

□ Open Lecture: Koen Vanmechelen - THE CHICKEN'S APPEAL



Written by Teresa Stoppani

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Cross-breeding is the thing. We need to cross breed across the boundaries if we want the world not to perish. We need to think cosmopolitical. Nothing is as beautiful as joining with other cultures and take energy from this. (Koen Vanmechelen)

The first, primitive chicken, the 'Red Jungle Fowl', still lives near the Himalaya. In contrast with domesticated chickens the Red Jungle Fowl is monogamous. As the fowl still lives in the wild, monogamy may be even a stronger characteristic than the polygamous element. The 'super bastard' or Cosmopolitan Chicken is no return to the primitive fowl, but a new start. For his first cross-breeding Koen Vanmechelen chose the 'Mechelse Koekoek', the pride of Flemish chicken breeding and a relative in name to the artist. It was cross-bred in 1998 with the 'poulet de Bresse', a first-rate French chicken. Their cross-breeding, the 'Mechelse Bresse', was later cross-bred with the English 'Redcap'. This 'Mechelse Redcap', uniting Belgian, French and English nationalities was crossbred with the American 'Jersey Giant'



Speaker: Koen Vanmechelen is one of today's artists who no longer choose just one medium to work in. His works range from highly expressive paintings and drawings, to photography, video, installations, works in glass and a 'recurring' wooden sculpture. What links all these different ways of expressing himself are the chicken and the egg. Over the years they have become an important symbol that has enabled the artist to make a connection to scientific, political, philosophical and ethical issues. The intricate system that he thus developed is the subject of the debates, conversations and lectures that the artist organizes or takes part in to shape his philosophical universe.

- Vanmechelen current work can be divided in three main categories:
- Golem, the principle of the creating man, is the point of departure for the whole of his work.
- The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project (CCP) is the core of the artist's work, a breeding programme with chicken breeds from all over the world; the project draws attention to the crossing of borders and all its implications and calls, above all, for a mutual understanding.
- Medusa is the scientific part of the project and the collaborative think tank behind the CCP.

www.koen-vanmechelen.be

University of Greenwich School of Architecture & Construction
Norbert Singer Lecture Theatre (M055)
Mansion Site, Avery Hill Campus
Bexley Road, Eltham, London SE9 2PQ
Tuesdays 17.30

Directions to Avery Hill Campus

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