

It is with great pleasure that Fonderia Nolana Del Giudice together with LABINAC announce the opening of a space entirely dedicated to LABINAC in Naples, in Via Crispi 69, on 26 March 2022, from 12:00 to 19:00.

LABINAC is a design collective founded in 2018 by Maria Thereza Alves, Jimmie Durham and Kai-Morten Vollmer, with the dual purpose of designing and making objects (furniture, chandeliers, and other elements of interior design) and supporting the design works of Indigenous peoples in Latin America, of which both artists have been staunch defenders throughout their lives.

LABINAC was initiated with the intention of being a collective open to other artists and designers. Alves and Durham invited Elisa Strinna, Jone Kvie and Philipp Modersohn, who through their research and their works have enhanced the range of potential ideas while also questioning the role of design today, the thin line between the arts, and the possibility for experimentation that different available materials offer.

The common denominator to all of LABINAC's works remains the consistent approach to research and deep experimentation, as well as the desire to investigate the different life possibilities of each single object – or more precisely, to explore how the past life of a single detail combined with a new added element can create a new life, bringing it into coexistence with the object in a different social context.

Past and present, old and new are combined with a desire to imagine a life for the object that is not just related to the moment in which it is designed but also, and above all, to when it goes on to live in a new architecture.

To open somewhere that could be used as a selling space, with Fonderia Nolana's partnership with LABINAC, and which would also have a cultural approach and become a meeting place for debate and open discussion on what it means today to make and deal with design, had long been a project and desire of the collective, and particularly in the mind of the two founders. So when Jimmie Durham left us this past year in November there was never any doubt about the intention to carry on, and indeed to stimulate the implementation of the program.

This exhibition aims primarily to be a tribute to Jimmie Durham himself, as an artist, thinker and friend in research and experimentation within the collective. *A Stick in the Forest*, the title of the exhibition, were Durham's last thoughts before he passed away and it is from these that LABINAC began to design the concept of the exhibition.

Jimmie encourages us to sit down on the ground of the forest and to be in a state of wonder, so that a dialogue can begin with a stick. Perhaps it becomes a leg for a table or an element in a chandelier. Or you get up and a dog crosses your path and with interest eyes your stick – a gift to be given, and perhaps the beginning of a friendship.

The exhibition not only pays homage to Jimmie's work through presenting some of his objects, including *PINO Tables*, *Sabi*, *Arboletier Chandelier* and *Baroco-co Salo-netto* (designed with Alves), but also through the evocation of his culture of origin, his particular irreverence and peculiarity in the use of materials (wood, colors, bones, stones, and other elements) that become ironic and critical at the same time, in a constant game of mirrors between "culture" and "nature".

In the three rooms dedicated to the exhibition are objects of various kinds. As a welcome at the entrance is a table designed by Maria Thereza, *Expansion through Reduction*, on which are placed a series of sticks carefully collected by Durham during some of his frequent walks in the woods over the years. This first contact with these natural elements arranged on a designed surface, leads us into LABINAC's universe, where the constant interrelation between different worlds dominates.

In the first room the spectator finds themselves in front of Jimmie Durham's majestic table *Sabi*, which means solitude in Japanese. Of the great olive trees killed by lightning or eaten by various insect-borne diseases usually only little remains, and this is generally further resized to be transformed into a household utensil. Jimmie decided to do something different instead, preserving the entire trunk and limiting his intervention to the bare minimum, to a mere smoothing of parts of the trunk and the addition of four solid steel legs. The majesty of the trunk is preserved, and yet through this delicate intervention the birth of a possible new function, a new life, can be seen: a spectacular olive tree has become a table, one that remembers the growth and movement of a tree in life.

Other tables are designed by Jone Kvie, with wood once again the primary material being celebrated. Long strips of olive wood overlap one another, supported by an aluminum cast of a cardboard box and a magnificent piece of onyx, whose countless gradations of color become a spectacular spider's web in which our eyes can get lost. A second table top is composed entirely of translucent onyx, sliced from one piece and mounted on top of an aluminium structure made out of partly cast pieces.

Continuing to follow the path of the nuances of the material leads to *Coimbra*, a pink marble slab, an element of a table designed by Maria Thereza. The marble was recovered from a roadside during a trip to Portugal; the magnificent pink slab with its irregular but sinuous cut edges rests on an aluminum sheet, supported in turn by four brass legs. The final result is elegant, light and precious.

A wise use and mix of materials is at the core of the work of Philipp Modersohn, who has designed a kind of pyramid vase, consisting of three different elements, in concrete, glass and ceramic, each with individual openings for a single flower. Philipp deliberately recalls the baroque topiary trees, something he has already investigated in a previous work conceived for LABINAC, *Topiary Lights*. Philipp is fascinated by the idea that each flower has its own container, its own space of expansion and expression. It renders the simple vase as even more of a sculptural object.

In terms of material and function, the pieces produced by Elisa Strinna and Alessandro Piromallo are entirely different objects. Strinna decided to create tiles, discreet furnishing elements on the edge between the sculptural and the architectural forms of the foundation of the house itself. The artist studies and creates mysterious ecosystems that play with the different levels of depth of the material. A starting point for Elisa was the observation of the interaction between organic life and human infrastructures, as well as the study of natural forces such as gravity or wind in the creation of the structure of the geological components, the stones or meteorites. The resulting microcosms that Strinna creates are attempts to refocus our attention on the potentially infinite and dark dimensions of our planet.

Alessandro Piromallo was invited to make new works for LABINAC. With a background in sculpture, Alessandro shows his fountain for birds, his *Omphalos* made of ceramic stoneware, basalt and metal, an attempt by the artist to search for balance through the contact of structural stability.

This space is inaugurated in the hope that it will become something more than simply a place to admire and acquire, and, above all, be a new meeting point in the city that can broaden the cultural debate around the arts and design.