

Scotland + Venice

Bugarin + Castle to represent Scotland at the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia in 2026, in a project curated by Mount Stuart Trust

Ambitious new sculptural, performance and moving image work to be shown as Scotland returns to Venice

For the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia in 2026, **Bugarin + Castle** are to represent Scotland, curated by **Mount Stuart Trust** and commissioned by **Scotland + Venice**. The work will be shown from Saturday 9 May to Sunday 22 November 2026.



Image: Davide Bugarin, Angel Cohn Castle and Morven Gregor at Mount Stuart House. Photo by Charlotte Cullen, courtesy Scotland + Venice.

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The Glasgow based artist duo Bugarin + Castle (Davide Bugarin and Angel Cohn Castle), will present a multi-layered new project that uses the concept of the parade as a lens to explore complex emotional legacies of shame, pride and celebration. Drawing on queer histories, Scottish archives and Filipino cultural heritage, it will examine how sound and costume shape social control. The artists' interdisciplinary art practice traverses cabaret performance and architectural methodologies, driven by queer and decolonial research.

Mount Stuart Trust, based on the Isle of Bute, will curate the project, working with the artists and a series of partners. They have presented a renowned Contemporary Visual Arts Programme since 2001 with artists including Alberta Whittle, Abbas Akhavan, Linder, Martin Boyce, Thomas Abercromby, and Ilana Halperin. The Venice exhibition will return for an exhibition at Mount Stuart on Bute in Summer 2027, before further presentations in Scotland to be announced. Dunoon Burgh Hall and BUZZCUT also form part of the project network, reflective of the interdisciplinary work of the artists and Scottish cultural sector. Forma, an arts charity working across the UK and internationally, will provide production support for the film element, building on their previous Scotland + Venice experience working with Alberta Whittle in 2022. Further roles and touring information will be announced soon as well as the venue for the project in Venice.

The project was chosen to represent Scotland by a panel including Sepake Angiama, Director, Iniva, Norah Campbell, Head of Arts Scotland, British Council, Simon Groom, Director, International & National Partnerships, National Galleries of Scotland, Emma Nicolson, Head of Visual Arts, Creative Scotland and Lucia Pietroiusti, Head of Ecologies, Serpentine.

Bugarin + Castle's recent interactive film *Sore Throat*, shot in Edinburgh and Manila, explored colonial monsters and sound in queer Filipino spaces, showing in a solo exhibition at Fruitmarket as well as at Tate Modern and international venues. Via custom software, gallery audience voices were unknowingly recorded and replayed within the film, implicating them as antagonists in its narrative. Bugarin + Castle also perform in drag as Hairy Teddy Bear and Pollyfilla, through Pollyanna, a Scottish queer arts company founded by Castle, now in its 10th year.

The artist's work has been exhibited at leading UK institutions including Tate Modern, ICA: Institute of Contemporary Art, Fruitmarket and City Art Centre. Internationally, their work has been shown at Microscope Gallery (USA) and Krittinen Gallery (Finland), and will be in upcoming exhibitions at Tromsø Centre for Contemporary Art (Norway), Photographic Centre Peri (Finland), and WHYNoT Space (Philippines). Individually, they have a wide international practice. Davide Bugarin's work has been featured at the Malta Biennale (2024) and the Italian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale of Architecture 2025. He has also participated in a residency at Venice Biennale of Architecture 2023, selected by the Biennale curator. He was part of the New Architecture Writers programme, contributing to *The Architectural Review* and *The Architects' Journal*. He has received awards and scholarships from Royal Institute of British Architects

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(RIBA), Worshipful Company of Architects and Burberry. Bugarin recently completed a research fellowship at The Warburg Institute, who have supported the initial research for this Scotland + Venice project. Angel Cohn Castle's work has been commissioned by BBC Scotland, LUX Scotland and Talbot Rice Gallery, and exhibited at galleries including Kunstmuseum Bonn (Germany) and BALTIC (UK). As founder of Pollyanna, she has produced exhibitions at Royal Scottish Academy, Stirling Castle and international galleries. She is currently Lecturer in Fine Art at Newcastle University, and was previously Teaching Fellow in Fine Art at The University of Edinburgh.

