

ARTISTS FOR THE VENICE BIENNALE ANNOUNCED

The Greek curator Katerina Gregos has announced the names of the artists chosen to exhibit in the Danish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2011.

Gregos has selected a group of eighteen internationally acclaimed and upcoming artists, of different generations (the oldest born in 1934, the youngest in 1981), working in different media: From the renowned experimental Czech filmmaker Jan Švankmajer and the legendary American illustrator and cartoonist Robert Crumb to the Dutch pioneer of net art Han Hoogerbrugge and the multi-disciplinary Chinese artist Zhang Dali. The Danish artists in the exhibition are Lilibeth Cuenca Rasmussen and FOS (Thomas Poulsen). The large majority of the artists will be presenting new works especially conceived for the exhibition.

Katerina Gregos has chosen freedom of speech as the theme for the Danish Pavilion, and visitors can look forward to an unusual, critical international exhibition on this subject. The exhibition, entitled *Speech Matters*, aims to complicate the question of freedom of speech and to examine its different aspects and problematics, both from a national and a global perspective.

Curator Katerina Gregos says:

"In recent years the question of freedom of speech has become one of the key issues in the current public debate and one that is becoming increasingly contested given the steady erosion of civil liberties in many countries all over the world. Apart from the fact that it relates to Denmark specifically, it is also highly relevant in relation to much of what is happening in the world today from press intimidation and censorship in Russia and elsewhere, to the recent Google episode in China and current events in North Africa down to other issues such as increasing surveillance in the UK and the USA, and highly charged debates on the limits of freedom of speech in several European countries such as the Netherlands.

In making my selection of artists for the Danish Pavilion in Venice I felt, therefore, that it was important to include artists from many different

countries, artists who could provide different perspectives on the subject. There are artists from countries where freedom of speech still is contested and under threat, like China and Iran but also artists whose work has consistently engaged with the issue in one way or another.

My aim with this exhibition is precisely to create a space that brings together different considered artistic reflections and insights into a subject, which is so often discussed in a very polarised or simplistic way. Freedom of speech, in fact, is an extremely complex, often ambivalent issue which is contingent on subjective political, social, cultural, religious and personal circumstances, and the exhibition aims to highlight these ambiguities and grey areas, emphasizing the fact that the boundaries surrounding freedom of speech cannot be easily delimited. I hope that in their encounter with the works of these artists visitors will discover how art can convey a greater complexity surrounding this most timely and sensitive issue."

ARTISTS PARTICIPATING IN THE EXHIBITION

Agency (international, established 1992)
Ayreen Anastas & Rene Gabri (Palestine & Iran)
Robert Crumb (USA, born 1943)
Stelios Faitakis (Greece, born 1976)
FOS (Denmark, born 1971)
Sharon Hayes (USA, born 1970)
Han Hoogerbrugge (the Netherlands, born 1963)
Mikhail Karikis (Greece, born 1975)
Thomas Kilpper (Germany, born 1956)
Runo Lagomarsino (Argentina/Sweden, born 1977)
Tala Madani (Iran, born 1981)
Wendelien van Oldenborgh (the Netherlands, born 1962)
Lilibeth Cuenca Rasmussen (Denmark, born 1970)
Taryn Simon (USA, born 1975)
Jan Švankmajer (Czech Republic, born 1934)
Johannes af Tavsheden
Tilman Wendland (Germany, born 1969)
Zhang Dali (China, born 1963)

Films about the project and the artists

In these three short films Katerina Gregos talks about the artists and the exhibition's theme: <http://video.kunst.dk/?tagsid=1006>

About the Danish Arts Council and the Venice Biennale

The Danish Arts Council Committee for International Visual Arts serves as Commissioner for the Danish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, where Denmark has taken part since 1895. In compliance with its intention to consider Danish art in an international perspective, it is the aim of the Danish Arts Council Committee for International Visual Arts that the Danish Pavilion, through innovative artistic and curatorial practices, reflects upon the position of contemporary art in a globalized art world as well as the position of the Venice Biennale in this ever-changing art world.

The Danish participation in the 54th Venice Biennale is funded by the Danish Arts Council. The Danish Arts Council Committee for International Visual Arts consists of Christine Buhl Andersen (Chairman), Eva Koch, Mikael Andersen, Jakob Jakobsen, Gitte Ørskou (1 April 2007 - 31 March 2011) and Rune Gade (Chairman), Jesper Elg, Mads Gamdrup, Lise Harlev, Anna Krogh (1 April 2011 - 31 March 2015).

Curator's short biography

Katerina Gregos is a curator and writer based in Brussels, Belgium. She is currently co-curator of the 4. Fotofestival Mannheim_Ludwigshafen_Heidelberg, Germany (forthcoming September 2011), part of the curatorial team for Manifesta 9, Province of Limburg, Belgium (forthcoming June 2012) and curator of *Newtopia: The State of Human Rights*, Mechelen, Belgium, (forthcoming September 2012). Previously, she served as artistic director of Argos - Centre for Art & Media, Brussels and director of the Deste Foundation, Centre for Contemporary Art, Athens where she curated numerous exhibitions. As an independent curator Gregos has also curated several large-scale exhibitions internationally including, more recently, *Hidden in Remembrance is the Silent Memory of Our Future*, Contour 2009 - The 4th Biennial for Moving Image, in Mechelen, Belgium (2009). Katerina Gregos regularly teaches, publishes on art and artists in magazines, books and exhibition catalogues, and is a frequent speaker in international conferences.

Support

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