

INTERNATIONAL CURATORS FORUM
PRESENTS

**ZOT KONN - YEMAN
THEY KNOW - THE WISE**

DIASPORA PAVILION 2, VENICE

20 - 22 APRIL
2022

PERFORMANCES
HELD DAILY AT
12:00 - 12:30,
15:00 - 15:30,
18:00 - 18:30.

TEATRINO
GROGGIA /
GROGGIA THEATRE
CANNAREGIO 3150,
VENICE, ITALY



A NEW PERFORMANCE & INSTALLATION
BY SHIRAZ BAYJOO

IN COLLABORATION WITH
NICOLAS FAUBERT AND SIYABONGA MTHEMBU

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH VENICE ART FACTORY
AND CONTEMPORIS ETS

For ICF's Diaspora Pavilion 2: Venice, Shiraz Bayjoo will present a new performance and installation in collaboration with Nicolas Faubert and Siyabonga Mthembu during the vernissage of the 59th Venice Biennale. This new commission, conceived by Bayjoo, will feature moving image, sculptural installation, choreographed movement enacted by Faubert and vocal performances by Mthembu. Visitors are invited to attend live performances between the 20th and 22nd of April held three times daily, at noon, 3pm and 6pm in the Groggia Theatre in Cannaregio, located in one of the few publicly accessible parks in Venice.

The title *Zot Konn – Yeman* brings together Mauritian Creole and the Bantu language Fang, merging the two African languages spoken by Bayjoo and Faubert's ancestors. Translated as 'they know - the wise' the title refers to a collective questioning of existing systems of knowledge and an active pursuit of wisdom. The works in the installation feature still and moving images captured by Bayjoo of plants, archives and architectures found at Kew Gardens in London during a period of research that sought to interrogate the transplantation of species from Mauritius to the UK during colonial rule and their current place in the nation's archives.

Bayjoo and Faubert have developed a five-chapter dance piece which is an unfolding bodily engagement with these plants, a navigation of the glass houses that hold them, and a response to the magnitude of such a collection. Faubert takes up the role of negotiator, tracing and moving with these dislocated plants and objects. Mthembu will respond to the installation through song, which will be performed live alongside a soundscape developed in collaboration with Nobuhle Ashanti. Together, these visual, spatial and sonic elements explore the emotional resonance and symbolism of these institutions and the practices of extraction and knowledge production upon which they are built.

The presentation of *Zot Konn – Yeman* in the Groggia Theatre in Venice alludes to the relationships between entertainment, the act of collecting, and the circulation of knowledge in the formation and preservation of Empires.

ICF's Diaspora Pavilion 2 project is a trans-national, collaborative project that advances the organisation's engagement with diaspora as a critical concept following the first Diaspora Pavilion during the 57th Venice Biennale in 2017. DP2 interrogates and complicates the term diaspora across various curatorial formats as part of an ongoing mapping of the rich and complex material cultures, mythologies, alternative histories and re-imagined landscapes that are born from the distinct and yet shared reality of belonging to a diaspora.

Zot Konn – Yeman is informed by research Bayjoo undertook during a residency with Delfina Foundation and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew with support from Cockayne - Grants for the Arts and The London Community Foundation.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Shiraz Bayjoo is a contemporary multi-disciplinary artist who works with film, painting, photography, performance, and installation. His research-based practice focuses on personal and public archives addressing cultural memory and postcolonial nationhood in a manner that challenges dominant cultural narratives. Bayjoo has exhibited with the Institute of International Visual Arts, London; New Art Exchange, Nottingham; 5th Edition Dhaka Art Summit; 14th Biennale of Sharjah; 13th Biennale of Dakar; and 21st Biennale of Sydney. Bayjoo is a recipient of the Gasworks Fellowship and the Arts Council of England. He was an artist in residence at the Delfina Foundation in 2021, and has recently been awarded the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship. In 2022 Bayjoo has been invited to the 13th edition of Bamako Encounters.

Nicolas Faubert was born in Libreville, Gabon and now lives and works in Paris, France. Faubert is a dancer and performer with a visual impairment and has developed signature engagements with movement and space. Dance allows Faubert to explore the limits of consciousness and he absorbs new movements, often bringing together classical dance with Hip-Hop, Popping, B-Boying and Freestyle movements. Through hybrid performances, Faubert breaks down the barriers between disciplines (dance, visual arts, sound, photography) and social contexts, in order to allow meaningful access to culture for all. In 2018 Faubert was selected by Laure Prouvost to perform in the French Pavilion for the duration of the 58th Venice Biennale. Shortly after, Faubert undertook a two-year residency at the Cité Internationale des Artes in Paris focused on investigating new ways to feel and transcribe performance.