Bugarin + Castle said, *"We first met performing in the mess and noise of queer cabaret in Edinburgh. A decade later, that spirit still drives our practice. We're thrilled to show new work together in Venice, transforming the venue with spatial and drag-inflected interventions that confront questions of gendered performance and colonial sound control, rooted in our lived experience. We aim to trouble easy narratives on the contested ground of identity today."*

Alastair Evans, Chair, Scotland + Venice Partnership, said *"Scotland + Venice 2026 presents a timely opportunity to showcase the diversity, innovation and internationalism of contemporary Scottish art. This presentation reflects the depth of collaboration, critical engagement and inclusive practice that defines the Programme's future direction"*

Morven Gregor, Curator, Mount Stuart Trust and Sophie Crichton Stuart, Chair of Mount Stuart Trust, who founded the Mount Stuart contemporary visual arts programme in 2001, said, *"We are excited to curate the work of Bugarin + Castle, extending our shared commitment through the opportunities presented by Scotland + Venice to bring this ambitious work of performance and moving image to life and to reach our audiences on the West Coast of Scotland and internationally. We look forward to celebrating the return of Scotland to Venice with our communities across Scotland and beyond, and, as ever, recognise the positive impact of working in collaboration with key partners in the cultural sector. In 2026 Mount Stuart Trust's Contemporary Visual Arts Programme celebrates 25 years, and we are delighted that part of this special year will be working with Angel Cohn Castle and Davide Bugarin on Scotland + Venice."*

Emma Nicolson, Head of Visual Arts, Creative Scotland, said, *"We are thrilled to support Mount Stuart Trust and Bugarin + Castle as they lead Scotland's return to Venice with a commission that speaks powerfully to the rich and diverse contemporary art practice that we have in Scotland. This project is bold, visually compelling and emotionally layered and stands as a testament to the varied and ambitious artistic voices in Scotland, rooted in place, conceptually bold, and internationally relevant. We are excited to see how this work will evolve in Venice and ripple back across communities and venues throughout Scotland and beyond."*

Norah Campbell, Head of Arts, British Council Scotland, *"The British Council is proud to support Scotland + Venice as it returns to the world stage in 2026. Angel Cohn Castle and*

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Davide Bugarin's collaborative project exemplifies how Scottish creativity can spark meaningful global dialogue. Venice offers a unique opportunity to demonstrate how Scotland's artists are addressing the challenges of our interconnected world, and helping to strengthen the cultural ties that bring nations together. "

Sepake Angiama Artistic Director, Iniva, and selection panel member said, *"The jury were impressed by the range of artistic and curatorial vision of the applications made - it made our conversations lively, with so many brilliant and ambitious ideas from artists across Scotland on the table. However, this proposal was chosen as it not only challenges what it means to represent Scotland in Venice but also recognises the wide and varied work Scottish institutions and artists produce that can speak to international audiences. Venice is an incredible occasion to present dynamic practice to the world and I am excited to see the final project in 2026."*

Lucia Pietroiusti, Head of Ecologies, Serpentine and selection panel member said, *"A presentation at Venice by a country is a meeting point of local and international. It brings situated practices rooted in their environment in dialogue with the wider existential, philosophical, cultural and social questions of our time. The quality of all proposals was extremely high, and demonstrated the excellence of artistic practice in Scotland. The range of different visions for this year was also impressive, as were the proposals' engagement with the most important issues of today. The successful proposal was selected for the artist's vision, their energetic approach, their collaborative nature and for the way in which it connects the realities of Scotland and the wider world"*

Veronique AA Lapeyre, Director, Scottish Contemporary Art Network, said, *"The return of Scotland + Venice in 2026 marks a renewed celebration and investment in Scottish contemporary art. SCAN is delighted to see that this important partnership recognises, and further amplifies, the internationally renowned work of Scotland's artists and organisations that inspires people at home and abroad. It's vital that as a country we continue to nurture international partnerships and build an artistic community united around global social concerns and cultural production."*

ENDS

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Notes to editors

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About Scotland + Venice

Scotland + Venice is a major international project designed to promote the best of contemporary art and architecture from Scotland on the world stage. Founded in 2003, the project supports the development of new work, fosters international connections and exchange, and positions Scotland as a vibrant place for creative and cultural production.

The Scotland + Venice presentation at the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia 2026 is led and funded by Creative Scotland, British Council Scotland, and the National Galleries of Scotland, with Creative Scotland awarding funds from The National Lottery.

Scotland + Venice is a partnership between Creative Scotland, British Council Scotland, the National Galleries of Scotland, Architecture and Design Scotland, V&A Dundee and the Scottish Government.

The aim of the 2024 Scotland + Venice Review was to deliver research and conclusions that enable the Scotland + Venice Partnership to determine the future viability of the project, the effectiveness of its approach, and consider alternative options for the future.

