

For immediate release

FUTURE HISTORIES

Mark Dion | Arseny Zhilyaev

9 May – 23 August 2015

Casa dei Tre Oci, Giudecca 43, Venice, Italy (Vaporetto Stop 'Zitelle')

EXHIBITION OPEN FROM 10AM TO 7PM ON 6, 7, 8 MAY

SPECIAL PREVIEW: 7 MAY, 3-5PM

WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF THE CURATOR AND ARTISTS

OPENING: 7 MAY, 6-8PM

V-A-C Foundation is proud to present a dialogue exhibition between **Mark Dion** and **Arseny Zhilyaev**, curated by **Magnus af Petersens**.

Taking the traditional museum practice of collections and taxonomic displays as a starting point, the artists will create a *wunderkammer* in the making and an imaginary future museum.

United by a flair for speculation and talent for combining the critical with the playful, Dion and Zhilyaev will transform the historic Casa dei Tre Oci into a dynamic and immersive environment. Both artists will create a new large-scale installation, each occupying a floor, as well as presenting a selection of existing works in other spaces.

Mark Dion's new installation *The Wonder Workshop* is a meditation on the origins of collecting, exploring the pre-Enlightenment Wunderkammer tradition. The work proceeds from a speculative chain of relations which begins with a living bird in far off South America which is killed and skinned by a traveler, brought back to Europe, where it is sold to a curiosity dealer. It is then mounted by a taxidermist and sold to a collector, who installs the bird in his cosmological curiosity cabinet. There it is drawn by an artist, and the image then

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reproduced by an engraver and bound in a rare volume. The chain of events that make up the story of this particular bird could end here but, 400 years later, Dion picks it up and fashions a new link that highlights the fetishisation of the exotic and interrogates our fascination with the act of collecting and the culture of nature. With a team of talented sculptors, who will set up a live workshop on the second floor of the exhibition space in Venice, he will produce three-dimensional objects based on the curious imagery from 16th and 17th century Wunderkammer catalog engravings of exotic animals plants, instruments, and ethnographic and Archeological artifacts. These will then be exhibited in a new marvelous wonder room exhibition.

In addition to this new installation, Dion will also show works from "The Pursuit of Sir William Hamilton". Commissioned by the Fondazione Morra Greco in Naples, the project is an investigation into the legacy and influence of the great polymath and collector Sir Hamilton, the British Envoy Extraordinary to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies from 1764 to 1798 and a scholar, art patron, archaeologist and volcanologist.

Also on display will be Dion's Raiding Neptune's Vault: A Voyage to the Bottom of the Canals and Lagoon of Venice (1997-1998), the result of an archaeological dig where he dredged a Venetian canal and displayed the finds, originally commissioned by the Nordic Pavilion for the Venice Biennale of 1997. A work which further probes the methodologies of the gathering and collecting favored by museums and the natural sciences that shape our understanding of both nature and culture.

In his new project ***Cradle of Humankind***, Arseny Zhilyaev depicts an unsettling image of a far off future in which humans have naturally abandoned Earth, turning it into a museum-reservation called "The Cradle of Humankind", dedicated to the origins of life and civilization. The reservation is part of a network of local museums commemorating historic figures and key events in the history of civilization on Earth, presenting artefacts from the past and merging the utopian aesthetics of the Soviet space programme with the ultimate idealism of Russian Cosmism. And, it is within the framework of this Utopia and Idealism that the museum also offers unique services, resurrecting client's ancestors, therefore achieving the highest metaphysical aim.

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In contemplating the museum as an institution from a future perspective, Zhilyaev investigates its ambivalent role in the formation and conservation of our ideas about the world and life within contemporary political and economical conditions, as well as its growing corporate prominence within the global system of interminable cycles of production and consumption.

Zhilyaev will also show a part of his 2012 exhibition project *Museum of Proletarian Culture*, which rethinks the heritage of soviet avant-garde museology from the 1920s. Also on display will be works from his 2013 project *Pedagogical Poem, the archive of the future museum of history*, a collaborative educational project investigating the relationship between history and its display in museums of revolution.

The new works that have been commissioned for the exhibition will each fill one floor of the Palazzo Tre Oci whereas the other works will be presented in the various galleries on the entrance floor of the Palazzo.

Future Histories is curated by **Magnus af Petersens**, Senior Curator and Head of Collections at Moderna Museet in Stockholm, and Curator at Large at the Whitechapel Gallery in London.

V-A-C Foundation supports as donor the 56th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia.

A fully illustrated catalogue will be produced to accompany the exhibition.

V-A-C is dedicated to the international presentation, production and development of Russian contemporary Art – across a multitude of forms and within the framework of invigorated and informed exhibition, education and publishing programmes. Particularly important to the new generation of artists in Russia, V-A-C's focus is on practically

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supporting and expanding the platform for home-grown talent, giving artists the opportunity to experience, engage with and interrogate international cultural practices whilst developing an authentic and autonomous artistic language. It is deservedly considered as one of the key proponents in opening out contemporary Russian culture to the wider world, and practically supporting and developing emerging artists through finding new international platforms for exhibition and opportunities for commissions as well as ways of encouraging cross-cultural exchange - especially important in the current climate.

For all further information, please contact:

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Notes to Editors:

- Full Artist / Curator biogs available on request
- About V-A-C Foundation
V-A-C Foundation is a non-for-profit private institution founded in Moscow in 2009 and committed to supporting contemporary art in Russia. Our focus is directed towards contemporary art and cultural practice with the aim of providing a platform for creativity in the wider sense of the word. We strive to be actively engaged in artistic production, rather than the patronage or sponsorship of ongoing artistic processes. V-A-C is deeply committed to the growing importance of art made in Russia as well as the new generations of artists from around the world.
www.v-a-c.ru
- About Casa dei Tre Oci
Casa dei Tre Oci was designed by the artist Mario De Maria (Marius Pictor) and built in 1913. It is an acclaimed example of neo-gothic architecture in Venice, officially declared as a palazzo of historic and artistic interest by the Direzione Regionale per i Beni Culturali e Paesaggistici del Veneto in 2007. Bought by Fondazione di Venezia in 2000, following a period of careful restoration, it became a public exhibition space,

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showcasing contemporary art exhibitions with particular attention on photography. Casa dei Tre Oci has always been a place of artistic production, a centre for meetings and debates, a studio space for artists taking part in the Biennale, hosting internationally acclaimed figures such as Peggy Guggenheim, Sciltian, Morandi, Fontana, Dario Fo' and Renzo Piano. The Casa dei Tre Oci exhibition space is managed by Civita Tre Venezia in association with Veneto Banca.

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