

Anna Maria Maiolino and Nil Yalter **Golden Lions for Lifetime Achievement** **of the Biennale Arte 2024**

The artists will be both participating at the Biennale Arte for the first time

The Italian-born Brazilian artist **Anna Maria Maiolino** and the Paris-based Turkish artist **Nil Yalter** are the recipients of the **Golden Lions for Lifetime Achievement** of the 60th **International Art Exhibition** of **La Biennale di Venezia - *Stranieri Ovunque - Foreigners Everywhere***.

The decision was approved by La Biennale's Board of Directors chaired by **Roberto Cicutto**, upon recommendation of **Adriano Pedrosa**, Curator of the 60th International Art Exhibition.

The **awards ceremony** and **inauguration** of the 60th Exhibition, which will open to the public at 11.00 am on that same day, will be held on **Saturday April 20th, 2024** at Ca' Giustinian, the headquarters of La Biennale di Venezia.

The Curator **Adriano Pedrosa** declared:

"This decision is particularly meaningful given the title and framework of my Exhibition, **focused as it is on artists who have traveled and migrated between North and South, Europe and beyond, and vice versa**. In this sense, my choice rests upon two extraordinary, pioneering **women artists** who are also **migrants** and who embody in many ways the spirit of *Stranieri Ovunque—Foreigners Everywhere*: **Anna Maria Maiolino** (Scalea, Italy, 1942, lives in São Paulo, Brazil), who migrated from Italy to South America, first to Venezuela and later to Brazil, where she lives today; **Nil Yalter** (Cairo, Egypt, 1938, lives in Paris, France), a Turkish who migrated from Cairo to Istanbul and finally to Paris, where she is based."

The artists will be both participating at the Biennale Arte for the first time in 2024: **Maiolino** will present a new large-scale work that continues and unfolds her series of sculptures and installations in clay; **Yalter** will showcase a new reconfiguration of her innovative installation *Exile is a hard job* in conjunction with her iconic *Topak Ev* work, placed in the first room of the Central Pavilion at the Giardini.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Anna Maria Maiolino was born in Scalea, Italy, on May 20, 1942, and a few years after World War II migrated with her family to Caracas, Venezuela, in 1954. There she studied at the Escuela de Artes Visuales Cristóbal Rojas, between 1958 and 1960. In 1960, she relocated to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where she attended the free painting, sculpture and woodcut classes at the Escola Nacional de Belas Artes. She devoted herself to this technique that allowed her to connect with the popular woodcuts practised in the north-east of Brazil; she used it for several years precisely because it was steeped in social criticism.

The artist declares herself to be self-taught. Through attendance at the Escola de Belas Artes and artists in Rio, Maiolino became part of the well-known Brazilian art movement called Nova Figuração (New Figuration), a reaction to abstraction in the 1960s, infused with pop inflections that also reflected the harsh political climate in the country during the first years of the military dictatorship (1964-1985). During this period, Maiolino continued to develop her language and skills, attending the famous art courses given by artist Ivan Serpa (1923-1973) at the Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro. In 1964, she had her first solo exhibition at the Galeria G, in Caracas, and in 1967, she participated in the historical *Nova Objetividade Brasileira* exhibition in Rio de Janeiro. Between 1968 and 1971, Maiolino was in New York and studied at the Pratt Graphic Center and practices the technique of metal engraving, etching, expanding her artistic horizons to encompass various media as well as experimental poetry. Her paintings and engravings from the 1960s are quite radical, as they combine pop imagery with the typical Nova Figuração repertoire, focusing on political characters and narratives, as well as personal, bodily and familiar references.

Between the 1970s and 1980s, Maiolino began dedicating herself to performance art, and in 1981, she staged her astonishing *Entrevistas*, in which dozens of eggs are spread on the floor, challenging herself to navigate and walk through them as a "minefield", taking into consideration the fragility and precariousness of the egg—a symbol for life itself. In the early 1990s, Maiolino started working with clay, signaling a new focus on gestural expression, the handmade, and the relationship with elemental materials in her sculptures and reliefs that persist until today.

For the 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, Maiolino will present a new large-scale work that continues and unfolds her series of sculptures and installations in clay. She will be participating at the Biennale Arte for the first time.

Anna Maria Maiolino has had many survey and retrospective exhibitions throughout her career, including ones at the Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo (2022), the PAC Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan, and the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2019), the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2017), the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona (2010), and the Drawing Center, New York City (2002). She has participated in the Lyon Biennale (2017), the Gwangju Biennale (2014), the Bienal de São Paulo (2010, 1998, 1991, 1994, 1967), the Sydney Biennale (2008), the Bienal de la Habana (1984), among others. Her work is in the collections of the Castello de Rivoli, Torino, the Galleria Nazionale di Arte Moderna, Roma, the Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, the

Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, the Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro, the Tate, United Kingdom, among others.

Nil Yalter is a Turkish artist who was born in Cairo, Egypt, on 15 January 1938, and moved to Paris in 1965, where she still lives. She is widely regarded as a pioneer in the global feminist art movement. Yalter has never received formal education in visual arts, and as a self-taught artist, she has continuously conducted research into her own practices and areas of interest, working in painting, drawing, video, sculpture and installation. Her artistic career began in 1957 when she held her first exhibition at the French Cultural Institute in Mumbai, India. However, it was during the 1960s that she delved deeper into her practice.

After moving to Paris in 1965, Yalter's work inaugurates a truly radical and pioneering chapter as she begins to address social themes, particularly related to immigration and women's experiences, in a very unique exploration and development of conceptual art practices. In 1973, Yalter created the groundbreaking installation *Topak Ev*, which was featured in a solo exhibition at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.

In the following year, she presented *The Headless Woman* a key video piece addressing women's sexual liberation and the Orientalist objectification of Middle Eastern women. Another extraordinary work from this period is *La Roquette, Prison de Femmes*, (executed with Judy Blum and Nicole Croiset) from 1974, which presents the accounts of a former convict of the famous women's prison in France. Additionally, her work *Temporary Dwellings*, first showcased in 1977, delved into the lives of migrant workers, as recounted by women. In 1980, Yalter had a solo Video projection and conference titled *Rahime, Femme Kurde de Turquie* at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, where another radical work of hers was first presented. The 1990s marked a period of creative exploration and recognition for Yalter, during which she embraced digital media.

For the 60th International Art Exhibition, Yalter will showcase a new reconfiguration of her innovative installation *Exile is a hard job* in conjunction with her iconic *Topak Ev* work (1973), placed in the first room of the Central Pavilion at the Giardini. She will also be participating at the Biennale Arte for the first time.

Nil Yalter has had retrospective and solo exhibitions at the Ludwig Museum, Cologne, the Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, the Musée d'Art Contemporain du Val-de-Meuse, France, the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, among many others. She has participated in the Sharjah Biennale (2023), the Berlin Biennale (2022), the Gwangju Biennale (2014), the Istanbul Biennial (2013), the Bienal de São Paulo (1979), the Biennale de Paris (1977), among others. Yalter's work is in the collections of the Istanbul Modern, the Centre Pompidou, Paris, the F.N.A.C. Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, France, the Tate, United Kingdom, the Museum Ludwig, Cologne, the Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid, among many others.

IMAGES of the 60th International Art Exhibition can be downloaded here:

<https://cloud.labiennale.org/url/biennale2024> | password: biennale2024