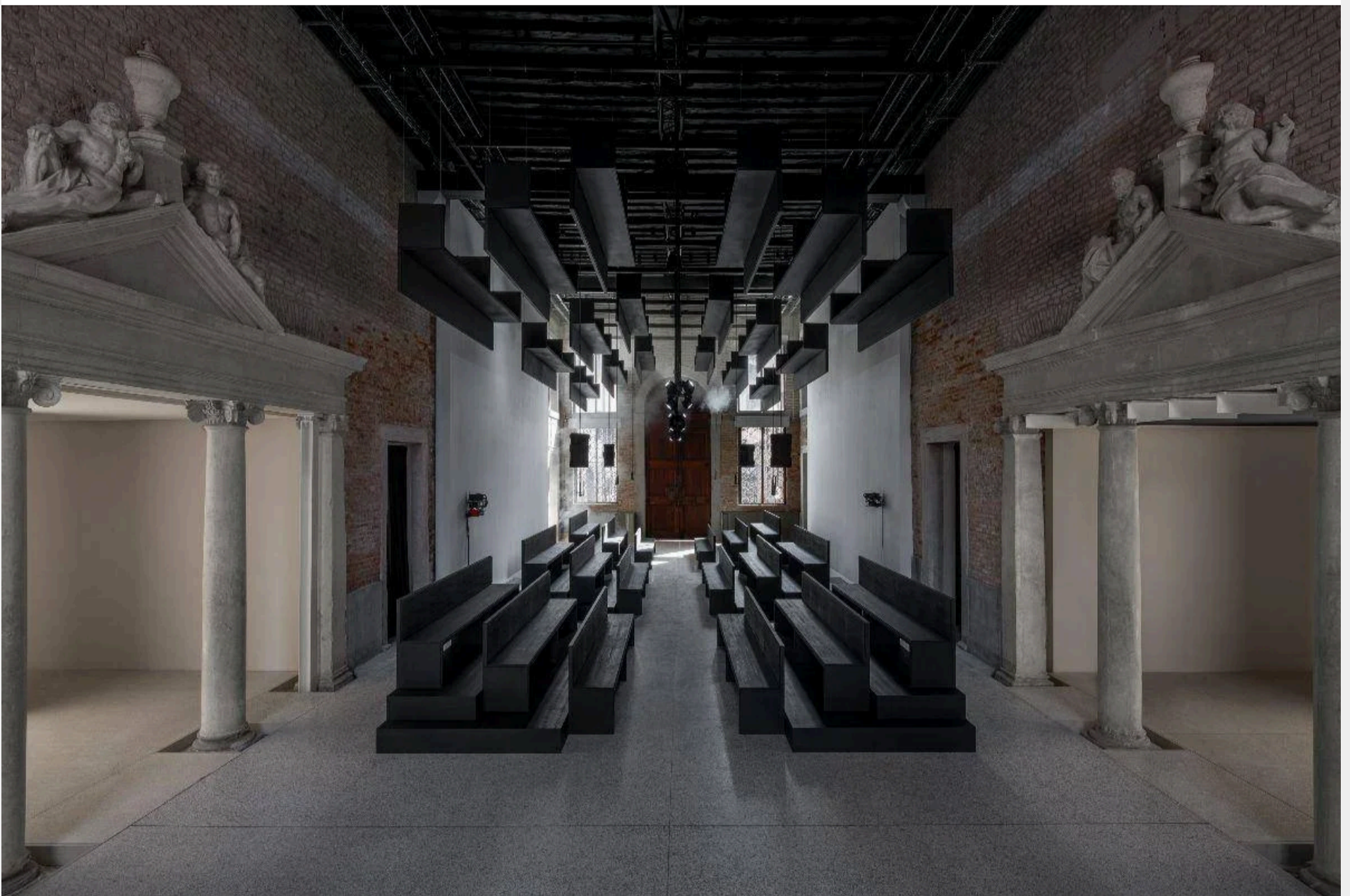


ENTERTAINMENT & CULTURE

In Venice, a pioneering exhibition explores the themes of AI, technology and biology.

