LA B IO MISTA

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AN EVOLVING
WORK OF ART ABOUT
THE MIX OF LIFE

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OPENING LABIOMISTA BRINGS WORLD TO GENK

PRESS RELEASE

KOEN VANMECHELEN'S "HOMAGE TO THE MIX OF LIFE" IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CITY OF GENK

GENK – Today LABIOMISTA, the remarkable evolving artwork by Belgian artist Koen Vanmechelen, opens its gates. Vanmechelen's 'pregnant site', a unique collaboration with the city of Genk, already attracted world press to Zwartberg.

Daring and ambitious, LABIOMISTA is much more than an art project. With the site, Koen Vanmechelen wants to offer the ingredients for the birth of a possible new society. With a strong focus on community development and human rights. "As a powerful cross-pollination between art, science and society, LABIOMISTA is a beacon of hope, "says the Belgian artist. "It's an ode to the mix of life.""And this in a young, cosmopolitan city like Genk. LABIOMISTA has international allure and at the same time, the project is deeply embedded in the local community." confirms Mayor Wim Dries

LABIOMISTA

Four years after the groundbreaking, LABIOMISTA opens to the public. Half of its 24-hectare area consists of untouched nature. The rest is taken up by The Battery, housing both the art studio and headquarters of Koen Vanmechelen; Villa OpUnDi, in a re-designed villa that was once the directorial mansion of the Zwartberg coal mine, and later of the Zwartberg Zoo; LabOvo, a space for workshops and educational events; and a permanent open-air exposition with a range of living artworks and installations. The entrance to it all is The Ark, the eye-catching gatehouse into LABIOMISTA. The Battery and The Ark were designed by Mario Botta, the renowned Swiss architect. The Battery contains an extraordinary greenhouse called The Looking Glass, and a huge eagle aviary.

LABIOMISTA is the embodiment of Koen Vanmechelen's art and philosophy. Internationally acclaimed for its exploration of the intersections between art, science and community, his oeuvre spans 20 years and ranges from painting and sculpture to video art, mixed-media installations and 'living art' projects. Vanmechelen is motivated by his belief in art as a catalyst for mutual understanding and as a guiding light in our search for answers to the great challenges of the 21st century – in particular – the relationship between nature and culture, and sustainable community development. With the opening of LABIOMISTA, Vanmechelen creates his largest, evolving artwork yet, capturing the trajectory of his practice and forming a dynamic platform for future endeavors.

But above all, Vanmechelen wants a new, positive, hopeful narrative, a possible alternative for the future. "That is why it is a multi-layered site that offers the visitor various experience modes: beauty, wonder, movement, reflection, etc."

THE ARTIST AND THE CITY

LABIOMISTA is an atypical project, emerging from a remarkable collaboration between an artist, Koen Vanmechelen, and a city, Genk. Wim Dries, the Mayor of Genk — "As the most culturally diverse city in Flanders, we share Koen Vanmechelen's conviction that diversity explains the present and shapes the future. That's why we are confident to give him free rein with LABIOMISTA, and will work with him to produce a bountiful harvest in the fertile ground of Zwartberg, both in terms of artistic experiments and social redevelopment. This way, the themes that Koen Vanmechelen addresses in his work can be translated into the context of a city like Genk – compact and cosmopolitan at the same time. This is a new and bold approach to urban renewal. LABIOMISTA now opens its gates to the public, but it will remain a primarily content-driven project."

Apart from the investment of the artist and that of the city of Genk, the project was funded by the Flemish government as an urban renewal project. Furthermore, there was a financial impulse from private investors, Flanders Heritage Agency, Tourism Flanders and Tourism Limburg. Minister of Tourism of the Flanders region Ben Weyts: "Flanders is investing 600.000 euro in LABIOMISTA. We intend to position the project as a touristic catalyst for the region. These days Flanders is putting the emphasis on the importance of the Flemish Masters from the past, but we believe that creative contemporary art has a great touristic value as well."

The project has already drawn worldwide media attention. The British quality newspaper The Guardian headlined: 'Belgians alternative natural history museum – the stuff of Dreams'; Wallpaper, German Vogue, Trouw en the Dutch newspaper Financieele Dagblad, who visited the Genk site in preview also wrote enthusiastic reviews.

GENK'S DNA

Joining C-mine and Thor Park, LABIOMISTA is the third former coal-mining site in Genk turned into a location with international appeal. These three sites will transform Genk, formerly a mining hub, into a modern, vibrant focal point for 21st-century urbanity. An exciting meeting place for diversity of all stripes, where universal socio-ecological topics take shape and become the subject of artistic discourse. LABIOMISTA's park area contains three animal compounds totaling more than 9,000 m2, three ponds, and a footpath more than a kilometer in length that includes a number of bridges. The animals populating the park play an essential part in Vanmechelen's work: in addition to his world-famous species of chicken, there are llamas, emus, dromedaries, ostriches, alpacas, rheas, and more.

As a project that takes on a multitude of forms, LABIOMISTA presents itself both as an alliance between and a bridge towards the local neighbourhood, the wider world, human society and all other species with whom we share this earth. And as a brand-new element in its surroundings, it adds to Genk's DNA, itself still a young city. "LABIOMISTA addresses themes such as identity, biocultural diversity and fertility," says the artist. "It's a reflection of my vision on nature, society and life itself. As such, it will continue to evolve with the rest of my work. Because LABIOMISTA is so all-encompassing, there was no better place for it than in a diverse city like Genk."

For the city of Genk, LABIOMISTA is a major, future-facing driver of development, designed to inject the city itself – and the wider world – with fresh ideas and new projects. Says Mayor Dries: "LABIOMISTA has the potential to turn Genk into a lab, one in whichour social and cultural diversity £can grow and flourish." One way to achieve this is by cross-pollination between on the one hand, Vanmechelen's various global projects (such as the Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, the Planetary Community Chicken, Lucy, SOTWA, MECC) and foundations (Mouth, The Walking Egg, CC®P, Combat and Cosmogolem); and on the other hand, various local actors (including multicultural neighbourhood projects, the award-winning Cosmocafé, the history of the area and region – not in the least the rich local tradition of allotment gardens, and of course the local flora and fauna). Says Vanmechelen: "Even the trees in the park form an invisible network. Everything is interconnected. All things flow, seek out connections, crave mixture."

NOMADLAND & COMMUNITY

A conscious choice was made to not to develop any commercial catering and recreation activities at LABIOMISTA. Instead, the project promotes the growth of local businesses and neighbourhood initiatives. This chimes with the artist's vision to support sustainable, healthy and vibrant communities, by linking what's local with what's global, and by connecting art with society. In fact, the revenue from LABIOMISTA's entrance fees will be used for exactly that purpose. Those funds will be reinvested in their entirety in the park's public role, and in neighbourhood projects – a rather unique approach.

