

# U.S. artist Bruce Nauman wins Golden Lion at Venice Biennale

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Influential U.S. artist Bruce Nauman has won the Golden Lion for best national participation at the 53rd International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale.

Nauman's exhibit, *Topological Gardens*, features both fountains with water spewing from severed heads and neon words, in humorous pairs, all in a garden setting.

The jury said it was awarding the Golden Lion "in recognition of the sustained energy and precision of Bruce Nauman's art."

"From iconic embodiments of human pain and fragility to pithy jabs at our frailties, his oeuvre reveals the magic of meaning as it emerges through relentless repetition of language and form," it said in its citation, issued after Saturday's presentation ceremony.

Nauman, who works in a variety of media, including sculpture, photography, neon and performance, often makes reference to language in his art.

The Venice exhibit pulls together many of the highlights of his career with audio installations in English and Italian and references to the canals and gardens of the city. It is curated by the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The Venice Biennale opened to the public on Sunday, with 77 countries represented with pavilions and 90 artists presenting work on the theme, Making Worlds

Canada is represented by video artist Mark Lewis, who brought his four-film installation, *Cold Morning*, which contrasts Toronto's modernist architecture with a Vienna street scene.

The best artist Golden Lion went to German artist Tobias Rehberger, 43, for his work *What you love also makes you cry*.

The artist from Esslingen near Stuttgart designed the cafeteria in the central Biennale pavilion, which functions both as a restaurant and an artwork.

The jury lauded his work for "taking us beyond the white cube, where past modes of exhibition are reinvented and the work of art turns into a cafeteria."

An honorary Golden Lion was presented to Yoko Ono, the widow of Beatle John Lennon, for her role as a "pioneer in performance and conceptual art."

Another went to John Baldessari, a U.S conceptual artist who has inspired a generation of young artists.

Other awards and special mentions:

- Silver Lion for a promising young artist in the Making Worlds exhibition: Nathalie Djurberg of Sweden for *Experimentet*.
- Special Mention in Remaking Worlds to Lygia Pape of Brazil for *Teia 1*.
- Special Mention in Curating Worlds to Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset, curators of the Denmark Finland, Norway and Sweden pavilions.
- Special mention in Expanding Worlds to artist Ming Wong of Singapore.
- Special mention in Translating Worlds to Roberto Cuoghi of Italy.