



Ghana Pavilion

This will be Ghana's first national pavilion and it's a strong debut. Exhibiting artists will include *Ej Anatsui*, winner of the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement in 2016, and British painter *Lynette Yiadom-Boakye*, who was shortlisted for the Turner Prize in 2013.

Also exhibiting are renowned filmmaker *John Akomfrah* and photographer *Felicia Abbari*. There will be some newer faces, too. *Ibrahim Mahama* who has exhibited at White Cube and Saatchi Gallery, reuses fabrics to explore globalisation, migration and economic exchange and *Selasi Awusi Sosu* makes video installations that examine the properties of glass.

The pavilion will be titled *Ghana Freedom* after a song composed by *E.T. Mensah* on the eve of the country's independence in 1957.

Image: John Akomfrah, *Woods*, Screen Architecture at Central Documentary, 2010. Photo: Charles HC (cc) 2010. www.charleshc.com, 7.1.2014. © Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License. Source: Gallery

08 May 2019

The Atlantic
Online

Scenes From the 2019 Venice Biennale

ALAN TAYLOR / MAY 8, 2019 / 23 PHOTOS / IN FOCUS

The 58th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, held in locations throughout Venice, Italy, will open to the public on May 11. This year's exhibition is titled "May You Live in Interesting Times," and will remain open until November 24. Gathered here are a few images of artwork and installations created by artists from around the world.



19. A visitor takes a photo with a mobile phone in the Ghana pavilion during a press preview on May 8, 2019.

#

Tiziana Fabi / AFP / Getty



19 May 2019

GQ
Online

Culture

The best things to see at this year's Venice Biennale

This year's Biennale was all about meaning over marketability, and it produced some excellent pavilions and some... not so good ones. Natasha Arselan tells you what to drink in if you head to The Floating City

BY NATASHA ARSELAN
1 day ago

My favourite pavilions

The Brazil pavilion proudly presented *Swinguerra*, a new film commissioned specifically for the Pavilion Of Brazil, displayed on two opposing large screens. The title, taken from a popular dance movement in the northeast of Brazil, was cleverly co-opted by a spin of the spelling, with the ending "Guerra" meaning war. Bárbara Wagner and Benjamin de Burca's work delves into expressions of popular culture in contemporary Brazil and their complex relationship to race, gender, identity, conflict and desire. The artistic duo work collaboratively with the performers in the film that lead them into the heart of communities that are often considered to be on the periphery of society by focusing on a collective dance competition curated by Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro.

Swinguerra presents an empathetic view of Brazilian culture, at a moment of significant political and social tension due largely to the divisive rhetoric of its newly elected president, Jair Bolsonaro. The film shows predominantly black bodies on screen, many of nonbinary gender, who are in many ways the focus of contemporary disputes around visibility, entitlement and self-representation not just in Brazil, but all over the world. The staging of the dance competition was a fascinating, fluid and gripping exploration of heavier issues relating to gender, race, power, masculinity and conflict in ways that are often found in mainstream cultural spaces. I found the work subtle but sincere and the soundtrack overly sexualised in quite literally "banging".



19 May 2019

GQ
Online

The Spanish pavilion presented Itziar Okariz and Sergio Prego, who centred their work around Susan Sontag's essay *The Aesthetics Of Silence*. I found this most refreshing after being bombarded by what felt like every issue/matter that is wrong with the world and society today. It was like coming up for air after being submerged in frenetic waters. The core message of the pavilion can be summarised in the following line: "Not only does silence exist in a world full of speech and other sounds, but any given silence has its identity as a stretch of time being perforated by sound." The simplicity of the video/sound installation of breathing reminded me that I am only human. I am as simple as the breath that escapes my lungs. This experience, in comparison with the Dutch pavilion, who displayed the measurement of one's presence in the form of geometric shapes in a white vacuum, was both startling and humbling. Overall, the Dutch pavilion for me was a little too conceptual. I'd be a little concerned if this was a representation/measurement/timeline of my life on earth.

The Lithuanian pavilion showed a surprisingly impactful piece centred around climate change by artists Lina Lapelyte, Vaiva Grainyte and Rugile Barzdziukaite, who presented an unnerving performance about the beginning of the end of the world. Not a particularly uplifting piece, but penetratingly powerful.



19 May 2019

GQ
Online

Other must-see pavilions

Poland: Roman Stanczak, "Flight".

Ghana: Felicia Abban, John Akomfrah, El Anatsui, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Ibrahim Mahama, and Selasi Awusi Sosu, "Ghana Freedom" (first-ever Ghanaian pavilion).

Georgia: Anna KE, "REARMIRRORVIEW".

Switzerland: Artist duo Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz, "Moving Backwards"; Laure Prouvost, "Deep See Blue Surrounding You/Vois Ce Bleu Profond Te Fondre".

And, of course, Great Britain, who this year presents Cathy Wilkes (former Turner Prize nominee), "Untitled".

17 May 2019

Arch Daily
Online

7 Must-See Pavilions at the 2019 Venice Biennale

04.00 - 17 May, 2019 | by Victor Delaqua

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The Venice Biennale of Arts is a great opportunity to think outside the box. From the collateral events that bring new uses for centenary buildings to the country pavilions in Giardini or Arsenale, an architect can learn a lot by visiting the world's oldest biennial. Here are 7 must-see pavilions if you are visiting Venice before the Biennale ends on the 24th of November.

17 May 2019

Arch Daily
Online

Ghana

Ghana Freedom

Entitled after the song composed by E.T. Mensah on the eve of the independence of the new nation in 1957, this is the first **Ghana Pavilion** at the Biennale. It examines the legacies and trajectories of that freedom by six artists. Rooted both in Ghanaian culture and its diasporas, the pavilion is designed by Sir David Adjaye. Each artist's work is exhibited in elliptically-shaped interconnected spaces that are plastered with locally-sourced earth from classical structures in Ghana. It's an exhibition that differs from all other pavilions through its space and art, a place to immerse yourself in the incredible and exponent Ghanaian culture.



09 May 2019

Art News
Online

Morning Links: Protest at the British Museum Edition

BY *The Editors of ARTnews* POSTED 05/09/19 9:48 AM



To receive Morning Links in your inbox every weekday, sign up for our Breakfast with



Interior of the British Museum.
ERIC POLJHEF/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

ARTnews newsletter

Venice Dispatches

Keep up with *ARTnews*'s continuous coverage of the Venice Biennale— with musings on saltwater sorbet and more. [[ARTnews](#)]

Here's a look at the Ghana Pavilion, which includes works by Felicia Abban, John Akomfrah, El Anatsui, Ibrahim Mahama, Selasi Awusi Sosu, and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye. Akomfrah describes the exhibition as "a charismatic example in a sea of whiteness." [[The Guardian](#)]

17 May 2019

Ocula
Online



GHANA PAVILION: 'GHANA FREEDOM'



17 May 2019

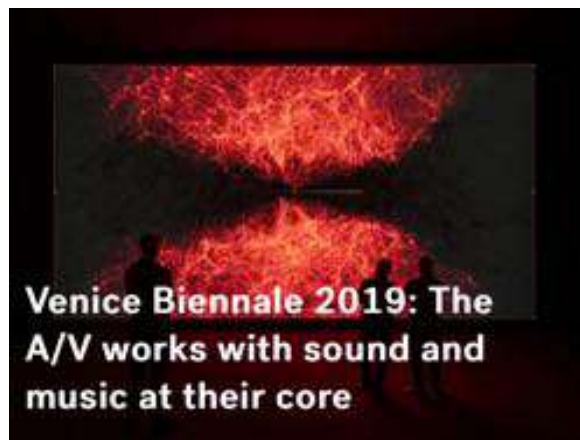
Ocula
Online





16 May 2019

The Vinyl Factory
Online



Written by
Dorothy Feaver

Published on
May 16, 2019

Björk, Larry Levan, and Oneohtrix Point Never jostle in the multi-sensory melee of this year's exhibition.

Prominent space is given to major audio-visual works at the 58th Venice Biennale, curated by Ralph Rugoff of the Hayward Gallery. Watched over by a sphinx-like title, 'May You Live in Interesting Times', the exhibition sets sail on the rising seas of doom, glistening with digital promise. Environmental degradation and social inequality are wretchedly relevant themes, but there is room for expressions of joy, curiosity and contrariness.

Among hundreds of works competing for attention, some of the most absorbing moments are where sound is used demarcate space and hold the viewer. Building on *The Infinite Mix*, curated by Rugoff and The Vinyl Factory at 180 The Strand in 2016, immersive installations substantiate the audio-visual experience. Technology supports the convergence of disciplines, allowing music to serve as a direct dial to memory, and pop cultural material to revitalise contemporary art discourse.



16 May 2019

The Vinyl Factory
Online

So too, it is a delight to experience film in lush, expanded installations with specially designed carpets and seating: Alex da Corte's candy-coloured perverted Americana; Jon Rafman's grotesque gaming universe *Dream Journal*, soundtracked by the inimitable electronics of Oneohtrix Point Never; Laure Provost's magical voyage to Venice in the French Pavilion; Angelica Mesiti's sunken amphitheatre in the Australian Pavilion.

Here are nine works and pavilions to explore that use sound and music to devastating effect.

Ghanaian Pavilion

John Akomfrah, *The Elephant in the Room – Four Nocturnes* (2019)

The jewel among the Arsenale's national pavilions, David Adjaye's design for the first ever Ghanaian Pavilion situates works within curved walls plastered with soil imported from Ghana. Among these, John Akomfrah's three-part video installation is a counterpoint to the liquid graveyard he envisaged in *Vertigo Sea*, which premiered at the 2015 Venice Biennale. The imagery has a dreadful beauty, tracing the interdependence of humans within a hot and lurid natural world of orange skies, menacing dunes, dust storms, bubbling oil, flowers unfurling and crisping at the edges, flocks of birds, elephants and static machinery. A crisp soundtrack envelops the viewer in bird cries, rising winds and crackling fires.

09 May 2019

Art Agency
Online

May You Live in Interesting Times Highlights of the 58th Venice Biennale



El Anatsui is one of the artists featured at Ghent's first ever Venice Biennale pavilion, designed by architect David Adjaye. The Spoon/Crystallization work at the Bass Museum of AHO (2010). Courtesy the artist and Jack Shannan Gallery, New York.



BY Louise Buck
contemporary art correspondent



AND Jane Morris
writer and editor

Published 9 May 2009
31 March 2019



Live from the opening of the Biennale, our intrepid reporters review the best of the art on show so that you know what not to miss. C.B.

09 May 2019

Art Agency
Online

"Ghana Freedom", Ghana Pavilion, Arsenale (11 May-24 November)

Eight African countries are represented at the Venice Biennale this year and among them is Ghana, which makes its biennale debut with a striking pavilion designed by British Ghanaian architect [Sir David Adjaye](#). He took inspiration from the traditional earth houses of east Ghana and has used local earth to line six elegantly curved exhibition spaces, each of which houses one of six artists representing three generations of Ghanaian creativity.

There are shimmering sculptures by [E. Anatsui](#) made from metal bottle tops and a powerfully pungent installation from [Ibrahim Mahama](#) incorporating the metal grates used to smoke fish in Ghana's coastal and riverside communities. [Felicia Abban](#) was Ghana's first professional portraitist and is here showing both self-portraits as well as those of Ghanaian women in both Western and traditional African dress, while [Lynette Yiadom-Boakye](#) has made a powerful new series of figurative oil paintings. There is also a three-channel video installation by [John Akomrah](#) and a video sculpture by [Selasi Awusi Sosu](#). The pavilion will travel from Venice to Accra when the biennale closes. **L.B.**

14 May 2019

Archi Panic
Online

VENICE ART BIENNALE 2019: 7 MUST-VISIT ARCHITECTURAL PAVILIONS

From Ghana to Taiwan, Denmark, US and more. At Venice Art Biennale 2019 - the Olympics of Art - many national pavilions have a strong architectural imprint. Check the ones we liked the most.

Posted



MAY 14, 2019

ARCHITECTURE ART DENMARK
GHANA INSTALLATION IRELAND
ITALY LITHUANIA TAIWAN
UNITED STATES USA VENICE
VENICE 2019



Italy pavilion at Venice Art Biennale 2019 - Photo by Delfino Sixto Legnani, courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

14 May 2019

Archi Panic
Online

Venice Art Biennale 2019 – Archipanic explored the **58th international Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia** and selected 7 must-visit pavilions imbued with architecture. From Italy's labyrinthine installation to Bethlehem's dystopian underground future at the Danish pavilion but also David Adjaye-designed exhibition for the Ghanaian participation and the cells of Venice's infamous Prison Palace turned into a high-tech surveillance system.

Ghana pavilion

Arsenale, [\[Map\]](#)



Ghana Pavilion. Photography by David Lewers.

14 May 2019

Archi Panic
Online

British-Ghanaian architect **David Adjaye** has designed the first **Ghana Pavilion** at Venice Biennale. Elliptically-shaped interconnected spaces imbued with the country's colours and textures showcase the work of 6 artists across three generations capturing the nation's culture and diaspora.