"For something to grow to global scale, it needs to have local roots, local DNA," Vanmechelen says. "That's why LABIOMISTA actually extends into the surrounding community. This is Nomadland, which connects LABIOMISTA with its wider neighbourhood." For Vanmechelen, the name Nomadland conjures up travellers along the Silk Road, introducing each other to the unique treasures of various cultures. Dotted with allotments, picnic zones and an event-staging area, Nomadland is set to become a meeting place like no other. During the opening weekend Nomadland will be turned into a miniature festival area, with local food and drinks managed by local entrepreneurs. This will be continued throughout the summer, always on Sunday afternoons. "We're inviting our neighbours to help build something exciting together with us. Something that belongs not just to us here in Zwartberg, but to the whole world as well," Vanmechelen enthuses.

"C-mine as a creative hub is closely linked with nearby Vennestraat, Genk's cosmopolitan artery with its restaurants, bars, shops and galleries. In that same vein, we want to embed LABIOMISTA in the surrounding neighbourhood and wider community in Zwartberg," Wim Dries confirms.

SITE MAP

VIJVER
PROTECTED PARADISE
12 HECTARE
V
COSMOPOLITAN
CULTURE PARK
IV
MEEUWERSTRAAT
NOMADLAND
II
III
I
P1
SPEL
'RIJK DER DIEREN'
I THE ARK
II VILLA OPUNDI
III THE BATTERY
IV COSMOGOLEM
V LABOVO
PICKNICK
PLAATS
P2
PLOT
MARCEL HABETSLAAN

Aerial view of LABIOMISTA © Builders Facts, 2018

LABIOMISTA is positioned at the crossroads of nature and city, industry and community. It's located at the heart of Zwartberg, a neighbourhood in Genk; and adjacent to the Hoge Kempen National Park. Covering a total of 24 hectares, the site consists of three main parts: the villa, the park and Koen Vanmechelen's studio. Each part has its own identity: humanity, nature and the relationship between both. A hiking trail introduces visitors to these various identities and guides them from domestication via semi-domestication to the wilderness.

Exterior view of The Ark under construction
© Koen Vanmechelen, Photo by Pieter Simons

THE ARK

The Ark is the entrance to the park, LABIOMISTA's interface with the world. It's an eye-catching reception building, erected in black brick and polished concrete. Covering an area of 230 m2, the structure serves as a space for welcoming visitors, introducing them to Koen Vanmechelen's work and to LABIOMISTA itself. The Ark also houses several of Vanmechelen's artwork, a shop and the site's staff offices.
Both the reception building's look and its location link it to The Battery, Vanmechelen's studio and the site's artistic engine room. Raised in the same black stone – a reference to the location's history as a coal mining site – both buildings also resonate with each other via the simplicity and symmetry of their playful geometries. Both were designed by Mario Botta (°1943), the Swiss architect, and were realised in collaboration with the artist.

— LOCATION former entrance gate of the mine director's villa
— FUNCTION site reception area, welcoming visitors, providing information, selling tickets and other products
— ARCHITECT Mario Botta (CH), in collaboration with the Genk-based architectural firm Buro B
— CONTRACTOR Thys Bouwprojecten
— INSTALLATIONS AND ARTWORK BY KOEN VANMECHELEN Under Pressure, SOTWA
— SCENOGRAPHY design by Voet and De Brabandere, production by Casa Vero

Exterior view of Villa OpUnDi under construction
© Koen Vanmechelen, Photo by Pieter Simons

VILLA OPUNDI

The former director's residence of the Zwartberg mine and zoo is restored within the framework of LABIOMISTA. The villa recounts the history of the site and simultaneously presents a kaleidoscopic image of Koen Vanmechelen's art and universe: visitors get to experience the many entrances and angles they can choose from to get to know the world in which Koen Vanmechelen lives and operates. At the same time, the villa is the headquarters of Koen Vanmechelen's OpUnDi, the Open University of Diversity, which was inaugurated in 2011 during the Venice Biennale at the Palazzo Loredan. That's why the Villa is also called the Villa OpUnDi – a place for meeting others and gaining knowledge.

At Villa OpUnDi, various installations inform visitors about the content and context of the ecosystem and the animals of the Cosmopolitan Culture Park. There's also some background information about ongoing scientific research and projects that are linked to LABIOMISTA activities. Visitors can browse Koen Vanmechelen's international work via the Library of Collected Knowledge (L.O.C.K.) Over time, the villa will be able to offer lodging to researchers, students and curators who are conducting research at LABIOMISTA or want to consult the archives. The villa also contains the estate manager's residence.

Dating from 1925, the director's villa exemplifies an eclectic-historical style with features of the Mosan Renaissance. The building first housed the director of the coal mine, until it ceased operation; and then the director of Zwartberg Zoo, which was the site's second destination, until it closed in 1997. It would then take another ten years for the building to get a new purpose, this time as part of LABIOMISTA. The villa was restored to its former glory. The first part to be renovated was the building's outer shell. Next, the interior was designed by Team van Meer architecten & co. The interventions

were modest and remained true to the spirit of the building. For the complete renovation of the building's interior, including the attic spaces and the new stairwell, the choice was made to introduce contemporary elements. This was to make a clear distinction between those interior elements that were restored, and the newer additions. The villa contains many original wooden and metal interior elements in neo-eclectic style. Inside, there are marble floors in the entrance areas, parquet in petit Versailles pattern in the salons, a monumental staircase with wrought-iron railings and stucco ceilings in the function rooms. It is because of these special historical elements that the villa has been listed as a historical heritage site, following a neighbourhood initiative.

— FUNCTION explaining the history of the site, OpUnDi Genk, projects and foundations of Koen Vanmechelen, plus the Library of Collected Knowledge
— Protected monument, now restored
— DESIGN Team van Meer architecten
— CONTRACTOR Renotec
— INSTALLATIONS AND ARTWORKS BY KOEN VANMECHELEN Wunderkamer, Ubuntu, Frozen Culture, L.O.C.K.
— SCENOGRAPHY design Voet and De Brabandere, executed by Casa Vero

The Battery – studio Koen Vanmechelen, exterior view with eagle cage, LABIOMISTA, Genk (BE) © Koen Vanmechelen, 2018 - Photo by Philippe van Gelooven

Artworks, installation view beneath The Battery – Studio Koen Vanmechelen, LABIOMISTA, Genk (BE) © Koen Vanmechelen, 2018 - Photo by Kris Vervaeke

THE BATTERY

The Battery houses the studio of Koen Vanmechelen, an impressive new build with an area of almost 5000 m². It is designed by the renowned Swiss architect Mario Botta (Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco, Fiore di pietra in Switzerland, and more). Inspired by Vanmechelen's work, Botta created a building consisting mainly of concrete, clad in a black facing brick and 6-metre-high windows that allow light to penetrate deep into the building.

The first part of the building was constructed on pillars, allowing the visitor to walk beneath it as if through an open-air gallery. The niches frame various 2D and 3D works by Vanmechelen, including an installation with the Red Jungle Fowl - the 'primal chicken' and ancestor of the domesticated chicken. The rest of the studio is not open to the public: it contains the artist's private work space – i.e. his studio or atelier – with assorted logistical spaces and offices for the supporting team.

