

The Brazilian Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale will be curated by Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro and feature works by Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca

The show will include a new work commissioned for the occasion and establishes a dialogue with the event's overall theme

The Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is announcing Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro as curator of the Brazilian participation at the 58th Venice Biennale, in 2019. To represent Brazil at the world's oldest art biennial, Pérez-Barreiro — curator of the 33rd Bienal de São Paulo — selected the artist duo Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca, who will develop a film commissioned for the occasion.

“The promotion of Brazil’s artistic and cultural wealth abroad is a key concern for the Ministry of Culture; the joint effort by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and the Fundação Bienal for the realization of Brazil’s representation at such a prestigious venue as the Venice Biennale is vital for this,” says Minister of Culture Sérgio Sá Leitão. “The excellence of the exhibitions presented at the Brazilian Pavilion is widely recognized, including its having received an honorable mention at the event’s last edition. And this is only possible through the joint effort of these three institutions, each with their own specific missions, yet coming together in the same project.”

João Carlos de Figueiredo Ferraz, president of the Fundação Bienal, explains that “the appointment of Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro is due to the wide knowledge the curator has demonstrated about Brazilian art, to his good integration with the Fundação’s team, and to the affinity between the concepts he mobilized at the 33rd Bienal de São Paulo and those proposed for the 58th Venice Biennale.”

The 58th Venice Biennale, *May You Live In Interesting Times*, alludes to periods of uncertainty, crisis and unrest. The proposal developed by chief curator Ralph Rugoff adopts as a title a phrase in English falsely attributed to a Chinese curse and repeated as such in countless Western political discourses. In the post-truth context of fake news and “alternative facts,” the false curse is an example of how fictional contents can have real political implications.

The work by Wagner & de Burca is related with the overall theme of the Venice Biennale in terms of its commitment with the complex and sometimes conflictive reality of Brazil. “Bárbara Wagner and Benjamin de Burca bring a critical and simultaneously comprehensive view to the enormous plurality of the current moment, pointing to the way in which popular culture absorbs and interprets the images and phenomena of everyday life and the mass media, incorporating them to their own

reality,” explains Pérez-Barreiro.

In their production, the duo has focused on aspects of Brazilian popular culture, especially from the state of Pernambuco, which they present based on a generous gaze without stereotypes. Their works deal with a spectrum of cultures ranging from evangelical religion to rap and *brega* music, seen as manifestations that represent the vast Brazilian cultural diversity. Wagner & de Burca avoid facile dichotomies and relativize the borders between erudite and popular culture, and artistic and journalistic languages.

About Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca

Bárbara Wagner (Brasília, 1980) and Benjamin de Burca (Munich, 1975) live in Recife, where they have worked as an artist duo since 2011. They develop their works as a collaborative practice together with the characters portrayed, thus presenting them by way of a frank and horizontal approach. The films take the form of musicals that defy the conventions of the genre insofar as the fictional and documentary dimensions become hybrid to instate a third territory of language, in which music and dance catalyze the complex intersections between class, gender, race and religion. The duo's recent solo shows most notably include *Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca*, AGYU (Toronto, 2018); and *Aspirations*, MOCAD (Detroit, 2017). Their group shows include: *FRONT International* – Cleveland Triennial (Cleveland, 2018); *Corpo a Corpo*, IMS (São Paulo, 2017, and Rio de Janeiro, 2018); *Berlinale Shorts* (Berlin, 2017 and 2018); *Panorama de Arte Brasileira* (São Paulo, 2017 and 2013); *Prêmio PIPA*, MAM (Rio de Janeiro, 2017), on which occasion they were announced as the Pipa Prize winners; *Skulptur Projekte* (Münster, 2017); and the Bienal de São Paulo (2016). In 2019, Wagner & de Burca will have solo shows at Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and at Museo Tamayo in Mexico City.

About Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro

(La Coruña, Spain, 1970. Lives in New York, USA)

Curator of the 33rd Bienal de São Paulo and of Brazil's official representation at the 58th Venice Biennale. Holds a PhD in history and theory of art from University of Essex (United Kingdom) and a master's in art history and Latin American studies from the University of Aberdeen (United Kingdom). Director and chief curator of Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros (New York and Caracas) since 2008, he was the curator of Latin American Art at Blanton Art Museum of the University of Texas in Austin (2002–2008), chief curator of the 6th Bienal do Mercosul in Porto Alegre (2007), and director of Visual Arts of the Americas Society in New York (2000–2002). In 2018 he was co-curator, with Michelle Sommer, of an exhibition dedicated to critic Mario Pedrosa at the Museo Nacional de Arte Reina Sofía, in Madrid.

About the Brazilian participation at the 58th Venice Biennale

That the Fundação Bienal was given the responsibility to produce Brazil's official representations at the Venice Biennale is the outcome of a long-standing partnership with the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These two ministries, responsible for the promotion of the politics of Brazil's cultural interchange, have conferred to the Fundação Bienal the responsibility to appoint

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the curator for the Venice Biennale and to conceive and produce the exhibitions there, in recognition of the excellence of its work in the artistic-cultural field. Organized with the aim of promoting Brazilian artistic production at the most traditional art event in the world, the exhibitions are held in the Brazilian Pavilion, built in 1964.

Brazil's Representation at the 58th Venice Biennale

From May 11 through November 24, 2019

Preopening: May 8 through 10

Commissioner: João Carlos de Figueiredo Ferraz, president of the Fundação Bienal de São Paulo

Curator: Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro

Artists: Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca

Place: Giardini Castello, Padiglione Brasile, 30122, Venice, Italy

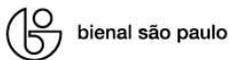
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