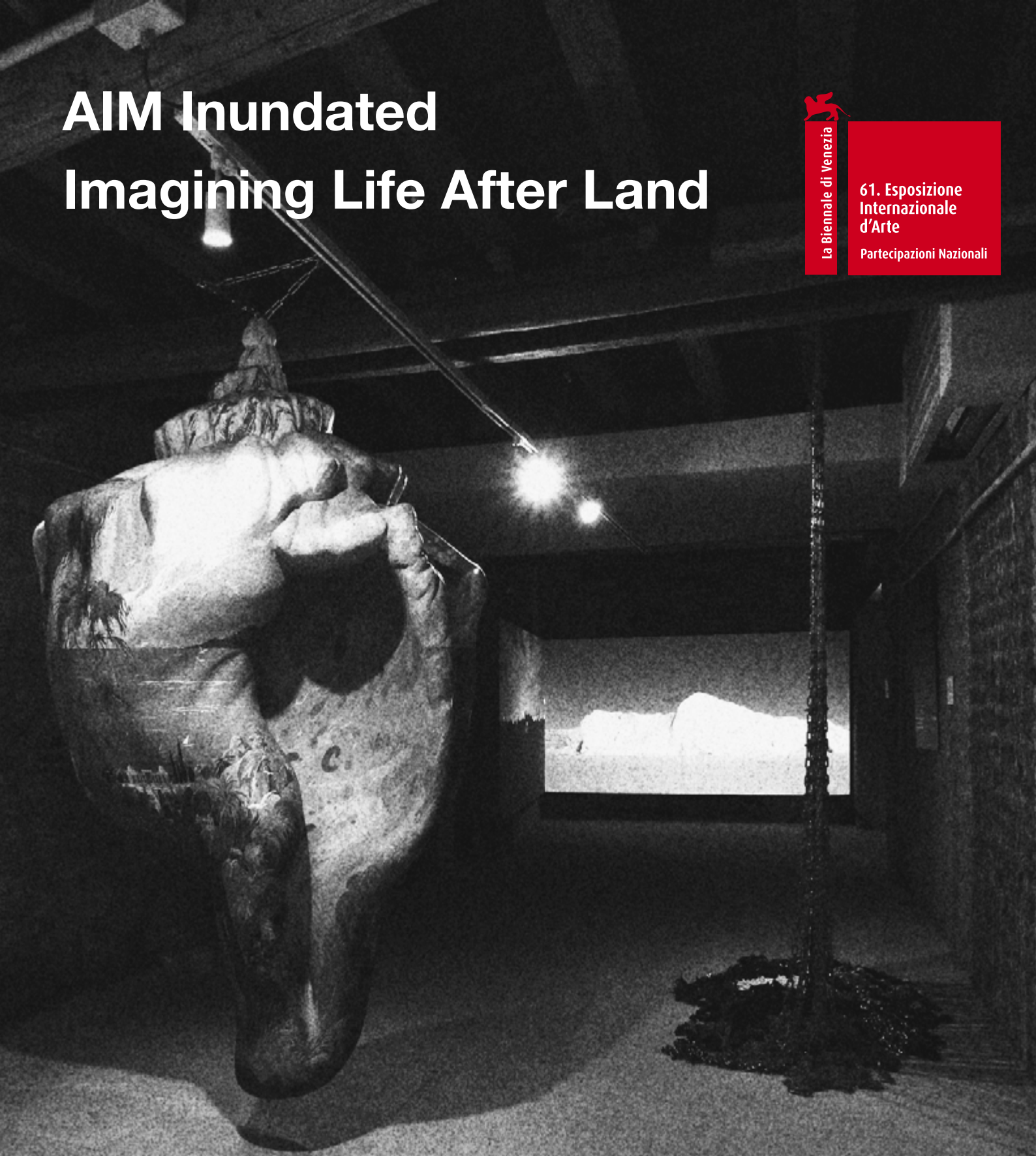
AIM Inundated
Imagining Life After Land



La Biennale di Venezia

61. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali

Republic of Nauru's Pavillion 2026

61. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte
La Biennale di Venezia

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Imagining Life After Land
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This publication features photographs of the artists taken during the installation phase at the **Pavilion of the Republic of Nauru**, along with the interviews conducted afterwards.

The project was carried out by **Virginia Rimondi** (artist interviews and document layout) and **Nicola Zanellato** (photography and photo layout). **Giulia Broz** collaborated on photography.

For its first-ever Biennale Arte, the future inundates present Nauru, the world’s smallest island nation, as both a warning and a guide, raising questions about life in a place where tomorrow has already arrived. Addressing environmental decline and its intertwined histories of extractive activity and post-colonial impact, the pavilion positions Nauru not as a distant or marginal site, but as a place where the consequences of global decision-making have long been lived realities. By presenting its own account of ecological urgency and the fragile conditions of territorial survival, the pavilion offers a perspective shaped directly by erosion, loss, and the pressures placed on small nations confronting planetary shifts. Nauru becomes a universal metaphor. Through the visions of inter - national artists, the project is framed as a conceptual study of disap - pearance. This is understood not as spectacle or catastrophe imagery, but as an event that alters knowledge, memory, and presence. Disappearance affects physical land, cultural continuity, and ways of understanding the world. Through this lens, it becomes a condition that reshapes collective identity and artistic expression. Nauru’s present cannot be separated from its history. A century of phosphate extraction turned the island into a depleted terrain, an example of how resource demand can dismantle both ecology and sovereignty. What was once extraordinary natural wealth became a source of long-term instability, leaving behind a landscape marked by exploitation and limited possibilities for recovery. The pavilion places Nauru within broader global systems, and as a highly visible point within networks of climate policy, extractive econ - omies, and enduring colonial inheritances. By doing so, it challenges prevailing assumptions about scale, relevance, and the hierarchy of nations in environmental debates. Presented in Venice, a city influenced by water-bound risks, the pavilion establishes an exchange between different places facing forms of fragility. It asks audiences to recognise shared exposure while acknowledging the unequal burdens. Through this engagement, the pavilion becomes a site for reflection, resistance, and reimagining life in conditions where land, history, and continuity are increasingly under threat.

— Khaled Ramadan

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An interview with...

Learn more about this artist who exhibited at the Nauru Pavilion:

Representing Nauru at the Biennale

This year, Nauru enters the Venice Biennale with a pavilion that speaks from a place where the consequences of environmental and political decisions are already being lived. What does it mean for you to contribute to representing Nauru at this moment? What do you hope visitors will take away from their visit?

Disappearance as Transformation

The pavilion approaches disappearance not as a spectacular catastrophe, but as a condition that reshapes memory, identity, and ways of understanding the world. How does this idea of disappearance resonate with your own artistic practice? Is it something that you feel as a pressure, a concern, or perhaps even a productive force?

The Role of the Artist Today

One of the underlying ideas of the pavilion is that Nauru's condition reflects broader global realities, from climate change to political instability and conflict. In your view, what role can art play in such circumstances? Can an artist remain detached from the social and political conditions of their time, or is artistic practice inevitably connected to them?

Imagining the Future

Nauru is presented in this pavilion not only as a place of loss, but also as a glimpse into a future that concerns us all. In your view, what role can art play in helping us imagine futures beyond fear, resignation, or catastrophe? Can artistic practice open new ways of thinking and acting in the face of uncertainty?

Kauw Tsisi (Nauru)



Representing Nauru at the Biennale

Participating in the Nauru Pavilion is a responsibility for me. Nauru is often talked about by other people, but not many people hear directly from Nauruans. Most people only know us through stories about climate change, phosphate mining, or politics. Very few know what it is like to grow up on our small island or understand our history.

For me, being part of this pavilion is a chance to show that Nauru is more than headlines and statistics. I am not speaking for every Nauruan because everyone has their own experience, but I hope my work helps people see another side of our country. I hope visitors leave with a better understanding that Nauru is not only a place facing environmental problems. It is a country with people, history, culture, humour, and feelings.

Disappearance as Transformation

The idea of disappearance is important to me personally. In Nauru, disappearance is not only about the land or nature. It is also about things like our language changing, memories fading, traditions changing, fewer opportunities, and many young people thinking about leaving the island for a better future at a better place.

People change, communities find ways to move forward, and culture keeps growing in new ways. This is where my music comes from. Trapped is not only about feeling stuck. It is also about asking what we can keep when things around us change, and it is about remembering where we come from while finding new ways to move into the future.

The Role of the Artist Today

I don’t believe artists have an obligation to produce political slogans only, but I do believe we cannot completely separate ourselves from the world or the communities we live in. I think our work carries touches of our communities, our histories and our experiences.

Being from Nauru and living abroad, this becomes even more of an issue because our stories are not often part of global conversations. So culture and art give us the possibility to reflect on complex issues. I think the role of the artist today is not necessarily to provide solutions but to create spaces where people can slow down, reflect and imagine differently. Sometimes a song or an artwork can communicate emotions that facts and reports cannot at least, this is in my opinion.

Imagining the Future

Fear of what will happen to us has its impact on us, and it is powerful, but it cannot be the only way we imagine our future. If we only imagine catastrophe, then we stop imagining how to think of solutions. And art gives us permission to think beyond political cycles and economic calculations. It reminds us that people are capable of creating new relationships with each other and with the environments they inhabit.

For me, hope is not optimism that everything will be fine. Hope is the decision to continue producing, even when certainty is impossible. Making music itself is an act of believing that communication still matters.







Artist: Kauw Tsisi

Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato

An interview with...

About the artwork:
Trapped, 2025

1.

For many visitors, your work may be their first meaningful encounter with the history and contemporary reality of Nauru. Do you believe art can help transform awareness into responsibility?

2.

What would you most like audiences to understand after experiencing Trapped?

3.

As an artist whose work is being presented within a highly international context such as *the Venice Biennale*, do you feel a responsibility to “translate” the experience of Nauru for global audiences? Or do you see your role more as preserving a space of authenticity that resists simplification?

Kauw Tsisi (Nauru)

1.

Art cannot force responsibility, not always, but it can make indifference more difficult. When people emotionally connect with a place and its inhabitants, they begin to understand that global decisions are never abstract, but can affect real lives, real people. I hope my work encourages visitors to think about responsibility not only towards Nauru but towards all communities living with the long-term consequences of decisions made elsewhere.

2.

I hope people understand that being trapped is not only a physical condition. It can be historical, political, economic, or emotional and I will underline emotional many times.

The song Trapped reflects experiences that exist in many parts of the world, especially places similar to what Nauru is facing. It speaks about isolation, limited choices and inherited circumstances, but it also speaks about resilience and the refusal to disappear. I know very well the true situation we are facing, but I want to keep my dreams alive.

If audiences recognise something of themselves listening to my song, then the conversation moves beyond Nauru and becomes a shared human experience and stories.

3.

I think there should be a balance between translation and authenticity, but I am not sure how it can work in real life. I wish and want people to understand something about Nauru, but I don’t want to reduce our country into a simple story that fits international expectations. Every place on earth contains complications and contradictions, and Nauru is no different. Rather than

translating everything, I prefer to invite people into a consideration and conversation where some things remain open. Art and culture respect the fact that not every experience can be fully explained.

Still and the way I see it, my responsibility is to remain honest to my own perspective while leaving room for others to encounter the work on their own terms, remembering that authenticity is not about providing definitive answers.

I think my song is well suited to the perspective of the Venice project because it reflects what many Nauruans feel, as well as what they fear to express openly. I didn't intend to explain Nauru only through its environmental challenges. Instead, I wanted to acknowledge and discuss our history, our way of life, and the cultural traumas we have experienced since the process of modernisation began.

An interview with...

Learn more about this artist who exhibited at the Nauru Pavilion:

Representing Nauru at the Biennale

This year, Nauru enters the Venice Biennale with a pavilion that speaks from a place where the consequences of environmental and political decisions are already being lived.
As an artist coming from a different geographical and cultural context, what does it mean for you to contribute to representing Nauru at this moment? What do you hope visitors will take away from their visit?

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CPS - **Ramadan** (Denmark) & **Cramerotti** (Qatar)





Representing Nauru at the Biennale

For us, contributing to Nauru's first national pavilion at the Venice Biennale is not simply a matter of representing a country from an external position. It really requires us to think critically about what representation itself means, particularly when the subject is a small island state whose history has been shaped by colonialism, geopolitical asymmetries, environmental transformation and the continuing interventions of larger powers.

Coming from a different geographical and cultural context makes this responsibility more complicated, not less. It requires a degree of self reflexivity about the position from which we speak, look and produce concepts or images. Throughout our collective practice, we have been concerned with visuality, archives and the politics of representation, often questioning who has the authority to produce an image, whose history becomes visible, and who is positioned as the subject of someone else's gaze. These questions are particularly important in relation to Nauru because there is a long history of outsiders defining the island and its history through their own political, economic and cultural frameworks.

For that reason, we do not see our role as speaking for Nauru. Rather, we are contributing to a space in which Nauruan histories, experiences and questions can enter into a wider conversation without being reduced to the familiar images of the vulnerable helpless island, environmental catastrophe or inevitable disappearance.

What we hope visitors take away is not simply knowledge about Nauru, but a reconsideration of their own position within the systems that shape Nauru's present.

So representing Nauru at Venice is, for us, less about presenting an image of a country than about creating a space in which the structures surrounding that country become visible. The pavilion should leave visitors not with the feeling that they have witnessed someone else's crisis,

but with the uncomfortable recognition that Nauru is not simply a place we are looking at, it is a place from which we are being asked to look back at ourselves.

Disappearance as Transformation

Disappearance has been a persistent concern in our artistic practice, but we have never understood it simply as the opposite of presence. We are more interested in disappearance as a process of transformation, what happens to memory, identity, knowledge and history when something that appeared stable begins to change, fragment or become inaccessible.