The Battery is characterised by two large cages: The Looking Glass at the front of the studio and the eagle's cage on top of the building. The world comes together in The Looking Glass. Seed- and fruit-eating birds from the world's various continents cohabit here in a tailor-made habitat, including hornbills, toucans, roul-rouls, Victoria crowned pigeons and various kinds of tourako. In collaboration with internationally recognised

organisations, adapted breeding and placement programmes are being developed to protect and preserve diversity. The eagle's cage houses a pair of Steller's sea eagles – their antipodes. Here we have predator and prey, strength and power, in a constant search for balance. Together, they symbolise the duality of beauty and cruelty in nature, of benevolence and resistance, of serenity and conflict. They underscore a central, constant concept in Koen Vanmechelen's oeuvre: conflict, and by extension the question of humanity's role in it.

— FUNCTION studio, lab, Vanmechelen's work space.
— ARCHITECT Mario Botta, in collaboration with Genk-based architectural firm Buro B
— CONTRACTOR Thys Bouwprojecten
— INSTALLATIONS AND ARTWORKS BY KOEN VANMECHELEN
The Looking Glass, Myths and Medicine, Collective Memory

View of the Cosmopolitan Culture Park under construction
© Koen Vanmechelen, Photo by Pieter Simons

Koen Vanmechelen looking at the Cosmogolem
© Koen Vanmechelen 2018 Photo by Studio Tropics

COSMOPOLITAN CULTURE PARK

The Cosmopolitan Culture Park is the largest part of LABIOMISTA. The design and construction were performed by BURO Landschap, a Belgian firm specialising in landscape planning, urban design and technology, in collaboration with Koen Vanmechelen and the city of Genk. After the zoo was closed, the fences and animal cages were removed from the premises. This gave the park the chance to recover naturally, which helped create a unique landscape.

In the Cosmopolitan Culture Park, visitors encounter the elements central to Koen Vanmechelen's oeuvre; nature, animals and art. A network of hiking trails that float above the surface guides them from the tamed/domesticated world to a rugged, untouched and untamed one - and then back. In the meantime, visitors can acquaint themselves with the various animal species that play an essential, inspirational role in the artist's work. In particular, various animal pairs are brought together in three compounds, each approximately 1 ha in size. The animals represent the diversity that typifies our world. Together with the animals, plants, fungi and other living organisms already present, they form a new ecosystem. The animals, which include dromedaries, llamas, emus, rhinoceros and alpacas, can roam freely throughout most of the compounds, allowing them to develop their own hierarchical structures and natural systems. This provides visitors with an insight into the biological needs, the diversity and the daily life of the animals. The barriers between the animal compounds mainly consist of natural elements. Where necessary, minimal fencing has been installed, taking care not to disturb the sense of open space throughout the park.

Central to the park are Koen Vanmechelen's 'living artworks', including his famous Cosmopolitan Chicken Project and the Planetary Community Chicken.

Last but not least, the Cosmopolitan Culture Park also allows visitors to encounter a number of Koen Vanmechelen's sculptures and installations, including the Cosmogolem: a 9.5-m-tall open head made of marble and steel, an international symbol of children's rights.

One of the participants of the care programme.
© Photo city of Genk

Inge Kindt, Open Farm Manager and Johan Vanroye of Regenboog vzw
© Photo city of Genk

INCLUSIVE CARE

Animal rights are always central to Koen Vanmechelen's projects. The animals are afforded lots of natural space, get the best possible care and are allowed a natural death. As Open Farm Manager, Vanmechelen's wife Inge Kindt coordinates the various farms around the world. LABIOMISTA is like an inverted zoo: instead of being locked up, lamas, alpacas, dromedaries, chickens, rheas, emus and ostriches freely roam the grounds.

To provide care for the animals, a unique collaboration has been set up with RegenbOog vzw and Covida. These two organisations, both from Genk, offer leisure experiences to children, young people and adults with disabilities. Getting close to nature is one of those experiences. Inge: "The daily care routine takes a few hours. It includes feeding, cleaning stables, collecting eggs. But there are plenty of other fun things to do, under supervision: going out to discover the farm's natural surroundings, or using the eggs to prepare some delicious food, for example."
"Just the fact that our clients get to play an active part in the warm and tender care for animals at LABIOMISTA adds an extra dimension to 'the mix of life'," says RegenbOog vzw's Johan Vanroye. "It's amazing to see how well they interact with the animals. And you can see it's a wonderful addition to their lives. This experience makes it clear that we as a society should think more about being inclusive. We're very happy to be a part of this project."

— DESIGN Buro Landschap
— CONTRACTOR Kumpen NV / Willemen NV
— SCENOGRAPHY Voet and De Brabandere, executed by Casa Vero
— INSTALLATIONS AND ARTWORKS BY KOEN VANMECHELEN
Cosmogolem, Joy and Wisdom, T-Rex

Total area: 12 ha

3 ponds:
— The smallest pond: 256 m2
— The largest pond: 2000 m2

Hiking trail: 1.7 km

Animal compounds:

Compound 1
— Llamas, emus, Cosmopolitan Chicken Project
— 8072 m2

Compound 2
— Dromedaries, ostriches
— 8519 m2

Compound 3
— Alpacas, rheas, Planetary Community Chicken
— 9030 m2

Rendering LabOvo, exterior view, Cosmopolitan Culture Park, LABIOMISTA, Genk (BE)
© Van Belle & Medina, Koen Vanmechelen

LABOVO

About halfway into the Cosmopolitan Culture Park emerges a pavilion in light gray concrete and finished with façade elevations in wood and glass. LabOvo, a contraction of 'AB OVO' – a reference to the earliest beginnings, when all emergent forms of life resemble each other – and 'LAB', a nod to the cross-disciplinary collaborations that result in scientific (and other) findings, to the story of DNA and to the diversity both in Vanmechelen's work and in nature itself.

The lab offers space for experimentation, fertilisation, and the hybridisation of organisms and ideas.

LabOvo is a place where people can take a break during their walk in the park – the roof doubles as a terrace, offering a panoramic view of the site. At the same time, it's the nerve centre of the Cosmopolitan Culture Park. In LabOvo, there is room both to care for animals and for education: there is a quarantine area, a space for workshops and an amphitheatre that serves as a speakers' corner.

The building is designed by the Belgian-Spanish architectural firm
Van Belle & Medina Architects.

— FUNCTION a combination of animal care, indoor amphitheatre, sanitary facilities, panoramic roof, multipurpose room for activities or education
— ARCHITECT Van Belle and Medina (Antwerp)
— CONTRACTOR Thys Bouwprojecten (Westerlo)

NOMADLAND, meeting place in the community adjacent to LABIOMISTA, Zwartberg, Genk © Koen Vanmechelen, 2018 Photo by the city of Genk

View on NOMADLAND, meeting place in the community adjacent to LABIOMISTA, Zwartberg, Genk © Koen Vanmechelen, 2018 Photo by the city of Genk

NOMADLAND

Nomadland is being realised by the city of Genk and the residents of Zwartberg, based on a concept by Koen Vanmechelen. Collaboration with surrounding communities – near and far – is one of the basic pillars shaping Koen Vanmechelen's work. His art is steeped in the spirit of the nomad, the outsider. An element looking for fertilisation outside of its cocoon and in so doing fertilising other communities as well. For its part, the city of Genk aims to use the new, organic development of LABIOMISTA as a lever for the socio-economic development of the neighbourhood. Nomadland was built on that intersection of objectives. It connects the existing allotments to the west of Meeuwerstraat with LABIOMISTA.

