

Further information:

**The AZERBAIJAN PAVILION at the 56<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia**

## **Vita Vitale**

**Created by:** IDEA (International Dialogue for Environmental Action), supported by Save our Species

**Commissioner:** Heydar Aliyev Foundation, Baku, Azerbaijan

**Curators:** Artwise: Susie Allen, Laura Culpan, Dea Vanagan

**Scientific curator:** Professor Rachel Armstrong

**9 May – 22 November 2015 (Official opening 6 May 2015, by invitation only)**

**10am – 6pm, daily (except Mondays)**

**Venue: Ca' Garzoni, Calle del Traghetto o Garzoni, San Marco 3416, 30124**

Azerbaijan's participation in the **56<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia 2015** is commissioned by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation. For **Biennale Arte 2015**, Azerbaijan presents two exhibitions for international audiences that celebrate the voices of artists addressing complex and pressing questions that affect us globally. While *Beyond the Line* reconsiders the country's past, **Vita Vitale** looks to Azerbaijan's future, and beyond its geographic borders, to spotlight the artists and scientists confronting the ecological challenges we face globally.

The naturalist Sir David Attenborough once declared that humans were a plague on the Earth, depleting their own resources and those of other species, thereby threatening their own existence. **Vita Vitale** unites an international group of contemporary artists galvanised by this threat. From the grandly-proportioned rooms of a 13<sup>th</sup>-century palazzo overlooking Venice's Grand Canal — itself the bearer of the human footprint's heavy weight — their multimedia works and installations explore the consequences of plastic pollutants, consumerism, climate change, dwindling resources, deteriorating land and seascapes, rising sea levels, and endangered species. From aerial shots of the increasingly arid Texas Panhandle to a futuristic wasteland built upon the excesses of the financial market; from photographs of flip-flops washed up on the beaches of Wales to sculptures of barnacle-encrusted reefs inspired by the urbanisation of the Galapagos Islands, **Vita Vitale** navigates the delicate balance between our planet's ecosystem and our impact on the natural world. At the same time, works such as a gilded swarm of bees, an idyllic animation of an apple tree, and sculptures of olive trees celebrate our interdependency on the Earth and its species.

The exhibition's Laboratory, hosted by IDEA (International Dialogue for Environmental Action), further reinforces our connection to our environment, especially **Vita Vitale's** own immediate environment. Located only a few steps from the Grand Canal, and drawing inspiration from Venice's ecological concerns, the IDEA Laboratory convenes scientists, artists, and designers to spark dialogue about synthesising our technological capabilities and our living realm.

At a time when the human race increasingly consumes and jettisons natural resources and manmade products, the collective voices of **Vita Vitale's** artists and scientists resonate throughout Ca' Garzoni. They challenge us to confront the potential dangers of ignoring the messages that **Vita Vitale** conveys, while simultaneously suggesting creative tools and ideas for securing 'all the world's futures.'

**Exhibiting Artists:** Edward Burtynsky, Mircea Cantor, Loris Cecchini, Gordon Cheung, Khalil Chishtee, Tony Cragg, Laura Ford, Noémie Goudal, Siobhán Hapaska, Paul Huxley, IDEA Laboratory and Leyla Aliyeva, Chris Jordan with Rebecca Clark and Helena S.Eitel, Tania Kovats, Aida Mahmudova, Sayyora Muin, Jacco Olivier, Julian Opie, Julian Perry, Mike Perry, Bas Princen, Stephanie Quayle, Ugo Rondinone, Graham Stevens, Diana Thater, Andy Warhol, Bill Woodrow, Erwin Wurm, Rose Wylie.

**Scientific Curator for the IDEA Laboratory:** Rachel Armstrong, Professor of Experimental

Architecture, Newcastle University and Senior TED Fellow 2010; featuring ecoLogic Studio, Julian Melchiorri, Mike Perry, and Swine Studio.

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**Artwise Curators:** Founded in 1996, Artwise is a curatorial collective based in London that specialises in curating and producing international contemporary art projects. Working with both leading and emerging artists, designers, and creative thinkers, Artwise is renowned worldwide for public art commissioning, museum and gallery exhibitions, and innovative art projects for charities and select clients. Frequently inspired by collaborations that interlink art, music, science, and architecture, Artwise has commissioned over 80 artists and has exhibited projects in many inspiring spaces, such as Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg; Groninger Museum; Centraal Museum, Utrecht; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Milan Central Station; National Museum of Fine Arts, Jakarta; TN Probe Galleries, Tokyo; Pallant House Museum and Gallery, Chichester; and the Royal College of Art Galleries, Royal Academy of Arts, Whitechapel Gallery, and Design Museum in London. Artwise curatorial collective are Susie Allen, Laura Culpan and Dea Vanagan. [www.artwisecurators.com](http://www.artwisecurators.com)

**The Heydar Aliyev Foundation:** The Heydar Aliyev Foundation is the largest non-governmental organization in Azerbaijan; it was established in 2004 and has since implemented large-scale programs and projects both in the country and abroad. The main goal of the Foundation is safeguarding national and spiritual values, the widespread promotion of Azerbaijani culture, the implementation of various programs and projects ensuring the development of science, education, healthcare and social sphere, as well as promoting the international image of the country worldwide. [www.heydar-aliyev-foundation.org](http://www.heydar-aliyev-foundation.org)

**IDEA (International Dialogue for Environmental Action):** IDEA works with young people to put environmental awareness and action at the heart of family, community and national life. Their mission is to create a community of young people, regionally and internationally, with a shared passion for the environment; nurture virtual community through an open dialogue which provides information, inspiration and practical calls for environmental actions; empower each member of this community to be an ambassador and leader for environmental awareness. [www.ideacampaign.org](http://www.ideacampaign.org)

**SOS (Save our Species):** SOS is a global coalition initiated by the three founding partners IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature), GEF (Global Environment Facility), and World Bank to build the biggest species conservation fund, supporting on-the-ground field conservation projects all over the world. [www.sospecies.org](http://www.sospecies.org)

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