

nato a venezia
Koen Vanmechelen



nato
a venezia

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Open University of Diversity

Curated by Peter Noever

Nato a Venezia

Open University of Diversity

Collateral Event of the 54th
International Art Exhibition
La Biennale di Venezia

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Lettere ed Arti
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Venice, Italy

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the most
serene
chicken

adriano berengo

The magnificence of the Most Serene Republic of Venice, or La Serenissima, attracted people from the most diverse places but especially from the East. Their presence enriched the city not only economically but culturally as well. Here, earlier than in other places, it was understood that immigration was crucial to ensuring the city's growth. La Serenissima based its wealth on a flourishing commerce, one that brought together more than 100,000 inhabitants of various ethnic groups and unified them despite their differences. Between the XV and XVI centuries, the time of its greatest splendor, Venice was a cosmopolitan city. Greeks, Turks, Arabs, and Germans brought to Venice new ideas and techniques that they managed to merge fully. Of course at that time there was no talk of multiculturalism or integration, but history shows how these people managed to gradually become part of Venetian society. Specific regulations for foreigners safeguarded the continuity of their origins and cultures. The trump card in Venice's expansion was this multiculturalism. The foreigners have left valuable imprints that Venice still retains in such evocative

place names as the “Fondaco dei Turchi” (Turks’ Inn), the “Fondaco dei Tedeschi” (Germans’ Inn), the Jewish Ghetto, the island of “San Lazzaro degli Armeni” (Saint Lazarus of the Armenians) and in the many “campi, calli” and courts bearing Greek names. Then there is the host of Venetian surnames – like Turco, Del Turco, Turcato, Moro, Morello – that also recall these Eastern and Middle Eastern origins. Lastly, there is the Venetian dialect itself that still today retains words that came from the East. The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project is a scientific and artistic project of racial and cultural hybridization created twenty years ago by Koen Vanmechelen. His project found fertile soil, an ideal incubator in Venice and specifically on the island of Murano, where our collaboration first began. Over the years, both here on Murano and in other international glassworks, he has created various art projects using glass as a material for cultural hybridization and exchange. For all these reasons, Koen Vanmechelen’s exhibition nato a Venezia / Open University of Diversity, a collateral event of the 54th Venice Biennale represents not only a step in his quest for artistic expression, coming of age with this project, but an important moment for this city, its permanent residents and visitors to reflect on Venice’s future as a symbol of culture, solidarity and hospitality.





ALAMOZZI
DIE INGE
E POLLA
DI VIAG
RINCI AR
TORICO
LEBRA
CONTEN
BALLADIO
1616

DI BELLINI
TIVRA VE
VITA PE
TA E FIOR
EG ALLA O
TTIANO
E

POLITAN CHICKEN
SE PAYOLMI
♂
COOPERATION
BELDING BETWEEN
SE 乌鸡 (CCF)
x
الغانا (EGYPT)

ROBUSTI
L'INFORZATO
DEI ARTISTI
NO H



get
excited!

peter noever

Andrea Palladio (1508 - 1580), Marco Polo (1254 - 1324), Paolo Veronese (1528 - 1588), Antonio Canova (1757 - 1822), Dante Alighieri (1265 - 1321), or Daniele Manin (1804 - 1857), and many other – fifty in total – outstanding representatives of the arts, politics, and science are assembled here in the entrance hall of the proud thirteenth century Palazzo Loredan. As history has irrevocably proven, all of these men (and there are only men) perpetuated in stone in this Pantheon of Science are true ambassadors of the spiritual life of Venice and the Veneto. It is impossible to elude the view of the stone busts resting side by side on their marble pedestals. Each of them is the embodiment of the fame and prestige of the unique lagoon city. Everything is as expected, every bust has its place, and with the help of these worthy portrayals the visitor can playfully immerse herself into the eventful history of this city, home of Veronese, Tiziano, or Tintoretto, and also of Nono, Scarpa, or Vedova. But right here and now the visitor will discover a strange creature among the history laden busts, a projection of the future, cast in marble. It carries

the name Mechelse Fayoumi and shall be born in Venice on the occasion of the 54th International Art Biennale. Accordingly, the inscription "The Cosmopolitan Chicken 'Mechelese Fayoumi', 15th Generation. Crossbreeding between Mechelese Silky (CCP) X Fayoumi (Egypt)" is chiseled into the stone pedestal. "Nato a Venezia" (Born in Venice) is the name of the installation of the exceptional artist Koen Vanmechelen. A discrete, yet clearly articulated artistic intervention has been our common goal from the very beginning, the site of action, Venice and the Palazzo Loredan with its history and its scientific focus, being our particular challenge. Taking this into account while at the same time accentuating the artistic position of Koen Vanmechelen on the verge of science is the central concern of this project, which is exceptional in every respect. Central to "Nato a Venezia" is the open university of diversity, an open study center for the exploration of biological and cultural diversity. In a biological and intellectual breeding center, including an incubator

where the active breeding of the Biennale Chicken, the 15th generation of the Cosmopolitan Chicken crossbreeding project – Mechelse Fayoumi – takes place, live research on cultural and biological diversity will be made accessible to the visitor for the entire period of the 54th Venice Biennale. Topping the intervention off by a live-stream “reality show” of the parent chickens of the Biennale Chicken, Koen Vanmechelen has turned the Palazzo Loredan into an art laboratory, into a contemporary manifestation on the borderline of art and science.

For the duration of the Venetian Art Show the old, dignified library on Campo S. Stefano is filled again with life. The interdisciplinary project “Open University of Diversity” adds a momentum to the historic site that is committed to this space dedicated to science and research while conveying the utopia of man's unison with nature in the broadest sense and creating a new approach to art.

The starting point of this artistic intervention is a happy event: Nato a Venezia.