

TOWARDS THE FUTURE – 35 Years of Galerie Dr. Dorothea van der Koelen Mainz | Venezia

Those who, like Dr. Dorothea van der Koelen, have the advantage of drawing from an eventful past, look to the future with optimism. The gallery owner, who 35 years ago founded an art gallery in Mainz, since more than ten years successfully manages her *dépendance* in the city of the Biennale.

Representing at the same time a gateway to the East and a bridge to the Alps, Venice has distinguished itself over the past decades as one of the major cultural centers in Europe. Many galleries, foundations and private museums have opened here their second seat, to enjoy the annual exchange between the Biennale of Art and Architecture.

In this exciting social and cultural context, Dorothea van der Koelen has put over a really interesting selection of artists, working strategically between Mainz and Venice. "The Gallery of Dorothea van der Koelen," according to Philip Rylands, director of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, "is the best international gallery of Venice."

On the occasion of the Art Biennale 2015, with the exhibition *Towards the Future* La Galleria gazes forward, focusing its questions on how the artistic creation can be able to maintain its sustainable validity in this era of digital revolution, and on what the new roads are that can be explored by Art.

Far in advance, Dorothea van der Koelen has chosen a theme which is consistent with the one presented by the artistic director of the Biennale Okwui Enwezor and entitled *All the world 's futures*, that is: how do all the different realities that are part of this world expect, plan and implement their own future?

Dorothea van der Koelen presents a selection of works from those exhibited for the first time on 1 November 2014 in CADORO, her new centre for arts and culture in Mainz.

The installation *After here & there*, by the American conceptual artist **Lawrence Weiner** (* 1942), placed on the front wall of La Galleria in Venice, serves as *pars pro toto* for the entire show. Weiner's constant commitment in seeking new ways for Contemporary Art is now more relevant than ever. At the 55th Art Biennale in 2013 he presented as a collateral event *The Grace of Gesture*: a text played in ten different languages, from Chinese to Arabic and Hebrew, which interacted with the city and was reproduced on water buses.

The leitmotif in Weiner's works, Time-Space-Existence, is also used by Arab artist **Mohammed Kazem** (* 1969). For the Art Biennale in 2013 Kazem has set up the UAE Pavilion with his work *Walking on Water* and has carried on the experience of the Biennale through the work *Triangle*, donated to the van der Koelen Foundation for Art and Science. In his wall installation, several white numbers of different sizes intertwine, representing geographic coordinates that seem to shine on a blue background. This artwork should have been exhibited in La Galleria, but has been replaced by one from the series *Fixing Nothing*, discovered by Dorothea van der Koelen in Kazem's atelier during her recent visit to the United Arab Emirates with Guggenheim Museum International Patrons. For his new series, Mohammed Kazem has chosen aluminum, a specific material on which he fixes screws and screwnuts of different colors. "Mohammed's works in metal are an ideal contribution to the theme of the future," says the gallery owner, in fact "in a digital world where almost nothing is tangible, in contemporary art we can notice a return to the materiality of the artwork."

Dorothea van der Koelen discovered Kazem during one of her many trips to the Emirates along with the artist **Lore Bert** (* 1936), who in 1999 was invited as *artista emerita* at the Sharjah Biennial. After the great success of her exhibition *Art & Knowledge* as a collateral event at the Biennale in 2013 (which brought to the Biblioteca Marciana in San Marco over 100,000 visitors), Lore Bert presents two works in the collective art exhibition *Personal Structures - Crossing Borders* in Palazzo Bembo. Bert's works for La Galleria feature a new color: the artist, soaking the delicate Japanese paper with a bright magenta, sends a positive signal in the context of *Towards the Future*. Her large format artwork *Golden Ornament* (180 x 180 cm) is exposed on the front wall of La Galleria, as if to conclude the complex of works submitted for this Biennale. This work, despite the element of fragility represented by paper, offers through its strong colors a forceful counterpoint to Mohammed Kazem's metalwork displayed on the opposite wall. In the main hall of La Galleria, will also be presented works of three artists who celebrate a special birthday this year. As a tribute to the Austrian **Heinz Gappmayr** (* 1925 - † 2010) , well-known representative of Visual Poetry, Dorothea van der Koelen has chosen the work *Blanc* (160 x 110 cm) of 1993, where the white background becomes the central part of the work; on the edge, almost imperceptibly painted are the outlines of the word *Blanc*. The color white, as the sum of all the possibilities and as a symbol of the future is also at the core of the embossings made by the German artist **Günther Uecker** (* 1930), who this year celebrates its 85th birthday. In the main room of La Galleria will be exposed the legendary *Graphein* (70 x 50 cm) of 2002, a book composed of 12 embossings by the artist, accompanied by a selection of particularly known calligraphic texts from various cultures. The nail, which appears as the only possible abstraction in the art of Group ZERO star Günther Uecker, is shown in the work *Strömung - Current* (120 x 80 cm) of 2000.

As in any collective art exhibition in La Galleria, **Fabrizio Plessi** (* 1940), multimedia artist and Venetian by adoption, has to be present. In 2011 La Galleria hosted an individual exhibition of Plessi and in the autumn of 2015, on the occasion of the artist's 75th birthday, the CADORO in Mainz will dedicate him a Solo-Show. While *La Barca*, a 6 meters high video-sculpture, is exhibited in the entrance foyer of CADORO, one of Plessi's famous sketches will be displayed in Venice.

Also **Daniel Buren** (* 1938) belongs to the family of international artists represented by Dorothea van der Koelen. For *Towards the Future* he will exhibit the artwork *12 B 5 (violet)*, from his famous series *Cadre Décadré* of 2006. The square steel frame (113.1 x 113.1 cm) is composed of plexiglass squares containing vertical white stripes, that alternate with transparent squares in pink. This work conforms to Buren's typical rule that all sizes have to be proportional to 8.7 cm. As stated by Prof. Wulf Herzogenrath Buren's work is particularly significant "because it simultaneously examines the general conditions of Art." This creative comparison between appearing - seeming - disappearing ranks Daniel Buren in the futuristic context of *Towards the Future*.

Other works as acrylic glassware by **Hellmut Bruch** (* 1936), several works from the series *Ergänzungen* by **Vera Röhm** (* 1943), one of **Kisho Mwakaiyama's** waxworks and *Chaosbox* by **Arne Quinze** (* 1972) will be displayed in the rooms of La Galleria.

In Lore Bert's Venetian atelier opened on the occasion of this exhibition or on request for visitors, is exposed *Pyramidensculptur* (28 x 20 x 20 cm) created by the artist in 2015 specifically for Venice. This elegant round shaped sculpture in magenta, which seems to float on a black lacquered pyramid, offers the visitor the prospect of a really rosy future.