



Università
Ca' Foscari
Venezia



TANDON SCHOOL
OF ENGINEERING



SASHA VINCI

A HUMAN FLOWER WALL

curated by Diego Mantoan, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Urban performance and flower parade

May 26, 2019 / 11:30am–12:30pm

NYU Tandon School of Engineering / Brooklyn, NEW YORK CITY

on the occasion of edra50 brooklyn

Promoted by

Ca' Foscari Sostenibile, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Supported by

Department of Technology, Culture & Society, New York University Tandon School of Engineering

Humanities and Social Change Center, Venice

Department of Humanities, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Aa29 Project Room, Caserta | Milano

A PERFORMANCE FOR URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

On May 26, 2019, in New York City, the art project A HUMAN FLOWER WALL will take place. Created by the Sicilian artist Sasha Vinci and curated by Diego Mantoan, the performance takes flowers and people to the streets of the Big Apple and is hosted by the Department of Technology, Culture & Society of the Tandon School of Engineering of New York University on the occasion of the international conference *edra50 brooklyn* on Sustainable Urban Environments. This project is based on the artistic experience of *The Republic of Marvels*, performed in Venice in 2018 following the victory at the Sustainable Art Prize. The new intervention blossoms from the art prize founded by Ca' Foscari Sostenibile and awarded every Autumn at the art fair ArtVerona, in order to engage the art world in the debate on sustainable development.

On the last Sunday in May a parade of students and people will walk across the streets of NYC as one critical, unique and cohesive grouping, starting from the campus buildings of NYU Tandon School of Engineering in Brooklyn, the parade will thus metaphorically constitute a biological and moving wall, which appears ready to open up and be penetrated. It will be a wall made of flowers and humans that doesn't imply negation, separation and division; on the contrary it stands as a symbol of integration, inclusiveness and protection of every human being, each one resonating like a human diapason with one another.

This new landmark in Sasha Vinci's social and artistic work is again supported by Ca' Foscari Sostenibile for the Ca' Foscari University of Venice, and supported as well by New York University Tandon on the occasion of *edra50 brooklyn*, the most important conference in North America devoted to urban sustainability. The project is further supported by Humanities and Social Change Center in Venice and the art gallery aA29 Project Room (Milan/Caserta), also profiting from the scientific support of the Department of Humanities at the Venetian university.

ARTIST CONCEPT AND FLOWER GARMENTS

A HUMAN FLOWER WALL is a political performance, as well as a civic and artistic action that reaffirms the value of life in Western society, at a time when it is closing down and when the world betrays the side-effects of uncontrolled industrial development, social derangement and capitalistic involution with sovereignty claims, racism and individualism surfacing again.

The action started ideally in Venice, the quintessential utopian island, where the students of Ca' Foscari reflected on a desirable society living in harmony with humanity and nature, thus arriving in New York City, the contemporary Babel and unique melting pot, where NYU students will take on the challenge and transform this dream into a real and pervasive action.

Before the parade the artist and the NYU students will take part into the so-called "infiorata", the flowering part, a magical moment when flowers express their sense of beauty and power. Thousands of gerberae and chrysanthema – an empathetic metaphor of beauty and transience, of energy and frailty – will be applied on garments and bodies, thus transforming every participant in a constructive part of a set, in a brick of a strong and cohesive social being. One flower after another a wall comes into shape, though it will be the triumph of natural sounds against today's totalitarian trumpets. A HUMAN FLOWER WALL will thus bring a different idea of urban community into the world, one in which flowers are the social glue between disparities, the bond between differences, such as to break free from consumerism culture boosting inequalities and taking away the power of enchantment.

During this action the Symphony of "The Republic of Marvels" will be performed live by the musician and composer Vincent Migliorisi. The lyrical voice of the soprano Giulia Alberti will join in the composition, thus merging notes and flowers into one creative whole.

