

**Venice Gardens Foundation**

presents

**“ECHOES OF THE FOREST”**

**Maria Thereza Alves and Jimmie Durham**  
design collective **LABINAC**

**Royal Gardens of Venice**  
**September 3 – September 17, 2021**  
**Only by appointment**

*Architecture must begin with a specific place,  
considering the nature of the surroundings.  
Every building is created in a garden, whether or not that is recognized.*  
Maria Thereza Alves

**Venice Gardens Foundation** presents – from Friday 3 to Friday 17 September 2021, during the 17th Venice Architecture Biennale – the project **"Echoes of the Forest"** by the design collective **LABINAC** and by its two founders, the artists **Maria Thereza Alves** and **Jimmie Durham**.

In the evocative setting of the Greenhouse at the Giardini Reali in Venice "The Human Garden", recently returned to its splendour in 2019 after an extensive four-year restoration project promoted and curated by the Venice Gardens Foundation, which now manages the gardens, LABINAC is presenting under the title "Echoes of the Forest" a selection of design works, some of which were conceived for the site.

**Adele Re Rebaudengo**, President of Venice Gardens Foundation, and curator **Chiara Bertola** have invited LABINAC to design the work tables for the Royal Gardens, in keeping with the Foundation's idea that the Gardens should be also 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.

LABINAC presents thirty tables that were specifically designed for the Royal Gardens by the two artists. The tables that were donated by Alves and Durham to the Venice Gardens Foundation will remain as a site-specific permanent installation at the venue after the end of the Biennale.

The exhibition also includes eight vases by Maria Thereza Alves, from the series *Cloudstone*, *Perfectly Imperfect*, *Allelic Combinations* and *Forms of Life*. All the objects are one of a kind. They were made at different glass workshops through a process of experimentation between the artist and the master glassblowers. Durham will also exhibit a chandelier inspired by trees and the play of light on leaves and on broken glass.

Both Alves and Durham drew inspiration from the Mediterranean Pine Tree. Alves designed eight research tables from Green Serpentine Marble to represent the trees as seen from above or below. According to Durham: “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 reminds us of our need to engage in an inclusive dialogue, which encourages relational practices, and the challenges that this involves.

### OPENING DATES AND TIMES

**By appointment only:**

September 3 - September 17, 2021

Tuesday to Sunday, 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Closed Mondays.

### PRESS CONTACTS

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### ROYAL GARDENS OF VENICE

**Giardini Reali di Venezia - San Marco**

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### GIARDINI REALI DI VENEZIA

The Royal Gardens of Venice, once again connected to Piazza San Marco, cover an area of approximately 5,000 square meters, fronting onto Bacino di San Marco. They are surrounded by canals which are overlooked by the Correr Museum, the imperial chambers of the Royal Palace, the Archeological Museum and the Marciana Library.

To stop the progressive deterioration of a site of outstanding historic and natural value, in December 2014 the State Property Office and the City of Venice have entrusted in concession the Monumental Complex of the Royal Gardens to the **Venice Gardens Foundation**, chaired by **Adele Re Rebaudengo**, so that it would oversee its restoration and ensure its future conservation.

Between 2015 and 2019 the Gardens underwent complex restoration, carried out by the Foundation. Planning the botanical aspects of the restoration was entrusted to the architect **Paolo Pejrone** and the architect **Alberto Torsello** was chosen to plan the rebuilding of the greenhouse.

Reopened in December 2019, the Royal Gardens, rich in unexpected perspectives and luxuriant growth, have reacquired their formal excellence and botanical complexity, through a philological and conservative intervention regarding the design and architecture of the garden, and innovative from a botanical and gardening point of view.

To carry out this project, the Venice Gardens Foundation signed a partnership agreement with **Assicurazioni Generali** regarding the restoration and promotion of the Royal Gardens, with the shared goal of reclaiming an element of historic and artistic importance in the Piazza San Marco area.

## LABINAC

LABINAC, a design collective with the dual purpose of designing and making objects and supporting the design traditions of Indigenous peoples in Latin America, was founded by Maria Thereza Alves and Jimmie Durham in 2018. LABINAC makes furniture, light fixtures, jewellery, vases and vessels from glass and ceramics. Over a period of forty years, Alves and Durham have worked together in Mexico, New York, Marseille, Brussels, Rome and Naples and are currently based in Berlin. They have designed and made their own furniture and work areas in each of these places.

## Maria Thereza Alves

Born in Brazil in 1961, Maria Thereza Alves is a multidisciplinary artist, writer, activist and designer.

She has participated in Manifesta 7 and 12, the 29th and 32nd São Paulo Biennale, the Sharjah Biennale and DOCUMENTA 13. She had a solo exhibit at MUAC in Mexico City and a survey exhibit at CAAC in Seville. Alves participated in the Toronto Biennale in 2019 and the Sydney Biennale in 2020. She is the recipient of the Vera List Prize for Art and Politics 2016-2018 awarded by The New School in New York. Her book, *Recipes for Survival*, was published by the University of Texas Press.

## Jimmie Durham

Born in the United States in 1940, 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 the Venice Biennale. 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 civil rights movement in the U.S. Besides countless solo exhibitions, he has taken part in numerous international exhibitions, including Documenta (1992, 2012), the Whitney Biennial in New York (1993, 2003, 2014), the Venice Biennale (1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2013, 2019), the Istanbul Biennial (1997, 2013). In 1985 Durham received an award for his first book of poems from the American Poetry Association. He received the Emperor's Ring from the city of Goslar (Goslarer Kaiserring) in 2016, and the Robert Rauschenberg Award in 2017.