

MEDIA RELEASE

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New publication:

Biennale Venedig: Die Beteiligung der Schweiz, 1920–2013 (Essays & Materials)

The Venice Biennale, first held in 1895, has the richest traditions in the world as a platform for national identities represented through art. Since 1920 Switzerland has also made use of this opportunity for self-projection, sporadically at first, then consistently from 1932, and ever since 1952 in a pavilion designed by Bruno Giacometti standing independently in the Giardini. The Swiss Institute for Art Research (SIK-ISEA) has produced a book reflecting its research on Swiss contributions to the «Biennale di Venezia» from early beginnings until the present day.

For 93 years Switzerland has been among the countries participating in the Venice Biennale, which has evolved over a history of almost 120 years into one of the major institutions of the international art scene. The Confederation first accepted an invitation to join this «world exhibition of the art nations» (Beat Wyss) in 1920. The regular participations since 1932 have articulated Switzerland's cultural foreign policy (albeit unofficial), permitting observations about the relationship between local particularities and national identity.

This two-volume publication by the Swiss Institute for Art Research (SIK-ISEA) is the first attempt to examine and document official Swiss participations at the Venice Biennale in detail. It is the outcome of a research project devoted to the Venice Biennale that has lasted several years, initiated and supervised by Prof. Dr. Beat Wyss during a Fellowship at SIK-ISEA. A reader with 14 contributions and a lavishly illustrated volume of materials elucidate the history of Switzerland's involvement in the Biennale from various perspectives. We see, for example, how expectations have changed over the years with regard to how a nation should be represented through its art, and how the federal structure has influenced art policy. Readers will also find answers to questions about which artists were invited by the Confederation to participate in the Biennale and which of their works went on show.

To accompany the publication, SIK-ISEA marked the opening of the 55th Venice Biennale by launching the website www.biennale-venezia.ch. This online reference work is free to use and continually updated, providing information about all official Swiss participations at the Venice Biennale since 1920. It includes the contributing artists, the Commissioners and members of the Swiss Art Commission responsible for decisions, the works exhibited, secondary literature and relevant documents. Alphabetical and chronological search functions with an attractive, user-friendly interface permit wide-ranging research in all databases. SIK-ISEA has also been supplying Pro Helvetia's official Biennale site (www.biennials.ch) with selected datasets.



SIK ISEA

Publication data

Biennale Venedig. Die Beteiligung der Schweiz, 1920–2013 («outlines» series, vols. 8/1 & 8/2), edited by Regula Krähenbühl / Beat Wyss, Zürich: SIK-ISEA / Scheidegger & Spiess, 2013.

Volume 1: Essays

Preface by **Beat Wyss**: *Die Globalisierung des Peripheren*, Introduction by **Regula Krähenbühl**: *Die Eidgenossenschaft im Wettbewerb der Kunsnationen*, contributions by **Peter F. Althaus**: *Geistige Gastarbeit in Venedig. Harald Szeemann als Ausstellungsmacher an den Biennalen 1980, 1999 und 2001*, **Regula Bolleter**: «Die Schweiz glänzte dabei durch Abwesenheit». *Die Eidgenossenschaft und die Internationale Kunstausstellung von Venedig 1895 bis 1932*, **Lea Oliva Brägger**: *Die Schweizer Beiträge in der Kirche San Staë von 1988 bis 2009*, **Ilona Genoni Dall**: *Art Basel – die bessere Biennale?*, **Kornelia Imesch**: *Kunst und Künstler der Suisse romande im Schweizer Pavillon*, **Patrizia Keller**: *Die Biennale Venedig – Königsdisziplin der bundesstaatlichen Kunstförderung? Kunstpolitische Entscheidungen der Schweiz seit den 1980er Jahren*, **Edith Krebs**: *Das Jahr der Secondos. Die Ausstellung «Shadows Collide With People» im Schweizer Pavillon der Biennale Venedig 2005 als kulturpolitischer Sonderfall*, **Franz Müller**: *Bergsee an der Lagune. Die Schweizer Beteiligungen 1948 bis 1960*, **Andreas Münch**: *System Venedig*, **Susann Oehler**: *Bruno Giacomettis Schweizer Pavillon von 1951–1952*, **Elio Schenini**: *A Venezia in ordine sparso. La Svizzera italiana e le Biennali di Venezia*, **Joachim Sieber**: *Trügerischer Aufstieg zu internationalem Glanz. Die Schweizer Beteiligung an den nationalistischen Biennalen von Venedig 1932–1942*, **Konrad Tobler**: *Der Kunstmarkt als Faktor bei den Schweizer Beiträgen für die Biennale von Venedig? Eine Skizze*, **Hans-Peter Wittwer**: *Den unsichtbaren Mann beschatten. Über die Fotografie (nicht nur) schweizerischer Kunstschaffender an der Biennale von Venedig*

Volume 2: Materials

Introduced and compiled by **Regula Krähenbühl**, **Simonetta Nosedà** and **Susann Oehler**: *Die Beteiligung der Schweiz 1920–2013* (chronology) and *Die Kunstschaffenden und ihre Werke* (alphabetical directory), with a contribution by **Jasmin Sumpf**: *Die Biennale im Archiv*

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