

How does entrepreneurism, branding, and contemporary art share space at the Venice Biennale?

Alissa Rice



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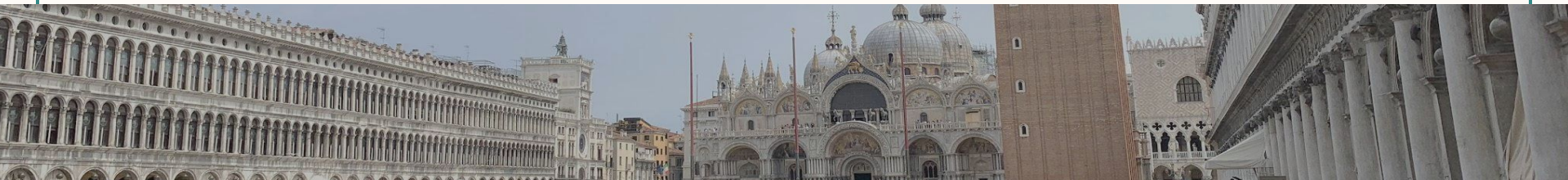
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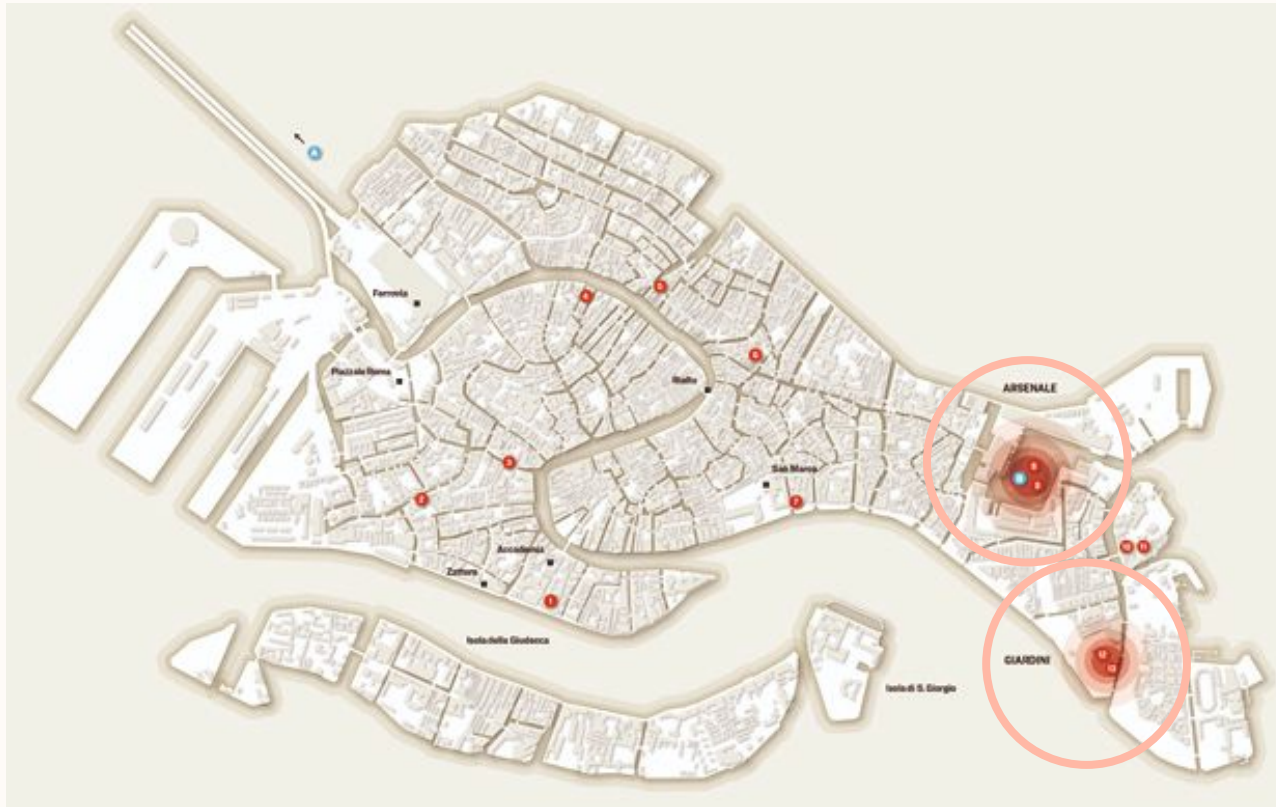
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Final points are made as well as more images from the Biennale.