This is particularly relevant to the way we have approached archives and visual culture in general. An archive is never a complete record of what happened. It is also a record of what was selected, preserved and given the authority to remain visible and communicated. What disappears from an archive can therefore be as significant as what remains within it. In this sense, disappearance is not necessarily an absence, it can be an active process through which history is reorganised.

This perspective has influenced the way we approach Contested Ecologies. We are not interested in producing the spectacular image of an island disappearing beneath the sea. Such an image is powerful, but it can also reduce a complex political and historical condition to a single dramatic metaphor. The more difficult question is what disappears before the land itself disappears, forms of memory, relationships to territory, cultural continuity, political agency and perhaps even particular ways of imagining the future.

For Nauru, this becomes particularly complex because disappearance cannot be separated from history not in this case. The island has already undergone profound transformations through colonialism, external political influence, economic intervention and environmental change. The question is therefore not simply whether Nauru will disappear, but what kind of Nauru is being transformed, who has participated in producing that transformation, and who has the authority to define what remains. We see this not only as a pressure or concern, but also as a productive force. Disappearance forces us to question categories that we normally take for granted. It asks us to reconsider what constitutes a nation, what constitutes territory, what constitutes an archive, and how identity can persist when the physical conditions that have historically supported it are transformed.

This is where disappearance becomes intellectually productive. It does not necessarily mean the end of something. It can reveal what was previously invisible. It can expose the structures behind what we assumed to be permanent.

The Role of the Artist Today

It is truly difficult to imagine artistic practice as completely detached from the social and political conditions in which it is produced. Even when an artist claims to be working outside politics, the choice of what to look at, what to ignore, what to preserve, and how to represent the world is already a position. Detachment is therefore not necessarily neutrality. Sometimes it is simply an unexamined position within the structures of one's time.

At the same time, the artist's role can be a political commentator or to turn art into an illustration of political positions because art has a different capacity. Its strength lies in creating forms of perception that allow us to experience relationships that are otherwise difficult to see. This is particularly important in relation to climate change, political instability and conflict. These conditions are often discussed through statistics, policy documents, media images and political rhetoric. But behind these abstractions are questions of memory, identity, displacement, territory and belonging. Art can bring these dimensions into a different kind of visibility and negotiations.

And this is where I see the relevance of Contested Ecologies because Nauru is not simply an environmental case study it is much more than that. It is a place where ecological transformation intersects with colonial history, geopolitical influence, economic dependency and the question of national sovereignty. The artist's role is not necessarily to explain these systems, but to create a space in which their relationships become perceptible. Additionally we need to be careful about the idea that artists must always provide solutions. Art does not have to compete with science, policy or political activism. Its contribution can be more disruptive. It can question the categories through which a problem is understood in the first place.

And here is where art becomes politically significant, not by telling people what to think, but by making it harder to continue thinking in the same way. The political conditions of our time inevitably enter artistic practice, whether consciously or unconsciously. The question is therefore not whether an artist can remain detached, but what kind of position the artist takes in relation to the world they inhabit.

In the case of Nauru, that position also carries an ethical responsibility. We are working with a place that has historically been represented by others, interpreted by others and subjected to decisions made beyond its territory. Even the establishment of this small island nation to become a nation state at the UN was determined by others.

To make another representation without questioning that history would risk reproducing the very structures we are trying to examine.

Ultimately, the artist cannot stand outside history therefore our role, is not to speak on behalf of Nauru, nor to turn its condition into a universal metaphor. It is to create a space where Nauru can complicate our understanding of the global systems in which we are all implicated.

Imagining the Future

For us, imagining the future is not about producing an optimistic alternative to catastrophe. It is about refusing to allow catastrophe to become the only future we can imagine. If Contested Ecologies begins with disappearance, it ultimately asks what becomes possible when we move beyond the assumption that disappearance necessarily means an ending.

Nauru is important in this sense because it challenges the conventional relationship between territory, identity and sovereignty. If the physical conditions of a place change, we are forced

to ask whether identity, culture and political belonging must disappear with them. These are not abstract questions. They concern the future of communities already experiencing the consequences of environmental and political transformation like Nauru, Tuvalu and the Maldives just to name a few.

Art can create a space in which such questions can be explored before they become irreversible realities. It can allow us to rehearse different possibilities, not by predicting the future, but by expanding our capacity to imagine it. This is particularly important at a moment when political discourse often oscillates between technological optimism and catastrophic resignation.

This is where art can become a form of political imagination. It can challenge the assumption that the future is already determined by the conditions of the present. It can create images, narratives and conceptual spaces in which other forms of belonging and collective life become thinkable and imaginable.



Photo credit: Giulia Broz

An interview with...

About the artwork:
Contested Ecologies, 2004/26

1.

In your podcast, you describe Nauru not as a marginal or isolated place, but as a lens through which global systems of extraction, power, and climate vulnerability become visible.
What does Nauru reveal about the world that larger nations often fail to see about themselves?

2.

What aspects of Nauru’s history did you feel were most urgent to bring back into public consciousness?

3.

Your work suggests that environmental crises cannot be separated from political and economic structures. How can art help audiences understand these invisible systems of responsibility?

CPS - Ramadan (Denmark) & **Cramerotti** (Qatar)

1.

Nauru reveals, in concentrated form, how global systems of extraction and power operate. What appears as a small environmental crisis is a diagnostic of wider global situation. Nauru is not outside globalisation but a site where its logic becomes materially legible. For more than a century, the island functioned as a resource frontier. Phosphate extraction turned a finite territory into an export economy whose value was realised elsewhere, while ecological and social costs remained local. This history exposes a central contradiction of modern development, value is generated through extraction while its consequences are displaced onto specific places and populations.

Nauru makes visible the entanglement of extraction, political influence, and responsibility. Ecological vulnerability is not natural but produced through political and economic structures, as also evident in contexts such as Greenland. The key question is not only why vulnerability exists, but who benefits from the systems that produce it, who exercises influence, and how responsibility is distributed when damage becomes irreversible. Colonial relations remain crucial here. Formal independence does not end asymmetrical power. It persists through economic dependency, strategic alliances, institutional arrangements, and geopolitical leverage. The actors may change, but the underlying question remains. who can shape the political choices of others? Nauru is therefore a diagnostic case. Its scale renders visible processes often dispersed elsewhere, economic dependency, environmental exhaustion, geopolitical pressure, and uneven exposure to risk. In Contested Ecologies, we choose not to frame Nauru as a passive victim or remote landscape. Such representations reproduce the asymmetries they seek to critique by positioning knowledge as external. Instead, we approach Nauru as a site through which global systems become legible.

This by the way raises an urgent question, what happens when a sovereign territory becomes uninhabitable? Climate discourse often frames displacement at the level of individuals. Nauru

instead poses a structural problem, what happens when an entire national territory is threatened? Where do citizens go if their state can no longer sustain them, and under what legal and political categories are they received? Nauru does not point to a distant future. It reveals conditions already present elsewhere but more easily deferred by larger nations. It exposes the limits of a system in which sovereignty is tied to territory while environmental change undermines that basis.

2.

The urgency is not to reproduce Nauru as a narrative of suffering. Familiar framings of small island nations, paradise, isolation, vulnerability, disappearance clarify but also simplify. Instead, we focus on the mechanisms shaping its present, external power, resource extraction, and constrained state agency.

The key question is not only what happened to Nauru, but who has repeatedly had the capacity to act upon it. Forms of influence have shifted from colonial administration to economic dependency and geopolitical relations, but the asymmetry persists. Formal sovereignty can coexist with limited control over material conditions. Colonial relations must therefore be understood beyond their historical period. They persist in dispersed forms, through economic structures, strategic dependencies, institutional arrangements, and knowledge production. Representation is part of this mechanism who speaks for whom, who produces the archive, and which histories become visible.

In Contested Ecologies, we remain attentive to the risk that external observation reproduces the asymmetry it critiques, arriving, documenting, and departing. We therefore avoid treating Nauru as a static site of environmental catastrophe and instead focus on disappearance as a eco-political process. What disappears is not only land, but also memory, continuity, identity, and the capacity for self-determination. Climate change here becomes inseparable from responsibility. If environmental transformation renders Nauru uninhabitable, what becomes of the nation? Where do its citizens go, and who bears responsibility for their reception? These questions must enter public consciousness before displacement becomes a reality. We are posing them particularly to the countries that have historically benefited from Nauru's resources, wealth, political relationships, or diplomatic position in the UN.

The issue, therefore, is not only climate change or the environment, it is fundamentally a question of control, law, citizenship and historical responsibility. Nauru's history is not past it continues to shape the political questions of the its future.

In May 2026, Nauru's Parliament decided to restore the country's traditional name, Naoero, as part of an effort to reclaim its language, heritage and national identity from the legacy of colonial naming. This is a significant gesture of decolonisation and self-definition. But restoring a name also raises a larger question, can symbolic decolonisation lead to substantive sovereignty? Only time will tell whether Naoero represents merely a correction of colonial nomenclature, or the beginning of a deeper process through which the country reclaims greater political self determination, economic and territorial agency. Ultimately, sovereignty is not defined by what a country is called, but by who has the power to determine its future.

3.

We do not see art as a means of explaining systems in the manner of political science or economics. Its role is to make relations perceptible.

Many structures of power are difficult to see because they are distributed. Borders, damaged landscapes, and institutions are visible, but dependency, influence, and responsibility operate through networks, agreements, infrastructures, and narratives.

Our interest lies in the politics of visibility, what is made visible, what is obscured, and who has authority over that distinction. We also treat the archive not as a neutral record but as a system that selects and legitimises what counts as history. And as you know there is a risk that environmental collapse becomes aesthetically consumable, damaged landscapes become images, images become exhibitions, and exhibitions become cultural value, while lived consequences recede.

Finally and as you know art does not necessarily provide answers. Its power lies in making questions that have been politically postponed impossible to ignore. In Contested Ecologies, we use art to expose the structures behind environmental crisis structures of colonialism, power, sovereignty and responsibility. Ultimately, the question is not only what will happen to Nauru, but what Nauru forces the international system to confront, when a nation's territory is threatened, who is responsible for its people, its sovereignty, and its future?

An interview with...

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Patricia Jacomella Bonola (Switzerland)



Representing Nauru at the Biennale

What makes Nauru particularly significant today is that many of the challenges the world considers imminent or abstract are already part of the island's everyday reality. Working within this context has led me to reflect not only on the consequences of political and economic decisions, but also on the forms of resilience, adaptation, and imagination that emerge in response to such conditions.

I hope that visitors leave the pavilion with a more nuanced understanding of the interconnections that link places that may seem far apart. I would like them to see Nauru not as a symbol or an isolated case, but as a real place, inhabited by stories, memories, and perspectives that challenge and deepen our understanding of the present.

Disappearance as Transformation

In my artistic practice, disappearance does not manifest so much as a sudden or dramatic event, but rather as an ongoing process of transformation. I am interested in what remains when something is lost: the traces, the gaps, the distortions of memory, and the new meanings that emerge from absence. I certainly perceive it as a form of pressure, especially in an era marked by accelerated change, environmental crises, and technological obsolescence. Yet disappearance also generates new forms of attention and new ways of relating to the world around us. It prompts me to question what we consider stable or permanent and to work with uncertainty, fragility, and transformation. Rather than representing disappearance, I seek to create situations in which it can be experienced. It is within that ambiguous space between presence and absence that I find many of the questions that sustain and drive my work.

The Role of the Artist Today

I believe that art has the unique ability to make visible connections that often escape public and political debate. Although the situation of Nauru is specific, it speaks to issues that concern us all: the exploitation of resources, the environmental consequences of human activities, global inequalities, migration, and geopolitical tensions.

In this sense, art can create spaces for reflection and dialogue that allow us to understand these phenomena not only through data and analysis, but also through emotional and sensory experience. Today, the role of the artist is not necessarily to provide solutions, but to raise questions, challenge established perspectives, and give voice to experiences that risk remaining marginalized.

In an era marked by environmental crises, political instability, and conflict, art can help foster new forms of awareness and collective responsibility, encouraging us to imagine different ways of inhabiting the world.

Imagining the Future

Art can play a fundamental role in helping us imagine futures different from those dominated by fear or catastrophe. Unlike other forms of expression, art does not merely describe reality; it creates spaces in which we can explore possibilities, question what we consider inevitable, and develop new forms of sensitivity toward the world.

In the case of Nauru, its history reveals the consequences of economic and environmental choices that appeared beneficial in the short term. However, art can transform this experience into an opportunity for collective reflection, not only on failure, but also on our capacity to envision alternative paths. Through images, narratives, and participatory practices, artists can make visible connections that are often overlooked and foster a sense of shared responsibility.



