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 Clarissa Herbst and Alex Sonderegger

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La Biennale di Venezia

Arte
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“In Minor Keys are sequences of exhilarating journeys that address the sensate and the affective, inviting visitors to marvel, meditate, dream, revel, reflect, and commune in realms where time is not corporate property nor at the mercy of relentlessly accelerated productivity.”

Koyo Kouoh

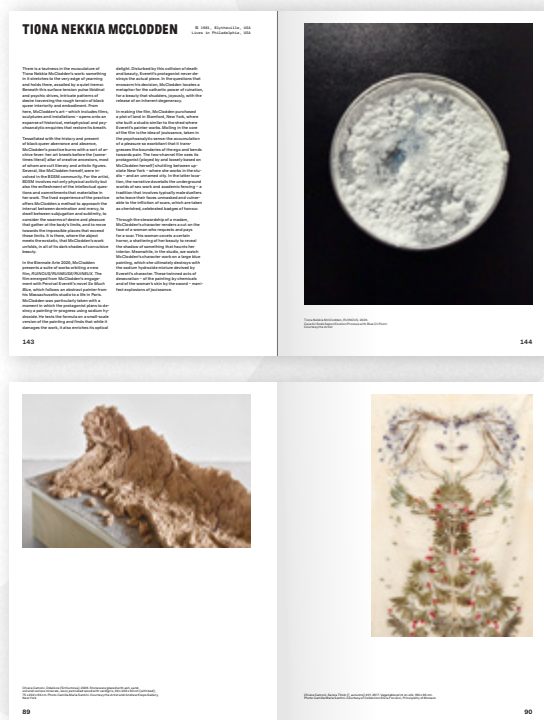
IN MINOR KEYS

The official catalogue *In Minor Keys* consists of two volumes. **Volume I** is dedicated to the International Exhibition curated by Koyo Kouoh. **Volume II** is dedicated to the National Participations and Collateral Events. **The Exhibition Guide** has been conceived to accompany visitors throughout the exhibition path.

It was important to Koyo that the catalogue for *In Minor Keys* stand not only as a robust contribution to the archive, but also as an exemplar of the collaborative, cross-disciplinary, and intuitive mode of making that she convened. In the catalogue, this has meant, first and foremost, **centring artists, with four-page spreads that afford space for a substantive short essay**, as well as studio, sketch or process images that convey the ideas and worklife behind what is on view. **Artists were invited to propose writers on their practice**, resulting in an ensemble of over 100 authors, with texts that vary in approach and voice but benefit from closeness and insight. **The catalogue opens with five “Invocations” – original literary interventions** that do not directly address the exhibition and its contents but are prompted by its moment, its theme, and its circumstances. These texts are authored by Ken Bugul, Teju Cole, Natalie Diaz, Frieda Ekotto, and Abdaljawad Omar. **Two “Shrines” follow, dedicated to the artists Issa Samb and Beverly Buchanan**, with contributions by various authors, including Simon Njami, Elena Filipovic, Park McArthur and Jennifer Burris, Patricia Ekpo, Lucy Lipard, and Lowery Stokes Sims. The catalogue also features **seven original critical essays** (by Adrienne Edwards, Stefanie Hessler, Miguel A. López, Hélio Menezes, Wanda Nanibush, Oluremi C. Onabanjo, and Françoise Vergès) that address thematics, composition, motifs or constellations of practices in the Exhibition, as well as issues in the making of a major international exhibition in the present time. **A section of the book is devoted to the Schools**: it features critical texts as well as images and original texts from each School that address their method and their exhibition presentation.

The **visual identity** for *In Minor Keys*, along with the catalogue design, have been created by **Clarissa Herbst** in collaboration with Alex Sonderegger, following Koyo’s selection of Herbst. The design draws on *komorebi*, the Japanese term that designates the shifting and dappled effect of light filtered through leaves, to convey the relief found under the shade of a tree. Declined in shades of grey with subtle tonal gradients that balance evanescence and permanence, expressed on posters, signage, and moving textile banners, the design aims for clarity and impact while connoting natural and cosmic modes of perception.

Koyo Kouoh (Cameroon, 24 December 1967 – Switzerland, 10 May 2025) was the Executive Director and Chief Curator of Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA) in Cape Town. Prior to this appointment, she was the founding Artistic Director of RAW Material Company, a centre for art, knowledge and society in Dakar, Senegal, as well as part of the curatorial teams for documenta 12 (2007) and documenta 13 (2012). Kouoh is the recipient of the Grand Prix Meret Oppenheim 2020, the Swiss Grand Award for Art that honours achievements in the fields of art, architecture, critique, and exhibitions. Koyo Kouoh has organised meaningful and timely exhibitions such as *Body Talk: Feminism, Sexuality and the Body in the Works of Six African Women Artists*, first shown at Wiels in Brussels, Belgium in 2015. She curated *Still (the) Barbarians*, 37th EVA International, the Ireland Biennial in Limerick in 2016 and participated in the 57th Carnegie International in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, United States, with the deeply researched exhibition project *Dig Where You Stand* (2018), a show within a show, drawn from the collections of the Carnegie Museums of Art and Natural History. She has served as Curator of the Educational and Artistic Programme of 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair in London, UK and New York, US, from 2013 to 2017. She was the initiator of the research project *Saving Bruce Lee: African and Arab Cinema in the Era of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy*, co-curated with Rasha Salti at Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow, Russia, and Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, Germany (2015-2018). Active in the critical field of the arts community in a pan-African and international scope, Kouoh had a remarkable list of publications under her name. During her tenure at Zeitz MOCAA, her curatorial work focuses on in-depth solo exhibitions by African and African-descent artists. As such, she has organised exhibitions with Otobong Nkanga, Johannes Phokela, Senzeni Marasela, Abdoulaye Konaté, Tracey Rose, and Mary Evans. She lived and worked alternately in Cape Town, South Africa; Dakar, Senegal; and Basel, Switzerland.





TITLE
BIENNALE ARTE 2026
IN MINOR KEYS
 SHORT GUIDE / ENGLISH

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 336

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 Clarissa Herbst and Alex Sonderegger

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Koyo Kouoh

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIENNALE ARTE 2026

The Short Guide to the **Biennale Arte 2026**, titled *In Minor Keys*, is designed to lead visitors through the exhibition spaces of the Arsenale and the Giardini, and point them to other projects situated throughout the city of Venice during the **61st International Art Exhibition** by Koyo Kouoh.

Not only a practical guide but also a tangible memory of the Biennale Arte 2026, the book introduces the readers to the work of the artists in the **International Exhibition**, the **Participating Countries** and the **Collateral Events** of the 61st International Art Exhibition taking place across the Metropolitan City of Venice between 9 May and 22 November 2026.

The graphic identity and design of the **Biennale Arte 2026** publications is by Clarissa Herbst and Alex Sonderegger.



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