

PRESS KIT



La Biennale di Venezia

59. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte

Eventi Collaterali

CATALONIA IN VENICE



LLIM

an organism by
Lara Fluxà

curated by
Oriol Fontdevila

THE CHALLENGES OF L LIM

MOVING WATER

Anyone who has worked in Venice knows how complicated it is to obtain authorization to intervene in any heritage element, including the lagoon.

After the bureaucratic steps to obtain all the permits, one of Llim's main challenges has been to trap the water from the adjacent San Pietro canal and transfer it using a hydraulic pump inside the pavilion, where it circulates through the glass sculptures thanks to the own gravitational inertia aided by a system of valves controlled by Arduino microprocessors.

As it passes through the pavilion, the water from the canal leaves residues, sludge and sediment, that is, the Llim that gives the work its title. Throughout the seven months of duration of the Biennale, the installation will assimilate the subsoil of Venice, incorporating it into the pavilion through the pipes of the organism.

This is the reason why the artist and the curator consider Llim as a living organism which, as such, leaves space for experiment and surprise.

The result of the circulation of water through these not completely sealed circuits, but with a minimum presence of oxygen, will be known only during the Biennale. In principle, it is unknown whether it will generate any form of life, microorganisms or bacteria. On the other hand, the accumulation of sediment poses a contradiction, it produces a fertile substrate full of life, but at the same time, it is difficult to manage, as shown by the problems affecting the Venetian lagoon.

A factor that adds complexity to the piece is the composition of the water in Venice and its greater density, due to the mixture of saline water from the sea with fresh water from the lagoon.



CHANGING OF SCALE

With *LLIM*, the work of Lara Fluxà work escalates from sculpture to infrastructure.

Because of that, the artist has been helped by Ferran Collado, a master glassmaker who has become a referent regarding avant-garde and experimentation in this field.

This escalation also affects the tools used, mostly the lathe and the oven of much larger dimensions than she used before.

KEYWORDS

LLIM

(silt) is a mud rich in organic matter, which remains after the flooding of the rivers. As an expression of the vital fluid, slime represents an infinite sequence of transitions in which matter permanently changes its state.

VISCOSITY

is the ability of materials to work together. Thus the water when it comes into contact with the earth gives rise to life.

REVERSIBILITY

is the peculiar characteristic of the two materials used for the installation. Both water and glass can reversibly alter their state.

GLASS

is a permanent material. It does not degrade during the recycling process, so it can be recycled over and over again without losing quality or quantity

WATER

is an element that implies a strong poetic, political and physical charge. Its crystalline appearance masks ecological problems and the economic interests of its management prevail over ecosystems and territories.

PETROLEUM

and its derivatives symbolize pollution and capture the metaphor of water that is becoming the new oil.

MILK

is the essential water and links to the concept of the Biennial's central exhibition,
The Milk of Dreams.

PRESENTATION BY THE CURATOR

A fusible stone at the same time as a solid juice. Glass is the very manifestation of ambiguity, according to the words the first traveler used to describe the industry in Venice. The same can be said of the city; it has been cradled throughout the centuries in a precarious balance between a solid state and a liquid one. Venice emerges from the sediments supplied by the rivers that flow into the lagoon, although it is under perpetual threat of disappearing into the waters of the Adriatic.

LLIM (silt) discreetly adheres to the canals and the glass tubes, connecting them, and, as it circulates, it progressively assimilates the layers that make up the place. Without being able to distinguish cause from effect, or interior from exterior, in Venice LLIM conducts itself like a Klein bottle: it is a situated manifestation of the viscous behavior of matter.

That a city surrounded by water became the glass-making center of the western world in the 13th century is a circumstance that is entirely due to viscosity: the ability of glass and water to reversibly mutate between states of matter keeps them open to collaboration and facilitates their coexistence.

Water has fertile power because it becomes silt when in contact with the earth. From the black mud of the Nile, the fertile land, comes the Arabic word khemia, alchemy, which has historically found a source of inspiration in glass, and its practitioners used it for the transmutation of base metals. LLIM does not aspire, in any case, to the obtaining of gold nor of the quintessence: it moves the foundation of Venice with the same calm that it metabolizes and returns the materials to their origin.



