

THE INTERNET SAGA

JONAS MEKAS

curated by:
Francesco Urbano Ragazzi

in collaboration with:
Zuecca Projects

Wednesday 6 May, 7 pm >>> OPENING RECEPTION
Burger King: [Palazzo Foscari Contarini, S.Croce 745/A, Venice](#)
Open until 22 November. Everyday from 10 am to 11 pm

Thursday 7 May, 7 pm >>> TALK
My Art Guide Meeting Point: [Circolo degli ufficiali, Castello 2167, Venice](#)
with a Skype performance by Amalia Ulman for the launch of)titre(

Thursday 7 May, 10:30 pm >>> SLEEPLESS NIGHT
Spazio Ridotto: [Calle del Ridotto, San Marco 1835, Venice](#)
with a poethic declaration by Jonas Mekas
Open until 30 June. Everyday from 10 am to 6 pm (closed on monday)

The Internet Saga is the only project dedicated to art on the web to be inaugurated on the **6th and 7th of May** on the occasion of the 56th Venice Art Biennial. This edition's main protagonist is an independent cinema legend: **Jonas Mekas**.

Founder of the New American Cinema in 1960, this artist started experimenting new audiovisual languages online in 2006, thus becoming a contemporary art web-star before anyone else.

Curated by the **Francesco Urbano Ragazzi** duo and in collaboration with **Zuecca Projects**, the Internet Saga will have two official sites, opposed but also new in the city's landscape: Palazzo Foscari Contarini, a sixteenth century noble residence overlooking the Grand Canal now a Burger King restaurant, and the Spazio Ridotto, a brand new project space for video art, just 100 meters from Piazza San Marco.

This project offers a calendar full of events.

On 6th May at 7pm at Palazzo Foscari Contarini: the inauguration of Jonas Mekas' solo exhibition will take place and will be composed of three novel interventions linked to the artist's production on Internet.

On 7th May at 7pm at My Art Guide Meeting Point (at the Circolo Ufficiali of l'Arsenale) : a press conference open to the public will take place and will become a real performance thanks to the presentation of the online editorial project)titre(and the Skype call of Argentinian born artist Amalia Ulman.

On 7th May at the Spazio Ridotto at 10:30 pm: the third and last part of the project will open with the projection of Birth of a Nation, a film made by Mekas in 1997, portraying the community of film-makers who, with Mekas, has revolutionized the American independent cinema.

A **Sleepless Night**, which will last until dawn of the following day, will be launched with a poetic declamation by the Lithuanian-American artist dedicated to Internet and will end on the terrace of Hotel Bauer .

The Internet Saga continues online with a website: www.internetsaga.com

Title: The Internet Saga

Artist: Jonas Mekas

Curator: Francesco Urbano Ragazzi

A project by: Associazione E, Zuecca Project, Spazio Ridotto

Supported by: Lithuanian Culture Istitute, Sirio Spa, Galerie EXPRMNTL, agnes b. endowment fund, Fashion Film Festival Milano

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A Project By:



Sponsors



Media Partners:



THE INTERNET SAGA

We are all aware that our relationship with the Internet had changed, if only because talking about post-Internet art, of art after Internet's diffusion, has become mainstream. But what has truly changed? Above all, the language, as always.

Our lives are no longer divided between online and offline: the smartphone is always turned on and the connection is present everywhere, so that we are constantly online and offline contemporaneously. Internet is no longer a place - a virtual world as we defined it ten years ago - but a time which juxtaposes itself perfectly to our life. And it is not a coincidence if, from Myspace, we have moved on to consulting an infinite number of timelines.

The Internet is always linked less to our space and more to our time. This is why, to represent Internet art during the Venice Biennial, a pavilion similar to those of other nations is no longer sufficient: we need a new narrative form .

It is from this premise that the **The Internet Saga** was created, the only project dedicated to digital culture on the occasion of this Venetian event. On the **6th and 7th of May**, the inauguration of this project will be held at Palazzo Foscari Contarini and at the Spazio Ridotto, curated by **Francesco Urbano Ragazzi**.

THE ARTIST AND THE PROJECT'S SPACES

An epic tale of northern European tradition, a saga moves forward with infinite digressions, just like surfing the Net. All the different stories told must be bound together by the presence of a great founder. And this first episode of The Internet Saga has such an exceptional figure: **Jonas Mekas** (Biržai, 24th December 1922), absolute pioneer of independent cinema, both before and after Internet.

Founder of the New American Cinema in 1960 and the Anthology Film Archives in 1969, the Lithuanian-American artist has never stopped experimenting and in 2006 he developed a video-diary on the web which now has over 500 short films.

If we consider that YouTube has been online since 2005 we can certainly affirm that Mekas is indeed one of the first web-stars of contemporary art. Who better than him, an artist who has been part of the evolution of audiovisual language both on and offline through the end of one century to the beginning of the next, is able to show us the present and the future of the Internet?

