

BIOGRAPHY KOEN VANMECHELEN



The Belgian artist Koen Vanmechelen (1965) is an internationally renowned, conceptual artist. His groundbreaking work deals with diversity and identity. Over the past decade Vanmechelen has collaborated with scientists from different disciplines. That earned him an honorary doctorate at the University of Hasselt this year.

Just before the millennium year 2000, Koen Vanmechelen launched his Cosmopolitan Chicken Project (CCP), a unique artistic project. Central to his work are the chicken (*Gallus gallus*) and the interbreeding of national chicken species into a super hybrid. He uses this animal as a metaphor for observations around 'la condition humaine'. Currently the 14th 'crossing', the Mechelse Silkie, is a fact. Vanmechelen uses a plethora of artistic tools for his work - from painting and video to installations, sculpture and glass -, which includes three projects. These are: the 'Cosmopolitan Chicken Research Project' (CC@P), the wooden statue 'Cosmogolem' and the fertility project 'Walking Egg'. In 2011 the supporting foundations will be grouped into a new institute in Hasselt with the preliminary name 'Open University of Diversity'.

Vanmechelen has presented his work on almost all continents, from the U.S. to China and Iceland to Senegal. In Belgium his work was exhibited in many museums and other loci: the Verbeke Foundation, Watou, Museum M and Z33. Furthermore, he participated in solo and group exhibitions in among others the National Gallery London, Victoria and Albert Museum (London), Museum Kunst Palast (Düsseldorf), Projects Venice (Venice), Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ (Amsterdam) and Pushkin Museum (Moscow). His work was also shown at the Biennales of Venice, Moscow, Dakar and Poznan and at the Shanghai World Expo 2010.

Vanmechelen lives in Meeuwen-Gruitrode, in the northeast of Belgium. He is an honorary citizen of his native town of Sint-Truiden.

For more information; www.koenvanmechelen.com