



**VISIT SUNNY DYSTOPIA**

\* Dystopias are the kind of literary invention one might hope remains imaginary; the disorienting worlds of Orwell and Bradbury stay, thankfully, confined to the page. But author Hari Kunzru invites readers to step inside the grim future he's envisioned in his newest work, *Memory Palace* (V&A Publishing). The book, to be released in June, envisions a London overtaken by a dictatorial regime that outlaws writing and books in an effort to eliminate memories themselves, and for the Victoria & Albert Museum's exhibit "**Sky Arts Ignition: Memory Palace**," Kunzru transformed the novel into a three-dimensional story-book. The tale begins in the Porter Gallery's central space, designed by architect CJ Lim as a "palace of memories." A series of rooms visualizing different memories surrounds the viewer, each designed by an artist in collaboration with Kunzru. In one, Némó Tral's spectral drawing, *The Limpicks*, depicts a dilapidated Olympic Park overrun by nature; in another, graphic designer Stefanie Posavec fashions typographic trees and globes into the stark, monotone infographic *The Withering and the Wilding* (above). Kunzru's isn't the first novel to be turned into an exhibit: Nobel Prize-winner Orhan Pamuk's avant-garde experiment in Istanbul, the Museum of Innocence (*Çukurcuma Caddesi, Dalgıç Çıkmaızı 2; masumiyetmuzesi.org*), is an immersive tribute to the love-stricken couple of his novel of the same title. *Memory Palace* explores something darker than the vagaries of love—something we might wish still existed only on paper—but we can't help but be transfixed. "**Sky Arts Ignition: Memory Palace**" runs from June 18 to October 20; Cromwell Rd., London; [vam.ac.uk](http://vam.ac.uk). —JAMIE WIEBE

*Vampires on the Vineyard*



\* The title of Vampire Weekend's third album, *Modern Vampires of the City* (May 7, XL), is a slight misnomer. Though the New York quartet has always sung about a rarefied Manhattan, much of *Modern Vampires* was actually written far outside the city limits, at a friend's guesthouse in Martha's Vineyard. "It was the off-season and still sort of empty and mellow, a little misty," frontman Ezra Koenig says. They're not the first urban band to find inspiration in the serenity of a coast—the Rolling Stones famously fled to the South of France in 1971 to record *Exile on Main St.*—but the location happened to be a perfect fit for the group's WASPy aesthetic. The resulting album—imagine four natty Columbia grads channeling Graceland-era Paul Simon—is perfect for blasting with the windows down on your way out of town. —BILL BRADLEY

*Venice Wunderkind*

Super-curator **Massimiliano Gioni**, who, at age 39, serves as the youngest director of the Venice Biennale in its 110 years this summer, provides a behind-the-scenes look at the famed global art festival. —SUE HOSTETLER

**Do you have any rituals to prepare yourself mentally for Venice?**

I kind of started smoking again since I took this job. Not sure if it counts as a ritual, but certainly it's an indication of my stress level.

**What can I absolutely not miss in Venice?**

Well, focusing on the Giardini and the Arsenale is probably your safest bet. In the Arsenale there are many new pavilions, and I think that adds another layer to a very stratified, polyphonic landscape, which after all is what makes Venice so beautiful.

**Do you have a favorite hotel or restaurant?**

While working on the Biennale, I get a special deal at the Hotel Danieli, which will probably never happen again in my life. As for restaurants, I don't have time for special meals. I mostly feed myself on the delicious *tramezzini* from small bars and cafés.



**Be honest: How annoying are the politics of putting together a show of this magnitude?**

There is a terrible virus that bites every participant in the show—it's called "Biennialite." It's an awful disease that forces even the most modest and sweet artist to ask for bigger spaces. This is the first time I am witnessing it. It must be the humidity of the lagoon.

**The attendant "scene" is often as talked about as the actual art. Which country throws the best parties?**

We have more than 90 pavilions this year and many new nations, including Lebanon, Nigeria, even the Vatican. I'm curious if the Holy See has a big dinner planned. I remember a Scandinavian party a few editions ago in which a guy fell into the canal. That seemed like the ne plus ultra of parties. If there's one thing I really regret about being the Biennale's director this year, it's that I will probably have to go to bed earlier than ever.

**In 2003 you were invited to curate a temporary pavilion that won many accolades but was annihilated by critics. How do you feel about it ten years later?**

I have often fantasized about simply reinstalling that exact same Biennale from 2003 and calling it "How do you like me now?"

The 2013 Venice Biennale runs June 1 to November 24; [labiennale.org](http://labiennale.org).