

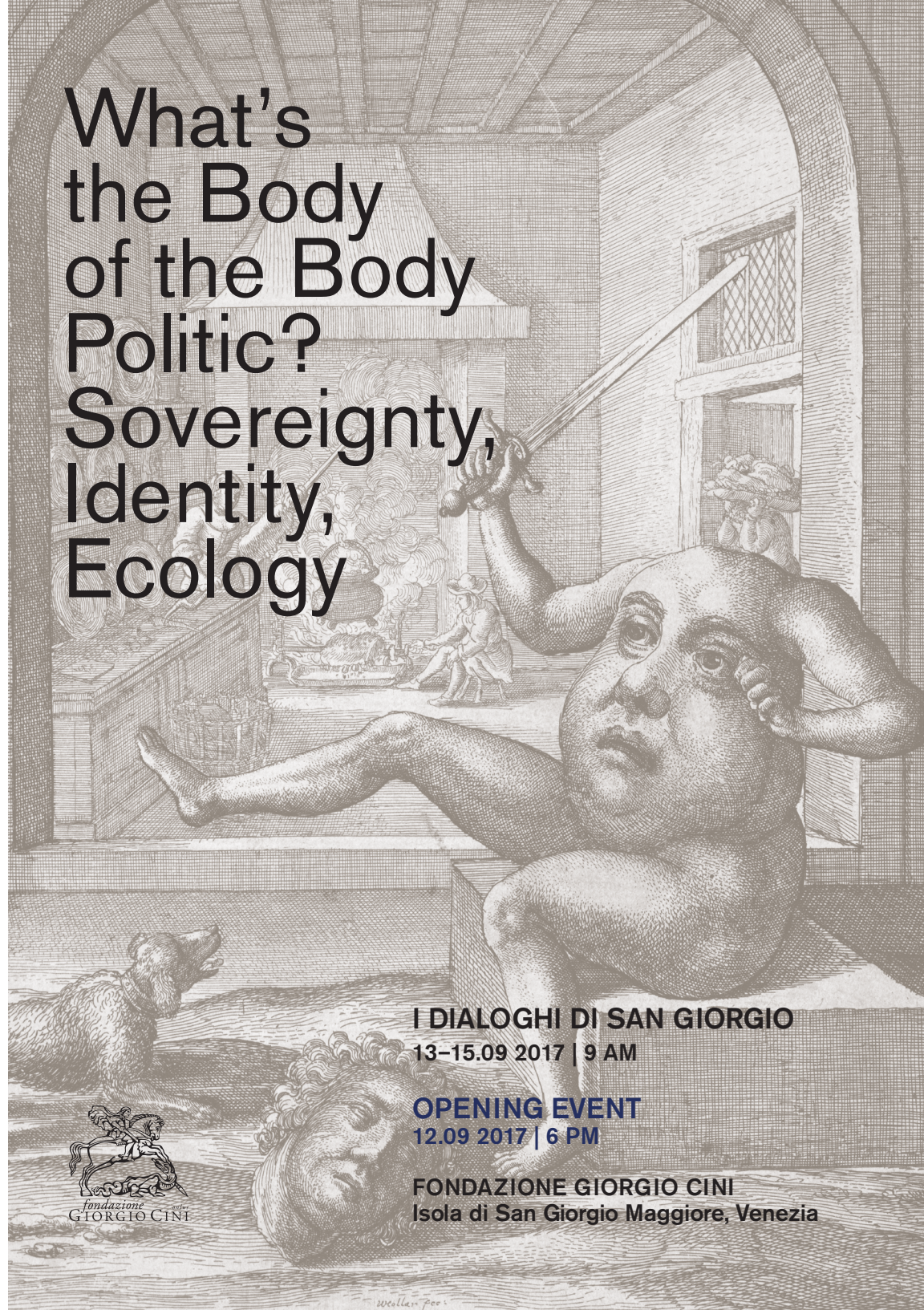
What's the Body of the Body Politic? Sovereignty, Identity, Ecology

