

# BEYOND BOUNDARIES 20.4 – 24.11 2024 VENICE ART BIENNIAL



Title	<i>Personal Structures - Beyond Boundaries</i>
Venues	Palazzo Bembo, Palazzo Mora & Marinaressa Gardens
Location	Venice, Italy
Promoter	European Cultural Centre
Organising Team	Sara Danieli, Rachele De Stefano, Vittoria Mastrolilli, Lucia Pedrana, Claudia Piovan, Micaela Skerl, Lucia Trevisan, Elena Volpato, Katerina Zachou
Period	20 April - 24 November 2024
Openings	18 - 19 April 2024
Websites	<a href="http://personalstructures.com">personalstructures.com</a> ↗ <a href="http://ecc-italy.eu">ecc-italy.eu</a> ↗

“Delving into the challenges of global migration and the intricate web of national identities, *Personal Structures* emerges as a vital artistic dialogue, transcending borders and reflecting the complexities of our interconnected world.” This is how Sara Danieli, Head of Art at ECC Italy, describes the seventh edition of *Personal Structures*. The biennial art exhibition, organised by the European Cultural Centre (ECC) in Venice, will welcome visitors from the 20th of April until the 24th of November, 2024 in the historical venues of Palazzo Bembo, Palazzo Mora and Marinaressa Gardens. Press previews and openings will take place on the 18th and 19th of April.

Considering the complex dynamics of our global society, *Beyond Boundaries* was chosen as the guiding title of *Personal Structures* 2024. The collective show will present itself not only as an exhibition, but also as a journey that will cross multiple boundaries – geographic, political, religious, cultural and artistic. While some physical and conceptual limits can mean comfort and safety – our own bodies, the walls of our homes, the lines on the road – the exhibition will aim to shift these constraints, to investigate what is beyond in order to see it from a different point of view.

By bringing together more than 200 artists and multidisciplinary creatives from 51 different countries,

*Personal Structures* seeks to provide a rich tapestry of perspectives on the pressing challenges of our time. The protagonists of this year’s group show will be renowned as well as emergent international multimedia artists, photographers, sculptors, performers along with art and academic institutions and galleries, who will articulate their visions, reflections, and responses to the multifaceted aspects of today’s society.

Exhibitors explore their cultural backgrounds, revealing an array of approaches on national and cultural identity. In parallel with her current Tate Modern exhibition, Yoko Ono showcases at Marinaressa Gardens an inspiring work which looks at the present moment, imagining and hoping for utopian world peace. Strengthening a collaboration that started in 2022, the Palestine Museum US presents at Palazzo Mora *Foreigners in their Homeland*, an exhibition curated by Faisal Saleh featuring a selection of Palestinian multimedia artists. Focusing on contemporary art of the Sinti and Roma communities, is site specific installation *R-roma Lepanto* which comprises artists brought together by the Foundation Kai Dikhas at Palazzo Bembo.

The show highlights indigenous cultures and features numerous artists based in Asia in countries such as Taiwan, Japan, and China, as well as artists and galleries from the Global South, including countries such as the Philippines, Seychelles, Colombia, Argentina, Venezuela, Nigeria, and India. Paying homage to Native Americans and their ancient connection to Asia, is David Middlebrook with *The Return*, a life-size birch-bark canoe outfitted with bronze bamboo legs. In *The Rhapsode’s tools will build the Rhapsode’s House*, artist Areez Katki displays 9 tiles made with kaolinite clay found in his family’s backyard in New Zealand (Aotearoa), to create a sensitive portrait of his late grandmother; together with 17 embroidered handkerchiefs respond to the 17 Ha’s from Zarathushtra’s Gathas. On the other hand, Robert Jahnke’s *Te Wepu MMXXIII* is a tribute to the Māori prophet Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Tūruki (1830-1893). His neons in the shapes of crescent moon, cross,

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mountain, bleeding heart and star, which colours allude to the Union Jack, are invested with significance to reinvigorate the symbols of resistance within the neo-colonial present.

