



## Media Release April 2019

### Venezia Pavilion, Giardini 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

Exhibition: 11 May to 24 November 2019

Preview: 8-10 May 2019 (opening Venezia Pavilion: 10 May, 10:30am)

Presentation available to view from Tuesday 7 May



A group of seven international artists with strong creative ties to the Italian art scene were selected to represent the city itself in the Venezia Pavilion for the 58th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia: **Mirko Borsche**, **Lorenzo Dante Ferro**, **Sidival Fila**, **Ferzan Özpetek**, **Plastique Fantastique**, **Fabio Viale** and **Giorgos Koumentakis**. Curated by **Giovanna Zabotti**, based in Venice, in collaboration with artistic directors **Alessandro Gallo** and **Stelios Kois**, the exhibition will present the artists' collective response to their individual experiences of the city of Venice. The Pavilion Commissioner is **Maurizio Carlin**.

The Venezia Pavilion this year is the first to transcend the confines of the pavilion and infiltrate the city beyond. The Mayor of Venice **Luigi Brugnaro** strongly urged for the renewed presence of the Venezia Pavilion within the Biennale to tell the story of the city. The Pavilion is itself a work of art in which the choral nature of the works, the fruit of individual experiences, represent their collective vision. The concept of the exhibition is inspired by the urban fabric of the city, exploring its history and mythology. Through an immersive environment, the artists aim to capture the essence of Venice through the elements that over time have become symbols associated with the city - sacred images, boats, bricole, chains and water - and the use of materials that characterize it such as stone, marble, wood, rope and fabric. The Venezia Pavilion – located in the Giardini and created by the architect Brenno Del Giudice in 1932 - will be transformed into a work of art in its entirety, where visitors can experience Venice as a microcosm composed of all its essential elements: its fog, its art and its mysticism.

One of the elements of the exhibition that will transcend the boundaries of the Pavilion will be designed by the acclaimed graphic designer **Mirko Borsche**, who will create a link between the Venezia Pavilion and the city itself. Inspired by the traditional symbol of Venice - the lion of San Marco - the abstract yellow neon motif designed by Borsche will infiltrate the spaces and everyday objects throughout the city, including Palazzo Ca' da Mosto. This particular building is one of the oldest buildings on the Grand Canal and one of the first hotels in Europe, which is currently undergoing restoration works to be completed by early 2020. Encounters with Borsche's artworks around the city will prompt visitors to engage with the Pavilion's concept even outside of its borders.

The selected artists will work to recreate the countless narratives that continue to shape the city. **Plastique Fantastique**, a creative platform for temporary installations, will create a large-scale immersive inflatable structure that will be in dialogue with the marble elements of the Italian sculptor **Fabio Viale**. A section of the Pavilion will be dedicated to the work of the Turkish-Italian filmmaker **Ferzan Özpetek** and his muse Kascia Smutniak and another section dedicated to the works that explore the spirituality and religion created by the Brazilian artist **Sidival Fila**, the first Franciscan monk to exhibit in the history of the Biennale. The multi-sensory environment will be completed by a fragrance by Maestro perfumer **Lorenzo Dante Ferro** and a melody created by Greek composer from the Greek National Opera, **Giorgos Koumentakis**.

In addition to the main exhibition in the Venezia Pavilion, there will be a collateral event, conceived by the mayor **Luigi Brugnaro** and promoted by the Municipality of Venice. "Creators of our time" a competition through which young people, aged between 18 and 35, born, residents, students or workers in Italy were invited to express their vision of the present time, through six categories: visual poetry, music video clips, street art, painting, comics and photography, according to the main theme of the 58th Venice Art Biennale: "May You Live in Interesting Times".

The winning work of each category will be exhibited at Ca' Pesaro the Museum of Modern Art of Venice and, in rotation one at a time, at the Venezia Pavilion from the 1<sup>st</sup> of June.

