Modena, 10 April 2025

Press release

IN THE PARADISE OF BIODIVERSITY LOST WITH FALLEN FRUIT

With the "Paradise Lost" exhibition David Allen Burns and Austin Young carpet the 17th-century Palazzina in Modena's Giardini Ducali with images inspired by Museo della Figurina picture cards in a reflection on the environment

The 17th-century Palazzina dei Giardini Ducali in Modena, a stone's throw from the botanical garden, has been transformed into a "paradise of biodiversity lost". The lush environment with images of flowers, plants, butterflies, birds and animals of all kinds and species has been created for the occasion by David Allen Burns and Austin Young of Californian duo Fallen Fruit, to prompt reflection on the natural environment under threat from climate change. The visual installations in the "Paradise Lost" exhibition, curated by Francesca Fontana, draw inspiration from the images in the Museo della Figurina historical collections, taking over drapes and walls to create an immersive environment. The images on the "Paradise Lost" bespoke tarot cards again come from the historical picture cards. Visitors to the exhibition can turn to the cards to explore the beauty and chaos of the world in the attempt to momentarily capture its wild nature.

The exhibition, which opens at 6 pm on Friday 11 April, will be on show until 24 August. Organized by Fondazione Ago Modena Fabbriche, it is part of "Il Tempo della Meraviglia" project promoted by the foundation and its founding members the municipality of Modena, UNIMORE and Fondazione di Modena. It is also part of the "Alberi Festival. Costruire la città degli alberi" programme. For information: www.agomodena.it.

The exhibition continues in the Museo della Figurina in Palazzo Santa Margherita where visitors can admire the original images that inspired the artists' work. The advertising cards are mainly taken from collections published between 1885 and

1925 by historic brands such as Liebig, Bon Marché, Suchard and many more. The refined drawings were typically accompanied by simple explanatory texts, making the card albums into fun little encyclopaedias: from “Flower Symbols” and “Alpine Heights”, through “Insect Power” and “Great Cultivations”, to “Butterflies and Cherubs” or “Children and Shells”.

The Palazzina dei Giardini Ducali instead plays host to the image-filled, alluring environment of the site-specific work also containing taxidermied animals from the UNIMORE zoology and comparative anatomy museum. Like silent witnesses absorbed by the artwork, the wolves, foxes, monkeys, birds, iguanas and toads seem to ignore the visitor and remind us of the fragility of existence and the precarious balance of nature.

The installation draws inspiration from the epic poem “Paradise Lost” by John Milton and invites us not only to reflect on the vulnerability of ecosystems, but also on the consequences of free will: despite having the chance to look after our environment, humankind seems to have chosen – underlines curator Francesca Fontana – to pursue a logic of consumerism and exploitation. Fallen Fruit’s work has always had a spiritual tendency. Their very name is taken from a passage in Leviticus that invites part of the harvest to be left to the poor. Ever since they mapped the public fruit trees in Los Angeles in 2004, their works have always been closely connected to urban spaces and drawn towards “sharing the world with others”.

Guided tours of the exhibition will be available every Saturday at 5 pm (booking required). The first, on 12 April, will be led by the two artists and the curator. They will all be present at the opening at 6 pm on Friday 11 April to be followed, from 7 to 9 pm, by a DJ set with Juta all’Orto and a track selection inspired by the exhibition and curated in collaboration with Fallen Fruit. There is more: a series of Fallen Fruit-themed cocktails and mocktails will be available throughout the exhibition at the Palazzina dei Giardini Ducali bar, with discounts for exhibition visitors and events programme participants. There will also be reduced-price exhibition tickets for bar patrons who have tried out a cocktail and a special young people’s discount for the Thursday evening *aperitivo*.

Entry to both exhibition venues is free for the opening weekend. Opening times are 11 am to 7 pm. Various art-science-blended initiatives are scheduled: the “Dance Dance Dance” workshop with dancer and choreographer Elisa Balugani

on Saturday at 10 am gives the chance to visit, understand and interpret the exhibition through gestures, listening to your body, and stimulating creativity and well-being (book at www.agomodena.it). There will also be activities for children over the two days. They will be given a free gift of special seeds with the slogan: “Plant a flower, feed a bee, save the future!”

Other appointments are already scheduled for the coming weeks. For children: “Il Mondo in una carta” workshop on 10 May and 27 June and the “Faune Impercettibili” workshop with the zoology and comparative anatomy museum on 13 June. Booking required for both. There will be a special guided tour of the Museo della Figurina on occasion of “Quante storie nella storia” (10 May); an initiative in partnership with the municipal environment office (11 May, bike ride from the Parco della Resistenza to the Giardini Ducali where there will be a flea market); a talk with Alessandro Giannì from Greenpeace (13 May); night-time opening for the Notte dei Musei (17 May); a special guided tour of the Giardini Ducali in collaboration with the UNIMORE botanical garden on occasion of Biodiversity Day (22 May); and, in collaboration with the FEM (Future Education Modena) EdTech Hub, an interactive installation that invites the public to take part in an experiment involving art, nature and neuroscience (24 May), using eye-tracking to monitor visitors’ eye movements as they observe the images in the exhibition and to examine the positive influence that looking at art and nature can have on mental and physical well-being.

The full activity programme is constantly being updated and can be found at www.agomodena.it.

PARADISE LOST
David Allen Burns and Austin Young / Fallen Fruit

Modena
11 April – 24 August 2025

Curated by
Francesca Fontana

Palazzina dei Giardini Ducali, corso Cavour 2
Museo della Figurina, corso Canalgrande103

Opening times April to June
From Wednesday to Friday: 11 am–1 pm / 4 pm–7 pm
Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays: 11 am–7 pm

Opening times July and August
From Wednesday to Sunday and public holidays: 3 pm–7 pm

Two-in-one venue ticket
Full price 10 euros (concessions 5 euros – residents in the province of Modena 7 euros)
Free entry first Sunday of the month
Free entry every Wednesday for residents in the province of Modena
Guided tours Saturdays at 5 pm (booking required, no additional cost)

Information: biglietteria@fondazioneago.it
agomodena.it
+39 059 2032919 (Museo della Figurina)

Press office: press@fondazioneago.it