

BIENNALE ARTE 2026

**VENEZIA
GIARDINI / ARSENALE**

PROGRAMME


PERFORMANCE



La Biennale di Venezia

Arte
Architettura
Cinema
Danza
Musica
Teatro
Archivio Storico

6.5 — 11.5.26



In Minor Keys' performative gestures centre the body as a site of knowledge and memory, as well as a political vessel for collective resistance, healing and joy. The call is to breathe and listen to the music that resides in the water, air, fire and earth. Movement, recitation, call-and-response, and other poetic offerings radiate through the exhibition spaces and out into the Giardini and Arsenale grounds, lighting lanterns for the journey ahead.

WEDNESDAY 6TH MAY

11 AM GIARDINI BIENNALE

**BIG CHIEF DEMOND
MELANCON**

Blessing the Ancestors

30'

For over two centuries, the Black Masking Culture of New Orleans has carried forward an ancestral ritual standing both as a ceremonial procession and a public activation of the traditional suit exclusively sewn and worn by the community's shepherd also known as Big Chief. Demond Melancon brings this living practice to the Giardini, wearing his 2020 *Jah Defender* suit, a work on show throughout the duration of the Exhibition. Accompanied by members of the Young Seminole Hunters from the Lower Ninth Ward, Big Chief calls for the blessings of those who have departed from Earth but stay alive as sentinels watching after the community.

Performers: Big Chief Demond Melancon, Alicia Winding, Rashaud Brown, Walter Fair, Askia Bennett

2 PM ARSENALE – GIARDINO DELLE VERGINI

URIEL ORLOW

*Reverie of Collective
Walkers (Reading to Plants)*

30'

An ambulatory reading performance where participants are invited to walk among plants and read aloud from a site-specific library of texts in multiple languages, or bring their own stories and poems where plants are protagonists and human-botanical entanglements take centre stage. The collective gesture creates a horizontal dialogue with the more-than-human world. The addressees are the plants themselves, who receive, in return, the CO2 released in the act of reading.

3 PM ARSENALE – SALA D'ARMI E*

**YOSHIKO SHIMADA +
BUBU DE LA MADELEINE**

*Procession for Fallen
Comrades and Fallen Angels*

45'

**Performative procession.
Gathering point in front of
Sala d'Armi E*

A rubber boat moves through the crowd. Onboard, DJ LaLa plays live as drag queens lead the way. The boat is pulled by participants as the shared burdens and acts of care. The performance honours those who refused to be silenced: activists, artists, friends taken too soon by AIDS. Drawing on the last scene of Federico Fellini's *Nights of Cabiria*, where a grief-stricken woman's resolve is boosted back to life by a crowd of strangers singing and dancing in the street, the *Procession for Fallen Comrades and Fallen Angels* moves from mourning to solidarity. The boat carries loss, but also resilience and joy.

Performers: toru yamanaka / DJ LaLa, Afreeda O Breat, Takahiro "Harry" Kitte, Aase Nielsen, mogmin, Sabina, Lily Lux, Corinzia

5 PM
ARSENALE –
TESE DEI
SOPPALCHI

MARIA MAGDALENA
CAMPOS-PONS
+ KAMAAL MALAK

Whispering in III Movements
30'

Where Sound Becomes Color, Color Becomes Breath.

A multi-sensory performance that dissolves the boundaries between music, visual art, aromatherapy and neural frequency therapy. Created by Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons and Kamaal Malak, the work unfolds across three immersive movements. Live music, painting, botanical essences and various materials are drawn into a single unified field of sensation. Scent moves through the air. Bass frequencies resonate through the body. Images shift and dissolve in real time. Malak and Campos-Pons invite all guests to think about what it means to be fully present: to listen not just with the ears but with the skin, the breath and the soul.

THURSDAY
7TH MAY

11 AM
ARSENALE –
GIARDINO
DELLE VERGINI

VICTORIA
IDONGESIT-UDONDIAN

Kayayei Momome
30'

Kayayei Momome activates Udondian's installation *Obroni Wawu* – an Akan term meaning “dead white man's clothes”, referring to the second-hand garments imported from Western countries into African markets. Seven women – wearing handcrafted headdresses inspired by the kayayei, women who carry heavy loads – process through the Giardino delle Vergini reminding the ghostly presence of migrant communities who carry everyday workloads often rendered invisible in Western geographies. Drawing on Akan ritual traditions of procession and purification, the performance transforms labour, resistance and care into a site of empowerment and energetic renewal.