Introduction

The Venice Biennale was founded in 1895 and is considered one of the most prestigious cultural institutions in the world; promoting current trends in the contemporary arts through a multidisciplinary approach that includes fine art, cinema, architecture and performance. The Biennale provides a forum for countries to curate how they want to be perceived and invites audiences from around the world to join an expansive conversation about the present-tense.



The Venice Biennale is composed of two large exhibition sites named the Giardini and the Arsenale and was founded in 1895. Each of these exhibitions, host different countries in multiple pavilions, throughout the site. The title of this biannual event is *May You Live in Interesting Times*.

During my time in Venice, I analyzed forty-five different pavilions, and tried to make sense of the design and aesthetics of each of them and how it related to the title of the Biennale. Rather than going to the Biennale just to experience the art, I explored the overall aspect of the Biennale and its pavilions through the lens of an entrepreneur and a graphic designer.





“The Contributors to this exhibition are seriously adventurous; they each produce diverse bodies of work that articulate distinct modes of thinking and engage far-ranging concerns” -*La Biennale Di Venezia*

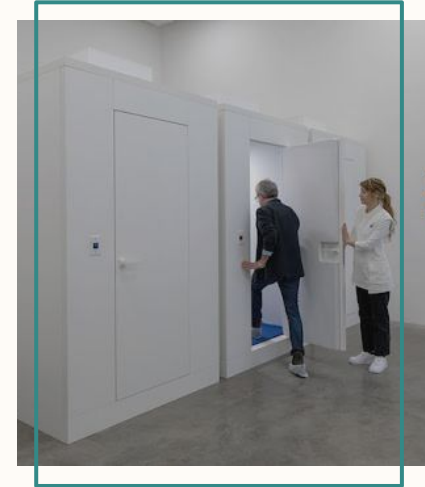




Israel: Field Hospital X

Field Hospital X is a mobile, international institution established by artist Aya Ben Ron. It is committed to researching the way art can react and act in the face of social ills and corrupt values in society. Israel's pavilion originated with the intention to create a safe space about four different difficult topics, abuse in the family, Palestinian resistance, child abduction and anti-transgender violence.

When you enter Israel's pavilion at the Biennale, you are a patient, a recipient of care. You first take a queue number and wait in the reception area for your number to be called. Once your number is called, you go to the reception desk and choose a risk-wristband. In the reception area you are to watch a TV program that tells you to "be patient; be a patient." Once you receive your wristband, you then head upstairs to the "safe-unit" where you learn how to produce a "self-contained shout." The "safe-unit" is perceived as to be safe and nobody can hear you from the outside, but in reality, everyone can. After the "safe-unit" you can sit on the Care-Chair, where you can personally view a short video by an invited artist that confronts a social ill through a personal story



The interior design of the building connects to the designs used for branding and marketing. Israel has an Instagram page (@fieldhospitalx) that they post pictures on for marketing, this can create awareness to the topics that they are addressing, without having to attend the Biennale. Social media supercharges brand awareness by enabling engagement, promoting content, and social sharing. Social sites are a playground for engaging with one another. Social media is a great place for Field Hospital X to engage with the world at every stage of their journey.