The pavilion is plastered with locally-sourced earth and inspired by the country's traditional structures. "Being able to show the diversity and creativity of Ghana on an international scale is an incredible achievement, and one which showcases the talent that we have to offer," says David Adjaye. [Read more...](#)

21 May 2019

Quiet Lunch
Online

"May You Live In Interesting Times" Venice Biennale National Pavilions: On Empathy

In The Menu, Visual Arts by Rachel Lambert | May 21, 2019 | [Leave a Comment](#)

Listen to Post



The human body with its presence, absence, and agility define the most visceral and most powerful presentations at the 58th Venice Biennale. Titled "May You Live in Interesting Times" and curated by Ralph Rugoff, this biennale was split between Rugoff's curatorial conceit and the various country's presentations at both the Giardini and Arsenale sites of the Biennale. This year's iteration met with several own challenges: for example, despite contributing to the biennale both Algeria and Venezuela failed to open their respective pavilions during the event's opening weekend. In general, national pavilions either went the apolitical route or confronted politics head-on. Those who did approach politics overwhelmingly did so with allusions to bodies: governmental, personal or otherwise. Whether exploring the human form through film, installation, or performance, representations depicting our shared humanity remain integral to the biennale's offerings in our current, fraught political moment. The common thread of empathy linked several of the top offerings at the 58th Venice Biennale.

These evocative artworks on view at the 2019 Venice Biennale draw from our shared experiences as citizens representing many nations, regions and social classes. These works draw from the wellspring of human emotion: doubt and exhilaration, failure and redemption. To paraphrase philosopher David Hume, the Biennale took to heart the exhortation to be... "a philosopher but, and all your philosophy, be still a human." Replace philosophy with art, and you've arrived at focus situating all of the most compelling exhibitions on view for visitors to experience at the 58th Venice Biennale.

21 May 2019

Quiet Lunch
Online

With a fun twist on the "Top 10" format for most biennale exhibitions, we've attributed qualities in a lighthearted manner to our 8 selected pavilions for the 2019 Venice Biennale. This hopefully adds a fun touch to the selections, allowing them a more human "persona." It's key to remember that during trying times of populism, anti-immigrant sentiment and the rise of right-wing governments, it's important to recall our shared humanity, remain humorous and critical and find common ground in empathy. We have highlighted some of the most uplifting and thoughtful national presentations below—make sure to stop by this summer and record your own reaction to these compelling presentations!

21 May 2019

Quiet Lunch
Online

Most Star Power: Ghana Pavilion, "Freedom"

**Felicia Abban, John Akomfrah, El Anatsui, Lynette
Yiadom-Boakye, Ibrahim Mahama, Selasi Awusi
Sosu**

Curated by Nana Oforiatta Ayim



21 May 2019

Quiet Lunch
Online

An astounding presentation as a first foray into the Venice Biennale, "Ghana Freedom" alludes to the song "Ghana Freedom" which celebrates the birth of the nation's 1967 independence. With powerhouse advisors David Adjaye and Osei Serefor (NPP), the pavilion hosts a variety of art world superstars, including O Ananui and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye. Abstract and figurative interest, with Ghana providing a stunning survey of work by the many talented artists working in mixed media, painting, photography and more. A must-see – particularly fitting given Sir David Adjaye OBE's interior designed to reflect traditional homes in Ghana. Each artist has a space to call home, to experiment with medium and representation, and to find their own personal sense of freedom within a wider pantheon of artistic expression.

20 May 2019

Feel Desain (Australia)
Online



The Venice Biennale of Arts is a great opportunity to think outside the box. This year 87 national pavilions can be found in Venice with the participation of Ghana, Madagascar and Pakistan!

Open until 24 November 2019, the pavilions are mainly located in the two main biennale venues: the Arsenale and the Giardini. But there are also others to be found around the city, and a couple that can only be reached by boat.

Here's a couple of exhibitions and where to find them:

20 May 2019

Feel Desain (Australia)
Online

Ghana Freedom

Ghana - Venue: Arsenale



This is the first Ghana Pavilion at the Biennale. The title was inspired by E.T. Mensah's song on the eve of the independence of the new nation in 1957. The exhibition takes a look closer to legacies and trajectories of that freedom by six artists. Rooted both in Ghanaian culture and its diasporas, the pavilion is designed by Sir David Adjaye.

"Being able to show the diversity and creativity of Ghana on an international scale is an incredible achievement, and one which showcases the talent that we have to offer," explained Adjaye.

20 May 2019

The Upcoming
Online

Venice Biennale 2019: The top ten pavilions



20 MAY 2019

ANNA SOUTER

2019's edition of the Venice Biennale brings together pavilions by 50 countries at its two main sites – the waterside *Arsenale* and the picturesque *Giardini* – as well as various old palaces and warehouses across the city of Venice. It's a contemporary art spectacle on a staggering scale, with some of the biggest names across the international art scene coming together to collaborate (and compete) across every imaginable medium. This guide to the top ten pavilions might help you to navigate your way through the madness.

20 May 2019

The Upcoming
Online

Ghana, Arsenale



Image: "Ghana Freedom", featuring Felicia Abban, Untitled (Portraits and Self-portraits), c. 1960-70s. Courtesy of the artist, photo by David Levene

The nation of Ghana is presenting a pavilion for the first time at this year's Biennale. The group show, curated by Nana Oforiatta Ayim, brings together some of the nation's brightest stars in a beautifully pitched space designed by architect David Adjaye. The works are well-chosen, highlighting the diversity of Ghana's history and artistic production at the same time as pointing to a strong sense of shared cultural identity. Highlights include new, enormous bottle-top tapestries by El Anatsui, as well as a powerful three-channel film by John Akomfrah.

L'ARTE

Tutta l'arte alla Biennale di Venezia

Di Giuseppe Perry
3 maggio 2019

La nostra guida per non perdersi tra le centinaia di mostre collaterali in Laguna



Continuano a proliferare biennali in ogni parte del mondo ma ce n'è una che dal lontano 1895 mantiene indisturbata il primato: la **Biennale di Venezia** (dal 11 maggio al 24 novembre, www.labiennale.org). È passato più di un secolo da quando la mostra si teneva nel Palazzo delle Esposizioni, costruito per l'occasione nei Giardini del sestiere di Castello. E ancora oggi la Signora di tutte le biennali gode di ottima salute. Le ragioni della sua longevità sono tre: la prima è che si tiene a Venezia, una delle città più belle, misteriose e affascinanti del mondo; la seconda è che oltre alla mostra principale che si svolge tra i Giardini e l'Arsenale, con 79 artisti provenienti da tutto il mondo, partecipano con i propri padiglioni molti paesi — quest'anno sono 90 con quattro new entry: **Algeria, Ghana, Madagascar e Pakistan**. La Repubblica Dominicana e la Repubblica del Kazakistan partecipano per la prima volta alla Biennale Arte con un proprio padiglione, last but not least, sono centinaia gli eventi collaterali — quelli ufficiali e non — sparsi per tutta la città, che occupano sedi istituzionali, meravigliosi palazzi storici affacciati sul Canal Grande o nascosti tra le miriadi di calli, e location sempre sorprendenti.

Il titolo di quest'anno *May You Live In Interesting Times* è piuttosto ambiguo. Il Presidente della Biennale Paolo Baratta lo spiega così: «Il titolo può essere letto come una sorta di maledizione nella quale l'espressione "interesting times" evoca l'idea di tempi sfidanti e persino minacciosi. Ma può essere anche un invito a vedere e considerare sempre il corso degli eventi umani nella loro complessità, un invito pertanto che ci appare particolarmente importante in tempi nei quali troppo spesso prevale un eccesso di semplificazione, generato da conformismo o da paura». Una biennale anticonformista, dunque? Il curatore Ralph Rugoff, che tiene a sottolineare che la sua Biennale non ha un vero tema, aggiunge: "May You Live in Interesting Times includerà senza dubbio opere d'arte che riflettono sugli aspetti precari della nostra esistenza attuale, fra i quali le molte minacce alle tradizioni fondanti, alle istituzioni e alle relazioni dell'"ordine postbellico". La Mostra – prosegue – si concentrerà sul lavoro di artisti che mettono in discussione le categorie di pensiero esistenti e ci aprono a una nuova lettura di oggetti e immagini, gesti e situazioni". Ma gli artisti non mettono sempre in discussione categorie esistenti? Il mistero del titolo s'infittisce... A voi svelarlo! Gli eventi collaterali che si svolgono durante la Biennale sono centinaia. Ma per non perdersi ne abbiamo selezionati alcuni per voi. Sempre che non siate rimasti "impegnati" nel labirintico Padiglione Italia. Quest'anno la parola d'ordine è retrospettiva.



Ritratto di Jannis Kounellis, Galleria L'Attico, Roma 1972. Foto di Claudio Abate, in mostra alla Fondazione Prada di Venezia

La **Fondazione Prada** nella sua bellissima sede veneziana nel Palazzo Ca' Corner della Regina ospita la prima retrospettiva dell'artista di origine greca **Jannis Kounellis** — quando si trasferì nel nostro paese disse che vivere in Italia era un lavoro — dopo la sua scomparsa nel 2017 (dall'11 maggio al 24 novembre, www.fondazioneprada.org). A **Georg Baselitz**, classe 1938 e maestro del Nuovo Espressionismo tedesco, è dedicata una grande mostra con più di cento opere tra dipinti, disegni, grafiche e sculture, ospitate nelle Gallerie dell'Accademia (dall'8 maggio all'8 settembre, www.gallerieaccademia.it). Le tappe della lunga carriera dell'artista umbro **Alberto Burri**, tra i più importanti protagonisti dell'arte della metà del Ventesimo secolo — dai Catrami ai Sacchi, dai Cretti ai Cellotex — saranno ripercorse nella mostra ospitata dalla Fondazione Cini sull'Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore (dal 10 maggio al 28 luglio, www.cini.it). La **Collezione Peggy Guggenheim** è la sede della mostra che esplora il lavoro dell'artista **Jean (Hans) Arp** con una selezione di numerose opere, tra sculture, disegni, tessuti e libri illustrati (fino al 2 settembre, www.guggenheim-venice.it). Al pittore belga **Luc Tuymans**, Palazzo Grassi dedica una mostra antologica non cronologica che raccoglie moltissime opere che l'artista ha realizzato a partire dalla metà degli anni Ottanta ad oggi (fino al 6 gennaio 2020, www.palazzograssi.it).



Pino Pascali, Particolare di nave con litta, 1965, stampa fotografica. Courtesy Fondazione Pino Pascali, Polignano a Mare

© Massimo Sestini

Palazzo-Cavanis (Fondamenta delle Zattere) fa un omaggio a **Pino Pascali**, uno dei più straordinari artisti italiani purtroppo prematuramente scomparso. In mostra un corpus fotografico scoperto di recente di oltre 160 scatti e alcune delle sue più importanti opere scultoree e ambientali (dal 9 maggio al 24 novembre, www.museopinopascali.it).

Per la prima volta in Italia a Ca' Pesaro, Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna, viene ospitata una retrospettiva dell'artista di origini americane, emigrato in America, **Arshile Gorky**. La mostra ripercorre la sua carriera con 80 opere, dagli esordi nel 1904 fino alla sua scomparsa nel 1948 (dal 9 maggio al 22 settembre, <https://capesaro.visitnove.it>).

09 May 2019

Hong Kong Tatler
Online

Venice Biennale 2019: 10 International Pavilions To Visit



By Oliver Giles

MAY 09, 2019

The Venice Biennale—arguably the most important event on the global art calendar—begins this Saturday. Before the hundreds of exhibitions open and are flooded with a glamorous crowd of art collectors, curators and critics, we introduce 10 national pavilions you should make a beeline for.

09 May 2019

Hong Kong Tatler
Online

Ghana



El Anatsui, *Earth's Skin* (2007). (Courtesy of Guggenheim Abu Dhabi and the artist)

Ghana is one of four countries participating in the Venice Biennale for the first time this year—the others are Madagascar, Malaysia and Pakistan.

Acclaimed architect David Adjaye has designed Ghana's pavilion, which is filled with works by several Ghanaian artists who have received acclaim at home and abroad. Included in the show are paintings by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, photography by Felicia Abban and installations by El Anatsui, whose tapestries woven from unusual materials such as bottle caps have been exhibited at museums around the world.

09 May 2019

The Straits Times (Singapore)
Online

In Pictures: A look at the 58th International Venice Biennale art exhibition

The Venice Biennale, now in its 58th edition, opens to the public on May 11 and runs till Nov 24. One of the main venues is the Arsenale - a former shipyard complex.



A visitor in Ghana's pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale on May 8, 2019. PHOTO: EPA/EFE

23 May 2019

Museum tijdschrift (Netherlands)
Online

Zes must-sees in Venetië

🕒 1 dag geleden ⭐ Recensie 🗨 Bloeiende kunst



Het kunstaanbod op de Biennale van Venetië is elk jaar overweldigend. Maar welke paviljoens zijn nou echt de moeite waard? Robert-Jan Muller ging namens Museumtijdschrift op pad en selecteerde 5 landenpaviljoens en 1 geheimtip.

Zelfs op je gemakkelijkste gympon is het schier ondoenlijk in vier dagen alle nationale paviljoens, palazzi, kerken en andere locaties van de 58ste Biennale van Venetië te bezoeken. Terwijl dit jaar, onder artistieke leiding van Raigh Rayoff, directeur van de Londense Hayward Gallery, het aantal deelnemers in de centrale tentoonstellingen van de Giardini en Arsenale beperkt is tot ruim zeventig kunstenaars. Onder het motto 'May you live in interesting times' staat hij met 'zijn' Biennale stil bij problemen als ongelijkheid, milieucrisis en politieke conflicten. Hoe lukt het de kunstenaars om daar vat op te krijgen?

