

Vasily Klyukin: *In Dante Veritas*
during the 2019 Venice Art Biennale
May 8 - November 26, 2019

The State Russian Museum and the Municipality of Venice are pleased to present *In Dante Veritas*, a massive multimedia exhibition by Russian artist Vasily Klyukin at Arsenale Nord (Venice) from May 8th to November 26th, 2019. *In Dante Veritas* will be displayed during the 2019 Venice Biennale, a major cultural worldwide event. A reverberation of Dante Alighieri's 14th-century epic poem *Divine Comedy*, Klyukin explores themes of human vice and sin, Good and Evil, and reimagines Dante's Inferno as an environmental collapse - the final consequence for our sin and non-action. The show will be further displayed in America, England and Switzerland on 2020-2021.

The collection, which tells a narrative that re-engineers the nine circles of hell, is comprised of over 100 multimedia elements including sculpture, installation, digital art, audio and light-boxes. A significant part of the exhibition are 32 sculptural works, 22 of which represent human vices, like *Anger*, *Lust*, *Gluttony*, and *Hypocrite*. Working in a larger scale, Klyukin gives new names to the The Four Horsemen of Apocalypse: *Overpopulation*, *Misinformation*, *Extermination* and *Pollution*. At 3.5 meters high, these were the most physically demanding works for the artist to create, but they raise important issues and are reflective of today's global issues, ushering classical tropes into the modern era.

All of the sculptures presented in *In Dante Veritas* are created with Klyukin's signature "live sculpture" technique. Maximizing flexibility, steel plates are assembled without any fasteners, fanning out like the pages of an open book and remaining mobile. For example, *Dante's Death Mask*, a sculpture that envisions Dante's stoic likeness, uses this technique. This sculpture and the rest of *In Dante Veritas* are accompanied by a audio-guide in Russian, English, Italian etc, written in verse and prose. Klyukin wrote the verses specifically for each work. The audio guide is not only an art object on its own, but adds to the aggregate nature of the works.

Participatory installations are essential to Klyukin's exhibition and includes sonic, visual, and spatial elements. In the 9th circle of the Inferno, an exhibit called *Be-*

trayal, visitors experience a new realm. This “traitor’s hall” where guests are invited to inscribe the initials of those who have wronged them on the walls and sculptures themselves.

Klyukin’s “Inferno experience” is a conglomerate of over 100 interrelated elements that all work together to expound upon his reimagining. He works to provide a holistic experience, enveloping the viewer in the Inferno via Klyukin. He asks, how are we to avoid sins against nature and their subsequent punishments? *Can we?* Before we are able to embark on change, we must become conscious of our external effects, to become self-aware. Klyukin presents *In Dante Veritas* with a hope that visitors will see and become considerate of the environmental degradation that they are forcing future generations to endure.

About [Vasily Klyukin](#)

Born in Moscow in 1976, Vasily Klyukin was a successful businessman and founder of a real estate fund, development group and a bank. After 15 years in finances, he moved to Monaco in 2011, where he took up sculpture and design. His architectural concepts are known throughout the world. Highlights from Klyukin’s artistic career include, a published album of architectural concepts called “Designing Legends” in 2013, a designed statuette called “The Golden Madonnina” in 2017 which became the official Design Prize award at Milan Design Week and on-site installation of the “Beating Heart” sculpture at Burning Man Festival. In 2018 Vasily held his solo exhibition at the Ludwig Museum in Russian Museum. Klyukin’s practice often focuses on the environment and ecological problems. In 2018, Klyukin created “Why People Can’t Fly” a sculpture which contained parts of plastic waste collected from over 150 countries. Klyukin supports amfAR, Elton John’s AIDS foundation and his work can often be found at charity auctions. Klyukin’s work is located throughout the world including in Moscow, London, Monte Carlo, Lucerne, Cannes, and Ibiza.

His work is highly appreciated. Albert II, Prince of Monaco, Charles Saatchi, Sir Leonard Blavatnik, Eva Longoria and Leonardo DiCaprio are among his collectors.

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From the artist

Welcome to the sculptural embodiment of Dante Alighieri's "Divine Comedy". Inside Inferno's nine circles, you will come across twenty-two human vices that entice us every day, trying to darken our clear souls. Maybe, if you get to know these vices well, you will weaken them and it will be simpler to fight the evil inside you. After all, every person is made of good and bad. Every one of us needs to have both sides of the spectrum.

This inner fight shouldn't be put off. We exploit our planet ragged, polluting it and bringing the end of the world nearer and nearer. Veiling themselves under new names and faces, the four horsemen of the Apocalypse are rejoicing for our poor choices is just what they need. Their horses are breathing down our necks. Guided by Vergil and protected by Beatrice, Dante went to Inferno and came back to our world alive. Now, Dante is ready to become your protector in the world of vices, and our audio guide your pilot!