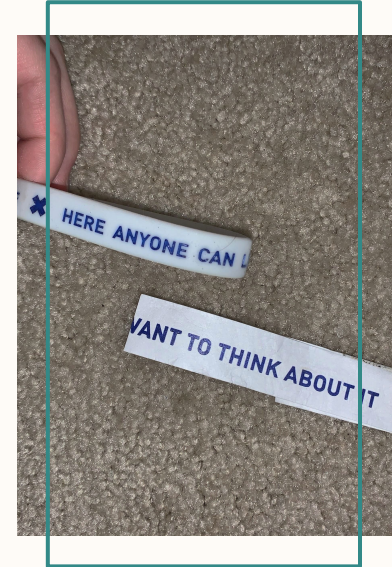


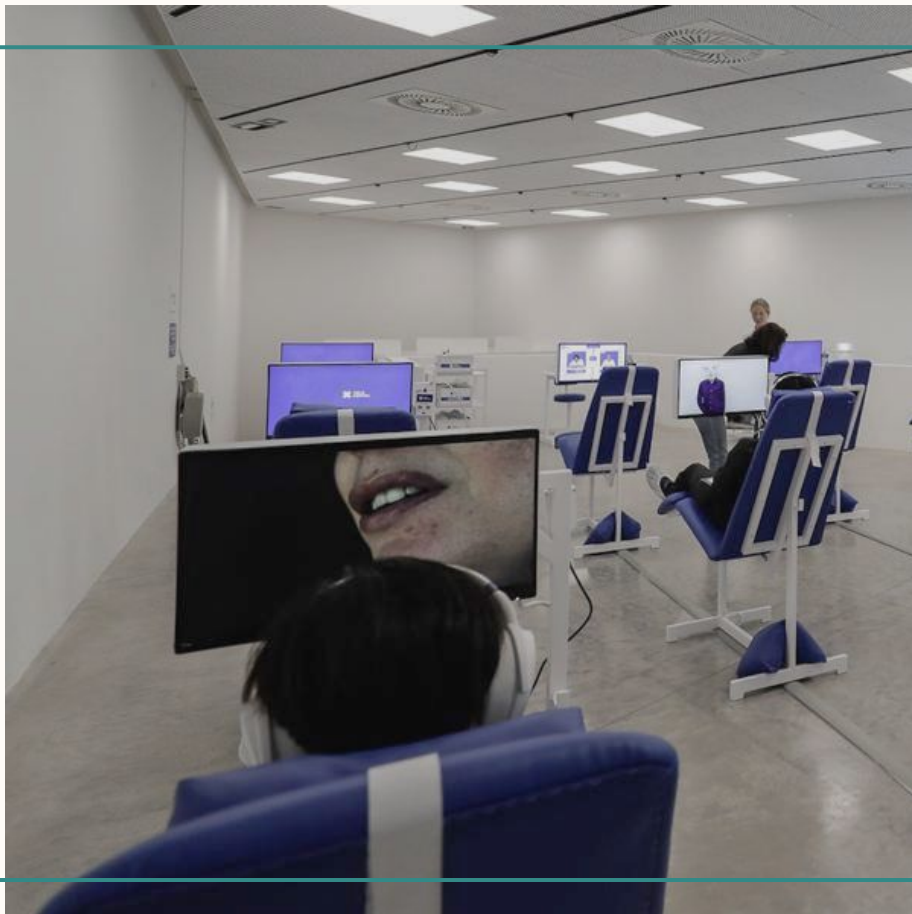
The design of the care-chairs tie into the design of the pavilion's overall aesthetics. The chairs are inspired by dental and gynecologist chairs.



There are multiple ways to engage with people through social media be it through conversation, engaging posts, or advertisements, they all draw attention to a business or in this case the pavillion. Many brands like to use social media as a space to push out their blogs, videos, and other content they have worked hard on. This is simply because their following is likely to be people who are interested in what they have to say, not to mention may find it useful.

Israel has taken the correct steps to gain brand recognition, Israel has a logo for Field Hospital X that is very significant to their pavilion. Their logo is a blue X, its simple but effective. They used blue for their logo because the flag for Israel is the same color blue and they used an X to represent the title of their art, Field Hospital X. This logo is on all their pamphlets, wristbands, and the bracelet that they give you at the end of your experience at Field Hospital X. The wristbands and bracelets were a smart move on the branding teams end. As people walked around the Biennale, it was hard not to notice their bracelets and wonder what Field Hospital X is. These bracelets and wristbands were mobile advertisements and really got people in the doors of their pavilion. The branding of the logo connected back to the interior design of the building. The interior consisted of white walls with blue furniture for the hospital aesthetics, the countries colors for the interior design and the simple yet effective logo.





Along with the logo for branding and design, there are also some really interesting motion graphic pieces for the Care-Kits section of the pavilion, which is where the gynecologist chairs are. The short videos are relevant to the risk-wristbands that each person gets before they sit at the reception area. The four videos that play are, abuse in the family, Palestinian resistance, child abduction and anti-transgender violence, all of which are difficult and hard-to-swallow topics..

The Biennale is a huge and quality global art festival with over 615,000 visitors (615,152), on top of the 23,531 attendants of the preview days during the 2017 Biennale (Biennale Arte 2017). So **how is art at this scale funded? Where does Israel get the money to fund their pavilion?** Field Hospital X has been supported and funded by many organizations including: **The Israel Lottery Council for Culture & Art, The University of Haifa, ZAZLOTS, The University of Haifa's Faculty of Law Legal Clinics and Refugee Mental Health, The Leon Charney Resolution Center, The Leon Charney Forum on New Diplomacy based at The University of Haifa, Gandyr Foundation, NATAL Israel Trauma and Resiliency Center, Outset Contemporary Art Fund, Makor Foundation for Israeli Films, David and Michal Fuhrer, TIAF: Tel Aviv Israeli Art Foundation, Tel Aviv University and Sotheby's Israel** (About). With the support of these organizations, Israel is able to conduct Field Hospital X at the Venice Biennale and now, after the Biennale they will travel to various sites around the world to develop and expand. I believe that the funders wanted to support this project because they stand behind the underlying meaning of what the pavilion is trying to say. Also, the Venice Biennale is globally known and if these organizations get their name on this, they will reach a large population of people and being recognized.





