

Peter de Cupere, *Smoke Flowers*

A site-specific work presented at Command Alternative Escape

Venice, Italy

May 6 - 13, 2017

Artist: Peter de Cupere

Scent installation: *Smoke Flowers*

Curator: Natasha Pradhan

Scents: *With/thanks to the support of IFF. Bernardo Fleming, Meahb Mc Curtin, Laura French, Gregoire Hausson, Marine Hetheier*

Press photos via dropbox: <https://tinyurl.com/venice2017> or

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/piscq5c9jnh3dqe/AAAX1ot2snmzVY6EqfsE8Uupa?dl=0>

Credits photographs: *Smoke Flowers* © Peter de Cupere www.peterdecupere.net

Video: <https://vimeo.com/214104335> or www.vimeo.com/peterdecupere/smokeflowers



Peter de Cupere is arguably the most innovative olfactory artist of our time. His previous works have inspired refugees to confront and heal seated traumas; provoked estranged intimacies by inviting the public to enter into contact with the sexual flavors of other strangers; and tempted gallery-goers with poetic sculptural installations that draw them into spaces that reek of industrial fumes. De Cupere lectures at the PXL–MAD School of Arts in Hasselt where he has co-founded an MFA Program at the Art Sense(s) Lab that draws students from across the globe. He has also authored the Manifesto of Olfactory Art, signed with an extract of his signature scent - developed over two years by meticulously distilling his own body smells.

This May in Venice, certain flowers in the Spazio Thetis gardens in Arsenale form part of De Cupere's olfactory poem. Moved by the abusive impact that modern industry and contemporary lifestyles have on nature's purity, the artist has managed to conjure real flowers to regurgitate the fumes of industrial pollution.



This piece like many others by De Cupere is seductive. Precious and delicate flowers emit curls of smoke that resemble the smoking edge of a chimney. When the curious visitor moves closer to inspect what appears incredible - smoking flowers - he realizes the nature of the thickly polluted fumes by which these flowers nearly scream. *Smoke Flowers*, still a delicate and poetic piece, reeks of urgency.

Christine Macel, the curator of the 57th Art Biennale titled *Viva Arte Viva*, writes, "*The role, the voice and the responsibility of the artist are more crucial than ever before within the framework of contemporary debates. It is in and through these individual initiatives that the world of tomorrow takes shape, which though surely uncertain, is often best intuited by artists than others.*"

De Cupere's poem that engages every sense - not to mention the imagination - accomplishes just this. *Smoke Flowers* stirs a profoundly visceral and emotive response to a fairly universal understanding of environmental degeneration. I hesitate to call the piece surreal for De Cupere, by placing two very normal though seemingly disparate phenomena abreast, only brings us nearer to the truth.

Natasha Pradhan

COMMAND ALTERNATIVE ESCAPE

From 6 to 13 May 2017

Spazio Thetis Gardens, Venezia

Opening Saturday 6th May, 6pm

Press preview 5pm

The exhibition "COMMAND-ALTERNATIVE- ESCAPE" - a site specific group show coinciding with the 57th Venice Art Biennale, set in the Gardens of Spazio Thetis in the Arsenale.

Located in Spazio Thetis Gardens, a guarded Venetian green space enclosed by historical industrial architecture, "COMMAND-ALTERNATIVE-ESCAPE" welcomes visitors to confront permanent land art works by Joseph Beuys, Jan Fabre and Michelangelo Pistoletto, in dialogue with new works by:

Peter de Cupere, Allora & Calzadilla, Carolina Antich, Jesse Darling, Enej Gala, Patrizia Giambi, Mihai Iepure, Kensuke Koike, Tania Kovats, Paul Kneale, Sahra Motalebi, Tao G. Vrhovec Sambolec, Kristian Sturi

Exhibition location:

Spazio Thetis Gardens at Arsenale

Vaporetto stop: Bacini

Castello 2737, 30122 Venice

Opening hours:

Sunday 7th May: 2pm -7pm

Monday 8th - Friday 12th May: 10am-7.30 pm

Saturday 13th May: 2pm-7pm

Website Peter de Cupere: www.peterdecupere.net

Book: www.scentincontext.com

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