Ulysses' Gates - English

First Chapter of *Climate-tides*

Venice, City of Water

Venice is a city built on water and within water.
For centuries, it has not lived against the sea, but in dialogue with it.

Its history is made of thresholds, diversions, fragile balances: rivers redirected to protect the lagoon, inlets shaped to regulate the passage of the sea, tides observed like an ancient breath. Six hours toward the land, six hours toward the open sea. A natural, cyclical, necessary rhythm.

But today that rhythm is no longer the same.
The challenge is not only the sudden storm, nor the exceptional event of *acqua alta*. It is something slower, more continuous and more profound: the rise in sea level, the transformation of the climate, the increasing frequency with which nature exceeds the thresholds that humankind had learned to recognise.

The First Chapter of *Climate-tides*

Ulysses' Gates is born from this tension.

The project begins with a cultural proposition by **Umberto Vattani**: to interpret the theme of the 2026 Biennale Arte, gathered under the title ***In Minor Keys*** by **Koyo Kouoh**, by transforming the sound of the MOSE, Venice's invisible defence against rising sea levels, into an artistic experience under the title ***Ulysses' Gates***.

Starting from this intuition, the dialogue among the authors opens the project to a broader framework, ***Climate-tides***, capable of connecting climate change, high tides and infrastructures of mediation. In this process, **Hiroaki Kitano** and **Vittorio Loreto**, in addition to contributing to the creation of the naming, help strengthen the scientific and conceptual dimension of the work by introducing the perspective of complexity: the analysis of more than one hundred years of tidal history and rising water levels in Venice, the reading of data as signals of transformation, and the possibility of translating these processes into a sensitive narrative.

Filippo Gregoretti brings this vision into the field of artistic composition, transforming data, thresholds and movements of the lagoon into a generative sonic and visual form, capable of offering the public not only information, but an experience of listening. This framework does not define an exclusive authorship, but rather the shared field within which the work, created by **Filippo Gregoretti, Hiroaki Kitano and Vittorio Loreto**, takes shape as the first chapter of an ongoing artistic series.

Born from this convergence of visions, ***Ulysses' Gates*** inaugurates ***Climate-tides***, a series dedicated to tides, climate change and new forms of listening to nature. Venice and the MOSE constitute its first chapter: a place and a technology in which the relationship between water, city, climate and human intervention manifests itself with particular symbolic force.

Within the context of the 2026 Biennale Arte, gathered under the title ***In Minor Keys*** by **Koyo Kouoh**, ***Ulysses' Gates*** finds a natural resonance: it does not seek the monumental tone of conquest, but the subtler one of listening, of thresholds, of the almost imperceptible vibration that precedes change. It is in this minor key, fragile and necessary, that the work invites us to perceive the relationship between Venice and water.

The name ***Climate-tides*** arises from the encounter between climate and tides, while also evoking the relationship between places and the environmental transformations that move through them. It defines a poetic and scientific territory in which water is not only matter, but language: a form through which nature communicates, warns, measures and transforms the way we inhabit the world.

Listening as an Artistic Gesture

Venice is the necessary starting point of this journey. Here, water is protection and threat, memory and future, boundary and openness. It is what made the city possible and what reveals its fragility today. For this reason, the central gesture of the work is not defence, but listening.

Listening to the lagoon.
Listening to the tides.
Listening to the thresholds.
Listening to what nature has continued to say: first as an imperceptible variation, then as a signal, and finally as an urgency.

From Data to Experience

Ulysses' Gates translates more than a century of lagoon, climate and environmental data into sound and generative images. Historical tide series, the evolution of critical events, water pressure and the functioning of the MOSE system become objects of attention. What normally belongs to the technical language of measurement is transformed into experience: the audience does not simply observe data, but enters into its rhythm.

The work builds a temporal narrative that unfolds as a climax. At first, the tide appears as a natural breath, regular, almost harmonious. Then the first signs of imbalance emerge.

Exceptional events become more frequent; the threshold is exceeded with increasing insistence; nature seems to ask to be listened to with ever greater force.

The MOSE as Threshold

The MOSE marks a turning point in this narrative. Not as a definitive solution, nor as humankind's victory over the sea, but as a moment of confrontation. It is the gesture through which Venice and nature seem to look each other in the eye and ask: "What now?".

The mobile barriers, hidden on the seabed at the lagoon inlets, constitute an invisible defence. They sleep beneath the water and rise only when the threat becomes concrete. They protect the city without separating it from the sea forever. They intervene, then disappear. They restore balance, but do not erase fragility.

The Intelligence of Ulysses

This is why the title evokes Ulysses.
Not the strength of those who seek to dominate, but the intelligence of those who know how to adapt. Not the wall, but the threshold. Not conquest, but vigilance.

In *Ulysses' Gates*, the MOSE becomes a symbolic figure: an invisible hand rising from the bottom of the lagoon, an act of human ingenuity that does not interrupt the dialogue with water, but makes it more conscious. Protecting Venice does not mean denying the sea. It means continuing to listen to it.

