

**FONDAZIONE PRADA PRESENTS THE RESEARCH EXHIBITION “EVERYBODY TALKS ABOUT THE WEATHER” IN VENICE FROM 20 MAY TO 26 NOVEMBER 2023**

Venice, 4 May 2023 – “Everybody Talks About the Weather” is a research exhibition conceived by curator Dieter Roelstraete on view at the historic palazzo of Ca’ Corner della Regina, Fondazione Prada’s Venetian venue, from 20 May to 26 November 2023. The press preview days are Wednesday, 17 May and Friday, 19 May 2023.

“Everybody Talks About the Weather” explores the semantics of “weather” in visual art, taking atmospheric conditions as a point of departure to investigate the emergency of climate crisis. More than fifty works by contemporary artists and a complementary selection of historical artworks trace the various ways in which climate and weather have shaped our histories and how humanity has dealt with our everyday exposure to meteorological events. The exhibition design created by New York-based studio 2x4 will entwine the artistic dimension of the project with a series of in-depth scientific spotlights developed in collaboration with The New Institute Centre For Environmental Humanities (NICHE) at Ca’ Foscari University in Venice.

As stated by Miuccia Prada, President of Fondazione Prada, “the project arose from the idea of taking weather as a starting point to highlight the urgency of climate change, empirically equating meteorology and climatology, and using the tools of art and science together. The goal is to understand the environmental crisis and its undeniable impact on our lives by drawing attention to, representing, and analyzing meteorological phenomena. Climate is a global issue that influences the actions and destinies of people worldwide. Talking about the weather today therefore means talking and worrying about everyone’s future.”

Following the exhibitions “Human Brains: It Begins with an Idea”, presented in Venice in 2022, and “Cere anatomiche: La Specola di Firenze | David Cronenberg”, currently underway in Milan, this project represents another attempt to address broader cultural challenges with the conjoined tools of science and artistic creation: from the evolution of the study of human thought and the changing meanings of bodies in our societies to the current climate crisis. Through these activities, Fondazione Prada intends to disseminate new knowledge and share the latest results of academic and scientific research with a larger audience. It also aims to build connections between distant cultural contexts, point to new trajectories of study, and thus contribute to broadening the perspective with which we examine our present and future cultural tendencies.

The exhibition title derives from the slogan “Alle reden vom Wetter. Wir nicht” (“Everybody talks about the weather. We don’t”) reproduced in a poster created in 1968 by the Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (Socialist German Student Union) and depicting Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Vladimir Lenin. In 2019, German artist Anne-Christine Klarmann designed a variation on the original poster representing Judith Ellens, Carola

Rackete and Greta Thunberg, twisting the original slogan to: “Alle reden vom Wetter. Wir auch” (Everybody talks about the weather. So do we).

As underlined by Dieter Roelstraete, “The message broadcast by the Socialist German Student Union was clear: while other political parties engaged in idle chatter ‘about the weather’, socialists, and leftists more generally, were committed to addressing the issues and questions that really mattered to the men and women in the street. ‘The weather’, in short, was the last thing a true progressive spirit should be caught talking about. Fifty-odd years on, it is hard to imagine a slogan as politically suicidal as this one, so defiantly claiming that ‘we don’t’ – for ‘the weather’ is simply the single most important fact of life everyone is either talking about already, or should really be talking about instead. ‘Everybody is talking about the weather’ – or everybody should be talking about the weather – for the simple reason that the current and ongoing climate crisis may well be the single greatest existential threat humankind has ever had to face in its 100.000-year history – and as such is well on its way to becoming the only thing we ever talk about anymore. For all that, however, climate change remains a subject that is oddly absent, curiously enough, from the broad sweep of mainstream art world attention.”

Here, Roelstraete seconds the argument of Indian writer and anthropologist Amitav Ghosh, who, in his 2016 book *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, exposed the broader failure of contemporary culture to adequately address the threat of climate change as a legitimate source for high-profile content from the perspective of literature. What Ghosh called the cultural world’s “great blindness” is partly due to both the enormity and complexity of our current climatological predicament – the cause of an expansive sense of paralysis among many contemporary authors and artists. As explained by Roelstraete, “It may be good and wise to continue to talk about the weather rather than the climate, but to do so more reflectively – and this exhibition project proposes to marshal a ‘meteorological’ view of art as one historically dependable and conceptually rich way of facing the ‘unthinkable’, and possibly help pave a way out of our current conundrum.”

“Everybody Talks About the Weather” will develop on two levels, the ground floor and first floor of Ca’ Corner della Regina, intertwining the two dimensions of research, the artistic and the scientific. The exhibition will begin with a large LED wall that will loop weather forecasts from a plurality of traditional and online media worldwide. The rooms of the Venetian building will host historical and contemporary artworks which reveal artists’ long-standing interest in “talking about the weather”, from allegorical and *en plein air* paintings to recent multimedia installations and transnational activism.

A selection of the exhibited works will be combined with texts and infographics including brief introductions to the artists and their works alongside scientific graphs, images and data. This alternate reading offers an in-depth insight into physical phenomena and environmental processes implicitly evoked or explicitly addressed by the artists and relating

to different times in human history (from the Little Ice Age from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to the future of Venice at the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century) and to distant geographic areas and cultures (from the desertification and expansion of Sahara to the impact of receding Arctic ice on Inuit life).

