

On View

In Pictures: See Practically Every Artwork in the Venice Biennale's Arsenale Section

The sprawling portion of the show at the Arsenale includes two smaller capsule exhibitions.

Ben Davis, April 21, 2022

Delayed for a year because of the pandemic, the Venice Biennale, titled "The Milk of Dreams," has finally opened to previews this week.

Curator Cecilia Alemani has spoken about how the process of putting together the massive endeavor in difficult conditions (Zoom studio visits, working remotely, etc.) made her appreciate the physical and non-technological dimensions of art-viewing even more. And indeed, this is a very physical show, with a focus on embodied knowledge, sensation, and artworks with physical presence.

It also has a pointedly self-reflective perspective on art history, and it's notable that the world's most famous survey of new art has one face turned away from the contemporary. Specifically, it incorporates a number of concentrated shows-within-the-show, each one intensively examining a theme that, in turn, is meant to serve as a lens through which to look at some the more contemporary work.

In the plunging Arsenale space, there are two such mini-exhibitions. One, with the prolix title "A Leaf a Gourd a Shell a Net a Bat a Sling a Sack a Bottle a Pot a Box a Container," is a selection of artworks that reflect on the vessel as a metaphor. The other, "The Seduction of the Cyborg," pays homage to female artists who have, in various way, thought about the body as a reprogrammable machine.

But there is much more to see. Here are some pictures to give you a sense of the Arsenale section of "The Milk of Dreams."



The entrance to the Arsénale section of "The Milk of Dreams." Photo by Ben Davis.



Works by Belkis Ayón in "The Milk of Dreams." Photo by Ben Davis.



Works by Gabriel Chaile. Photo by Ben Davis.



Works by Portia Zvavahera. Photo by Ben Davis.



Works by Rosana Paulino. Photo by Ben Davis.



Works by Britta Marakatt-Labba. Photo by Ben Davis.



Works by Frantz Zéphirin and Célestin Faustin. Photo by Ben Davis.



Works by Violeta Parra. Photo by Ben Davis.



A special capsule presentation titled "A Leaf a Gourd a Shell
a Net a Bag a Sling a Sack a Bottle a Pot a Box a Container."
Photo by Ben Davis.



Display of works by Ruth Asawa. Photo by Ben Davis.