



La Biennale di Venezia

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61ST INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA
GERMAN PAVILION

RUIN

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HENRIKE NAUMANN & SUNG TIEU
GERMAN PAVILION 2026

Curator Kathleen Reinhardt announces artistic positions for the German Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2026 on behalf of ifa.

Henrike Naumann and Sung Tieu have been announced as the artists for the German Pavilion at the 61st Venice Art Biennale, for which ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (Institute for International Relations) serves as commissioner. Curator Kathleen Reinhardt has nominated two artists who reflect on and scrutinize societal, bureaucratic and social systems of order in their work. In doing so, they make visible the fractures and tensions between the past, present and future. The exhibition at the German Pavilion will open on May 9, 2026.

“With their conceptual and sculptural work, Sung Tieu and Henrike Naumann pose questions about historical responsibility. They examine the role of individual and collective agency from the perspective of a young generation that situates the major themes of the German Pavilion in a completely different coordinate system. I am looking forward to developing new site-specific works for Venice with both of them”, says Kathleen Reinhardt, curator of the German Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2026.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Henrike Naumann was born in Zwickau (GDR) in 1984. She lives and works in Berlin. Naumann reflects on socio-political problems through design and interiors. She explores the friction between opposing political opinions through the lens of taste and personal everyday aesthetics. In her immersive installations, she arranges furniture and objects to create scenographic spaces in which she integrates video and sound works. Naumann’s artistic practice reflects upon mechanisms of radicalization and their connection to personal experience. It includes a wide range of lectures and interdisciplinary collaborations engaging with the central questions of her work. She is currently researching the relationship between art and war.

Naumann has been awarded numerous prizes, including the Karl Schmidt-Rottluff Scholarship, the Max Pechstein Prize of the City of Zwickau, the Leipziger Volkszeitung Art Prize and the Scholarship of Villa Aurora/Thomas Mann House, Los Angeles. Important exhibitions of her works have been held at the SculptureCenter in New York, the Busch-Reisinger Museum at Harvard University, the Museum of Modern Art Warsaw, the Wall Memorial of the German Bundestag as well as the Ghetto Biennale in Haiti (2015, 2017) and the Kyiv Biennale in Ukraine (2023). Henrike Naumann is a fellow at the Berlin Artistic Research Program 2024/25. She has accepted a professorship in sculpture at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg beginning in 2026.

Henrike Naumann: “In my artistic practice, I explore how societies shape and process social and political ruptures. I use history as a tool to understand the dynamics of social change in different global contexts. In

my research-based practice, I use historical sources and everyday materials to find new artistic forms of knowledge production.”

Sung Tieu, born in 1987 in Hải Dương, Vietnam, is a Vietnamese-German artist who lives and works in Berlin. Having grown up between political systems, Tieu’s work unfolds at the intersections of biography and geopolitics. Her practice examines the enduring aftershocks of the Cold War, colonial entanglements, and the subtle mechanisms of institutional power. It reflects the social and psychological effects of migration, bureaucracy, and control. Through sculpture, found objects, sound, video, photography, text, and archival material, Tieu constructs spatially dense installations—environments in which political structures and personal experience converge and blur.

Major solo exhibitions of her work have been held at the KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Museum für Gegenwartskunst Siegen; Kunsthalle Nürnberg; Amant Foundation, New York; MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge; Kunst Museum Winterthur; Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (n.b.k.); Mudam – Musée d’Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg; Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst (GfZK), Leipzig; Haus der Kunst, Munich; and Nottingham Contemporary. She has also participated in the Gwangju Biennale (2024), Shanghai Biennale (2023), Bienal de São Paulo (2021), and Kyiv Biennale (2021), among others. Tieu has received numerous awards, including the Schering Stiftung Award for Artistic Research (2024), the Rubens Promotional Award of the City of Siegen (2024), and the Audience Award of the Preis der Nationalgalerie (2021). She is currently a substitute professor at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg.

Sung Tieu: “I am interested in the edges of institutional language—between what is articulated and what is left unsaid. It is within the interstices of material form and discursive structure, between articulation and omission, that works emerge—resisting fixed interpretation and inviting viewers to locate their own position.”

ABOUT GERMANY’S PARTICIPATION

ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen is commissioner of the German Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. In 2025, the curator has been appointed by an eight-member selection committee. The members were: Johanna Diehl (artist and professor at Technical University of Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt), Florian Ebner (Centre Pompidou, Paris), Julia Grosse (curator and cultural manager), Gaby Horn (ex-Berlin Biennale), Anh-Linh Ngo (Arch+ and Academy of Arts Berlin), Angelika Richter (Weißensee Academy of Art Berlin), Stefan Rössel (German Foreign Office) and Gitte Zschoch (ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen).

Such artists as Gerhard Richter, Joseph Beuys, Bernd and Hilla Becher, Hans Haacke, Nam June Paik, Katharina Fritsch, Rosemarie Trockel, Martin Kippenberger, Candida Höfer, Tino Sehgal, Isa Genzken, Ai Weiwei, Anne Imhof, Maria Eichhorn, Yael Bartana and Ersan Mondtag

have created works for the German Pavilion at the Venice Biennale.

Germany's participation has won seven Golden Lions in four decades, four of them as best national pavilion: 1984 Lothar Baumgarten and A. R. Penck (commissioner: Johannes Cladders), 1986 Sigmar Polke (commissioner: Dierk Stemmler), 1990 Bernd und Hilla Becher (commissioner: Klaus Bußmann), 1993 Hans Haacke and Nam June Paik (commissioner: Klaus Bußmann), 2001 Gregor Schneider (commissioner: Udo Kittelmann), 2011 Christoph Schlingensief (curator: Susanne Gaensheimer) and 2017 Anne Imhof (curator: Susanne Pfeffer).

ABOUT IFA

ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, together with partners, advocates worldwide for freedom in art, research, and civil society. It provides activists, artists and scholars with a voice, promotes collaborations and increasingly pursues its objectives with European partners. Based on its core competencies of art, research and civil society, ifa builds networks to achieve ongoing impact. In the field of contemporary art, ifa supports exhibitions by artists living in Germany and is involved in international networks and academic discussions on art and cultural exchange. As part of its exhibition funding, ifa enables German and Germany-based artists to participate in biennials worldwide, as well as artists from developing and transitioning countries to participate in biennials in Germany.

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