Using art as a medium to tell stories about her Emirati heritage is Karima Mohamed Abdelaziz. She reinterprets notions that are specific to women's clothes, jewellery, and accessories, shedding light on the nuances of women's rich fashion rituals and paying homage to recognised symbols of tradition such as the burqa. Looking at identity through the lens of gender is the group of female artists presented by the Ross-Sutton Gallery. They transform one of the rooms at Palazzo Bembo investigating the subject of female sexuality, looking at their own bodies and experiences, and exploring how women navigate the world within the changes that occur constantly.

Drawing from both Eastern and Western philosophy, the humanities, and the science of cosmogenesis and phenomena, artist Shen Chang Ming channels the overly romantic aspects of life towards a rational balance. His paintings result in abstract landscapes composed of colourful dots, lines and Kanji, which help him overcome his own personal experiences of loss and separations through religion as well as rationality, creating a language that becomes universal. At Palazzo Bembo the intimate photographs of Elizabeth Heyert, speak of loss and grieving. She explores spirituality and afterlife capturing, as an outsider, corpses of the last journey of more than thirty people at the Harlem funeral home of Isaiah Owens.

Important to mention is also photographer Sandra Cattaneo Adorno who, in her exhibition *Ten Years*, delves into different layers of the in/visible world, using the inverted image to explore negative space in a symbolic way. Combining classical and contemporary symbolism is Micky Hoogendijk, who through her four-metre bronze sculpture, seeks to evoke immersive encounters, where observers merge with the sculpture, guided not just by sight but by a visceral and emotional connection.

Palazzo Mora becomes the stage for a compelling dialogue between Hermann Nitsch, renowned

for his visceral creations, and Miles Greenberg, known for his daring live performances. Drawing inspiration from the late Viennese Actionist painter, Greenberg presents for the first time a still from his seven-hour performance piece, *Fountain I*, showcased alongside Nitsch's work, *Schüttbild mit Hemd (Kreuzwegstation)*, an integration of one of his *Malhemd* (painter's overshirt) pieces.

A variety of installations bring attention to the discourse about climate change, greenwashing and sustainability. British acclaimed sculptor Emily Young, presents a series of sculptures in Marinaressa Gardens and Palazzo Mora which provide an impressive example of the use of stones she finds in abandoned quarries, stone yards, and wild places. Faiza Butt adopts the pressing issue of climate anxiety and handles it in an aesthetically rich and poetic manner. She displays a series of large elaborated oil paintings inspired by the 'Menagerie' tradition of the Dutch golden age, scenes of paradise tainted by the traces of human materialism, which pollutes the purity of nature.

Central stage is also given to research and education with the installations presented by Bremen University (Germany), Deakin University (Australia), Princeton University (USA), University of Southern California (USA), and Joshibi University of Art and Design (Japan). A selection of works by students and academics showcased between Palazzo Bembo and Palazzo Mora, that look at what role University should play in the next generation as well as navigate the conundrum of Venice with an art project linked to the city itself.

The group show encourages visitors to experience a diverse array of artistic narratives that challenge preconceptions and invite contemplation. Through paintings, sculptures, installations, and performances, exhibiting artists navigate the intricate current global landscape, offering insights that extend beyond the conventional and open pathways to new conversations. The exhibition becomes a testament of the richness that arises when diverse voices converge.

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## Collaborations

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### ***Arena for a Tree***

Exhibited outside Arsenale Nord is *Arena for a Tree*, a site specific project by Klaus Littmann created with the support of Kulturstiftung Basel H. Geiger and in partnership with ECC Italy. The walk-in art intervention delivers a strong message about global warming and hopes for a sustainable future by presenting three isolated trees at the centre of a round 12 metre diameter amphitheatre. Placed in one of Venice's most iconic locations and surrounded by water and architecture, it is set out to explore themes of migration and identity.

The long term touring project is an evolution of *FOR FOREST: The Unending Attraction of Nature*, Austria's largest public art installation, where 299 trees were placed on the football field of the Wörthersee Stadium in Klagenfurt in 2019. Like a seed of that colossal project, *Arena for a Tree* wanders from place to place telling the story of different trees and their impact on the environment.

