

# ARENA DE EVOLUCIÓN L.O.C.K.

12 Bienal de la Habana, Entre la idea y la experiencia  
Museo de Historia Natural 'Felipe Poey'  
Universidad de la Habana, 22 MAY – 22 JUN 2015, Havana (CU)



Artist  
Curator  
Co-curator

Koen Vanmechelen  
Jorge Fernandez  
Sara Alonso

## ARENA DE EVOLUCIÓN – LIBRARY OF COLLECTED KNOWLEDGE

Arena de Evolución – Library of Collected Knowledge is a multi-media and interactive installation created by Belgian artist Koen Vanmechelen for the 12th Biennial of Havana; 'Entre la Idea y la Experiencia'. It is a multidisciplinary project that has been inspired by the artist's trips to Cuba, by the yearlong collaborations with scientists but foremost by the Cosmopolitan Chicken Project. Arena de Evolución – L.O.C.K. was officially kicked off in 2013 in the artist's studio. Since then, several experts gathered in Tanzania, Belgium and the UK in different set-ups to discuss the topics essential to Vanmechelens work. These are Ecology and Climate, Immunity, Fertility, Ethics and Diversity. In the library presented during the biennial, the knowledge generated by this project is archived and accessible for the visitor.

At the same time, Vanmechelen re-introduced the Cubalaya chicken in Cuba at the biennial. A crossbreed between Asian and European breeds that was once the pride of Cuba, but has disappeared on the island for decades. The species, however, survived in the United States. Now it returns as a valuable genetic element in the artist's Cosmopolitan Chicken cross-breeding Project. During the biennial, Vanmechelen gifted the Cubalaya Centre to the Cuban people. *"The fact that this magnificent animal is coming home to roost at this particular point in time, is a strong statement about identity, hybridity and diversity in our fast-changing world,"* states the artist.

More information on  
[Lock.koenvanmechelen.com](http://Lock.koenvanmechelen.com)

# ARENA DE EVOLUCIÓN EXHIBITION



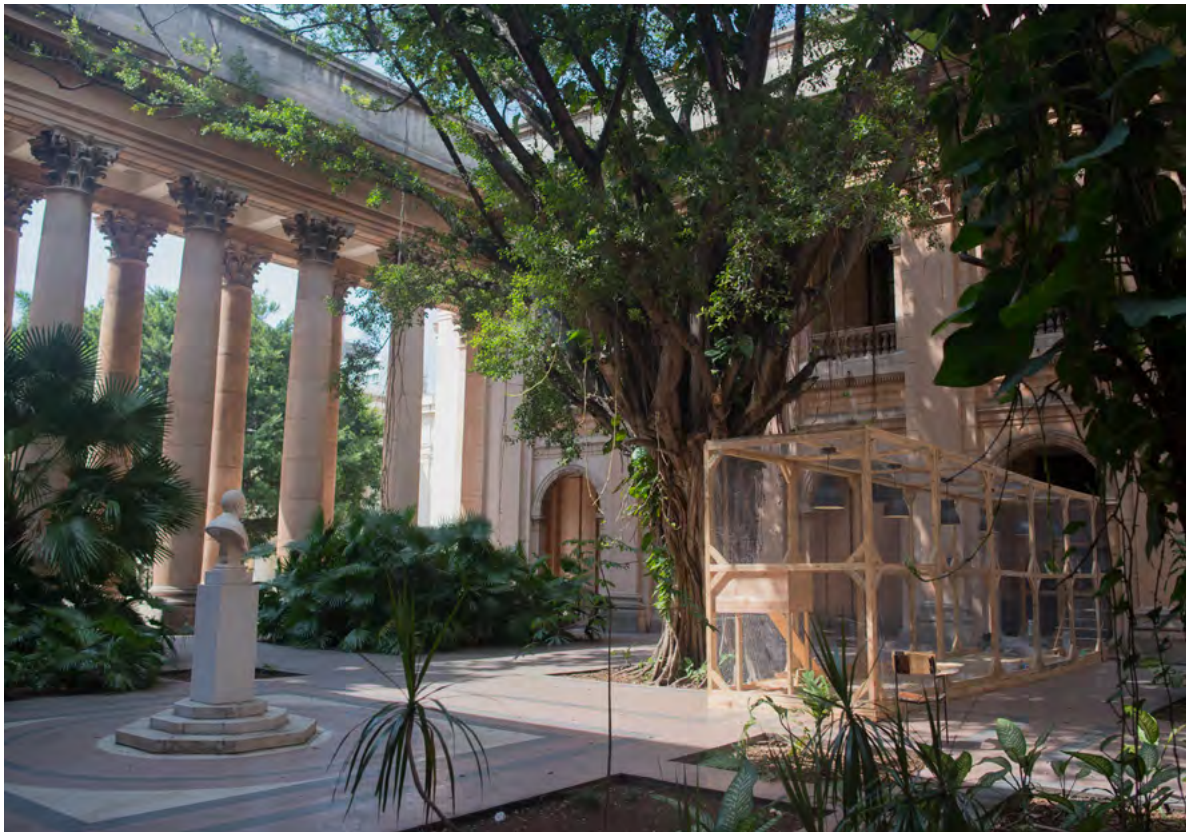
Top Inside view of the Museo de Historia Natural 'Felipe Poey' at the University of Havana, Cuba, the oldest museum of Havana