3 PM
GIARDINI
BIENNALE

POETRY CARAVAN
120'

Words hang in the air, move from tongues to ears au gré des vents, words penetrate the soil as clandestine fertiliser, their sounds, rhythms and melodies perfuming the air. –Koyo Kouoh, 2000

In 1999, Koyo Kouoh brought together nine African poets for a poetry caravan by road from Dakar to Timbuktu. This procession of poets and musicians honours that journey and the vision she brought to the 61st International Art Exhibition. In the tradition of the *griots* – those who for centuries carried the stories of the people and their lives – poets assemble and cycle through seven stations in the Giardini, gathering others as they hum, recite, sing, improvise, chant and howl. This communal act seeks to concretise resilience through gesture and movement.

Performers: Batool Abu Akleen, Ken Bugul, Christian Campbell, Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons & Kamaal Malak, Natalie Diaz, Mohsen Emadi, Gabrielle Goliath, Rajyashri Goody, Robin Coste Lewis, Werewere Liking, Momtaza Mehri, Maneo Mohale, Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, Rodney St-Éloi, Anne Waldman

Musicians: Saliou Cissokho, Philippe Mall, Raed Yassin

FRIDAY 8TH MAY

10.30 AM ARSENALE – GIARDINO DELLE VERGINI

GUADALUPE MARAVILLA
Sound Meditation Ceremony
60'

Gongs, voice and percussion. Sound as medicine, vibration as care. Rooted in Maravilla's own journey – from fleeing civil war in El Salvador as an undocumented child to healing from cancer – this ceremony binds activism and tenderness into a single act. In collaboration with two sound healers, the artist constructs an immersive environment where mental, physical and spiritual restoration become a collective gesture. The sound meditation ceremony will be a moment of rest and healing through sonic vibrations.

A limited number of yoga mats will be provided. Audience members are welcome to bring their own mat or blanket.

Sound healers: Guadalupe Maravilla, Fanny Pérez, Hilary Ramos

2 PM ARSENALE – GIARDINO DELLE VERGINI

VICTORIA
IDONGESIT-UDONDIAN
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3 PM ARSENALE – ARTIGLIERIE

HAGAR OPHIR
*Bound with the Living:
Gathering in Venice*
165' (3 sessions of 45'
with intervals)*

**To preserve the integrity of the séance, audiences are invited to enter at the start of each 45-minute session only*

Around a table in a dark room, a séance unfolds. Objects – relics of displaced and uprooted lives, witnesses to colonial violence – sit at the center. A historian acts as medium, calling forth absent guests through a multi-alphabetical Ouija board, and the collective mental presence of those gathered. The knowledges held within each object are gradually released through the coalescing of energies and questions posed to the spirits. A cohort of experts reveal unwritten pasts. Here, history is non-linear and experiences lost are conjured.

Medium: Juna Suleiman

Second Medium: Hana Umeda

Experts: Maisan Hamdan, Rima Najdi, Faysal Bibi, Emet Ezell, Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, Tamar Novick, Maya Avis

Protocol writer: Sereen Dhamshi

With the following entities and objects:

a Silver Rattle, a Copper Tray, a Kite and a Gazelle Skull, their original owners, and other guest entities.

Sound: Miriam Schickler

Costumes: Antonia Eckardt

Dramaturgy: Hana Umeda

3.30 PM
ARSENALE –
GIARDINO
DELLE VERGINI

GUADALUPE MARAVILLA

*Sound Meditation Ceremony
– dedicated to the Cancer
Community*

60'

Drawing from his own experience of cancer, Maravilla discovered the restorative power of sound firsthand. As a survivor, he now leads ceremonies with healers from around the world, and is dedicating this particular assembly to all those whose lives have been touched by cancer – survivors, carers, the bereaved. Gongs, voice and percussion: a collective moment to meditate, rest and let sonic vibrations heal the body.

A limited number of yoga mats will be provided. Audience members are welcome to bring their own mat or blanket.