23 May 2019

Museum tijdschrift (Netherlands)
Online

Ghana
Het
Ghanese
paviljoen
in de
Arsenale
is



Een wandbelegging van El Anatsui in het Ghanese paviljoen.

ontworpen door de Brits-Ghanese architect sir David Adjaye. Met het werk van zes kunstenaars ervaar je een caleidoscoop van Ghanese cultuur die afwisselend ontroerend, overweldigend en betoverend is. Zo worden de interne vrouwenportretten uit de jaren zestig door de eerste vrouwelijke professionele Ghanese portretfotograaf Felicia Abban, gevolgd door een indringende filminstallatie van John Akomrah. Dens adembenemende natuuroptnames van de Sahara en de invloed van milleurampen, gecombineerd met beelden van negentiende-eeuws kolonialisme, drijven op je netvlies geest. De installatie van El Anatsui, een wandbeleg van flessendoppen, werkt in de laatste ruimte als een verstilde bezwering van de heftigheid.

Locatie: Ghanese paviljoen, Arsenale

11 May 2019

Africa.com
Online

Africa Top10 Lifestyle & Travel News

May 11, 2019

3

Ghana's Buzzed-About Venice Biennale Pavilion is a Clear First Step in the Country's Bid to Become a Global Art Destination



11 May 2019

Africa.com
Online

Ghana is making a splashy first foray into the Venice Biennale with a masterful pavilion designed by architect David Adjaye and artwork from a stellar roster of African artists. The Venice Art Biennale, the world's most celebrated international art event, has a history that is inextricably bound up with colonialism. Although states such as China have in recent years begun to present prominent national pavilions, African countries have been thin on the ground. This year, however, that balance is subtly shifting: Ghana has burst on to the scene with an exhibition featuring artists based in the country and from its diaspora. The paintings, photographs, films, sculptures and installations are presented in a series of deftly curving spaces designed by the architect Sir David Adjaye, whose most celebrated work includes the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington DC. He is also the architect of a planned interdenominational National Cathedral of Ghana. The first-ever Ghana pavilion officially opened on Wednesday in the presence of the country's first lady, Rebecca Akufo-Addo. The artists shown include Turner-prize-nominated painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, and Nigeria-based, Ghana-born El Anatsui, who is exhibiting some of his glimmering sculptures made from reused bottle tops.

SOURCES: ARTNET

23 May 2019

In Venice Today
Online

Ghana Pavilion 58th Biennale of Art

The Ghana Pavilion of the Venice Biennale: the artists of the pavilion, the works, the times, the periods, the cost of the tickets and the exhibition venue.



Ghana Pavilion at Venice Biennale of Art - Arsenale, Castello - Venice

23 May 2019

In Venice Today
Online

Exhibition in progress from 11 May to 24 November 2019

The 58th Biennale of Art will open to the public on 11 May 2019. But starting from a few days before the opening there will be the various openings and side events that always suddenly animate the Venetian artistic life. The title of the 58 edition of the Biennale d'Arte is *May You Live In Interesting Times*.

79 artists are invited to exhibit at the 58th Venice Biennale of Art, with a prevalence of women. Among them the 2 Italians Ludovica Carbotta and Lara Favaretto. The first will make a site-specific work in Forte Marghera, inside the building known as the Austrian Powder Mill.

[Go to the page of the 58th Venice Art Biennale](#)

Ghana Pavilion at 58th Biennale Arte of Venice

Title of the exhibition at Ghana Pavilion is **Ghana Freedom**.

News

21 May 2019

Evening Standard
Online

Lifestyle • ES Magazine

Flashbulb! Venice Biennale special

The great and the good of the art world descended upon the 58th annual event

JULIANA PIKORZ · 7 days ago · 3 comments



Like · 2019 MAY 21 · ES MAGAZINE



Shane Westworth / Getty Images

21 May 2019

Evening Standard
Online

Gucci gang

Under Alessandro Michele's artistic direction Gucci have been throwing themselves behind all manner of artistic causes, after chairing this month's Met Gala, they were back sponsoring the Italian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale.

Michele threw a dinner and cocktail reception in honour of the pavilion's curator Milovan Farronato at the Cenacolo Palladiano at Fondazione Giorgio Cini. Guests feasted underneath Venetian old master Veronese's painting "The Wedding at Cana" before throwing some shapes at Venice's oldest disco Piccolo Mondo.

Not laying low

LAYLOW founder Taz Fustok and Mark Wadhwa of 180 The Strand, joined forces to create a series of thoroughly bougie events throughout the week. Jamie XX kicked off the festivities with an exclusive set on Monday night followed by a dinner on Tuesday hosted by the Biennale's curator Ralph Rugoff, the 1,300-strong guest list included Virgil Abloh and art collector Jay Joplin. On Wednesday Amal Clooney, the First Lady of Ghana Rebecca Akufo-Addo, Christian Louboutin attended the opening of the Ghanaian Pavilion, which got shut down by the Venetian police. The week was rounded off on Thursday with one final knees-up at the LAYLOW 180 Palazzo for all the artists and curator's at the Biennale. ■

May 2019

Broadcast
Online

The Venice Biennale's Best Installations, from America to Ghana

VENICE



As the [58th Venice Biennale](#) opens it doors to the world's art aficionados. Tim Marlow, Artistic Director of the [Royal Academy of Arts](#) in London explores highlights around the city, from the pavilions of the Claret, to the Arsenale, palazzos, museum shows and beyond – including Biennale Director Ralph Rugoff's exhibition, *May You Live in Interesting Times*.

08 May 2019

Sothebys
Online

THE VENICE BIENNALE 2019

Artists from the Ghana Pavilion Open Celebrations at the Venice Biennale

BY SOTHEBY'S | MAY 8, 2019

Undeniably a key highlight of the 58th Venice Biennale is the Ghana pavilion, and its heavy-hitting artistic talent were out in force to kick off the week at Sotheby's home overlooking the Grand Canal: The Gritti Palace.

Hosted by European Chairmen, Oliver Barker and Claudia Dwek, guests including Her Excellency, the First Lady of Ghana, Rebecca Akufo-Addo, celebrated the opening of the Ghana Pavilion - a historic moment for being the first time Ghana has taken part in the Biennale.



MAGES FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: HER EXCELLENCY, THE FIRST LADY OF GHANA, REBECCA AKUFO-ADDO AND GUESTS, SIR DAVID ADJAYE & ASHLEY SHAW-SCOTT. PHOTO: LAURE JACQUEMIN/SOTHEBY'S

Curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim was joined by John Akomfrah and Ibrahim Mahama, as well as Sir David Adjaye, the mastermind behind the architectural design of the pavilion, and his wife, Ashley Shaw-Scott.

08 May 2019

Sothebys
Online



OLIVER BARKER. PHOTO: LAURE JACKSON/SOTHEBY'S

After thanking the evening's Presenting Partner and longtime Sotheby's affiliate, the real estate developer Lusha UK, with Sotheby's International Realty presenting N&I Courcouronnes Square, Barker expressed his excitement at hosting some of the key minds behind the inaugural Ghana Pavilion, noting the significance of the country's first ever national presentation at the Biennale.



IMAGES FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: OLIVER BARKER, CHAIRMAN EUROPE AND EMEA; DAVID ZICKMAN, EIP DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING; SABINE NEEMANN AND FIORELLA BALLARÓ, HEAD OF PROPERTIES. PHOTO: LAURE JACKSON/SOTHEBY'S

Barker's speech also recognised a "very special year" for Sotheby's, referring to its 276th anniversary along with its commitment to innovation. "It almost feels like a start up at times," he observed, highlighting the reimagined Sotheby's New York building that has just opened and the upcoming David Karim-designed interactive exhibition, Throneless from Chatsworth.

08 May 2019

Sothebys
Online



PRESENTING PAVINA LUDICA WITH SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY, INVESTING IN 1 GREENWICH SQUARE. PHOTO: LAURE JACQUARD/STOWEY'S

After bringing together a host of the art world's most exciting figures to mark the opening of the biennale, the vernissage week continues with a number of events that highlight not only this spirit of innovation and breaking new ground, but that also explore the history and legacy of this captivating city as the beating heart of the art world. Intimate private dinners, conversations with artists and curators and tours of the Giardini, Arsenale and beyond will follow, allowing Sotheby's clients unrivalled access to all that Venice has to offer.

17 May 2019

Vanity Fair
Online

SOCIAL LIGHT MAY 17, 2019 5:37 AM

Social Light: LAYLOW 180 Palazzo at the 58th Venice Biennale



BY HAZEL BYRNE

LAYLOW founder Taz Fustok and Mark Wadhwa of creative hub, 180 The Strand, joined forces to create the LAYLOW 180 Palazzo, the entertainment epicentre of the 58th Venice Biennale's vernissage week. Straddling Monday to Friday, artists, designers, creative influencers and international figureheads were wined and dined by chef Matthew Ryle and the LAYLOW team.

Highlights included a Jamie xx set on Monday and a dinner hosted by Wadhwa and the Biennale's curator Ralph Rugoff on Tuesday. The 1,300-strong guest list included Virgil Abloh, Karla Otto and Jay Joplin who were treated to a carefully curated smörgåsbord of entertainment by The Vinyl Factory.

Guests of Wednesday's opening of the Ghanaian Pavilion designed by Sir David Adjaye included First Lady of Ghana Rebecca Akufo-Addo, Christian Louboutin, Amal Clooney and, as rumour would have it, the Venetian Police. Thursday's proceedings were marginally more subdued. Jack Peñate treated the Serpentine's Hans-Ulrich Obrist, Yana Peel and many more to material from his latest album.

On Friday, glasses were raised and the baton was handed to Heist gallery, which will be occupying the LAYLOW 180 Palazzo for the remainder of the Biennale. The space will house *She Persists*, an all-female exhibition by artists including Mithu Sen, Maria Kreyz and former actress Rose McGowan, who presents her work for the very first time.

11 May 2019

The Washington Post
Print

A wander of wonders

VENICE (AP) —

(Here are advertisements for it in the Venice Airport as you arrive) has a lot to do with its location, right in the center of tourist Venice, so close that a sign at the doorway tells people who are looking to visit the Doge's Palace palace that they're in the wrong place.

Some of the best specimens of the past few days in Venice have been away from the two main sites of the biennale, exploring exhibitions integrated into the old city, in historic palaces and museums that still retain the character and much of the splendor of Venice's past. It took me months to get when they first see San Marco (it happens to everyone, mine did when I entered a room called the Tribuna in the Palazzo Grimani, a recently restored 16th-century palace. The museum has been

historic collection of antiquities originally acquired by Giovanni Grimani, the son of an elite Venetian family who held important church positions. Surveys of every niche, pediment, groin with busts and masks, and almost every horizontal ledge and protrusion of the ornate classical wall design is filled with some relic of the Roman era or Renaissance era.

I have no idea if Giovanni Grimani was as loud and vulgar as some of the satirical collectors who attacked their way through the crowd on my last day. But the Tribuna offered one of those rare moments when you sense a continuity in the social history of art, that Grimani, too, wanted a room crisscrossed with everything he could acquire and that there has always been a tension in that primal acquisition, between the desire to know and understand and the desire to hold and own.

Upstairs at the Palazzo Grimani is a rewarding exhibition of paintings by Helen Frankenthaler, horizontal canvases from throughout her career, and, yes, too, one printed canvas. The colors of Frankenthaler's

mixed paintings, the occasional thick dabs of paint, and the references to landscape and the work of other painters make for a smart and subtle artist, and the paintings seemed all the more so in the context of the Palazzo Grimani.

I have made several quick trips to exhibitions like this one. A survey of AFRICA (Africa's Contemporary of Bob Rife, event Africa), Africa's Contemporary artist originally from Chicago who formed a black power collective in the 1960s, was held in a Gothic palazzo near the Rialto Bridge and billed as the first major exhibition of this work in Europe. In Venice, a city with a long history of racially charged art and iconoclasm, the "vibrant" colors and fractured, restless general surfaces of the painters felt distinctly different, still a powerful act of resistance within the context of America's aesthetics but also connected to a larger history of human delight in vibrant surfaces.

At the biennale, history isn't one single thing, or idea, but is full in myriad ways. At the Robert Rauschenberg (the history of modernism, of Mondrian and



The rocking horse Archie Gorky made for his daughter.

the De Stijl movement, is felt as a nostalgic residue that needs to be cleaned, compacted and neatly contextualized. In the Australian Pavilion, a complicated and fascinating film by Annette Meier documents the dissolution of old codes, power structures and aesthetic ideologies, dissolved into the liquid

of rhythm and dance and a necessarily (and perhaps imaginarily) steeped of consciousness. At the Swiss Pavilion, artists Pauline Bonifay and Renato Lorenzi use dance to dramatize the idea of going backward, both the backward slide into barbarism that defines our current politics, and the possibility of liberating backward motion.

The heart of the art at the biennale is made by artists who transparently want to belong to the here-and-now of the biennale, art that cries for the immediate attention of the particular social streams that gather here. The best of the art always stands apart. The Ghana Pavilion is a work of smart video, painting, art and design. The best of the best, all the more powerful for the sense of quiet that prevails in architect David Adjaye's design, design the crowd. At the Brazilian Pavilion, a dance film by Barbara Wagner and Benjamin de Sève shows us charismatic young people, grinds, flex, queer and racially diverse, who stand apart from contemporary Brazil, which has elected a homophobic populist who delights in

crude social division. The U.S. Pavilion, which I will review separately, displays the work of sculptor Martin Puryear, who has worked productively and with great insight in his own square for decades.