Below Installation view Arena de Evolución – L.O.C.K., 12 Bienal de la Habana, Museo Felipe Poey, 2015  
© Koen Vanmechelen

# ARENA DE EVOLUCIÓN EXHIBITION



## ARENA DE EVOLUCIÓN EXHIBITION



Top View of the courtyard of the University of Havana  
Below Installation view of the Cubalaya Cage, Arena de Evolución  
– L.O.C.K., 12 Bienal de la Habana, Museo Felipe Poey,  
2015 © Koen Vanmechelen

## ARENA DE EVOLUCIÓN EXHIBITION



Top Opening Arena de Evolución – L.O.C.K., 12 Bienal de la Habana, Museo Felipe Poey, 2015 © Koen Vanmechelen  
Below Cubalaya rooster from the artist's Cubalaya breeding center in Belgium and two hens from Cuba, Cubalaya Cage, Arena de Evolución – L.O.C.K., 12 Bienal de la Habana, Museo Felipe Poey, 2015 © Koen Vanmechelen

# ARENAS

## ARENA DE EVOLUCIÓN – L.O.C.K.

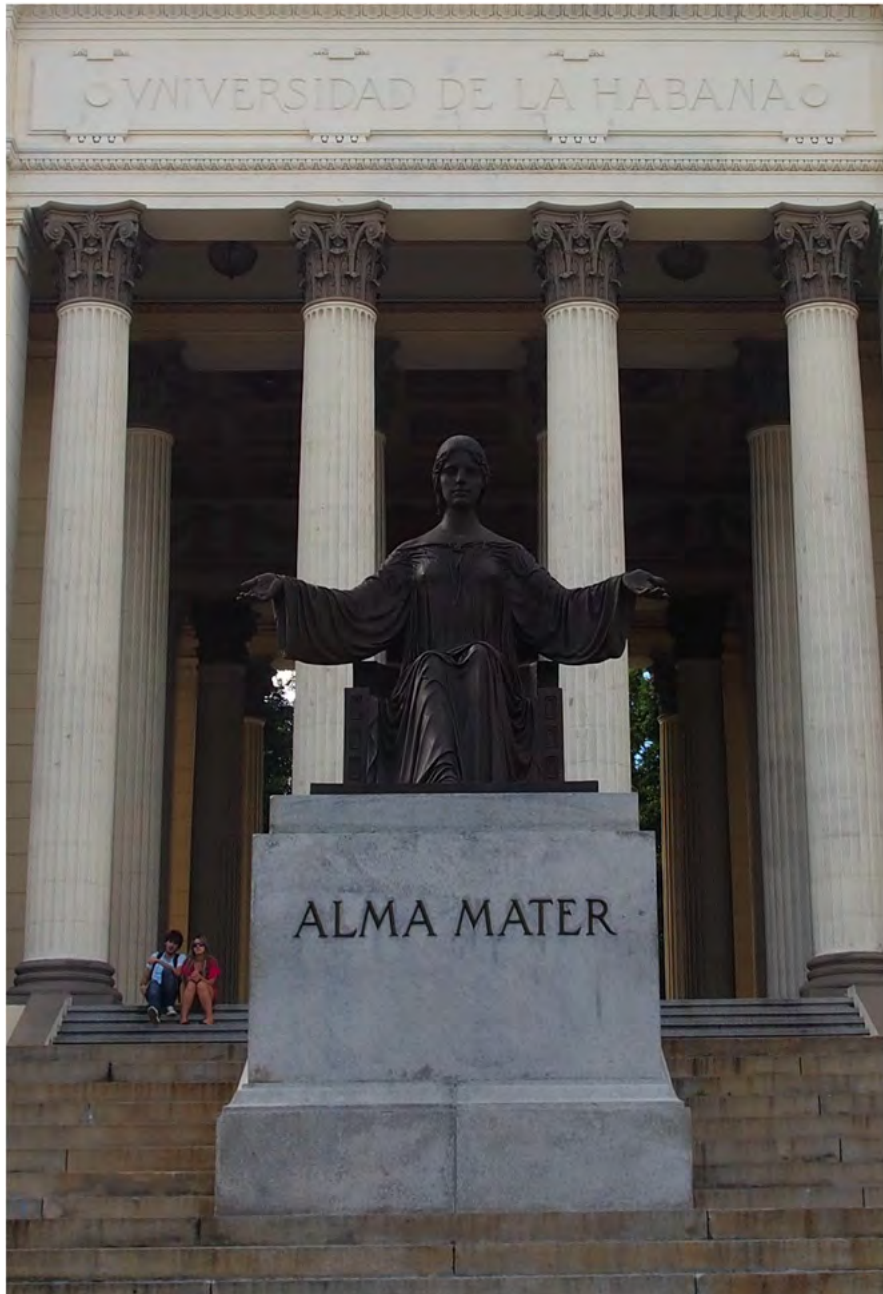
Parallel with the in-situ installation at the Museo Felipe Poey, a scientific programme was set up. This connection and interplay between art and science has been at the core of Vanmechelen's ongoing projects. The artist has worked together with scientists in various fields like medicine, biology, computer sciences, anthropology and philosophy. He wants to create an ongoing debate on biological and cultural diversity which is a central conceptual framework in his artwork. This interplay has led to new insights and reflections on the importance of diversity and created a place where international scientists and artists reflect, discuss and work together on crucial global challenges.