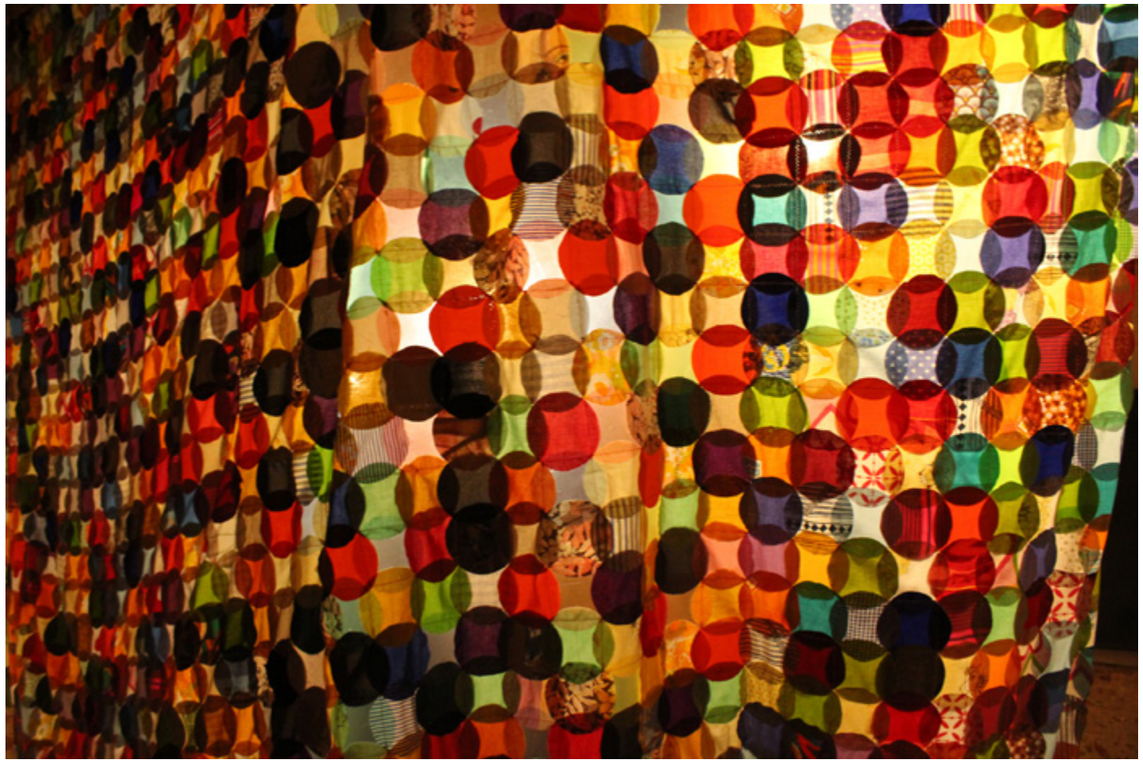




Artist: Patricia Jacomella Bonola

Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato







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Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato







Artist: Patricia Jacomella Bonola

Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato

An interview with...

About the artwork:
I used to go to the beach, 2026

1.

Your installation incorporates discarded plastics and fragments of packaging materials, objects that are often overlooked in everyday life. What drew you to these materials, and what role do they play in conveying the work's reflection on environmental change and collective responsibility?

2.

Visitors have responded to the work by leaving hundreds of handwritten messages expressing love, hope, empathy, and solidarity. What has it been like to witness this collective participation? Did the public's response surprise you in any way?

3.

Unlike many environmental artworks that focus primarily on loss, your project seems to leave space for dialogue, care, and action. How important is the participatory dimension of the work to your vision as an artist?

Patricia Jacomella Bonola (Switzerland)

1.

I am interested in waste materials because they are very concrete traces of our everyday habits. Plastic and packaging fragments are objects that we use for only a few minutes, yet they can remain in the environment for decades or even centuries. It is precisely this contradiction that attracted me: the gap between their apparent insignificance and their real impact.

In the installation, these materials serve a dual function. On the one hand, they bear witness to the pervasive presence of human activity, becoming a kind of archive of contemporary consumption; on the other hand, transformed and recontextualized within the space of the artwork, they invite viewers to observe what is normally ignored or discarded. Environmental change is often perceived as a distant and abstract phenomenon, whereas these materials bring it back to a daily and tangible dimension.

Through their accumulation and physical presence, the work suggests that the environmental crisis is not the result of a single action, but of the sum of countless individual and collective actions. For this reason, the sense of responsibility that emerges from the work does not belong solely to institutions or industries, but also to each of us, through the choices and behaviors we make every day.

2.

I expected significant participation, but the number, and above all the quality of the messages exceeded my expectations. Seeing hundreds of people stop, reflect, and leave a handwritten message transformed the artwork into a living space of sharing and human connection. Every contribution, even the simplest one, added a new nuance to the work, demonstrating how much we need places where vulnerability, hope, and empathy can be expressed.

3.

The participatory dimension is fundamental to my work. I see the artwork not as a finished object, but as a space for relationships. I am interested in creating situations in which people can feel engaged, heard, and part of a shared process. Dialogue is not an ancillary element, but an essential component of the work. It is often through encounters with others that the artwork finds new forms, meanings, and possibilities for transformation.

Participation makes it possible to move beyond passive spectatorship and to foster collective reflection, turning the artistic experience into a moment of genuine exchange and connection.

An interview with...

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As an artist coming from a different geographical and cultural context, what does it mean for you to contribute to representing Nauru at this moment? What do you hope visitors will take away from their visit?

Disappearance as Transformation

The pavilion approaches disappearance not as a spectacular catastrophe, but as a condition that reshapes memory, identity, and ways of understanding the world. How does this idea of disappearance resonate with your own artistic practice? Is it something that you feel as a pressure, a concern, or perhaps even a productive force?

The Role of the Artist Today

One of the underlying ideas of the pavilion is that Nauru's condition reflects broader global realities, from climate change to political instability and conflict. In your view, what role can art play in such circumstances? Can an artist remain detached from the social and political conditions of their time, or is artistic practice inevitably connected to them?

Imagining the Future

Nauru is presented in this pavilion not only as a place of loss, but also as a glimpse into a future that concerns us all. In your view, what role can art play in helping us imagine futures beyond fear, resignation, or catastrophe? Can artistic practice open new ways of thinking and acting in the face of uncertainty?

Tedo Rekhviashvili (Georgia)



Representing Nauru at the Biennale

For me, contributing to the Nauru Pavilion is a very meaningful and delicate responsibility.
I come from Georgia, from a different geography and history, but I also come from a place where questions of land, memory, displacement, and political decisions are not abstract. They are part of people's lives, families, and bodies.

Nauru speaks from a place where the consequences of environmental and political decisions are already visible and already lived. I do not see my participation as speaking "for" Nauru, but rather as entering into a dialogue with its condition — with respect, care, and awareness. My own work comes from the experience of Abkhazia, an organic part of Georgia that was occupied by Russia through war in the 1990s. For many Georgian families, including my own, this history is not distant; it is connected to home, memory, and the pain of displacement.

In this sense, there is a connection between different forms of loss: the loss of land through war, the loss of land through extraction, and the possible loss of land through climate change.

I hope visitors will leave the pavilion not only with a sense of tragedy, but with a deeper understanding that disappearance is not something far away. It is already happening in different forms around the world. I hope they will feel that land is not just territory. It is memory, language, childhood, family, sound, smell, and identity.

Disappearance as Transformation

The idea of disappearance is very close to my practice. In my work, disappearance is never only an ending. It is also a condition that changes the way memory works. When something is lost — a home, a landscape, a family history, a sense of belonging — it continues to exist inside us, but in another form.

I think a lot about Abkhazia in this way. Abkhazia is an organic part of Georgia, but after the war and occupation in the 1990s, for many people it became a homeland that exists both as a real place and as a memory that cannot be fully returned to. It exists through stories, images, silence, pain, and imagination. This kind of disappearance creates pressure, of course. It creates pain and sometimes anger. But it can also become a productive force in art, because it pushes you to search for another language.

For me, painting and installation are ways to give form to what is absent. They allow me to create a space where something lost can still be felt — not as nostalgia, but as a living presence.

The Role of the Artist Today

I do not think an artist can be fully detached from the social and political conditions of their time. Even when an artist does not speak directly about politics, the work still comes from a body that lives inside history. We are shaped by the places we come from, by conflict, by silence, by fear, by memory, and by the systems around us.

At the same time, I do not believe art should only illustrate political events. Art has a different power. It can touch the emotional, symbolic, and spiritual layers of reality. It can make visible what is usually hidden: the wound behind a border, the silence after violence, the memory inside an object, the human presence inside a landscape.

In circumstances of climate change, instability, and conflict, art can create a space where people do not only receive information, but experience something. It can slow us down. It can ask us to feel responsibility, grief, and connection in a deeper way.

Imagining the Future

I think art can help us imagine the future because it does not have to follow the logic of fear or catastrophe. Art can hold pain, but it can also transform it. It can create images and spaces where we understand that the future is not only something that happens to us, but something we are responsible for shaping.

For me, the future cannot be imagined without memory. If we forget what has happened — to people, to land, to nature — we repeat the same violence in new forms. But if memory becomes active, it can become a material for rebuilding.

Art allows us to imagine beyond survival alone. It can open a space where care, protection, and responsibility become possible again. In the face of uncertainty, artistic practice can remind us that even when the world is damaged, meaning can still be created.







Artist: Tedo Rekhviashvili

Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato







Artist: Tedo Rekhviashvili

Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato





Artist: Tedo Rekhviashvili





Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato

An interview with...

About the artwork:
Sea that Remembers, 2026

1.

Your work emerges from a deeply personal experience of conflict and displacement, yet it also speaks to broader questions of memory, belonging, and contested territories. In this sense, it resonates strongly with other stories presented in the pavilion, including those of Nauru. Do you see connections between these different experiences of loss?

2.

What can they teach us about resilience and survival?

3.

If you could address a message to people who have witnessed their homeland transformed, damaged, or taken away by forces beyond their control (whether through war, extraction, or environmental change) what would you want to say to them today?

Tedo Rekhviashvili (Georgia)

1.

Yes, I see strong connections between these different experiences of loss. Of course, every history is specific. The experience of Nauru is not the same as the experience of Georgia or Abkhazia. But there is a shared emotional and human question: what happens when the place that formed you is transformed, damaged, or taken away by forces beyond your control?

In Abkhazia, the loss is connected to war, displacement, and political occupation. Abkhazia is an organic part of Georgia, but in the 1990s it was occupied by Russia through war, and this created a deep wound in Georgian society. In Nauru, the loss is connected to extraction, environmental damage, rising seas, and geopolitical vulnerability. These histories are different, but both ask us to think about what happens when land becomes fragile, contested, or endangered.

In both cases, land becomes more than land. It becomes memory. It becomes the body of a community.

My work tries to approach this connection through symbols: the shell, the sea, the sound of war, the landscape, the home that cannot be reached. These are not only images of loss; they are also images of what remains inside people when the physical place becomes fragile or inaccessible.

2.

They teach us that survival is not only physical. It is also emotional, cultural, and spiritual. To survive means to keep memory alive without allowing it to become only pain. It means to carry a place inside you, even when you cannot fully return to it.

Resilience is not always heroic. Sometimes it is very quiet. It can be a mother telling a child a story. It can be a family preserving a language, a song, a landscape in memory. It can be the act of making art when there are no simple answers.

For me, resilience is the ability to transform loss into responsibility. Not to forget, not to romanticize the pain, but to continue creating meaning from it.

3.

I would say: your memory matters. Even if a place is damaged, occupied, extracted, flooded, or changed beyond recognition, the memory of that place is not powerless. It continues to live through you.

No one can fully take away the inner landscape of a person. They can destroy houses, borders can change, nature can be damaged, but memory, language, love, and belonging can continue to resist disappearance.

I do not want to give a message that sounds too easy, because loss is real and sometimes very painful. But I believe that remembering is already a form of protection. To remember a place honestly — with its beauty, its pain, its people, and its wounds — is to refuse its disappearance.

And maybe this is also what art can do: it can hold a place when the world fails to protect it.

An interview with...

Learn more about this artist who exhibited at the Nauru Pavilion:

Representing Nauru at the Biennale

This year, Nauru enters the Venice Biennale with a pavilion that speaks from a place where the consequences of environmental and political decisions are already being lived.
As an artist coming from a different geographical and cultural context, what does it mean for you to contribute to representing Nauru at this moment? What do you hope visitors will take away from their visit?

Disappearance as Transformation

The pavilion approaches disappearance not as a spectacular catastrophe, but as a condition that reshapes memory, identity, and ways of understanding the world. How does this idea of disappearance resonate with your own artistic practice? Is it something that you feel as a pressure, a concern, or perhaps even a productive force?

The Role of the Artist Today

One of the underlying ideas of the pavilion is that Nauru's condition reflects broader global realities, from climate change to political instability and conflict. In your view, what role can art play in such circumstances? Can an artist remain detached from the social and political conditions of their time, or is artistic practice inevitably connected to them?

Imagining the Future

Nauru is presented in this pavilion not only as a place of loss, but also as a glimpse into a future that concerns us all. In your view, what role can art play in helping us imagine futures beyond fear, resignation, or catastrophe? Can artistic practice open new ways of thinking and acting in the face of uncertainty?

Sylvia Grace Borda (Canada)



Representing Nauru at the Biennale

My artwork draws from my experiences of growing up and living on the unceded territories of Coast Salish peoples in the south-western part of British Columbia, Canada. This association has fostered respect for local traditional knowledge and for greater awareness of the connectedness of people, land and sea, and the consequences of environmental change due to climate and anthropogenic activity.

For the Venice Biennale, I chose to locate my artwork in relation to Protection Island that is part of Nanaimo city within the Traditional Territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation (British Columbia, Canada). Being from a settler family, I am aware of local and national indigenous communities' continuing struggle for land protection and stewardship rights locally in the Nanaimo region and along the north Pacific coastline, as well as across Canada. Despite being an ocean away in distance, Nauru peoples are similarly reclaiming their traditional ecological knowledge, community and territorial sovereignty.

So it is a very great privilege and honour to be part of the Nauru pavilion and to bridge a shared narrative through the visualization of shorelines of the North Pacific Ocean, providing a glimpse of ecological time and space and positioning non-human actors at the foreground of the story. My intention is for visitors to engage through my artwork as a conduit to the points at which the Pacific Ocean in the south from Nauru touches the shorelines of Nanaimo in the north Pacific.

I would like to invite visitors to consider and reflect on these often unseen margins between land and water. These are the hidden and fragile places that shelter living and breathing connections to ecological systems where the smallest actions ripple far and wide. How can we be better stewards of these transformative in-between spaces which connect us to the land and across the ocean to Nauru?

