



La Biennale di Venezia

59th International Art Exhibition

The Milk of Dreams

Venice (Giardini and Arsenale), 23 April – 27 November 2022
Pre-opening: April 20, 21 and 22

Venice, 20 April 2022 – The **59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia**, titled *The Milk of Dreams*, will open to the public from Saturday **April 23** to Sunday **November 27, 2022**, at the Giardini and the Arsenale; it will be curated by **Cecilia Alemani** and organised by **La Biennale di Venezia** chaired by **Roberto Cicutto**. The **pre-opening** will take place on **April 20, 21 and 22**; the **awards ceremony** and **inauguration** will be held on **Saturday, 23 April 2022**.

In 2021, La Biennale di Venezia launched a plan to reconsider all of its activities in light of recognized and consolidated principles of **environmental sustainability**. **For the year 2022, the goal is to extend the achievement of “carbon neutrality” certification**, which was obtained in 2021 for the 78th Venice International Film Festival, to all of La Biennale’s scheduled activities, which include the 59th International Art Exhibition, the Theatre, Music and Dance Festivals and the 79th Venice International Film Festival. (*See document attached herein*)

THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

The Exhibition unfolds in the **Central Pavilion of the Giardini**, and in the **Corderie, Artiglierie**, and the **outdoor spaces of the Gaggiandre and Giardino delle Vergini** at the **Arsenale** complex. *The Milk of Dreams* includes **213 artists from 58 countries**. More than 180 of these artists have never had their work in the International Art Exhibition until now. For the first time in its 127-year history, the Biennale will include a majority of women and gender non-conforming artists

The exhibition features **contemporary works** and **80 new projects** conceived specifically for the Biennale Arte, presented in dialogue with several historic works.

“The Milk of Dreams takes its title from a book by Leonora Carrington (1917–2011) - **Cecilia Alemani** stated - in which the Surrealist artist describes a magical world where life is constantly re-envisioned through the prism of the imagination. It is a world where everyone can change, be transformed, become something or someone else. The exhibition *The Milk of Dreams* takes Leonora Carrington’s otherworldly creatures, along with other figures of transformation, as companions on an imaginary journey through the metamorphoses of bodies and definitions of the human.

This exhibition is grounded in many conversations with artists held in the last years. The questions that kept emerging from these dialogues seem to capture this moment in history when the very survival of the species is threatened, but also to sum up many other inquiries that pervade the sciences, arts, and myths of our time. **How is the definition of**

the human changing? What constitutes life, and what differentiates plant and animal, human and non-human? What are our responsibilities towards the planet, other people, and other life forms? And what would life look like without us?

These are some of the guiding questions for this edition of the Biennale Arte, which focuses on **three thematic areas** in particular: **the representation of bodies and their metamorphoses; the relationship between individuals and technologies; the connection between bodies and the Earth.**"

"As visitors move through the exhibition in the Central Pavilion and the Corderie, they encounter **five smaller, historical sections: miniature constellations of artworks**, found objects, and documents, clustered together to explore certain key themes. **Conceived like time capsules, these shows within the show provide additional tools of investigation and introspection, weaving a web of references and echoes that link artworks of the past – including major museum loans and unconventional selections – to the pieces by contemporary artists in the surrounding space. This wide-ranging, transhistorical approach traces kinships and affinities between artistic methods and practices, even across generations**, to create new layers of meaning and bridge present and past. What emerges is a historical narrative that is not built around systems of direct inheritance or conflict, but around forms of symbiosis, solidarity, and sisterhood."

"The Milk of Dreams was conceived and organised in a period of enormous instability and uncertainty, since its development coincided with the outbreak and spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. La Biennale di Venezia was forced to postpone this edition by one year, an event that had only occurred during the two World Wars since 1895. So the very fact that this exhibition can open is somewhat extraordinary: its inauguration is not exactly the symbol of a return to normal life, but rather the outcome of a collective effort that seems almost miraculous. During these endless months in front of the screen, I have pondered the question of what role the International Art Exhibition should play at this historical juncture, and the simplest, most sincere answer I could find is that the Biennale sums up all the things we have so sorely missed in the last two years: the freedom to meet people from all over the world, the possibility of travel, the joy of spending time together, the practice of difference, translation, incomprehension, and communion.

