



La Biennale di Venezia

58. Esposizione  
Internazionale  
d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali

Press Release | Miles Evans PR

Playing on the beach this summer - a sun-drenched opera for the Anthropocene

## Sun & Sea (Marina)

The Lithuanian Pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

11 May – 31 October 2019

Pre-opening: 8 – 10 May 2019



For the 58th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia (Venice, Italy), the Lithuanian Pavilion transforms the interior of a historic quayside building within the Marina Militare complex into an artificially lit beach scene replete with sand and all the paraphernalia associated with seaside holidays.

In the unique setting of the Marina Militare, located adjacent to the Arsenale, and which until now has never previously been used during the Biennale Arte, artists Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė, Vaiva Grainytė and Lina Lapelytė present a durational opera performance, *Sun & Sea (Marina)*. While initially appearing light-hearted, this highly innovative take on the operatic form - described as “counter-monumental” and “anti-baroque theatre” - addresses some of the most pressing ecological issues of our time. Presented by Nida Art Colony of Vilnius Academy of Arts, *Sun & Sea (Marina)* is curated by Lucia Pietrojusti, Curator of General Ecology and Live Programmes at the Serpentine Galleries, London.

With a bird's-eye view of the performance from a mezzanine gallery above the stage, audiences look down on the assembled characters who appear as a typical group of holiday-goers, of varying ages,

from different walks of life, attired in colourful bathing suits and sunbathing under the full glare of the sun over a mosaic of towels. Surveying this fleshy tableau vivant from their sun-like vantage point, audiences observe the frailty of the human condition. As the libretto unfolds we are introduced to each individual in turn, through sung performances (performed whilst lying down) that reveal private preoccupations, ranging from trivial concerns about sunburn and plans for future vacations to nagging fears of environmental catastrophe, which surface as though from the depths of the characters' troubled consciousness. Frivolous micro-stories on this crowded beach give way to broader, more serious topics and grow into a global symphony, a universal human choir addressing planetary scale issues; tired bodies offering a metonym for a tired planet.

Specially adapted for the 58<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, *Sun & Sea (Marina)* is the first version of this piece in English, adapted as a durational performance. The original version of *Sun & Sea (Marina)* was produced by Neon Realism.

Daisy Hildyard, author of the internationally acclaimed non-fiction book, *The Second Body, a reflection the way our ecological impact extends far beyond what we consider our physical body* - gives the opening talk during the vernissage, on 10 May.

This is not the first collaboration for the three artists, who have known each other since teenage years growing up in Kaunas, the second largest city in Lithuania. Their contemporary opera *Have a Good Day!* - created between 2011 and 2013 and still touring the world - won six international awards in Europe. It has toured more than twenty festivals and was broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and the Lithuanian National Radio. In 2018 at the Golden Cross awards in Lithuania the artists were awarded Borisas Dauguvietis prize for their innovative and original ideas. In their collaborations, the artists pay special attention to the relationship between documentary and fiction, reality and poetry as well as the overlap of theatre, music and visual arts. Themes that appear in *Sun & Sea (Marina)* have run through the artists' works, such as Rugile Barzdžiukaitė's award-winning film essay, *Acid Forest*, which replaced the human's filmic viewpoint with that of birds, or in *Have a Good Day!*, an opera in which complex questions such as gender, ageing and labour were addressed through individual checkout counter workers' songs, all offering an insight into their everyday lives and preoccupations.

This project marks the second time that Vilnius Academy of Art's Nida Art Colony has produced Lithuania's Pavilion in Venice. In 2015, during the 56<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, the Colony presented Dainius Liškevičius' project *Museum*. The head of Nida Art Colony, art critic Dr Rasa Antanavičiūtė, serves as the Commissioner of the national pavilion together with Honorary Commissioner Jean-Baptiste Joly, founder of Akademie Schloss Solitude, where the development of *Sun & Sea* began in 2016. *Sun & Sea (Marina)* follows the *Swamp Pavilion*, the Lithuanian pavilion for the Biennale Architettura 2018, which also focused on environmental issues.