Do you remember the Aesopian Fable of the *Belly and the Members*, or the letter of Paul to the Corinthians about the Body and the Church, or *The Fable of the Bees* by Mandeville, or the somewhat dangerous association of pests and foreigners, or the more recent attempts to think of the Earth as a giant organism? None of these stories stops shifting metaphors between one domain – that of the body – and another – that of politics. The result has been the creation of that most important concept of Western philosophy, *corpus politicum*, the Body Politic. One interesting aspect of this most famous topic is that every domain borrows from each other the certainty associated with the other's authority, so that political science ends up borrowing from biology what biologists borrow from political theory. This constant commerce of concepts and metaphors, unfortunately, has never guaranteed the quality of what has been ceaselessly transported from one domain to another. The result is that we remain deprived of a coherent definition of collective bodies. Hence the idea of attempting to re-open the question in this Dialogue by bringing the different domains together and examine what each has really to offer to the others that is genuinely proper to the phenomena it studies. Just at the moment when the idea of sovereignty has become obsolete through the intensification of globalization, planetary changes and migrations, the new political mood is to withdraw behind the borders that Nation States invented in previous centuries. In spite of the vast transformations that the new climatic regime requires, it is today a politics of identity, nationalism and

borders that seems the most attractive to voters. Everywhere the choice is either to prolong the extension of globalization or else return to the older ideas of strictly enforced sovereignty. There seems to be no other alternative. In this Dialog we wish to open the way for another political orientation, one that relies neither on the idea of globalization nor on those of sovereignty, identity and individuality. Our assumption is that most of the ideas about the Body Politic come from ideas about the biological body, and *vice versa*. There has always been a two-way stream of exchanges between biology, law, religion and social theory to the point that it is very difficult when people talk about ecosystems, identity, genetics, organism or globalization to decide if they speak about human or non-human entities. Biologists don't seem to worry that they import social theory to talk about organs and tissues, sociologists don't hesitate to use a legal conception coming from Church history to define the individual, while economists happily mobilize what they take as a "naturalistic" notion of competition to render the optimum calculable, while organization theorists borrow offhandedly the DNA metaphor of cell organization, and so on. *Metaphors travel freely, transporting the same unexamined perplexities from field to field.* San Giorgio, a secluded island, is an ideal venue for the dialogue, in that it differs from some other utopias. Instead of dogmatically assuming the answer has already been reached, the Cini Foundation offers the chance for collaborative search for better questions.

Wenceslaus Hollar, *The Belly and the Members* | University of Toronto, Wenceslaus Hollar Digital Collection

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I DIALOGHI DI SAN GIORGIO
13-15.09 2017 | 9 AM

OPENING EVENT
12.09 2017 | 6 PM

FONDAZIONE GIORGIO CINI
Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore, Venezia



Tuesday 12 September
Auditorium "Lo Squero"

6 pm | Opening Event
Pasquale Gagliardi
Introduction of I Dialoghi

mdi ensemble
Karlheinz Stockhausen Tierkreis
(1974/1983)

Alberto Onofrietti
Lectures from
Aesop, Thomas Browne,
Christine De Pizan, Marsilio Ficino,
John of Salisbury, Saint Paul,
William Shakespeare

Wednesday 13 September
Biblioteca del Longhena

9 am – 10.30 am | Session 1
Bruno Latour

10.30 am – 11 am | Coffee Break

11 am – 1 pm | Session 2
Deborah M. Gordon
& **Timothy Mitchell**

3 pm – 5 pm | Session 3
Scott Gilbert & Mike Lynch

Thursday 14 September
Biblioteca del Longhena

9 am – 10.30 am | Session 4
Feedback on Day 1

10.30 am – 11 am | Coffee Break

11 am – 1 pm | Session 5
Isabelle Stengers
& **Tim Lenton**

3 pm – 5 pm | Session 6
Kyle McGee
& **David Western**

Friday 15 September
Biblioteca del Longhena

9 am – 10.30 pm | Session 7
Feedback on Day 2

10.30 am – 11 am | Coffee Break

11 am – 1 pm | Session 8
Shirley Strum
& **Didier Debaise**

3 pm – 4.30 pm | Session 9
Simon Schaffer

4.30 pm – 5 pm | Coffee Break

5 pm – 6 pm | Session 10
Feedback on Day 3
and final remarks