

T H E A
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M M X V I I

PAVILION OF RUSSIA AT THE 57TH
INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA



la Biennale di Venezia

57. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali

THEATRUM ORBIS

COMMISSIONED AND CURATED BY
SEMYON MIKHAILOVSKY

13 MAY TO 26 NOVEMBER 2017

OFFICIAL INAUGURATION CEREMONY 3PM, 10 MAY

Theatrum Orbis, a new exhibition conceived and created for the Russian Pavilion at the 57th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, features artists Grisha Bruskin, Recycle Group and Sasha Pirogova alongside contemporary Russian composers.

The exhibition title – translated as *Theatre of the World* – takes its name from Abraham Ortelius' atlas published in Antwerp in 1570. Marking an epoch in the history of cartography, it was the first modern atlas to combine knowledge with experience, in the fields of science and culture which accumulated during the Age of Discovery.

Theatrical in its concept and form, the exhibition includes sculpture, installation, video and sound across three emotionally connected parts. Visitors follow a narrative throughout the pavilion, first encountering Bruskin's installation of figurative white sculptures; then, on descending the stairs and passing through a labyrinth, further rooms contain works by Recycle Group and Pirogova. While Bruskin represents a long-established generation of Russian artists, Recycle Group and Pirogova come from a new post-digital era engaged with technology.

Music and sound play a very important role in the exhibition, with specially written scores by Dimitri Kourlianski, Peter Aidu and Konstantin Dudakov-Kashuro. For the first time sound is not constrained by the walls of the pavilion, but is taken out into the Giardini, establishing a dialogue with the viewer through Dimitri Kourlianski's sound performance *Commedia delle arti*.

Part 1: Scene Change

Artist: Grisha Bruskin

Co-Curators: Giuseppe Barbieri, Silvia Burini

Grisha Bruskin's installation *Scene Change*, is as implacably regulated as the wheels of a universal clock mechanism where two periods, remote from one another, Antiquity

and Modernity, meet and clash in a series of eloquent images according to the ancient rules of the “art of memory”. This uncanny landscape, marked by tens and tens of figures, represents the contradictory nature of power, incarnated by a mechanised hybrid: the two-headed bird. Dolls, dummies, hybrids and androids give shape to the threat of international terrorism, while soldiers with binoculars, drones and archaic idols equipped with antennae and radars pursue the idea of a “transparent” world where they can monitor and spy on the human masses. From the ancient “art of memory” – a process through the millenia, of the organisation of different languages, Bruskin conceived the ambition to create a Magnum Opus, to melt down our contemporary age in the crucible of a timeless alchemist.

Part 2: Blocked Content

Artists: Recycle Group

Co-Curator: Ekaterina Shcherbakova

In *Blocked Content*, Recycle Group create an absurdist image of artificial intelligence as an authority on ethical standards playing with the phenomenon of virtual reality and social media. In an exploration of immortality in contemporary society, ‘saints’ of the web are granted eternal life and ‘sinners’ – including spammers, virus retailers and fake-celebrities – are punished. An epiphany about life and death in the virtual realm, the installation takes inspiration from Dante's 9th Circle of Hell. Featuring scenes of Hell, the installation shows profiles frozen in a vacuum, without likes and reposts and unable to return to life, only fully visible through a virtual reality app that will be downloaded to visitors’ mobile devices.

Part 3: Garden

Artist: Sasha Pirogova

Video artist Pirogova focuses on motion and its capacities by exploring the territory between theatre, ritual, performance and dance to transform rational movements into metaphors. *Garden* is a performance video telling a story of eternal life, death and immortality expressed through notions of darkness and light. Darkness is not a horrifying thing, but as a lack of light, which in turn means it has the potential to be enlightened and the human being is a source of light.

Sound Pavilion: Commedia delle arti

Composer: Dmitri Kourliandski

Commedia delle arti is a new work from contemporary composer Kourliandski consisting of an interactive and performative sound installation. From the façade of the building *Commedia dell'ascolto* plays recorded by leading Russian musicians. At the entrance to the Pavilion, visitors can pick-up ‘score-instructions’ that can be followed to create a dialogue between the artist, visitor and outside world.

About the Russian Pavilion

The Russian Pavilion in the Giardini in Venice was designed by Alexei Shchusev and ceremonially formally opened by Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna of Russia at a ceremony in 1914. Russian artists have participated in the Biennale Arte from its first Exhibition of 1895 and since then, over 800 Russian artists have shown work there from leading names like Repin, Malevich and Kabakov to emerging artists. Semyon Mikhailovsky was appointed Commissioner of the Russian Pavilion for the exhibition of Biennale Arte and Biennale Architettura in 2016 and will hold the post until 2021. The Russian Pavilion is supported by the Ministry of Culture of Russia and ROSIZO. The core funding for the project comes from private sponsorship.

Contacts

www.ruspavilion.com

Instagram

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#TheatrumOrbis #RussianPavilion2017 #GrishaBruskin #RecycleGroup
#SashaPirogovaArt #DmitriKourliandski

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