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[Mary Angela Schroth Shares Highlights from the Venice Biennale](#)

Posted on [May 18, 2015](#) by [Vatican Patrons](#)

[The Venice Biennale](#), which takes place every two years, is considered to be the most important and prestigious event on the international contemporary arts calendar and the oldest and largest established biennale in the world. [Mary Angela Schroth](#) of the Patrons Office was there for the opening on May 6, 2015. Here are her impressions.

For the first time in history, a non European has been asked to direct the Biennale in Venice: Okwui Enwezor is a star in the art world. Born in Nigeria, an academic background in sociology, he has been a major figure now for the last 20 years, curating various biennales and exhibitions throughout the world including Germany's Dokumenta. Entitled "All the world's futures," Okwui has chosen more than 100 artists to participate in his main exhibition, and more than a third are from Africa, even more from outside the eurocentric construct. The Biennale also hosts pavilions from 89 countries, as well as another 44 collateral exhibitions so it is indeed the Olympics of Art.

For the second time, Commissioner Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi and Curator Micol Forti (who heads the modern and contemporary department of our Vatican Museums), have organized the [Vatican Pavilion](#) and it is a testament to both art and faith. Forti and her team have chosen 3 young artists from three diverse areas of the world: Monika Bravo from Colombia, Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva from Macedonia, and Mário Macilau from Mozambique. The biblical theme is: "In the Beginning there was the Word...the Word became flesh," with an additional reference to the story of the Good Samaritan. All these aspects are part of Pope Francis' mission but also that of Cardinal Ravasi to underline the importance of contemporary art and faith in our world today. All three artists are experimental and ground-breaking but the best works are by Macilau, dramatic and stark black and white large photographs mounted in a stunning architectural context designed by the artist and recounting the tragedy of children living on the streets of Maputo, Mozambique's capital city and one of the poorest areas in the world. But with the art of Macilau we see a new beauty and a new hope for humanity through the creative image.

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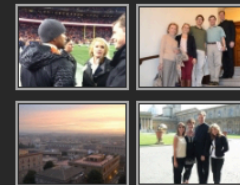


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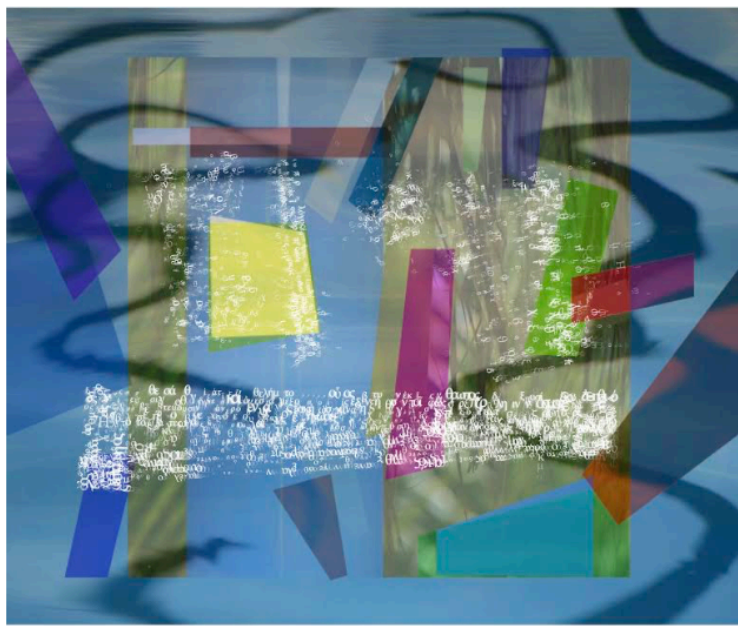
From left pavilion curator Micol Forti, Pontifical Council for Culture President Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi and Venice Biennale President Paolo Baratta attend a press conference at the Vatican to present the Holy See pavilion “In Principio ...la Parola si fece carne” (In the Beginning ... the Word became flesh) participating in to the 56th edition of the Venice Biennale of Arts. (AP Photo/Domenico Stinellis).



Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, Haruspex (detail), 2015, organic materials Photo Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, © Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, Courtesy the artist.



Mário Macilau, A Fish Story, photograph from the series Growing on darkness/ Crescendo na escuridão, 2012-2015 Pigmented inkjet print on Hahnemühle cotton paper. Photo Mário Macilau © Mário Macilau, Courtesy Cataldo Colella.



Monika Bravo, part of the installation ARCHE-TYPES. The sound of the word is beyond sense, 2015, LD monitor, transparent elements, painted wood panel, projection, media player, 440 x 230 cm, photo Monika Bravo © Monika Bravo, Courtesy the artist.

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