

# **FUTUROMA**

The Roma exhibition commissioned by ERIAC and curator by Daniel Baker, entitled **FUTUROMA** is currently under evaluation by Artistic director of the Venice Biennale. It is a proposal under consideration.

**Roma Exhibition at the 58<sup>th</sup> Venice Contemporary Art Biennale**  
**11 May – 24 November 2018**

Exhibition selected by the International Jury of:  
Prof. Dr. Ethel Brooks, Tony Gatlif,  
Miguel Ángel Vargas and ERIAC management

## **Curatorial concept**

The curatorial concept of **FUTUROMA** draws upon aspects of Afrofuturism to explore Roma contemporary art's role in defining, reflecting and influencing Roma culture. **FUTUROMA** offers new and spontaneous re-tellings of Roma past, present and futures via a fusion of the traditional and the futuristic in order to critique the present-day situation for Roma people and to interrogate and re-examine historical events. Imagining Roma bodies in speculative futures offers a way out of the reductive ways that Roma culture has been understood and constructed to move our cultural expression beyond the tropes of oppression.

In the same way that Afrofuturism seeks to reclaim black identity through art, culture, and political resistance, **FUTUROMA** aims to set in motion ambitious visions for life affirming futures that also allow the possibility to reinterpret collective pasts.

**FUTUROMA** uses art to imagine futures free from social injustice and as a tool to implicitly critique the status quo. By recognising the innovation and dynamism that has long existed in Roma art forms we counter destructive narratives with the bravery of our imagination. In their unique manner each of the artworks on display in **FUTUROMA** variously employ and deconstruct different aspects of the primeval, the everyday and the futuristic. The resulting works move between the familiar and the unexpected taking us beyond the confines of time and place to a different kind of objectivity—to a place to see anew.

The artworks will include new site specific works covering a variety of media with the emphasis on material objects—physical stuff that takes up space in the world rather than the digital or the virtual. It is, after all, our physical presence that is continually contested, marked by questions of where we are permitted to exist? And who decides?

The Show is both international and intergenerational in its approach with: 12 artists from 7 countries: (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia and the United Kingdom). Ages range from 27 to 95.

The artworks in FUTUROMA are rooted in the techniques and traditions of the Roma diaspora, but at the same time decisively forward-looking. As well as being a means to re-discover our history in an impactful and engaging way the project is a chance to envision a radical and progressive vision of Roma to come.

As Roma we are too often told that we have no future—that we are relics of the past. FUTUROMA draws together versions of the futures we are building to create alternative perspectives informed by all that came before and the promise of all that can be, placing us firmly in the here and now.

### **Daniel Baker**

Daniel Baker is a Romani Gypsy born in Kent, United Kingdom in 1961. An artist, curator and theorist, he holds a PhD on the subject of Gypsy aesthetics from the Royal College of Art, London. Baker acted as exhibitor and advisor to the first and second Roma Pavilions: Paradise Lost and Call the Witness at the 52nd and 54th Venice Biennales respectively.

Baker's work examines the role of art in the enactment of social agency through an eclectic practice that interrogates contemporary art discourse and its social implications via the reconfiguration of elements of the Roma aesthetic. Publications include *We Roma: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art* (2013) and *Ex Libris* (2009). Baker's work is exhibited internationally and can be found in collections worldwide. Former Chair of the Gypsy Council (2006–2009). He lives and works in London.

Baker's doctoral research employed a three-part methodology composed of curating, art practice and writing. The selection and display of works by Roma artists formed the foundation of his research method.

His studio practice and writing were employed as interpretive tools through which to gain greater insight into the meanings and implications of the artworks under examination. The findings from his original research continue to develop his understanding of Roma visual culture and to inform his ongoing curatorial, studio and writing practices. Baker has been instrumental in the development and implementation of the Romani Cultural and Arts Company (RCAC) 'Gypsy Maker' project—a unique initiative which commissions and exhibits new artworks by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller artists in the UK. Baker is Visual Advisor to the RomArchive: international digital archive of Roma arts.