FROM THE TRILOGY OF POSSIBILITY TO THE FLOWERS FOR NEW YORK

"The wall symbolizes a torn world, an unnatural divide between people, between city and nature, which even physically separates societies in blocks and counterpoised principles. A HUMAN FLOWER WALL thus isn't a barrier made of bricks, wood, metal or concrete; on the contrary it is a human wall, made of free individuals that strive for a different world. The performance visually recalls the pervasive, beautiful and powerful wave of youth movements that these days are gaining consciousness about sustainable development issues. Through this action I wish to give shape to a possible new world which favors inclusiveness amongst heritage and knowledge, urbanism and nature." (Sasha Vinci)

Sasha Vinci with A HUMAN FLOWER WALL intends to expose the mechanics of predominance that leads us today to believe in the existence of a *normality*, which implies the utter exclusion of anything deemed *alien* or *different*, thus fueling fear of the *others*, as if this otherness could contaminate society and drag it down. The artist reacts to this deformation of meaning by means of an artwork that praises all human existence and generates a healthy relationship between power and life – life, the bios, intended as the collective life, the life of all individuals in harmony with their environment.

In a world that is gradually suffocating politics on supposedly biological claims, A HUMAN FLOWER WALL wants to stir human conscience and engage in free thought to advocate interdependency between all individuals, thus fostering inclusiveness and environmental respect.

The project is ideally connected to the former "Trilogy of Possibilities" crated in collaboration with artist Maria Grazia Galesi as a cycle of three participatory performances that climaxed in the project for the Sustainable Art Prize of Ca' Foscari won in 2017. This cycle devoted to sustainability started with "Mutabis" in Scicli (Sicily), then proceeding with "La Terra dei Fiori" in Caserta (Naples) and finishing in Venice with "La Repubblica delle Meraviglie" for the Ca' Foscari University.



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THE SUSTAINABLE ART PRIZE OF CA' FOSCARI

Ca' Foscari University of Venice in collaboration with **ArtVerona** created the **Sustainable Art Prize** reflecting on sustainability issues, which is devoted to artists at the art fair and was launched in October 2017. Aim of the project is the promotion of the sustainable development goals, fostering a stronger consciousness and stimulating engagement on the part of artists by means of artistic techniques as a powerful potential for the spread of debate on global challenges, in line with the **17 goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development promoted by the UN**.

The prize entails the construction of an installation, an exhibition or a performance which relates to sustainability, to be hosted at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. The construction of the project involves students at Ca' Foscari, while the artists work in a new environment collaborating with the university community in Venice – a unique opportunity of dialogue between art and research.

For the first edition the jury awarded the artist collective of **Sasha Vinci and Maria Grazia Galesi**, presented at ArtVerona by **gallery aA29 Project Room** (Milan/Caserta). The artists' dedication to deal with **environmental, social and political sustainability** was met with enthusiasm as well as their capacity to translate their commitment in an aesthetically interesting project that was particularly striking in a communication perspective, and their honest community involvement, one of the key features of their projects.

EDRA50 BROOKLYN FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

EDRA50 Brooklyn invites researchers and practitioners to come together with a shared belief in shaping urban design and changing environmental behavior at the global scale. The conference offers one-of-a-kind networking opportunities and educational seminars tailored exclusively for those in the environmental design field!

On the occasion of *edra50 brooklyn*, held at NYU Tandon School of Engineering and devoted to the topic of "Sustainable Urban Environments: Research, Design and Planning for the Next 50 Years", a **collateral program of sustainable art activities** will enrich the conference impact and scope. Furthermore, it will provide an interesting opportunity for conference attendees, most of whom are involved in the fields of research, education and planning, to **discover projects and ideas that spring from creative practice** and evaluate emerging trends in the visual arts devoted to sustainability. Eventually, the collateral program shall allow visitors to get in touch with recent examples drawn from Brooklyn and the wider NYC area, and in so doing provide a **platform for local artists working on sustainable development goals**.