

Cecilia Alemani is an Italian curator based in New York City.

Since 2011, she has been the Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director & Chief Curator of High Line Art, the public art program presented by the High Line in New York City. From 2020 to 2022, she served as artistic director of the 59th Venice Biennale, where she curated the acclaimed exhibition *The Milk of Dreams*. She also served as artistic director of the inaugural edition of Art Basel Cities: Buenos Aires in 2018 and was the curator of the Italian Pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale in 2017. Over the past twenty years, Alemani has developed an expertise in commissioning and producing ambitious artworks for the public space and unusual sites.

During her tenure at the **High Line**, she has commissioned major projects by El Anatsui, Phyllida Barlow, Carol Bove, Sheila Hicks, Rashid Johnson, Barbara Kruger, Zoe Leonard, Faith Ringgold, Ed Ruscha, Adrián Villar Rojas, and Nari Ward, among others. Through these public initiatives, Alemani has sought meaningful civic engagement by galvanizing dialogue, awareness, and a sense of possibility. Alemani has also organized group exhibitions on and around the High Line featuring works by many young and emerging artists, including Firelei Báez, Marguerite Humeau, Josh Kline, Duane Linklater, Jon Rafman, Max Hooper Schneider, Sable Elyse Smith, Rayyane Tabet, Kaari Upson, Andra Ursuta, and others. These shows have examined the role of art in creating and defining public spaces, the relationship between humankind and nature, and technology's inescapable obsolescence, among other timely topics. Alemani recently spearheaded the High Line Plinth, a new program featuring monumental artworks that commenced in June 2019 with *Brick House*, a sculpture by artist Simone Leigh. She also launched an ongoing performance series that has presented works by Alexandra Bachzetsis, Kevin Beasley, Simone Forti, Maria Hassabi, Alison Knowles, and Naama Tsabar. Additionally, she initiated a daily video series that distinguishes the High Line as the only park in New York City offering a regular multimedia program available every day of the year for free, as are all art programs on the High Line.

In 2020, Alemani was appointed artistic director of the **59th Venice Biennale**. She curated an exhibition *The Milk of Dreams*, inspired by a book of the Surrealist artist Leonora Carrington. The exhibition featured 213 artists from fifty-eight countries. Most of these artists were women and gender nonconforming artists. In addition to many living artists, the exhibition featured five historical "capsules," or small exhibitions, which included artworks, found objects, and documents by artists from the twentieth century, establishing connections and affinities with the works of the contemporary artists in the exhibition. The show was visited by over 800,000 paying visitors, which broke the attendance rate record in Biennale's more than 127-year history. Alemani worked closely with the artists, also overseeing the production of complex site-specific projects like Precious Okoyomon's garden, Alexandra Pirici's choreography, Delcy Morelos's immersive earth installation, Kapwani Kiwanga's mesmerizing environment, and many more. Alemani was in charge of curation, production, and installation of the exhibition, as well as fundraising and related editorial activities.

In 2023, Alemani is curating several exhibitions. In September, she inaugurated *Tetsuya Ishida: My Anxious Self*, the first American retrospective of Japanese painter Tetsuya Ishida (1973–2005), at Gagosian Gallery in New York. In October, Alemani organizes *Making Their Mark*, the first public presentation of the Shah Garg Collection, one of the most formidable contemporary art collections in the United States. Focused on the work of women artists, the collection brings together works that span more than seven decades, from 1946 to today. The exhibition highlights an emerging group of artists who are exploring abstraction in

innovative ways alongside their significant predecessors who have in many ways anticipated the current discussions around representation, identity, and power. In January 2024, she will serve as the curator of *Anu Põder: Space for My Body*, the first solo exhibition presented outside Estonia of works by Anu Põder, featuring more than forty examples of her rarely seen artistic production. The exhibition is staged in the breathtaking Muzeum Susch in Switzerland, built in a rural monastery from 1157 set against the alpine landscape of the Lower Engadin valley. Museum Susch is founded by Polish collector Grażyna Kulczyk and is dedicated to the work of underrepresented women artists, mainly from Eastern Europe.

For **Art Basel 2019**, Alemani commissioned Alexandra Pirici to stage a new iteration of *Aggregate* for the city's Messeplatz. The immersive work is a performative environment featuring more than sixty performers who move around the viewers, enacting gestures and making sounds that reference disparate forms of cultural heritage, creating something like a time capsule.