By **Editor**

MAY 4, 2026



An ambitious interdisciplinary project that redefines the boundaries between art, technology and theoretical research. Berggruen Arts & Culture presents “Strange Rules”, the new interdisciplinary event created by Mat Dryhurst, Holly Herndon and Hans Ulrich Obrist and curated in collaboration with Adriana Rispoli. The exhibition is open from today to 22 November 2026 at Palazzo Diedo in Venice, in conjunction with the 61st International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale.

Strange Rules introduces the concept of Protocol Art, a practice that engages with the underlying rules that dictate how culture is produced, distributed and perceived in the digital age. These rules frequently manifest themselves in the form of algorithms, artificial intelligence models, computer protocols, platforms, and various technological infrastructures. Protocol Art does not limit itself to using these tools; he exposes them, analyzes them and transforms them into artistic material in and of themselves.

The work is therefore not just the final result, but the process regulated by instructions, or rather the invisible architecture that makes the aesthetic experience possible. This shift in perspective – from the object to the system and from the single author to collaboration and ultimately to man-machine co-creation – defines one of the most urgent territories of contemporary research.

Nicolas Berggruen, founder of Berggruen Arts & Culture, said: “In the age of artificial intelligence, what is the active role of art and artists? Palazzo Diedo, together with Mat Dryhurst, Holly Herndon, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Adriana Rispoli, is trying to address this question.”

The project transformed the historic architecture of Palazzo Diedo into a dynamic laboratory of ideas. The ground floor hosts a major new commission by Mat Dryhurst and Holly Herndon in partnership with Berlin-based architecture firm SUB. The floor will function as a hub for temporary interventions, including conferences, performances and screenings. The first floor presents a series of site-specific installations and a selection of video works that explore the themes of Protocol Art.

Renowned biology professor Michael Levin presents his research on using bioelectricity to permanently modify a worm’s anatomy, resulting in regenerating worms that continue to produce two-headed specimens. The exhibition displays examples of these two-headed worms.

AI and machine learning researcher Ken Stanley introduces Picbreeder, an online platform that uses evolutionary algorithms to generate images. Users select their favorite visual variations, which evolve into new generations through Compositional Pattern Producing Networks, demonstrating collaborative creativity between humans and AI through interactive evolution.

The project also features a new permanent commission by Philippe Parreno. *The Diambulist Humself (2026)* extends Parreno’s ongoing investigation of exposition as a “living score.” Two electrified cables stretched above the heads of the visitors transform the room into a field of tension. Along this aerial axis, *The Diambulist Humself* circulates at variable speeds, carrying a set of dimmable LED and neon bulbs.

The artists exhibiting in *Strange Rules* are: Mat Dryhurst (UK), Holly Herndon (USA), Michael Levin (Russia), Joshua Citarella (USA), *New Models* (Caroline Busta and Julian Wadsworth (USA)), Ken Stanley (USA), Agnieszka Kurant (Poland), Trevor Paglen (USA), Fabien Giraud (France), Ho Tzu Nyen (Singapore), Simon Denny (USA), Venkatesh Rao (India), Stephanie Dinkins (USA), Avery Singer (USA), Lawrence Abu Hamdan (Jordan), Philippe Parreno (France), Lorenzo Senni (Italy), Primavera De Filippi (France), Ayoung Kim (South Korea), Terra0 (Paul Kolling and Paul Seidler (Germany)), Lynn Hershman Leeson (USA), He Zike (China) and the SUB studio (Germany).

With “*Strange Rules*”, Palazzo Diedo establishes itself as the first space in Italy to promote a curatorial and theoretical reflection on Protocol Art, positioning itself at the forefront of the debate on the relationship between art and technology, humanistic and scientific disciplines. In this sense, the project is not just an exhibition, but a foundational initiative that introduces a structured and international investigation into this emerging field of artistic research into the Italian context.