With its allotment gardens, picnic areas, an open space for events and room for food trucks, Nomadland is a place of collective equality, of fertilisation. It connects LABIOMISTA with the surrounding neighbourhood. Nomadland creates an atmosphere in which people meet others to build a 'common' with ingredients from all over the world. Koen Vanmechelen refers to the nomad, the traveller along the Silk Road who joins together the riches of various cultures. For the artist, the produce brought forth by the allotment gardens is the contemporary equivalent of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

— INSTALLATIONS AND ARTWORKS BY KOEN VANMECHELEN
Nomadland, neon installation
— ARCHITECT Voet en De Brabandere

LABIOMISTA is located on a site with a rich 20th-century history. In 1901, coal is discovered in the province of Limburg. Soon after, three mining sites are established in Genk. The first structures of the Zwartberg coal mine are inaugurated in 1910. The mid-1950s are the mine's heyday, but the last batch of coal is hauled to the surface in 1966 already. The shaft towers are demolished and the director's villa is sold to the Wauters family, which operates a private zoo on the premises from 1970. The zoo closes its doors in 1997. Twenty-two years later, the grounds are dedicated to a new, future-oriented project – LABIOMISTA.

ZWARTBERG COAL MINE

For centuries, the moorland that made up the landscape of Genk remains untouched. The sparsely-populated area is beloved by poets and painters. But in 1901, a new era begins for Limburg. The discovery of highly sought-after coking coal (a.k.a. 'fat coal') changes the landscape forever. In all, seven mines rise up in the Kempen coal basin. In 1925, the Zwartberg mine brings its first coal to the surface. Around the mine, a new community arises: villas for the mining engineers and executives, workers' houses for the miners. The community is designed as a garden city, an attractive, modern residential area in a totally new zone of economic growth. Initially, the mine employs mainly local men, from the province of Limburg itself. Workers commuting in from the wider region complement the labour force. At the start of World War II, many young men go down the pit as a way to escape mobilisation into the military.

The war puts a temporary stop to the expansion of the Limburg mining industry. Coal production continues, but everything that is extracted is sent to Germany. After the war, the so-called 'Kolenslag' (literally a 'coal battle': an intensive production drive) increases the demand for new miners. A bilateral agreement with Italy offers a solution, and a first wave of guest workers reaches Belgium. Following a deadly mining disaster at Marcinelle in 1956, the relationship with Italy turns sour. So new miners are recruited elsewhere: in Spain, Greece, Turkey and Morocco. People from all over the world meet each other at Zwartberg. But the steep rise of the petroleum industry is detrimental to the continued growth of coal. The mines of Zolder and Houthalen are forced to merge in 1964, while the closure of several mines in Wallonia was imminent.

Fearing that tensions between Flemings and Walloons could fan unrest in Wallonia into a full-blown revolt, the Belgian government decides to sacrifice one coal mine in Flanders: Zwartberg. Never mind that it's the most modern and productive mine in Belgium at that time. The news is a massive blow, and local resistance is strong. Two people are killed in the ensuing demonstrations.

With the conclusion of the Pact of Zwartberg, peace returns. The deal states that the mine will only close when all employees have found other work. The last coal cart is hauled to the surface on 7 October 1966.

ZWARTBERG ZOO

Following centuries of moorland solitude and forty years of intensive mining, Zwartberg in 1970 receives a wondrous batch of new arrivals. There are lions and great apes, rhinos and elephants: at its peak, Zwartberg Zoo has almost three thousand animals, of more than fifty different species. In 1967, the Wauters family had acquired the former director's residence of the Zwartberg mine to set up a zoo. On 17 May 1970, the mayor receives Marcel Wauters – and two lions – at the town hall for the official signature on the deed of incorporation. With great fanfare, Limburg Zoo opens its doors to the public.

Run by Isabella Drijkoningen and Marcel Wauters, the zoo is privately owned: it never receives any government subsidies or private grants. The project is born from a deep love for animals. The Wauters family obtains its animals through donations and by caring for old and often abused animals from circuses and other, bankrupt zoos. They acquire a few animals by themselves. It's an unconventional zoo and, because of its role as a shelter and via an intensive breeding programme, a rapidly growing one. The zoo's huge diversity of species and its unique approach – some animals are allowed to roam freely – both constitute the zoo's attractiveness and signal its eventual downfall.

The absence of subsidies allows the zoo more freedom to pursue its own philosophy: no animal is ever refused, nor are old and sick animals ever euthanised – unless they suffer too much. But the lack of subsidies also means the authorities have no instrument to enforce ever-stricter environmental and animal-welfare standards. Public pressure mounts, and the park eventually closes its doors in 1997. A large number of predators finds a new home via Belgium's Royal Society for the Protection of Animals, which sets up a dedicated shelter for wild animals at Coutisse, in Wallonia.

TIMELINE

1910 Inauguration of the first coal mining infrastructure
1925 Completion of the director's villa
1966 Closure of the Zwartberg coal mine
1970 Inauguration of the Limburg Zoo
1997 Closure of the Limburg Zoo
1999 The city of Genk acquires the grounds of the former mine and zoo
2005 The director's villa is listed as a monument and the site becomes a public park
2009 The neighbourhood opens ZWAZOOpad, a signposted walking trail
2014 First talks between Koen Vanmechelen and Genk mayor Wim Dries about LABIOMISTA
2015 Works on LABIOMISTA start
2017 On January 1st, Koen Vanmechelen moves his studio to the new building in Genk
2017 Construction of The Ark (entrance building), LabOvo (reception pavilion) and Cosmopolitan Culture Park
2018 Nomad fest officially inaugurates Nomadland; the neighbourhood gets the chance to discover LABIOMISTA
2019 Opening LABIOMISTA

SITE DIMENSIONS

24 hectares
Includes three animal compounds totalling more than 9000 m², three ponds, a walking trail of more than 1 km, which includes a few bridges.

INVESTMENT

Joint investment of €22.6 million (public-private partnership)

- Investment of €9 million by Koen Vanmechelen, as private partner
- Investment of €9 million by the city of Genk, as public partner
- Government subsidy of €4.6 million by public partners Toerisme Limburg, Toerisme Vlaanderen and the Flemish Government (Agentschap Binnenlands Bestuur – LABIOMISTA selected as urban renewal project)

ADMISSION PRICES

Basic price	€ 8
Children <18 years	FREE
Annual subscription	€ 15 / year

DISCOUNT RATES

People with a physical limitation and their supervisor, students (upon presentation of a valid student card), teacher (upon presentation of a valid teacher card) and groups of minimum 10 people, age 60 and older	€ 6
Annual subscription residents of Genk	€ 5 / year*

LABIOMISTA's revenues are fully reinvested in the public operation of the park and projects in the neighborhood.

