

One of a Thousand Ways to Defeat Entropy

Official Collateral Project
54th Venice Biennale of Contemporary Art

This major international exhibition features monumental new works by four of the most exciting and renowned artists working today: Alexander Ponomarev (Russia), Hans Op de Beeck (Belgium), Adrian Ghenie (Romania) and Ryoichi Kurokawa (Japan). ***One of a Thousand Ways to Defeat Entropy*** is an Official Collateral Project of the 54th Venice Biennale of Contemporary Art – the world's oldest and most prestigious art festival – and will be on view at the Arsenale Novissimo from **3 June to 27 November 2011**. The exhibition is organised by the AVC Charity Foundation (London) with the academic support of The Courtauld Institute of Art.

Entropy! A key term characterising the movement towards chaos – in physics, probability theory, sociology and information technology. The entropic end-state is nothing less than uniform oblivion, which recent art-theoretical discourse has associated with representations of melting and liquidification – an ocean of homogeneity. The exhibition throws light on this inescapable tendency (declared to be the second law of thermodynamics), demonstrating that resistance to it can only be carried out by a creative person. Only creators give birth to life energy that is capable of creating improbable structures. The bearers of this power – artists, engineers, poets – are a small army, the guides of evolution, warriors with cosmic noise. In June they will come together in a place where the concept of entropy takes on a strategic character: Venice, the sinking city. Located in the Arsenale Novissimo (a former shipyard) *One of a Thousand Ways to Defeat Entropy* is a fantastic machine, a vessel, sailing in the expanding cosmos of the imagination, leaving behind works in space that allow us – for a second at least – to doubt the inevitable domination of entropy.

The participating artists are internationally recognized as leading voices in contemporary culture. They have all exhibited in major public museums in both their home countries and abroad, and they are represented in important state and private collections. For *One of a Thousand Ways to Defeat Entropy* each will create a new large-scale installation befitting the imposing renaissance industrial architecture of the Arsenale Novissimo. For every artist, the technical and artistic ambition of their new work represents a career milestone.

Hans Op de Beeck debuts the latest in his acclaimed series of 'total' installations, *Location 7*: an immersive environment faithfully evoking a pathetic Western European suburban home and garden in grey monotone – within which every aspect, from furniture to blades of grass, is made of concrete. It is as if some Vesuvius has covered anywhere western Europe in ash. Op de Beeck was born in Turnhout, Belgium (1969), and lives and works in Brussels.

Adrian Ghenie will unveil Duchamp Funeral 3, an eighteen-metre long, four-metre tall painterly collage depicting Marcel Duchamp's corpse lying 'in state', like Vladimir Ilych Lenin in Red Square. Ghenie was born in Baia-Mare, Romania (1977). He lives and works in London and Berlin.

Ryoichi Kurokawa contributes *Octfalls*, a digital audio-visual work that consists of eight lcd screens and attendant speakers suspended from the ceiling of the Arsenale, arranged in an octagonal three-dimensional configuration. Oscillating footage of waterfalls and digital distortion whirls around the viewer with sound – producing a destabilizing and hallucinatory effect. Kurokawa was born in Osaka, Japan (1978). He lives and works in Berlin.

Alexander Ponomarev (b.1957) is represented by *Formula*. This work consists of two eight-metre high acrylic columns, each clear and hollow with a diameter of one and half metres, containing twelve metric tons of lagoon water. Within each, a kinetic futuro-automobile rises and falls in its vertical casket. Alexander Ponomarev was born in Dnepropetrovsk, Russia (1957). He lives and works in Moscow.

