



**Pavilion of the Dominican Republic
at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia**

Even if the Dominican Republic has already participated, honorably, in various editions of La Biennale di Venezia with an artist belonging to the Latin American representation – of those countries with no national pavilion – for the first time, the Dominican art has the opportunity to show its contemporary expression through a group of well recognized artists. In addition, the works exhibited reflect on a peculiarly "caribeño" theme, as well as on an important current issue: nature and biodiversity in the Dominican Republic, starting from particular regional and global concerns, proposed as guidelines by the 58th International Exhibition d'Arte – La Biennale di Venezia.

Of the five participants born in the Dominican Republic, two live in Santo Domingo, while the other three live and work in New York, without losing contact with their origins: in fact, both those who still live on the island and those who left it, commit themselves to reflect their identity through their respective creations.

Observe how the Dominican artists integrate in their works, with extreme ease, biological, anthropological, plant and zoomorphic elements. Conscious and proud of their national and regional identity, the artists imitate, represent, reinvent nature, in atmospheres that are sometimes unusual, suspended between reality and imagination. In the works we observe a desire to communicate with the universe and life, claiming the key role of nature and biodiversity, as established by the theme chosen for La Biennale di Venezia.

With a rich and multi-colored palette – ranging from sober shades to sparkling colors - Hulda Guzmán recreates magical dimensions, in which a sense of coherence and monumentality reigns in an ecological territory still untouched. Her painting reproduces a deeply emotional and mysterious atmosphere. The pyramid, the water of the sea and the rivers, the topography of valleys and wild landscapes, the sky in which the sun and the moon shine, the exuberant vegetation of the tropical foliage, the flight of birds are all elements that follow each other and flow into the artist's creations, generating perfect chromatic agreements, until they reach an inebriating intensity that incorporates lyrical abstractions, perceived almost as threatening by this idyllic order.

Miguel Ramírez, tireless researcher and experimenter, set designer and all-round artist in two or three dimensions, demonstrates his skill in the use of space, shapes, color and materials. In his work "Herbario", symbiosis of painting, sculpture and installations, built through precise proportions, tropical vegetation fights for its survival, faces the urban advancement, deploying its tropical and luxuriant foliage.

Ezequiel Taveras, museographer and multifaceted artist also living in New York, is a specialist in the art of ceramics, whose concept of "decorative element" he wants to demystify, by transforming it into a reflection on the present time and contemporaneity. In the work "Memorias de la tierra", the artist proposes, taking advantage of the extension of the wall, a succession, physical and metaphysical, of mosaics that become symbols of a deeply indigenous time and space. Different textures are inserted in the design and geometry, playing on the contrast between opaque and glossy elements.

Another member of the "New York" Dominican diaspora, Julio Valdez, specialized in the management and organization of cultural events, expresses himself with visual artistic creations realized thanks to the fusion of ancient and contemporary techniques. Through the enormous paintings by Julio Valdez, the viewer explores the fascinating transparencies of an ideal ecosystem, made of water and waves, images that translate a visual poem and a warning message. At the peak of his career, the artist creates an impeccable work, the result of his virtuous self-need in mastering the arts.

The third "absent Dominican" who participates in the exhibition is Darío Oleaga, organizer of exhibitions in his gallery in Manhattan. Abandoning the classic quadrangular geometries, the artist expresses himself with circular shapes, combining abstraction and figuration that dissolve into harmonious chromatic variations. In this way, the theme of nature allows him to express both aesthetic and ecological concerns.

Alongside these works, there are those realized by some artists who, although they were not born in the Dominican Republic, have lived for a period of time in the country or have established a strong connection with it. Among these, Rita Bertrecchi distinguishes herself for her multiform experimentation, which uses mixed and multi-material techniques, as well as arcane symbolism. Her work "Demarcación" is characterized by its informal language and a strongly bipartite composition: black and white are in opposition, between luminous rarefied spaces that evoke the uncontaminated nature and obscure material accumulations that physically represent the degradation.

Nicola Pica, founder of the movement called "Cromocostruzione", is the author of works that acquire their concrete physicality thanks to color. The installation "Los Cinco Reinos - Cromoconstrucción" investigates the fragile balance between the five Kingdoms of Nature, each vital to the survival of the other, visualized through a puzzle of five pieces perfectly interlocked. Finally, the duo di Luggo & Casciotti proposes a narrative research, marked by very direct symbolisms, as expressed by the two works that have a strong connection. "Genesis", by Annalaura di Luggo, is born from the comparison, from the desire to cross borders, to trace a path that is enhanced in color. It is an abstraction, an astral geometry that belongs to the matter of dreams, which comes from the distant past to project itself into the future. A path of biodiversity understood as a difference, as a discovery and therefore as an emotion in front of life. This last one, in turn, feeds the lush nature that explodes in "Naturaleza dominante", an *assemblage* of leaves that shows itself in all its seductive physicality with a multiplicity of colors.

The Pavilion of the Dominican Republic will be hosted in the sumptuous Palazzo Albrizzi-Capello in Cannaregio and will be inaugurated on 8 May 2019, at 4 pm.