What will I remember after days of looking at art? The thing that I can't stop thinking about, is something that was probably never meant to be art. In a moving exhibition of the work of Archie Gorky at the U.S. Pavilion, a museum of modern art in a classic Venetian palace, there is a wooden rocking horse he made for his daughter, Gorky, born Artemus, and the Russian proceeds, but his mother's marriage and emigration in the United States in 1920. He changed his name, built an emotional wall around the trauma he had experienced, absorbed the tenets of modern painting like a sponge and became one of the century's greatest artists. He helped himself in 1946. I don't know why I love that rocking horse so much.

alexia.annand@washpost.com
The Venice Biennale Through Nov. 24. biennale.org/en

Venice Art Biennale opens to the public

DPANFP
Venice

The Venice Art Biennale opened to the public yesterday, marking the first day of the six months in which visitors can marvel at the latest contemporary art trends.

Until November 24 works from about 80 artists can be found under the motto *My You Live In Interesting Times*.

Libya was awarded the prize for the best national contribution.

The Golden Lion award for best participant was presented to US filmmaker Arthur Jafa for his video *The White Album*, which deals with racism and hate crime online.

Two German artists won the Golden Lion the last time the event was held in 2017.

US museum director Ralph Rugoff is curating the huge show of contemporary art.

The jury is headed by Singaporean Rosalind, who is the director of Berlin's Martin-Graepel-Stiftung exhibition hall.

Earlier, Rugoff said that in the era of "fake news" and social media echo chambers, Venice's Biennale art fair is challenging preconceived biases by suggesting other ways of contextualising modern society's biggest issues.

"What elevates art into something special is the fact that it re-creates closed mentalities," he told AFP ahead of yesterday's opening.

The theme - *My You Live In Interesting Times* - is an idiosyncratic ancient Chinese verse that Rugoff says succinctly captures the world today, as the news cycle spins from crisis to crisis.

"At a moment when the digital dissemination of fake news and 'alternative facts' is corroding political discourse and trust ... it is worth pausing: whenever possible to measure our terms of reference?" he said in his introduction to the 2019 Biennale.

For the 2019 edition, Rugoff, the director of the Hayward Gallery in London, invited 79 artists to Italy's City of Canals, including for the first time three non-binary artists.

It's a contemporary exhibition: all the works have been made since 2010, and nearly half the artists are aged under 40.

New national pavilions this year include those of Ghana, Maldives and Pakistan.

The artists, some of whom hail from Asia and the Americas that



A visitor takes photos with a mobile phone in the Ghana pavilion during a press preview ahead of the opening of the 58th International Venice Biennale art exhibition. The exhibition, titled *My You Live In Interesting Times*, curated by American curator Ralph Rugoff and organised by La Biennale di Venezia, opened to the public yesterday.

in previous editions, were commissioned to produce works for the Giardini - gardens created by Napoleon in the 19th century - and the Venetian Arsenal complex of former shipyards.

Poland's Roman Sikorski brings to Venice his *Flight*, an aeroplane that the Warsaw-based artist has turned inside out, intended as a metaphorical call for a "reversal of the world".

Dear, by China's Sun Yan and Feng Yu, is a mock-up of the Lincoln Memorial's marble throne being thrashed by a rubber hose inside a glass case - a violent and futile exercise evoking the modern-day attraction to psychotic, phallic power.

The pair, renowned for their provocative creations, are also showing *Can't Help Myself*, a ragged robot in arms which feebly attempts to sweep up a blood-like fluid.

Rugoff said that art "cannot stem the rise of nationalist movements and authoritarian governments in different parts of the world ... nor can it alleviate the huge tide of displaced people across the globe".

"But in an indirect fashion, perhaps art can be a kind of guide for how to live and think in 'in-

teresting times," he added.

The list of some of those forced to flee their homes and attempt the perilous Mediterranean crossing to Europe is powerfully recalled in Swiss-Godoladic artist Christoph Buchser's *Barca Nostra Our Ship*.

Buchser's centerpiece is a rusted fishing vessel that sank in April 2015, killing more than 500 migrants trapped in its hull.

Leaves Present, representing France, offers *Deep Sea Blue*, *Surrounding You*, which features an oceanic roasting fish, and serves as a commentary on forced migration, human connectivity and the pollution of the world's seas.

US artist Martin Puryear, widely regarded as one of the nation's most distinguished sculptors, presents *Isobrye*, a series of works which evoke a battle between darkness and light in a commentary about history and race.

And feminist Austrian avant-garde artist Renate Burhanian brings *Naacolo Ego Non E' Dio*, a grid of 32 hand-blown glass roses, out of which protrude razor-sharp blades, in a reference to society's power structures.

13 May 2019

The Daily Star (Lebanon)
Print

Venice Biennale inspires deep thoughts on political issues

By **Colleen Barry**
Associated Press

VENICE, Italy. Fake news. Migration. Poverty. Global warming. Armed conflict.

Like so much laundry hung out to dry in the lagoon breeze, political issues that light up the news and social media are getting an opening at the 58th Venice Biennale of contemporary art.

Curator Ralph Rugoff, director of London's Hayward Gallery, titled the main exhibition "May You Live in Interesting Times." The title is itself an exasperating piece of fake news, delivered by a British lawmaker as Europe lurked toward World War II as an ancient Chinese curse.

It was, in fact, made up. As Rugoff notes, the curse has "had a presence in political discourse ever since."

Rugoff says contemporary art is particularly effective at unpacking today's appetite of news-seeking crowd, by revealing complexity, ambiguity and conflicting emotions in a way that more traditional media often do not. "Where do we have a space in our culture where the part of being human is given a place?" Rugoff said during a walk-through of the main exhibition. "It really meets in contemporary art."

"Interesting Times" is a split between the biennale's two main venues, in the leafy Giardini and the former Arsenal shipyard. Many of the 79 artists invited to participate make very literal references to present-day woes.

Swiss artist Christoph Büchel transported a hulking smuggler's ship where 700 migrants perished in April 2015 to the edge of the Arsenal, exposing to viewers the gaping holes in the hull that caused it to sink. Chinese collaborator Sun Yuan and Peng Yu constructed a robot that evenly spreads around a blood-like substance. The impact of drug violence is portrayed in Terza

Margulies' razor wire topped concrete wall "Muro Chiodo Inerte."

Ukraine's Zhanna Kadyrova used old ties to create pieces of laundry that are hung outside the pavilion, which Rugoff says serves as a reminder that while inside the building "there is a lot of heavy thinking and challenging art," ordinary life continues in the narrow Voornis alleyways just outside, where flipping laundry is show of its own.

In staging art to comment on worldly events, Rugoff wants to create conversation and the Gianni Castaldi Pavilion emits a vapor that is literally suggestive of thought processes, which in turn

casts a veil of fog over the pavilion's facade, throwing the sobering of that institution into question.

In a Biennale that puts a real emphasis on the interactive experience of art, one has emerged a preferred artistic medium across the exhibition's 90 national pavilions and several collateral events.

Australian artist Angelica Mesiti uses film to examine ways citizens can assemble and communicate against the backdrop of fragile democracy. American Martin Dusek explores liberty through a series of clay, declarative sculptures and installations that are a rebuke against racism and testosterone-

driven power. Israeli artist Aya Ron has created a field hospital to treat social ill from domestic abuse to racism to occupation, which forces hurried visitors to slow down, take a number and wait their turn.

Beyond the Biennale, Serbia's Miroslav Alekovic asks whether empathy created in a virtual reality experience can motivate action against climate change.

The French pavilion also even vapor, meant to create a dreamlike environment for the journey, proposed by Laure Prévost, only the third woman to represent France at the Biennale.

Here is an interactive experience of

files, performance and installations whose details include rows hung outside pecking along a neglected seaside, where Mirzovic glass shoes, representing humanity's castoffs, lie alongside colorful on life. According to curator Martha Karantouni, the work reflects the artist's concern about climate change and ecology.

Mir is also put to effective use inside the Indian Pavilion, where a tribute to the Mahatma Gandhi marks the 150th anniversary of his birth. Artist Jitish Kallit projects a 1979 letter Gandhi wrote to A.K. Hiral, appealing to him to prevent war and addressing him as "friend."

Kallit said the "Dear friend" salutation projects Gandhi's message across time "and asks the reader to rethink what they ... can do to save the world from going to a savage state."

Making its Biennale debut in Ghana, one of only six African nations participating, the pavilion was designed by architect David Adjaye in a series of interconnected units that form a whole, recalling West African dwellings. The late Okwui Enwezor, the 2015 Biennale curator who died in March, served as an adviser. It features all newly commissioned works, from sculpture, to film and photography, which will be exhibited in Ghana after the Biennale.

"Things like this, I guess, [are] a form of self-politics. It is a way of representing your culture in a way other than political and economic," said curator Nana Obosogie Ayiam. "We have so many glorious expressions, so many ways of being in Ghana, but so often in the outside world, you just get one, and very often it is negative."

"This is very much how we represent ourselves to the world in all our plurality, in all our diversity, in all our different layers."

"May You Live in Interesting Times" ran through Nov. 24.



Zohar Al-Ghazali's "After Effects," on view at the 58th Venice Biennale of contemporary art, Venice.

19 May 2019

Sunday Guardian (India) Print

At Venice Biennale, the art's for sale, if you know the right people

The 58th edition of the Venice Biennale, now open to the public, epitomises how conflicted today's art world feels about financial concerns, with organisers making a conscious effort to dispel perceptions that it is a commercial event, writes SCOTT REYBURN.

FEATURE

The Venice Biennale, whose 118th edition opened to the public last week, is the world's biggest and most influential survey of what artists currently make of the times we live in. The event, lasting more than six months, and spread across the whole of this historic city, epitomises how conflicted today's art world feels about financial concerns, for some, particularly in oil-rich nations. "The Biennale" should have the romantic five-yearly quality of a museum. "We must not fall into the trap of letting ourselves be guided by the market," Paolo Baratta, the Biennale's president, said last month in a statement. The Biennale, he added, should avoid being interpreted of "companies with a long-term goal."

So where, then, is the art? The Venice Biennale is the world's biggest art fair, if you just know whom and how to ask.

The main event, held in the Giardini, is the Venice Biennale itself, a series of pavilions, each representing a different country. The United States is represented by African American artist Martin Puryear, whose powerful assemblage sculptures in different media on the themes of slavery and slavery are a contrast with the transcendence of America's 2017 contribution by another star Mark Bradford.

Though Puryear had a solo show at MOMA in 2007, he is not particularly well-known internationally. His works, in the Venice spotlight will surely lead to a critical and financial re-evaluation. But here, as well as elsewhere at the Biennale, art is directly available for sale. "We have placed some pieces, but we would be happy to sell others," said puryear's Tina, a senior director of the New York and Los Angeles gallery Matthew Marks, which represents Puryear and is listed in the American Pavilion's "Leadership Support" team. Tina added that the sculptures were priced between \$1.5 million and \$4 million. Ghana presented its first national pavilion at this Biennale, designed by the distinguished London-based architect David Adjaye. It displayed six presentations by artists that included internationally acclaimed names such as El Anatsui, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye and Ibrahim Mahama, as well as Felicia Akpan, regarded as Ghana's first woman to be a professional photographer. Distinguished by the smell of smoked fish (the smell of Mahama's installation, *A Drought Like This Through the Course of History*), and by the quality of the paintings, sculptures, photographs and videos on display, this is an exhibition where, ostensibly, nothing is for sale. But during the four-day preview, when dozens of museum curators and wealthy private collectors were in Venice, gallery staff members, such as Elizabeth Lubowich, founder of the Octopus Gallery in London, which represents El Anatsui, were visible at the pavilion, as they were at many other national ones. Another first gained international fame at the 2017 Venice Biennale, when Belgian galleryier Axel Verweert audaciously draped a huge metal ball cloth by the Ghanaian sculptor over the facade of the Palazzo Foscari. The gold tapestry, named *Love, Ecosystem*. There were, more unambiguously, stand cloths by Anselm Kiefer, the German painter, and by the technically innovative French sculptor Jean-Luc Moineau on show at the Giardini and the Arsenal. In Venice, a 2019 work that plays a battered 18th-century terra-cotta sculpture of a young girl on a steel table, is priced at 120,000 euros, or about \$150,000, she said.



An installation work at the Venice Biennale 2019.

The high proportion of known quantities (at least in the art world), such as Moineau, George Condo, Henry Taylor, Christian Marclay and Condy, has led some to question just how and how much there is to discover in Biennale's selection of artists. "It's just all the hot stuff," said Johann König, a Berlin dealer who represents Natascha Sadr Assmann, the selected artist at this year's German pavilion.

Others approved of the curator's selection. Patricia Schneider is a German art collector with a foundation in Turin, Italy. She said that 35 of the artists in the group show were represented in her own collection. "It's a confirmation of the choices I made when I was supporting artists at the beginning of their careers," said Schneider to Rebenberg.

For her, this edition of the Biennale felt less commercial than others in recent years. "Art and the market are always connected, but maybe in the past there was too much of market," added Schneider to Rebenberg, who noted that up until 1960, there were actually had more sales offices.

Dealers' eyes in evidence at the Biennale's international group show, but there was a tendency to display artists' works in distinct groupings that at times resembled commercial gallery exhibitions.

