PRESS RELEASE

Now Open: Moldovan Pavilion presents On the Thousand and Second Night at the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia

The Republic of Moldova presents at the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia *On the Thousand and Second Night*, an exhibition by Pavel Brăila (Republic of Moldova), curated by Adelina Luft (Romania) and supported by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Now open at Santa Veneranda, at the Chiesa dei Santi Geremia e Lucia, the project marks a significant milestone for the Republic of Moldova and affirms its commitment to international contemporary cultural dialogue.

Responding to the theme of Biennale Arte 2026, *In Minor Keys*, the installation unfolds within a register of low frequencies, with the steady, tense hum of drone propellers echoing through the church's hollow stillness. Rather than amplifying the noise of the present, *On the Thousand and Second Night* opens a space for reflection in which the tension between the technologies of war and the interwoven cosmogonies of material culture opens new realms of imagination within a world undergoing transformation.

Inside the church, an ensemble of carpets hovers between floor and vault, suspended by drones. The carpet—an object rooted in the domestic sphere, associated with embodied knowledge and continuity—is supported by a technology commonly linked to surveillance, control, and, increasingly, to armed conflict. The installation symbolically reverses roles: the drone no longer restricts or pursues, but supports. For a moment, a technology tied to domination becomes an act of protection, and domestic memory gains the power to keep a shared space suspended in the air.

On the Thousand and Second Night continues a line of inquiry initiated by Pavel Brăila with *Magic Carpet* (2018), in which a woven rug was lifted by drones. What once appeared as a poetic image now resonates differently in a world where technology and airspace have become terrains of redefinition.

Drawing both on the tradition of carpets woven in homes and villages across Moldova — passed down as dowry and preserved as generational memory — and on the Middle Eastern motif of *bisat al-rih* (the flying carpet), among them from the tales of *One Thousand and One Nights*, the project reclaims storytelling as a gesture that keeps the possibility of the future open, imagining alternative exits from a world in which borders may shift and security remains fragile. Rather than offering escape, Brăila proposes flight as a metaphor for solidarity and collective imagination. Each suspended carpet evokes protection, well-being, and the continuity of life, reconstructing, thread by thread, a cosmology of care.

"*I feel deeply connected to how this work has taken shape. It carries a poetic and emotional weight, while also delivering a strong and direct message. At the same time, there is an inner conflict: this is not the kind of work I would choose to make under different circumstances. I would rather be working on something else, something not shaped by war. Yet, in moments like this, silence feels inadequate. There is a need to speak, to respond, to*

make visible what cannot be ignored. Perhaps through such gestures, however small, we contribute to a collective voice—one that insists on change, and holds onto the hope that this thousand and second night will arrive, when we can begin to tell entirely new stories, beyond the shadow of war, violence, and terror," says Pavel Brăila.

"On the Thousand and Second Night *is an installation built on contrasts: the fairy tale coexists with the nightmare; the world of symbolism within the carpets is interrupted by the sound of drone propellers; the unseen forces of the divine compete with the power of the wicked. We invite everyone in Venice to stop by Santa Veneranda and experience the work in person. Despite the context that fuels our anxieties about the future, we are opening the pavilion with the intention of celebrating life and Moldova's first official representation at the International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia,"* adds curator Adelina Luft.

In an era marked by fragmentation and the weaponisation of technology, *On the Thousand and Second Night* suggests a reversal of function: from domination to support, from delimitation to interdependence — towards the possibility of a form of coexistence yet to be imagined.

(690 words)

– Ends –

Press Contacts
Elise Bell | Scott & Co | elise@scott-andco.com

Notes to Editors

On the Thousand and Second Night
Commissioner: H.E. Oleg Nica, Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to Italy
Curator: Adelina Luft
Exhibitor: Pavel Brăila

Venue: **Pavilion of the Republic of Moldova at the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia | Spazio Santa Veneranda** | Chiesa dei Santi Geremia e Lucia (Sestiere Cannaregio 252, 30121)
Exhibition: 9 May – 22 November 2026 | Preview: May 6, 7 and 8 2026

Production
Producer: ArtWatt
Executive Producer: Galeria Lutnița
Architects: Tesseract Architecture and Claudiu Ionescu, Gorgona Architecture & Design

Project Team
Project Manager: Ana Antir
Supervisor: Lilia Brăila
Engineer: Serghei Iachimov
Trusted Advisor: arh. don Gianmatteo Caputo

First Assistant: Olga Ghilca
Production Manager: Andrei Sclifos
Production Assistant: Mihail Șarpe
Programmer: Alex Iachimov
International PR: Scott & Co
Communication: Simona Rădoi
National PR: Andreea Pietroșel
Public Programmes: Alisa Bakalova, Olivia Furtună
Graphic Design: Daniel & Andrew Design Advisory
Photographer: Vadim Hîncu
Videographer: Denis Bartenev
Translations: Francesca Pizzinga
Accountant: Ludmila Plotean
Logistical Support – Italy: Elizaveta Fursova
Special Effects: Rodion Rusu
Permits & Local Coordination: Arch. Federico Pizzol

Organizer: Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Moldova
With the support of: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova

Social Media: Website |Substack | Instagram | Facebook

Pavel Brăila (b. 1971, Chișinău) lives and works between Chișinău and Berlin. He is one of the most internationally recognised artists from the Republic of Moldova. Working across film, photography, installation, and performance, his practice explores the social and political realities of Eastern Europe through attentive observation and subtle irony. He has participated twice in *documenta* (2002, 2017) and in *Manifesta 10* (2014). His work has been presented at institutions including Tate (London), Neue Nationalgalerie (Berlin), Moderna Museet (Stockholm), Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (Rotterdam), Kiasma (Helsinki), and the Renaissance Society (Chicago).

Adelina Luft is a curator based in Bucharest. Between 2014 and 2021, she was active in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, where she developed projects informed by decolonial thought, focusing on process-based and interdisciplinary projects. Since 2022, she has lived in Bucharest, where she curated, among others, the group exhibition *Ecologies of Repair* at Gaep (2022) and the residency project *Flowing Streams* (2024), initiated by EUNIC Romania. She is part of the tranzit.ro/Bucharest, active at The Experimental Station for Research on Art and Life, and in 2025 co-founded the Amaranth Seed Collective together with artists, curators, and architects, on shared land adjacent to the Research Station.

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Responding to the theme of Biennale Arte 2026, *In Minor Keys*, *On the Thousand and Second Night* opens a space for reflection in which imagination and material culture operate as forms of continuity within a world undergoing transformation.

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