In 2018, Alemani was artistic director of the first edition of **Art Basel Cities**, an initiative in partnership with Buenos Aires to celebrate the city's thriving cultural ecosystem. She curated a city-wide exhibition titled *Hopscotch (Rayuela)* that featured works by eighteen international artists in close dialogue with their venues, shaping a multilayered experience that connected visual art, urban spaces, and the city's histories in unexpected ways. Among the participating artists were Eduardo Basualdo, Pia Camil, Maurizio Cattelan, Gabriel Chaile, Alex Da Corte, Leandro Katz, Barbara Kruger, Luciana Lamothe, Ad Minoliti, and Stan VanDerBeek.

In 2017, Alemani curated the **Italian Pavilion** at the 57th Venice Biennale. Titled *Il Mondo Magico (The Magical World)*, the exhibition featured new large-scale, site-specific commissions by Giorgio Andreotta Calò, Roberto Cuoghi, and Adelita Husni-Bey. Harnessing the transformative power of the imagination, each artist employed references to magic and fable, building fantastical worlds that left visitors with a richer, deeper appreciation of their own.

From 2012 to 2017, she curated **Frieze Projects**, the nonprofit platform of the Frieze Art Fair in New York, which has premiered new productions by emerging artists such as Uri Aran, Dora Budor, Liz Glynn, Samara Golden, Anthea Hamilton, David Horvitz, Marie Lorenz, and Adam Pendleton. Frieze Projects also presented reconstructions of historical exhibitions and artists' projects, including those involving Allen Ruppersberg's 1971 installation *Al's Grand Hotel*, the experimental Galleria La Tartaruga in Rome, George Maciunas's 1971 *Flux-Labyrinth*, Daniel Newburg Gallery in New York, Fashion Moda art space in the South Bronx, and Gordon Matta-Clark's 1971 artist-run SoHo restaurant FOOD.

Prior to these roles, Alemani collaborated with **museums, institutions, and foundations** on various programs, while pursuing more unconventional projects with nonprofits and informal organizations. In 2011, she was guest curator for the performance art biennial Performa 11. She also co-founded No Soul For Sale, a festival of independent spaces, nonprofit organizations, and artists' collectives, which took place at X Initiative in June 2009 and at Tate Modern's Turbine Hall in May 2010 as the main event for the museum's tenth anniversary.

From January 2009 to February 2010, she served as curatorial director of the yearlong **X Initiative**, New York, an experimental nonprofit space for which she curated numerous

exhibitions, among them solo shows by Keren Cytter, Hans Haacke, Derek Jarman, Tris Vonna-Michell, and Artur Zmijewski. Alemani conceived and organized more than fifty events for the initiative, including performances, panel discussions, symposia, concerts, and screenings.

Alemani also served as an advisor to the **Venice Film Festival** for the Orizzonti category, which is devoted to new tendencies in filmmaking. She additionally oversaw the organization of the Future Generation Art Prize, a prize for emerging artists. From 2007 to 2008, she acted as curator of special projects for Artissima, Turin.

As an **independent curator**, she has organized numerous exhibitions in museums, nonprofit spaces, and galleries, including *Anu Pöder: Space for my body*, Muzeum Susch, Switzerland (2024); *Making Their Mark*, New York (2023); *Tetsuya Ishida: My Anxious Self*, Gagosian Gallery, New York (2023); *The Magnetic Fields*, Gió Marconi Gallery, Milan (2019); *Glee*, Blum and Poe, Los Angeles (2011); *The Comfort of Strangers*, MoMA/PS1, New York (2010); *Solaris*, Gió Marconi Gallery, Milan (2009); *ONLY CONNECT*, Bloomberg Headquarters with Art in General, New York (2008); *boundLES*, several venues in the Lower East Side, New York (2008); *Down by Law*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2006); and *Things Fall Apart All Over Again*, Artists Space, New York (2005).

Alemani received an MA in philosophy from the Università degli Studi in Milan and an MA in curatorial studies from Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. She has served as a contributor to several art publications, including Artforum.com, *Cura*, *Domus*, *Mousse*, *Klat*, *Modern Painters*, *Art Press*, *October Magazine*, and *Flash Art*. As of October 2019, she writes a weekly column in *D*, *Repubblica*, in which she reflects on some of today's most compelling artworks.

In April 2023, Alemani was awarded the Achievement Award for Excellence in the Arts by the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC. In 2022, she received the McKim Medal by the American Academy in Rome, and in 2015 she was named Ufficiale dell'ordine della Stella d'Italia by the President of the Italian Republic, Sergio Mattarella.