Sound healers: Guadalupe Maravilla, Fanny Pérez, Hilary Ramos

SATURDAY
9TH MAY

11.30 AM
ARSENALE –
GIARDINO
DELLE VERGINI

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60'

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SOPPALCHI

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5.30 PM
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GIARDINO
DELLE VERGINI

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Sound healers: Guadalupe Maravilla, Fanny Pérez, Hilary Ramos

SUNDAY 10TH MAY

3 PM ARSENALE – ARTIGLIERIE

HAGAR OPHIR

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Gathering in Venice*

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5 PM ARSENALE – GIARDINO DELLE VERGINI

CLARISSA HERBST
+ DOMINIQUE RUST

*Parfumerie DJ set:
dj styropor*

105'

In Zurich in the late 1980s, a nomadic club night gathered momentum in defiance of strict nightlife laws. The name Parfumerie was born after its founders came across a discarded perfumer's neon sign, and hence the sign was carried from party to party to "inject perfume into the city". The spirit of this DIY cultural and social experimentation temporarily inhabits the Casetta Scaffali in the Giardino delle Vergini. This set by one of Parfumerie's original DJs reactivates and carries forward its space-making energy as a tribute to the scene, its people and the creative freedom they claimed in the peripheries of the city.

MONDAY
11TH MAY

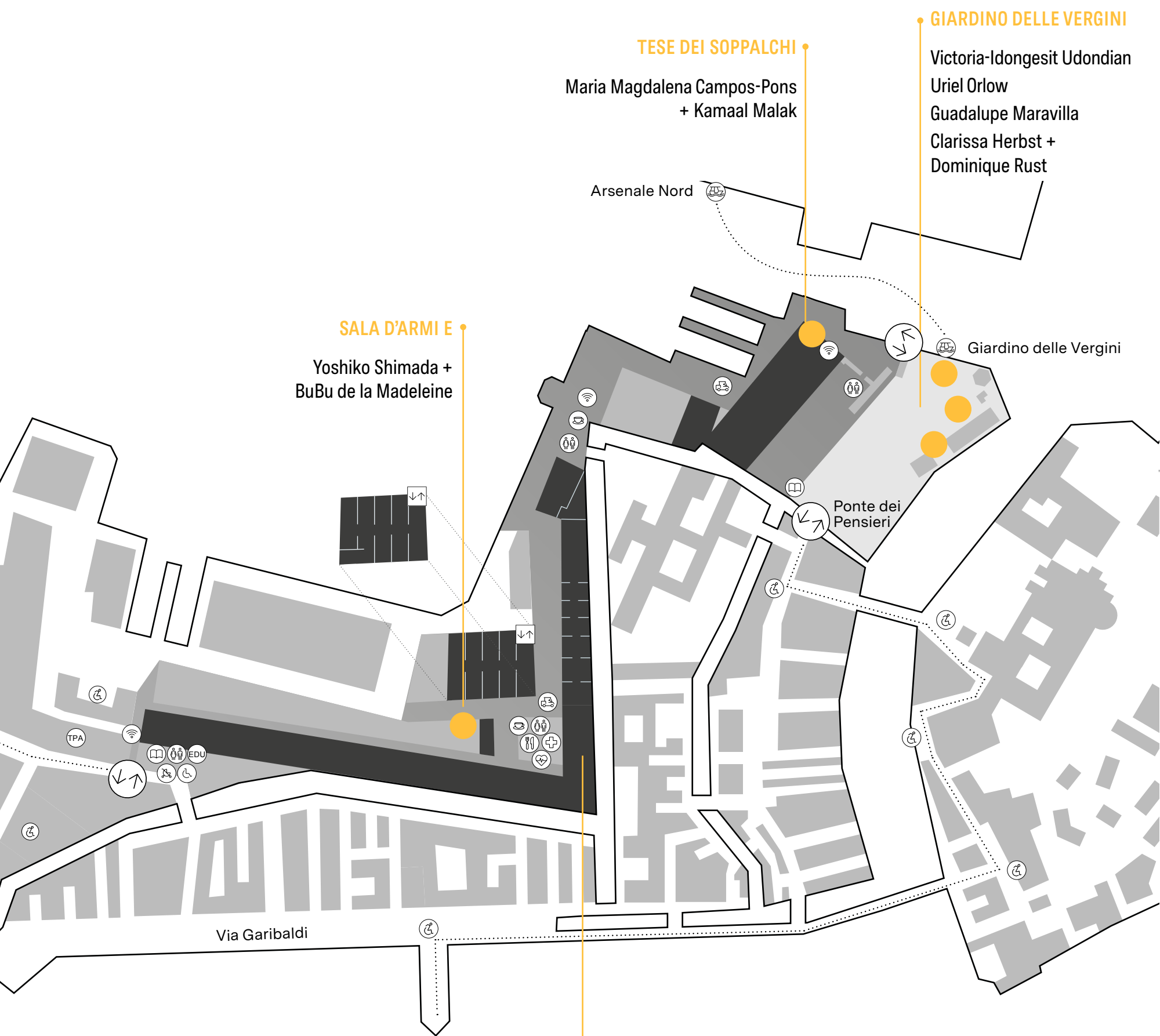
5.30 PM
ARSENALE –
GIARDINO
DELLE VERGINI

URIEL ORLOW

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Walkers (Reading to Plants)*

