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ARTICLES

Your Concise Guide to the 2015 Venice Biennale

by **Hrag Vartanian** on May 5, 2015

This year's Venice Biennale promises to be one of the most political. While curator Okwui Enwezor's central exhibition, [All the World's Futures](#), talks about "filters" (please don't let them be on Instagram), early publicity was about making the artists, curator, choreographers, and others into the main "protagonists." We'll have to wait and see. Aside from Enwezor's highly anticipated show, the national pavilions are the focus.

One of the interesting aspects of Venice is that national politics, particularly from emerging countries, are writ large in the art through the selections, inclusions, and even exclusions. Political ambitions dovetail with these cultural displays, so in 2013 it wasn't a coincidence that Venezuela's Chavez government hit a populist note with a street art–focused pavilion, while Russia's entry was literally showering gold on visitors (women only) in a grand display of conceptual might (it's arguable how successful it was). Each nation projects itself to the world — expect fancy displays from wealthy oil kingdoms eager to suggest a more progressive image, including Azerbaijan, Iraq, Iran, Qatar, Venezuela, the UAE, and others.

Here are some notable things to watch.

Repressed Global Girls

Patricia Cronin's Shrine for Girls ([site](#)), location: Chiesa di San Gallo, Campo San Gallo O Canova 1103, Corte delle Ancore (curator: Ludovico Pratesi)



Piles of clothes from repressed girls from around the world will be placed on altars in a Venetian church. The gesture is simple but sounds profound.

One of the altars exhibits hijabs symbolizing the 276 schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram in Nigeria, while another displays brightly colored saris worn by girls in India, three of whom were recently gang raped, murdered, and left to hang from trees.