For more information, visit: <https://live.comune.venezia.it/it/2019/02/artefici-del-nostro-tempo-al-un-bando-giovani-artisti-emergenti>

**For further information, images or to arrange a viewing:**

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **Scientific and operational committee of the Venezia Pavilion**

Nicola Ferrari, Matteo Ballarin, Francesca Giorgi Pierfranceschi, Lorenzo Poggiali, Cristiano Grisogoni, Tonino Zera

### **Biographies**

#### **Stelios Koīs**

Koīs was born in the vicinity of Mount Athos in Greece. The Athonian red earth landscape, the monasteries with their mystic interplay of light and shadow, and the introduction to Byzantine icon painting as a youth, were to have a lasting impression upon his later work. He moved to Rome where he studied in Università degli studi di Roma. A student architectural award gave him the opportunity to travel to Osaka, Japan. There he studied the Japanese tradition and its focus on balance and the eloquent interaction of light and materials. Returning to Italy he collaborated with architectural practices and worked as a creative director. Later on, he moved to Athens where he completed his studies at the National Technical University. After a few successful collaborations he founded his own

firm in 2007. An outcome of the necessity to express his vision of an architecture that embodied his taste for a purity of style which seemed to combine physical and spiritual serenity. His works testify to the coherence of this aesthetic vision, but also demonstrates his ability to reveal its spatial essence by structuring the visitor's experience of it.

### **Alessandro Gallo**

Having graduated in architecture, Gallo (born Venice, 1978) founded the Golden Goose deluxe brand in 2000 together with his wife. The fashion company, of which he is not only a managing director but also the creative director, leads him to travel and seek influences and inspirations all over the world. The creation of garments and clothing accessories with a strong personality and innovation, leads the brand to grow very rapidly and to become, within a few years, a reference in the high-end sector. Despite international developments, the link with Venice remains very strong and essential, a city that continues to be the main source of inspiration as well as the headquarter and an important productive reality of excellence. His work extends beyond the world of fashion, seeking collaboration and contamination in the world of art, architecture and design. Over the years he has worked on various exhibitions and installations of art and architecture as well as collaborating with the Biennale, Pitti and international magazines. In 2016, he founded a new company with the aim of expanding his Venetian lifestyle concept to the world of hotellerie, catering and design. From 2018 he participates in the Ca' Foscari development board in order to contribute to the positive development of this important reality and of the territory it represents.

### **Giovanna Zabotti**

Zabotti (born Venice, 1971) is the Art Director and Vice President of Fondaco Italia, which she co-founded in 2004. Fondaco Italia is a Venice-based consulting company, specialised in the implementation of communication projects through the enhancement of the historical and artistic heritage and the realisation of cultural events. She has conceived, edited and coordinated different projects during many Biennale editions: the first one in 1° Prague Biennale Arte (2003), "Vertical Sea" by Fabrizio Plessi at the entrance to the Biennale Gardens (2005), in the same year she has been the co-curator of side events of Biennale Arte in "Isola della Poesia" and "La notte dei poeti". She has also participated in the restoration of the Venezia Pavilion and the "Mariverticali" exhibition by Fabrizio Plessi in the 54th Biennale Arte (2011), and then in the 55th Biennale Arte she has coordinated the project "Silk Map" (2013). In the same year she has conceived the exhibit "Gero qua" Canaletto – Chiesa di San Gregorio Venezia.

### **Artist Biographies**

**Mirko Borsche** (born Germany, 1971) is a renowned German graphic designer based in Munich. From 1994 to 1999 he worked as an art director for various advertising agencies, including Start.Advertising and Springer & Jacoby. In 1999, Mirko became artistic director of jetzt Magazin, a youth-oriented weekly supplement of the national daily newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung. From 2004 to 2007 he took the artistic direction of Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin, the well-known weekly supplement of the newspaper, he then founded his own graphic design studio, Bureau Borsche, and started working as creative director for the German national weekly Die Zeit, supplement for the magazine ZEIT magazin and many other spin-offs like Zeit Verlag.