Dealers were less in evidence at the Biennale's international group show, but there was a tendency to display artists' works in distinct groupings that at times resembled commercial gallery exhibitions. Five large paintings by Los Angeles artist Njideka Akunyili Crosby hung in a row at the Giardini, just as a show of the recent works was opening at the Vittorio Miro gallery in Venice. Museums are lining up to buy Condy's paintings, but prices for other artists could be obtained by email. Fendi's shoe design (Fendi's Council quickly responded to a request by the technically innovative French sculptor Jean-Luc Moineau on show at the Giardini and the Arsenal. In Venice, a 2019 work that plays a battered 18th-century terra-cotta sculpture of a young girl on a steel table, is priced at 120,000 euros, or about \$150,000, she said.

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10 May 2019

The Washington Post
Online

Venice Biennale: After long days filled with contemporary art, a simple rocking horse leaves the strongest impression



The Ghana Pavilion was among the best of the biennale, a quiet space showing the work of several major artists, including El Anatsui, whose colorful metal tapestry is seen here. (Philip Kennicott/The Washington Post)



By **Philip Kennicott**
Art and architecture critic
May 10

10 May 2019

The Washington Post
Online

VENICE — On my last afternoon in Venice, I decided to make a quick detour on my way back to the hotel to fetch bags. Without a little discipline at the biennale, the city can become an afterthought, a place to grab dinner and down a quick espresso while running between collateral exhibitions and the Giardini, the park where the main pavilions are located. So I wanted to pay one last visit to the Piazza San Marco, just to soak it in, tourists and all, because no matter how many times you see it, the square is still one of the most beautiful man-made places on the planet.



A Venice journal

Three days exploring the Biennale, the art world's biggest gathering

And there it was, just before the Doge's Palace, another sign with the distinctive red box that indicates a biennale venue, this time a collateral event from Taiwan, held upstairs in an old prison that once numbered Casanova among its inmates. The project, called "3X3X6" by artist Shu Lea Cheang, is among the edgier of the biennale offerings, a mash-up of video and narrative, parodies of pornography and a high-tech installation that uses the stories of famous sexual renegades to challenge contemporary uses of surveillance and imprisonment by state power. Casanova X, Foucault X and Sade X (played by a woman who uses a sex toy on camera) are among the figures in the racy and often funny videos (Robert Mapplethorpe's classic photograph "Man in Polyester Suit" makes a comic appearance).

The goal, according to a brochure, is "to create a real-time dissident interface." Once again, as with so many artist statements, it's best to ignore the language and try to overlook the unedited feel of the installation, which like so many of the national pavilions, needs pruning, a stronger design hand and a little more clarity. The delight of this heavily promoted work (there are advertisements for it in the Venice Airport as you arrive) has a lot to do with its location, right in the center of tourist Venice, so close that a sign in the doorway tells people who are looking to visit the Doge's Palace-prison that they're in the wrong place.

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Online



In the Palazzo Grimani, a recently restored 16th-century palace, a collection of classical statuary assembled centuries ago has been reinstalled in the room where it was first seen. The Palazzo Grimani is also hosting an exhibition of the paintings of Helen Frankenthaler. (Philip Kennicott/The Washington Post)

Some of the best moments of the past few days in Venice have been away from the two main sites of the biennale, exploring exhibitions integrated into the old city, in historic palazzos and museums that still retain the character and much of the splendor of Venice's past. If tourist mouths gape when they first see San Marco (it happens to everyone), mine did when I entered a room called the

Tribuna in the Palazzo Grimani, a recently restored 16th-century palace. The museum has reassembled in the Tribuna the historic collection of antiquities originally acquired by Giovanni Grimani, the scion of an elite Venetian family who held important church positions. Statues fill every niche, pediments groan with busts and masks, and almost every horizontal ledge and protrusion of the ornate classical wall design is filled with some relic of the Roman era or Hellenistic era. Hadrian's bust on one wall looks at his boyfriend, Antinous, on another, and a second-century Ganymede is suspended from the ceiling.

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Online

I have no idea if Giovanni Grimani was as loud, aggressive and vulgar as some of the ultrarich collectors with ridiculous eyewear who muscled their way through the crowds on my last day. But the Tribuna offered one of those rare moments when you sense a continuity in the social history of art, that Grimani, too, wasted a room overstaffed with everything he could acquire and that there has always been a tension in that primal acquisitiveness, between the desire to know and understand and the desire to hold and own.

Upstairs at the Palazzo Grimani is a rewarding exhibition of paintings by [Helen Frankenthaler](#), horizontal canvases from throughout her career, and here, too, one sensed continuity. The colors of Frankenthaler's stained paintings, the occasional thick daubs of paint, and the references to landscape and the work of other painters (not just other abstract expressionists but Cézanne and Turner) make her a smart and subtle artist, and the paintings seemed all the smarter in the context of the Palazzo Grimani.

I have made several quick forays to exhibitions like this one. A survey of AfriCOBRA (African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists), African American artists originally from Chicago who formed a black power collective in the 1960s, was held in a Gothic palazzo near the Rialto Bridge and was billed as the first major exhibition of this work in Europe. In Venice, a city with a long history of vividly chromatic art and mosaics, the "cool-ade" colors and fractured, restless gestural surfaces of the AfriCOBRA painters felt distinctly different, still a powerful act of resistance within the context of American aesthetics but also connected to a longer history of human delight in vibrant, eye-catching surfaces. Even more, these artists' use of text and the painful but powerful sense that our identities are woven of words — the ones we chose to use and the ones used by others to define us — makes these works feel extraordinarily prescient given what is happening right now at the Arsenale and Giardini.

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The Washington Post
Online



Anshu Gorky's "Rocking Horse," 1944.
Lorraine Palmieri/© 2018 The Anshu Gorky
Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS),
New York

At the biennale, history isn't any single thing, or idea, but is felt in myriad ways. At the pavilion of the Netherlands, the history of modernism, of Mondrian and the De Stijl movement, is felt as a nostalgic residue that needs to be cleansed, compacted and neatly contextualized. In the Australian Pavilion, a complicated and fascinating film by

Angelica Mesiti dramatizes the dissolution of old orders, power structures and aesthetic ideologies, dissolved into the liquid of rhythm and dance and a momentarily (and perhaps imaginary) utopia of communion. At the Swiss Pavilion, artists Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz use dance to dramatize the idea of going backward, both the backward slide into barbarism that defines our current politics, and the possibility of liberating backward motion, perhaps to some kind of revolutionary "reset" in our relation to each other and world.

10 May 2019

The Washington Post
Online

The worst of the art at the biennale is made by artists who transparently want to belong to the here-and-now of the biennale, art that cloyes for the immediate attention of the particular social stratum that gathers here. The best of the art always stands apart. The Ghana Pavilion is a surfeit of smart video, painting, art and design, the best of the best, all the more powerful for the sense of quiet that prevails in architect David Adjaye's design, despite the crowds. At the Brazilian Pavilion, a dance film by Barbara Wagner and Benjamin de Burca shows us charismatic young people, gender fluid, queer and racially diverse, who stand apart from contemporary Brazil, which just elected a homophobic populist who delights in crude social division. The U.S. Pavilion, which I will review separately, displays the work of sculptor Martin Puryear, who has worked productively and with great integrity in his own space for decades.

What will I remember after days of looking at art? The thing that stays with me, that I can't stop thinking about, is something that was probably never meant to be art. In a moving exhibition of the work of Arshile Gorky at the Ca' Pesaro, a museum of modern art in a classic Venetian palace, there is a little wooden rocking horse he made for his daughter. Gorky, born Armenian, fled the Turkish genocide, lost his mother to starvation and emigrated to the United States in 1920. He changed his name, built an emotional wall around the trauma he had experienced, absorbed the history of modern painting like a sponge and became one this country's greatest artists. He hanged himself in 1948. I don't know why I love that rocking horse so much.

Initially published May 9, 2019

09 May 2019

Al Jazeera
Online

Ghana makes pavilion debut at 2019 Venice Biennale art show

In Venice, 90 countries are making their own artistic statements but one new arrival is already leading the pack.

11 hours ago



The Venice Biennale is an opportunity for over half a million visitors to travel around the world of art without leaving Venice.

Ninety countries are represented by individual pavilions, giving a snapshot of their artistic output.

After 57 years of no presence, [Ghana](#) has its first national pavilion and has brought an extra element of energy to the art competition.

Al Jazeera's Charlie Angela reports from Venice.

13 May 2019

The Daily Star (Lebanon)
Online

Venice Biennale inspires deep thoughts on political issues



 Colleen Barry | Associated Press

VENICE, Italy: Fake news. Migration. Poverty. Global warming. Armed conflict. Like so much laundry hung out to dry in the lagoon breeze, political issues that light up the airwaves and social media are getting an open airing at the 58th Venice Biennale of contemporary art.

Curator Ralph Rugoff, director of London's Hayward Gallery, titled the main exhibition "May You Live in Interesting Times." The title is itself an exemplary piece of fake news, delivered by a British lawmaker as Europe hurtled toward World War II as an ancient Chinese curse.

It was, in fact, made up. As Rugoff notes, the curse has "had a presence in political discourse ever since."

Rugoff says contemporary art is particularly effective at unpacking today's specter of never-ending crises, by revealing complexity, ambiguity and conflicting emotions in a way that more traditional media often do not. "Where do we have a space in our culture where this part of being human is given a place?" Rugoff said during a walkthrough of the main exhibition. "It really exists in contemporary art."

13 May 2019

The Daily Star (Lebanon)
Online

"Interesting Times" is split between the Biennale's two main venues, in the leafy Giardini and the former Arsenale shipyard. Many of the 79 artists invited to participate make very literal references to present-day woes.

Swiss artist Christoph Büchel transported a hulking smugglers' ship where 700 migrants perished in April 2015 to the edge of the Arsenale, exposing to viewers the gaping holes in the hull that caused it to sink. Chinese collaborators Sun Yuan and Peng Yu constructed a robot that evenly spreads around a blood-like substance. The impact of drug violence is portrayed in Teresa Margolies' razor wire-topped concrete wall "Muro Ciudad Juarez."

Ukraine's Zhanna Kadyrova used old tiles to create pieces of laundry that are hung outside the pavilion, which Rugoff says serves as a reminder that while inside the building "there is a lot of heavy thinking and challenging art," ordinary life continues in the narrow Venetian alleyways just outside, where flapping laundry is show of its own.

By staging art to comment on worldly events, Rugoff wants to create conversations and the Giardini Central Pavilion emits a vapor that is literally suggestive of thought processes, which in turn casts a veil of fog over the pavilion's facade, throwing the authority of that institution into question.

In a Biennale that puts a real emphasis on the interactive experience of art, mist has emerged a preferred artistic medium across the exhibition's 90 national pavilions and several collateral events.

Australian artist Angelica Mesiti uses film to examine ways citizens can assemble and communicate against the backdrop of fragile democracy. American Martin Puryear explores liberty through a series of dear, declarative sculptures and installations that are a rebuke against racism and testosterone-driven power. Israeli artist Aya Ben Ron has created a field hospital to treat social ills from domestic abuse to racism to occupation, which forces hurried visitors to slow down, take a number and wait their turn.

Beyond the Biennale, Serbia's Marina Abramovic asks whether empathy created in a virtual reality experience can motivate action against climate change.

13 May 2019

The Daily Star (Lebanon)
Online

The French pavilion also emits vapor, meant to create a dreamlike environment for the journey proposed by Laure Prouvost, only the third woman to represent France at the Biennale.

Hans is an immersive experience of film, performance and installations whose details include two living seabirds pecking along a neglected seaside, where Murano glass shoes, representing humanity's castoffs, lie alongside colorful sea life. According to curator Martha Kirszenbaum, the work reflects the artist's concern about climate change and ecology.

Mist is also put to effective use inside the Indian Pavilion, where a tribute to the Mahatma Gandhi marks the 150th anniversary of his birth. Artist Jitish Kallat projects a 1939 letter Gandhi wrote by to Adolf Hitler, appealing to him to prevent war and addressing him as "friend."

Kallat said the "Dear friend" salutation projects Gandhi's message across time "and asks the reader to rethink what they ... can do to save the world from going to a savage state."

Making its Biennale debut is Ghana, one of only six African nations participating. The pavilion was designed by architect David Adjaye as a series of interconnected units that form a whole, recalling West African dwellings. The late Okwui Enwezor, the 2015 Biennale curator who died in March, served as an advisor. It features all newly commissioned works, from sculpture, to film and photography, which will be exhibited in Ghana after the Biennale.

"Things like this, I guess, [are] a form of self-politics. It is a way of representing your culture in a way other than political and economic," said curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim. "We have so many pluralistic expressions, so many ways of being in Ghana, but so often in the outside world, you just get one, and very often it is negative.

"This is very much how we represent ourselves to the world in all our plurality, in all our diversity, in all our different layers."

"May You Live in Interesting Times" runs through Nov. 24.

18 May 2019

Sunday Guardian (India)
Online

At Venice Biennale, the art's for sale, if you know the right people



Scott Reyburn

Published: May 18, 2019, 1:08 pm | Updated: May 18, 2019, 1:08 PM



An installation work at the Venice Biennale 2019.

The 58th edition of the Venice Biennale, now open to the public, epitomises how conflicted today's art world feels about financial concerns, with organisers making a conscious effort to dispel perceptions that it is a commercial event, writes Scott Reyburn.

The Venice Biennale, whose 58th edition opened to the public Saturday, is the world's biggest and most influential survey of what artists currently make of the times we live in.