The Milk of Dreams is not an exhibition about the pandemic, but it inevitably registers the upheavals of our era. In times like this, as the history of La Biennale di Venezia clearly shows, art and artists can help us imagine new modes of coexistence and infinite new possibilities of transformation." (*The full text of Cecilia Alemani is included in the Press Kit*)

"Cecilia Alemani's Exhibition imagines new harmonies, hitherto unthinkable cohabitations and surprising solutions - said **President Roberto Cicutto** - precisely because they distance themselves from anthropocentrism. A journey at the end of which there are no losers, but where new alliances are brought forth, generated by a dialogue between different beings (some perhaps even produced by machines) with all the natural elements that our planet (and perhaps others as well) presents to us. The travelling companions (the artists) who accompany the Curator all come from very different worlds. Cecilia tells us that there is a majority of female artists and non-binary subjects, a choice I endorse because it reflects the richness of the creative force of our time."

“Many works are new productions created specifically for this edition. This is an important sign and proof of the great attention bestowed on the new generations of artists. It is no coincidence that the Curator has proposed to realize the first College Arte in the Biennale’s history, which now flanks those dedicated to Cinema, Dance, Theatre, and Music. The past few years of the Biennale College under the direct responsibility of their Artistic Directors of Dance, Theatre, Music and Cinema departments, aided by tutors, have been very positive.”

“It seemed difficult to achieve this also for the Biennale Arte. But three female artists and one male artist, chosen from among the many candidates from all over the world, see their works exhibited out of competition in the International Exhibition, with equal pride of place as their already established colleagues who have been selected by the Curator. This is an important step **for La Biennale di Venezia which, through the activities of its ASAC and the establishment of an International Centre for Research on the Contemporary Arts, is becoming an increasingly important instrument of growth for female and male artists, further enhancing its historical role of producing exhibitions and festivals.**”

“My wish for the 59th International Art Exhibition is that we can all immerse ourselves in the “re-enchantment of the world” that Cecilia evokes in her introduction. Perhaps this is a dream, which is another of the constituent elements of this Exhibition.” (*The full text by Roberto Cicutto is included in the press kit*)

“In the last few weeks the Russian aggression in Ukraine has shaken us to the core, for the shock and dismay, but also with the perturbing question: can a war really just break out all of a sudden or were we unaware (politicians, diplomacy, the world of culture) of the many signals that, had we caught them in time, could have avoided it? In the emergency of these weeks of war every concern must be directed towards rescuing those in need and saving as many human lives as possible. **La Biennale, and all those who work in the fields of art and culture, faced with a thousand difficulties and understanding the positions in which the reasons of the victims prevail over those of the aggressors, must seek to keep alive the possibility of a dialogue between those who use the languages of art to give hope for a future that will silence the weapons forever.**” (*The full text by Roberto Cicutto is included in the press kit*)

SPECIAL PROJECTS realised by La Biennale di Venezia

- Forte Marghera Special Project, Mestre

Elisa Giardina Papa, one of the artists taking part in the International Exhibition (in competition), has been invited by Cecilia Alemani to make a special work in Forte Marghera, in the building called Polveriera austriaca.

- Applied Arts Pavilion Special Project, Arsenale, Sale d’Armi

Artist **Sophia Al-Maria** has been selected to present a work in the Applied Arts Pavilion, titled *Tiger Strike Red*, at the Sale d’Armi, Arsenale. This is the third time of collaboration between La Biennale di Venezia and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in London at the Biennale Arte.

