



DICASTERIUM  
DE CULTURA ET EDUCATIONE



La Biennale di Venezia

61. Esposizione  
Internazionale  
d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali

## Press Release

Tuesday 14 April 2026

### THE PAVILION OF THE HOLY SEE ANNOUNCES PARTICIPATING ARTISTS FOR THE 61<sup>ST</sup> INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION OF LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

Featuring new commissions by 24 artists inspired by the life and legacy of  
12<sup>th</sup> century abbess Saint Hildegard of Bingen

Curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Ben Vickers and realised in collaboration with  
Soundwalk Collective

The Pavilion of The Holy See: *The Ear is the Eye of the Soul*  
The Mystical Garden of the Discalced Carmelites, Cannaregio  
Santa Maria Ausiliatrice Complex, Castello

Press images: <https://tinyurl.com/TheHolySeePavilion>

The Dicastery for Culture and Education of the Holy See today announced the 24 artists participating in the Holy See Pavilion at the 61<sup>st</sup> International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia.

Curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Ben Vickers and realised in collaboration with Soundwalk Collective, *The Ear is the Eye of the Soul* unfolds across two venues in Venice: The Mystical Garden of the Discalced Carmelites, Cannaregio, and the Complesso di Santa Maria Ausiliatrice, Castello. Conceived in response to Koyo Kouoh's curatorial proposition for Biennale Arte 2026 to slow down and attune to a quieter register, the exhibition takes the form of a sonic prayer, a call to the contemplative act of listening, inspired by the life and legacy of Saint Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), medieval abbess, poet, healer and composer.

#### The participating artists are:

##### The Mystical Garden of the Discalced Carmelites:

1. Bhanu Kapil
2. Brian Eno
3. Carminho
4. Caterina Barbieri
5. Devonté Hynes
6. FKA Twigs
7. Holly Herndon & Mat Dryhurst
8. Jim Jarmusch
9. Kali Malone
10. Kazu Makino
11. Laraaji
12. Meredith Monk
13. Moor Mother
14. Otobong Nkanga
15. Patti Smith
16. Precious Okoyomon
17. Raúl Zurita
18. Soundwalk Collective
19. Suzanne Ciani
20. Terry Riley
21. Benedictine Nuns of the Abbey of St. Hildegard Eibingen

## **Santa Maria Ausiliatrice Complex:**

1. Alexander Kluge
2. Ilda David'
3. Tatiana Bilbao

The final work of celebrated filmmaker and author Alexander Kluge, who died on 25 March 2026 aged 94, will be presented as part of the Holy See Pavilion at the Complex of Santa Maria Ausiliatrice in Castello. Kluge also gave the Holy See Pavilion its title: *The Ear is the Eye of the Soul*.

Presented in Venice's ancient **Giardino Mistico** (Mystic Garden), a monastic green space hidden within a 17<sup>th</sup>-century convent cared for by the Discalced Carmelite community, the first part of the Pavilion features new sound works by 20 contemporary composers, musicians, poets and visual artists, responding to Hildegard's chants, writings, and visionary images through voice, instrumentation, and at times, silence. In the garden, visitors are invited to reflect and listen through headphones to these new commissions, realised in collaboration with the sound artists Soundwalk Collective, alongside a site-specific instrument created by Soundwalk Collective which listens to the garden in real time. As Pope Leo XIV said: «The logic of algorithms tends to repeat what "works," but art opens up what is possible. Not everything has to be immediate or predictable» (Encounter with the World of cinema, 15/11/2025).

Across the city in Castello, the Pavilion's second venue is the **Complex of Santa Maria Ausiliatrice**, which becomes a contemporary scriptorium (a place where books were copied and illuminated). Triangulated between three anchor points, the venue hosts a living archive, Alexander Kluge's final work, and the twinned sonic liturgy of the nuns of Eibingen Abbey. The archive has been curated in close collaboration with Sister Maura Zátónyi OSB and the St. Hildegard Academy, whose teachings, research, and preservation of Hildegard's legacy helped to inspire the artists and collaborators of the Pavilion. Within the archive, visitors encounter a curated multilingual library of Hildegardian texts, artist books by Ilda David', and new monastery architecture by Tatiana Bilbao Estudio. The venue will present the final work of filmmaker and author Alexander Kluge, completed before his death in March 2026, a towering twelve-station film and image installation unfolding across three rooms within the industrial logic of the building's ongoing restoration.