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Mount Stuart is an extraordinary Neo-Gothic mansion on the Isle of Bute. Since 2001, this unorthodox building has provided both the inspiration and location for an acclaimed Contemporary Visual Arts Programme. The Programme enables the Trust to promote and facilitate interest in the contemporary visual arts and bring exhibitions of international standard to Bute and Argyll. Each exhibition is complemented by a programme of events, publications and educational activities. Exhibiting artists have included Martin Boyce, Ilana Halperin, Sekai Machache, Monster Chetwynd, Martin Boyce, Abbas Akhavan and Christine Borland. Mount Stuart's Contemporary Visual Arts Programme is supported by Creative Scotland.

Morven Gregor is the Curator of Contemporary and Learning for Mount Stuart Trust, on the Isle of Bute, where she has lived since 2016. She has worked on exhibitions by Christine Borland,

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Martin Boyce, Ilana Halperin, Alberta Whittle, Steven Claydon and Abbas Akhavan. As well as performances and exhibitions by Monster Chetwynd, Sekai Machache, Rhona Warwick Paterson & Eve Mutso and Linder. Since its inception in 2018, she has overseen Mount Stuart's Emerging Artist Residency in Socially Engaged Practice. In 2023, she completed her PhD at Glasgow School of Art, examining social collecting practices. Her published work includes papers, essays and photography and co-editing Mount Stuart Trust publications for Martin Boyce, Abbas Akhavan, Christine Borland and Arrange Whatever Pieces Come Your Way. Last year, she was one of the cohort of Scottish curators receiving a travel grant from British Council Scotland and Creative Scotland to make a research trip to the 2024 Venice Biennale.

[BUZZCUT](#) is a Glasgow-based organisation dedicated to creating exciting, supportive environments for artists and audiences to experiment with live performance. We open up new spaces for performance, bring new audiences to Live Art, and generate opportunities for artists to make and share work. Founded in 2012 as a free, DIY five-day festival with over 60 artists performing in unconventional spaces across the city, BUZZCUT has grown into an internationally recognised platform for radical performance. Our work is rooted in grassroots community support and a belief in building welcoming, inclusive spaces for creative risk-taking and collective exchange. Their year-round programme includes an annual Live Art festival, regular artist development opportunities, and a monthly performance night, Double Thrills. Across all activity, they prioritise generosity, curiosity, and care through the sharing of food, ideas, homes, and experiences as they foster bold, boundary-pushing art.

[Dunoon Burgh Hall](#) is an inspiring story of a small Scottish community coming together to preserve its rich cultural heritage. The building was rescued by the community, who worked with the John McAslan Family Trust to purchase it for a token £1. Following a major refurbishment in 2017, this grade b listed building is now a fully accessible venue for exhibitions, performances, gatherings, community meetings and events, providing the community with an accessible space in which to gather and celebrate. Today Dunoon Burgh Hall is an inclusive organisation which works hard to improve mental well being by providing access to the arts through a year-long programme of free exhibitions, theatre and events.

[Forma](#) is a leading contemporary arts organisation and registered charity, recognised as an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. Driven by the ambition of our artists, since 2001 Forma has been at the forefront of commissioning groundbreaking, socially conscious art, providing tailored support in the development of collaborative projects that are career-defining and lead to major presentations with our partners worldwide. Artists Forma have worked with include Alberta Whittle, Himali Singh Soin, Lawrence Lek, Sin Wai Kin, R.I.P. Germain, Oliver Frank Chanarin, Évar Hussayni, Sung Tieu, Benedict Drew, Athen Kardashian & Nina Mhach Durban, and Jala Wahid. Since January 2025, Forma has also been programming a new exhibition space at 15 Bermondsey Square, which provides our artists-in-residence the opportunity to showcase work in the public realm, having researched and developed their practice within the community at FormaHQ.

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About the Venice Biennale

The Venice Biennale is one of the most significant international platforms within the global art world, celebrating visual art, architecture, cinema, dance, music and theatre. Founded in 1895, and despite the significant growth of similar events around the world, the Art Biennale is still promoted as the most influential and prestigious contemporary art event, attracting an audience of over 700,000 in 2024. Future editions of the Art Biennale will take place in 2026, 2028 and 2030.

The Venice Biennale events take place in 29 country pavilions housed in the Giardini and more pavilions at Arsenale sites and across the city. 'Collateral' events take place in venues and spaces across Venice and include presentations from countries not included in the Biennale's official country pavilions.

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