

Press Release

Monday, September 28, 2026

The Dicastery for Culture and Education announces the presentation del the CATALOGUE of the Holy See Pavilion "The Ear is the Eye of the Soul" 61st INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION – LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

**A catalogue presenting the Pavilion inspired by the life and legacy of the twelfth-century
abbess Saint Hildegard of Bingen**

Catalogue of the Holy See Pavilion: "The Ear is the Eye of the Soul"

The Dicastery for Culture and Education announces the presentation of del the Catalogue of the Holy See Pavilion "The Ear is the Eye of the Soul" at the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale Di Venezia. The catalogue, published by **Allemandi Editore**, features a graphic design by Studio Irma Boom. The presentation of the Catalogue will take place at the **MACRO Museum** – Museum of Contemporary Art of Rome, **moderated by the museum's artistic director, Cristiana Perrella.**

Speakers:

Card. José Tolentino de Mendonça, Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education and Commissioner of the Pavilion

Michele Coppola, Executive Director of Arts, Culture and Historical Heritage, Intesa Sanpaolo

Irma Boom, designer of the catalogue

Hans Ulrich Obrist and **Ben Vickers** in conversation with **Soundwalk Collective**, curators and artistic directors of the Pavilion

Moderator

Cristiana Perrella, artistic director of **MACRO**

NOTES TO EDITORS

Holy See Pavilion

The Ear is the Eye of the Soul - L'orecchio è l'occhio dell'anima

Curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Ben Vickers, and created in collaboration with Soundwalk Collective, **"The Ear is the Eye of the Soul"** develops in two venues in Venice: the Mystical Garden of the Discalced Carmelites in Cannaregio, and the Santa Maria Ausiliatrice Complex in 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. A doctor of the Catholic Church since 2012.

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

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

Curators: Hans Ulrich Obrist; Ben Vickers, in collaboration with **Soundwalk Collective**.

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 – MAIO Architects - DOGMA, Terry Riley.

Production:

Nicola Picco & Raul Betti – Mattia Marzaro
Soundwalk Collective & Tessa Nijdam – Elena Origliasso

Venues: Santa Maria Ausiliatrice Complex, Fondamenta S. Gioachin, Castello 450 and The Mystical Garden of the Discalced Carmelites, Cannaregio 54

The presentation of the Catalogue will take place on **1st October at 06:30**

MACRO – Museum of Contemporary Art of Rome
Via Nizza, 138 **Rome**

PRESS ENQUIRIES

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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.

Irma Boom

Irma Boom is an Amsterdam-based book designer. Her experimental approach often challenges the conventions of the traditional book, both in design and content. Since 1992 she has collaborated with Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, and has given lectures and workshops around the world. She has received many awards for her book designs and, in 2001, was the youngest person to be awarded the Gutenberg Prize. Boom's books are in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Vatican Library, and the Centre Pompidou in Paris. The Special Collections of the University of Amsterdam collects her complete oeuvre. In 2014 Boom

received the Johannes Vermeer Prize, the Dutch state prize for the arts. In 2019 she earned an honorary doctorate from London's Royal College of Art.

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.

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.

Committee for the 2026 Venice Biennale | Conciliazione 5 | ArtCut2026

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