Pictorial works and prints by Old Masters such as Gustave Courbet, Katsushika Hokusai, Plinio Nomellini and Carlo Francesco Nuvolone will space with recent or new works by artists like Giorgio Andreotta Calò, Theaster Gates, and Beate Geissler & Oliver Sann, establishing an ideal continuity between past, present and future or, conversely, triggering a short circuit between opposing visions and discordant notions. Colourful, diaristic pencil drawings by Inuit artist Shuvinai Ashoona will be juxtaposed with a photograph by German conceptual art pioneer Hans Haacke. Through their anecdotal descriptions of the phenomenon of evaporation forty years apart, both artists anticipate or openly address the emergency of global warming.

Clouds represent a motif of remarkable longevity and endurance in the history of Western art. Contemporary artists such as Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle and Chantal Peñalosa transform this subject of pure aesthetic contemplation or romantic yearning into an entity dense with political significance. Jitish Kallat, with his *Rain studies*, interacts with invisible and silent natural processes, while Pae White imitates the ephemeral nature of atmospheric phenomena, introducing elements of mystery and wonder. Kenyan painter Richard Onyango and Haitian artist Alix Oge create two variations on the archetypal image of the Flood on a different scale, two powerful representations of the uncontrollable and frightening force of nature.

Pieter Vermeersch will exhibit two pieces in this show: on the first floor, a new work incorporating a signature geological element and, on the ground floor, a scenographic intervention integrating eight replicas of historical masterpieces by Giorgione, Pieter Brueghel the Elder, Hendrick Avercamp, Nicolas Poussin, John Constable, Caspar David Friedrich, William Turner and Claude Monet. These seminal paintings convey the evolving influence of changing weather patterns on art history.

A series of works by Jason Dodge will also be featured on both exhibition floors. For *Above the Weather*, Dodge invites artisans and craftswomen from around the world to “weave yarn the colour of night and the length equaling the height from the earth to above the weather”. The second work on view is composed in part of ethically sourced dead bees and thereby inevitably invokes the spectre of a potential “insect apocalypse” and the catastrophic impact this would have on our ecosystems.

Usually described as a group of artists, media practitioners, curators, researchers, editors and catalysts of cultural processes, Raqs Media Collective operates at the intersections of contemporary art, historical enquiry, philosophical speculation, research and theory. In

“Everybody Talks About the Weather”, they will present *Deep Breath*, an underwater film documenting the search of three divers for a fragment of an ancient Greek aphorism related to the perils of forgetting – more specifically, the most basic and deadly form of amnesia, the so-called “forgetting of air”. This work also evokes the cataclysmic condition of their hometown Delhi, the most polluted capital city in the world.

A series of “research stations” will feature more than five-hundred books, scientific publications and articles, and a selection of video materials and interviews with scholars and activists. They will allow the audience to freely consult the various bibliographic sources of the extensive research behind this project and delve deeper into the scientific and cultural issues addressed by the exhibition.

“Everybody Talks About the Weather” will be complemented by a public program scheduled in October 2023, featuring a series of lectures by international scientists, authors and scholars who will frame the themes explored in the exhibition from a broader perspective.

An illustrated book published by Fondazione Prada will accompany the exhibition. It will include an introduction by Miuccia Prada, President of Fondazione Prada; an essay by the exhibition curator Dieter Roelstraete; an interview by Roelstraete with Amitav Ghosh; a timeline conceived by Geissler & Sann; eighteen short essays by author, editor and curator Giovanni Aloï, contemporary art historian and critic Cristina Baldacci, editor and curator Shumon Basar, curator of Climate Change Soren Brothers, visual art and media scholar Giuliana Bruno, fashion historian Amber Jane Butchart, historian of architecture Barnabas Calder, architect and curator Pippo Ciorra, activist Selina Neirok Leem, curator Cornelia Mattiacci, linguist Andrea Moro, meteorologist Luca Mercalli, creative director, writer and teacher Michael Rock, curator and art critic Lucia Pietroiusti, scientist Björn Stevens, ecofeminist and climate activist Jennifer Uchendu, environmental journalist Gaia Vince and activist Giff Johnson; and a collection of poems by artist, author and activist Cecilia Vicuña. The book also contains the fundamental bibliography on climate dynamics consisting of nearly five-hundred texts accompanied by maps, diagrams, and other graphic representations.

#### **Complete list of exhibited artists**

Sophia Al-Maria, Giorgio Andreotta Calò, Shunivai Ashoona, Anonymous Veneto, Ursula Biemann, Nina Canell, Vija Celmins, Paolo Cirio, Gustave Courbet, Vittore Grubicy de Dragon, Jason Dodge, Ayan Farah, Theaster Gates, Beate Geissler & Oliver Sann, Antony Gormley, Hans Haacke, Ichoryusai Hiroshige, Katsushika Hokusai, Jitish Kallat, Anne-Christine Klarmann, Zdeněk Košek, Goshka Macuga, Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle, Santu Mofokeng, Plinio Nomellini, Carlo Francesco Nuvolone, Alix Oge, Richard Onyango, Chantal Peñalosa, Dan Peterman, Nick Raffel, Raqs Media Collective, Gerhard Richter, Thomas Ruff, Tiffany Sia, Himali Singh Soin, Vivian Suter, Fredrik Vaerslev, Pieter Vermeersch, Pae White, Tsutomu Yamamoto, Yang Yongliang.

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**Information**

“Everybody Talks About the Weather”

A research exhibition curated by Dieter Roelstraete

20 May – 26 November 2023 (Press Preview Days: 17 and 19 May 2023)

Fondazione Prada, Venezia

Ca' Corner della Regina

Santa Croce 2215, Venice

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