

VENICE 2018



**Architecture
Biennial**

**TIME
SPACE
EXISTENCE**

Allison Newsome

Visitors of exhibition Time Space and Existence will embrace a new way of thinking for a sustainable future. As an artist and Bioneer I am driven to be part of the new Renaissance that is picking up momentum with STEAM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math. As the "A" in STEAM I am dedicated to the pursuit of sustainability and utility at the core of my sculpture. The study of Bio mimicry plays a huge part in how my forms develop, and allow the viewer to contemplate the imitation of nature to solve complex human problems.

The concept to develop a rain harvesting sculpture began for an exhibition at an Arboretum. The Arboretum featured a redwood tree, which are a species native to my childhood home in a cabin deep in the redwoods of the Santa Cruz Mountains. On a daily basis I witnessed the redwood forest's ability to reshape the local climate and environment in which they lived. They control the movement of water in the forest with their upper canopies, catching coastal fog and directing it downwards to maintain the life and homeostasis of the myriad of under canopy ecosystems as the 'fog drip' soaks into the ground and replenishes streams. My sculpture 'RainKeep' is informed and inspired by Botanist Stephen C. Sillet's accounts as an explorer of the redwood forest canopy, and his descriptions of the "3dimensional labyrinth that exists in the air above the forest floor". We can learn volumes from the redwoods when it comes to persistence in evolutionary adaptations to changing climates, a species that can withstand drought and fire.

The 'RainKeep' I am creating for 'Time Space and Existence' will celebrate Venice's historic wellheads and complex underground cisterns, which are found throughout the city. Venice is built on a saltmarsh without potable groundwater and historically relied on catching rain-

water stored in cisterns under the cities courtyards. The wellheads provided access to the water. Artists were commissioned to create elaborate sculpted panels on the walls of the wellheads. Lions are the symbol for Venice, when Napoleon conquered Venice he had lions chiseled off of several wellheads. Many lions were destroyed, but many remain! My 'RainKeep' will symbolically "bring back the lost lions of Venice". The 'RainKeep', now formed with steel, bronze and brass, can hold anywhere from 800 to 8,000 gallons of water, and reduce the use of municipally treated potable water used for gardening, cleaning etc. It can be utilized for drip irrigation, or as a regular garden hose with a hookup and bucket.

When I approach a site I always take into account the history and the ecology of the site as a foundation to build upon. My work, at large, raises the question of our current human psyche. We are "child like" in how we take nature for granted. We are supported unconditionally by nature, but to what extent? When will nature stop supporting our culture; when will our oceans stop absorbing our garbage and soaring CO2 emissions. I can only hope that as I explore these avenues of thought, I shall continue to create significant works of art that engage, educate and enlighten the public. These are critical times. Art and Science must work together in any way or form to move toward a symbiotic existence between Nature and Culture.

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