Disappearance as Transformation

As an artist, I am curious about acute observation, experiencing the minutiae of life forms, as well as the meta level of seasons and ecosystems and their interdependence across multiple non-human and human actors. How can the seemingly smallest change, whether ecological or anthropogenic, create a new balance or imbalance? How can this change lead to the transformation of other forms?

In my artistic practice, my working process is twofold – capturing points of transformation, as well as inviting viewers to experience some transformation of their own perspective.

For the Venice Biennale Nauru Pavilion, my artworks support a platform to engage viewers with a narrative about non-human actors of Pacific coastal shorelines – lapping waves and currents, seaweed, kelp and algae, wind and cloud, and shoreline lifeforms, such as starfish and mollusks. A sense of transformation is not all what is visible, but also what is unseen and audible – such as the distant sound of float planes pointing to a very human presence. As humans, we are at a crossroads with nature and the anthropogenic in which disappearance as transformation may not necessarily lead us to a sustainable future of co-existence if we ignore seemingly marginal ecosystems. Both disappearance and transformation are not irreversible paths.

The Role of the Artist Today

Art is data and evidence. It is almost always relational - connected to stories, whether of people, place, non-human life or abstraction. Speaking as an eco-artist, contemporary artist practitioners are creating impactful forms of ecological connection through sensory engagement, material and non-material encounters, not dependent solely on social and political conditions, but also as mediators and interpreters. Artistic narratives can incorporate data and scientific contexts to mediate communication as part of critical responses to human-centered and non-human approaches to environmental change.

Aligned to these processes, the role of the artist can move beyond the individual practitioner towards collaboration with museums, public initiatives, multi-stakeholder and interdisciplinary partnerships, so that there is the scaffolding of a collective response. Here the role of the artist can facilitate and/or give form and voice to artistic and humanistic perspectives to question how we represent, understand, and experience connections and intersections across human and ecological spaces at times of disruption and loss – and how we can activate our own responses and mitigations.

Imagining the Future

My environmental art narrative counters a dominant view of the human-centeredness of the future and offers an alternative positioning. Through art, we can reimagine ourselves, not as central cast members in a story led by us, but as part of a collective that live, work and respectfully co-exist with forests, oceans, plants and animals, each with their own narrative and each with their own agency. We need to understand ourselves as ecological and non-dominant neighbours so to open up new ways of thinking, reflection about and acting on our collective futures. There is a plurality of knowledge across these systems, from before humankind, and several millennia of local traditional knowledges. My aspiration, via my artwork and practice, is to reveal facets of these knowledge systems, however small and hidden, as interconnected and co-contributing to the wellbeing of the planet which we share. Ecological art has an important role to bridge human experiences with other living systems and to help activate positions towards sustainability, stewardship, collective knowledges and regenerative futures for multi-species flourishing.



Artist: Sylvia Grace Borda





Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato



Artist: Sylvia Grace Borda





Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato

An interview with...

About the artwork:
Perceptual Fields: From Nauru to Nanaimo, 2026

1.

The ocean is at the centre of your work, not only as a resource, but as a living environment that connects distant geographies. Through photography, moving images, and sound, you create an experience that engages multiple senses. Could you tell us about the research process behind the project and the experiences that shaped its development?

2.

The work establishes a dialogue between Nauru and Nanaimo, two places separated by vast distances yet connected through ecological and maritime realities. What unexpected parallels emerged during your research?

3.

Your practice often combines scientific observation with sensory experience.
Do you see art as a way of making environmental knowledge more tangible and emotionally accessible?

Sylvia Grace Borda (Canada)

1.

My arts practice is closely associated with transformative photographic and spatial media. The profound potential for reimagining human and nature experience through these and other media with local and far-reaching audiences has shaped my approach to developing shared narratives, new forms of dialogic interaction and perspective.

Central to this narrative building, recording the real-world through different optics has been a ubiquitous tool for me – to research, to capture and reveal hidden realities unfolding around us. It makes the invisible visible. Crucially, the Nauru exhibition has extended the possibilities for exploring sensory engagement, for example with Ocean 'blankets' for audiences to physically wrap themselves in, as well as the digital layering of moving image and audio in the Intertidal Cantos. This process has heightened perception of the Pacific Ocean as a body with its own rhythms, breathing patterns, capacities to oxygenate, and shelter to vast life forms deep in the ocean and in shallow spaces. Whenever small moments of these dynamics are revealed, we can see first-hand through time and observation that the Ocean connects a complex living breathing system.

My current research aims to map the multiple tiers of organisms and ecological relationships that can exist in these breathing systems focusing on the more invisible shorelines which naturally come to the end (or beginning) of the Pacific Ocean's perpetual rhythmic cycle. From here, I take an approach of curiousity, angling from the perspective of a crevice or obscured space in the shoreline to speculate how each respond to this touchpoint with the Ocean, and to the rippling effects of disruption from climatic change like strands of kelp debris and proximity to the human scale like the sound of a float plane in the distance.

The result is an embodied narrative of awareness and learning where audiences can become curious themselves, and even reflective of their place and fragility of these breathing living

micro-environments at the cusp of the Pacific Ocean.

2.

For the Venice Biennale, it was a conscious decision to locate my artwork in relation to Protection Island located in the city of Nanaimo region (British Columbia, Canada) and within the Traditional Territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. While Nauru and Nanaimo are vastly apart in geographical terms, they are much closer in shared commonalities. Both are islands in the Pacific Ocean. Nauru is located in the South Pacific and Nanaimo in the Northwest Pacific. Both share relatable histories of 19 th. century colonization, for example, the mining of phosphate in Nauru and the mining of coal and granite on Protection Island in Nanaimo. Both locations share histories of indiscriminate deforestation, over-fishing, and mineral extraction which have impacted indigenous peoples' sustainability and sovereignty across culture, language, history, identity, and land ownership. In the Nanaimo region and along the north Pacific, Indigenous communities are advocates for traditional land protection and stewardship rights. Nauru peoples are similarly reclaiming their traditional ecological knowledge, community, and territorial sovereignty.

A critical connection, and my motivation for the Biennale artwork, is to reflect on what we experience on our respective shores in the form of climate change and anthropogenic activity, the impacts of which are profoundly amplified for island nations and communities. My artwork attempts to bridge this shared narrative focusing on the shorelines of the North Pacific Ocean, and as a metaphorical point at which the Pacific Ocean in the south from Nauru touches the shorelines of Nanaimo in the north Pacific. Each are connected to vital ecological systems where the smallest disruptive action can ripple far and wide.

3.

Art has a substantial role in contextualizing environmental knowledge and activating awareness, reflection and discovery. In my practice, I trial ways to present a perspective co-authored with Nature but also to embed a form of critical enquiry and self-guided exploration. I often engage in scientific and qualitative observation to initiate an artwork, and I invite audiences to similarly observe at their own pace and within an open narrative. In this way, audiences can become co-observers and agents in the narrative space and beyond.

For generations, artists have used visual and other media to engage the public in real-world science and speculative imagination about how nature is in an increasingly precarious balance and how sustainable futures can be pursued. These processes emphasise the role of art in addressing complex social and environmental challenges. Contemporary arts continue to shape our thinking around environmental sustainability amidst climate change and technological disruption. A critical shift for some, including myself, is in considering the collective - building legitimacy from the bottom up with communities to inform activations and policy through respectful approaches across lived experience, traditional knowledges and scientific endeavours. For me personally, the Nauru exhibition has been instrumental in shaping dialogue at this critical intersection.

An interview with...

Learn more about this artist who exhibited at the Nauru Pavilion:

Representing Nauru at the Biennale

This year, Nauru enters the Venice Biennale with a pavilion that speaks from a place where the consequences of environmental and political decisions are already being lived.
As an artist coming from a different geographical and cultural context, what does it mean for you to contribute to representing Nauru at this moment? What do you hope visitors will take away from their visit?

Disappearance as Transformation

The pavilion approaches disappearance not as a spectacular catastrophe, but as a condition that reshapes memory, identity, and ways of understanding the world. How does this idea of disappearance resonate with your own artistic practice? Is it something that you feel as a pressure, a concern, or perhaps even a productive force?

The Role of the Artist Today

One of the underlying ideas of the pavilion is that Nauru's condition reflects broader global realities, from climate change to political instability and conflict. In your view, what role can art play in such circumstances? Can an artist remain detached from the social and political conditions of their time, or is artistic practice inevitably connected to them?

Imagining the Future

Nauru is presented in this pavilion not only as a place of loss, but also as a glimpse into a future that concerns us all. In your view, what role can art play in helping us imagine futures beyond fear, resignation, or catastrophe? Can artistic practice open new ways of thinking and acting in the face of uncertainty?

Ron Laboray and **Niki Elliott** (USA)



Representing Nauru at the Biennale

We never saw ourselves as speaking on behalf of Nauru. Instead, we were invited into a conversation the pavilion had already begun. Our responsibility wasn't to explain Nauru's experience, but to contribute work that resonates with its broader questions about disappearance, memory, and transformation.

One of the remarkable things about art is that it allows people from very different places to recognize common concerns. The details may differ, but questions about loss, displacement, ecological change, and identity are no longer local questions. They're increasingly shared ones.

Disappearance as Transformation

I've never thought of disappearance as a single dramatic event. It feels more like erosion. Images fade, places change, technologies become obsolete, and meanings slowly shift over time. Much of my work begins with those remnants and asks what persists. The images in the large drawings have an origin with one intention and over time accumulate new meaning and when I repurpose and juxtapose the images, I transform their original meaning into a new context and conversation, often critiquing their origin.

Through Little Richard's Almanac, we've developed close relationships with independent musicians around the world. We've heard, firsthand, how difficult it has become simply to continue existing as a band. Again and again, artists tell us they're on the edge—not because they've run out of ideas or audiences, but because the systems that determine visibility, touring, and financial sustainability have become increasingly difficult to navigate. To us, that's another form of disappearance. We hope that the video that we create in collaboration with these independent artists will extend the journey of the music, that it will move into new spaces, new audiences, and new conversations.

The Role of the Artist Today

By nature, artists are cultural reflectors. We are global citizens who contemplate pressing issues and present those reflections to an audience through our objects and performances. My work functions as a series of historical documents, archiving shared cultural experiences and capturing specific moments in our collective worldview. Ultimately, my practice explores how we, as humans, define identity and reality through shared interpretation and invention.

Art is never made in a vacuum; we often look to the visual culture of an era to understand what mattered most during its creation. In my work, I arrange appropriated images and colors into map and chart configurations. From these borrowed images to the structural armatures of timelines, the foundational elements originate outside of me. Yet, while the processes of appropriation, chance, and spray-painted application might initially suggest a detached approach, the resulting pieces reveal a deeply personal investment—anchored in humor, reflection, and a sense of hope.

Imagining the Future

That is a really profound question, and it honestly gets to the absolute core of why art matters so much today. When we are dealing with massive, overwhelming crises like climate change or ecological loss—the exact kinds of things Nauru's history brings to light—standard data and political speeches usually just freeze us up. We get this intense crisis fatigue where we either panic or completely tune out because the problem feels too big to handle.

That is exactly where art steps in to change the game. Instead of throwing cold, hard statistics at us, a space like the Nauru pavilion translates those heavy concepts into a sensory, emotional experience. It makes you actually feel the weight of the loss rather than just reading a report about it. By turning an abstract global issue into a deeply personal moment, art pierces through our defense mechanisms and moves us from passive awareness into genuine empathy.

It also does something desperate needed right now: it breaks our collective obsession with dystopia. Popular culture has given us endless, vivid imagery of the apocalypse, making it incredibly easy to imagine the end of the world but nearly impossible to picture a future where we actually adapt and thrive. Artists have the unique freedom to engage in speculative world-building without being held back by immediate political or financial constraints. They can look at a place of loss and ask "What if?" in a way that models radical adaptation or highlights indigenous stewardship. This replaces a single, terrifying timeline with a whole spectrum of possibilities, proving that a total catastrophe isn't the only option on the table.

Ultimately, fear and resignation both come from a desire for certainty, fear assumes the worst will happen, and resignation decides there is no point in trying. But art is incredibly comfortable with ambiguity. It embraces uncertainty not as a source of paralyzing terror, but as a space of profound potential. If the future isn't set in stone, it means our choices right now still matter. Art might not be able to pass legislation or physically build a seawall, but it alters the cultural soil from which those real-world actions grow. By changing how we feel and what we believe is possible, artistic practice expands our imagination and transforms uncertainty into a space where we can actually breathe and act.







Artist: Ron Laboray

Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato





Artist: Ron Laboray

Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato







Artist: Ron Laboray

Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato

An interview with...

About the artwork:
Disappearence as Perceptual Inquiry, 2026

1.

Your work delivers a powerful political message through a visual language that is vibrant, playful, and at times almost hypnotic. Visitors find themselves lingering in front of the videos or even attempting to reproduce the dance movements represented in the drawings. Could you tell us about your creative process and how these different visual elements come together?

2.

Many of your works seem to operate in a space between drawing, animation, and social commentary. What attracts you to this hybrid approach, and what possibilities does it open that a single medium might not?

3.

Could you tell us more about *Little Richard's Almanac*? How did the project originate, and what questions were you hoping to explore through it?

Ron Laboray and **Niki Elliott** (USA)

1.

My art explores the freedom of contemporary artistic practice, where the absence of a single, dominant narrative allows for the construction of countless individual stories. I create works that blend conceptual rigor, lighthearted humor, and the inherent beauty of well-crafted objects. My drawings navigate the space between abstract mapping and realistic representation, not as opposing forces, but as related points along a spectrum of actual, perceptual, and procedural distances, including time.