Brazil: Swinguerra

The Brazil pavilion is located in the Giardini and it features a duo of video artists. Barbara Wagner and Benjaminc de Burca bring together choreography and experts from life to present an uncensored view of the conflictual character of the South American country. The dancers in the film danced to collective choreography, by bodies and faces without gender and origin, shining, semi-dressed bodies, barefoot on the sand, feet that interpret the anaerobic rhythms of swingueire.



The film is projected on two screens across from each other in the pavilion. They use music and dance as ritualistic backdrops that drive the dancers to exploit the beats to arm every movement, to shout phrases that at times assume a poetic structure and at times, instead, remain dialectic expressions. When first walking into the pavilion you see many pictures of the groups of dancers hanging on the walls. That first room led viewers to the back room where two giant screens were placed facing each other on opposite sides of the room.

The screens showed a film of the dancers dancing swingueira. The screens facing opposite of each other gave off this dramatic dance battle effect. Each screen had a set of wooden bleachers in front of it for the audience to sit in. It was interesting and a good choice that the designers choose wooden bleachers because bleachers are a type of street-style seating and they fit into the overall aesthetics of the pavilion. At times the dancers appeared as if they were having a dance battle against another group of dancers. One screen would have one group and the other screen would be another group, one group would dance and the other group would dance back after they were finished. Other times, the camera featured different angles depending on what screen the viewer was watching.



Brazill

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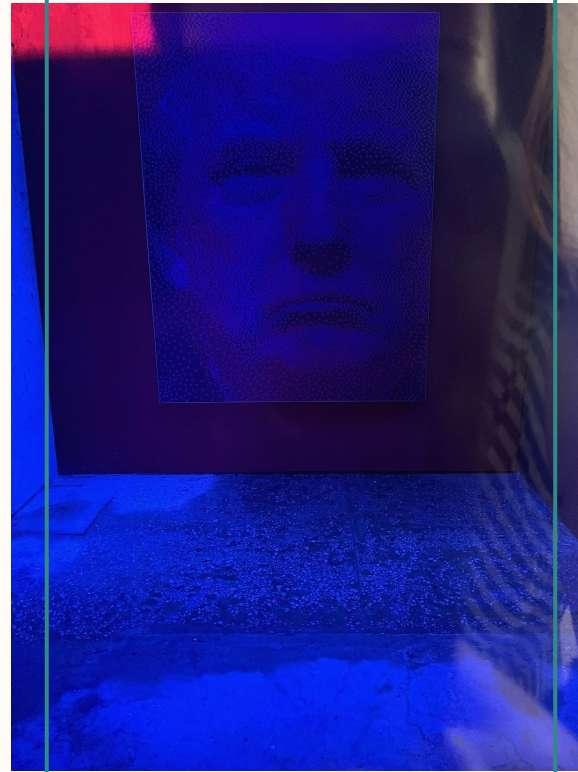
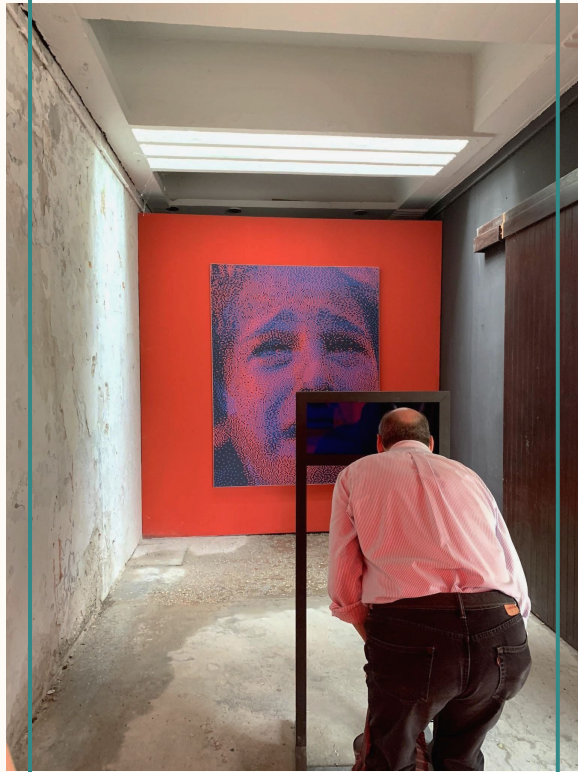


