

Biennale Gherdëina 9
The Parliament of Marmots

curated by **Lorenzo Giusti**
with **Marta Papini** as associate curator

31.05— 1.09.2024

OPENING DAYS
Friday 31 May and Saturday 1° June 2024

Ortisei and Val Gardena
www.biennalegherdeina.it

From May 31 to September 1 2024, with opening days on Friday 31 May and Saturday 1 June 2024, in Ortisei and within the unique setting of the Dolomites and Val Gardena, **The Parliament of Marmots**, the **9th edition of the Biennale Gherdëina**, curated by **Lorenzo Giusti** with **Marta Papini** as associate curator, will open to the public. The Parliament of Marmots is inspired by the Kingdom of Fanes, one of the most fascinating Ladin myths of the Dolomites, which tells of the breaking of a pact established between animals and humans. This orally transmitted legend shares some key figures with Mediterranean culture and speaks of transformations, celebrating wild nature, the cycles of life, and the intimate and profound relationship between all species. In this perspective, the mountains and the Dolomites — remnants of gigantic coral reefs that surfaced 250 million years ago — transform from a barrier into a passage, a meeting point, and thus a place of encounter and contamination.

Biennale Gherdëina 9 - *The Parliament of Marmots* brings together artists in the peculiar context of Val Gardena who explore themes of the **wild** as a creative dimension, **multispeciesism** as a trajectory of becoming, and the **mountain** as a terrain of encounter and reconciliation in their artistic practice. The Biennale aims to give voice to a diverse artistic community, representative of a broad cultural area that connects recent artistic research developed in various contexts across continental **Europe, North Africa**, and the **Middle East**.

"According to anthropologist Anna Tsing, the ability to create worlds is not a prerogative of humans; hence it is necessary to turn to ways of world-making or modes of existence beyond the human," explains curator Lorenzo Giusti. "This does not mean adopting a post-human perspective — where the human disappears — but opening up to the telling of 'more-than-human' stories, in which humans lose their centrality, in the awareness that no organism can become itself without the assistance of other species. In trying to compose a possible vision of these worlds, Biennale Gherdëina 9 presents a hybrid mosaic of artistic proposals, opening up the possibility of cultural and political reconciliation between the Alps and the Mediterranean, between origins and perspectives."

From the 17th-century **Castel Gardena** in Selva di Val Gardena to the **center of Ortisei**, from the industrial area of **Pontives** in Laion to **Dantercepies**, the ninth edition of Biennale Gherdëina unfolds through various formats: new productions, performances, solo and group exhibitions, collaborations with regional cultural institutions, and workshops open to the public.

New Commissions

Biennale Gherdëina 9 has invited a group of artists to create new works and installations that interact with the natural, cultural, linguistic, and social context of Val Gardena. Thanks to encounters with paleontologists, linguists, and artisans, the artists have opened new interpretations and perspectives on the heritage and future of the Dolomite landscape, highlighting connections with seemingly distant geographies. Among the new commissioned works are those by Nassim **Azarzar** (1989), who, with a pictorial intervention on the exterior

walls, has transformed the Hotel Ladinia into an open invitation to the public to enter and explore the now-abandoned hotel; Julius **von Bismarck** (1983) has created a large statue on the main street of Ortisei, where the spruce bark beetle, the insect devouring the local forests, is depicted as a mounted leader. Collaborating with local sculptor Helene Demetz, Sara **Ouhaddou** (1986) has created small wooden sculptures of indigenous animals of Val Gardena, inspired by zoomorphic ceramic art practiced in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco and Tunisia since the Neolithic. Drawing inspiration from the *anguane*, female figures of Ladin mythology associated with water; also in Ortisei, drawings by Esraa **Elfeky** (1989) are located in the herbarium of Museum Gherdëina; Diana **Policarpo** (1986) has created a sculpture in an ancient fountain at Castel Gardena resembling a large amoeba. Other works and installations have been commissioned from: Atelier dell'Errore (2002), Ruth **Beraha** (1986), Chiara **Bersani** (1984), Alessandro **Biggio** (1974), Daniele **Genadry** (1980), Arnold **Holzknicht** (1960), Michael **Höpfner** (1973), Ingela **Ihrman** (1985), Nadia **Kaabi-Linke** (1978), Linda Jasmin **Mayer** (1986), Femmy **Otten** (1981), Eva **Papamargariti** (1987), Markus **Vallazza** (1936-2019) + Martino **Gamper** (1971), Karin **Welponer** (1941).