The titles of my artworks are often matter-of-fact descriptions of the information presented, offering insight into the work and acting as triggers for the creation of connective narratives. Even without the titles, the drawings and paintings can be appreciated for their inherent aesthetic qualities.

Along with these drawings, I am presenting a collaborative project "Little Richard's Almanac" with my partner Niki Elliott. LRA is an art collective founded by Ron Laboray and Niki Elliott as a studio project producing animated music videos. Included in the exhibition are videos for the bands, The Brian Jonestown Massacre, Federale, L.A. Mood, Super American Eagle, and German composer Engelbert Lerch. These partnerships push us towards unexpected and exciting outcomes. Also, the shortform nature of the music video pairs well with animation, a process demanding 100s of hours of labor to produce only a few minutes of video. Rooted in contemporary conceptual art, we approach each animation as a unique work of art. While music videos are often consumed casually, we actively seek to elevate them beyond the typical viewing experience by exhibiting them within museums and galleries.

2.

I've always seen my studio practice as a deeply intellectual pursuit—a way to archive, measure,

and try to make sense of our shared social existence. As an artist, I feel a strong responsibility to act as a citizen and use my aesthetic voice to engage with social and political realities. To do that effectively, I can't limit myself to just one traditional tool.

I'm naturally drawn to the random detritus of our society—pop culture, mass media, and shared public data. To handle that material, I often adopt a 'pseudoscientific' method. I like to remove my own personal subjectivity by mapping out abstract information along strict spatial or historical timelines. Balancing that kind of scientific rigor with a sense of humor and irony requires a flexible toolkit. The immediate, foundational quality of drawing gives me a structure, while the dynamic, time-based nature of animation allows those structures to breathe.

Choosing a single, static medium forces you into a very fixed formal language, and I've never been interested in adhering to a master narrative. Breaking into a hybrid space opens up possibilities that a single medium just can't touch.

For one, it allows me to capture drawing and time together. History, science, and cultural myths don't stand still; they exist along continuous timelines. A static painting or drawing can struggle to communicate that temporal depth. By incorporating digital tools, 3D modeling, and animation, I can introduce a literal stream of consciousness, capturing the fluid passage of time and globalization.

Operating across mediums also opens the door to cross-disciplinary projects and collaboration. For instance, animating music for other sound artists and musicians expands the conceptual focus of my studio, forcing me to let go of total control and see where the work goes.

Ultimately, this hybrid approach lets me bridge the gap between high technology and accessible mass culture. It makes the work highly engaging and visually scannable for the public, which feeds directly into my broader mission: using art as an engine for community connection and civic revitalization.

3.

Little Richard's Almanac grew out of a shared belief that music and visual art have always had the power to transform one another. Some of the most exciting artistic moments of the last century have happened where those worlds overlap, and we wanted to explore what a music video could become if it were approached as a work of contemporary art rather than simply a promotional tool.

We were interested in questions about attention and discovery. In a culture increasingly shaped by algorithms and endless scrolling, what kind of work invites someone to stop, look closely, and return for a second viewing? Can a music video reward sustained attention in the same way a painting, a film, or a novel can?

Those questions naturally led us toward independent musicians. We found ourselves collaborating with artists making extraordinary work who were often struggling simply to be discovered. Rather than illustrating their songs, we try to create films that extend the music's journey into galleries, museums, film festivals, and conversations with audiences who might never have encountered it otherwise.

Ultimately, Little Richard's Almanac is about creating connections—between music and visual art, between artists working in different disciplines, and between audiences and work that deserves to be experienced. If someone leaves one of our films wanting to watch it again, or wanting to explore a band they've never heard before, then we've accomplished exactly what we hoped to do.

An interview with...

Learn more about this artist who exhibited at the Nauru Pavilion:

Representing Nauru at the Biennale

This year, Nauru enters the Venice Biennale with a pavilion that speaks from a place where the consequences of environmental and political decisions are already being lived.
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Dorian Batycka (Poland)



Representing Nauru at the Biennale

As an artist coming from a different geographical and cultural context, I don't see my contribution as an attempt to speak *for* Nauru. Rather, I'm interested in how an artwork can enter into a conversation already shaped by Nauruan histories, while also acknowledging the distance, asymmetry, and potential awkwardness involved in representing a place one does not come from.

In relation to Nauru, this became a way of thinking about visibility. Nauru is frequently framed through statistics, climate anxiety, geopolitical narratives, or images of environmental damage. Those representations may be factually grounded, but they can also turn a living place into a symbol—a warning sent to the rest of the world. I'm interested in what happens when that symbolic image begins to circulate independently of the people and histories it supposedly represents. Who gets to be visible? Who is made invisible? And what does it mean to "disappear" in an age when everything is constantly documented, posted, and archived?

Disappearance as Transformation

My work, #disappear, begins with the language of memes, hashtags, and online circulation. Memes are often dismissed as disposable or unserious, but they are also one of the ways contemporary political feeling is produced and shared. They compress complex histories into images, phrases, jokes, and gestures that can travel rapidly across borders. That compression can be reductive, but it can also reveal something about how we collectively process crisis: through repetition, irony, parody, and sometimes disappearance.





Artist: Dorian Batycka



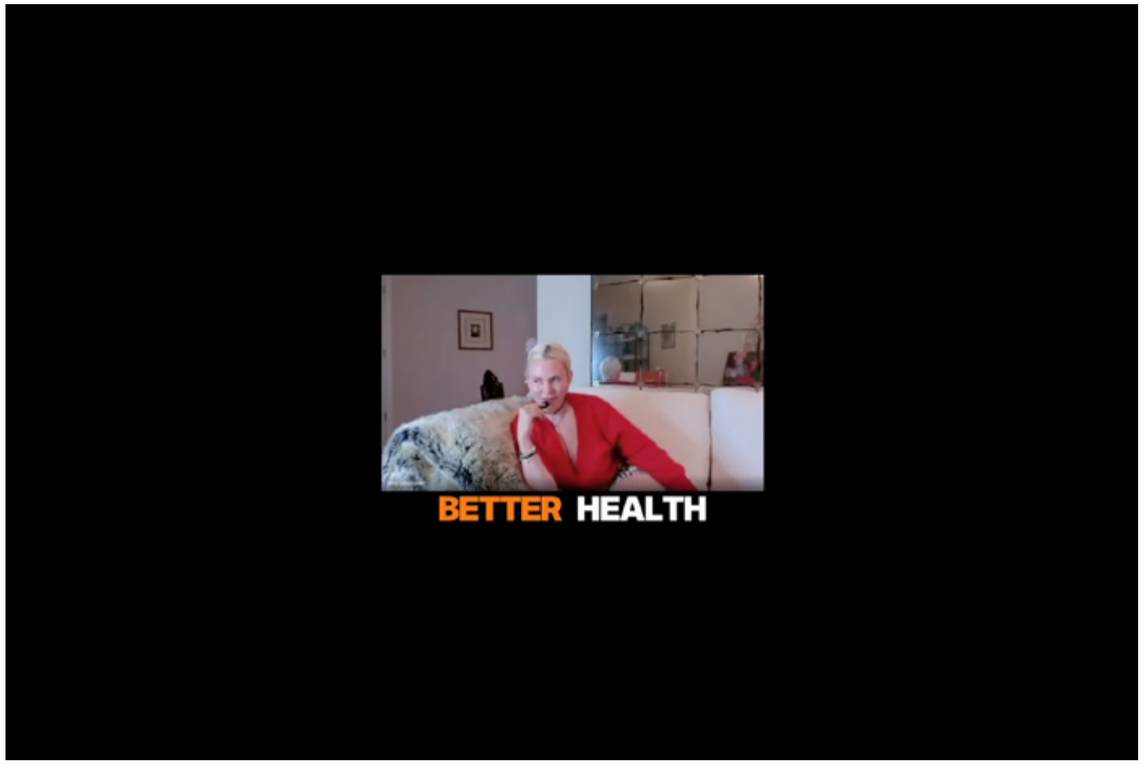


Photo credit: Giulia Broz

An interview with...

About the artwork:
#disappear, 2026

1.

Your work often plays with the boundaries between documentation and constructed imagery. In the context of this pavilion, how do you approach the idea of visual truth? Do you see images as evidence, interpretation, or something else entirely?

2.

The pavilion reflects on disappearance as something that affects not only physical territory but also memory and perception. How does your work engage with the idea that images can both preserve and transform what is being lost?

Dorian Batycka (Poland)

1.

My idea was to create a system of images that align to the present chaoticness of today. In my view, the world is rife with brain rot and the proliferation of extremism online is a topic I am deeply interested in. I see the world as an ongoing cycle of catastrophe and chaos, and that entropy is something I find deeply resonant. Some people have called me a doomer and an incel. So be it. I see the world through the prism of an algorithm programming us all to become more extreme. My idea is to stop, reflect and resist, not conform to the slop we are all now so accustomed to.

2.

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The idea of working with Nauru and the Venice Biennale is something that questions the idea of statehood itself. Since 2011, I have been interested in the Venice Biennale less so as an exhibition venue and more so as a framework for ideological tooling. Art and political art have a profound importance for smaller countries especially, since they provide a 'seat at the table' in a space that would otherwise be exclusively for rich white people from Western countries. In the case of both Nauru and my earlier participation in the Maldives pavilion in 2013, I see art as a way in which to create the foundations for change, a space for discourse, and a way to platform voices and perspectives that would otherwise remain silent.

An interview with...

Learn more about this artist who exhibited at the Nauru Pavilion:

Representing Nauru at the Biennale

This year, Nauru enters the Venice Biennale with a pavilion that speaks from a place where the consequences of environmental and political decisions are already being lived.
As an artist coming from a different geographical and cultural context, what does it mean for you to contribute to representing Nauru at this moment? What do you hope visitors will take away from their visit?

Disappearance as Transformation

The pavilion approaches disappearance not as a spectacular catastrophe, but as a condition that reshapes memory, identity, and ways of understanding the world. How does this idea of disappearance resonate with your own artistic practice? Is it something that you feel as a pressure, a concern, or perhaps even a productive force?

The Role of the Artist Today

One of the underlying ideas of the pavilion is that Nauru's condition reflects broader global realities, from climate change to political instability and conflict. In your view, what role can art play in such circumstances? Can an artist remain detached from the social and political conditions of their time, or is artistic practice inevitably connected to them?

Imagining the Future

Nauru is presented in this pavilion not only as a place of loss, but also as a glimpse into a future that concerns us all. In your view, what role can art play in helping us imagine futures beyond fear, resignation, or catastrophe? Can artistic practice open new ways of thinking and acting in the face of uncertainty?

Khaled Hafez (Egypt)



Representing Nauru at the Biennale

The challenge that always faces an artist today is how to address timeless problems that transcend any one geography, and still be accessible to global audience. In my case, I am Egyptian and French' speaking three languages fluently allows me to formulate my thoughts and my visual language organically to respect the viewing process of audience. and my challenge is how to represent visually intricate cultural Egyptian specificities as timeless and universal alphabets, that are comprehensible to global viewers across generations and geographies. I explored the idea of "wealth and power" in my 2025 AI generated film "Cottonopolis 2025", where subtle statements of colonialism, exploitation, power, war and independence are touched intelligently rather than just aesthetically. I believe the curatorial team did a great work selecting all the works at the pavilion using the same formula of "intelligent and aesthetic"; this made the contribution of all of the artists meaningful to the Nauru National Pavilion, as well to the entire selection of artists. All works constituted phrases required for the. Entirety of the visual narrative of the exhibition.

I believe visitors will navigate all the works and find the link of "Earth, Land Sea", environment, ecology, and sustainability, all without screaming messages that we, artists, tend to imply in our artwork, rather than address explicitly.

Disappearance as Transformation

I have worked with this curatorial team since 2007 at the Guangzhou Triennale, Manifesta 8 in 2010, as well as for the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013, representing the Maldives. We share the same concern of memory as a degrading vehicle of our culture, hence identity, and the breeder of hybrid identities in the organic evolution of the human kind. What we, the curatorial Team, of Ramadan, Cramerotti, Cagol, Boemio and myself share is the global transformation, and

degradation, in a post-colonial world, where land wealth is extorted, by force or by diplomacy, and how Earth is enslaved to neo-market economies, and how sustaining the planet becomes more challenging by the day.

Being of Egyptian heritage, I believe in documentation and writing, as an indispensable act of “preservation”: of memory, of identity, of culture, of history and of heritage. As an artist, I approach my practice as a documentary filmmaker who researches before committing to scribing, which here means wherever my practice takes my narrative (be it painting, film, installation, photography, and or text).

Wiping out land and mobilizing population indeed becomes a driving force, as our practices as artists, in our attempt to record and document, work against challenges of corporate interests, regional war, ideology-stained market economy, forced migration, history erasure, as well as policies that all work against our objectives as artists.

The Role of the Artist Today

Art document the contemporary situation; whoever coined the term “contemporary art” back in the late fifties implied the type of art that is aware of the current “now” condition, in every geography, so the spatial and the temporal are expressed to document the current economic, social, political, ideological and demographic condition. The trick, and challenge, for artists today is how to express the declining state of how we handle climate and ecosystems, and how unsupervised industries participate by the minute in this crisis. Legislations are futile in front of the new international political economy and global trade.

Inspired art p[practices explore such topics both intelligently and philosophically, proposing along their “research” new aesthetics accessible to viewers of today and researchers of tomorrow. The challenging step for every artists is hwo to choose the proper visual alphabets to represent novel ideas in an implied –and not explicit—creative methods.

Can an artist remain detached from the social and political conditions of their time? Yes they can if they choose; landscape paintings, portraits, stunning photography of living and practicing artists who choose “safe” art fill auction houses and sell for millions….. it is a choice. It is also a choice of other living practicing contemporary artists, as well as curators and writers, to challenge ideas, taboos, ideologies, beliefs and sometimes political systems; those also challenge traditional mediums of expression, and approach their practice and visual narrative through interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary methods.