The project for the Biennial of Havana builds further on this tradition of connections between art and science by creating different Arenas de Evolución.

Since the Kick Off in December 2013, various arenas were organized at different locations. They function as intellectual spaces of debate and learning and are crucial for the development of the topics that underlie the artist's work; Ecology and Climate, Immunity, Fertility, Ethics and Diversity. The knowledge and information gained in these arenas are collected in the Library of Collected Knowledge.

ARENA DE EVOLUCIÓN - L.O.C.K.  
UNIVERSIDAD DE LA HABANA <sup>(CU)</sup>

21 - 25 May 2015, Bienal de La Habana, Cuba, 2015



The symposium during the Biennial of Havana functioned as a summit of all the previous arenas. During a 3-day program at the Universidad de La Habana, different events were organised; firstly, a series of workshops with the aim of collaborating with the Cuban people and their infrastructure on the topics of Immunity, Fertility, Culture and Ecology. Secondly the opening of Vanmechelen's in-situ installation and finally a closing symposium on Fertility in all its aspects followed by an after party.



ARENA DE EVOLUCIÓN - L.O.C.K.  
UNIVERSIDAD DE LA HABANA (CU)



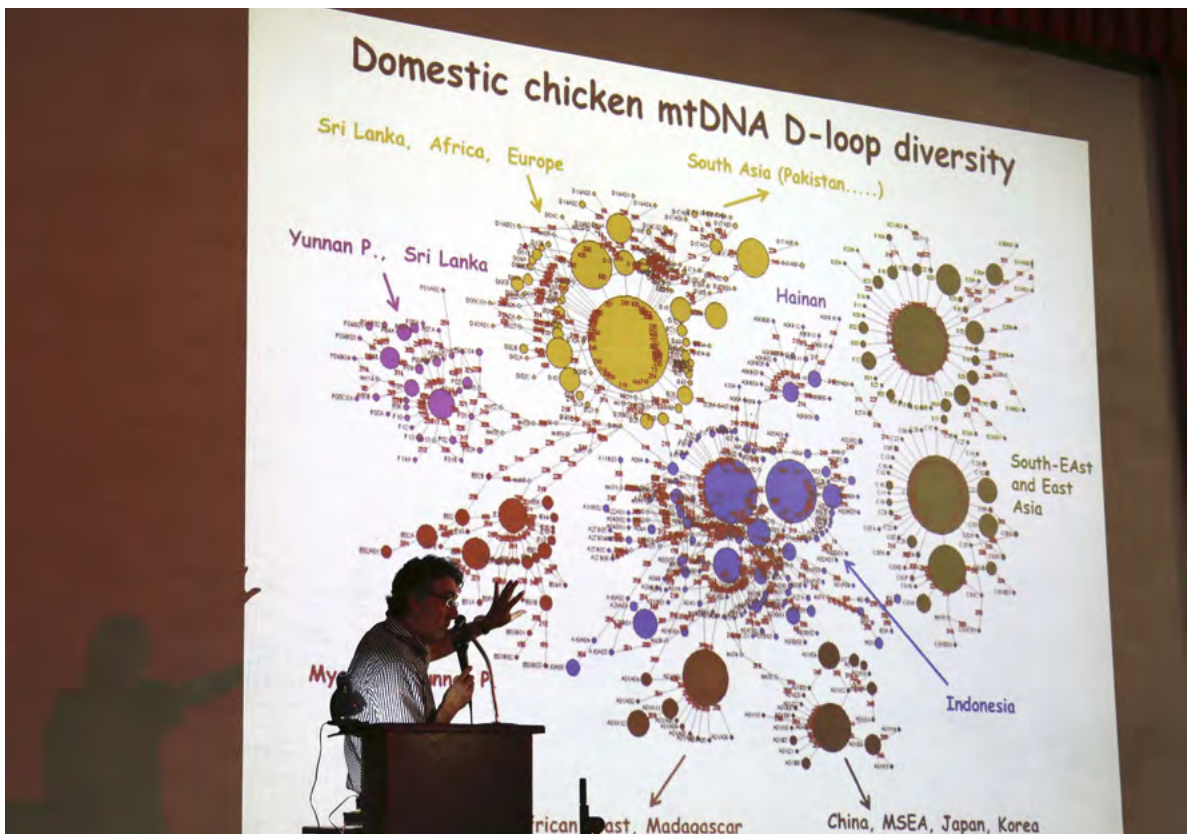
Top Group photo of the experts that participated in the Arena de Evolución workshops  
Below View of the Immunity workshop organized at the University of Havana

ARENA DE EVOLUCIÓN - L.O.C.K.  
UNIVERSIDAD DE LA HABANA (CU)



Top View of the Arena de Evolución symposium organized at the University of Havana with artist Koen Vanmechelen speaking about La Biomista  