Siyabonga Mthembu grew up in Kempton Park Tembisa in the East Rand of Johannesburg. Mthembu's practice incorporates the collaborative dimension of storytelling in the context of the transformations that led to Nelson Mandela becoming president of South Africa in 1994. Known also by the alias 'Hymn_self,' Mthembu is the lead vocalist of The Brother Moves On (TBMO), a band and performance art ensemble that he formed with his later brother Nkululeko and cousin Zelizwe in 2009. The band grew through collaborations and contaminations, questioning 'what is it to be rhythmically South African' and reinforcing the understanding of jazz as an indigenous knowledge system and network of consciousness stretching across the American and African continents. Mthembu is co-curator, with Thandi Ntuli, of Indaba Is, a compilation taking South African improvised music in the context of kinship and communal ties as an established form of ancestral knowledge passed down through generations.

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

International Curators Forum (ICF) was founded by artists and curators in 2007 to offer a dynamic and evolving programme that responds to the conditions and contexts impacting creative practitioners through commissions, exhibitions, projects, publications and events. We provide tools and platforms for professional development and facilitate an open peer-to-peer network inviting participants to be part of a generative system of skills and knowledge transfer. Across all of our work, both critically and practically, we aim to challenge the barriers to equality and inclusivity within our industry.

Through all aspects of our programme we engage with diaspora as a critical framework through which we can address and complicate public discussion, test and explore new innovative curatorial models, and create space for artistic and discursive interventions into historical narratives and systems of representation. Based in London, ICF has conceived and produced projects with artists, curators and thinkers who engage with diaspora across the UK, Europe, the Caribbean, Asia, the Middle East, and now Australia.

VeniceArtFactory is a Venice-based organisation specialising in the development of curatorial projects and formats. Between 2015 and 2020 it has produced more than 70 exhibitions during the Venice Biennale, including national pavilions (Angola, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Grenada, Mauritius, Pakistan, San Marino, Ukraine), official collateral events and off-Biennale shows. In recent years, VeniceArtFactory collaborated with organisations, galleries, museums and sponsors from all over the world, including: the Art Gallery of South Australia, UAL - University of Arts London, Parasol unit foundation, Arts Council England, Vanhaerents Art Collection, Art Bahrain Foundation, Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre, Karuizawa New Art Museum, Beijing 2102 Art Center, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Millennium Foundation, Fondation Dubuffet, Fondation Valmont, University of Lisbon, Chenshia Museum, UNHCR, the High Commissioner for the Refugees of the United Nations, Whitestone Gallery, Galleria Maggiore, Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere e Arti, Fondazione Querini Stampalia and Musei Civici di Venezia. VeniceArtFactory is also the founding platform of the Venice Design Biennial from its start in 2016.

Contemporis ets is a non-profit cultural association based in Venice. Contemporis was founded in 2021 by a group of people who share an interest in the multiple expressions of contemporary culture and their interaction with the peculiar architectural and social context of the Venetian lagoon. With the aim of enhancing, disseminating and developing multidisciplinary artistic projects, which involve in particular the visual and performing arts, architecture and design, Contemporis works to enrich the city's cultural offer through the organisation of exhibitions, events, meetings, presentations and festivals. To pursue these objectives, Contemporis is proposed as a permeable and erratic platform, anchored to the lagoon but with an eye towards the world.

DIASPORA PAVILION 2, VENICE

ZOT KONN – YEMAN

They know – the wise / Lo conoscono – il saggio

Presented by:

International Curators Forum

in partnership with VeniceArtFactory and Contemporis ets

Artists:

Shiraz Bayjoo with Nicolas Faubert and Siyabonga Mthembu

Curated by:

Jessica Taylor

Exhibition Dates:

20 - 22 April 2022

Performances held daily at 12:00 – 12:30, 15:00 – 15:30, 18:00 – 18:30

Venue:

Teatrino Groggia / Groggia Theatre
Cannaregio 3150, Venice, Italy

For more information:

internationalcuratorsforum.org

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ART FACTORY

CONTEMPORIS ETS



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