The presentation in Venice features a special-edition vinyl catalogue, conceived by Åbäke and featuring texts by Marie Darrieussecq, Daisy Hildyard, Monika Kalinauskaite, Lucia Pietroiusti and more. Visual identity by Goda Budvytytė.

Address:

Marina Militare

Calle de la Celestia (near Campo de la Celestia)

Castello, 30122 Venice, Italy ([Map](#))

## Opening Times:

11 May – 31 October 2019

Installation open Tue – Sun, 10am – 6pm

Performance every Saturday, 10am – 6pm

Find out more at [sunandsea.lt](http://sunandsea.lt)

**For further information, images and interviews contact Miles Evans via [milesevanspr@gmail.com](mailto:milesevanspr@gmail.com) / Tel: +44 7812 985993 or Lina Vaitiekūnaitė via [media@sunandsea.lt](mailto:media@sunandsea.lt) / Tel. +370 612 33812**

## Notes to Editors:

Organized biennially since 1895, the International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia is considered one of the most prestigious exhibitions of contemporary art in the world. The 2019 edition is curated by London's Hayward Gallery Director, Ralph Rugoff. Lithuania has been participating in the Biennale Arte since 1999.

**Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė** (b.1983, based in Vilnius) works as filmmaker and theatre director. In her creative practice, Barzdžiukaitė explores the gap between objective and imagined realities, while challenging an anthropocentric way of thinking in a playful way. Her recent full-length film-essay *Acid Forest* was awarded at the Locarno International Film Festival in 2018 and is touring extensively in film festivals around the world.

**Vaiva Grainytė** (b.1984, based in Vilnius) is a writer, playwright, and poet. Her writer's practice usually crosses the confines of desk work and becomes an integral part of an interdisciplinary polylogue. Her handwriting exhibits the features typical of her oeuvre: personal and collective memory, daily routine and social issues are in harmony with poetic and ironic approach.

**Lina Lapelytė** (b.1984, based in Vilnius and London) is an artist, musician and composer. Her performance - based practice is rooted in music and flirts with pop culture, gender stereotypes and nostalgia. Lapelytė's works were presented at KIM? in Riga, Rupert in Vilnius (solo exhibition), gallery 1857 in Oslo, the Modern Art Museum in Malmo, MACBA in Barcelona, DRAF in London. Upcoming shows include Cartier Foundation in Paris, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Kunsthalle Praha.

**Lucia Pietroiusti** is Curator of General Ecology and Live Programmes at the Serpentine Galleries in London, where since 2013 she has been instrumental in developing the annual Marathon series and the successful *Park Nights* series of site-specific events and performances. Her long-standing research into ecology and the environment, begun in 2014 with the Serpentine's Extinction Marathon, led Pietroiusti to develop the General Ecology project at the Serpentine Galleries. Launched in 2018, General Ecology is a multi-disciplinary and long-term project addressing ecology, post-humanism and complexity through workshops, research networks, publications, live events, radio and exhibitions. As part of General Ecology, she is the co-curator (with Filipa Ramos) of the two-year-long symposium and research project on interspecies consciousness, *The Shape of a Circle in the Mind of a Fish* and of *The Serpentine Podcast* (with Kay Watson).

**Nida Art Colony** is an art and meeting space, surrounded by sand dunes and seas. Opened in 2011 as a subdivision of Vilnius Academy of Arts, NAC runs an Artist-in-Residence Programme, Nida Doctoral

School, and initiates art, education and research projects that encourage a creative confluence of academic and non-academic education, artistic and scientific practice, hard work and leisure. Operating all year round, NAC receives about 700 people a year and provides space for workshops, intensive courses, exhibitions, seminars, rehearsals, artists' talks and screenings. Its activities can result in presentations, exhibitions, broadcasts and publications.