



## The Majlis: A Meeting Place Caravane Earth

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- New ground-breaking work by leading Colombian architect Simon Velez and British landscape architect Todd Longstaffe-Gowan in the wild-flower garden of the Abbazia di San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice
- This collateral event at the Venice Biennale from 23 May to 29 November 2020 brings together architecture, design and landscape within the conceptual umbrella of the Majlis, traditionally a place where people come together to interact
- It is based on the principles of the Caravane Foundation which aims to restore awareness of the interconnectivity between people, culture and nature through craftsmanship, art, innovation, agriculture and education

The Caravane Earth Foundation presents **The Majlis** book, a rich and colourful documentation of the creation of the “Majlis” exhibition, a multi-layered nomadic project at the 17th annual Biennale di Venezia. The book tracks the multifaceted nature of the exhibition itself, which comprised an architectural object, an exhibition, and a garden, all three hosted by the Abbazia di San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice, Italy. Additionally, the book tells the broader story of Caravane Earth, chronicling research conducted by the foundation and the key ideas that form its philosophy and agenda. The Majlis highlights the main elements of the project in Venice while giving an introduction to key members of Caravane’s community of experts.

With a narrative structure broken into four sections – Exhibition, Architecture, Craft, and Earth – **The Majlis** book features interviews with important figures and institutions from these fields, stunning visual documentation of the creation process and featured artefacts, and critical writings on permaculture, architecture, and craft. Featuring discussions with the Smithsonian Foundation, landscape architect Todd Longstaffe-Gowan, The International Network for Traditional Building, Architecture & Urbanism (INTBAU), director and curators of the Sheikh Faisal Museum, and many more, the collection provides a deep look and education into the many causes championed by Caravane Earth.

A Rhodes Scholar, **Thierry Morel** is an art historian and curator who graduated from the universities of Paris and Oxford in law and history of art. He was a post-doctoral research associate at the University of Cambridge and for Venice in Peril co-authored *The Venice Report: Demography, Tourism, Financing and Change of Use of Buildings*. Thierry has done extensive research on the history of art collections and art provenance in Europe, wrote and produced *Private View*, a documentary series on leading international art collectors for Time Warner.

Architect **Simón Vélez** has more than 50 years experience working with natural materials and is widely regarded for his innovative use of bamboo. Vélez discovered new and revolutionary techniques in bamboo joinery, allowing greater use of its natural strength and achieving more complex geometric forms. To date, he has designed and built over 200 buildings in Germany, France, USA, Brazil, Mexico, China, Jamaica, Colombia, Panama, Ecuador, and India.

Landscape architect **Todd Longstaffe-Gowan** read Environmental Studies at the University of Manitoba, Landscape Architecture at Harvard University and completed his PhD in Historical Geography at University College, London. He has carried out research at Yale University, the Getty Center in Los Angeles, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Todd has advised on many public and private historic landscapes, including the National Trust and English Heritage, The Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, and Kensington Palace Gardens.