

The Fair Grounds

PRESS RELEASE

The city as a rollercoaster experience

Amsterdam is rapidly developing, like many old European city-centers, into a public fairground. Entire parts of the city are occupied solely by tourists and it's accompanying assortment of shops and attractions. Local businesses are dwindling and are being replaced by chain stores, waffle and cheese-outlets. 'Venice' being the prime example to avoid: a beautiful and scenic yet empty shell. It has become an open-air museum visited daily by a large photographing horde, slowly moving their way through predetermined highlights.

The Fair Grounds is an interactive multimedia artwork that will be placed in Venice during the preview days of the International Art Exhibition, *La Biennale di Venezia*. From May 9 to 14 the project will be displayed at Vaporetto-stop *Arsenale*, on the *Riva Ca'di Dio*, the route from *San Marco* to *Giardini*. This is the same route that the art-loving crowd traverses daily to come and visit the Biennale. A place on the street, in the public space, where a mixture of Biennale-visitors, tourists and the occasional remaining citizen can meet.

The work consists of six nostalgic so called 'kiddy rides': carnivalesque attractions restored to their former glory and covered in a high gloss unicolor polyester layer. Colored in the template of *De Stijl*, the famous Dutch modernist art movement of *Piet Mondriaan* and *Gerrit Rietveld*. The objects are placed behind one another, lining up to make a small coaster train. Passerby's are invited to take place: they can choose between a motorbike, a horse, a racecar, a helicopter, a 'Pikachu' and a clown seesaw. Once seated, they don a VR-headset. A big red button will activate the whole 'coaster train'. Every ride moves autonomously from each other in its own manner.



Inside the 'virtual reality' the participants are raced through Venice or Amsterdam in a high-speed rollercoaster experience in 360° and 3D view. *The Fair Grounds* turns Biennale-visitors into tourists and tourists into art-connoisseurs.

The Fair Grounds is the first work in a series under the title *De Koude Kermis, (The Cold Fair)* in which DROPSSTUFF experiments to connect popular culture, technical innovations and artistic translations. This in an attempt to search for ways of 'inclusivity' in stead of 'exclusivity' in times of cultural and political polarization.

About DROPSSTUFF

The Dutch art initiative DROPSSTUFF is a pioneer in media arts and is specialized in creating public experiences. DROPSSTUFF conceptualizes, realizes and presents interactive multimedia projects where they focus on increasing the public participation in arts and culture. To accomplish this, they aim for audiences in public space.

DROPSSTUFF has presented an alternative Dutch contribution on four previous editions of the Biennale in 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013. So they will make the docks of Venice their artistic home for the fifth time this year.

DROPSSTUFF is a cooperation between the media artist *René van Engelenburg* and media designer *Gijs ten Cate*. They often experiment on the borderline between popular culture and high art, approaching it from the conviction that art should be as publically accessible as it can be. *High versus Low Art, amateur versus professional*.

Venice, Riva Ca' di Dio at Vaporetto stop 'Arsenale', 9-14 May 2017 daily from 10 - 19

Opening/vernissage: 10 May 2017, from 17 - 19

Amsterdam, VondelCS - Mediabites: 18-19 May 2017

Groningen, Groninger Forum: 20 May 2017

more information: www.dropstuff.nl, press@dropstuff.nl or +31 (0) 35 677 19 12