The presentation at the Complex of Santa Maria Ausiliatrice is an evolution of the Holy See's Pavilion at the 19th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, building on and continuing their sustained commitment to this site and the continuation of the architectural project of Tatiana Bilbao Estudio and MAIO Architects, *Opera Aperta* (2025).

Hildegard of Bingen was officially declared a Saint and Doctor of the Catholic Church by Pope Benedict XVI, in 2012.

### **The Pavilion of the Holy See**

#### ***The Ear is the Eye of the Soul***

**Commissioner:** Card. José Tolentino de Mendonça, Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education of the Holy See;

**Curators:** Hans Ulrich Obrist; Ben Vickers;

**Exhibitors:** Alexander Kluge, Benedictine Nuns of the Abbey of St. Hildegard Eibingen, Bhanu Kapil, Brian Eno, Carminho, Caterina Barbieri, Devonté Hynes, FKA Twigs, Holly Herndon & Mat Dryhurst, Ilda David', Jim Jarmusch, Kali Malone, Kazu Makino, Laraaji, Meredith Monk, Moor Mother, Otobong Nkanga, Patti Smith, Precious Okoyomon, Raúl Zurita, Soundwalk Collective, Suzanne Ciani, Tatiana Bilbao, Terry Riley

#### **Production:**

Nicola Picco & Raul Betti – Mattia Marzaro

Soundwalk Collective & Tessa Nijdam – Elena Origliasso

**Venues:** Complesso di Santa Maria Ausiliatrice, Fondamenta S. Gioachin, Castello 450 and Giardino Mistico dei Carmelitani Scalzi, Cannaregio 54

The Press Conference will take place 27th of April, 12:15

The Press Conference will be available to live stream. Please contact [daisy@boltonquinn.com](mailto:daisy@boltonquinn.com)

**Holy See's Press Conference Room**

Via della Conciliazione 54, 00120 Città del Vaticano, Italy

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**Soundwalk Collective**

Composed of contemporary artist Stephan Crasneanski and producer Simone Merli, Soundwalk Collective integrates sound, film, and mixed media in site- and context-specific artwork. Evolving along multi-disciplinary lines, they have cultivated long-term creative collaborations with artist and writer Patti Smith, late director Jean-Luc Godard, photographer Nan Goldin, choreographer Sasha Waltz, director and musician Jim Jarmusch, and actress and singer Charlotte Gainsbourg, among others.

Central to their artistic philosophy is the exploration of sound as a medium to navigate and interpret the complexities of human experience and environment. In doing so, their practice engages in the narrative potential of sound across mediums such as art installations, dance, music and film.

**Hans Ulrich Obrist**

Hans Ulrich Obrist (b. 1968, Zurich, Switzerland) is Artistic Director of Serpentine in London, and Senior Advisor at LUMA Arles. Prior to this, he was the Curator of the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. Since his first show 'World Soup (The Kitchen Show)' in 1991, he has curated more than 350 exhibitions.

In 2011 Obrist received the CCS Bard Award for Curatorial Excellence, in 2015 he was awarded the International Folkwang Prize, and in 2025 he received the Prix François Morellet. Obrist's recent publications include *140 Ideas for Planet Earth* (2021), *Edouard Glissant: Archipelago* (2021), *James Lovelock: Ever Gaia* (2023) *Remember to Dream* (2023), *Worldbuilding: Gaming and Art in The Digital Age* (2024) and *A Life In Progress* (2025).

**Ben Vickers**

Ben Vickers is a curator, publisher and technologist. He is currently developing a wilderness retreat and research campus called New Water, in New Hampshire (USA), a place focused on the future of technology and spirit, rooted in the landscape. Previously he founded unMonastery, publishing studio Ignota Books and the Arts Technologies department at the Serpentine. He is a strategic advisor to Ian Cheng's Opponent Systems, LAS Art Foundation, and cosmogenesis.

**The Dicastery for Culture and Education**

The Dicastery for Culture and Education is the department of the Roman Curia entrusted with relations with the contemporary art world, listening to its protagonists, and engaging in collaborative dialogue on the major questions of the present. Among its various initiatives, the DCE organizes the Holy See's national participation in the International Art and Architecture Exhibitions of La Biennale di Venezia and manages the Conciliazione 5 space, a platform open to contemporary art.

Comitato per la Biennale di Venezia 2026 | Conciliazione 5 | ArtCut2026

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