The opening event for *Arena for a Tree* will be held on the 16th of April, 2024 from 17:00 to 19:00. For more information and press materials you can contact Ginevra Fiorentini at [ginevrafiorentini@artspr.co.uk](mailto:ginevrafiorentini@artspr.co.uk)

### **Fiebre Photobook**

The European Cultural Centre is proud to renew, for the third consecutive year, its collaboration with Fiebre Photobook, the first and only festival in Spain specialised in photobooks, established with the goal of enhancing the attention on editorial initiatives and publications that focus on photography. After taking part in the jury for the Dummy Award last year, ECC is once again hosting a presentation of some of the photobooks featured in past editions of the Festival. In addition to the presentation at *Personal Structures 2024*, ECC will join the festival this fall with a special presentation of photographic publications.

### **Blurring the Lines**

Blurring the Lines is a non-profit organisation that seeks to promote and encourage all initiatives in various fields of photography and education, contributing to academic, local, and global dialogues, enabling young graduates to obtain international recognition. Since 2018, ECC has been a partner of this initiative through exhibitions, conferences, awards, and events. For the *Personal Structures 2024* exhibition, ECC is proud to showcase a photography presentation by Vanessa Cowling, one of the winners of the 2023 *Blurring the Lines'* award.

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## Welcoming Event & Programme

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To inaugurate the seventh edition of *Personal Structures*, the European Culture Centre is organising a Welcoming Event on the 18th April which will be open by invitation only. The ECC Team will take this opportunity to provide an overview of the contemporary art exhibition as well as introduce its participants. On this occasion, Amit Gupta, Founder and Editor in Chief of STIRworld, was invited to give a keynote speech highlighting the importance of bringing together artists from all over the world and reflecting on the current status of contemporary art, taking in consideration different cultural perspectives.

“The global contemporary arts present a collective soft power that maps our complex existential condition and unravels the many invisible or marginalised truths. The narrative of our world would remain singular if not for art and artists challenging established boundaries. STIR is glad to be associated with the presentation of the European Cultural Centre’s seventh edition of *Personal Structures*, titled *Beyond Boundaries*, which brings together artists across borders in opening up new conversations in the imagination of a plural world” Amit Gupta explains.

Throughout the seven months of opening, *Personal Structures* will be complemented by an inspired programme of talks, conferences, performances and workshops that will draw attention to the main topics of this year’s exhibition. Every month, artists, gallerists, and academics will join ECC Italy in Venice shedding a light on current concepts and questions in the fields of art and design.

## Catalogue & Website

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As an extension of the exhibition itself, the official catalogue of the seventh edition of *Personal Structures*, curated and designed by the ECC Italy team and crafted by local printer Grafiche Veneziane, is dedicated to all the projects presented in the exhibition in Venice. The catalogue will accompany and guide visitors through the exhibition and will be available in two printed versions: a collectable hardcover publication and a paperback one; as well as digitally and downloadable on the exhibition’s website.

Enhancing the exhibition digitally will be the dedicated platform [personalstructures.com](https://personalstructures.com) ↗. As a useful online tool, it will present the group show as a whole as well as feature each participant and their individual profiles, providing insightful information about their work, scope and location. In parallel, through the website visitors will have the opportunity to experience the show online by means of immersive virtual tours, written and filmed stories, and conversations with exhibitors and the ECC Team.

## Media Partners

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For the promotion and dissemination of the seventh edition of *Personal Structures*, the European Cultural Centre has partnered with international and local media outlets Art Review, Exibart, Pigment International, Platform, STIRworld and Venezia News. Thanks to the valuable support of these partners, the show will reach audiences both abroad and locally, and engage readers to follow the conversations that emerge from the biennial art exhibition.

ArtReview

exibart



PLATFORM

stir  
www.stirworld.com

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## Personal Structures

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Since 2010, *Personal Structures* has been organised every two years by the European Cultural Centre in its venues in the heart of Venice. The biennial exhibition documents the diversity of contemporary art today, featuring different expressions from artists that break away from any ideological, political and geographical barriers.

The project *Personal Structures* was born in 2002 as an open platform where artists could present their work and thoughts by means of exhibitions, symposia and publications. It was created as a reaction to non-subjective art, to the emerging trend of art without the touch of the artist; a non-personal approach. In response to this impersonalisation of artworks, the European Cultural Centre's founder and artist René Rietmeyer imagined a project that, on the opposite, states that every artwork, even the most minimalist work, is made intrinsically with a part of the artist's consciousness, and is thus, somehow, personal.

