



## COMMAND ALTERNATIVE ESCAPE

Venice, Italy

May 6 - 13, 2017

*‘With every breath we observe a scent with a reason’*

*Peter de Cupere*

{vimeo} [214104335{/vimeo}](https://vimeo.com/214104335)

{gallery}exhibitions/2017/venice{/gallery}

*During the opening week of the Venice Biennial, Peter de Cupere exhibits a new olfactory installation as part of the exhibition ‘Command Alternative Escape’. His work was selected by Natasha Pradhan, a young curator currently living in Cairo.*

*With thanks to the curators Natasha Pradhan, Venetia Baker and Marcella Malerba.*

*Scents: With/thanks to the support of IFF. Bernardo Fleming, Meahb Mc Curtin, Laura French, Gregoire Hausson, Marine Hetheier*

**Press photos & texts in English, German, French, Italian and Spanish via dropbox:** <https://tinyurl.com/venice2017>

or

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/piscq5c9jnh3dqe/AAAX1ot2snmzVY6EqfsE8Uupa?dl=0>

**Credits photographs:** Smoke Flowers © Peter de Cupere [www.peterdecupere.net](http://www.peterdecupere.net)

**Video:** [www.vimeo.com/peterdecupere/smokeflowers](http://www.vimeo.com/peterdecupere/smokeflowers)

Though the exhibition *Command Alternative Escape* only lasts for nine days, it could represent one of the most jolting beginnings of the entire Biennial. The exhibition was put together by promising young curators of the School for Curatorial Studies in Venice. The School's exhibitions are closely informed by the history of curatorial practice and bring together some of the most influential and innovative artists of our times.

During the opening week of the Biennial of Venice, as part of *Command Alternative Escape*, De Cupere will introduce visitors to plants which have been manipulated in the Spazio Thetis Gardens at Arsenale. In

*Smoke Flowers*

, De Cupere lets big and small flowers take revenge on the human population by regurgitating industrial air pollution. It is not what one would expect from the sight of these delicate flowers. Flowers do still give the world a bit of color, lushness, efflorescence and - typically - they smell

delightful.

All this beauty melts like snow before the sun at the sight of the *Smoke Flowers*. The work itself has a dreary quality and at the same time is very poetic. Spectators are transfixed by the little flowers which spit out a hint of smoke every now and then, emitting the scent of air pollution. Yet the spectator has to put in effort and has to come near to the flowers. They have to bend down, be attentive, look back and once again look attentively at the abundance of nature to then experience, unexpectedly, this poetic occurrence of smoke coming out of a flower. Realizing that the hint of smoke contains the scent of intense air pollution and not the pleasant scent of a flower, the spectator is forced to question, reflect and go back to nature.

The work criticizes our social attitude towards the urban and industrial pollution. It beseeches us to reflect on air pollution for not only do we as people suffer from it, but nature too is a victim.

The artist will be present for the entire duration of the exhibition in order to prevent people from picking up some of the 'Smoke Flowers' because he wants them to survive for a long time. The magic lies in the mystery of how the artist has created this work. De Cupere has been researching the topic for nine years. His first drawing of the Smoke Flowers dates back to 2008 and has recently been published in his book 'Scent in Context' on Olfactory Art. The book itself is 472 pages and one can smell the concept drawing of the Smoke Flower through scratch and sniff technology - a micro-encapsulation which allows the scent to be taken in when rubbed.

## COMMAND ALTERNATIVE ESCAPE

**From 6 to 13 May 2017**  
**Spazio Thetis Gardens, Venezia**  
**Opening Saturday 6th May, 6pm**  
**Press preview 5pm**

The exhibition "COMMAND-ALTERNATIVE- ESCAPE" - a site specific group show coinciding

with the 57th Venice Art Biennale, set in the Gardens of Spazio Thetis in the Arsenale.

Located in Spazio Thetis Gardens, a guarded Venetian green space enclosed by historical industrial architecture, "COMMAND-ALTERNATIVE-ESCAPE" welcomes visitors to confront permanent land art works by Joseph Beuys, Jan Fabre and Michelangelo Pistoletto, in dialogue with new works by: Peter de Cupere, Allora & Calzadilla, Carolina Antich, Jesse Darling, Enej Gala, Patrizia Giambi, Mihai Iepure, Kensuke Koike, Tania Kovats, Paul Kneale, Sahra Motalebi, Tao G. Vrhovec Sambolec, Kristian Sturi

**Exhibition location:**

Spazio Thetis Gardens at Arsenale

Vaporetto stop: Bacini

Castello 2737, 30122 Venice

**Opening hours:**

Sunday 7th May: 2pm -7pm

Monday 8th - Friday 12th May: 10am-7.30 pm

Saturday 13th May: 2pm-7pm