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Herbert Ploberger, Dressing table (Toiletentisch), 1926

ART

## Venice Biennale: highlights and best of the rest

*There's more to see in Venice than the Giardini and Arsenale; Louisa Buck picks the city's must-visit art attractions from the Biennale and beyond*

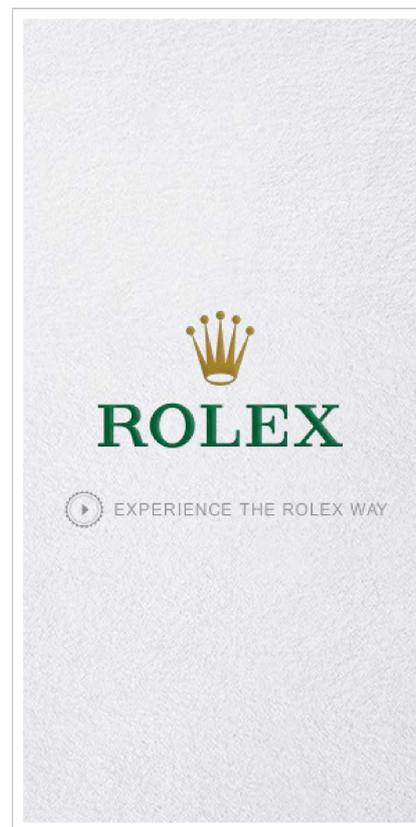


BY LOUISA BUCK  
MAY 29, 2015 11:59

Forget the frenzied opening week of the [Venice Biennale](#), when cacophonous art world hordes converge upon an already overcrowded city, resulting in snaking queues for anything of remote interest. For the Biennale itself, which includes the [national pavilions](#) in the public Giardini and also Okwui Enwezor's specially curated show All the World's Futures which runs across both the Giardini's international pavilion and the spectacular buildings of the Arsenale, is open right through until November 22. And many of the satellite exhibitions throughout the city have been timed to coincide with the Biennale and are open throughout the summer and often beyond. Below are some highlights from the Biennale, along with the best of the rest.

### Giardini

The quietly beautiful, pencil-drawn digital animation of a subtly changing and faintly malevolent forested landscape by artist duo





Part of the Belgian pavilion installation  
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IC-08 is housed in pitch darkness piles of tarry charcoal in Finland's cabin-like pavilion, which was designed by Alvar Aalto in 1956. The Belgian pavilion also contains a rich, lively and thought-provoking lineup of 10 artists from Africa and across the world

who use multifarious means to examine colonialism and its consequences in the Belgian Congo and beyond.

**International Pavilion and Arsenale**

In the vast array of work brought together in Enwezor's exhibition don't miss the hilariously grotesque filmic fantasies of Argentinian Mika Rottenberg and also Malawi-born Samson Kambalu's cinematic fragments that blend slapstick and spiritual ritual. Theaster Gates has imported chunks of the defunct church from his native Chicago – including its roof and bell – which formed the setting of his evocative film, while Chris Ofili has created his own secular temple in which to house his sensuous new paintings. There are two



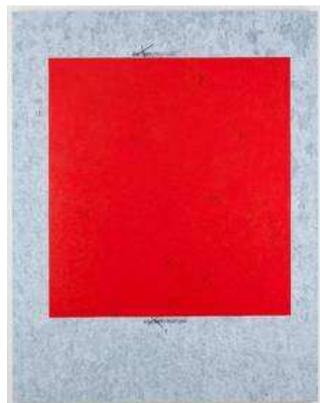
Mika Rottenberg, NoNoseKnows, 2015, part of All the World's Futures  
[Enlarge](#)

mesmerising films by Steve McQueen, each playing on different sides of the same screen, and each addressing the untimely passing of the Grenadian fisherman Ashes; while London based John Akomfrah's sumptuous three-screen film installation intercuts archive and breathtaking newly shot footage to chronicle the sea and all it signifies in terms of nature, culture, beauty and horror.

**Jimmie Durham: Venice: Objects,**

**Work and Tourism**

This 16th century palazzo with its perfectly preserved upper rooms and ground floor and garden remodeled by Carlo Scarpa in the early Sixties is already one of Venice's more unusual museums. Now it has been made all the more remarkable by a series of highly idiosyncratic interventions by veteran American artist Jimmie Durham. Durham has created a series of evocative assembled objects based on his time spent with Venice's contemporary workers and dwellers which have then been provocatively inserted amongst the museum's historical interiors and art collection. [Fondazione Querini Stampalia](#), until September 20



Jenny Holzer, XX 7, 2013  
[Enlarge](#)

**New Objectivity: Modern German Art in the Weimar Republic 1919 to 1933**

**Jenny Holzer: War Paintings**

A comprehensive survey of Weimar Germany – from the end of the First World War to the rise of the Nazis; a time of excessive poverty, sexual licence and social and political rupture – is not only reflected in classic artworks by the likes of Otto Dix, Max Beckmann and Christian Schad, but is also depicted by a multitude of fascinating lesser-known names. In New Objectivity at Museo Correr, equal priority is given to the many photographs produced by artists during this the period, which reveal how the two art forms influenced each other.

Also not to be missed is Jenny Holzer's grand, chilling War Paintings, based on recently released documents relating to the often atrocious acts performed during American military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. These devastating indictments of more recent conflicts are on show amongst the Correr's permanent collection of Renaissance works, and seem ominously at home amongst the treasures produced during Venice's own time as a war-mongering global superpower. [Museo Correr](#); [New Objectivity](#) until August 30, [War Paintings](#) until November 22

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The grand chambers of Palazzo Fortuny are virtually unchanged since they were the turn-of-the-century home and workplace of multitalented aristocrat Mariano Fortuny, the artist-designer of stage sets and avant-garde lamps as well as those famously pleated dresses. But now this atmospheric place has become even more of a *wunderkammer*, courtesy of Antwerp dealer/connoisseur Axel Vervoordt, who has augmented its contents with an exhibition examining the role of proportion across human history and civilizations. The eclectic array of goodies on show span from a Neolithic Chinese jade square block dating from around 6000 BC through to a classically beautiful Botticelli portrait of a young girl in profile, a painted grid by Agnes Martin and a Carl Andre steel plate floor piece. There are also specially commissioned



Sandro Botticelli, *Portrait of a Woman*, 1485

[Enlarge](#)

works by Marina Abramović, Anish Kapoor and Michaël Borremans. [Palazzo Fortuny](#), until November 22

**Peter Doig**

An exquisite small palazzo provides the perfect showcase for 14 of Peter Doig's most recent paintings, all of which have been produced over the last three years and range from small works on paper to full scale major canvases. Doig may currently command some of the highest prices for a living artist, but this array of enigmatic, unsettling works shows him mercilessly pushing his practice whilst blending a range of art historical influences with the folklore and surroundings of his adopted home of Trinidad. A fascinating insight into how one of our leading painters is by no means resting on his laurels. [Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Palazzetto Tito](#), until October 4



Peter Doig, *Night Studio*, 2015

[Enlarge](#)

**Portable Classic: Ancient Greece to Modern Europe**

The clout of Miuccia Prada as an art patron is yet again underlined by this world-class show which, along with a complementary exhibition in her recently-opened [Prada Foundation](#) building in Milan, engages with the way in which art from ancient Rome and Greece has been regarded and disseminated through the centuries. Incorporating loans from major museums and with a dynamic layout designed by Rem Koolhaas, *Portable Classic* investigates how the popular Roman

practice of making miniature versions of famous masterpieces was perpetuated in the Renaissance and throughout subsequent centuries, with constant adjustments made to keep in line with contemporary taste. So it turns out there is nothing new about appropriation, the making of multiples and recycling in art. [Prada Foundation, Ca'Corner Della Regina](#), until September 13



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