18 May 2019

Sunday Guardian (India)
Online

The event, lasting more than six months, and spread across the whole of this historic city, epitomises how conflicted today's art world feels about financial concerns. For some, particularly in officialdom, "la Biennale" should have the commerce-free purity of a museum. "We must not fall into the trap of letting ourselves be guided by the market," Paolo Baratta, the Biennale's president, said last month in a statement. The Biennale, he added, should avoid being suspected of "complicity with selling strategies."

For others, the event is also the world's biggest art fair, if you just know whom and how to ask.

The main event, held in the Giardini gardens and the Arsenale, a former shipyard and arsenal, consists, as usual, of two elements. First, there is a sprawling international group exhibition, featuring a relatively pared-down selection of 79 invited artists or artist partnerships showing pieces in both the Central Pavilion in the Giardini and in the Arsenale.

This year's chosen curator, Ralph Rugoff, director of the Hayward Gallery in London, has given the latest edition the enigmatic title, *May You Live in Interesting Times*. Second, there are contributions from 90 national pavilions.

This year, the organisers have made a conscious effort to dispel perceptions that the Venice Biennale is a commercial event. Labels in the main exhibition no longer credit the dealers who represent the selected artists. The temporary wooden walls constructed for the Arsenale group show have been left unpainted, to avoid it "looking too much like an art fair," Rugoff said on a tour of the exhibition last week.

Over in the national pavilions, the helping hands of commerce are also well-hidden.

The United States is represented by African American artist Martin Puryear, whose powerfully meditative sculptures in different media on the themes of slavery and liberty are a contrast with the exuberance of America's 2017 contribution by market star Mark Bradford.

18 May 2019

Sunday Guardian (India)
Online

Though Puryear had a solo show at MoMA in 2007, he is not particularly well-known internationally. Six months in the Venice spotlight will surely lead to a critical and financial re-evaluation.

But here, as well as elsewhere at the Biennale, art is discreetly available for sale. "We have placed some pieces, but we would be happy to sell others," said Jacqueline Tran, a senior director of the New York and Los Angeles gallery Matthew Marks, which represents Puryear and is listed in the American Pavilion's "Leadership Support" team. Tran added that the sculptures were priced between \$1.5 million and \$4 million.

Ghana presented its first national pavilion at this Biennale, designed by the distinguished London-based architect David Adjaye. It displayed six presentations by artists that included internationally acclaimed names such as El Anatsui, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye and Ibrahim Mahama, as well as Felicia Abban, regarded as Ghana's first woman to be a professional photographer.

Distinguished by the smell of smoked fish (incorporated in Mahama's installation, *A Straight Line Through the Carcass of History*), and by the quality of the paintings, sculptures, photographs and videos on display, this is an exhibition where ostensibly nothing is for sale.

But during the four-day preview, when droves of museum curators and wealthy private collectors were in Venice, gallery staff members, such as Elisabeth Labouche, founder of the October Gallery in London, which represents El Anatsui, were available at the pavilion, as they were at many other national ones.

Anatsui first gained international fame at the 2007 Venice Biennale, when Belgian gallerist Axel Vervoordt audaciously draped a huge metal-foil cloth by the Ghanaian sculptor over the facade of the Palazzo Fortuny, like a gold tapestry ransacked from Byzantium. Three new, more-manageably sized cloths by Anatsui hang in the Ghana Pavilion. Prices for these new start at about \$1 million, according to Gïes Peppiant, a specialist in modern and contemporary African art at Bonhams auctioneers in London.

18 May 2019

Sunday Guardian (India)
Online

Dealers were less in evidence at the Biennale's international group show, but there was a tendency to display artists' works in distinct groupings that at times resembled commercial gallery exhibitions. Five large paintings by Los Angeles artist Njideka Akunyili Crosby hung in a row at the Giardini, just as a show of her recent works was opening at the Victoria Miro gallery in Venice.

Museums are lining up to buy Crosby's paintings, but prices for other artists could be obtained by email. Paris dealership Chantal Crousel quickly responded to a request for the cost of pieces by the technically innovative French sculptor Jean-Luc Moulène on show at the Giardini and the Arsenale. *Donatrice*, a 2019 work that places a hammered 15th-century terra-cotta sculpture of a praying girl on a steel table, is priced at 135,000 euros, or about \$152,000, she said.

The high proportion of known quantities (at least in the art world), such as Moulène, George Condo, Henry Taylor, Christian Marclay and Crosby, has led some to question just who and how much there is to discover in Rugoff's selection of artists.

"It's just all the hot stuff," said Johann König, a Berlin dealer who represents Natacha Süder Haggelmann, the selected artist at this year's German pavilion.

Others approved of the curator's selection. Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, a private collector with a foundation in Turin, Italy, said that 15 of the artists in the group show were represented in her own collection. "It's a confirmation of the choices I made when I was supporting artists at the beginning of their careers," said Sandretto Re Rebaudengo.

For her, this edition of the Biennale felt less commercial than others in recent years. "Art and the market are always connected, but maybe in the past there was too much of a market," added Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, who noted that up until 1968, the event actually had its own sales office.

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13 May 2019

New Zealand Herald
Online

Venice Art Biennale: Travel, migration and fake news

13 May 2019 12:25am 0:5 minutes to read

Due boat: 'Batta Nostra' is resurfaced in Venice, after it sank with 140 migrants on board. Photo / Antonio Calaver, AP

AP
By: Colleen Barry



Fake news. Migration. Poverty. Global warming. Armed conflict.

Political issues that light up the airwaves and social media are getting a very open airing at the 58th Venice Biennale contemporary art fair, like so much laundry hung out to dry in the lagoon breeze.

American curator Ralph Rugoff, director of London's Hayward Gallery, titled the main exhibition "May You Live in Interesting Times," which opens Saturday and runs through Nov. 24. The title is itself an exemplary piece of fake news, delivered by a British lawmaker as Europe hurtled toward World War II as an ancient Chinese curse.

It was, in fact, made up. Yet, Rugoff notes, "it's had a presence in political discourse ever since."

13 May 2019

New Zealand Herald
Online

Rugoff says contemporary art is particularly effective at unpacking the present-day spectre of never-ending crises, by revealing complexity, ambiguity and conflicting emotions in a way that more traditional media often do not.

"Where do we have a space in our culture where this part of being human is given a place? It really exists in contemporary art," Rugoff said on a preview walk through the main exhibit, split between the Biennale's two main venues, in the leafy Giardini and the former Arsenale shipyard.



Venice Lagoon: 'Barca Mistra' fishing boat, which sank with 100 migrants on board. (Photo / Antonio Calanni, AP)

Many of the 79 artists invited to participate in the main exhibition make very literal references to present-day woes.

Swiss artist Christoph Buechel transported a hulking smugglers' ship where 700 migrants perished in April 2015 to the edge of the Arsenale, exposing to viewers the gaping holes in the hull that caused it to sink in the Mediterranean. Chinese collaborators Sun Yuan and Peng Yu constructed a robot that mechanically spreads a blood-like substance evenly around. The impact of drug violence is portrayed in Teresa Margolies' razor wire-topped concrete wall "Muro Ciudad Juarez."

13 May 2019

New Zealand Herald
Online

Zhanna Kadyrova of Ukraine used old tiles to create pieces of laundry that are hung outside the central pavilion, which Rugoff says serves as a reminder that while inside the building "there is a lot of heavy thinking and challenging art," ordinary life continues just outside, in the narrow Venetian alleyways where everyday flapping laundry is show of its own.

By juxtaposing art to provide comment on worldly events, Rugoff wants to create conversations and the Giardini Central Pavilion emits a vapour suggestive in a very literal way of thought processes, which in turn casts a veil of fog over the pavilion's facade, "questioning the authority of that institution."

In a Biennale that puts a real emphasis on the interactive experience of art, mist has emerged a major artistic medium across the sprawling exhibition, which extends into 90 national pavilions and manifold collateral events.



Israeli artist Aya Ben Ron. Photo: Antonio Calanni, AP

Israeli artist Aya Ben Ron has created a field hospital to treat social ills from domestic abuse to racism to occupation, which forces hurried visitors to slow down, take a number and wait their turn. Australian artist Angelica Mesiti uses film to examine ways citizens can assemble and communicate against the backdrop of fragile democracy. And American Martin Puryear explores liberty through a series of clear, declarative sculptures and installations that are a rebuke against racism and testosterone-driven power.

13 May 2019

New Zealand Herald
Online

Beyond the Biennale, Marina Abramovic of Serbia asks whether empathy created in a virtual reality experience can motivate action against climate change.

The French pavilion also emits vapour, meant to create a dreamlike environment for the journey proposed by 41-year-old artist Laure Prouvost, only the third woman to represent France at the Biennale.



Visitors watch the "Moving Backwards" installation by artists Pauline Boudry and Renata Gozzetti. Photo / Antonio Galardi, AP

Hers is an immersive experience of film, performance and installations featuring, among other details, two living white seabirds pecking along a neglected seaside where Murano glass shoes representing humanity's castoffs lie alongside colorful sea life, representing the artist's concern about climate change and ecology, according to curator Martha Kirszenbaum.

13 May 2019

New Zealand Herald
Online

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Kallat said the "Dear friend" salutation projects Gandhi's message across time "and asks the reader to rethink what they ... can do to save the world from going to a savage state."



Ghana pavilion curator, Nana Oforiatta Ayim. Photo / Antonio Calanni, AP

Ghana also is making its Biennale debut, one of only six African nations participating. The pavilion was designed by architect David Adjaye as a series of interconnected units that form a whole, recalling West African dwellings, while the late Okwui Enwezor, the 2015 Biennale curator who died in March, served as an adviser. It features all newly commissioned works, from sculpture, to film and photography, which will travel to Ghana after the Biennale for show.

"Things like this, I guess, is a form of self-politics. It is a way of representing your culture in a way other than political and economic," said curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim.

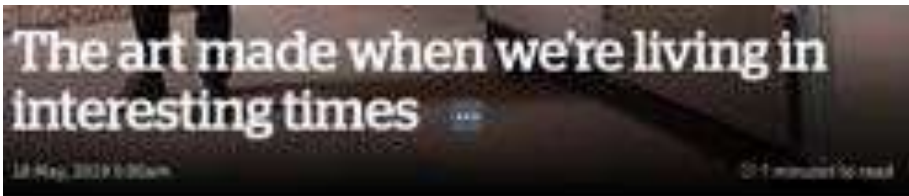
13 May 2019

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21 May 2019

New Zealand Herald
Online



Dane Mitchell at the New Zealand Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2019



By **Corazon Miller**

Reporter, NZ Herald

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Corazon Miller walks through New Zealand artist Dane Mitchell's installation at Biennale Arte 2019 in Venice, uncovering some of the wider themes at the international art exhibition

It could be the list to end all lists.

Two million items long - all things that have vanished from the world, some because of human activity. Travel to Venice in the next six months and you'll be able to see - and hear - the names of those things lost from the world, among them reptiles, mammals, invertebrates, islands, lakes, ocean habitats, national parks and world heritage sites.

It's the work of New Zealand artist Dane Mitchell, New Zealand's representative at the prestigious biennial art exhibition and it's called Post hoc. During the next six months, items from 260 categories of vanished things will be printed on scrolls of paper. These sheets will slowly fill the cavernous space of the old library at the Palazzina Canonica on the banks of Venice's Riva dei Sette Martiri.

21 May 2019

New Zealand Herald
Online

It will be the only tangible, visual representation of the millions of lost, invisible and redundant entities Mitchell has uncovered. Many who see it read it as a political statement on the environment but making the work seems a more organic than contrived process.

Says Mitchell, in true artistic fashion with the philosophical underpinnings of his thinking unfolding: "I don't think it suggests a moral lesson, not for me."

What led to the creation of *Post hoc*, Latin for "after this", were ideas about nature, unseen things and the power of speech.

"I had this realisation I was dealing with things that vanish. But in actual fact we are surrounded by gone things that are more visibly invisible than we might give them credit for," he says. "Vanished languages or former national anthems, lost borders or voids in space - all absences that are in our presence."

It took Mitchell two years to compile the list of now-absent objects. There was no algorithm, no team of statisticians - just Mitchell, three research assistants, Google spreadsheets, html and a text-to-speech program.

The list is comprehensive but it is not, and may never be complete, not least because there's a constant flow of new losses.

"It's ungraspable because the extent of loss is much greater than my lists."

A visit to *Post hoc* begins in the Palazzina Canonica's gardens - themselves a location for which the initial purpose, as a home for the Institute of Marine Science, is gone. A tree is the first thing to draw the attention because it initially seems to be a part of nature - until it becomes evident that it's not.

21 May 2019

New Zealand Herald
Online

Rather it is a man-made telecommunications tower, transmitting recordings of Mitchell's list. These recordings, to be heard via seven such "trees" scattered around Venice, originate from a concrete-walled room on the right side of the main Palazzina Canonica building.

It houses an echo-free chamber with a computer that feeds the audio transmissions to the trees - bringing to life each vanished thing, one by one, for eight hours a day across the biennale's duration. Go into the building, climb the stairs - and pause to think about all the people who, across dozens of years, have also done so - turn left and you'll come to an old library, slowly being filled by the written lists.

Mitchell's work slots neatly into the context of Venice, a Unesco heritage site spread across 118 small islands and 50,000sq m that themselves are at risk of disappearing because of rising tides and pollution.

