



We Thought We Were Alone

Koen Vanmechelen

Curated by James Putnam

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- Our greatest wealth lies in the diversity of life
- Book accompanying the exhibition of the same title by Koen Vanmechelen during the Venice Biennale from 9 May until 22 November 2026
- With images of 50 new artworks in a historic palazzo
- Contains texts by leading scientists and experts, as well as personal reflections by the artist

During the Venice Biennale, Belgian artist and thinker Koen Vanmechelen is presenting a solo exhibition in the historic Palazzo Rota Ivancich. The exhibition, entitled *We Thought We Were Alone*, spans three floors and takes visitors on a journey through key themes in the artist's oeuvre: hybridity, identity and survival, through the connection between all forms of life. The title, *We Thought We Were Alone*, refers to the premise that humans are not central to the functioning of the earth, but that every organism has a role to play in a complex system that is actually self-regulating. In addition to the artworks, the book also explores Vanmechelen's long history with the Italian city and the communities that invariably form around his art. It includes a chapter on Wild Gene Festival – the collaboration between the artist and singer Youssou N'Dour – and essays by voices such as human rights expert Manfred Nowak and physicist Thomas Hertog.

Koen Vanmechelen (1965) is an artist and a thinker. His work explores the human animal, hybridity and the breaking down of boundaries, inviting us to reflect on our connection with other species and the world around us.