OPENING HOURS

July 6 to November 3, 2019

Mondays	Closed
Tuesday - Sunday	from 10:00 to 17:00

The park remains open until 19:00
In October, the offices and the shop close at 16:00 and the park at 17:30.

The park is closed from November 4, 2019 to March 2020
(2020 season: April to October)

* During the season of 2019 residents of Genk will enjoy free admission upon presentation of their ID

Genk is a city of birth and rebirth. Its original renown is as a place beloved by painters for the rural purity of its landscapes. But at the beginning of the last century, the city is thoroughly transformed by the mining industry. Coal mines have made Genk into what it is today, not just in terms of urban development, but also socially and economically. Unlike any other city in Flanders, Genk's growth does not radiate from its church towers. From the three mining sites, at Winterslag, Waterschei and Zwartberg, it emerges as an amalgam of neighbourhoods, with a city centre in search of its own identity.

Coal is the 'black gold' that attracts a unique melting pot of nationalities and cultures. There are currently more than 100 nationalities in Genk, for a population of just 66,000. After the closure of the mines, the automotive industry puts Genk in an international pole position. With the Ford factory at Genk as its hub and driver, Genk becomes the third most important industrial centre in Flanders. But in 2012, Ford closes up shop in Genk.

On the foundations of the past and thanks to the tremendous willpower of its community, Genk is currently undergoing its third transformation: after coal mining and car manufacturing now come new, sustainable economic and social models, fit for this medium-sized multicultural city. From the remains of the Winterslag mine site springs C-mine, inspiring Genk to think and design creatively. Thor Park, the former mine site at Waterschei and part of the Hoge Kempen National Park, is developing into a high-quality technology site, allowing Genk to successfully evolve towards the highly specialised knowledge economy and Industry 4.0 of the future.

Zwartberg's mining site is now LABIOMISTA. Here, Koen Vanmechelen and the city of Genk are entering into a unique collaboration. The project builds on the uniqueness of the city, its heritage, past and population, and is based on common values such as freedom of thought, encountering the Other and a willingness to experiment.

Koen Vanmechelen –

> As an artist, I commit myself to a city with a 'wounded history': a city with a past in which identities such as coal mining or car manufacturing have disappeared. This means there's room for other structures, for transition. Here, we can begin again, with the energy that was once extracted from the earth itself.

LABIOMISTA provides visitors with a new perspective on biological and cultural diversity, on identity, on cross-fertilisation and on human rights, all based on Koen Vanmechelen's work and vision. Additionally, LABIOMISTA is a laboratory and an incubator, injecting the city and the world with new creations, projects, ideas and models, at that unique crossroads of art, science and society.

The Belgian artist Koen Vanmechelen (1965) is an internationally acclaimed conceptual artist. His ground-breaking work deals with biocultural diversity and identity. Central to his oeuvre is the chicken, which, through his projects, is revealed as both an artwork and a metaphor for society. By bringing together and exploring the interplay between art, science and philosophy in his work, Vanmechelen reflects upon our global heritage and examines the way that we choose to live and evolve. Multi-disciplinary scientific collaborations and community engagement are integral to Vanmechelen's approach.

Vanmechelen's work first gained worldwide recognition in the late nineties, with the launch of his Cosmopolitan Chicken Project (CCP), an artistic crossbreeding project with chickens. Since its inception nearly twenty years ago, the resulting art work has been shown in exhibitions all over the world. It has also attracted growing interest amongst scientists. Each successive generation of the CCP has proven to be more resilient, longer living, less susceptible to disease, and less aggressive than the previous one. In collaboration with the University of Leuven, the Cosmopolitan Chicken Research Project (CC®P) now studies the genetic make-up of the various CCP crossings and its potentia limplications for science. Vanmechelen's scientific collaborations have earned him an honorary doctorate from the University of Hasselt (2010) and the Golden Nica Hybrid Art award (2013).

Vanmechelen's art work is as diverse and hybrid as the Cosmopolitan Chicken itself: a unique mix of paintings, drawings, photography, innovative 3D-techniques, video, installations and wooden sculptures. All of it flows from Vanmechelen's belief that art belongs in society, engaging with people. The artist's major on-going projects have a consistent community focus: Cosmogolem, a global art-based children's rights project; the Walking Egg, a developing world fertility project; and Combat, a WWI remembrance project. In 2011, the foundations supporting these works were grouped into a new institute called the Open University of Diversity.

In 2016, Vanmechelen launched his Planetary Community Chicken (PCC) project. As the new cross-breed is being introduced to underserved communities worldwide, the MOUTH foundation leads on the sustainable development aspects of the initiative. MOUTH is a not-for-profit organization set up by a group of European doctors and scientists in partnership with Vanmechelen in 2016. It brings together art, science and people to explore the applications and impact of biocultural diversity.

Vanmechelen has presented his work on almost every continent, from the U.S. to China and Iceland to Senegal. In Belgium his work has been shown at numerous museums and locations: the Verbeke Foundation, Watou, Museum M and Z33. He has also participated in solo and group exhibitions in, amongst others, The National Gallery (London), Victoria and Albert Museum (London), Museum Kunst Palast (Düsseldorf), Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ (Amsterdam), Macro (Rome), MAD Museum (NY), Belvedere (Vienna), ZKM (Karlsruhe) and Pushkin Museum (Moscow). Besides making regular appearances at the Venice Biennale, his work has been shown at the Biennials of Moscow, Havana, Dakar and Poznan, at the Triennial of Guangzhou, at the World Expo Shanghai 2010, at Manifesta 9, and at dOCUMENTA (13).

Vanmechelen lives in Meeuwen-Gruitrode, in the northeast of Belgium. He is an honorary citizen of his native town of Sint-Truiden. Since 2017, the artist has been based at his new studio, LABIOMISTA, built by Swiss architect Mario Botta. Occupying the grounds of a former public zoo in Genk, LABIOMISTA will open to the public in June 2019. Alongside the artist's studio, it will host a culture and animal park, and an educational and research center, including the Open University of Diversity.