You won't just be visiting an exposition of sins and vices, something dedicated to Inferno. You will be diving into an Inferno Experience, where each object is made of over one hundred intertwined elements: sculptures, light boxes, video mapping, cloth, sound, and more. This is the answer to the questions: "What does the underworld look like?" "Who are we really?" "Why may we end up in hell and are we capable of changing?"

All of the pieces are made in the Live Sculptures technique, in which no fasteners are used to connect the elements of each sculpture. Only gravity, friction and the correctly calculated balance keep the sculptures together, which helps to keep most elements movable. This also allows to put the sculptures together or take them apart rather quickly.

Vasily Klyukin

About the exhibition

Architect, designer, writer, sculptor – just reading the list of all the things that interest Vasily Klyukin is enough to understand that his creative potential will continuously propel him and allow him to bring any plan and design to life. Every one of his undertakings – be it his own business or writing a sci-fi novel – end up being successful.

Throughout the last decade, Vasily Klyukin created several dozen architectural and design concepts. In 2013, the Italian publishing house Skira published his album “Designing Legends”, revealing fifty design concepts of skyscrapers, museums, and office buildings of the future. The author is sure that each of his buildings can be not just a functional piece of a metropolis, but a focal point, a decoration, so to say, of a city. It can be useful for centuries, while having individuality and giving people something to talk about.

After Vasily tested his skills at architecture, he turned to sculpture. At the beginning, his pieces were basically the sculptural embodiments of his architectural ideas. Later, he made the gradual move to topical plastic arts.

Having some engineering experience, Vasily was able to experiment with metals and derive a concept of connecting steel sheets on a speculative axis without any actual fasteners. The principle of mobility of each individual piece was the basis of Vasily’s new technology in sculpture. Made without physical fasteners, each piece is easily assembled and disassembled.

Based on Dante’s “Divine Comedy”, the exhibition “In Dante Veritas” is meant to answer the eternal questions of living, sifting them through the realities of the modern world. The exhibit includes 26 sculptures and the death mask of the greatest of Italian poets. There are four horsemen of the apocalypse, but while they are Plague, War, Death and Famine in the works of literature, Vasily gives them more modern names, to represent today’s greatest threats to humanity: in

his world, they are Overpopulation, Disinformation, Pollution, Extermination. These are followed by the allegorical figures of the sins and sinners – starting with Limbo from the first circle of hell, to Betrayal, who was placed in circle nine.

All of the pieces of this exhibit are structurally sound while being very expressive. Carefully and professionally approached lighting solutions make the timeless meaning of the sculptures absolutely clear to anyone visiting the exhibit. Being Vasily's first sculptural show, "In Dante Veritas" is surely not his last.

Marina Stekolnikova – Head Research Fellow of the Sculpture Division of the Russian State Museum

Tickets:

The access of the show is free

GET WALKING TO ARSENALE NORD ("IN DANTE VERITAS" EXHIBITION)



“In Dante Veritas” is located inside the Venice Arsenale and you can easily reach the venue **from Piazzale Roma, Ferrovia, Fondamente Nuove, San Zaccaria, Zattere and Airport.**

The venue is near the **BACINI stop** of the water bus 4.1, 4.2, 5.1 and 5.2 (Clockwise line).

Get by public transport TO BACINI FROM:			
from	transit time	line	departures at minutes
Piazzale Roma	39 min.	5.2*	09-29-49
Ferrovia (railway station)	33 min.	5.2*	15-35-55
Fondamente Nuove	9 min. 9 min	5.2* 4.2	19-39-59 17-37-57
S. Zaccaria	28 min.	4.1	01-21-41
Zattere	10 min. 28 min.	5.1 4.1	19-39-59 (get off at S. Zaccaria and change line (4.1 from Murano))
Marco Polo – Tessera Airport	47 min	Alilaguna blu line	Waiting for the new timetable

* Docks station weekdays only, on request from 7 a.m. to 8:40 p.m.

Lines ACTV

5.2 Clockwise Line, from Lido Piazzale Roma, Ferrovia (Railway Station), Fondamenta Nuove, Bacini , Lido, S. Zaccaria, P.le Roma	5.1 Counterclockwise Line, from Lido Lido, Bacini , Fondamenta Nuove, Ferrovia (Railway Station), Piazzale Roma, S. Zaccaria, Lido
4.2 Clockwise Line, from Murano Piazzale Roma, Ferrovia (Railway Station), Fondamenta Nuove, Murano, Fondamenta Nuove, Bacini , S. Zaccaria, Piazzale Roma	4.1 Counterclockwise Line, from Murano Piazzale Roma, S. Zaccaria, Bacini , Fondamenta Nuove, Murano, Fondamenta Nuove, Ferrovia (Railway Station), Piazzale Roma

Get walking to Bacini

Another option you have is to go walking to Celestia (not so easy). From the waterbus stop “Celestia” you turn left, cross the bridge and walk along the boardwalk on the Arsenale walls up to the entrance.

Other information for connections:

www.actv.it (local transport); www.alilaguna.it (connections airport to Lido and Venice);

www.veniceairport.it (airport); www.trenitalia.com (trains)