Art, Science and Generative Technologies

The work is born from the encounter between different practices and visions: sound and visual composition, performance, complexity theory, generative technologies and the analysis of environmental data. In this dialogue, Filippo Gregoretti, Hiroaki Kitano and Vittorio Loreto cross the boundaries between art and science to transform a complex phenomenon into a shared perception.

An artwork made of sound, images and attention can then open up a much broader question: what does it mean to inhabit a world in transformation? How can we build technologies that protect without dominating? How can we intervene without compromising the dialogue with the natural elements? And above all: how can we learn to listen before signals become an emergency?

Venice is a symbol. And its fragile beauty reminds us that every balance is temporary, every threshold requires care, and every form of defence implies responsibility.

With *Ulysses' Gates*, the city is not only the site of the work. It is its interlocutor. It is the body that breathes, resists and adapts. It is the symbol of a global condition that concerns all coastal cities and, more profoundly, the very relationship between civilisation and nature.

The sea is a voice, and Venice, once again, teaches us that survival does not mean winning against water, but learning to listen to it.

The Artists

Stemming from an idea by **Umberto Vattani**, whose cultural vision has often crossed the dialogue between art, institutions and international relations, ***Ulysses' Gates*** takes shape through the encounter of three figures who explore the boundaries between art, science and technology: **Filippo Gregoretti, Hiroaki Kitano and Vittorio Loreto**.

The project brings together Gregoretti's artistic and musical research with the scientific, technological and creative vision of Kitano and Loreto. Gregoretti brings to the work a practice rooted in composition, performance, and digital and generative languages. Kitano contributes a transdisciplinary perspective connected to artificial intelligence, robotics, and the relationship between natural and artificial systems. Loreto introduces the perspective of the physics of complex systems, oriented toward the understanding of collective dynamics, creative processes and emergent phenomena.

All three artists bring a sustained engagement with practices at the intersection of art, science and technology. Gregoretti, a pioneer of digital and generative art since the early 1990s, when he founded one of Italy's first interactive art studios and launched **NeT-ArT** in 1992, among the earliest experiments in dynamic art on the web, has presented his work at venues including **Manifesta**, **ISEA**, the **World Economic Forum**, the **Italian Cultural Institute in London** and **Luisa Catucci Gallery** in Berlin, and is Professor of Transmedia Arts and Digital Storytelling at **Suor Orsola Benincasa University** in Naples. Kitano returns to engage with the themes of **La Biennale di Venezia** after his participation, in 2000, in the **7th International Architecture Exhibition**, followed by his inclusion in MoMA's ***Workspheres*** exhibition in 2001 and a Special Award at **Prix Ars Electronica 2000** for **RoboCup**. Loreto leads the **Augmented Creativity** research line at **Sony CSL – Rome**, which explores the relationship between artificial intelligence and human creativity, with ongoing participation in the European Commission's **S+T+ARTS** programme through the projects **S+T+ARTS AIR** and ***Repairing the Present***, as well as collaborations bridging science and dance, such as the ***Duetto*** project with **Centro Coreografico Nazionale ATER Balletto**, and the series of events **"Dialogues between Literature and Science"**, hosted at the Sony CSL – Rome laboratory, of which he is Director.

Artists Biographies

Filippo Gregoretti is a transmedial artist, composer, performer and researcher working across digital and generative languages. His practice moves through music, visual arts, technology, coding, narrative and performance, exploring the connections between human

creativity, algorithmic systems and perception. In his work, sound and image often become dynamic environments, capable of reacting, transforming and generating new forms of experience.

Hiroaki Kitano is an internationally renowned scientist and a leading figure in the fields of artificial intelligence, robotics, and biological and computational systems. President and CEO of Sony Computer Science Laboratories, Chief Technology Fellow of Sony Group Corporation and Professor at the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate School, he has developed a body of research focused on major scientific and technological challenges, bringing together natural and artificial systems, biological complexity, intelligence and future-oriented design. He is also known for his artistic work inspired by the frontiers of science and technology, presented at La Biennale di Venezia 2000 and in MoMA's *Workspheres* exhibition in 2001, and recognised with a Special Award at Prix Ars Electronica 2000.

Vittorio Loreto is a physicist of complex systems, Professor at Sapienza University of Rome and founder of Sony CSL – Rome. His research explores the dynamics of innovation, creativity, social systems and emergent phenomena, with particular attention to the collective processes through which new ideas, behaviours and forms of organisation come to life. No stranger to the intersections between art and science, Loreto often crosses disciplinary boundaries, shifting the viewpoint from scientific research to artistic languages in order to observe complex phenomena from unexpected perspectives. Within the project, his contribution introduces a reading of complexity as a space of listening, adaptation and transformation, in which environmental data become not only objects of analysis, but also sensitive and narrative matter.