Together with the exhibition, a new important publication published by Marsilio Arte will constitute the first complete account of Protocol Art. The research for this volume will develop for the entire duration of *Strange Rules*, with Palazzo Diedo acting as both an exhibition venue and a research centre. The book aims to become a reference point for Protocol Art, mapping its key works, protagonists and theoretical foundations within the vast artistic-technological field.

Parallel to “*Strange Rules*”, Palazzo Diedo will host “*Unfinished*”, curated by Ann Gallagher and Jonathan Watkins. The exhibition offers an accurate overview of the work of Ceal Floyer, a British artist who passed away in December 2025. Through the use of video, photography, sound installations, readymades and sculptures, “*Unfinished*” highlights a subtle humor that arises from new perspectives, plays on words and an original reinterpretation of everyday reality. The exhibition itinerary manages to simultaneously convey the vital force of creativity in all circumstances and a slight touch of absurdity.

The dialogue between “*Unfinished*” and “*Strange Rules*” connects two different ways of questioning reality. On the one hand it presents the analysis of the invisible protocols that structure digital culture; on the other, it highlights the ability to subvert everyday life through minimal conceptual shifts.

At the Casa dei Tre Oci, Berggruen Arts & Culture and Berggruen Institute Europe present a new exhibition by American conceptual art pioneer Joseph Kosuth (until 22 November 2026). Known for his celebrated neon works, a new large-scale commission, *A Chain of Resemblance (2026)*, based on a text by Michel Foucault, is installed in the main atrium of the Tre

Oci. The exhibition also displays the artist's early works from the 1960s, including the famous One and Three Mirrors (1965), and explores the way in which meaning is shaped by both the text and the context in which it appears, revealing how language is never neutral but intrinsically influenced by its environment and its reception.

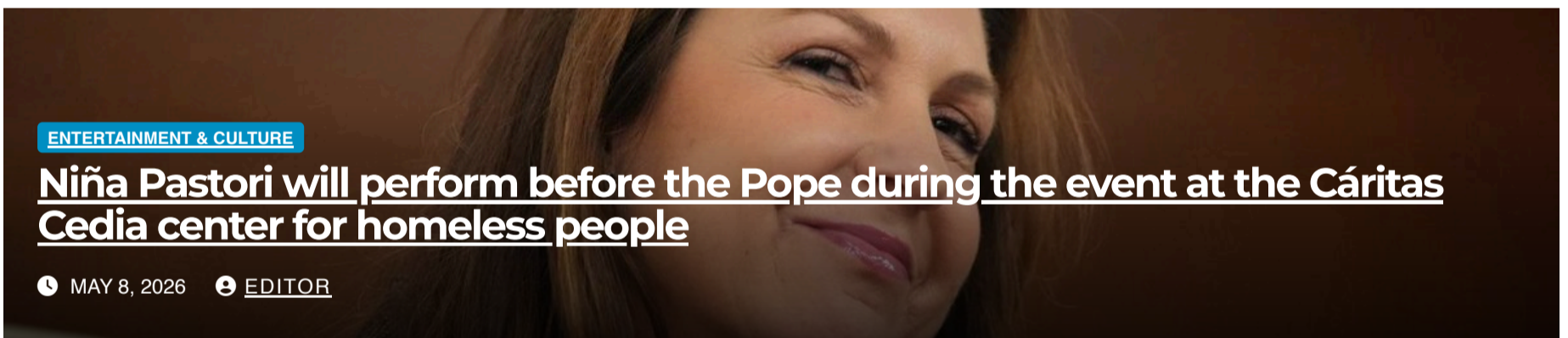
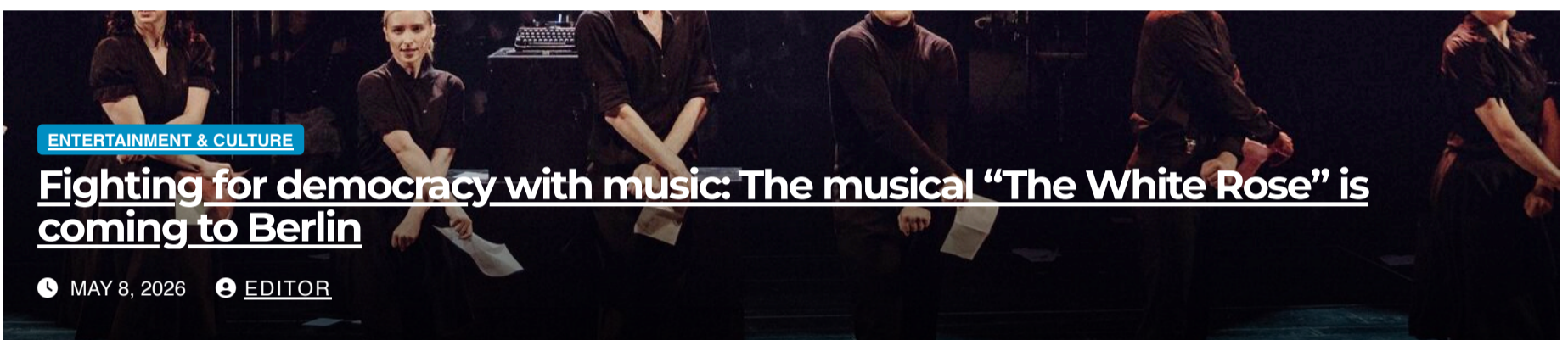