Below Chido Govera during the symposium talking about the Future of Hope Foundation

ARENA DE EVOLUCIÓN - L.O.C.K.  
UNIVERSIDAD DE LA HABANA (CU)



Top Artist Koen Vanmechelen with local chicken breeders on a quest to find the Cubalaya chicken in Cuba  
Below Prof. dr. Olivier Hanotte (Livestock geneticist, University of Nottingham) during the Arena de Evolución symposium

ARENA DE EVOLUCIÓN - L.O.C.K.  
UNIVERSIDAD DE LA HABANA (CU)



Top During one of his trips to Cuba, Koen Vanmechelen met a young boy who made a drawing of the Cubalaya and proudly spoke about this bird, 2013  
Below Children performing a group dance on biocultural diversity during the Arena de Evolución symposium

ARENA DE EVOLUCIÓN - L.O.C.K.  
UNIVERSIDAD DE LA HABANA (CU)



Top Koen Vanmechelen encounters local musicians in Havana, 2013

Below Performance with local musicians and dancers during the Arena de Evolución after party

KICK OFF  
OPEN UNIVERSITY OF DIVERSITY, HASSELT <sup>(BE)</sup>

7 December 2013, Arena de Evolución – L.O.C.K.

Arena de Evolución was officially kicked off during the Golden Nica Celebration Party in the artist's studio. Ten eminent speakers set up the contours of the platform that launched the arena: Koen Vanmechelen (OpUnDi), prof. dr. em. Jean-Jacques Cassiman (Human Genetics, University of Leuven), prof. Bruno Goddeeris (Biology, University of Leuven), prof. Dr. Rik Pinxten (Anthropology, UGent), prof. dr. Bart Raymaekers (Ethics, University of Leuven), Ignace Schops (Ecology & Climate, UHasselt), prof. dr. Willem Ombelet (Fertility, UHasselt), prof. dr. Piet Stinissen (Immunity, UHasselt), Loreta García (Flora y Fauna de Cuba) and Jorge Fernandez (director Havana Biennial).

