

Flags For Venice

May 31 - June 5, 2011

Venice, Italy

FLAGS FOR VENICE

Invited artists

Lorenzo Scotto di Luzio, Daniel Knorr, Ahmet Ogut, Lili Reynaud Dewar, Danh Vo, Mai-Thu Perret, Thomas Julier, Jonathan Horowitz, Mika Tajima, Lisa Oppenheim, Rob Pruitt, Das Institut, Gerwald Rockenschau

Concept

Since its beginnings in Indian and Chinese cultures, the flag has been a symbol that belongs to a group or a community. It's only during the modern age, with the rise of nationalism, that it has become, above all, a nation's distinctive sign.

In 2009, the Swiss Institute New York initiated the "Flag" project. Conceived by Gianni Jetzer, the project explored the interaction between institution and public situations, by innovating the flag that hangs on New York's historic thoroughfare Broadway. The invitation to re-design and manipulate the graphic identity of the Swiss flag, effectively complicated the relationship between the Swiss Institute and its representation of national identity.

On the occasion of the 54th Venice Biennale, The Istituto Svizzero di Roma, which also runs a branch in Venice, has re-imagined the Flag project to be installed along another path, the one located behind Volti at the Giardini, in a narrow Venetian calli. The Istituto Svizzero di Roma has adapted the project to respond to the nationalism historically represented by the Biennale.

The site specific project utilizes the Biennale's conflicted celebration of unity and nationalism to shift the use of a flag away from a symbol of national or institutional identity, and gear it toward a new representation of fictional group, peoples, or communities.

The invitation goes out to 12 international artists to design a flag that represents a new group -real or imagined. The resulting flags delete the physical and mental boundaries belonging to a real community and invents new typologies for individuals as a collective body.

The project will be installed in the calli between the Giardini and the Arsenale –the two main venues of the Venice Biennale– a key-place to be visited by the thousands of professionals and public during the days of the Biennale's opening days. There will be no map that indicates the exact locations, flags will therefore be encountered by chance.

While visitors frequent these celebrated and famous sites, the commissioned flags will be seen fluttering overhead. The artistic project will be installed on the pre-existing laundry lines that stretch, in zig zag lines all along the alleys. Hanging alongside the local's freshly laundered clothing, the flags mix with the traditions and habits of the Venetian people.

A project by Istituto Svizzero di Roma and Swiss Institute, New York, in the byways of Venice

Curated by Salvatore Lacagnina and Gianni Jetzer

Istituto Svizzero di Roma + LOGO

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