

PRESS RELEASE  
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55TH INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION - la Biennale di Venezia

## PAVILION OF CHILE ARTIGLIERIE DELL'ARSENALE

# ALFREDO JAAR VENEZIA, VENEZIA

CURATED BY MADELEINE GRYSZTEJN

### EXHIBITION:

1 JUNE - 24 NOVEMBER 2013

### PAVILION OF CHILE PREVIEW:

WEDNESDAY 29 MAY 2013, 5 PM

Alfredo Jaar's immersive site-specific installation, *Venezia, Venezia* is an evocative and critical intervention that questions how today's culture, composed of increasingly complex global networks, can be adequately represented at this iconic, international art exhibition.

*Venezia, Venezia* creates an environment of striking visual and somatic encounters. It begins with an obstruction: a suspended 2.5 x 2.5 m lightbox photograph captures the Argentine-born Italian artist Lucio Fontana in 1946 on his return to Milan following the devastation of World War II. The intrepid 20<sup>th</sup> century artist is poised precariously amidst the catastrophic evidence of his destroyed studio - the ruins of a site of creative and critical activity.

Beyond this unsettling image, stairs lead the viewer over a structure recalling the iconic bridges of Venice to an ominous pool of dark water. From this pool, the complex conditions of art and globalism arise in the form of a perfect replica of the Giardini - historically the original site of the Venice Biennale - and their first 28 foreign pavilions. Approximately every three minutes, the spectral embodiment of the Biennale breaks through the surface of the water and peers through just long enough to be recognised before it swiftly descends into the dark water and imminent obscurity. **The artist has created a future where the Giardini have disappeared. In their brief emergence, they are a ghost from history.**

Jaar's installation is a poetic invitation to rethink the Venice Biennale model. The pavilions and their archaic rigidity dissolving into the depths of water reflect the manner in which these pavilions have lost their meaning in the fluidity of today's world culture. Water acts as the tragic agent of sudden deluge, as well as an enduring symbol of renewal: **a utopia is created the very instant the Giardini vanish, and the space of the pool becomes a historical opportunity for rebirth.**

In dialogue with this, the image of Fontana crystallises a key moment in Italian history: one which represents both physical and moral devastation following a catastrophic war, but also symbolising a country hopeful for creative and political renewal. By placing the Giardini's disappearance in the continuation of history, *Venezia, Venezia* reveals a city still haunted by ghosts that include not only past wars and leaders but also defunct architecture. **Similarly to reconstruction that follows war, the creation of a new order, for the Biennale and for Italy, should perhaps follow the flood.**



# VENEZIA, VENEZIA

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### VENEZIA, VENEZIA: THE CATALOGUE

Jaar's presentation at the Biennale is accompanied by a major publication edited by **Adriana Valdés** and published by **Actar** (Barcelona). It features essays by 18 prominent, international authors from different fields of work and thought, including political and philosophical thinkers, critics, theorists, art historians and curators. Their contributions consider *Venezia, Venezia* in its critical context, as well as recent global developments and the volatile conditions of contemporary art practice.

### CATALOGUE CONTRIBUTORS

**Vicenç Altaió** (Spain - lives in Barcelona); **Elvira Dyangani Ose** (Spain - lives in London); **Luigi Fassi** (Italy - lives in Graz); **Andrea Giunta** (Argentina - lives in Austin); **Madeleine Grynsztejn** (USA - lives in Chicago); **Hou Hanru** (China - lives in San Francisco); **Salah Hassan** (Sudan - lives in Ithaca); **Mary Jane Jacob** (USA - lives in Chicago); **Geeta Kapur** (India - lives in New Delhi); **Sarat Maharaj** (South Africa - lives in London); **Federica Martini** (Italy - lives in Lausanne); **Vittoria Martini** (Italy - lives in Turin); **Antonio Negri** (Italy - lives in Venice and Paris); **Patricia Phillips** (USA - lives in Providence); **Mari Carmen Ramírez** (Puerto Rico - lives in Houston); **Jacques Rancière** (France - lives in Paris); **Rasha Salti** (Lebanon - lives in Beirut); **Adriana Valdés** (Chile - lives in Santiago)

### THE ARTIST

**Alfredo Jaar** was born in Santiago de Chile in 1956. He has lived in New York since 1982 and has shown extensively around the world. He has participated in the Venice Biennale (1986, 2007, 2009), São Paulo Bienal (1985, 1987, 2010), and Documenta in Kassel (1987, 2002). His recent major solo exhibitions include the Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne (2007); Hangar Bicocca, Milan (2008); and a retrospective at three Berlin institutions: Berlinische Galerie, Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst and Alte Nationalgalerie (2012).

### THE CURATOR

**Madeleine Grynsztejn** is Pritzker Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago where she is advancing an ambitious and engaged platform for producing new ideas and insights on the creative process. In 1990, Grynsztejn organised Alfredo Jaar's first major international exhibition and publication for La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego. Born in Lima, Peru, Grynsztejn grew up in Caracas, Venezuela and London, England. Prior to joining the MCA, she was the Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture at the San Francisco Museum of Art.

### THE COMMISSIONER AND SUPPORTERS

*Venezia, Venezia* is commissioned by the **National Council for Culture and the Arts (CNCA)** and organised in collaboration with the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** through its **Cultural Affairs Bureau (DIRAC)**, the **ProChile** Chilean Promotion Bureau and the **Imagen de Chile Foundation**. The project is made possible by the generous support of **Goodman Gallery** (Johannesburg & Cape Town), **Galerie Lelong** (New York), **kamel mennour** (Paris), **Galería Patricia Ready** (Santiago), **Galleria Lia Rumma** (Milan), **Galerie Thomas Schulte** (Berlin), **Fondazione Giuliani per l'arte contemporanea** (Rome) and **ICUN, Impresa Costruzione Ulisse Navarra** (Rome).

### IMAGE CAPTION

#### **Alfredo Jaar**

*Venezia, Venezia*, 2013

Lightbox with black and white transparency

Photograph: Milan, 1946: Lucio Fontana visits his studio on his return from Argentina © Archivi Farabola

244 cm x 244 cm x 18 cm

Metal pool, 1:60 resin model of Giardini, hydraulic system

100 cm x 500 cm x 500 cm

Wood structure, metal

100 cm x 1600 cm x 1400 cm

Installation detail

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<http://alfredojaar.net/venezia2013-press>