The Curators

Alexander Ponomarev graduated from the USSR Nautical Engineering College in 1979, following a period at the Orel Art School. He is an Officier d'Arts et de Lettres (France) and a member of the Russian Academy of Arts. In 2007 he represented Russia at the 52nd Biennale di Venezia and in 2009 docked his handmade submarine, *SubTiziano*, on the Grand Canal as an Official Collateral Project of the 53rd Biennale. His works are in major public collections worldwide including the Centre Georges Pompidou, FNAC (Fonds National d' Art Contemporain), France, the State Russian Museum, St Petersburg, the Collection of the Great Duchess of Luxembourg, the National Museum of Singapore, and the University Jaume I, Castellon de la Plasa (Spain).

Nadim Samman read Philosophy at University College London before undertaking a doctorate in Art History at The Courtauld Institute of Art. He has written for publications including *Third Text*, *The Art Newspaper*, *Art Review* (Online), *Contemporary*, *Asian Affairs*, *Art India*, *Erotic Review*, *Naked Punch* and *WestEast*. He has also been an invited speaker at MoMA Warsaw, the 2009 Beijing Biennale, Christie's and SOAS. His curatorial projects in London, Moscow, Berlin and Zurich have included presentations of leading Russian modern and contemporary artists, emerging international talent and, recently, a large-scale photography exhibition at Somerset House (London) under the patronage of Prince William. In February 2012 Nadim curates the 4th Arts in Marrakech Biennale.

The Supporters

AVC Charity Foundation supports projects in the visual and performing arts throughout Western and Eastern Europe. Based in London, AVC is committed to excellence and cultural exchange. *One of a Thousand Ways to Defeat Entropy* is the first in series of ambitious visual artistic commissions that will take place in the next five years.

The Courtauld Institute of Art is a world-class centre of intellectual enquiry in the fields of the history of art and architecture, conservation and curatorship. It fosters and advances the understanding, care and enjoyment of the visual arts through a distinctive combination of advanced research, specialist teaching, professional training, exceptional libraries and visual resources, outstanding galleries and a wide range of public programmes. The Courtauld has a faculty of 25 art historians and six conservators and each year 400 students enrol in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The Courtauld is exceptional in covering the full chronological range of art history from antiquity to contemporary art, from a wide range of methodological approaches. Research-led small group teaching is an essential feature of The Courtauld's tradition as well as the opportunity to see first-hand the works of art being studied. In addition to their teaching responsibilities, faculty are actively engaged in research and publication and many curate exhibitions at other art institutions.

The Courtauld's 6,000 alumni around the world have a major impact as museum directors, curators, academics, conservators, critics, journalists, teachers and art dealers. Notable museum and gallery directors include Neil MacGregor (British Museum), Nicholas Penny (The National Gallery), Sir Nicholas Serota (Tate), Sir Mark Jones (V&A), Christopher Brown (The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford), John Leighton (National Galleries of Scotland), Simon Groom (Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art), Penelope Curtis (Tate Britain) and Christoph Grunenberg (Tate Liverpool). In the USA alumni include Thomas Campbell (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) and William Griswold (Morgan Library & Museum, New York). Distinguished alumni also include professors and senior academics at Oxford, Cambridge, London and universities throughout the world.

Exhibition *One of a Thousand Ways to Defeat Entropy*

Dates: 3 June to 27 November 2011

Location: Arsenale Novissimo, Tesa Nappa 89, Venice, Italy
Tel. +, website

Opening hours: Daily 10 am to 6 pm, last admission 5.30 pm, closed Tuesday

Admission: Free

Curator Alexander Ponomarev
Co-Curator Nadim Samman

Supporters: AVC Charity Foundation (London)
The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London

Catalogue: A fully illustrated catalogue will accompany the exhibition with essays by the curators and further texts by leading scholars and critics including Prof. Andrei Tolstoy (Pushkin Museum), Prof. John Bowlt (University of Southern California), Prof. Nicoletta Misler (Istituto Universitario Orientale, Naples) and Dr Sarah Wilson (The Courtauld Institute of Art).
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How to get there: From Arsenale by shuttle boat (during Biennale opening days only)
Vaporetto station Bacini, lines 41, 42, 51, 52

For further information, artists' CVs and images, please contact:

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