

Press Release
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La Biennale di Venezia

58. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali

Dutch Pavilion 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia



Iris Kensmil, *The New Utopia Begins Here: Claudia Jones*, 2018-2019, oil on canvas, 155 x 115 cm. Photo: Gert Jan van Rooij
Remy Jungerman, *Horizontal Obeah GEENGESITONU* (detail), 2018, painted wood, cotton textile, kaolin, yarn, nails, 285 x 90 x 30 cm. Photo: Beatriz Meseguer

The Measurement of Presence **Iris Kensmil and Remy Jungerman**

Exhibition: 11 May to 24 November 2019
Pre-opening: 8-10 May 2019 (opening Dutch Pavilion: 8 May 12:00 hrs.)

Curated by Benno Tempel
Commissioned by Mondriaan Fund

The work of visual artists Remy Jungerman and Iris Kensmil has been brought together and selected as the Dutch contribution to the 58th International Art Exhibition – La biennale di Venezia in a joint presentation by curator Benno Tempel (director of the Gemeentemuseum, The Hague). The exhibition, titled *The Measurement of Presence*, calls for an alternative, transnational approach towards what binds us, acknowledging that we are in a constant state of flux. Jungerman and Kensmil explore the possibilities that emerge from not just allowing but embracing this ongoing shift. They explore how a truer measurement of presence, spirit, and history are needed for our interconnected existence.

The idea for the Dutch exhibition arose from a reflection on the history of the Art Biennale and its location (the modernist pavilion of architect Gerrit Rietveld), from conversations between the curator and the artists, and from current debates.

The Giardini, where the national pavilions are located, largely reflects the geopolitical relations of the 20th century. Originally, the pavilions were meant as national show rooms, based on 19th century concepts about nationalism. During the 20th century this view gave way to an unconditional belief in the universal values of modernism. Today it is clear that both viewpoints have been abandoned.

The permanent flow of people and objects breaks through national boundaries and leads to the emergence of new identities. Places and societies become intertwined in a globalised world.

The Measurement of Presence is a transnational presentation that reflects on these developments.

Within their work, artists Remy Jungerman and Iris Kensmil investigate traditions and the past, and bring them into contact with the present. Their transnational position brings together influences from various backgrounds. In their work, they combine the inspiration they find in 20th century modernism (Stanley Brouwn) and the avant-garde (Piet Mondrian and De Stijl) with elements from other traditions and positions.

In his work, Remy Jungerman brings together motifs from the modernism of De Stijl, the Maroon culture and rituals of the Winti religion, evoking interaction and exposing blind spots in art history. He is interested in the journey of patterns and motifs. For the Dutch pavilion in Venice, Jungerman creates two installations in which he wants bring together the strengths of the ancestors of the Netherlands in the broadest sense – from the Netherlands to Suriname, Indonesia and elsewhere – with the intention of connecting the various cultures and entering into a future-oriented, open conversation.

Iris Kensmil describes her work as the painting of memories, with which she refers to making the hitherto ignored history of black people visible. She introduces us to black authors, philosophers, activists and musicians. By adding ideas from the past to our current knowledge, she broadens our awareness, allowing room for change to arise. Kensmil's work doesn't just reflect on history, it also adds new dimensions to the present. She makes a monumental installation that will cover several walls, in which she connects the utopian thinking of modernism with seven female intellectuals whose work offers a typical perspective on modernity and the future.

The architecture of the Pavilion, built by Rietveld, will play an important role in the design of this exhibition that will not include any architectural intervention. Curator Tempel wants the Pavilion to function as a meeting point where people reflect on the present and the past.

Publication:

An English-language catalogue will be published by Hannibal Publishers in cooperation with the Mondriaan Fund to mark the exhibition. In this catalogue, several international artists and authors will present their vision on the meaning of transnationalism for the artistic practice. Contributors include: Jessica de Abreu; Nick Aikens; Jelle Bouwhuis; Paul Goodwin; Charl Landvreugd; Willem de Rooij; Greg Tate; Benno Tempel and Allison Young. The catalogue contains images of works of the artists and of the exhibition itself.

Mondriaan Fund

The Mondriaan Fund, a publicly financed fund for visual arts and cultural heritage, is responsible for the Dutch entry to the International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. For the Biennale Arte 2019 the Mondriaan Fund issued an open call to curators and artists, who were asked to produce a plan in keeping with a State event.

www.venicebiennale.nl

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