"[The high waters] have a significant impact on the morphology and landscape consideration of the lagoon due to the erosion of the seabed and the salt marshes," a Unesco report reveals in the impassive language of official-ese.

A walk through Venice shows beauty and ugliness in equal parts: its narrow canals marred with plastic and rubbish that float across the water's surface and litter the cobbled streets. Director of the Institute of Marine Sciences, Rosalia Santoleri, says art serves to bring these issues to light.

"It is a good way to spread knowledge often limited to the scientific community."

She lauded Mitchell's work, which also included lists of extinct marine species the institute had provided. Likewise, Regina Frank, an artist from Germany, was one of the first to see *Post hoc* and described it as fascinating in the light of climate, economic and ecological problems.

21 May 2019

New Zealand Herald
Online

"These problems are too far away in space and time ... we don't really think about it that much as it doesn't touch us," says Frank. "But art touches people on all different levels ... because it visualises the problem."

Environmental and political themes are widespread at the exhibition, which itself has the title *May You Live in Interesting Times*. It includes art from 89 nations.

Canada is represented by Inuit artists' collective, *Isuma*, which highlights the impacts of mining on indigenous people in the country's north. The film *One Day in the Life of Noah Ptugattuk* comes at a time when local concerns about the proposed expansion of mining activities are rising.

For France, Laure Prouvost's *Deep See Blue Surrounding You/Vois Ce Bleu Profond Te Fondre* hints at humanity's mark on the environment. Her surrealist multimedia work includes a sculptural metaphor of an octopus' belly filled with blue water swimming with plastic, old cellphones, paper and other rubbish.

Inside an earth-house pavilion, biennale newcomer Ghana showcases the cultural diversity and beauty it's uncovered in the postcolonial era with its exhibition *Ghana Freedom*. Meanwhile, Japanese artist Mari Katayama, who was born with a cleft left hand and club feet, puts herself at the centre of a series of photographs challenging conventional views of beauty.

Biennale curator, Ralph Rugoff, says the exhibition focuses on artists who "challenge existing habits of thought. In an indirect fashion, perhaps art can be a kind of guide for how to live and think in 'interesting times.'"

Questions are often at the centre of the work on show at the Venice Biennale. In 2015, it was Christoph Buchel turning a church into a mosque; in 1990 a picture of the Pope, implicating the Catholic Church in the Aids epidemic. This year, Buchel is the repeat offender, with his installation of a fishing boat that capsized between Libya and the Italian island of Lampedusa in April 2015, resulting in the deaths of at least 700 refugees.

21 May 2019

New Zealand Herald
Online

It sits, with its rusty blue and red hull, casting a shadow over the Arsenale waterfront, as part of the Swiss-Icelandic artist's Barca Nostra – Our Boat project. The same waterfront it looms above was once the place where Venetian ships, setting sail to trade with other nations or fight wars, started their journeys.

The Art Newspaper listed Barca Nostra – Our Boat as one of the worst pieces at the exhibit, other critics raised questions about its appropriateness at an art exhibition. However, Cettina Saraceno, spokeswoman for Comitato 18 Aprile, an association established to remember those who died in the tragedy, told the New York Times it was a "valid project".

Mitchell's work has also hit the headlines, albeit for less controversial reasons. It's listed by many as a "must-see" at the biennale. Lead curator Dr Zara Stanhope says for an artist there isn't a much better response than questions and debate.

"I don't believe art is about teaching people lessons, it's more to raise people's curiosity."

10 May 2019

The Kansas City Star
Online

Venice Biennale inspires deep thoughts on political issues

BY COLLEEN BARRY, ASSOCIATED PRESS
MAY 10, 2019 11:32 AM, UPDATED MAY 10, 2019 11:33 AM



A woman walks past the wreck of the 'Barca Nostra' fishing boat, which sank in the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 with 700 migrants on board, is displayed at the 58th Biennale of Arts exhibition in Venice, Italy, Tuesday, May 7, 2019. The wreck is part of an artistic installation of *Art*, a project of artist Christoph Büchel. Political issues that excite newspaper, airwaves and social media, such as fake news, migration, poverty, global warming and armed conflict, are getting a very open airing at the 58th Venice Biennale contemporary art fair, which Saturday, May 11, and runs through Nov. 24, 2019. ANTONIO CALAMNI/AP PHOTO

10 May 2019

The Kansas City Star
Online

VENICE, ITALY

Fake news. Migration. Poverty. Global warming. Armed conflict.

Political issues that light up the airwaves and social media are getting a very open airing at the 58th Venice Biennale contemporary art fair, like so much laundry hung out to dry in the lagoon breeze.

American curator Ralph Rugoff, director of London's Hayward Gallery, titled the main exhibition "May You Live in Interesting Times," which opens Saturday and runs through Nov. 24. The title is itself an exemplary piece of fake news, delivered by a British lawmaker as Europe hurled toward World War II as an ancient Chinese curse.

It was, in fact, made up. Yet, Rugoff notes, "it's had a presence in political discourse ever since."

Rugoff says contemporary art is particularly effective at unpacking the present-day specter of never-ending crises, by revealing complexity, ambiguity and conflicting emotions in a way that more traditional media often do not.

10 May 2019

The Kansas City Star
Online

"Where do we have a space in our culture where this part of being human is given a place? It really exists in contemporary art," Rugoff said on a preview walk through the main exhibit, split between the Biennale's two main venues, in the leafy Giardini and the former Arsenale shipyard.

Many of the 79 artists invited to participate in the main exhibition make very literal references to present-day woes.

Swiss artist Christoph Buechel transported a hulking smugglers' ship where 700 migrants perished in April 2015 to the edge of the Arsenale, exposing to viewers the gaping holes in the hull that caused it to sink in the Mediterranean. Chinese collaborators Sun Yuan and Peng Yu constructed a robot that mechanically spreads a blood-like substance evenly around. The impact of drug violence is portrayed in Teresa Margolles' razor wire-topped concrete wall "Muro Ciudad Juarez."

Zhanna Kadyrova of Ukraine used old tiles to create pieces of laundry that are hung outside the central pavilion, which Rugoff says serves as a reminder that while inside the building "there is a lot of heavy thinking and challenging art," ordinary life continues just outside, in the narrow Venetian alleyways where everyday flapping laundry is show of its own.

By juxtaposing art to provide comment on worldly events, Rugoff wants to create conversations and the Giardini Central Pavilion emits a vapor suggestive in a very literal way of thought processes, which in turn casts a veil of fog over the pavilion's facade, "questioning the authority of that institution."

10 May 2019

The Kansas City Star
Online

In a Biennale that puts a real emphasis on the interactive experience of art, mist has emerged a major artistic medium across the sprawling exhibition, which extends into 90 national pavilions and manifold collateral events.

Israeli artist Aya Ben Ron has created a field hospital to treat social ills from domestic abuse to racism to occupation, which forces hurried visitors to slow down, take a number and wait their turn. Australian artist Angelica Mesiti uses film to examine ways citizens can assemble and communicate against the backdrop of fragile democracy. And American Martin Puryear explores liberty through a series of clear, declarative sculptures and installations that are a rebuke against racism and testosterone-driven power.

Beyond the Biennale, Marina Abramovic of Serbia asks whether empathy created in a virtual reality experience can motivate action against climate change.

The French pavilion also emits vapor, meant to create a dreamlike environment for the journey proposed by 41-year-old artist Laure Pruvost, only the third woman to represent France at the Biennale.

Hers is an immersive experience of film, performance and installations featuring, among other details, two living white seabirds pecking along a neglected seaside where Murano glass shoes representing humanity's castoffs lie alongside colorful sea life, representing the artist's concern about climate change and ecology, according to curator Martha Kirszenbaum.

10 May 2019

The Kansas City Star
Online

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Kallat said the "Dear friend" salutation projects Gandhi's message across time "and asks the reader to rethink what they ... can do to save the world from going to a savage state."

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"Things like this, I guess, is a form of self-politics. It is a way of representing your culture in a way other than political and economic," said curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim.

"We have so many pluralistic expressions, so many ways of being in Ghana, but often so often in the outside world, you just get one, and very often it is negative. This is very much how we represent ourselves to the world in all our plurality, in all our diversity, in all our different layers."

11 May 2019

The Sydney Morning Herald
Online

Venice Biennale echoes the social media-magnified ills of our time

May 11, 2019 — 11:02am



 Leave a comment

Venice: Fake news. Migration. Poverty. Global warming. Armed conflict. Political issues that light up the airwaves and social media are getting a very open airing at the 58th Venice Biennale contemporary art fair.



A man looks the Aus Oak sculpture part of 'Liberty' installation by artist Martin Puryear, at the Venice Biennale's US pavilion. [AP](#)

American curator Ralph Rugoff, director of London's Hayward Gallery, titled the main exhibition *May You Live in Interesting Times*. The title is itself an exemplary piece of fake news. It was delivered by a British lawmaker as an ancient Chinese curse as Europe hurtled toward World War II.

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11 May 2019

The Sydney Morning Herald
Online

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An artistic rendering of Lorenzo Quinn's six pairs of arching hands creating a bridge over a Venetian waterway for the 58th Biennale. [View image](#)

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A woman walks past the wreck of the 'Barca Nostra' fishing boat, which sank in the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 with 700 migrants on board, at the 58th Venice Biennale. [View image](#)

11 May 2019

The Sydney Morning herald
Online

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In a Biennale that puts a real emphasis on the interactive experience of art, mist has emerged a major artistic medium across the sprawling exhibition. The central pavilion emits a vapour signifying thoughts, that casts a veil of fog over the building's facade, 'questioning the authority of the institution' Rugoff says.



Israeli artist Aya Ben Ran stands by her Field Hospital installation.

11 May 2019

The Sydney Morning Herald
Online

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Visitors stare at the Deep See Blue Surrounding You installation by artist Laure Prouvost, at the French pavilion. AP

The French pavilion also emits vapour, meant to create a dreamlike environment for the journey proposed by 41-year-old artist Laure Prouvost in her Mediterranean migrant-inspired Deep See Blue Surrounding You installation, only the third woman to represent France at the Biennale.

11 May 2019

The Sydney Morning herald
Online

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The exhibition extends into 90 national pavilions and many collateral events opens on Saturday and runs through November 24.

AP

18 May 2019

The Hindu
Online

FRAMED ART

The Venice Biennale 2019 reflects the interesting times we are living in



Gayatri Sinha

MAY 16, 2019 14:08 IST

UPDATED | MAY 16, 2019 15:03 IST

ARTS

sunday magazine

The grand, the sombre and the marginalised intersect in the latest edition of the earth's greatest art show

18 May 2019

The Hindu
Online

In a part of the Arsenale, a vast hangar-like space that hosts the central exhibition of the Venice Biennale, a giant automated mop created by the Chinese duo Sun Yang and Peng Yu repeatedly sweeps up what appears to be blood on the floor, only to chase it again as it seeps and spills elsewhere. In another corner, a rotating metal gate by Shilpa Gupta, reminiscent of India's vaunted gated colonies, oscillates violently between zero and 180 degrees. Each time it slams into a wall, debris falls and collects like a reminder of acts of exclusion. On the edge of the waterfront outside, a giant boat lies berthed.

Relentless pace

It had borne refugees who fled war-torn Libya before a deadly collision in which 800 people died at sea. Bereft of a label, this entry from Swiss-Icelandic artist Christoph Büchel provokes strong reactions, to the border policies of the West as much as to the times in which we live.

As the greatest art show on earth, the Venice Biennale brings in eager backpackers and billionaires in private yachts to test the pulse of 'global' art. In the country pavilions – mainly in the beautifully laid out Giardini and the large spaces of the Arsenale – the mood is sombre, the concerns around ecology a grim reminder of man's disastrous descent into an unstable nature.

In the Japanese pavilion, a folk tale demonstrates the beginnings of the earth, which is represented by four cosmo-eggs or primal islands before Nagasaki, the tsunamis and the cumulative impact of man on the human environment.

In the relentless pace of the Biennale – you can only see it at a trot – other artist-curators evoke the environment in ways that are irreverent and wildly inventive. In the French pavilion, the artist Laure Prouvost, a Turner Prize awardee, has dug deep into the ground to lay out the detritus clinging to the Grand Canal, even as she has created an octopus's shape to project her whimsical film on.

18 May 2019

The Hindu
Online

That environmental protection may come in quiet forms was best demonstrated by the American pavilion, which 77-year-old African-American artist Martin Puryear lit up with his flowing poetic forms. A collection of individual, breathable pieces that recall birds' nests or shells, each made in natural material, also lend themselves to individual, poetic interpretation. Borne of his travels and work in places such as Iceland and Japan, Puryear seems to lend grace and reflection in the sweeping shift from minimalism to craft and beyond, to the urgent concerns around the environment. In his work 'Swallowed Sun (Monstrance and Volute)' the star appears to be a sunburst of wood, while a dark long, curved tail form seems to consume it. Against the backdrop of Venice as a seat of Catholicism, its grand churches and mercantile history, this piece with its comment on good and evil seems particularly appropriate.

Yet away from the grandeur of San Marco's square and the Doge's palace and the baroque excesses of the rising palazzos on the Rialto, in the small congested alleyways of the city, the stagnant smelly canals speak of another Venice, deprived of funding and decrepit with the passage of time. The rising waters, the influx of tourists, and a lack of resources speak of an alternate history even in the seat of wealth. Ralph Rugoff, the director of the the Hayward Gallery and curator of the Venice Biennale 2019, who gave his artists the challenge of the theme 'May you live in interesting times', creates abundant space for voices from the margins. Rugoff has said in an earlier interview, "Art is about unlearning your habitual responses, so that your imagination can get off its leash, wander around and explore."