**Lorenzo Dante Ferro** (born Switzerland, 1952) is a Swiss perfumer and founder of the artisan company that bears his name. He founded the company in 1982 in Venice, a region that played a fundamental role in his first sixteenth-century perfumery creations. Ferro's journey into the perfume industry begins in Switzerland, where he studied chemistry and later enrolled as an apprentice in Luzi AG. After a prolific career as a perfumer with Bush Boake Allen Ltd. in London and New York, among others, he received the prestigious title of Inventor with the award of international patents for research, development and the creation of new aromas. Today he is one of the few master perfumers in the world that makes him one of the few independent perfume manufacturers for exclusive distribution.

**Sidival Fila** (born Brazil, 1962) is a Brazilian artist based in Rome who moved to Italy in 1985 in search of an artistic and spiritual identity. Here he joined the Order of the Friars Minor of St. Francis of

Assisi, setting aside his artistic practice for almost twenty years. In 2006, Fila returns to art focusing on discarded materials and fabrics associated with the liturgy from the 17th century to today. His recent exhibitions at the Bilotti Museum in Rome (2015), at the Fresnoy-National Studio of Contemporary Art, Tourcoing (2016) and a first solo show in France at Galerie Jérme Poggi in Paris (2017) mark his return to the art scene institutional. Fila, today, lives and works in the convent of the Franciscan friars of San Bonaventura in Rome.

**Ferzan Özpetek** (born Istanbul, 1959) is a Turkish-Italian director who moved to Rome in 1976 to study film history at La Sapienza University. He has known success with his first film *The Turkish Bath - Hamam* (1997), selected for the Quinzaine des Réalisateur in Cannes. His subsequent films *Le Fate Ignoranti* (2001), *La Finestra di Fronte* (2003) and *Mine Vaganti* (2010) have won numerous awards including several Globo d'oros. In 2008, the Museum of Modern Art in New York dedicated a retrospective to the director *Filmmaker in Focus: Ferzan Özpetek*. His works have since transcended the traditional cinematographic medium to include works, theatre and novels.

**Plastique Fantastique** is a platform founded by Marco Canevacci (born in Italy, 1970), and Yena Young (born in South Korea, 1982) who creates temporary architectural installations for temporary activities. The transparent, light, soft and mobile structures created by the company refer to the notion of activation, creation, sharing and transformation of public space, involving citizens in creative processes. The pneumatic architecture is subversive and adaptable, welcomes fleeting activities and experiments, giving new life to the city and making the invisible visible. Plastique Fantastique was founded in Berlin in 1999.

**Fabio Viale** (born Italy, 1975) is an award-winning sculptor, renowned for his work with marble, who lives and works in Turin. In 2017, Viale created a functioning marble boat, *Ahgalla*, which was launched in Venice during the Biennale and subsequently exhibited at the Museo Storico Navale di Venezia. Recent projects include *Cavour* (2019), a monument to Camillo Benso count of Cavour for the Quirinale in Rome and a solo show at the Center for the Contemporary Art in Mosca Garage (2011). In 2016 Viale began his collaboration with the Poggiali Gallery which led his sculptures to become the first works of contemporary art in the historic Basilica of San Lorenzo in Florence and in the Königsplatz in Munich. The expertise of Viale consists in experimenting with traditional sculpture in a modern and unique way.

**Giorgos Koumendakis** (born Greece, 1959) is the Greek National Opera's Artistic Director and one of the most gifted and versatile Greek composers. Apart from his numerous pieces of symphonic and chamber music, a large part of his artistic career has been devoted to composing music for performing arts (theatre, cinema, dance, opera and installations). He has composed and presented four operas, including the two-act opera *The Murderess* (2014), which combines the Greek music tradition with the genre's contemporary European identity. Koumendakis' significant achievements start in 1985, when he is chosen by György Ligeti to compose *Symmolpa V*. A few months later he participates in the Venice Biennale. In 1987, he cooperates for the first time with the renowned French ensemble of contemporary music Ensemble InterContemporain, and thus, sets off his gradually broader international recognition, that leads, in 1992, to Prix de Rome. The same year begins his long-standing cooperation with choreographer-director Dimitris Papaioannou and Edafos Dance Theater, that reaches its peak with the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens, for which Koumendakis served as music director, composer and author of the musical scenario.



  
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