

For immediate release

V-A-C Foundation presents:

IK-00: THE SPACES OF CONFINEMENT

Curated by Katerina Chuchalina

7 JUNE – 24 AUGUST 2014

Casa dei Tre Oci, Giudecca - Zitelle, Venice, Italy

BIENNALE PREVIEW DAYS: 5, 6, 7 JUNE, 10AM-6PM

PRESS PREVIEW/BRUNCH WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF THE CURATOR AND THE ARTISTS:

5 JUNE, 2.30-4.30PM

OPENING AND MUSIC PERFORMANCE: 7 JUNE, FROM 3PM

Participating artists: **Rossella Biscotti, Sam Durant, Harun Farocki, Valentin Fetisov, Ashley Hunt, Rebecca Lazier, Conor McGrady, Mikhail Nesterov, Markus Schinwald, Jonas Staal, David Ter-Oganyan, Michael Tolmachev, Ines & Eyal Weizman, Donovan Wylie, Urban Fauna Lab, Arseniy Zhilyaev.**

V-A-C Foundation, a not-for-profit, Moscow-based institution, committed to the international presentation, production and development of Russian Contemporary Art, is proud to present the exhibition IK-00 The Spaces of Confinement.

In this project a number of international artists focus on an architecture of exclusion, exploring ways of documenting and witnessing institutional spaces designed to punish and sometimes correct individuals who have been separated from the rest of society.

Prisons, asylums and other correctional facilities are in constant evolution, ideologically, structurally and architecturally, encapsulating whole narrative structures of violence and resistance. How is a space of confinement produced? How can it be witnessed? In what way can it be documented and visualised? The spatial syntax of a prison is a distorted mixture of fantasy and reality. The artists in the exhibition reflect on spaces of constraint, confinement, and containment. The functional aspects of these spaces are beyond the visible; they are distanced both spatially and temporally from the fluid existence of those on the outside. However, these places of enclosure do not exist separately from the everyday. Their construction engenders a complex set of psychological patterns that connect to the human condition of all of us.

The British philosopher and social theorist Jeremy Bentham created plans for a circular prison building he called a 'Panopticon'. Its principle, based on the hyper-visibility of the prisoners in contrast to the

V — a — C

invisible gaze of their warden concealed within the tower, was expanded on by Michel Foucault to consider relationships between power and knowledge. The film by Harun Farocki, 'Prison Images', uses the documenting devices of surveillance systems themselves as his medium, together with individual electronic ankle bracelets and tracking devices, to demystify something of the interiority of both the segregated spaces of prisons and those held within them.

Other artists in the exhibition explore the body within a confined space. In Rebecca Lazier's dance research she reconstructs ritualistic repetitions of movement through a prison space while Valentin Fetisov creates a socio-psychological experience with a delusory choice of options for self-rescue. David Ter-Oganyan shifts a normal trajectory across a space by forcing the viewer to follow a convoluted route, corralled by metal barriers used for riots or crowd control.

The enclosure of the prison is often juxtaposed by its position in the landscape. Prisons often act as visually dominant reminders of colonial occupation, power structures which are present in the drawings of Conor McGrady. The hostile landscape and harsh climate of some prison locations can act as a further form of separation from a habitable world and lack of incentive to escape into it. Michael Tolmachev explores the politics of seeing and documenting, focusing on the remote territories of the 'natural' prison of the former Gulag camps, while the works of some Soviet-era camp prisoners in the form of a few surviving landscapes are both artworks and testaments of facing the invisible maximum-security walls of the landscape itself.

Arseny Zhilyaev connects a poetic imaginary world with a tragic real narrative in his work 'Save the Light'. Canvases exposed to long periods of sunlight shining through a prison window, supposedly made by a fictional protagonist in the form of a Russian avant-garde poet and artist who spent 20 years in a Stalinist Gulag, are linked to the case of an activist arrested in 2012 during mass riots in Moscow whose eyesight was decreasing drastically in the pre-detention prison where he had been held.

The exhibition will take place on Giudecca island in Venice where a womens' prison, an integral part of the local community's life, is located in the immediate neighbourhood of the venue. Rossella Biscotti has collected a number of dream memories from some of the women, and has created an audio installation that is spread out around the exhibition.

A free fully illustrated short guide will be produced for the opening and V-A-C will publish an exhibition catalogue, with installation images and texts by the curator and artists, for end of the year.

Also as part of the exhibition, a live music performance *Doppio Fallo* by Ivan Bushuev and Dmitry Vlasik will take place on 7 June at 5pm at Chiesa delle Zitelle, situated a few minutes walk from the exhibition space.



For all further information / images / interviews, please contact:

Helen Weaver

T. +44 (0)7772 159219

helweaver@gmail.com

Carole Dumoulin

helweaver.office@gmail.com

Notes to Editors:

- Full Artist/Curator biogs available on request

- **About V-A-C Foundation**

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 an invigorated and informed educational programme. Particularly important to the new generation of artists in Russia, V-A-C's focus is on practically 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. www.v-a-c.ru

- **About Casa dei Tre Oci**

The Casa dei Tre Oci, a splendid example of early 20th-century Venetian architecture, was designed by the artist Mario De Maria (Marius Pictor) and built in 1913. The building is one of the main examples of neo-Gothic architecture in Venice, such as to have been declared a monument of historical and artistic interest in 2007 by Veneto Regional Direction for Cultural and Landscape Assets.

After careful restoration by Polymnia, a subsidiary of the Fondazione di Venezia, which bought it in 2000, the Casa dei Tre Oci became a public exhibition space in 2012, a favoured campus for cultural production and comparison of the languages of the contemporary, particularly that of photography. The Casa dei Tre Oci exhibition space is a project of Fondazione di Venezia and Polymnia with Civita Tre Venezie, in association with Veneto Banca. www.treoci.org www.civitatrevenezie.it