MEETINGS ON ART

Leonora Carrington's literary and artistic work guides the title and themes of the 59th International Art Exhibition, *The Milk of Dreams*. To pay tribute to the artist's imagery, a series of conversations, roundtables and keynote lectures will be held **over five days in June, from 7 to 11**, each anchored in Carrington's life and oeuvre while expanding to the broader themes of the Exhibition. The talks will bring together artists, scholars, curators, thinkers and writers from various fields to discuss topics such as the metamorphosis of the body and of humanity, the posthuman turn, our relationship to the Earth and technologies, Surrealism, Spiritualism, magic, Indigenous epistemologies, the writing of fiction, and feminisms.

Speakers include, among others, **Susan L. Aberth, Tere Arcq, Matthew Biro, Rosi Braidotti, Mel Y. Chen, Susanne Christensen, Andrea Giunta, Jack Halberstam, Saidiya Hartman, Jennifer Higgie, Alyce Mahon, Joanna Moorhead, Igiaba Scego, Christina Sharpe, Adrien Sina, Grazina Subelyte, Marina Warner.**

(Additional events, conversations and performances will take place throughout the seven months of the Exhibition. More information on www.labiennale.org)

BIENNALE COLLEGE ARTE

The final projects for the 1st edition of Biennale College Arte 2021/22 are by Simnikiwe Buhlungu, Ambra Castagnetti, Andro Eradze and Kudzanai-Violet Hwami. The 4 artists received a grant of 25,000 euros for the realization of the final work. **The artworks are presented, out of competition, as part of the 59th International Art Exhibition, *The Milk of Dreams*.** Over 250 young emerging artists under 30 from 58 countries around the world have joined the call for participation. More than half are women. *(See document attached herein)*

NATIONAL PARTICIPATIONS

The Exhibition includes **80 National Participations** in the historic Pavilions at the Giardini, at the Arsenale and in the city centre of Venice. **5 countries** participate for the first time at the Biennale Arte: **Republic of Cameroon, Namibia, Nepal, Sultanate of Oman, and Uganda.** Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Republic of Uzbekistan participate for the first time with their own pavilion.

The **Italian Pavilion** at the Tese delle Vergini in the Arsenale, sponsored and promoted by the **Ministero della Cultura**, Direzione Generale Arte e Architettura Contemporanea e Periferie Urbane. Titled *History of Night and Destiny of Comets* is curated by **Eugenio Viola**, an installation by **Gian Maria Tosatti**.

PIAZZA UCRAINA

The aim of this project is giving a voice to artists and the art community of Ukraine as well as other countries in solidarity with the people of Ukraine in the aftermath of the brutal invasion by the Russian government, **La Biennale di Venezia** presents *Piazza Ucraina*, a space for debate and conversation, by the **Curators of the Ukrainian Pavilion Borys Filonenko, Lizaveta German, Maria Lanko.** Realized in the context of the 59th International Art Exhibition with the collaboration of the **Ukrainian Emergency Art Fund (UEAF)** and the **Victor Pinchuk Foundation**, *Piazza Ucraina* is an open-air installation at

the Spazio Esedra in the Giardini of La Biennale, **designed by Ukrainian architect Dana Kosmina.**

“We hope – said **Roberto Cicutto** - that this initiative will help raise awareness in the world against the war and all that comes with it.”

COLLATERAL EVENTS

30 Collateral Events, which are admitted by the Curator and promoted by non-profit national and international bodies and institutions, take place in several locations around the city of Venice. They offer a wide range of contributions and participations that enrich the diversity of voices that characterizes the Exhibition.

INTERNATIONAL JURY and GOLDEN LIONS FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

The Board of Directors of La Biennale di Venezia, upon recommendation by the Artistic Director **Cecilia Alemani**, has appointed the **International Jury** of the **59th International Art Exhibition** composed by: **Adrienne Edwards** (USA), President of the Jury, **Lorenzo Giusti** (Italy), **Julieta González** (Mexico), **Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung** (Cameroon), **Susanne Pfeffer** (Germany).

The International Jury will award the following official prizes: **Golden Lion for best National Participation; Golden Lion for best participant** in the International Exhibition; **Silver Lion for a promising young participant** in the International Exhibition.

