

BIO KOEN VANMECHELEN



Koen Vanmechelen (Belgium, °1965) is an internationally renowned conceptual artist. Biocultural diversity is central to his groundbreaking work. Over the past 10 years, Vanmechelen has worked on this theme together with scientists from a broad range of disciplines. These boundary-defying projects have earned him an honorary doctorate from Hasselt University (2010) and the Golden Nica Hybrid Art (2013).

Koen Vanmechelen is best known for his 'Cosmopolitan Chicken Project' (CCP), a unique artistic project which he launched in the late 1990s. The focus of this project is the chicken – more specifically, the crossing of national chicken breeds to create 'Cosmopolitan Chickens'. In 2024, the 29th generation of this global project is born: the Mechelse Jær, with genes from Belgium, France, England, America, Germany, the Netherlands, Mexico, Thailand, Brazil, Turkey, Cuba, Italy, Russia, China, Egypt, Senegal, Slovenia, Austria, Indonesia, Detroit, Denmark, Finland, Vatican City, Chile, Croatia, Israel, Iceland, Bangladesh and Norway. The project put Vanmechelen on the world map, both in the art world and beyond. The essence of the project is not the chicken, nor the egg; but the cross-breeding process itself and the diversity that ensues.

That same diversity also characterises the other animal species, farms, projects and foundations that together make up the artist's work. As a modern Uomo Universale, Vanmechelen fuses art, nature and knowledge, reaching out to anyone and anything that can help him to break boundaries on his journey. He records the results of his experiments in every conceivable medium: from highly expressive paintings and drawings to photography, performances, sculptures, video, innovative 3D techniques, glassware, (living) installations, and also practical interventions in communities and science. In the midst of society, among the people, these works point the way to new insights; to a Cosmopolitan Renaissance.

Vanmechelen's work has already been exhibited on almost all continents and in many countries, from the U.S. to China, from Senegal to Iceland. He has had international solo and group exhibitions at the Uffizi Gallery (Firenze), Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Cuba (Havana), the National Gallery and the Victoria & Albert Museum (London), Museum Kunst Palast (Düsseldorf), Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ (Amsterdam), Macro (Rome), MAD Museum (NY), Belvedere (Vienna), ZKM (Karlsruhe), Serlachius Museum (Manttä) and Pushkin Museum (Moscow). In addition to the Venice Biennale, his work has also been shown at exhibitions in Moscow, Dakar, Havana and Poznan, the World Expo Shanghai 2010, the Guangzhou Triennial, Manifesta 9 and DOCUMENTA (13). As a speaker in high demand, he has given presentations at the World Economic Forum (Davos), various TEDxConferences, World Expo (Shanghai), Climate Change Congress and the Creativity world Forum.

Since 2017, Vanmechelen is based at LABIOMISTA; an immense park in Genk (Belgium) where among great architecture and natural landscape installations, artworks and avians of the most disparate species live together. LABIOMISTA is the embodiment of Vanmechelen's artistic and philosophical vision, created on the belief in art as a driver of mutual understanding and as a guide in the search for answers to the major challenges of the 21st century, the relationship between nature and culture and in particular the development of sustainable communities.

More information - www.labiomista.com