Contributions

In the new Pontives venue, Biennale Gherdëina 9 presents contributions from artists whose works explore the three trajectories of The Parliament of Marmots in various ways. In the group exhibition at Spazio Stuffesser, artists from the Mediterranean area focus on themes such as multispeciesism and geological time, an extended time that blurs geographical boundaries, bringing together stories from Europe with those from the Middle East. The works include those of Talar **Aghbashian** (1981), Ismail **Bahri** (1978), Yesmine **Ben Khelil** (1986), Nadim Choufi (1994), Elmas **Deniz** (1981), Andro **Eradze** (1993), Marianne **Fahmy** (1992), Shuruq **Harb** (1980), Katia **Kameli** (1973), Janis **Rafa** (1984). Additional contributions at Pontives include works by Alex **Ayed** (1989), Valentina **Furian** (1989), and Laurent **Le Deunff** (1977).

Collaborations

As part of the long-term program *Thinking Like a Mountain*, developed by **GAMEc** - Galleria D'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Bergamo, The Parliament of Marmots also presents a tribute to the work of Lin **May Saeed** (1973-2023), with a retrospective presented simultaneously at Biennale Gherdëina 9 and GAMEc in Bergamo, in an exhibition divided between the two venues. In Ortisei, a selection of works is presented in which the relationship between humans and animals is constantly revisited, thanks to a narrative dimension that draws on myth, fairy tale and legend.

The program is completed by collaborations with some of the main contemporary art institutions in the region: **Ar/Ge Kunst** in Bolzano presents new film work by Eva **Giolo** (1991) – shot in the valleys surrounding the Dolomites, as part of an exhibition curated by Zasha Kolah and Francesca Verga. The **Bolzano Danza** contemporary dance festival presents the choreographic installation by Helle **Siljeholm** (1981), developed on the Dolomite rock walls of Cir in Selva Val Gardena, curated by Lisa Gilardino. **Museion**, the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Bolzano, shares with the Biennale the presentation of the work of South Tyrolean artist Tobias **Tavella** (1990), included in the Renaissance exhibition, curated by Leonie Radine.

During the event, **MUSE** – Museo delle Scienze in Trento and Biennale Gherdëina develop a film program, curated by Lorenzo Giusti, Alice Labor, and Marta Papini, with artist films by Noor **Abuarafeh**, Liv **Bugge**, Jumana **Manna**, Maeve **Brennan**, Yalda **Afsah**, and Caterina Erica **Shanta** dedicated to the themes of the wild and the Anthropocene. Introduced by researchers from MUSE, the selected films deepen the Biennale's perspectives, intersecting scientific investigation with artistic languages.

Public Programme

Starting **from Sunday, June 2**, and throughout its duration, Biennale Gherdëina 9 will be accompanied by a rich **public programme** dedicated to all ages: workshops, performances, talks, and walks in the woods to discover the history of the Dolomites, the plants and animals that inhabit them, and the sounds that characterize them. The program will begin with the first event on Sunday 2 June at Dantercepies, Selva di Val

Gardena, with open rehearsals of *The Sea of Rocks* by Helle Siljeholm. All information and the complete schedule are available at www.biennalegherdeina.it.

OPENING PROGRAMME

31.05 – 1.06.2024

FRIDAY 31.05.2024

15.00 h Vallunga, Selva di Val Gardena

L'animale selvaggio (part 1), Pre-Opening, performance by Chiara Bersani

17.00 h Castel Gardena / Fischburg

Occurring in the Atmosphere, participative performance by Tobias Tavella

L'animale selvaggio (part 2), Performance by Chiara Bersani

Welcome of the Authorities, President of Zënza Sëida Eduard Demetz and curator Lorenzo Giusti

The Sea Of Rocks (Preview), Performance by Helle Siljeholm

Drifters, Performance by Linda Jasmin Mayer

Incontri gastronomici tra l'Alto Adige e il Medio Oriente, curated by Tucia and Ollerhond Selbergmochts

Late Evening Music by zuPPa collective

SATURDAY 1.06.2024

10.00 h Spazio Ferdinand Stuflessner, Pontives

Guided tours through the venues in Pontives

14.00 h Sala Trenker, Ortisei

Guided tours through the artwork in the public space, Sala Trenker, Museum Gherdëina and to Hotel Ladinia

The Wandering Spruce, Performance by Ingela Ihrman

18.00 h Piazza della chiesa, Ortisei

Eva Giolo, *Memory Is an Animal, It Barks with Many Mouths, 2024 (20')*, Introduction by Francesca Verga and Lorenzo Giusti

Noor Abuarafeh, *Am I the ageless object at the museum?*, 2018 (15')

Liv Bugge, *The Other Wild*, 2018 (28'), Introduction by Massimo Bernardi, paleobiologist and director of the MUSE research and collections office

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