The German artist **Katharina Fritsch** and the Chilean artist **Cecilia Vicuña** are the recipients of the **Golden Lions for Lifetime Achievement** of the **59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia**. The Biennale Arte 2022 awards ceremony will be held on **April 23rd, 2022** at Ca' Giustinian, the headquarters of La Biennale di Venezia. (*See document attached herein*)

BIENNALE SESSIONS, the project for Universities

For the eleventh consecutive year, La Biennale dedicates the **Biennale Sessions** project to institutions that develop research and training programmes in architecture, the arts and related fields, and to Universities and Fine Arts Academies. The aim is to facilitate self-organised three-day visits for groups of at least 50 students and teachers, with the possibility of holding seminars in the exhibition venues offered free of charge and assistance in coordinating travel and accommodation. (*See document attached herein*)

EDUCATIONAL

For the past decade, La Biennale di Venezia has been devoting increased attention to learning activities and has developed a growing commitment to educational initiatives addressed to the audience of its Exhibitions, to universities, young people, and children, from schools at all levels. In the past two years, the Art and Architecture Exhibitions had **82,819** participants in Educational activities in total, amongst whom **48,006** were youngsters. A broad Educational programme has been scheduled for 2022 as well, addressed to individuals and groups of students, children, adults, families, professionals, companies, and universities. All the initiatives aim at actively involving the participants, and are led by professional operators, carefully trained by La Biennale di Venezia. They are divided into two categories: Guided Tours and Workshop Activities. (*See document attached herein*)

CATALOGUE AND GRAPHIC IDENTITY

The official catalogue, titled “The Milk of Dreams”, consists of two volumes. Volume I of the catalogue is dedicated to the International Exhibition, curated by Cecilia Alemani. This volume includes the Curator’s original contribution as well as a wide range of illustrations and critical essays by some of today’s most cutting-edge thinkers and writers.

Volume II is focused on the National Participations and the Collateral Events. The Exhibition Guide is conceived to accompany the visitor through the Exhibition.

The graphic identity of Biennale Arte 2022 and the publication’s design are by **A Practice for Everyday Life**, London. The **graphic identity** explores ideas of fluidity, identity, the human and the non-human, re-enchantment, and fragmentation. The graphic identity positions artists’ works at its forefront, featuring details from artworks by Belkis Ayón, Felipe Baeza, Tatsuo Ikeda, and Cecilia Vicuña. These disparate artworks are united in their representation of eyes, which are symbolic of important ideas running through the exhibition: dreams, identity, the body, and reflection.

The three volumes are published by La Biennale di Venezia. (*See document attached herein*)

EXHIBITION DESIGN

The Exhibition design is conceived by **Formafantasma**, a research-based design studio founded in 2009 by Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin. Their work is internationally recognized for its rigor and **while investigating** the historical, political and social forces shaping the discipline of contemporary design.

PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

The 59th International Art Exhibition was also made possible thanks to the support of **Swatch**, **Partner** of the event.

Main Sponsor of the 59th Exhibition is **illycaffè**.

Sponsor: **Bloomberg Philantropies**, **Vela-Venezia Unica** and **Kvadrat**

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Media partner for the 59th International Art Exhibition is **Rai Radiotelevisione Italiana**.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We thank our Donors and the International Councils and Organizations, which are essential to the creation of the 59th Exhibition.

We especially wish to thank Cecilia Alemani and all her team.

And finally we would like to thank the highly professional staff of La Biennale, who work with such great dedication on the organisation and management of the Exhibition.

The Biennale Arte 2022 is online through its social media channels:

Facebook: La Biennale di Venezia; **Twitter:** @la_Biennale; **Instagram:** @labiennale;

YouTube: BiennaleChannel; **official website** www.labiennale.org

The press conference (Wednesday, April 20 at 11.00 am) and the award ceremony (Saturday, April 23 at 12.00 pm) will be live streamed.

Official hashtags: **#BiennaleArte2022 #ILlatteDeiSogni #TheMilkOfDreams**

IMAGES of the 59th International Art Exhibition may be downloaded at the following link:

<http://ftp.labiennale.org> | *Account:* biennalearte2022 | *Password:* biennalearte2022

For more information

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