LARA FLUXÀ, LLIM (detall), 2022.
Tècniques: vidre i aigua. Fotografia: Violeta Mayoral

LARA FLUXÀ, *water and glass*

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Lara Fluxà (1985) has been working with water and glass for the majority of her career. These are materials that took her to explore concepts such as fragility, stability and the balance of ecosystems. She discovered glass and its possibilities during her childhood. Back then, she discovered that glass was not a liquid or a solid, but “something fragile that behaves like honey and that can be cut with scissors” The artist has carried out intense research to identify the most genuine and peculiar aspects of Venetian traditions and myths related to glass and water, two fundamental and consubstantial elements in the history of the lagoon city.

<https://larafluxa.net/>

The curator: ORIOL FONTDEVILA

Oriol Fontdevila (1978) is a curator, writer and researcher focused on artistic practices and education. A doctoral candidate in Humanities and Communication at UOC, he has curated projects at many modern art centres and museums, such as Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Fundació Joan Miró, Centre d'Arts La Virreina, Centre d'Arts Santa Mònica, Centre de Cultura Contemporània El Carme de València and Vojvodina Contemporary Art Museum in Novi Sad, Serbia.

He was on the team of curators for the European project Performing the Museum; and artistic director of Sala d'Art Jove, an initiative of the Catalan Government. His essay *El arte de la mediación* (The Art of Mediation) was published in 2018 by consonni, written thanks to a grant



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from MNCARS. He has collaborated on many books and modern art catalogues. He is a visiting professor at several Masters programmes. He is currently an associate professor at EINA.

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THE INSTALLATION

LLIM unfolds a landscape THAT shows the fragility of the environment and its possibilities that calls for our urgent attention and understanding.

The pièce includes several sculptural assemblies where the water of the lagoon circulates. Water is always in motion, but this is not always perceptible, therefore the installation includes optical effects to visualize the movement.

In addition to the main water circuits, there are other sculptures with more or less organic shapes, which form closed circuits with a shorter path. These contain a liquid with a milky consistency and another derived from petroleum. Unlike water that is kept in constant circulation, these remain still, without a hint of movement.

To create *LLIM*, the artist has collaborated with master glassmakers and a hydraulic engineer, who has developed a pumping system specifically for the installation.

Lara Fluxà's father, Lluç Fluxà, is the most renowned exhibition assembler in the Balearic Islands, so the artist has known the ins and outs of this delicate work since her childhood. Perhaps this background has allowed her to bravely face a project so complicated in its formal completion.

PUBLICATION

LLIM will be accompanied by a free publication, which will be distributed from the exhibition space. A narrative unfolds in the publication, composed of different visual and textual documents that have all been necessary in the creation process of this organism.

The publication includes two letters: one from Jane Da Mosto, an environmental scientist and director of the association We Are Here Venice, which addresses issues associated with silt management in the lagoon. A second letter is by Javier Peñafiel, a visual artist, who reflects on the idea of metabolism, making references to artistic and architectural practices that have previously taken place in Venice.





LARA FLUXÀ, *Fata Morgana*, 2019.
Tècniques: vidre i aigua. Fotografia: Roberto Ruiz

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN *LLIM* AND *THE MILK OF DREAMS*

The topic of transformation and transmutation of materials is the thread that connects the Catalan pavilion with the concept of the 59th Biennale Arte, the first one after Covid, titled *The Milk of Dreams*, as homage to Leonora Carrington.

British Surrealist gave this title to a small notebook where she wrote down her dreams and illustrated mysterious tales she told to her children. She thought this was intellectual nourishment for kids in a time when free spirits such as Carrington were forced into confinement or exile.

The main exhibition, curated by Cecilia Alemani focuses on three thematic areas in particular: the representation of bodies and their metamorphoses; the relationship between individuals and technologies; the connection between bodies and the Earth. Among the selected artists is also the Catalan medium Josefa Tolrà (Cabrils, 1880 – 1959).

CATALONIA IN VENICE

Since 2012 Catalonia in Venice locates in an old boat warehouse at Via Garibaldi, the street connecting the two nerve centres of la Biennale: Arsenale and the Giardini.

Catalonia participates with its own space at Biennale Arte in Venice since 2009. The first pavilion, La Comunidad Inconfesable, was curated by Valentín Roma, current director of Virreina Centro de la Imagen. It was located at Magazzini del Sale, close to the headquarters of the Pinault Collection, at Punta de la Dogana, but far away from the hub of Biennale.

The second pavilion, featuring multimedia artists Mabel Palacín, was located at Isla de la Giudecca, a very suggestive place, but even further away from the main circuit.

The current pavilion, in a superb place, opened at the Biennale of Architecture in 2012, with the project Vogadors/ Architectural Rovers, curated by Jordi Badia and Fèlix Arranz.