How is art at this scale funded? Curators and biennial organizations fundraise to cover some of the costs, which include the materials required to construct the work, flights and accommodation in the biennial city, the shipping of these materials and the salaries and associated costs of hiring a technical team to install the work at the biennale. The Venice Biennale typically does not provide fees for the artists in its main exhibition. Artists, who do not have access to government funding, frequently ask their galleries for financial assistance, but, then you have to split the cost of any sale of the work with them. Essentially artists and curators are taking gambles at the Biennale. A lot of them have to stop producing artwork months prior to the Biennale in order to save money to get their artwork overseas. Artists tend to take the gamble because they can become globally recognized and start to create bigger names for themselves. Big time art critics and art collectors view these upcoming artists works at the Biennale and increase the chances of their art getting bought, for big bucks, is way higher.

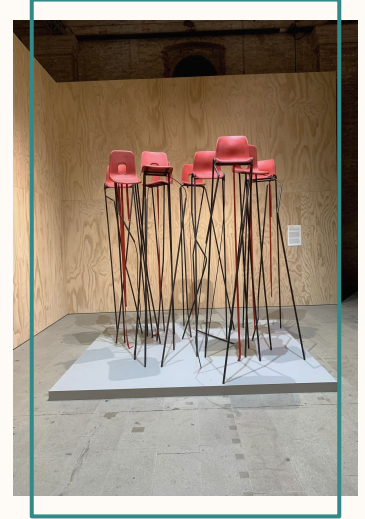


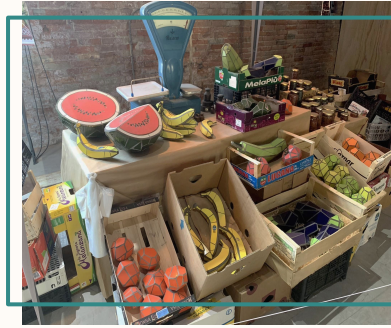
Conclusions

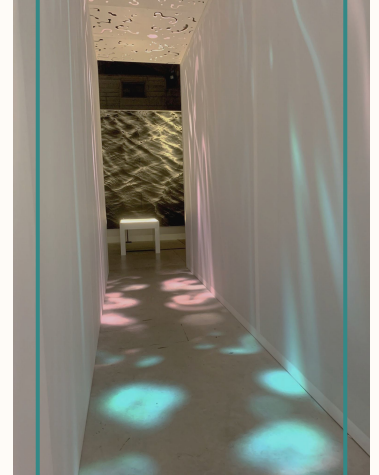
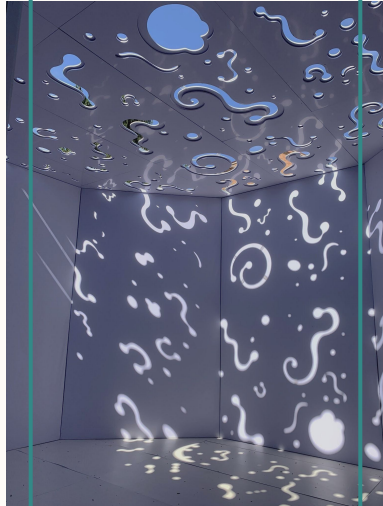
The Biennale, *May You Live in Interesting Times* is essentially a global olympics for art that multiple countries participate in to produce diverse bodies of work that articulate distinct modes of thinking and engage far-ranging concerns. For me, going to the biennale wasn't just to experience the art, I analyzed the overall aspect of the Biennale and its pavilions through the lens of an entrepreneur and a graphic designer. After visiting forty-five pavillions at the Venice Biennale, I decided to narrow in on Israel's Field Hospital X and Brazil's *Swinguerra*, while focusing on the aesthetics of design, branding and marketing, cultural selections, and the funding sources of invited works of art and artists. As evidence of these pavilions, it is apparent that elements of entrepreneurship and graphic design are essential in putting on a great production at the Biennale.



This was in Venezuela's Pavillion, you looked through the blue glass at the image of a child crying and Trump would appear.









Thank You to everyone that supported me to go on this study abroad program. From the Global Programs Office, the Think Tank Committee, Professor Shanahan, Professor Watts, my family and everyone that bought candy bars and or t-shirts from me. This was an experience of a lifetime and it couldn't have been done without all of you!



Here is a video that I put together from all of my clips from my time in Venice, aside from the Biennale.



Credits

Images:

@alissariceart

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