

Venice  
Biennale  
2015

## All aboard the Venice Biennale Bargenale, Michèle Lamy's scaffolding-clad freighter

At once a hangout, restaurant and recording studio with guests including A\$AP Rocky, the barge for the Biennale gave Venice a sight to remember

In fact she is 71, spent part of her childhood with her grandparents in the Alpine town of Oyonnax, later worked as both a defense attorney and cabaret dancer in Paris during the 70s, and then met Owens in Los Angeles when she hired him as a pattern cutter on her own line, Lamy. She has diamond-studded teeth.

Point is, if we were all on the barge to do something, Lamy was not telling. Instead she wanted to hear stories. She wanted to tell stories of her own, she said, and the barge, like the London ferry, and [a similar excursion aboard a Victorian train near St Moritz before it](#), are the way she tells them. "And perhaps I feel like this is 1001 Nights," she said, "and if I stop telling the stories, bop, I'm dead."



📷 Captain's pick: Rick Owens stares over the side.  
Photograph: OWENSCORP

Like the London ferryboat before it, this Venetian barge, despite its often glittering cast of characters, was free and open to the public, with food prepared by a chef in residence, [Dieuveil Malonga](#). Ultimately it was kind of tableau vivant which Lamy had set the stage for and cast. Everyone aboard was invited to play a part, to improvise it as they saw fit. In which case, Lamy, equal parts impresario and enthusiastic party attendee – brought all of these pieces together, not just for our entertainment, but for her own. "It's not a party boat," Lamy says. "It was the whole thing, the entire experience that made it."

On the last day of the Bargenale, I asked Owens what the project actually was. "I've tried to figure it out myself," he says. "There is someone here filming – is it a film, a performance, a restaurant? I think she's just the mother hen. Her instinct is always to build a nest for everyone to come together, where she can hatch her little chicks and watch them grow."

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