

## Press Release

## "Regenerative Forest - JINEN" at the Venice Biennale Garden Project evokes the recovery of the ecosystem in Tono Mirai's earthen architectural work on the theme of circulation.

**A JINEN garden symbolising the dune ecosystem and biodiversity  
is reproduced in the work.**

### JINEN Garden Project

At the Venice Biennale, the work "Regenerative Forest - JINEN" by architect Tono Mirai is exhibited at the exhibition of architectural works "Time Space Existence" organised by the Italian branch of ECC (European Cultural Centre: <https://europeanculturalcentre.eu/locations/italy>), starting from 22 May. The work consists of a structure with the natural materials of earth, wood and bamboo as a visualisation of the city of Venice, and a garden as a reproduction of the ecosystem of Venice. The Garden Project was carried out in collaboration with Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Green Wise Italy to create a small Venetian ecosystem in the Tono's artwork JINEN.

### Concept of JINEN



JINEN model by Tono Mirai

"Jinen" is an oriental concept meaning "occurring itself". Tono Mirai creates a self-made ecosystem in Venice, an anthropic creation in an artificial city to regain the energies of nature.

Today the city faces many problems such as flooding, salt damage, land subsidence, and air and water pollution. Tono Mirai proposes to regenerate this place, creating a "Regenerative Forest" with an installation of raw earth and wood on the theme of Jinen, which does not imply an abandonment of nature to itself, but rather promotes a symbiotic relationship between man and nature in which the two take care of and enhance each other.

JINEN is the translation of a circular process that starts from the study of the local inhabitants and materials, confronting the genius loci of Venice, its origins and its environmental issues, and then undergoes a constant regeneration by accepting the changes of the environment in which it is located. The de-installation of the artwork will be the beginning of a regenerative process, allowing the material used to be reused to make new creations.

In traditional construction in Japan, the rapid deterioration of structures due to the exceptional humidity of the local climate and frequent earthquakes has led to the use of natural materials such as earth and wood and the use of periodic reconstruction to make buildings more suitable for change. This practice is known as Tokowaka (always young) and has also made it possible to pass on traditional building techniques and knowledge over time, keeping them always current. The noblest example of the practice of "Jinen" and "Tokowaka" is the Ise Shrine, which has been periodically rebuilt for more than 1000 years.



"Regenerative Forest - JINEN"  
by Tono Mirai  
Photo: Mohamed Mire

#### "TIME SPACE EXISTENCE"

From 22nd May 2021 to 21st November 2021

At European Cultural Centre

Palazzo Mora, Venice, Italy

Website: <https://ecc-italy.eu/exhibitions/nowopen>

10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Closed Tuesday)

Free entrance



## Regenerative Forest

Inspired by the concepts of “Jinen” and “Tokowaka”, the Garden Project creates a regenerative ecosystem to complement Tono Mirai's work. Oak, the same material as the trunks driven into the ground as the foundations of the city of Venice, is used as the pillar of the main body of the work. This structure, then covered with bamboo and raw earth, is the beginning of the cycle to create the regenerative forest.

In the garden, a small oak tree is planted as a “symbol tree” of the original forest. The curved surface of the roof will allow rain to run off to the ground to wet the symbol tree and the garden: in this way nature's gifts will be recirculated back to the soil to help the forest grow.

The characteristics of Tono Mirai's architectural works can be seen in the organic and modern forms created with raw earth, a traditional material, but also in the slogan "bring neither inside nor outside". Considering the problem of environmental load in the architectural sector due to displacement of building materials, Tono Mirai wanted to use local materials as much as possible. Naturally, he wanted to create a Venetian ecosystem, using local plants.



## Collaboration with Ca' Foscari University of Venice

To contribute to the regeneration of the Venetian environment, we asked the Ca' Foscari University of Venice (<https://www.unive.it/pag/13526/>) to cooperate. Professor Gabriella Buffa, Professor of Botany at the Department of Environmental Sciences, Informatics and Statistics, immediately shared the concepts of “Jinen” and “Tokowaka” and linked them to the Life REDUNE project (<http://www.liferedune.it>), for which she is responsible. The project is financed by the European Commission and deals with the recovery of the Veneto coastline, aiming to preserve biodiversity and coastal ecosystems in the Veneto.



*Nursery of Veneto Agricoltura*

The dune ecosystems of the Veneto coast are fundamental for the preservation of the coastline, but they are highly endangered systems that have suffered from a long history of inappropriate use and management, resulting in habitat loss, loss of natural landscapes, spread of invasive species, increased threats to native species and reduced resilience of plant communities and the whole system.

The Life REDUNE project was launched to restore dune habitats and maintain the health of the ecosystem along the Veneto coast, including through environmental education and events for tourists and operators. The dune plants are produced and grown for a certain period at the nursery of Veneto Agricoltura (<https://www.venetoagricoltura.org>), one of the research partners of Ca' Foscari University (together with Veneto Region – Regional Strategy of Biodiversity and Park Structure, SELC Società Cooperativa, EPC - European Project Consulting s.r.l.), and then brought back to the dunes, where they will perform their role as dune engineers.

Our projects have found a perfect match. The plants used in the JINEN garden are dune plants and will be returned to the dunes after the exhibition.



## Collaboration with Green Wise Italy

Green Wise Italy (<https://greenwiseitaly.com>) was responsible for the design, planting and management of the garden in the work. Green Wise, an environmental greening company with over 100 years of history in Tokyo, opened a studio in Italy, the country of fame for beauty and design, in 2019 to develop their Slow Green philosophy that resonates with the "Jinen" concept.