KICK OFF  
OPEN UNIVERSITY OF DIVERSITY, HASSELT (BE)



Top Outside view of the Open University of Diversity, the artist's studio in Hasselt, Belgium  
Below Art expert Jill Silverman van Coenegrachts during her speech at the Arena de Evolución Kick Off party

MKATABA Y'ARUSHA,  
MAASAI, ARUSHA <sup>(TZ)</sup>

7 - 14 September 2014, Arena de Evolución – L.O.C.K.

An international group of thinkers, experts and scientists immersed in the Maasai culture, their language, religion, and their natural habitat. Since this traditional tribe lives so close to nature and are said to “be free, unassuming, practical, down to earth and skilful at what they do”, they can provide us with useful insights in human cultures, ecosystem dynamics, social justice, fertility, immunity and sustainable development. And teach us how to find a balance between nature and culture. What is the Maasai's view on evolution? How do they cope with recent developments and the challenges from a modern Tanzanian and global society? The visit was sealed with a pact; an Mkatoba. We are connected through OSOTWA (meaning umbilical cord); a cow the group adopted from the Maasai.



MKATABA Y'ARUSHA,  
MAASAI, ARUSHA (TZ)



The encounter of a group of experts selected by Koen Vanmechelen and the Maasai tribe in Arusha, Mkataba Y'Arusha, Arena de Evolución – L.O.C.K., Tanzania, 2014

IN CONVERSATION -  
DARWIN'S DREAM, LONDON <sup>(UK)</sup>

14 November 2014, Arena de Evolución – L.O.C.K.

On the occasion of the solo exhibition Darwin's Dream, an 'In Conversation' with Koen Vanmechelen, Em. Prof. Jean-Jacques Cassiman and curators James Putnam and Jill Silverman van Coenegrachts was set up in the St Pancras Church. Central was the idea of the crossbreeding between art and science, interlinked with Darwin's practice and that of artist Koen Vanmechelen. James Putnam introduced the panel and spoke briefly about the exhibition. Afterwards, the artist talked about his work and why it is centred on biocultural diversity followed by prof. Cassiman, a specialist in human genetics. The lectures sparked interesting debate material for the closing panel discussion.

IN CONVERSATION -  
DARWIN'S DREAM, LONDON (UK)



Top Outside view of the Crypt of the St. Pancras Church,  
London, United Kingdom  
Below In Conversation, Arena de Evolución – L.O.C.K.,  
Darwin's Dream, St Pancras Church, London,  
United Kingdom, 2014

UPPERCUT  
UNIVERSITY OF HASSELT, HASSELT <sup>(BE)</sup>

17 March 2015, Arena de Evolución – L.O.C.K.

During UPPERCUT – Arena de Evolución students challenged experts and artists in an actual boxing ring on five different issues: Immunity, Ecology & Climate, Fertility, Ethics & Diversity. Each topic was introduced by a video, followed by three short but fierce rounds where students fired their questions at the scientists/experts in the other corner. The students won 3-2. DJ James Lavelle surprised the audience with a statement on fusion and music.

UPPERCUT  
UNIVERSITY OF HASSELT, HASSELT (BE)



Top Outside view of the University of Hasselt, Belgium  
Below Uppercut, Arena de Evolución – L.O.C.K.,  
University of Hasselt, Belgium, 2015

INCIDERS  
OPEN UNIVERSITY OF DIVERSITY, HASSELT <sup>(BE)</sup>

20 March 2015, Arena de Evolución – L.O.C.K.

Why don't chickens have teeth? This question structured the fifth arena featuring dr. Luc Vrielinck (Oral Maxillofacial Surgeon) and dr. Philip Remans (Immunologist/Rheumatologist). Starting from an evolutionary point of view, the experts stated that it might have been the same genetic information that created teeth that now creates the chicken's feathers. They further discussed the importance of the microbiome and the immune system for all living organisms and which research potential lies in Vanmechelen's projects on diversity; the CCP and MECC.

INCIDERS  
OPEN UNIVERSITY OF DIVERSITY, HASSELT (BE)



Top Inside view of the Open University of Diversity,  
Koen Vanmechelen's studio in Hasselt, Belgium  
Below Inciders, Arena de Evolución – L.O.C.K.,  
Open University of Diversity, Hasselt, Belgium, 2015