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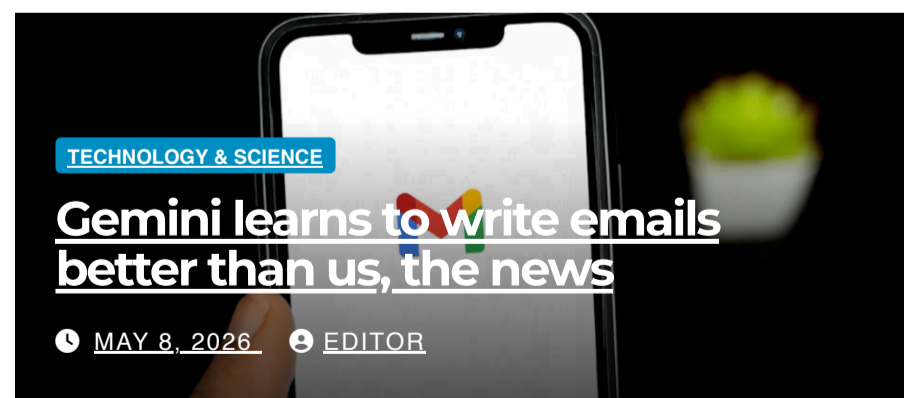
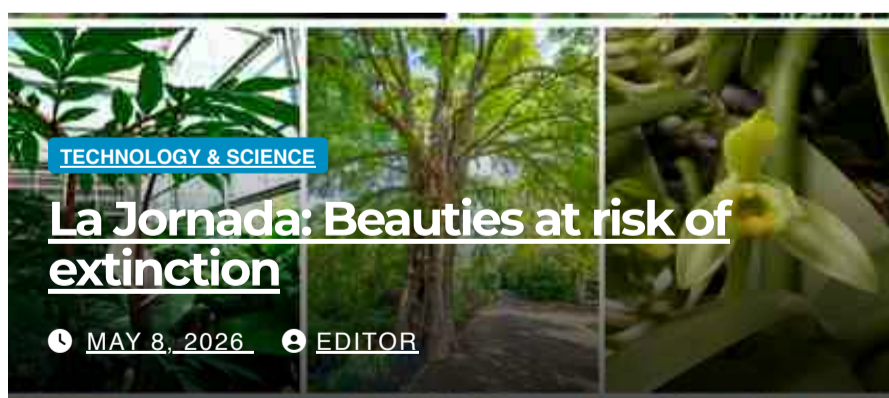
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