

PRESS RELEASE

ARMEN AGOP TO REPRESENT EGYPT AT THE 61ST INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION – LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

- Egyptian artist Armen Agop will present a new body of work exploring slowness, material memory, and quiet intensity at the National Pavilion of Egypt.

Silence Pavilion: Between the Tangible and the Intangible

Commissioner: Ministero della Cultura Egiziano- Accademia d'Egitto A Roma

Curator/Exhibitor: Armen Agop

Venue: Giardini

Cairo / Venice, February 26, 2026

The Egyptian Ministry of Culture has announced that artist Armen Agop will represent Egypt at the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. Agop's work traverses the boundaries of the spiritual and physical realms and is known for its distinct visual language rooted in silence, introspection, and permanence, an approach that has defined Agop's work for over three decades. His exhibition at Egypt's pavilion proposes art as a space for listening and reflection, inviting visitors to experience the transformation of their own inner world. The exhibition opens to the public on May 9, 2026 and continues through November 22, 2026.

Agop's decades-long artistic practice distills form to its most meditative essence, as he focuses on the invisible and the internal energy that an artwork transmits, embodying a spirituality within a physical form. Working with essential elements like a line or a point, he creates sculptures and paintings that privilege restraint over spectacle, duration over immediacy, and presence over performance.

For the pavilion's presentation at the Biennale Arte 2026, Agop approaches "minor" not as subdued or diminished, but as a conscious artistic position. At a moment defined by speed and spectacle, *In Minor Keys*, the curatorial vision of the late Koyo Kouoh, proposes a different rhythm, one that is grounded in attention and endurance. Agop's practice aligns with this shift, demonstrating that quiet intensity can hold as much force as grand gesture, and that art remains capable of sharpening perception.

Born in Cairo in 1969 to Armenian parents, Agop's artistic practice is informed by a deep engagement with form, time, and cultural memory. It draws on ancient Egyptian sculptural traditions, where granite symbolized permanence and strength, the desert's sense of timelessness, and a broader Mediterranean cultural landscape that bridges East and West. For Egypt's pavilion, this approach is translated into a cohesive curatorial vision that emphasizes

restraint and precision, inviting visitors to engage with the artworks through perception and presence.

Egypt's participation in Biennale Arte 2026 reflects a broader understanding of national representation as layered, open, and evolving. Through Agop's work, the National Pavilion of Egypt presents identity not as a singular statement, but as an accumulation of histories, migrations, materials, and lived experience. The exhibition explores an identity capable of speaking globally while remaining deeply rooted.

Artist Armen Agop said: *"To represent Egypt at the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia is both a profound honor and a significant responsibility. We live in a moment of acceleration at all levels, when everything demands immediate reaction and instant position-taking. My work is focused on articulating silence, where thinking and feeling can unfold at their own pace. The works are a result of three decades of questioning what is essential and what can endure beyond the temporary condition of our moment. Through the Pavilion, visitors will have the chance to step out of that cycle of urgency, to experience how perception shifts when you allow yourself to stay silent and go within."*

Advisor of the Egyptian Ministry of Culture artist Mohammed Talaat said: *"Armen Agop's selection to represent Egypt at the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia reflects our commitment to supporting artists whose work engages with heritage and contemporary dialogue. It also demonstrates the ministry's dedication to advancing Egyptian creativity internationally, expanding opportunities for Egyptian talent, and strengthening Egypt's role in global cultural discourse."*

The pavilion will be open to the public from May 9 to November 22, 2026 as part of the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, taking place in the Giardini.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

ABOUT ARMEN AGOP

Born in Cairo in 1969, Armen Agop creates sculptures and paintings that explore the relationship between the physical and spiritual. Rooted in his Egyptian-Armenian heritage, his

work connects ancient traditions with contemporary practice, blurring the line between art-making and meditation.

Inspired by the desert's silence, Agop distills his work into essential forms free of narrative or representation. His pieces become meditations on simplicity—recordings of time and consciousness that transform the space around them.

Agop graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts at Helwan University, Cairo in 1992. Major awards include the Prix de Rome (2000), the Umberto Mastroianni Award (2010), and the Premio Sulmona, Presidential Medal of the Italian Republic (2013). His works are held in collections including the Saudi Arabia Museum of Contemporary Art, Mathaf (Doha), Barjeel Art Foundation (Sharjah), and the Egyptian Modern Art Museum (Cairo). He lives and works in Pietrasanta, Italy.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PAVILION OF EGYPT

Commissioned by the Egyptian ministry of culture – Accademia d'Egitto a Roma, the National Pavilion of Egypt has participated in the International Art Exhibitions of La Biennale di Venezia since 1938, making it one of the longest-standing participants. Located in the Giardini, the pavilion was designed by architect Brenno Del Giudice in 1932 and has served as Egypt's permanent home since 1952. In 1995, Egypt was awarded the Golden Lion for Best National Participation. The pavilion serves as a platform for Egypt's most innovative artistic voices, providing a space for dialogue, cultural exchange, and creative collaboration. It represents Egypt's rich artistic heritage while showcasing contemporary innovation on the international stage.

ABOUT THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

Founded in 1958, the Ministry of Culture of the Arab Republic of Egypt leads the preservation, promotion, and development of Egypt's cultural identity and heritage. The Ministry oversees a wide network of national cultural institutions and creative bodies across the country and supports artists, writers, and creative talents through training, production, and representation at national and international platforms. Focusing on institutional development, digital transformation, and regional and international partnerships, the Ministry reinforces Egypt's cultural leadership in the Arab world and beyond.