Imagining the Future

I can speak for myself, and this can also represent the spirit of some participating artists of the pavilion, as well as the curatorial team, who are long time collaborators; we approach art as a “laboratory test”, that are well-researched, and yet allows for what is known as “empirical trials”, where there is some sort of a starting point, historical, political or ideological, then we perform tens of experimental steps, till the right formula of representation appears. What art represent here are the global issues that are not “safe to approach” in the public discourse. The completed art production is a documentary time capsule of the moment, left in published form for future generations to excavate in their very own research: archaeological, anthropological, or historical. Artists are the vehicle of the process of historicization.

Can artistic practice open new ways of thinking and acting in the face of uncertainty? Sometimes it is the only way to defy censorship; communities where taboos of faith, ideology and politics exists, and this includes Western media censorship by the way, art becomes the only way to defy censorship, through all sorts of visual metaphors and analogies, through codes and symbols that require awareness of semiotics and hermeneutics. Some cultures like where I come from in the Middle East, Africa and the Mediterranean regions where ancient cultures created art for thousands of years, this awareness exists, codes and symbols are constantly deciphered and legible to the layperson.





Artist: Khaled Hafez

Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato

An interview with...

About the artwork:
Cottonopolis, 2025

1.

In Cottonopolis, the narrative unfolds through the perspective of Donia, your ancestor and a resistance figure associated with the Egyptian independence movement of the early twentieth century. Could you tell us more about his story, and about the significance of bringing a family history into a work that also addresses broader historical and political narratives?

2.

You have said that artificial intelligence, in this work, does not reconstruct the past but rather produces it. This is a fascinating distinction. What do you mean by it, and how did this idea influence the way you approached the project?

3.

Your work seems suspended between memory and speculation, between historical research and technological imagination. How do the past and the future interact within Cottonopolis?

Khaled Hafez (Egypt)

1.

Hafez Donia, my grandfather died 23 years before I was born; I grew up listening to stories of resistance and heroism. He was a graduate of the Egyptian Police School (now called the Police Academy), and he was forst appointed in the Cavalier/Knight Sultan Guard at the Abdeen Palace, the Royal Court at the time back in 1909; he then married the daughter of one of his Palace colleagues, Adeela Mostafa Mossallam Oglu, of Turkish origin. Hafez Donia himself is claimed to have had an Italian origin one hundred years earlier, hence the Donia name, which has some online presence today with coat of arms and everything related. This cosmopolitan origin was not an obstacle for Hafez Donia, the Egyptian, to resist the British occupation. In 1919 a revolution erupted in Egyptp because the British broke a written pact with the Egyptian Sultanate to give Egypt independence if Egypt supported the allies in WWi; Egypt delivered the. British broke the pact, so the revolution erupted. As an educated police officer from a very wealthy family that owned massive areas of land in the Egyptian North Delta region, he led demonstrations, that ended up by the separation of the North Delta, and the declaration of independence, and the creation of the very short-lived Kingdom of Egyptian North Delta, with Hafez Donia as its first King, only for 100 days, before the British sieged the city, took control, and dissolved the separatist group. The core of the problem was the Egyptian wealth; the massive lands of the North Delta, and of Egypt as a whole, produced cotton, a produce that constituted 80% of the British empire use (the other 20% was American cotton), as well as all sorts of world class vegetables and fruits.

I took cotton, called at the time "the while gold" as it was the currency collateral, not gold, as a starting point for the video *Cottonopolis 2025*; I approached the narrative through all subtle routes to create a film that is does not pass explicit messages of the academically-consumed topics of colonialism and postcolonial theory, because I insist in all my art production to work "intelligently" and use implied narrative while respecting aesthetics.

I “reanimated” / resuscitated my very own grandfather through AI and made him lead a demonstration; it worked and made my entire family (cousins who are in their seventies today) smile and laugh. I believe that the pleasure of making art reflects on the viewer, and an artist who manages to demonstrate this pleasure in the making always manages to ensure a pleasurable viewing process, with smiles and laughs included.

2.

this all depends on how we look at AI; I believe that an artist can use it as a tool. This tool can be used as an inventor, another artist can use it as co-author, a third can use it to animate creative ideas. When I got the narrative for *Cottonopolis 2025*, it was an imaginary story of how the demonstrations happened in the North Delta Region; through my research I could not find a single photograph from that period for the Faraskour revolt (the city in North Delta that saw separatist event). I found images of demonstrations from other cities where the British were centralized, so I created a “an informed past of my own”, where real history is mingled with my personal history, and where fragments of information documented by Egyptian and British newspapers were reassembled to serve my narrative, an entirely “produced” narrative that could be true or false.

3.

For the past three decades of my 40-year career, I always try to break the barrier between the East and the West, the past and the present, the ephemeral/consumable and the sacred. Demolishing barriers between such dimensions has always been paramount in my transdisciplinary praxis, be it painting, video, installation, film or text. In *Cottonopolis 2025*, I followed the same pathway: how to represent conflict, in this case British-Egyptian, without making forces confront on the screen; so I created directional movement, where everything British moved from left to right, and everything Egyptian moved from right to left, trains, individual soldiers, platoons, etc. this approach solved the problem of “explicit expression”, and moved towards “implied narrative” that I find more intelligent and aesthetically pleasing. To create an inuendo of a “clash of civilizations”, I used British songs produced and performed during WWI to motivate the soldiers, as well as songs created specifically for the Egyptian cotton that represented the national identity during the same period.

The beauty of AI, a tool that represents the present and future, is that I use it as a tool to co-author my personal narrative, and blend this narrative with real and imagined histories, documented and oral, and come up with a film that proposes a different way to look at colonial history that is monopolized by mainstream academia and publishing.

An interview with...

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Imagining the Future

Nauru is presented in this pavilion not only as a place of loss, but also as a glimpse into a future that concerns us all. In your view, what role can art play in helping us imagine futures beyond fear, resignation, or catastrophe? Can artistic practice open new ways of thinking and acting in the face of uncertainty?

Iv Toshain (Austria)



Representing Nauru at the Biennale

Representing Nauru is not about speaking for Nauru. It is about showing how a small island can expose the mechanisms of a much larger world. Nauru is not an exception—it is a warning. For me, it means standing up for a conversation that reaches far beyond national borders.

Disappearance as Transformation

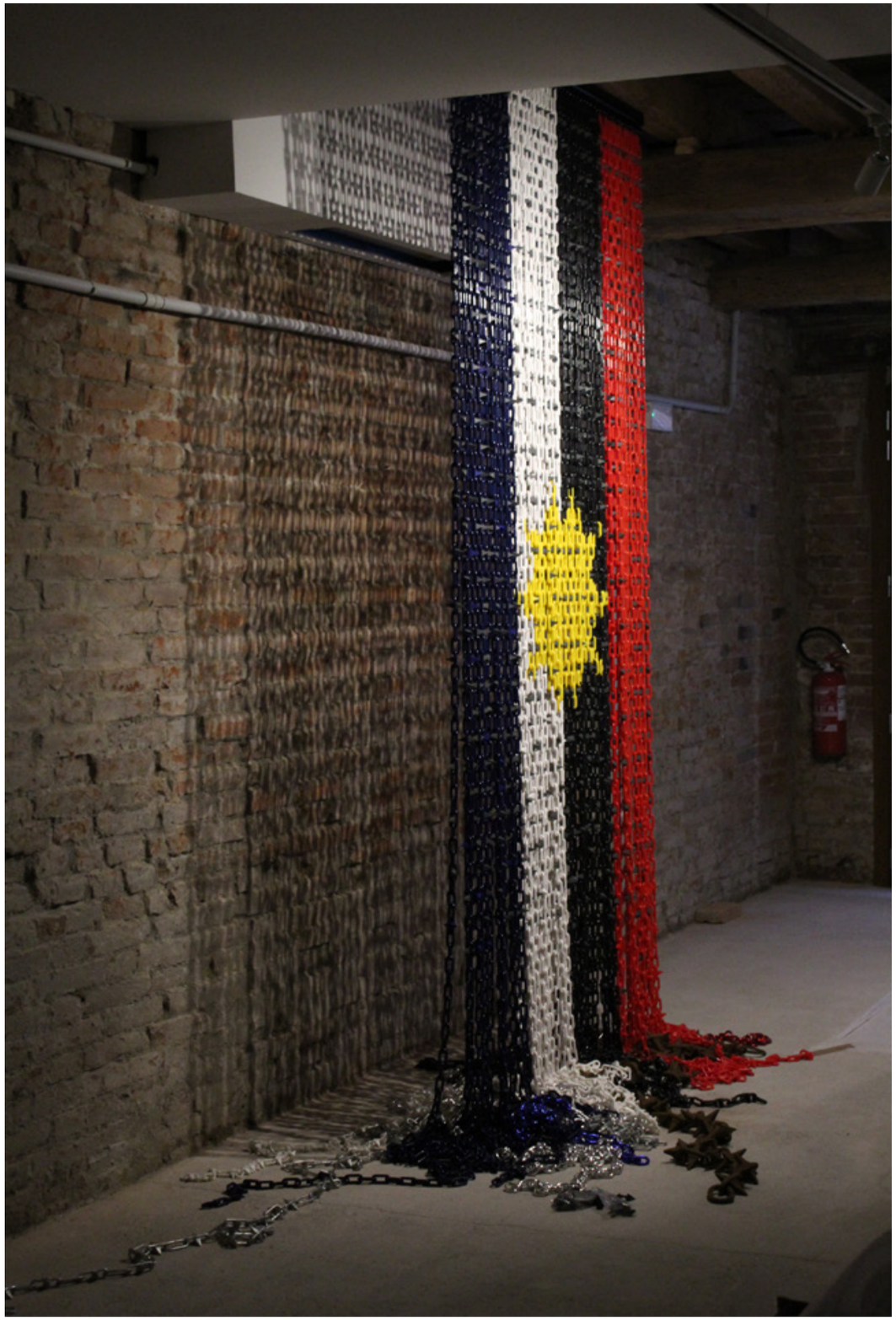
Disappearance is a process that allows us to question what we take for granted. My installation *Erewhon* deals with the vanishing point; its rigid structure dissolves as it reaches the floor. Disappearance is the appearance of something else.

The Role of the Artist Today

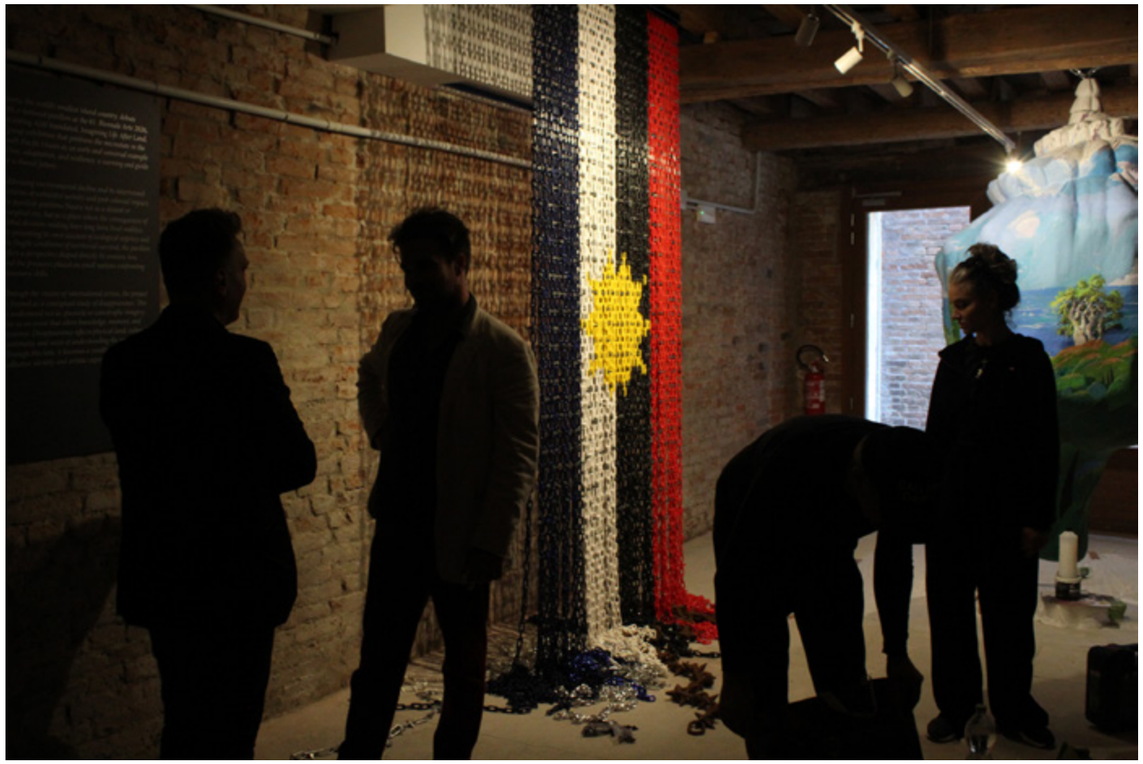
Even silence is a position. A contemporary artist can never be detached from the world.
Every authentic artwork is shaped by the conditions of its time; otherwise, it is not contemporary.
My practice ranges from direct activist projects to symbolic works, driven by the desire to "pin down reality" beyond spectacle and simulacra in the digital universe.

Imagining the Future

Art is not a fortune teller. Art is not a prophet. Art is not an oracle. Is it too romantic to see art as a remedy? Maybe art is the medicine.







