

Besides causing a one-year delay, the pandemic also changed art at the Venice Biennial. Art shown in 2018 condemned politics. Art in 2022 cries out for social and environmental justice. Works from artists of historically oppressed groups find the spotlight. The art takes you on a journey and we experience it with all our senses. At times we walk inside, literally inside the art and became part of it, engaging our psyches and examining ourselves. Norms are questioned in search of compassion and hope.



video: <https://mobile.twitter.com/AnneRossArt/status/1524868141049954334?cxt=HHwWvIC-ydjftakqAAAA>
the garden of knowledge, Installation, Uzbekistan Pavilion
2022

Curated by Space Caviar and Sheida Ghomashchi

As it leads you onto stairs of mirror that blend into air or pools of water, the garden of knowledge asks about the pitfalls of thinking we know where we are going, specifically around colonized data and the myth of neutrality. Wearing booties to protect mirror surfaces I navigated obscured changes in level and avoiding tripping or falling by paying attention. What disasters for non-understood perspectives await those not incorporated compassionately or accurately in our algorithms which in turn govern societal norms?

Find more info here <https://www.nationalpavilion.uz/projects/dixit-algorizmi-the-garden-of-knowledge/>



Alloro, 3-room installation, Venice Pavilion 2022
Art & Music by : Goldschmied & Chiari, Ottorino De Lucchi,
Paolo Fantin, Ophicina, Pino Donaggio

Visitors enter 10 minutes apart and push aside a translucent veil to cross from one room to the next. The figure doubled over on the edge of a bed in the first room is so realistic, for a moment I wonder if this is performance art. Haunting music emanates from all sides. The second room is bereft of the figure, except for her left-behind bed-sheet and handfuls of earth. The bed has transformed into a pool into which a drop falls from the ceiling, casting ripples and echoes. In the third room, what remains are a bed turned into a light-box with a

laurel branch on top and the smell of still water.
Artists are exploring myth, magic, life, death, transformation,
and sustainability which is a special concern for the city of
Venice

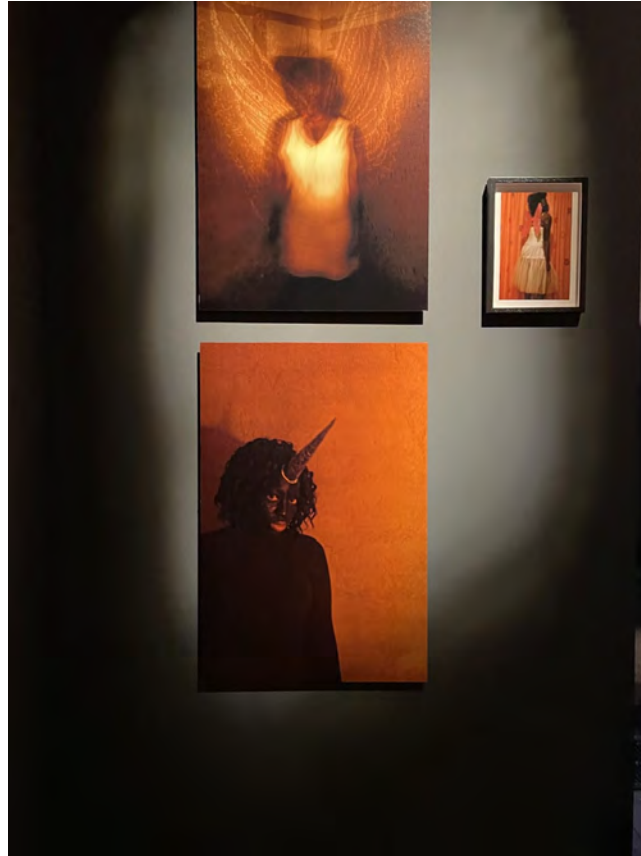
More information here: <https://www.labiennale.org/en/art/2022/padiglione-venezia>



We Walked the Earth also explores myth and solidity, life and death, humans and other sentient beings. It presents work that is so well crafted it appears to be real—Clearly dead, but also real. The horse side of the centaur is taxidermy. The human side... I watch for a blink or evidence of breathing, but it is not performance art. The title evokes a distant past or distant future. The exhibit asks us what is extinct and what remains, and whether only what is solid is real.

We Walked the Earth, Installation, Danish Pavilion 2022

Artist: Ulfe Isoolto; Curator: Jacob Lillemose
Find more information here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KauvUa_Q9h4





B(l)ack to Fairy Tales is an autobiographical series where the artist portrays herself as Snow Black in cameos from her childhood fairy tales. How does this juxtaposition of western happily-ever-after mythology and the grim reality of African poverty of make you feel? How does it speak to our political, economic, and historical narratives?

B(l)ack to Fairy Tales, South African Pavilion, 2022

Artist: Lebohang Kganye





Simone Leigh's sculptures remind me there is so much more than what we know at first glance. She honors black women by rendering her work via materials and processes associated with the artistic traditions of Africa and the African diaspora. Her work commingles images from colonization and slavery with autonomous and self-sufficient women. *Sovereignty*, Sculpture series, United States Pavilion 2022
Artist: Simone Leigh
Find more information here: <https://simoneleighvenice2022.org/>





When the body says Yes, immersive video experience, Dutch Pavilion, Venice 2022
Artist: melanie bonajo

I walked into a cavernous cathedral lined with pillows and cushions built into the floor. A movie played overhead and light filtered through stained glass windows on the other three walls. Bead and string tapestry curtains hung floor-to-ceiling. Visitors rested in softness. Onscreen, a group of a dozen or more people lay together and poured clear oil over one another's naked bodies. I wondered (not happily) if an orgy was being filmed.

Looking closer, I saw not eroticism but gentleness, like a mother to a child, a skilled masseuse, a loved one, or a dear friend. A sense of trust and safety filled the room. Onscreen people began to discuss boundaries: the empowerment found in clarifying what you do or do not want, the joy of not being forced into anything you don't want to do, and the

shared pleasure of honoring yours and another's boundaries and requests. I began to wonder about lines around sensuality and what makes sex sex? Not always nakedness not always touch; boundaries make sex sex. Boundaries being crossed against your will make it, whatever it is, wrong.

Onscreen, returns to the naked group. In the center, a woman with what would be a disability in another context was surrounded by attention, acceptance, and honor. Racial minorities next shared the center space, the young, the old, the thin, the fat, everyone had special honor in appropriate proportion. Bodies that daily are shamed onscreen were beautiful and complete.

Without the cushions and lying down, and without a friend's assurance that the film was worth seeing, I might not have stayed. I'm glad I did. I left the venue feeling clean, refreshed, comforted, rejuvenated, comforted, healed without even knowing beforehand what had needed healing. I felt loved and honored as a being, a woman, a person who may or may not be accepted by general society. Here was love from the greater community of humanity and compassion for the bodies' wisdom as we are.

Find more information here: <https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/458555/melanie-bonajowhen-the-body-says-yes/>

Attendees and members of the press had messages of their own:





