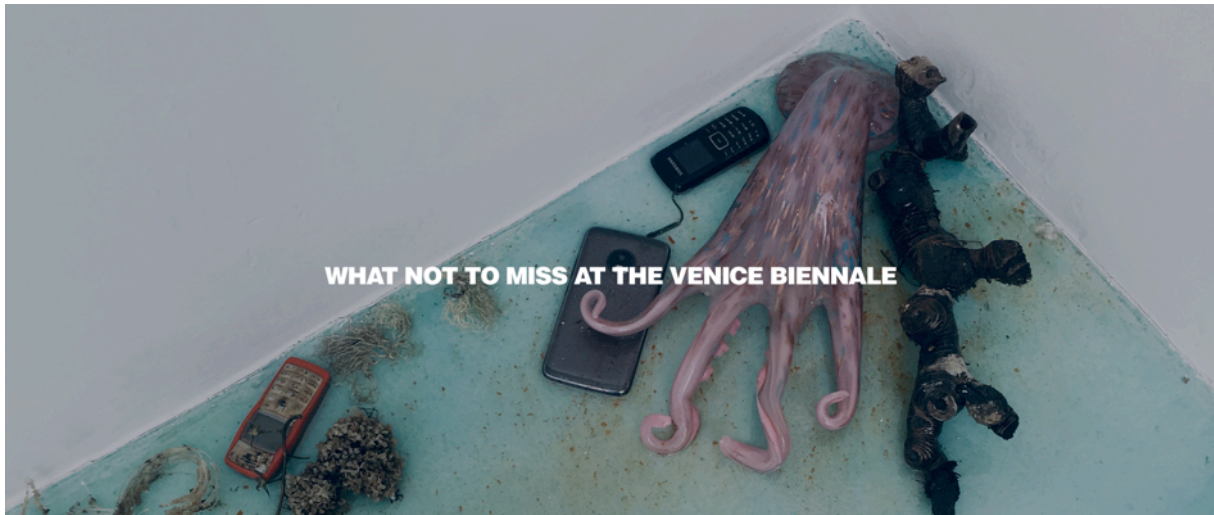


# SCHIRNMAG



13 MAY 2019

**VENICE IS SMALL, BUT THE BIENNALE ALWAYS TOO BIG. HERE ARE OUR SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SHOW AND SPECIAL TIPS BEYOND THE OFFICIAL PROGRAM.**

BY ANTONIA LAGEMANN

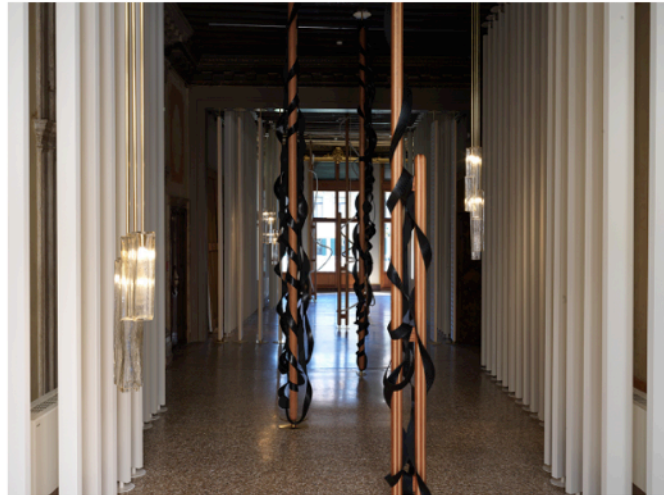
A cold, artificial mist lingers above the roof of the chalky-white main building. It slowly winds its way over the sandy, rain-soaked paths of the Giardini, creeps beneath vinyl Balenciaga parkas and envelops the shrill and colorful summer dresses. Frozen gazes, hunched shoulders and crossed arms among the queuing crowd. We are facing uncertain times. Worse, in fact: We are right in the middle of them, immersed in fake news, climate disasters and social crises. "May you live in interesting times" is the title curator Ralph Rugoff has given this year's Biennale.

In doing so, he refers to a saying that was passed off as a Chinese curse for many years. Sounds like confusion, like moral judgement, like finger-wagging. And yet that's not what Rugoff is concerned with: Political instructions are not a task for art, he claims; rather, it should reveal multiple perspectives and question existing concepts.

So much for theory! But now to the practice: With every lamentation about all the “bad art” that can undoubtedly be seen at every Biennale, this year there is at least as much moving and stimulating work that even offers a positive outlook. And this definitely makes it worth the trip.

#### **PORTUGAL**

An entirely different perspective is offered by the Portuguese Pavilion. Directly around the corner from the Accademia at the Palazzo Giustinian Lolin is “a seam, a surface, a hinge, or a knot” by Leonor Antunes. Her interest in everyday materials, substances and structures, particularly in the Venetian context, is expressed in abstract sculptures that interweave almost imperceptibly with the structure of the magnificent palazzo. Parts of the exhibition were produced with the Falegnameria Augusto Capovilla, one of the few joineries still active in Venice. Rhythmic forms made of noble woods, steel and glass lamps from Murano merge with the rooms of the palazzo to form an architectural Gesamtkunstwerk.



LEONOR ANTUNES, A SURFACE, A SEAM, A HINGE, OR A KNOT, 2019, COURTESY THE ARTIST AND AIR DE PARIS, PARIS; MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY, NEW YORK, PARIS & LONDON; KURIMANZUTTO, MEXICO CITY & NEW YORK; GALERIA LUISA STRINA, SÃO PAULO, IMAGE VIA [THESPACES.COM](https://thespaces.com)