



La Biennale di Venezia

61. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali

AIM INUNDATED
Imagining Life After Land
Republic of Nauru National Pavilion

**CURATORIAL
STATEMENT**



Curatorial Statement

The Nauruan National Pavilion, participating for the first time at La Biennale di Venezia, asserts itself not as a passive observer in global environmental discourse, but as an active narrator presenting a radically situated perspective on ecological urgency, extractives, post-colonial trauma, and the precarity of sovereignty.

This pavilion is conceived as a conceptual and spatial investigation into the notion of disappearance not as spectacle, but as an epistemological event. Disappearance here is both literal and metaphorical: a vanishing island nation, eroding coastlines, lost cultures, dislocated communities, fading epistemologies, and submerged futures.

From Resource Colony to Climate Hostage

Nauru's environmental precarity is not a natural inevitability, but the consequence of a century of extractive violence. Once one of the richest countries per capita due to phosphate mining, Nauru was transformed into a site of postcolonial exploitation and ecological exhaustion. The island's core was stripped bare, and what remains is a cautionary landscape a place where environmental degradation intersects with geopolitical abandonment.

This Pavilion aims to recontextualize Nauru as a critical site of contemporary artistic inquiry, disrupting dominant narratives of the "remote island" and instead focusing

on Nauru as a hyper-visible node within planetary systems of climate governance, extractive capitalism, and settler-colonial legacies. It challenges Venice, a city with its own aqueous precarity, to witness itself mirrored in Nauru's fragility, resistance and resilience.

Curatorial Structure: The Pavilion as Archipelagic Thinking

Inspired by Édouard Glissant's theory of archipelagic thinking, this pavilion resists the totalizing logic of singular narratives. It will be structured as a constellation of voices featuring artists, writers, musicians, theorists and plants whose work examines themes of ecological justice, indigeneity, extractivism, oceanic epistemologies, and climate displacement.

Rather than imposing a monolithic curatorial vision, the Pavilion operates as a discursive common, an open structure where different knowledge systems converge. In this way, the Pavilion does not just exhibit art; it stages a critical ecology of thought, a polyphonic platform for aesthetic and political exchange.

The Pavilion will be activated through site-responsive artworks that evoke the tension between permanence and impermanence, audio-visual narratives that document both the trauma and dignity of climate-impacted communities, and archival material that unearths colonial histories of land use, labour, and environmental injustice.



It will also host public programs, including seminars and roundtables with activists, scholars, and youth from the Global South, alongside an accompanying publication that serves as both an academic reader and a visual catalogue, with essays reflecting on the philosophical, ecological, and artistic implications of Nauru's story.

The Ocean as Archive and Witness

In Pacific cosmology, the ocean is not a void but a connective space, a lived archive of movement, migration, and memory. Unlike Western cartographies that isolate islands as discrete points, this Pavilion turns to Indigenous and Oceanic ways of knowing that imagine water as continuity, relation, and futurity. The Pavilion draws upon these frameworks to challenge the spatial politics of exhibition-making in Venice. The rising sea is not only a symbol of loss but also a metaphor for fluid resistance, a refusal to be fixed, defined, or contained.

The Aesthetics of Precarity and Repair

Artists participating in this Pavilion are invited not merely to illustrate crisis, but to interrogate its structures, represent its effects, and gesture toward alternative imaginaries. Their aesthetic strategies traverse material precarity, through the use of found, ephemeral, or organic materials that reflect the unstable conditions of climate-affected geographies' temporal dislocation.

This is done by engaging with futures that are already present in Nauru and collapsing the artificial distinction between "developed" the "endangered" worlds; and post-extractive aesthetics, which reflect on ruined landscapes and the possibility of repair, not as restoration, but as re-imagination.

Cultural Diplomacy in a Time of Crisis

The pavilion project is not merely an artistic endeavour, it is also a geopolitical gesture. For Nauru, cultural diplomacy through art provides an alternative platform to reframe its identity, advocate for justice, and engage with the world beyond the optics of crisis.

By participating in La Biennale di Venezia, Nauru asserts its agency not as a victim of environmental determinism, but as a nation with stories, visions, and propositions for global transformation.

The pavilion speaks to all vulnerable geographies Venice included whose futures are shaped by the decisions of distant powers.

On behalf of the curatorial team
Khaled Ramadan

NAURU NATIONAL PAVILION

9 May – 22 November, 2026

**AIM - Imagining Life After Land -
is commissioned by the Ministry of National Heritage,
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Venue

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