Romanian Pavilion at the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

BLACK SEAS
Scores for the Sonic Eye

La Biennale di Venezia
61. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte
Partecipazioni Nazionali

PRESS RELEASE – 18 February 2026

Anca Benera & Arnold Estefán to represent Romania at the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia 2026

Exhibitors:
Anca Benera & Arnold Estefán

Curators:
Corina Oprea
Diana Marincu

Pre-opening: **6 — 8 May 2026**
Exhibition: **9 May – 22 Nov. 2026**

9 May — 22 November 2026

Venues:
Romanian Pavilion,
Giardini della Biennale /
Sestiere Castello, 30122 Venice)

New Gallery of the Romanian Institute for Culture and Humanistic Research
Palazzo Correr, Cannaregio 2214,
30121 Venice

At the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, Romania is represented by Anca Benera & Arnold Estefán with *Black Seas – Scores for the Sonic Eye*, a large-scale polyphonic installation that reconceives the Black Sea as a site of acoustic memory and geoecological fracture. The work unfolds the sea within a wider oceanic continuum shaped by imperial expansion and extractive histories linking the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, and coastal landscapes of the Namib Desert.

Conceived through the notion of the "sonic eye," the project advances listening as both method and metaphor. Vision is displaced as the dominant epistemology. Through spectral composition, field recordings, sculptural instruments, and moving images, oceanographic data — wave turbulence, drifting buoys, undercurrents — are translated into spatialised vibration within an architectural sound environment. Sound operates as archive, sensor, and agent. The sea is not illustrated or symbolised; it is activated as a resonant system.

Central to the project is the sea's vast anoxic layer — one of the largest in the world — where the absence of oxygen arrests biological decay. Drawing on resurrection ecology, Benera and Estefán approach this suspended zone not only as scientific phenomenon but as a model for rethinking temporality and survival. As they note, "We explore how to create a setting where the sea can assert its own voice—where it is no longer a passive surface, but an active interlocutor, capable of both responding and refusing." What futures remain dormant within toxic depths?

Curators Corina Oprea and Diana Marincu articulate, "*Black Seas – Scores for the Sonic Eye* transforms marine science, hydropolitical histories, and ecological observation into spatial and acoustic form, inviting an encounter with geological depth and suspended temporality, where the seabed emerges as archive and latent force."

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Across the Romanian Pavilion in the Giardini della Biennale and its extension at the Romanian Institute for Humanistic Research (Palazzo Correr) in Cannaregio, a charged environment of sound, sculptural resonance, and performative presence unfolds, repositioning the Black Sea as an active force within global systems of circulation and power.

Since 2012, **Anca Benera and Arnold Estefán** have developed a collaborative practice investigating how military imaginaries, ecological transformations, and resource politics materialize across landscapes and climates. Their work brings invisible systems to the surface — tracing patterns of extraction, contamination, territorial tension, and environmental resilience. Working across film, sound, and sculptural environments, they construct research-based installations that reveal infrastructures normally hidden beneath political and ecological narratives. Their works have been presented internationally at major institutions and biennials, including Manifesta 15; the 13th Istanbul Biennial; Kyiv Biennale; Art Encounters Biennial; Museum Tinguely, Basel; mumok Vienna; n.b.k. Berlin; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; and Migros Museum, Zürich.

Corina Oprea is a curator, editor, and researcher working at the intersection of contemporary art, decolonial methodologies, and performance-based practices. She is currently Guest Curator at IASPIS (Stockholm) and was previously Managing Editor of L'Internationale Online and Artistic Director of Konsthall C (Stockholm). Oprea holds a PhD from Loughborough University (UK), where her research focused on coloniality and global exhibition histories. She is co-editor of Climate: Our Right to Breathe (K. Verlag, 2022). Her curatorial practice foregrounds collaborative knowledge production and expanded pedagogies.

Diana Marincu is a curator, art critic, and Artistic Director of the Art Encounters Foundation (Timișoara). Her work engages with posthuman theory, image politics, and exhibition histories in Central and Eastern Europe. She holds a PhD in Art History from the University of Art and Design in Bucharest, where she researched curatorial discourses of identity construction in global, regional, and national exhibitions. Marincu has curated numerous international exhibitions and biennial projects, contributing to the consolidation of contemporary art infrastructures in Romania and beyond.

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Commissioner: **Ioana Ciocan**
Curators: **Corina Oprea, Diana Marincu**
Exhibitors: **Anca Benera & Arnold Estefán**
Venues: **Giardini della Biennale & New Gallery of the Romanian Institute for Culture and Humanistic Research**, Palazzo Correr, Campo Santa Fosca, Cannareggio 2214

TEAM

Sound Composition & Spatial Audio Design: **Simina Oprescu**
Vocal Performer & Composer: **Diana Miron**
Composer & Field Recordist: **Laurențiu Coțac**
DOP & Video Editing: **Tudor Cioroiu | Format Studio**
Colour Grading: **Simona Cristea**

Strategic Coordinator: **Corina Bucea**
Executive Producer: **Ioana Gonțea | Uzinele Creative**
Communication Coordinator: **Raluca Selejan**

Exhibition Design: **George Marinescu, Maria Daria Oancea (Atelier Ad Hoc)**
Production Team: **Justin O'Shaughnessy, Jude O'Shaughnessy, Vlad Cîndea**

Mediation Team: **Tatiana Moise, Mihai Toth**
International PR: **Tilla Rudel**
PR consultant: **Oana Boca Stănescu**
Graphic Design: **Arnold Estefán, Otilia Fiastru**
Web development: **Bureau Castel**
Consultant editor: **Anna-Sophie Springer**
Translations: **Larisa Oancea, Samuel Onn**

Organisers:
Ministry of Culture
Romanian Cultural Institute
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Strategic Partner:
UniCredit Bank

Producers:
Art Encounters Foundation, FIR Cultural Association

Institutional partners:
Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (n.b.k.), ERSTE Foundation, The Center for Projects Timișoara

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Collaborators: **EIDOTECH, "Mihai Eminescu" National Theatre in Timișoara, Faculty of Arts and Design in Timișoara / West University of Timișoara, Faculty of Architecture and City Planning / Politehnica University Timișoara**

Partners: **Salt Istanbul, The Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art (LCCA), Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art (GIBCA), Röda Sten Konsthall, Kunsthalle zu Kiel, IKT International Association of Curators of Contemporary Art, Socialist Anthropocene in the Visual Arts (SAVA) at University of East Anglia (UEA), Artwill Bucharest, Mellow | MUSO | Normal Beer**

Scientific Partners: **The National Institute for Research and Development on Marine Geology and Geo-Ecology (GeoEcoMar), Emil Racovită Speleology Institute (ISER) & Underwater and Speleological Explorations Group (GESS)**

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