



La Biennale di Venezia

61. Esposizione  
Internazionale  
d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali

61ST INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION  
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA  
GERMAN PAVILION

RUIN

PRESS RELEASE  
APRIL 15, 2026

ENTITLED *RUIN*, THE GERMAN PAVILION  
AT BIENNALE ARTE 2026  
PRESENTS WORKS BY  
HENRIKE NAUMANN AND SUNG TIEU

Opening to the public on May 9, 2026, the German Pavilion at the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia is titled *Ruin*. Curated by Kathleen Reinhardt, the pavilion will present works by Henrike Naumann and Sung Tieu. The German contribution to the Biennale Arte 2026 is commissioned by ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (Institute for International Relations).

In *Ruin*, the German Pavilion becomes a space in which physical and social structures, German ideologies, and lived biographies tangibly overlap, bringing architecture, history, and psychology into productive tension. The exhibition's title riffs on the word's multiple associations. While the English word 'ruin' refers to architectural and physical remnants, the German term 'Ruin' signifies a state of collapse—economic, social, or moral.

In newly produced works, Henrike Naumann and Sung Tieu draw on their research into the GDR and the transition period following reunification of East and West Germany in 1990, demonstrating how historical ruptures and gaps in political, social, and architectural structures continue to resonate—and are perhaps more evident than ever in a globalized present. Tieu and Naumann reflect on both German history and the German Pavilion's fascist architecture by artistically re-appropriating the space. Using a formal vocabulary that oscillates between minimalist clarity and maximalist opulence, both artists employ the building as an ambivalent mirror of social dynamics from the recent past to the present.

From her nomination in May 2025 until her sudden death a few weeks ago, Henrike Naumann worked intensively on her contribution to the German Pavilion, completing the work before she passed. The team of the German Pavilion is now working alongside her studio team to bring her artistic vision to life.

The German Pavilion's graphic concept was developed by Dan Solbach. Building upon Sung Tieu's and Henrike Naumann's fields of interest, Solbach has created a design that bridges language and words, representation and effectiveness. The typography of the title *Ruin* is taken from a graffito that marked East Germany's last pavilion at the 44th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia in 1990: a black, red, and gold 'D.D.R.' (the German abbreviation for GDR – German Democratic Republic). Drawing on epigraphy—the study of ancient inscriptions—and *scriptio continua*, a style of writing without any word breaks, Dan Solbach transposes the inscriptions from the past to the present.

Press material is available in the press section of the German Pavilion's website. Recent updates can be found under News as well as on the pavilion's Instagram account.

Alongside the opening, an accompanying publication featuring texts by Sabeth Buchmann, Kathleen Reinhardt, and Kerstin Stakemeier, as well as artistic contributions by Henrike Naumann and Sung Tieu will be published by DISTANZ Verlag.

The 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia runs from May 9 to November 22, 2026. The press preview will take place from May 6–8. Accreditation applications for the preview will be accepted until April 24 and can only be submitted via La Biennale di Venezia. An invitation to the press event will follow shortly.

You can find all the information you need to plan your visit from May 9 to November 22, as well as details on advance ticket sales, on the biennial's website.

## ABOUT IFA

ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen is the commissioner of the German Pavilion at La Biennale di Venezia. Since the 1980s, ifa has helped secure seven Golden Lions, including four for Best National Participation at the biennial. Through its work in the fields of art and civil society, ifa fosters understanding and trust between people around the world. It supports democratic societies and advocates for freedom in art and science as well as freedom of expression. By contributing its international expertise and networks to discussions on art, culture, politics, and society, it helps broaden perspectives both in Germany and worldwide.

ifa provides spaces for artistic production and critical reflection, using its art collection and fostering art as a driving force for democratic social change. 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 supports German and Germany-based artists in participating in biennials around the world and facilitates the participation of artists from developing and transitioning countries in biennials held in Germany.

ifa is funded by the German Federal Foreign Office, the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the state of Baden-Württemberg, and the City of Stuttgart.

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Commissioner: ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen  
Curator: Kathleen Reinhardt  
Exhibitors: Henrike Naumann, Sung Tieu

The German Pavilion at the 61st International Art Exhibition—La Biennale di Venezia is realized by ifa—Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen on behalf of and funded by the German Federal Foreign Office



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