

GLADSTONE

artnet, "111 Artists Announced for the Venice Biennale," *artnet*, February 25, 2026

artnet

Art & Exhibitions(<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/exhibitions>)

111 Artists Announced for the Venice Biennale

Canceled Australian artist Khaled Sabsabi is among the artists who Koyo Kouoh had personally invited to take part in the exhibition before her untimely passing.

The list of 111 participating artists has been announced for "In Minor Keys," the main exhibition at this year's **61st Venice Biennale**, curated by the team of the late curator **Koyo Kouoh** (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/koyo-kouoh-curating-venice-biennale-died-2642963>).

The exhibition is being realized (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/venice-biennale-in-minor-keys-2649452>) according to Kouoh's wishes by a handpicked team of collaborators with whom she met in Dakar last April. These are London-based curator **Gabe Beckhurst Feijoo**, Berlin-based curators **Marie Helen Pereira**, with ties to Dakar, and **Rasha Salti**, with ties to Beirut, and Kouoh's assistant **Rory Tsapayi**. New York-based critic and journalist **Siddhartha Mitter** will edit the exhibition catalog.

At a press conference today in Venice, the team described "In Minor Keys" as an invitation to tune into the subtler emotional frequencies made possible by the arts, including music and poetry. In this way, the theme aims to provide "a radical reconnection with art's natural habitat and role in society," that of "the sensory, the effective, the subjective."

The Concept

Kouoh's team said that she conceived her exhibition according to several guiding "conceptual motifs." Among these are "shrines," "rest," "procession," and "schools." The list of participants includes 105 individual artists or collectives with the oldest living artist born in 1943 and the youngest born in 1997.

Unusually, the list also includes six artist-led organizations, like **Denniston Hill** in the Catskills, Dakar's **Raw Material Company**, **GAS Foundation** in Lagos, and the **Nairobi Contemporary Art Institution**, included as part of Kouoh's "schools" motif. These grassroots ecosystems are recognized for their "ethos to convene," sharing knowledge and providing "havens that are a font of learning and creative transition."

Central to "In Minor Keys" are two "shrines," or expansive displays that give particular prominence to two of Kouoh's guiding lights. One of these is dedicated to the Senegalese artist, playwright, and poet **Issa Samb**, who died in 2017 at the age of 71. The other honors the American artist **Beverly Buchanan**, who died in 2015 at the age of 74.

The "procession" motif, inspired by carnivals in the Afro-Atlantic world, meanwhile, includes work by artists like **Alvaro Barrington**, **Nick Cave**, **Big Chief Demond Melancon**, **Godfried Donkor**, **Pio Abad**, and **Ebony G. Patterson**. Kouoh has aimed, where possible, "to refuse solid walls," proposing instead new processional ways of journeying through an exhibition. Her team worked with Cape Town's **Wolff Architects** to design standing supports instead.

The motif of "rest" encourages enchantment as an antidote to "cynicism about what art can do," spotlighting the work of **Helen Sebidi** and **Seyni Awa Camara**. The "Creole garden and courtyard" is also a real and metaphorical place of rest, as imagined in the work of **Torkwase Dyson**, **Edouard Duval-Carrié**, **Wangechi Mutu**, **Werewere Liking**, and **Carsten Höller**, among others.