I HONORS AND AWARDS (selection)

— Golden Nica Hybrid Art, Prix Ars Electronica, Linz (AT), 2013
— Pavilion 0 Global Artist's Award, Venice (IT), 2013
— Beste Concept, VENUEZ, Cosmocafe (BE)
— Doctor Honoris Causa UHasselt, Hasselt (BE), 2010
— Honorary citizenship Sint-Truiden (BE), 2005
— Gustav-Henemann-Friedenspreis (with Gregie de Maeyer for 'Juul'), Berlin (DE), 1998

II EXHIBITIONS (selection)

2019
— FOOD; Bigger than the Plate, V&A, London (UK)
— The Worth of Life, Teatro dell'architettura, Mendrisio (CH)
— Human Rights Pavilion, Venice (IT)
— Iconic works, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm (SE), Ateneum, Helsinki (FI)
— Art With Me, Tulum (ME)

2018
— Protected Paradise, Palazzo Franchetti, La Biennale di Venezia (IT)
— CWRM, Land art installation, Ypres (BE)
— IT'S ABOUT TIME, Serlachius, Mantta (FI)
— Il Terzo Giorno, Parma (IT)

2017
— Protected Paradise, Palazzo Franchetti, La Biennale di Venezia (IT)
— Vision of the Owl, galerie Bach, Brussels (BE)
— Force of Nature, The Art Pavilion, Mile End Park, London, (UK)
— Planetary Community Chicken, VII Socle du Monde, HEART, Herning, Denmark (DK)

2016
— ENERGY/MASS, Wasserman Projects, Detroit (US)
— Planetary Community Chicken, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare (ZW)
— Daydreaming With... Stanley Kubrick, Sommerset House, London (UK)

2015
— This Is Not a Chicken, Het Domein, Sittard (NL)
— LIFEBANK/AWAKENER, GLASSTRESS 2015 GOTIKA, 56th Biennial of Venice (IT)
— Evolution of a Hybrid - CC®P, The Importance of Being..., Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, La Habana (CU), Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Buenos Aires (AR), Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro (BR)
— Protected Paradise - C.C.P., Vienna for Art's Sake, Belvedere, Vienna (AT)
— New Brood - C.C.P., Höhenrausch, OK Center for Contemporary Art, Linz (AT)
— Arena de Evolución, 12th la Bienal de La Habana (CU)
— La Biomista, Exo-Evolution, Globale 2015, ZKM, Karlsruhe (DE)

2014
— Darwin's Dream, The Crypt Gallery, St Pancras Church, London (UK)
— Never Green - C.C.P., Rurart, Poitiers (FR)
— In Captivity, Genius Loci – Spirit of Place, Lisson Gallery & Berengo Studio, 55th International Architecture Biennale of Venice (IT)

2013
— Leaving Paradise, CONNERSMITH, Washington (US)
— Mechelse Styrian - 17th generation - C.C.P., Galerija Kapelica, Ljubljana (SI)
— Leaving Paradise, Art Sanya, Hainan (CN)
— CC®P – The Cosmopolitan Chicken, OK Center for Contemporary Art, Linz (AT)
— Evolution of a Hybrid, Bozar, Brussels (BE)
— Note Book, Beit Ha'ir, Tel Aviv (IL)

2012
— Hybridity in art and science – C.C.P., dOCUMENTA 13, Kassel (DE)
— COMBAT, Landcommandery Alden Biesen, Bilzen (BE)
— Entwined - C.C.P., Breaking the Mold, Glasstress, MADmuseum, New York (US)
— Hotel de Inmigrantes 2 – Cosmopolitan Stranger (Collateral Event Manifesta 9), Open University of Diversity, Hasselt (BE)

2011
— Nato a Venezia, Collateral Event of 54th Biennial of Venice, Venice (IT)
— Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, Art Labor, Shanghai (CN)
— Breaking the Cage, IKOB, Museum of Contemporary Art Eupen, Eupen (BE)
— Modified Spaces – C.C.P., 4th triennial of Guangzhou, Guangdong Museum of Art (CN)
— Genetic Freedom – C.C.P., Scenarios about Europe, GFZK, Leipzig (DE)

2010
— 14th Generation - Mechelse Silky, Himalayas Center, Pudong Shanghai (CN)
— Cosmopolitan Chicken – Diversity, Espace Européen pour la Sculpture, Brussels (BE)
— Mediations Biennial Beyond Mediations, Tower of Babel, Poznan (PL)
— CCP -Innovations and adaptation, Dak'Art Biennial, Dakar (SN)
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken – Frozen Culture Balance, National Museum Warsaw, (PL)
— The Armory Show, New York (US)
— Parallellepipeda, Museum M, Leuven (BE)
— FADA Los Angeles Art Show 2010 (US)

2009
— Unicorn, 53rd Venice Biennale, 2009, Venice
— Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ, Amsterdam (NL)
— Against Exclusions, The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, Mechelse Orloff, 3rd Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, curator Jean-Hubert Martin, Moscow (RU)

— Becoming Intense, Becoming Animal, Becoming ..., Völkerkundemuseum von Portheim-Stiftung, Heidelberg (DE)
— In Bed Together, Breaking the Cage, Royal/T, curator Jane Glassman, Culver City (US)
2008
— Breaking the Cage – The art of Koen Vanmechelen, Victoria and Albert Museum, Arts & Business, curator Mike Phillips, London (GB)
— The Chicken's Appeal, Museum Valkenhof, curator Frank Van der Schoor, Nijmegen (NL)
— Genesis: CCP 10 Generation, Zentrum Paul Klee, curator Fabienne Eggelhöfer, Bern (CH)
— The Cathedral – Ectoplasma – CCP, Congress Centre, Davos (CH)
— Zerbrechliche Schönheit, The Accident, museum Kunst Palest, curator Thijs Visser, Düsseldorf (DE)
— CCP Ten Generations, Galerie k4, Münnich (DE)
2007-2000
— The Accident, curator Agnes Husslein, Palm Court, Miami Beach (US)
— Genesis - The Cosmopolitan Chicken, Centraal Museum Utrecht, curator Emilie Gomart (NL)
— Handle with care, Pushkin Museum, Moscow (RU)
— Red Jungle Fowl - Genus XY, CRAC, curator Hilde Teerlinck, Altkirch (FR), 2005
— Cosmopolitan Chicken Project – Mechelse Owlbeard, GEM Den Haag / KunstRAI, curator Wim Van Krimpen, Amsterdam (NL), 2003
— Visible / Invisible, Galerie Tapper, Malmö (SE), 2003
— Two Asias, Two Europes, Duolun Museum of Modern Art, curator Gu Zhenqing, Shanghai (CN), 2005
— Smak, smak, The Mechelse Bresse, S.M.A.K., curator Jan Hoet Jr., Ghent (BE), 2002
— Cultivando la Naturaleza, Fundacion César Manrique, curator Bianca Visser, Lanzarote (ES), 2004
— Cinecittà, Berengo Fine Arts, Filmfestival, Venice (IT), 2003
— The Walking Egg, Shinchu Museum, Taipei (TW), 2003
— Wir sind die ander(en), curator Jan Hoet, Herford (DE), 2001
— The Walking Egg, Arco 2000, Madrid (ES), 2000
— Storm Centers, curator Jan Hoet, Watou (BE), 2000
— A Shot in the Head, curator Jill Silverman, Lisson Gallery, London (GB), 2000

II PERMANENT WORKS (selection)

— Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, ZKM, Karlsruhe (DE)
— INCUBATED WORLDS, Ethiopia
— T-REX, Männtä (FI)
— Medusa, Serlachius Museums (FI)
— Collective Memory, EIUC, Global campus of Human Rights, Venice (IT), 2017
— Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, dOCUMENTA, 2012 Drawing, GEM | Museum voor actuele kunst, 2003
— Infinity - C.C.P., Dronten (NL), 2016
— Modified Spaces, T-Rex, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou (CN), 2011
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken – Celestial body, VOKA Kamer van Koophandel Limburg, Hasselt (BE), 2010
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken – Time Temperature, BioVille, Campus UHasselt, Biomedical Research Institute (BIOMED), Diepenbeek (BE), 2010
— The Walking Egg – Born, Ziekenhuis Oost- Limburg, Genk (BE), 2005

III FOUNDATIONS

— CosmoGolem Foundation; founded in 2010, to coordinate the project behind the growing series of towering wooden sculptures symbolizing children's rights.
— The Walking Egg Foundation; founded in 2010 to support the Walking Egg Project and the research on (in)fertility in developing countries. Chaired by fertility specialist Willem Ombelet (MD, PhD).
— The Open University of Diversity; founded in 2011, an intellectual space unifying the artistic projects of Koen Vanmechelen and a place where science and art can intersect. It serves as a think tank and is a meeting place for people to discuss the core themes relating to biocultural diversity which are found in the artist's work.
— COMBAT; founded in 2013, to coordinate the GoneWest project and with the purpose to further uncover the oeuvre and deeper meaning of Koen Vanmechelen's work and to actively bring the public closer to his work via action and reflection. In collaboration with vzw ku(n)st.
— MOUTH; Founded in 2014, a philanthropic foundation which brings together art, science and people for diversity. It partners with individuals and organisations worldwide to put diversity front and center of the global development agenda. The aim is a new, more constructive social and ecological balance.
— LABIOMISTA; the unique site of Koen Vanmechelen in the Belgian city of Genk. It accommodates the artist's first Open University of Diversity and the different foundations and subprojects. The site consists of 24 hectares and hosts three identities; a renovated villa, a newly designed studio by Mario Botta and a park.

MODIFIED SPACES,
4 TH GUANGZHOU TRIENNIAL
GUANGDONG MUSEUM OF ART (CN), 2011

The Guangdong museum of Art (Guangzhou, China) selected Vanmechelen as central artist for the Fourth Guangzhou Triennial. The artist created a site-specific installation called 'Modified Spaces'. An installation about the balance between nature and humans and about transformation

NATO A VENEZIA
BIENNALE OF VENICE (IT), 2011

Inside the walls of one of the main centers of Venetian culture and knowledge, Koen Vanmechelen presented a 'laboratory' on the borderline of art and science. In an open study, the visitors were actively invited to take part in different research projects on biological and cultural diversity that are conducted by the researchers on site.

LIBRARY OF COLLECTED KNOWLEDGE
BIENNIAL OF CUBA, 2014

Vanmechelen presented with Library of Collected Knowledge – Arena de Evolución a multi-media and interactive installation at the 12th Biennial of Havana, paralleled with a scientific programme. More info on lock.koenvanmechelen.be

LABIOMISTA
ZKM, KARLSRUHE (DE), 2016

Combining and reconfiguring genes and memes, mixing, experimenting and probing lie at the core of the Vanmechelen's oeuvre. His new studio; Labiomista (mixed life) is the architectural embodiment of his transdisciplinary approach and formed the entrance piece at the Exo-Evolution exhibition curated by Peter Weibel.

PROTECTED PARADISE
VIENNA FOR ART'S SAKE, BELVEDERE, VIENNA (AT), 2015

Heaps of golden corn have taken the place of the baroque gold leaf in Prince Eugene's former Dining Hall; the room contains a large, industrial aviary where two blue-and-gold macaws live. Vanmechelen addresses the issue of the contrast between culture (Baroque) and nature (birds) and establishes a direct connection of our present, the endangered nature, and the baroque past.

PROTECTED PARADISE,
BIENNIAL OF VENICE (IT), 2017

The work highlights the fragility of humanism within the larger story of natural evolution. The cage is made of recycled material and serves as a metaphor for the hysterical state of contemporary society. Every perceived or imaginary threat is followed by some form of internal confinement with enclosures, walls, detention centres, laws and frameworks. All this contradicts the essence of life. Paradise can never be found within walls. Paradise is like life itself: fascinating and terrible, boundless and beautiful. - Koen Vanmechelen

NEVER GREEN
RURART, POITOU- CHARENTES (FR), 2014

There is no green light.
Man has devised lots of systems – political, religious and economic – in an attempt to impose meaning on the chaos of life and to reduce the risk of the unexpected. Engaged in a truly Sisyphean effort, he has tried to cage the complex system of nature, and he has struggled to impose his will on natural systems.
The installation Never Green recreates this inherently human endeavor and subtly challenges the futility of it.

PLANETARY COMMUNITY CHICKEN
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ZIMBABWE, HARARE, 2016

In the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Vanmechelen showed an allcompassing, living art installation with a new species of chicken. His surprising collaboration with local communities of Harare explored broader philosophical issues about the future of global communities and our relationship to the world.

ENERGY/MASS
WASSERMAN PROJECTS, DETROIT (US), 2016

Via 2D- and 3D-works, alongside live chickens from the 20th generation of the Cosmopolitan Chicken Project (CCP) and the Planetary Community Chicken (PCC), the ENERGY/MASS exhibition highlighted the artist's engagement with diversity and duality and spurred the scientific and social debate on balancing productivity with diversity, global with local.

IT'S ABOUT TIME
SERLACHIUS MUSEUMS, MANTTA (FI), 2018

It's About Time offers an in-depth retrospective overview into the unique territory Vanmechelen's art occupies on the edges of art and nature; presenting striking and monumental artworks inside the Serlachius main exhibition space, with his famous breeding program for chickens and pigs outside across the grounds of the park. A deeply ethical artist, his work is concerned about the state of the Earth and a sustainable future for all species. He seeks both symbolically and concretely to open perspectives into a future where people do not exploit nature or each other but live in a state of balance.

INCUBATED WORLDS
ADDIS ABABA (ET), 2018

On 26 April 2018 a unique poultry facility opens in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa. Incubated Worlds is an artwork and research center, a combined effort of internationally acclaimed Belgian artist Koen Vanmechelen and two ILRI livestock geneticists: Tadelle Dessie and Olivier Hanotte. More than a scientific facility, Incubated Worlds is about harnessing diversity to promote new types of unity and harmony. It reveals art and science as valuable partners in addressing global challenges of sustainable food systems.