## European Cultural Centre

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### Who We Are

The European Cultural Centre (ECC) is a non profit organisation headquartered in the Netherlands. We are cultural entrepreneurs committed to promoting culture through international exchanges. We work with associations and partners from around the world, ranging from educational, cultural and governmental institutions to non-governmental organisations as well as museums, foundations and several private initiatives.

### Our Mission

We are determined to develop and enhance intellectual and cultural exchange amongst creative professionals working across disciplines. Among our main activities are the planning and management of cultural projects, such as exhibitions, publications, video series, and educational programmes.

## ECC Italy

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### Who We Are

Based in Venice, ECC Italy is the main branch of its larger parent organisation, the European Cultural Centre. Focusing on diverse topics within art, architecture and design, we aim to create dynamic exhibition spaces that show the interchanging of ideas from different cultures. Our art exhibition *Personal Structures*, alternates each year with the architecture biennial exhibition *Time Space Existence*. Our exhibitions draw a range of visitors, from industry professionals and artists to international and local art aficionados. Past exhibitions and virtual tours can be seen on our website [ecc-italy.eu](http://ecc-italy.eu)

The exhibition is organised by ECC Italy in collaboration with Open Space Venice ETS. Open Space Venice is a Non-profit association registered in Venice, Italy. European Cultural Centre Italy, is a

limited liability company registered in Venice, Italy, and it is owned by the Non-profit organisation European Cultural Centre Worldwide registered in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

### Personal Structures 2024 Organising Team

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Rachele De Stefano  
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## Our Venues

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From the beginning of its activities in 2011 down to the present day, ECC Italy has been extending the exhibition spaces from a single location to four venues of more than 5.000 square metres indoor and 7.000 square metres outdoors. The exhibitions as well as the respective events of each edition are set in two Venetian palazzos and two gardens, each having its own particular atmosphere and curatorial guidelines:

**Palazzo Bembo**  
4793 Riva del Carbon  
San Marco, Venice

Near the Rialto Bridge, Palazzo Bembo is characterised by a magnificent façade built in the Venetian Gothic style facing the Grand Canal.

The palace itself was committed by the noble Bembo family in the 15th century. While the interior has been modified several times during the past centuries, the exterior still maintains its original appearance. Thanks to the collaboration between the current owner of the palace and the ECC, the palace revives its past glory and hosts, since 2011, high quality exhibitions in its two noble floors.

**Palazzo Michiel**  
4391 Strada Nuova  
Cannaregio, Venice

Palazzo Michiel del Brusà is situated at the northern site of the Canal Grande with an entrance from Strada Nuova near the Campo SS. Apostoli.

The building has a unique gothic balcony that dates back to the 15th century. The rooms of the interior are decorated with frescoes from Jacopo Guarana. This location is used as the ECC-Italy headquarters and for conferences, workshops and events.

Palazzo Mora, Palazzo Bembo, Palazzo Michiel and the Marinaressa Gardens. The palaces are located alongside the Grand Canal while the Marinaressa Gardens, which we transform every year into an extraordinary sculpture park, are placed near the San Marco square on Riva dei Sette Martiri. Palazzo Michiel holds every year events and conferences organised in the scope of the ongoing exhibition.

**Palazzo Mora**  
3659 Strada Nuova  
Cannaregio, Venice

Palazzo Mora is located between the church of San Felice and the Canal di Noale in the district of Cannaregio. It was constructed in the 16th

century and was bought by the Mora family in 1716. The noble floor shows some frescoes attributed to Tiepolo made around 1750. The exhibitions are being held in the two main floors, the mezzanine, the third floor and the entrance garden. Due to the position of the palace at the crowded Strada Nuova and the dimensions of the exhibition itself, the Mora Palace welcomes a large number of visitors.

**Marinaressa Gardens**  
Riva dei Sette Martiri  
Castello, Venice

The Marinaressa Gardens were constructed in the thirties of the 20th century and are located alongside the Riva dei Sette Martiri,

a monumental shore of the city. The two gardens are situated in the district of Castello, close to the Piazza San Marco. Every year, these gardens are transformed into an extraordinary sculpture park with pieces of art and architecture displayed in both the Gardens of Levante and Ponente. This location had to undergo some renovation work carried out by ECC Italy to be open to the public in 2017.

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