

Immigration is a biotechnological project with fireflies designed by Francisco Mariotti and Klaus Geldmacher, it aims to create habitats and biotopes for fireflies. Immigration's concept is part of one of the priority goals for the Nomad Museum, which is to produce exhibition spaces without limits and which can reach the places where people are.

Tomatl is an artistic intervention with tomato plants in a natural area within the perimeter of the **VSL Lindabrunn Symposium**.

The project area was already defined in 2007 with the installation **Enclave**, a light mesh marking the territory's border with gates and 1200 artificial fireflies placed inside plastic bottles.

The **Nomad Museum** supports the migration of the Tomatl project from Lindabrunn wastelands in Lower Austria, to the exhibition spaces of the Biennial of Cuenca in Ecuador.

With the Nomad Museum, Symposium Lindabrunn VSL has designed an autonomous exhibition format, allowing the works that are developed at VSL's Art and Architecture experimental laboratories to move freely in a world without borders.

With **CAL Containerized Art Laboratories** the VSL has also developed mobile production spaces with exhibition formats tailored to the requirements of the place or exhibition where they are to be transported.

The base and space of inspiration for VSL art projects in public spaces and committed with nature is the Symposium Lindabrunn in 2551 Enzensfeld / Lindabrunn (Lower Austria)

Information and schedule:
<http://www.vsl.or.at>

A real-time view of works and events is possible through the Livestream Webcam:
<http://82.218.28.108>

Both, Nomad Museum, Containerized Art Laboratories and Transbiónica are artistic formats developed by the **umraum** art group for the VSL.

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From the (Hybrid) Garden (Being There)

For Sergio Guarisco, *in memoriam*

The keyword for our liminal times is not revolution but *mutation*. The accelerated hybridization of all knowledge and matter. Of all being and existence. Threatened: there is no innocence left possible for the art of an agonizing species and planet. Agony, however, is not death but a struggle to the death with death itself. To fight for each tree, prophesied Joseph Beuys decades ago, can no longer be perceived as a romantic gesture but as an extremely realistic urgency. The tree as an element of regeneration. And regeneration itself as a renewed concept of space and of time. Of the new temporality that art, certain art, establishes through the modification of consciousness.

The modification of consciousness and of the social. And, increasingly, of nature itself. As in those gestures that allowed Beuys to redefine in artistic terms the simple act of planting seven thousand oaks in Kassel. Seven thousand trees always accompanied by a basalt stone, destined to erode its minerals next to the organic and vegetable expansion. There is a mythico-political dimension in those gestures. And another dimension that is magical-religious. Shamanic. Healing.

Transformative. In ways that today exceed their first meanings and significations. The expanded concept of art is in turn overwhelmed by the transgenic expansions of science. Thus has Francisco Mariotti intuited it in his techno-aesthetic explorations, precisely denominated *hybrid gardens*. The intervention of space –rural and urban– with consumerist remains recovered for a new luminescence.

Plastic bottles and light emitting diodes (LEDs) blinking amongst the waters and the foliages. Or in between monuments and rubble. At first as a lyrical evocation of those insects called lampyridae in whose European extinction Pier Paolo Pasolini perceived the symbol of destroyed hope for a world led to its decline by the empire of industry and of capital. But in Mariotti that poetic signaling is slowly acquiring factual projections: *the return of the glowworms*, the phrase that serves as his motto, offers increasingly literal and programmatic overtones in a modus operandi that already insinuates itself as post-artistic.

Post-human, perhaps: the first communication attempted through Mariotti's interventions is not between the creator and his audience but between the species. Mariotti's art is not content with postulating just a new art or a new society but also a different nature. The reengineering of our exhausted ecosystem through unprecedented structures of symbiosis between culture and nature. As in the plastic meshworks that interweave artificial fireflies with tomato plants. These last feed snails that in turn are devoured by the larvae of biological glowworms attracted by the twinkle of their synthetic counterparts. The result is a hybrid habitat for the regeneration of that luminous presence darkened throughout the world by the invasive glare of metastatic urbanization.

A life effect sometimes achieved even within the cities' dead heart. Such as in Turin, whose industrial wasteland is now in a renaturalization process through biotechnological implants initiated by Mariotti and others in a project that also renaturalizes art itself: its function in urban renewal is no longer the static, statuary role of a sculpture park, but the libidinal one of a site for fecund interchanges.