For Venice, the artist has put together an innovative project which will be divided between two totally new spaces of contemporary art: **Palazzo Foscari Contarini**, now the city's only Burger King restaurant, in front of Ponte degli Scalzi, and **Spazio Ridotto**, project space dedicated to video art situated 100 metres from Piazza San Marco. These two places, these two chapters connected by the Grand Canal, will narrate the perpetual connection in which we have started to live between the fast and the slow.

OPENING: 6 May, 7pm, Palazzo Foscari Contarini

Palazzo Foscari Contarini is a sixteenth century residence overlooking the Grand Canal opposite Ponte degli Scalzi. In 1581 Francesco Sansovino described it as being «a building of beautiful shapes and lavish ornaments». Today, this elegant building is home to the only **Burger King** restaurant in the city, though it has never lost the aura of its past splendour with its precious marble columns, its ornaments and its imposing Murano chandeliers.

The duo Francesco Urbano Ragazzi have chosen this place as a metaphor of Internet for the relationship between eras and materials, history and trade, fake and authenticity which are elements which characterize it. It is where the first chapter of the Internet Saga will take place.

Three of the artist's novel interventions will be presented, without however disrupting the atypical exhibition space. The art of Jonas Mekas, like a poetic filter, will juxtapose itself to Palazzo Foscari Contarini, by modifying it without interfering with its reality, without touching it, as it would at a virtual level. On four screens already present in the building, many novel videos will be broadcast, a clever composition of more than 500 videos taken from the artist's **online journal**. They are in fact audiovisual elements which have been published almost daily since 2006 through his website, made up of little intimate moments, meetings with artists and stars, lyrical thoughts recorded on camera.

This remix of a flourishing life in the form of visual poetry, a characteristic of the artist's work, passes in front of the spectator's eyes.

In the courtyard, the sound piece **To Petrarca** will be diffused, a 70 minute symphony alternating with sounds from the city recorded in the streets of New York, poetic declamations and the sounds of Andy Warhol's funeral. Again, the fragment and the diary are the preferred forms through which Jonas Mekas tells his own story. The title of the opera reminds us, in this context, of Petrarca's failed attempt to transfer his personal library to Venice: the story of an encyclopaedic adventure that remains incomplete. On the 32 windows facing the courtyard, transparencies will be affixed representing **768 frames, unpublished for the most part**, from Jonas Mekas' films: a monumental but discrete collection, which will poetically modify the light inside the palace. As a timeline, the photographic series will register the rhythm of past times of which we keep not so much the memory but the image.

During the seven months of the exhibition, the Burger King restaurant will be running constantly. The art public and the restaurant's clients will therefore intermingle, resulting in a different level of attention and implication towards the pieces of art.

TALK: 7 May, 7pm, My Art Guide Meeting Point (Circolo Ufficiali all'Arsenale)

Close to the Biennial's main venue at the Arsenale, the My Art Guide Meeting Point at the Circolo Ufficiali della Marina Militare will host a press conference open to the public as a way of presenting the Internet Saga's protagonists.

It is in that context that the official website for this project, www.internetsaga.com, will be presented, designed as a work of art in itself. The website will gather in one unique virtual space all the timelines of The Internet Saga, from the social networks to the press review, from Jonas Mekas' website to the critical texts updated daily. Following this the online editorial project **titre** will be presented, a web-calendar updated at irregular intervals by artists and intellectuals who will reflect on time in the Internet era. Based on an idea from **Théo-Mario Coppola**, the website www.titre.name has been made by **Amalia Ulman**. To celebrate the event, the Argentinian born artist and web performer will present a Skype call dedicated to the poetry of Jonas Mekas. This will be the beginning of The Sleepless Night which will then continue at 10:30 pm between the Spazio Ridotto and the terrace of Hotel Bauer.

SLEEPLESS NIGHT: 7 May, 10:30pm, Spazio Ridotto

The Spazio Ridotto is the new site of Zuecca Projects dedicated to video art and online art, situated 100 metres from Piazza San Marco, the city's new artistic centre inaugurated in April this year. Here the second chapter of the Internet Saga will take place with a special cycle of projections which, from 7th May to 30th June will transform the Ridotto into a little cinema. In this context, Jonas Mekas has in fact chosen to show **Birth of a Nation**, a film he made in 1997 composed of four simultaneous projections: on the screen we will see 160 alternating portraits of film-makers and friends, who have all contributed to shaping the history of American Independent Cinema. Mekas has chosen to celebrate this community, which he calls « family », in order to emphasise the determining influence that this particular process of film-making has had in the development – philosophical rather than technical – on the aesthetics and on the strategies of distribution on Internet.

The projection will be inaugurated on the occasion of a very special event. In honour of the artist, a **Sleepless Night** will be launched on 7th May at 10:30 pm and will keep its public awake until dawn. Mekas himself will open the festivities by offering a poetic reading dedicated to Internet, created specially for the occasion. The Spazio Ridotto will remain open until the following day enabling visitors to calmly view Jonas Melkas' film at night. The fervent rhythm of the Biennial will be spread into a succession of dreamlike images.