Artist: Iv Toshain

Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato



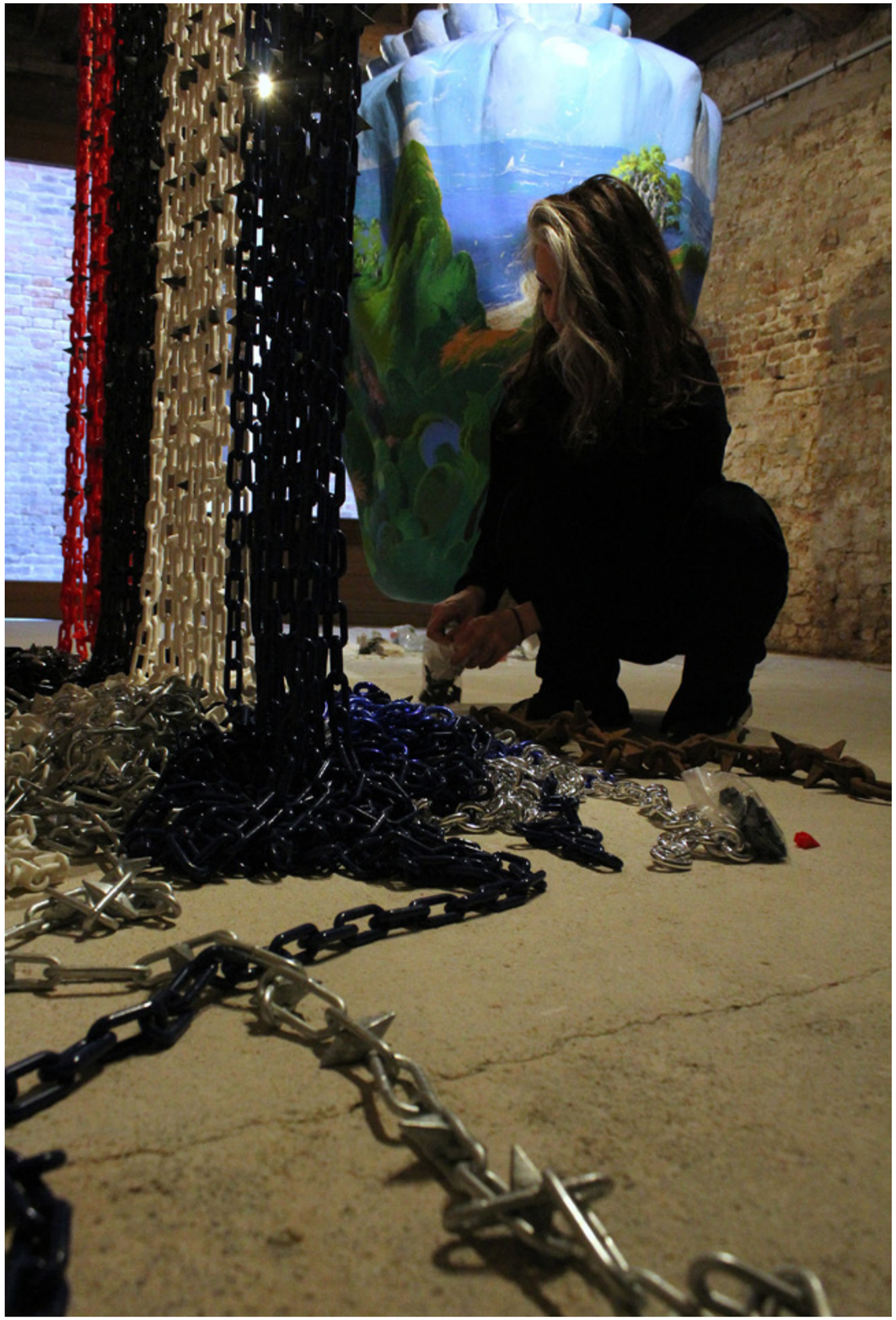


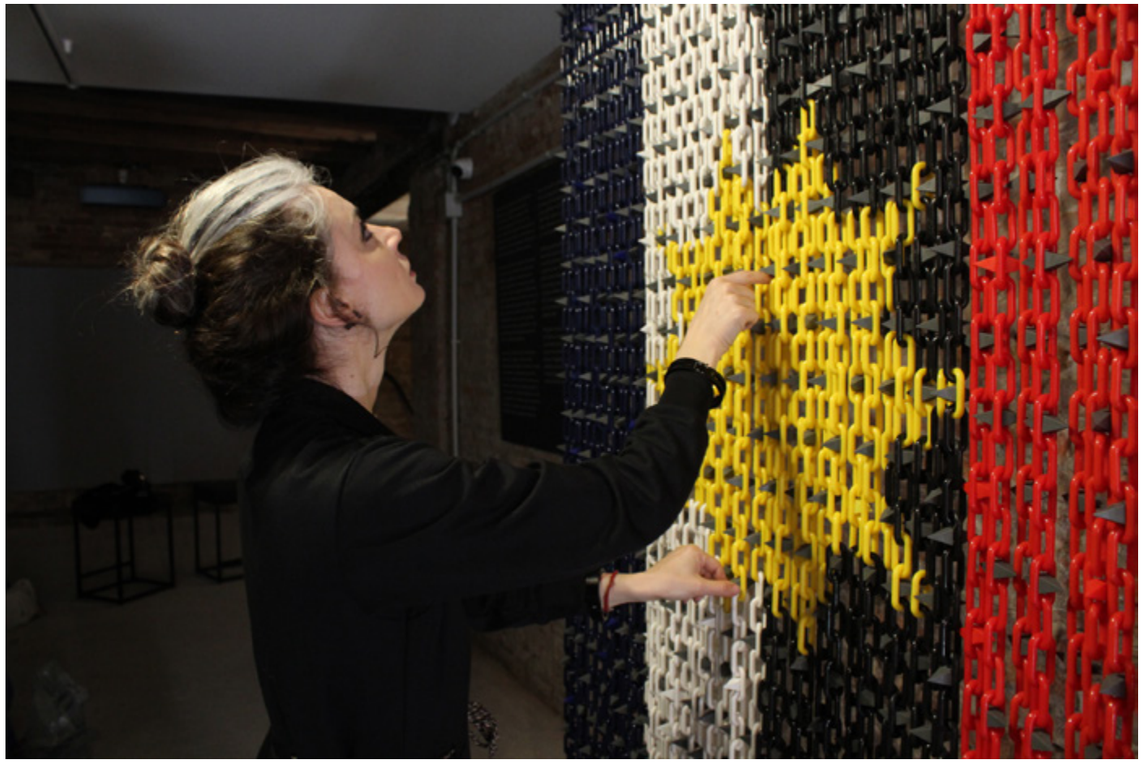
Artist: Iv Toshain

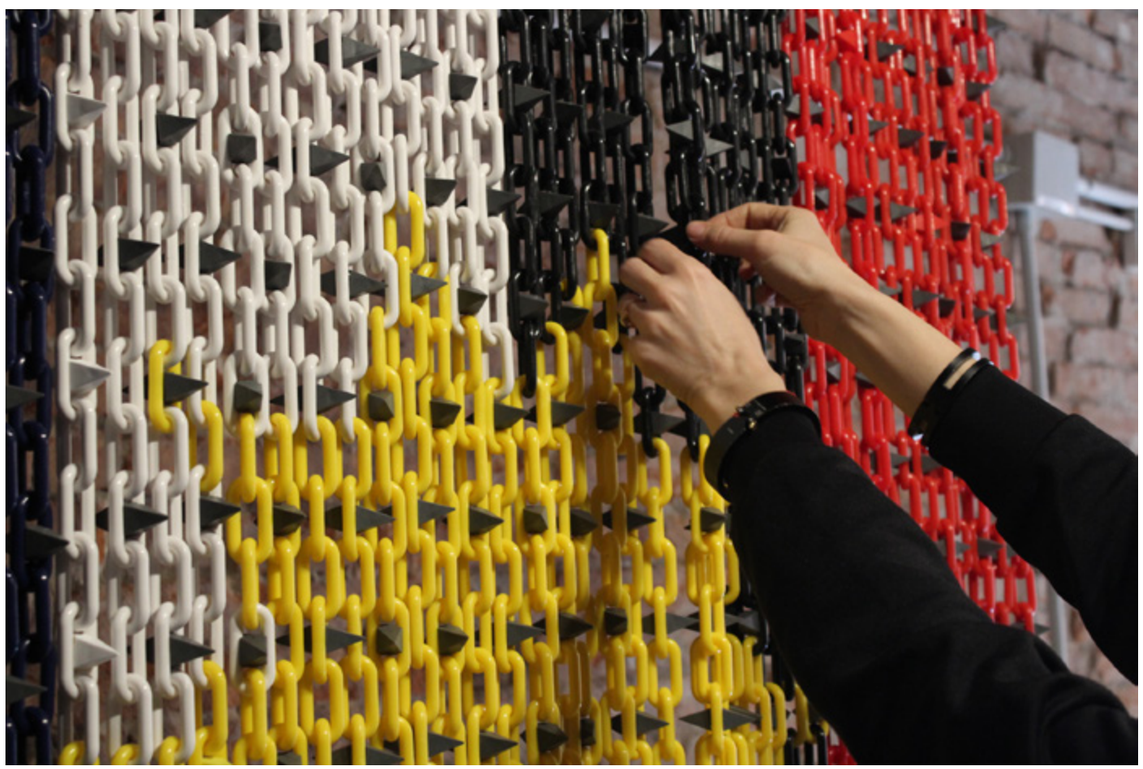




Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato







Artist: Iv Toshain

Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato

An interview with...

About the artwork:
Erewhon, 2026

1.

The title of your work refers to *Erewhon*, Samuel Butler's 1872 novel set in an imaginary society whose name is famously an almost perfect anagram of "nowhere." What first drew you to this literary reference, and how did it evolve into the conceptual starting point of the work?

2.

Your installation is a fictional flag, accompanied by a very distinctive visual language of colours, materials, and symbols. Could you tell us about the process of creating this imagined empire? How did you develop its aesthetic identity, and what meanings are embedded in these formal and material choices?

Iv Toshain (Austria)

1.

Samuel Butler's 1872 novel *Erewhon* (an anagram of "nowhere") tells the story of a fictional society set in the Victorian era and has been a recurring reference in my artistic practice since 2020. During the pandemic, I created *Erewhelse*—an anagram of "Elsewhere"—a public installation of three national flags (Bulgaria, Austria, and the EU) made of metal chains, each ending with a sharp 60 kg steel guillotine, installed between the columns of the gallery façade in Sofia. The work reflected on the lockdown, the suspension of freedom, the dictatorship of institutional power, and the collapse of globalization. *Erewhon* is a natural evolution of *Erewhelse*. But this time, the flag is no longer national—it is a hybrid, it is a hydra, composed of the colours of the powers that exploited Nauru. It is the flag of an ultra-mono-state.

2.

This is not a national flag but a banner of spiked chains. It does not represent a nation but an instrument of ideology, a composite fragment—discontinuous, built from the colours of empires. Blue, black, white, and red recall the colonial empires that once occupied and exploited Nauru. In England they still use Victorian spiked chains today—you can see them in Westminster Abbey. I juxtapose authentic 19th-century rusty barbs with contemporary plastic thorns, evoking ecocide. Spikes and chains form an obsessive pattern. As the banner reaches the floor, its rigid structure collapses into a chaotic mass, becoming a site of excess, anarchy, and decay, suggesting that every empire, no matter how powerful, will ultimately fail. Erewhon reveals scars inscribed on landscapes and violence inflicted upon nations: stripped, reshaped, exploited, brought to their knees, but never forgotten.

An interview with...

Learn more about this artist who exhibited at the Nauru Pavilion:

Representing Nauru at the Biennale

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One of the underlying ideas of the pavilion is that Nauru's condition reflects broader global realities, from climate change to political instability and conflict. In your view, what role can art play in such circumstances? Can an artist remain detached from the social and political conditions of their time, or is artistic practice inevitably connected to them?

Imagining the Future

Nauru is presented in this pavilion not only as a place of loss, but also as a glimpse into a future that concerns us all. In your view, what role can art play in helping us imagine futures beyond fear, resignation, or catastrophe? Can artistic practice open new ways of thinking and acting in the face of uncertainty?

Stefano Cagol (Italy)



Representing Nauru at the Biennale

It is incredible to be able to participate so actively, also as co-curator, in this unique pavilion. In some way, this experience comes from the one I had with the National Pavilion of the Maldives, but Nauru has no comparison. The condition of Nauru is so particular because it is the smallest island state in the world and, at the same time, embodies many of the contradictions of the contemporary world: colonialism, extractivism, the exploitation of resources, the climate crisis, the loss of territory and identity. Everything seems to be concentrated in this small place in the Pacific, which thus becomes a metaphor for the planet. For this reason, it is a great responsibility to contribute to representing Nauru at the Venice Biennale, especially at such a significant moment for the country, which today has officially returned to its traditional name: Naoero.

Living in Venice during this period and being in contact with the staff who look after the pavilion every day, I can testify that we are contributing to making the history of this nation known to the whole world, helping people understand that it is not remote and disconnected from us and, through this lens, fostering reflection on our own model of society. I realise that these are urgent issues largely ignored by most people. The idea that phosphate coming from a few contested places is indispensable for feeding us comes as a surprise. Resonating with this, it is significant that it is a collective and international group exhibition. Furthermore, the choice of the venue and, above all, the selection of the works and the exhibition plan, which faces the street and remains visible at all times, have proved effective in the desire to reach as broad an audience as possible. Every day, many hundreds of people visit the pavilion, including both contemporary art professionals and the general public. Some of them have never seen a contemporary art exhibition and know nothing about the Biennale, yet they understand what we want to convey and become curious about the works. They are often families with children. I am convinced that, for these people, a pavilion like ours can change their perspective, their lives. This is the very purpose of art.