In line with their philosophy of Slow Green, a movement that aims to restore the diversity of the natural world and a lifestyle in harmony with it, Green Wise Italy creates projects of varying scale. For arrangements, they use seasonal and local plants and flowers which are grown without the use of chemicals, and for landscape designs, they select native plants, proposing green space management methods that contribute to the prevention of global warming and the preservation of biodiversity.



*Green Wise Italy  
Photo by Elisa Biagi*

Understanding JINEN's work for them was immediate and without explanation: they care for plants grown only by nature, they make ecological choices, they live with nature, they don't finish their work when they sell the plants but carefully research the soil and space beforehand and continue to care for it after the sale to find out what environment the plants will grow in.

With the advice of professors from Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Green Wise Italy researched the nature of the plants used in the work, the design, and the planting in real-time with online links to Japan. While respecting the aesthetic aspect, priority is given to the natural form for the life of the plants.

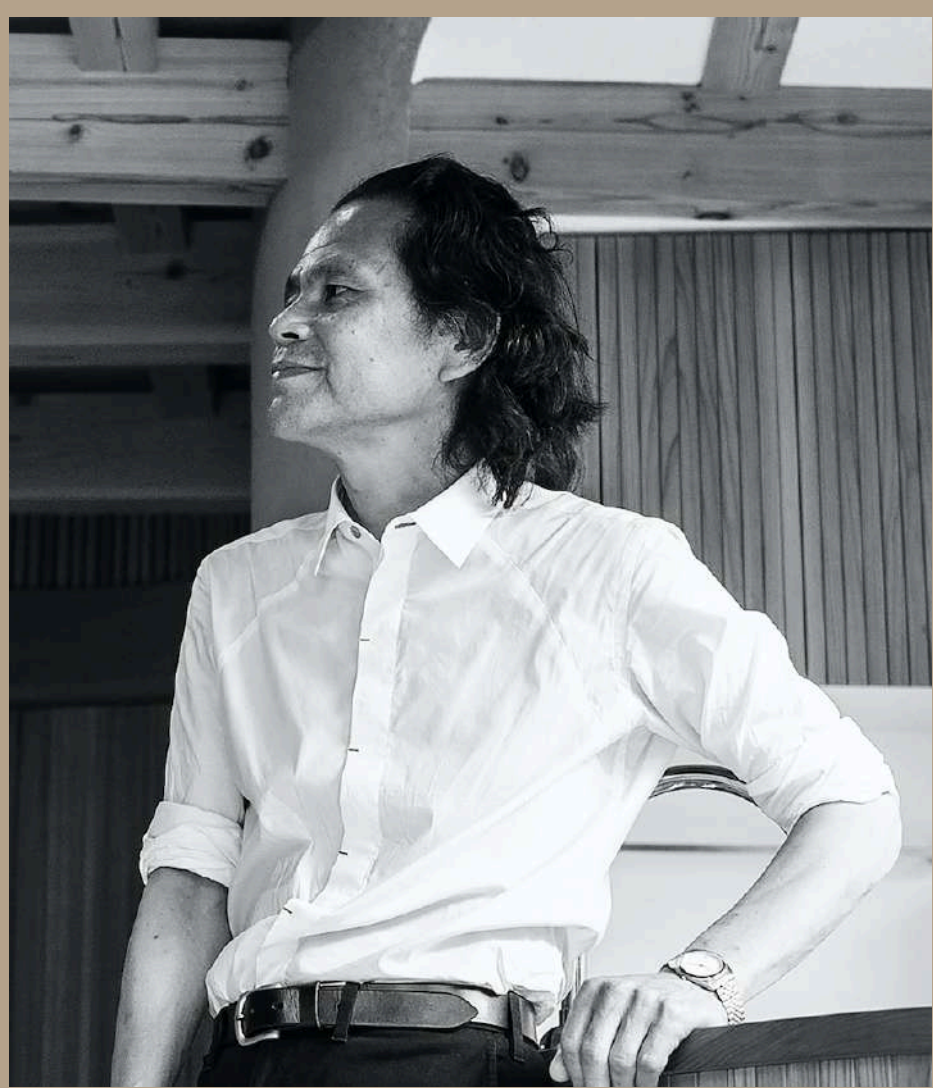
The care and maintenance of the plants will be carried out in collaboration with Mr. Ezio Poletto, the gardener of the ECC, Ca' Foscari University Venice, and Green Wise Italy until the plants return to their Veneto dunes.

## Future development

The Garden Project is the result of an inevitable encounter with Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Green Wise Italy. The work will be exhibited for four months until 21 November 2021 on the terrace of Palazzo Mora, a historic building owned by ECC, the largest cultural and artistic platform in Europe.

The Garden Project will document the growth of the plants during the exhibition and the return of the plants to the dunes at the end of the exhibition in a documentary that will be widely shared on various national and international occasions. During the exhibition, events, workshops and lectures are planned on the theme of this regenerative Venetian 'forest'.

Through the daily changes in JINEN's work, we hope that visitors will feel that we are all part of a continuous cycle, that we are part of the planet, and that biodiversity and ecosystems are important elements in enriching this cycle.



### Tono Mirai Profile

Japanese architect. Born in Sendai, Japan. In his search for human and environmentally friendly building materials, he encountered the traditional material, earth. For over 20 years he has been contributing to the environment and education by presenting earthen architecture for our planet's future. He has won many national and international awards for his modern works with organic forms.

### PROJECT SUPERVISOR

**JINOWA ~Root and Circle to Earth~** <<https://jinowa.org/ja/home/>>  
by **GEN Japan Co., LTD** <<https://www.gen.education>>  
**Tono Mirai architects** <<https://www.tonomirai.com>>  
JINEN web page <<http://rootandcircle.com/JINEN>>

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