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Francesco Bonami appointed Artistic Director of GES-2 House of Culture

The international curator and critic Francesco Bonami is joining GES-2 House of Culture in the new role of Artistic Director. Alisa Prudnikova will conclude her work as Programme Director of V-A-C Foundation and GES-2 House of Culture. She will continue her collaboration with the institution in 2027 as an independent project curator.

GES-2 House of Culture announces the appointment of Francesco Bonami as its Artistic Director. Bonami has participated in the development of institutional strategy since 2021. In this new role, Bonami will shape the artistic content of programme directions, defining the principles for the selection and realisation of projects alongside the GES-2 team.

Since GES-2 House of Culture opened five years ago, its priorities have included fostering connections between various artistic practices and ensuring programme accessibility to people of varied backgrounds and interests. A unified artistic approach will help further develop these connections whilst preserving the diversity of ways in which projects are interpreted and experienced.

Alisa Prudnikova, who has overseen the House of Culture's programme since 2022, will remain in her position until December 6, 2026. The GES-2 team and Prudnikova will remain in a professional relationship; from 2027, Alisa will work as an independent project curator focusing on academic studies and international residencies.

Under Alisa Prudnikova's leadership, the curatorial team has formed and consolidated central programme directions; built meaningful connections between projects, artists, and audiences; and created industrial possibilities for the artistic and professional communities.

"At the moment, I am especially interested in projects where culture becomes part of a wider strategy—in an organisation, a city, or within new social environments. GES-2 gave me the invaluable experience of working with a complex system. I hope to draw on this experience in future projects of differing scale and content," says Prudnikova.

Francesco Bonami sees his main task as the development of collaborative work with curators, paying particular attention to the artistic potential of proposed projects and the possible responses they might elicit from the public.

"In my understanding, the role of Artistic Director is to catalyse artistic energy. Our common goal is to search for the best projects for GES-2. My experience should help with this," says Bonami.

The elaboration of a renewed programme will take into account the work that has already been done by the team and project development timelines. The themes and projects of the next three-year period will be announced by the end of 2026.

This appointment is a continuation of a long collaboration between Francesco Bonami, V-A-C Foundation, and GES-2 House of Culture. In 2017, V-A-C Press published the Russian edition of Bonami's book, *I Can Do The Same! Why Contemporary Art Is Really Art*. In 2024, Bonami curated the *Square and Space. From Malevich to GES-2* exhibition alongside Zelfira Tregulova. In December 2026, his new project *Things, Idols, Bananas*, co-curated with Dmitry Belkin, will be presented at the House of Culture.

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Francesco Bonami

Curator, critic, author of books on contemporary art, Artistic Director of GES-2 House of Culture and the By Art Matters contemporary art museum in Hangzhou.

Francesco Bonami was born in Florence in 1955. He studied scenography and architecture at the Florence Academy of Fine Arts. He began his career as an artist, then worked as an editor of the international *Flash Art* magazine. In 1993, Bonami curated a section of the *Aperto* exhibition at the Venice Biennale. From 1995–2018, he served as Artistic Director of the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin. From 1999–2008, he was a senior curator at MCA Chicago.

Bonami curated the 50th Venice Biennale (2003) and the *SITE* Santa Fe Biennial (1997), he was co-curator of *Manifesta 3* in Ljubljana (2000) and of the Whitney Biennial in New York (2010). He has arranged over a hundred exhibitions for artistic institutions in many countries, among them the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art in Tokyo, the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, the Pinault Collection in Venice, and the Museo Jumex in Mexico City. He has curated solo exhibitions of Jeff Koons, Damien Hirst, Takashi Murakami, Rudolf Stingel, Maurizio Cattelan, Juergen Teller, Damián Ortega, and Hiroshi Sugimoto, among others.

Bonami is the author of a number of books on contemporary art. One of these, *I Can Do The Same! Why Contemporary Art Is Really Art*, was published in Russian by V–A–C Press in 2017. Bonami regularly writes for the Italian press and appears on television. His texts are written in an accessible language that combines analysis with irony, and address the questions and doubts that arise in viewers upon encountering contemporary art. In 2010, Bonami was awarded the French Légion d'honneur.

Francesco Bonami's collaboration with V–A–C Foundation began long before the opening of GES-2 House of Culture. In 2010–2011, alongside Irene Calderoni, he curated the *Modernikon. Contemporary Art From Russia* exhibition, which was shown in Turin and Venice and brought together works by twenty Russian artists. In 2024, alongside Zelfira Tregulova, Bonami curated the *Square and Space. From Malevich to GES-2* exhibition, which explored the influence of the avant-garde on the development of world art and the evolving relationship between the work of art, space, and the viewer.