Disappearance as Transformation

The works I conceived for the pavilion all speak of disappearance, although in different ways, starting with *The Ice Monolith*, a block of ice left to melt before the eyes of passers-by in the street during the opening days. At the pavilion in the video *We Are All Nauru*, there are the refineries of Texas and the idea of emptying the soil of resources that are millions of years old, as ancient as the thousands-of-years-old icebergs drifting at sea, with which I engage in the second part of the diptych, filmed in the increasingly contested territories of Greenland. There, the disappearing ice makes the underground resources increasingly accessible and coveted. Such distant places are united by the same paradigm. Finally, there is the burning flame in Murano blown glass, which emerges from an industrial canister. The idea is to make visible the fact that each of us sets off consequences that are at the same time fascinating and destructive.

In two previous series of works, *The Time of the Flood* and *We Are the Flood*, I used the metaphor of the flood, something very ancient and deeply rooted in the history of humanity. It is a catastrophe that brings about the disappearance of a world, but at the same time contains the idea of a possible new beginning. It can be a threshold towards something we do not yet know. This makes it clear that we cannot simply wait for something to end in order to start again. Perhaps this is precisely the most important question: to try to transform the present in order to have desirable futures, before the changes we are experiencing become irreversible.

The Role of the Artist Today

Art is, and absolutely must be, immersed in the world. It can help us look at problems that seem too large or too complex to be understood. I am convinced of this role of art, and for this reason I often work closely with philosophers such as Timothy Morton, who has summarised this condition in the concept of the “hyperobject”, and with MUSE – Science Museum of Trento. Art can help decode and make questions coming from science more accessible, translating them into images, experiences, emotions and questions, which can also be understood and felt in different ways. Art is empathetic, extremely powerful, and perhaps its strength also lies in the fact that it is ancient: it is one of the forms through which human beings have always sought to develop an understanding of the world, to tell its story and to draw what could be. Art is part of society, just as it is included in our own DNA.

Imagining the Future

When everything seems already written, art can open up a space for what does not yet exist. Working with MUSE, I understood that even scientists themselves are not always able to provide solutions. What is important is to succeed in changing the way people look at things and, therefore, also the way in which they can choose to act. In this sense, imagining a different future is already a first form of action.

This conviction sounds even more relevant in relation to Nauru, an island continuously overwhelmed by the voracity and violence of our society, from the colonial period to the present day, passing through the era of the World War, which did not spare this island, crucial because of its resources.







Artist: Stefano cagol

Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato





Artist: Stefano cagol

Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato







Artist: Stefano cagol

Photo credit: Nicola Zanellato

An interview with...

About the artwork:
We are all Nauru, 2024/25

1.

As both an artist and co-curator of the pavilion, you are contributing to a collective narrative in which Nauru becomes a metaphor for global ecological and political fragility. How do you balance these two roles, and what kind of dialogue do you hope this exhibition opens between artistic practice and curatorial vision?

2.

Your work *The Ice Monolith. After Land*, presented for the opening days, engaged directly with melting ice, transformation, and fragile ecologies. In this installation, natural elements are not just materials but active agents of change. Ice is also present in the video diptych *We Are All Nauru* at the National Pavilion. Could you tell us about the process behind this work and how you decided to use ice as a central visual and conceptual element?

Stefano Cagol (Italy)

1.

For several years I have also been involved in curating, as a natural evolution of my process-based artistic practice. I establish a very personal relationship with the works of the other artists and with their exhibition plan, as if they were part of a participatory work of mine. I recognise something of myself in them, of my thoughts, of my questions, which perhaps I would never have been able to express through my own work. For me, this is one of the great strengths of a group exhibition: the works become pieces of a large puzzle. Individually they have their own identity, but together they can construct something greater. This vision fits with that of Khaled Ramadan, and I think this is the reason why he wanted me to be part of the curatorial team from the very beginning. This collective work, both at the level of curators and artists, fits with the very concept of the exhibition and with the fact that Nauru — and the questions it raises — does not want to be seen as something remote and separate but shared.

2.

I decided to present a critical re-edition of one of my interventions from about a dozen years ago. Thanks to the consent of the Biennale, I was able to present *The Ice Monolith* again in exactly the same place — Riva Ca' di Dio — and with the same formal characteristics, which I believe is an almost unique case in the history of the Biennale. For the National Pavilion of Nauru, it was not only a matter of observing disappearance; this time the gesture became even more radical. I added a performance: I violently struck the block of ice, its essential, regular, crystalline form, with a sledgehammer. It was a physical, brutal, strongly symbolic action. I caused an explosion of fragments, which cut my knuckles and flew towards the audience. It was not a matter of observing the loss, but of entering directly into a relationship with it, taking responsibility for it.

There is a personal and biographical motivation. I am a witness to the disappearance of the glaciers of the Alps. When I was a child, in the 1970s, my father showed them to me and spoke

of them as eternal ice. Today that word — “eternal” — sounds truly strange. The title of the work refers to the black monolith in Stanley Kubrick’s 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, an entity that seems to exist before and after humanity, whereas in my work it is condemned to disappear quickly. My metaphors are real, not abstract: as we watched it, the ice changed, transformed and disappeared.

The ice returns in the video installation: it is the ice of colossal icebergs like mountains, which act as a counterpoint to the red fire that we see in the glass flame *Ex Ore Ignis (From the Mouth of Fire)*, as well as in the other channel of the video installation *We Are All Nauru*. In my hand, a flare lightens an absolute darkness that faces the blinding industry of oil.

An interview with...

Learn more about this curator who worked on the Nauru Pavilion:

Representing Nauru at the Biennale

This year, Nauru enters the Venice Biennale with a pavilion that speaks from a place where the consequences of environmental exploitation and political decisions are already being lived. As co-curator of the pavilion, what does it mean for you to bring Nauru's story to an international audience at this particular moment? What do you hope visitors will take away from their experience of the exhibition?

Disappearance as Transformation

One of the most compelling aspects of the pavilion is its approach to disappearance, not as a catastrophe, but as a condition that reshapes memory, identity, and the way we understand the world. Why was it important for you to frame the exhibition around this idea? How did this concept guide your curatorial choices and the dialogue between the artists?

The Role of Curators Today

The pavilion suggests that Nauru's story reflects broader global challenges, from climate change and environmental degradation to conflict and political instability. In your view, what role can curating play in today's world? How do you translate complex issues such as climate change, extraction, and political instability into an exhibition that audiences can experience, rather than simply observe?

Imagining the Future

Nauru is presented in this pavilion not only as a place of loss, but also as a glimpse into a future that concerns us all. What kinds of conversations, or perhaps even actions, do you hope this pavilion will inspire once visitors leave the exhibition?

Camilla Boemio (Italy)



Representing Nauru at the Biennale

I hope it awakens an awareness that we are all one with the cosmos, as well as the need to create the environmental revolution that has been so widely called for, yet undermined by the global political circumstances currently unfolding.

I am also an activist environmentalist. This summer has been a continuous assault on life: deliberate fires (from France to Spain, to the farms and rural areas near Milan) have destroyed forests and biodiversity, killed animals, and made people's lives disorienting and increasingly precarious. We are playing with fire and with our own survival.

Not to mention the bill on hunting in Italy, already passed by the Senate, which amends Law 157/1992, undermining the protection and management of wildlife and creating a playground for violent individuals, hunters, who, one might argue, are the very people who should be receiving social support to curb their basest instincts.

Imagining the future is essential if we are to counter the enormous decline that has come to corrode the world and democracy as we have known it since the end of the Second World War.

The turning point toward this regression into a kind of "Middle Ages" was the abandonment of the tremendous momentum generated by the activism of Albert Arnold Gore Jr., the American politician and environmentalist who served as the 45th Vice President of the United States from 1993 to 2001 under President Bill Clinton. He was awarded the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize and the 2007 Prince of Asturias Award for International Cooperation for his commitment to environmental protection. And, of course, this was not solely due to this "beacon," but also to the widespread support of movements, communities, scientists, intellectuals, and artists who fought to build resilience, foster change, and protect the environment.

Today, Nauru is just around the corner, everywhere. We are trapped in a stalemate, in a “nightmare” in which the collapse and exploitation of territories and subsoil, and the disregard for environmental conditions, have become more pervasive than ever.

The world is on fire, and it also depends on us whether we choose to be agents of good or of evil. This is why Nauru represents an open space for dialogue, reflection, exchange, and the struggle for justice.

Disappearance as Transformation

At the heart of the project is Ovid’s thinking, centered on transformation and metamorphosis. In *Metamorphoses*, he reflects a vision of the world that is flexible, precarious, and free from rigid hierarchies, where everything flows and changes in an uninterrupted stream, the *carmen perpetuum*.

The pavilion is connected to an earlier exhibition that followed this ecological line of thought: *Portable Nation*, the Maldives Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale, where the conditions were created to examine the tension between nature and pollution, East and West, with the “first appearance” of Stefano Cagol’s glacial installation: a monolith of ice positioned along the Riva di Ca’ di Dio.

This idea was also concretely developed through another form of thought that I consider a decisive initiation into the theoretical approach of the exhibition, one deeply intertwined with those elements of instability that characterize the present: a state of disequilibrium shaped by the dynamics of unstable environments, in which the social and historical context plays a dominant role.

Within this expanding context, its form, too, must expand into a complex and dynamic system of learning, an unfinished condition in which mutation leads to the abandonment of closed homogeneity in favor of a self-generating process unfolding through parallel projects, surprising performative activities, and an intense ongoing debate.

A non-linear exhibition design, open to creating spaces for discussion and multiple points of view emerging from global artists whose research and experiences are not aligned, yet are capable of generating a powerful sensory empathy. Each individual artwork or project could be considered independently, giving rise to a series of analyses; yet, inevitably, their totality leads toward the self-generation of an aesthetic and sensory movement of a different magnitude.

At its foundation are theoretical notions of the instability of exhibitions, which have given rise to a *Kraftwerk*, a “power station” understood as a vital place. A kind of biodiversity oscillating between object and process, incorporating the teachings of the “masters,” from Dorner to Szeemann, while attempting to enter the minds of artists and give form to a state of oblivion.

The Role of Curators Today

I could not devote myself to anything else; it is both my training and my vocation.

Curating must embrace a militant role, one that leads people toward an awareness that does not merely satisfy the playful and aesthetic dimensions, but succeeds in activating participation.

Two key figures of reference for undertaking a militant path are Hannah Arendt and Carla Lonzi. Today, more than ever, they are figures from whom we can learn in order to create new, independent, and welcoming curatorial perspectives—welcoming in the sense of being capable of embracing and receiving the breath of the time in which we live.

For Arendt, human beings regard the Earth—the only place in the universe where they can live, move, and breathe without artificial aids—as a prison. She connects the desire to escape from Earth with the attempts, already underway in her time, to create life in the laboratory or to extend human life indefinitely. This malaise leads to a denigration of creation, depriving it of the respect it deserves. Hence the conviction that everything is owed to us and that nature can be shaped according to our needs, most often dictated by the contaminating desire to plunder resources for mere personal gain. Modern humanity, she writes, “seems possessed by a sort of rebellion against human existence as it has been given to us, a rebellion against the very fact that it has been given, and a desire to exchange it, as it were, for something he has made himself.” Yet, despite being agnostic, Arendt does not abandon the idea that human beings are creatures, and that existence is “a free gift from I know not where” (*What Is Existential Philosophy?*, 1946).

To return to Lonzi means overturning the conventional structure of a relationship in which the artist and the artwork occupy the center, with everyone else relegated to the margins, into the role of passive spectators. Instead, everyone must be brought back into play and placed at the heart of the process.

There is much more that could be written, but I will summarize the points that I consider fundamental for weaving together theory and practice in a conscious form of action. Today, more than ever.

Imagining the Future

I hope it becomes a kind of “domino effect” in which, as in your case, it serves as a catalyst for action, encouraging other voices and initiatives to emerge and contribute to a more articulated form, fostering evolutionary and revolutionary aesthetic movements.

An interview with...

1.

There is always a risk that places like Nauru are represented primarily through crisis and vulnerability. How did you approach this challenge, ensuring that the pavilion would not speak about Nauru, but rather speak with Nauru?

2.

The pavilion frames disappearance not as a spectacular catastrophe, but as a process that reshapes memory, identity, and knowledge. Why was it important for you to move away from the visual rhetoric of environmental disaster and instead focus on disappearance as a condition of our time?

3.

The exhibition brings together artists from diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds, each responding to Nauru through a distinct artistic language. What guided your choices in bringing these voices together, and what kinds of conversations did you hope would emerge between the works?

Camilla Boemio (Italy)

1.

Many years ago, in Australia, I had already collaborated with independent art initiatives that dealt with Nauru. In some way, I had already absorbed a great deal from that experience, a strong starting point from which to draw out aspects that allow us to observe utopias, creating temporal ruptures and new forms of dialogue.

2.

For me, what is crucial is the loss of rhythm. There is no longer a long-term project, but rather a chaotic accumulation of disconnected events. If this is what defines our present, day after day, acceleration upon acceleration, how can an exhibition not reflect and embody this flow?

The punctuated present, which sociologist and philosopher Hartmut Rosa describes through acceleration as a force that dislocates human beings from the world. In this process of reshaping, we need utopias through which to redesign an uncertain future. In this catharsis, we must cultivate democratic sensibility, which can serve as an anchor in unstable times. We must cultivate the power of art and artists to transform our understanding of the present, giving us the possibility of imagining a different future.

The ultramodern needs religion, and the religion of art.

3.

Sometimes it is a matter of unexpected alchemy. An urgency driven by interconnections: an exhibition as an archive, with the intention of containing "seeds" for the future.

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