As one enters the Arsenale, 'Angst', a photo series by Soham Gupta depicting the poorest of Kolkata, engenders a visceral reaction. Gupta, 29, creates a nocturnal view of the abandoned and the homeless, a surreal Diane Arbus-like incursion into the self and the city. "This work is not about the city at all, though it is... about a night-time hellhole dwelling in my imagination."

18 May 2019

The Hindu
Online

Rocking the world

Rugoff draws upon multiple sites of irresolution – the self-portrait of Japanese artist Mazi Katayama with her amputated limbs, the picture of longing in the midst of teenage bedroom clutter, and the homoerotic staging of the paintings of Nicole Eisenman, who stuns with her stylistic simulations of the old masters and her satiric sculptures of men. Large black-and-white prints of African subjects by Zanele Muholi dot the Arsenale, reminding us that the burden of Africa sits uneasily on the ageing shoulders of Europe.

Issues of race in the superb paintings of Henry Taylor, interspersed with those of Julie Mehretu, and the extraordinary staging in the surreal domesticity of female relations in Kazari Upson's 'There is No Such Thing as Outside', make a chunk of the Arsenale unforgettable viewing.

For some reason, Rugoff then goes careening into techno mash-ups, one after the other, before finally closing his show on a quieter note. It's as if the weight of the world needs to be rocked before it settles into a semblance of normality.

First-time outings by Ghana and India were among the most contemplative of the national pavilions. Ghana stands out with an extraordinarily powerful film, 'The Elephant in the Room', by John Akomfrah, on the great denuding of the African landscape.

Renowned architect David Adjaye used Ghanaian mud to create the interior, while Okwui Enwezor, in one of his last assignments, served as advisor. A powerful installation by El Anatsui, the paintings of Lynette Yiadom-Boakye and the self-portraits of Felicia Abban create a dazzling image in broad strokes.

The smaller scale and intimacy of the Indian experience is brought out by Roobina Karode, curator of the India pavilion, in a selection of works that communicate Gandhi as a concept, as a monument to India's past, and as an ethereal crucible for our own times.

Gayatri Sinhas is an art critic and curator who runs www.criticalcollective.in.



The
Sole
Adventurer

18 May 2019

The Sole Adventurer
Online



BIENNALE NEWS VENICE BIENNALE 2019

Venice Biennale 2019 Opens: Zanele Muholi, El Anatsui in First Photos Online

MAY 8, 2019

As the 58th Venice Biennale opens this week with previews from May 8-10, the art world is on the lookout for what participating artists and national pavilions are showing. Curated by Ralph Rugoff and titled '*May You Live in Interesting Times*', the international exhibition features 83 artists, including collectives, from around the world, "who challenge existing habits of thoughts and open up our reading of images, gestures and situations."

View some of the first exhibition photos from the Biennale showing works by African Artists as reported by [Universes in Universe](#).



The
Sole
Adventurer

18 May 2019

The Sole Adventurer
Online

The Biennale is open to the public from May 11 until November 24, 2019. For more information and to download the program, visit www.labiennale.org.

See the [list of artists from Africa](#) and diaspora showing at the 2019 Venice Biennale [International Exhibition here](#) and read about [Ghana Pavilion here](#). Other African countries participating are Egypt, Mozambique, South Africa, [Zimbabwe](#), Madagascar and Ivory Coast.



Zanele Muholi, Venice Biennale 2019. Photo: Haupt & Binder. Source: Universes in Universe



Installation by El Anatsui, Ghana Pavilion, Venice Biennale 2019. Photo: Haupt & Binder. Source: Universes in Universe



15 May 2019

Wanted Online
Online

VENICE BIENNALE 2019: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WORLD'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS ART SHOW

WE HELP YOU CHOOSE WHAT TO SEE AT THE
SHOW OR ONLINE, IF YOU CAN'T BE THERE

Words: *Fyrene Smith*

15 May 2019



58th International Art Biennale in Venice. The vessel of the Barra Nostra by Christoph Büchel.

Image: Getty Images / Antonio Padellaro / Wikimedia



15 May 2019

Wanted Online
Online

In its 58th iteration, the world's most prestigious art show seems, by all accounts, to continue to function as the best barometer of what's bothering the global mind. This is evidenced by the large amount of artworks on display this year dealing with issues such as climate change, race relations and the terrors of Donald Trump.

If you're in the city during the Venice Biennale's run, which ends on November 24 this year, it's often a challenge to decide what to see among the thousands of artworks but early awards and reviews might help make this easier.

The main exhibition, which represents the work of 80 artists from around the world, is curated by London's Hayward Gallery curator Ralph Rugoff under the title "May you Live in Interesting Times". It features work by South African artists Zanele Muholi and Kemang wa Lehulero.

The Golden Lion for best artist was awarded over the weekend to American Arthur Jafa for his video work *The White Album*, which examines white identity in America through the lens of troubled race relations in the country over the centuries, using YouTube clips, news broadcasts and original footage. It is accompanied by a separate show of his monumental sculptures, made out of tyres and chains, recalling gallows.

The best pavilion Golden Lion went to Lithuania. The country presented an English-language version of an opera first performed in 2017 titled *Sun & Sea (Marina)* created by theatre director Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė, playwright Vaiva Grainytė and composer Lina Lapelytė. The performance focuses on a group of holidaymakers on a beach and has been described as a warning of the dangers of climate change and "a biting critique of leisure".



15 May 2019

Wanted Online
Online

There's also the much-talked-about, and generally criticised, work by Christoph Buchel *Barca Nostra* (Our Boat). The Swiss-Icelandic artist transported the wreck of a ship, which sank off the coast of Libya in 2015 killing 800 refugees, to the biennale, where it stands as an intended reminder of the plight of its victims but which has been criticised for its morbidity and lack of empathy. It has served less as a powerful record of the migrant crisis and more as a callous background for the taking of selfies and the subject of gossip for the café customers sitting opposite it.



18th International Art Biennale in Venice, The wreck of the *Barca Nostra* by Christoph Buchel.

Image: Getty Images / Emma Robinson / Anzenberger

The South African Pavilion, curated by Nkule Mabaso and Nomusa Makhubu under the title "The Stronger we Become", features the work of Tracey Rose, Dineo Seshee Bopape and Mawande ka Zenzile.



15 May 2019

Wanted Online
Online

Ghana's first pavilion at the biennale has been commended for its strong showing of the work of painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, filmmaker John Akomfrah, sculptor El Anatsui and portraits from the 1960s by the country's first female professional photographer Felicia Abban.



58th International Art Biennale in Venice, installation by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye in the Ghana Pavilion.

Image: Getty Images / Luca Dotti / Anzenberg

Finally, there's the American pavilion, which highlights the work of 70-year-old Martin Puryear, whose huge outdoor sculptures and wooden works reference the country's history of violence from Italian slaves to the civil war and Vietnam.

10 May 2019

True Africa
Online



By [Claude Grunitzky](#) | [@claudegrunitzky](#)
May 10, 2019



One highlight of the 58th edition of the Venice Biennale was the opening of the Ghana pavilion in the morning of May 8th. The room, in the Arsenale area of the Biennale, was packed with curators, critics, collectors, artists and museum directors from all over the world, perhaps a marker of the fact that it was a first for the country, which gained independence from Britain in 1957.

With the title of this year's international art exhibition referring to "interesting times," it was refreshing to see some of the most vibrant practitioners in the creative scene of one of Africa's fastest growing nations present new ideas and a new worldview without conforming to the norms of Western creation. However they felt about the moment, everyone seemed to be rolling on and just doing the work.

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In this case, defying expectations meant displaying the power and persistence of big visions while presenting—in media ranging from film to painting to photography to sculpture to installation—the work of El Anatsui (including the pieces shown below), Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Felicia Abban, Selasi Awusi Sosu, Ibrahim Mahama and John Akomfrah in curved galleries that were designed by the architect Sir David Adjaye. Being in that room evoked feelings of pride in Africa's past, coupled with an acceptance that things are meant to change.

Adjaye is known for crafting the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington DC, and also a series of unorthodox art spaces, including (a personal favorite) a chapel-like environment for the Nigerian-British artist Chris Ofili's 2002 installation called *The Upper Room*.

At the launch presentation, the curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim paid tribute to the late Okwui Enwezor, a Nigerian who had consulted on the project when it was first discussed as a viable option. Adjaye spoke of the team's "Herculean efforts" and the first lady of Ghana, Rebecca Akufo-Addo spoke with great pride about her country, and how far it had come. She also pointed to the growing numbers of women involved in the Venice Biennale.

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David Adjaye creates earth-house pavilion for Ghana at Venice Art Biennale



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Curving galleries plastered with earth characterise Ghana Freedom, the country's national pavilion at the 58th Venice Art Biennale, designed by architect David Adjaye.

Now open in the Venetian Arsenal, Ghana Freedom marks the first time that the country has presented at the prestigious art event.

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Modelled on traditional Gurunsi earth houses, the Ghana pavilion comprises a series of interconnected oval-shaped galleries topped by a wooden roof. It contains artwork that celebrate the country's heritage and culture.

"Being able to show the diversity and creativity of Ghana on an international scale is an incredible achievement, and one which showcases the talent that we have to offer," explained Adjaye.

"The commitment and inspiration shown by the president in commissioning this pavilion is a testament to what our country has to offer the art community."

The narrative and name for the pavilion originates from the song Ghana Freedom, which was written by E T Mensah in 1957 ahead of the country's independence from the UK.

Curated by film maker Nana Oforiatta Ayim, the exhibits "examine the legacies and trajectories" of this time.

Visitors can expect to see large-scale installations by El Anatsui and Ibrahim Mahama, alongside portraits by Felicia Abben and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, a film by John Akomfrah and a video sculpture by Selasi Awusi Sosu.

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The artwork adorns the walls of the galleries to evoke the intricate mud and chalk paintings found in the Gurunsi dwellings.

"It means a lot for us to have our first national pavilion at such a narrative-building event as the Venice Biennale, especially at this moment," explained Ayim.

"The conversation about nations is broadening in the face of issues of migrations; of us redefining our connections to our throughout our 'year of return', of discussing what it might mean to have our cultural objects returned, and how we thus might redefine ourselves in the world, and of finally moving out of the 'postcolonial' moment into one we have yet to envision."

David Adjaye is a British-Ghanaian architect and founder of Adjaye Associates, which has studios in both London and New York.

Alongside the Ghana Pavilion, the practice has recently completed the pink Ruby City art centre in Texas, and the African American Museum in Washington DC, which featured in his Making Memory exhibition at London's Design Museum.

Documenting Ghana

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Success at Ghana's Pavilion at the Venice Art Biennale ...

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(Featured image: Installation 'A STRAIGHT LINE THROUGH THE CARCASS OF HISTORY 1649' by Ibrahim Mahama. Photo Credit: David Levene)

... and the lack of publicity in the Ghanaian press!

Coming from an art background myself, I know how important the Venice Art Biennale is to artists and art lovers worldwide. Dubbed as the 'olympics of the art world', countries have been actively promoting their art, starting with Italy in 1895. This was followed up by various national pavilions from around the world. African countries have only recently started to have their presence at the Venice Biennale with a great presence in the 2017 57th edition, including Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, Tunisia, Zimbabwe, and Kenya. Ghana joined with their very own pavilion this year, at the 58th edition.

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For its very first time, Ghana made a great presence at the Venice Art Biennale this year (2019), with many press and art institutions/ magazines/ agencies naming it as one of the top 5 pavilions to visit (CNN, BBC, The Art Newspaper, Artsy, the Guardian, FinestreSullArte, Aesthetica Magazine, amongst many others). The Ghana National pavilion, which is situated at the Arsenale, is curated by the Accra-based Nana Oforiatta Ayim (with the help of the late strategic advisor, Nigerian curator Okwui Enwezor), is designed by British-Ghanaian architect David Adjaye, and it features artists Felicia Abban, John Akomfrah, El Anatsui, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Ibrahim Mahama and Selasi Awusi Sosu- all Ghanaian or from Ghanaian descent.

Entitled 'Ghana Freedom', taken from a song composed by Ghanaian highlife musician, E.T. Mensah, on the eve of the country's independence in 1957, the exhibition explores how its independence influenced the works of Ghanaian and diaspora artists by including artists from different generations- from Ibrahim Mahama (88), to Selasi Awusi Sosu (43) and Felicia Abban (64)- as well as having a balance of female and male artists, half of whom are rooted in Ghana and half in the diaspora.

Although the pavilion will travel to Ghana to support domestic tourism efforts, after the Biennale ends in November, I find it very odd that none of the Ghanaian national news agencies put any effort in publishing the success of Ghana's pavilion at the 58th Venice Art Biennale (at least this was my conclusion after searching for such press releases online). I was told that press releases like this do not attract the masses to visit the news portals because the majority of the Ghanaians do not appreciate art. How about being the medium to educate Ghanaians to change this mindset, I say? After all, I believe that Ghanaians are a very patriotic nation and such success should make each and every Ghanaian proud!

For more information about Ghana's Pavilion at the Venice Pavilion, please visit [here](#) and like their [facebook page](#).

If you consider yourself a proud Ghanaian upon reading this, do share and let more Ghanaians know about the success the Ghanaian National Pavilion has had. After all, this success will bring a lot of tourism to Ghana in the years to come!