Since 2021, Bonami has participated in the development of GES-2 House of Culture's strategy as an advisor, consulting the team on artistic and programming matters. As Artistic Director, Bonami will place particular emphasis on developing curatorial ideas in line with the interests and experience of the public.

Bonami sees his priorities at GES-2 as the establishment of connections between different artistic disciplines, the combination of large and smaller-scale exhibitions, and the creation of opportunities for the realisation of ambitious authorial projects. Bonami ascribes an important role to the Vaults Centre for Artistic Production and GES-2 artist residency programme, which intertwine artistic experiment, the production of new works, and professional exchange.

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Alisa Prudnikova

Curator, founder and commissar of the Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art, Programme Director of V-A-C Foundation and GES-2 House of Culture.

Alisa Prudnikova was born in Sverdlovsk in 1981. She is a graduate of the Ural Federal University, the ProArte Institute (Cultural Management programme), and the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Sociology of Art programme). From 2002 to 2008, Prudnikova was editor-in-chief of *ZAART* magazine. From 2005 to 2016, she headed the Ural Branch of the National Centre for Contemporary Art (NCCA). From 2017 to 2019, she served as Director of Regional Development for ROSIZO-NCCA, where she initiated the *NEMOSKVA* interregional cooperation project. From 2020 to 2022, she was Head of Strategic Projects at the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts.

Alisa Prudnikova has curated exhibitions and festivals of contemporary art in Russia and abroad, including the Ural Industrial Biennial and the New York *SCOPE* Art Fair video programme. She has served as an expert (2006–2012) and jury member (2009, 2011) for the Innovation Prize in contemporary art. She has organised and participated in more than 40 interregional and international conferences. She is a member of the Association of Art Historians (AAH), the International Biennial Association (IBA), and a laureate of the Innovation Prize (2016, 2018) and The Art Newspaper Russia Prize (2019). In 2013, she curated the creation of the House of New Culture (HNC) federal project in Pervouralsk. In 2018, she served as commissar of the *NEMOSKVA* interregional development project, and curated accompanying events aimed at developing cultural and artistic environments in the regions.

From 2022 to 2026, Prudnikova has served as Programme Director of V-A-C Foundation and GES-2 House of Culture. Together with the GES-2 team, she has developed new programme directions, built substantive links between projects, and fostered relationships with the artistic and professional communities.

Under Alisa Prudnikova's leadership, GES-2 House of Culture has created and expanded a system of support for artists, curators, and researchers that enables varied, long-term collaborations with GES-2 (participation in exhibitions, curatorial projects, educational and publishing initiatives). The House of Culture has developed new approaches to international engagement through the *Other Modernisms* programme, expanded its collaboration with local scenes through the *GES-2: Cities* initiative, and launched new public programming formats in Moscow. It has introduced regular [grant programmes](#), [project residencies](#), and continuing professional education courses such as the *Cult Tech* initiative, run in partnership with The Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology.

Among the key projects and programmes realised under the leadership of Alisa Prudnikova:

GES-2 academic direction—a research and discussion programme dedicated to current questions in art and culture, as well as to the structure and work of contemporary cultural institutions. The programme includes round table discussions, laboratories, and interdisciplinary conferences with the participation of Russian and international researchers, curators, and practitioners. Examples include *The Space In-Between. Fragments of Modernism in the Global Context*, a conference dedicated to the various trajectories of modernism and cultural exchange, and biennial mediation forums (2024, 2026), which aim to develop mediation as a professional and academic practice.

Transhistorical exhibitions—a series of projects in which works and items from various epochs and museum collections, historical documents, and contemporary art are brought together within a single research framework. This programme includes such exhibitions as *Split Together, Merged Apart* (2025), which encompassed archeological materials, the history of Soviet modernism, and works by contemporary

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artists; *Undark Ages: Tales of Medievalism and Academia* (2025–2026), a polylogue between Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and contemporary visual culture; and *Still Life. Portrait. Landscape. After Genre* (2026), which examines classical genres of European art in relation to contemporary modes of image production and circulation.

GES-2: Cities—a programme designed to engage with local cultural contexts founded on the interaction of artists, curators, and urban communities. Projects are created in direct contact with each region and call for a collaborative participation of local and invited professionals. The programme began with initiatives in various regions of Russia. In 2026, it took on the new format of collaboration between two cities: the first such project was the *Plus-Minus Eight. Vladivostok—Kaliningrad* festival.

GES-2: Prospekt—a programme of large-scale artistic projects in dialogue with the architecture of GES-2 House of Culture and its central public space, the Prospekt. Over the years, the Prospekt has accommodated such projects as Alexander Konstantinov's *House of Air and Lines* (2024), Francisco and Platon Infante's *Celestial Artefacts* (2024–2025), and *If These Walls Were Water. Lina Bo Bardi* (2025).

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