Exchanges both social and sexual: there is a logic of seduction and mating in the fascinating flicker of fireflies. As well as in the shinings of these artistic recreations. The result is a bioesthetics of transformed essences thus inscribed beyond our sensibilities and into the land itself. Into the earth and in its processes: a "quantum chant" (such is the title of some of Mariotti's crucial interventions) to nature and its regenerative powers. To the mother Gaia, theorized by James Lovelock as a continuing and mutant interaction between everything that is organic in a system where each vital impulse tends towards the ensemble's self-regulation. A homeostasis that favors the persistence of life by modifying the adverse changes in the habitat.

It is life itself that makes the planet livable. In the same way that labor and language hominize man, according to one of Marx's theses that does not seem to have become obsolete. Another one is the visionary theory of commodity fetishism, formulated at the very beginning of *Das Kapital*. And at the very start of Mariotti's musings on the lampyridae's poetic-political suggestions. A moment in his work literally illuminated by the *Pizza Lucciola*, conceived as a ludic comment on the commercial glitter of post-industrial society.

There is thus a radical humanism in this post-human post-art. So it is announced, in an even textual manner, by the sparkles that configure a luminous techno-natural homage to Chico Mendes, the Brazilian union leader and martyr for the preservation of the Amazon rainforest. Ecological struggles that this exhibition articulates to an incisive protest against the recent policies formulated by certain European governments for a peaceful

genetic cleansing of their populations. Special attention must be here paid to the strategic placement, at the end of this catalog, of the cold bureaucratic presence of the official form conceived as a "declaration of voluntary return". After the intense profusion of colors in the sensorial photographs of the processes that comprise Mariotti's work, the artificer displays the succinct visuality of numbered paragraphs under which the immigrant signs and sells to the State any right to stay in Spain. The perverse turn of a globalization that internationalizes financial capital but restricts migrant human capital. Always returnable. For a price.

What thus becomes a commodity is not just life but, above all, *experience*. Perhaps even what Heidegger called *being-in-the-world*. Beneath the apparent gains for both sides, unsuspected losses arise. Of all types: political, cultural, economic. Diversity interrupted, *métissage* frustrated. The repressed exchange of fluids that would enable the mutant continuity of society and the species. Hence the insight inscribed into the title of this project –the Nahuatl name for tomato– in involuntary resonance with the artificer's own name (but there is no such thing as chance).

Tomatl or *Xitomatl* means *fruit with a navel*, and what is summarized by its genetic history is precisely the migration of identities. Although of Andean origin (it was called *mala peruviana* at some point), the tomato plant was systematically cultivated in the Aztec empire. And it is in Europe that it acquired the dimensions and textures for which it is best known and appreciated in the international cuisine, after having been despised as poisonous (because of its resemblance with the mandrake), or mystified as an aphrodisiac (*poma amoris* was one of its seventeenth

century names).

Of particular interest here is the fact that there is now an active scientific search for an evolutionary regression to be achieved by incorporating into the modern tomato genetic components of the wild varieties still surviving in America. The intent is to thus regain the plants' natural resistance to new diseases brought out by an excessive and endogamic selection: suffice it to mention how the tomato blossom now takes forms that force self-fertilization, whereas originally its shapes facilitated the cross pollination induced by the wind and insects.

As much is certified by the botanical books that illustrate Mariotti's creative reflection in the same way that specialized publications on iconography and painting techniques supported the work of his predecessors. Not to be overlooked is the fact that the consequences of these new endeavors are now covered and reviewed by scientific journals such as *Biologi italiani*. Mariotti gradually dissociates himself from art history, even from history itself, to become engaged with more essential processes. Such as the modification of life. Starting with its most deeply earthen expressions. The artificer as a gardener.

An ornamental and utilitarian one. There is, to be sure, a surprising beauty in these works, which however also suggest a laboratory of practical urgencies for our planet at risk. And an arch of spiritual suggestions spans between both dimensions. The horizon under which Mariotti's proposals would seem to place themselves is not Gaia's revenge, as announced by Lovelock in recent publications, but its utopian reconciliation through the expansion of the very notion of the biosphere. A concept of the organic

expanded by Mariotti towards the replications of its functions by artificial means. The photovoltaic effect itself, suggested in previous works as a technological analogy of photosynthesis, now assumes an effectively regenerative condition.

Regenerative and genestic. Science and nature flow into the same current of primordial energies. As in a techno-aesthetic intuition of God. And in a dialectical surpassing of Beuys.

Gustavo Buntinx