

"ECHOES of the FOREST"

LABINAC at ROYAL GARDENS OF VENICE

MARIA THEREZA ALVES and JIMMIE DURHAM during the 17th VENICE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE

The president of the Venice Gardens Foundation, Adele Re Rebaudengo and curator Chiara Bertola invited artists Maria Thereza Alves and Jimmie Durham to show selected works from their design collective LABINAC in the greenhouse of the Royal Gardens for the opening of the garden's research center during the 2021 Venice Architecture Biennale.



LABINAC has been commissioned to design research and work tables for the restored greenhouse of the Royal Gardens at Piazza San Marco in Venice, restored by Venice Gardens Foundation that takes care of its conservation and management. LABINAC designed for the greenhouse in accordance with the idea of the Venice Gardens Foundation, for which the gardens are a meeting place, where researchers and artists can develop the vast metaphorical concept of the garden, sowing signs, sounds and words, cultivating and nurturing new visions.

"Architecture must begin with a specific place, considering the nature of the surrounding, every building is made in a garden whether or not that is recognised." -Maria Thereza Alves

The Royal Gardens commissioned by Napoleon adjacent to Piazza San Marco in Venice have been obscured in secrecy, left to decay and hidden from public eye for many years. Recently they have been restored by the Venice Gardens Foundation, with the support of Assicurazioni Generali, and open to the public on December 2019, reclaiming their botanical richness and nineteenth-century design grandeur. A historical and botanical gem comes back to life with a Mediterranean atmosphere. The gardens are surrounded by water facing the imperial rooms of the Royal Palace, the Archeological Museum and the historic Marciana Library.

For the Venice Architecture Biennale LABINAC will present a selection of works under the title: *"Echoes of the Forest"*. Exhibited will be twenty one tables specifically designed for the Gardens by the two artists, hand-blown glass vases, and a chandelier of broken Murano glass. The tables will remain as a site-specific permanent installation at the venue after the end of the Biennale.

Both Alves and Durham took as their inspiration the endemic Mediterranean Pine Tree. Alves designed research tables from Serpentine Green Marble to represent the trees as seen from above or below. Durham admits: " *We humans always need to know that the rest of nature is close.*" LABINAC's *"Echoes of the Forest"* scattered throughout the greenhouse opens the possibility of myriad lessons that Flora can teach us and remind us of the necessity and challenges to engage in an inclusive dialogue, which encourages relational practices.

Editor's note:

In 2018 Maria Thereza Alves together with Jimmie Durham founded LABINAC, a design collective with the dual purpose of designing and making objects and supporting the design works of Indigenous peoples in Latin America. LABINAC makes furniture, light fixtures, jewellery, vases and vessels from glass and ceramics. Alves and Durham have been living together in Mexico, New York, Marseille, Brussels, Rome, Naples and currently Berlin. They have made their own furniture and work areas in each place over a forty-year period.

Maria Thereza Alves

Born 1961, Brazil

Maria Thereza Alves is a multidisciplinary artist, writer, activist and designer.

She has participated in Manifesta 12 and 7, the 32nd and 29th São Paulo Biennale, the Sharjah Biennale and in dOCUMENTA (13) among others. She has had solo exhibit at MUAC in Mexico City and a survey exhibit at CAAC in Seville. Alves participated at the Toronto Biennale in 2019 and the Sydney Biennale in 2020.

She is recipient of the Vera List Prize for Art and Politics 2016-2018 from The New School in New York.

Her book, *"Recipes for Survival"* has been published by the University of Texas Press.

Jimmie Durham

Born 1940, USA

Jimmie Durham is an artist, designer, poet and writer.

In 2019 he was awarded The Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the 58th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia.

As a young person he worked as a carpenter and construction worker. He comes from a family of woodcarvers and makers of all sorts. Durham began working in alternative theatre and writing poetry in 1963 during the beginning of the civil rights movement in the U. S.

Besides countless solo exhibitions, he has taken part in numerous international exhibitions such as Documenta (1992, 2012), Whitney Biennial of New York (1993, 2003, 2014), the Venice Biennial (1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2013, 2019), the Istanbul Biennial (1997, 2013) and many other shows.

Jimmie Durham received an award for his first book of poems from the American Poetry Association in 1985. He received in 2016 the Emperor's Ring of the city of Goslar (Goslarer Kaiser- Ring) and the Robert Rauschenberg Award in 2017.

Meeting with Press: 18th May 2021 from 11 until 13:00. Artists will be present.

Address:

Opening 18 May 2021 at 18:00h

Exhibition duration: 22 May-21 November 2021

The twenty one tables commissioned and designed for the Gardens by Maria Thereza Alves and Jimmie Durham will remain as permanent site-specific installation after the end of the Biennale.

Royal Gardens: *Piazza, 30124 Venezia VE, Italy*

Opening times:

Tuesday-Sunday 9-17h Monday: Closed

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