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TESE DEI SOPPALCHI

Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons
+ Kamaal Malak

GIARDINO DELLE VERGINI

Victoria-Idongesit Udondian
Uriel Orlow
Guadalupe Maravilla
Clarissa Herbst +
Dominique Rust

SALA D'ARMI E

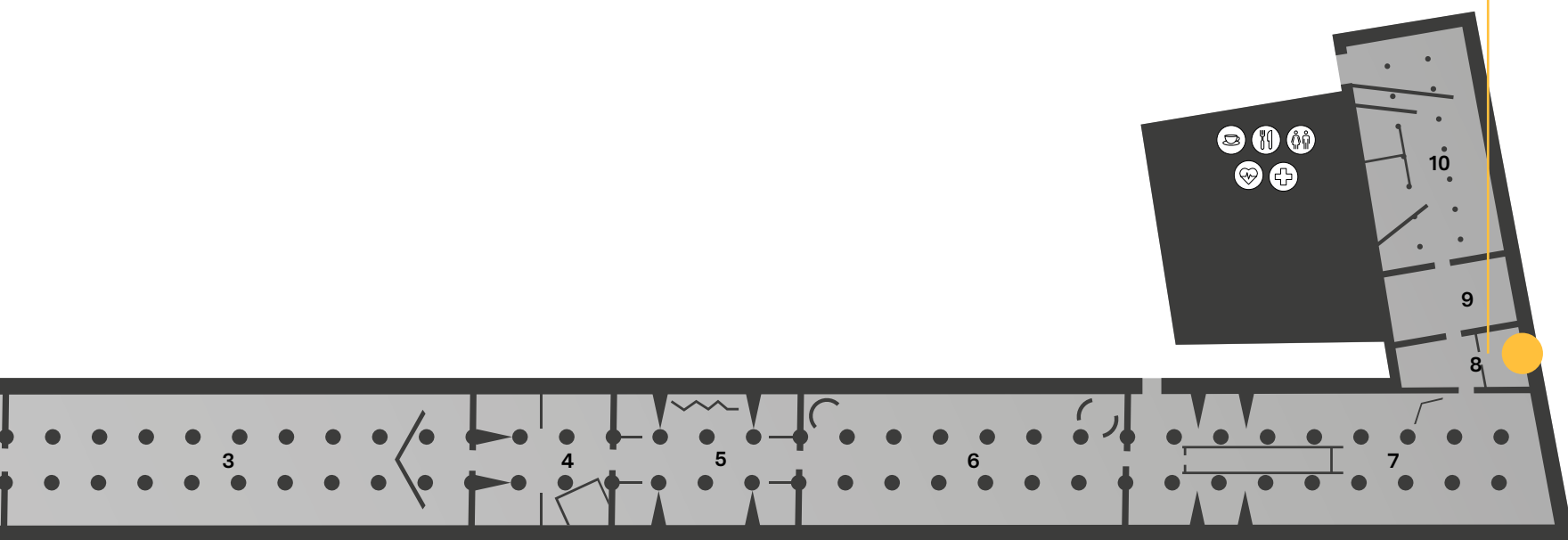
Yoshiko Shimada +
BuBu de la Madeleine

ARSENALE

**CORDERIE /
ARTIGLIERIE**

ARTIGLIERIE

Hagar Ophir



PADIGLIONE CENTRALE

Big Chief Demond Melancon

ESPOSIZIONE
INTERNAZIONALE -
PADIGLIONE CENTRALE /
INTERNATIONAL
EXHIBITION -
CENTRAL PAVILION

EDU



 ACTV Stop: Giardini Biennale

GIARDINI

Poetry Caravan

GIARDINI BIENNALE

BIENNALE ARTE 2026

GIARDINI / ARSENALE

Open until 22 November 2026

Opening hours

Pre-opening days

(6, 7 and 8 May): 10.00-19.00

From 9 May: 11.00-19.00

To attend the Performances, visitors must possess a valid admission ticket to Biennale Arte 2026 (invitation during the pre-opening period, regular ticket from 9 May), except for events taking place at the Giardino delle Vergini, accessible free of charge from the Ponte dei Pensieri.



Scan the QR code or [click here](#)
to prepare your visit
and buy your ticket

Info

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