2019
— Xfestival, UHasselt (BE)
— Food & talk seminar, Foodcamp Finland
— Human Rights Pavilion, OPUS, Mapuche (CL)
2018
— Incubated Worlds, ILRI, Ethiopia
— IT's ABOUT TIME, UNIARTS Helsinki (FIN)
2017
— Tedx, Univeristy of Michigan (US)
— This is not a chicken, Design Indaba (SA)
— Collective Memory, Diplomatic councel on human Rights, EIUC, Venice (IT)
2016
— VLIR-UOS, The Chicken's Appeal, Tour & Taxis, Brussels (BE)
— The Chicken's Appeal, International Livestock Research Institute, Nairobi (KE)
— XIII International Forum, Sculpture Network, Verbeke Foundation, Kemzeke (BE)
— Duo lecture with Maarten Doorman on the social relevance of art, DordtYart, Dordrecht (NL)
2015
— This is Not a Chicken, Het Domein, Sittard (NL)
2014
— The Chicken's Appeal, Vienna Center for Quantum Science and Technology (on invitation of Prof. Dr. Anton Zeilinger, Vienna (AT)
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken, Loitering with Intent, Stockholm University of the Arts, Stockholm (SE)
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken, New Narratives for Europe, Berlin (DE)
— Arena de Evolución, Feest van de Filosofie, University of Leuven, Leuven (BE)
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken Research Project, Visualizing Biological Data Conference, Heidelberg (DE)
2013
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken, New Narratives for Europe, Milan (IT)
— Evolution of a Hybrid, Poultry Genetics Symposium, Venice (IT)
— This is not a chicken, Leuphana University, Lüneburg (DE)
— Evolution of a Hybrid, STIMA, Ghent (BE)
— Hybridity in Art and Science, Auslandskulturtagung, Vienna (AT)
— This is not a chicken, Prix Forum Golden Nica, Linz (AT)
— Evolution of a Hybrid, A Vision of the Future, Pavilion 0, Biennial of Venice (IT)
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, ISA (Instituto Superior de Arte), Havana (CU)
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, CONNERSMITH, Washington (US)
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, Galerija Kapelica, Ljubljana (SI)
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit (US)
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, Cranbrook University, Wayne University, Detroit (US)
— When happiness happens, BOZAR (in cooperation with United Nations), Brussels (BE)
2012
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, Tori Oso (SR)
— The Open University of Diversity, TEDxYouth Flanders, Antwerp (BE)
— The Open Univeristy of Diversity, Nanjing Agricultural University, Nanjing (CN)
— This is not a Chicken, World Appreciative Inquiry Conference, Ghent (BE)
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, Europe (to the power of N), Berlin (DE)
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, Bioethics Congress, Rotterdam (NL)
— The Walking egg, Unite for Sight Global Health & Innovation, Yale University (US)
2011
— This is not a chicken, Galerie Für Zeit Genössische Kunst, Leipzig (DE)
— Modified Spaces –C.C.P., with Peter Noever, Guanzhou Museum of Art, Guangzhou (CN)
— In-Vetro – C.C.P., Symposium Transparent vision – the art and science of glass Kijkduin Biënnale (NL)
— The Chicken's Appeal, Pecha kucha, Brussels (BE)
2010 - 2002
— The Chicken's Appeal, TedxFlanders, Antwerp
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, European Conference On Computational Biology, Ghent
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, Belgian pavilion World Expo, Shanghai (CN), 2010
— The Accident, Debate with Professor J.-J. Cassiman, Dr. Mike Philips, Dr. Luc Vrielinck, and Peter Adriaenssens, moderator: Indra Dewitte, Museum M, Leuven (BE), 2010
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, PULSE New York (US), 2010
— The Chicken's Appeal, 3rd Moscow Biennial of Contemporary Art, Moscow (RU), 2009
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project – Culture and Nature Balance Climat Change Congress, 2009, Kopenhagen (DK), 2009
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken, Debate, World Economic Forum, Davos (CH), 2008
— Day of Hope, Cosmogolem, Jeanne Devos Fonds, Mumbai (IN), 2008
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (UK), 2008
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, Creativity World Forum, Lotto Arena, Antwerp (BE), 2008
— The Walking Egg, Expert meeting Fertility in Developing Countries, Arusha (TA), 2007
— CosmoGolem en Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, The Jacobs Foundation, Zurich (CH)
— The Cosmopolitan Chicken, Natural History Museum, London (GB), 2002

Top TEDXUofM, Michigan (US), 2017
Below Design Indaba, South-Africa, 2017

OVERVIEW OF EXHIBITIONS BY KOEN VANMECHELEN IN 2019

GROUP

— GLASSTRESS 2019, Venice (IT)
Curated by Vik Muniz and Koen Vanmechelen
9 MAY - 24 NOV, 2019
Returning for the 58th Biennale di Venezia, the sixth edition of GLASSTRESS brings together a new line-up of leading contemporary artists from Europe, the United States, Latin America, India, and China in an ambitious exhibition exploring the endless creative possibilities of glass.
www.glasstress.org

— FOOD: Bigger than the Plate, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (UK)
18 MAY - 20 OCT, 2019
FOOD: Bigger than the Plate will explore how innovative artists, individuals, communities and organisations are radically re-inventing how we grow, distribute and experience food. Taking visitors on a sensory journey through the food cycle, from compost to table, it poses questions about how the collective choices we make can lead to a more sustainable, just and delicious food future in unexpected and playful ways. Koen Vanmechelen has been invited to present his Cosmopolitan Chicken Project - Planetary Community Chicken.
www.vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/food-bigger-than-the-plate

— Under My Skin, Creatures made to measure, Design Museum Gent (Belgium)
17 MAY - 29 SEP 2019, MARTa Herford, Germany
www.designmuseumgent.be/en

OVERVIEW OF EXHIBITIONS BY KOEN VANMECHELEN IN 2019

SOLO

— Human Rights Pavilion, Venice (IT)
MAY 2019 - MAY 2021
The Human Rights Pavilion is an evolving artwork by artist Koen Vanmechelen, in collaboration with Global Campus of Human Rights, Fondazione Berengo and the MOUTH Foundation. The Human Rights Pavilion will be inaugurated in the context of the 58th Biennial with an exhibition at Fondazione Berengo and is built up of three chapter; SoTO Dialogues, SoTO Environment and SoTO legacy.
Over the course of 18 months, artist Koen Vanmechelen explores, captures and visualizes the complexity and possibilities of a 'universal body of human rights' and the role of art in its development. He presents nature as a human right and contemplates the need and content of human rights in the Anthropocene, the era in which the human impact on the Earth's geology and ecosystems reaches critical proportions. Vanmechelen's tools include both living and non-living materials: wood, marble, glass, ceramics, photography, living animal installations, private conversations, round table settings, café's, academic debates, and real live feeds.
www.humanrightspavilion.com

— The Worth of Life, Teatro dell'Architettura, Mendrisio (CH)
OCT 2019 – FEB 2020
Solo exhibition at the recently opened Teatro dell'Architettura, designed by Mario Botta. Unique in its kind, the Teatro dell'Architettura will contribute significantly to the new identity image of the Academy of Architecture of the University of Lugano: a laboratory of ideas and events, a place of experimentation, and a contemporary instrument to perceive and transmit cultural trends. The solo exhibition will be curated by Didi Bozzini.

— Cosmogolem, Parque Cultural de Valparaiso, Chili
1 AUG, 2019 (permanent sculpture)
www.cosmogolem.com

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http://caracascom.com/nl/labiomista-opent-haar-poorten-in-genk/900.html
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VIDEO
https://vimeo.com/322798255

JOURNAL LABIOMISTA 2019
https://www.labiomista.be/news/labiomista-journal-ndeg2