

***In the Beginning ... the Word became flesh***  
**Pavilion of the Holy See – Biennale Arte 2015**

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The desire to re-establish dialogue between art and faith continues after the experience of 2013, and there remains a great vivacity of interest in the international sphere concerning the relationship between the Church and contemporary art.

Following the first edition, the Pavilion of the Holy See at the 56<sup>th</sup> *Biennale d'Arte di Venezia* develops the theme of the “Beginning” with a movement from the Old to the New Testament, making the *Logos* and the *Flesh* the terms of a constantly living relationship.

With reference to *Genesis*, understood as Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation, which was the object of our reflection in 2013, we now have a new term of encounter in the Prologue of the *Gospel of John*. Two essential aspects of this meeting are highlighted: the transcendent Word is “in the beginning”, and at the same time reveals the dialogical and communicational nature of the God of Jesus Christ (v. 1-5), and the Word that becomes “flesh”, body, bringing the presence of God into the essence of humanity, especially where it seems injured and suffering (v. 14).

The descent to immanence is expressed in almost visual terms in the parable of the Good Samaritan, which is taken up in this context as a further thematic suggestion completely in perspective. The pages of the *Gospel of Luke* offer the image of a God present within a humanity oppressed in a human condition. God made flesh helps the injured man, who is marked by death and fragility.

The “vertical-transcendent” dimension of the *Logos* and the “horizontal-immanent” dimension of the “flesh” are axes of research in this sense. There is a need to refer to these as they cross over, to understand the single pieces of art, the dialogue that they create between each other within the exhibition space.

The terms of the Prologue of the Johannine Gospel inspire the thematic spaces into which the Pavilion is divided. They find the creations of artists who have been selected in light of the consonance of their current research journey with the chosen theme, for the variety of the techniques used, and for their geographic and cultural provenance.

*Gianfranco Card. Ravasi, Commissioner of the Pavilion*