

**VB61, SUDAN**  
**PERFORMANCE**  
**VANESSA BEECROFT**  
**PESCHERIA DI RIALTO**  
**VENEZIA, JUNE 8, 2007, HR 19.00–22.00**

Performance Specifics

Location: Venice—Pescheria di Rialto

Date: June 8, 2007

Hour: 19.00–22.00

Casting: 20–30 African women, possibly Sudanese refugees of any age

Wardrobe: black body suit (just to cover nudity) or white underwear

Makeup: black body makeup

Hair: shaved heads

Canvas: apx. 6x9 mt. white gesso-primed canvas for painting flat on the ground

Poster: advertisement of the performance

Links: [www.vb61sudan.com](http://www.vb61sudan.com) / [www.savedarfur.org](http://www.savedarfur.org) / [www.emergencyusa.org](http://www.emergencyusa.org)

Description: Approximately thirty Sudanese women lie on a white, rectangular, primed canvas on the ground. They lie, faces down, like dead bodies, informally piled, one on top of the other. Their eyes are shut and their bodies are motionless. There is no talking and no sound to enhance the visual aspect of the performance, which is one of void, loss, and murder.

The women are covered, but they seem naked. Their skin color is darkened by black makeup. They have shaved heads like the Dinka tribe of South Sudan.

(Dinka)

A wide, red paint stroke horizontally crosses the canvas and the women's bodies, similar to paintings done in a Viennese Actionism performance (1960–1971). The stroke covers approximately 1/3 of the canvas longitudinally and spills on the ground, looking like the fake blood used in movies.

(reference for red on black skin)

(Viennese Actionism)

A large banner and posters will be hung in the vicinity of the site and in other locations to announce the performance.

The palette of the performance is white, black and red, and the stage suggests a flag lying flat on the ground. The red recalls wasted blood; the color black, the black Africans; and the stained white canvas, the innocent ground where the violence is happening.

The “street” performance takes place at the Pescheria di Rialto—the fish market on Canal Grande, an open public space—during the days of the Venice Biennale, when the majority of the art world is in town. The performance imitates the 1970s working-class and student demonstrations against the Government and the Capitalists.

This performance is a silent, still picture. Its composition is highly detailed and architecturally accurate.

The canvas acts as both a stage for the performance and a painting. It is meant to speak in a language that those attending the Venice Biennale—one of the most major international art events—will understand. It serves as a graphic representation of the violent massacres that are ongoing in Africa, and conjures, in particular, the genocide that has been occurring in the Darfur region of Sudan since 2003.

(architectural renderings of VB61)

The performance's graphic image tries to reproduce live what is shown daily on TV to a desensitized audience. It emphasizes the need to understand the logic behind the TV spectacle, to seek a plausible explanation beyond the sensationalism of death and the confusion of war.

The First World is allowing the massacre by being ignorant and living life unconsciously, overloaded with privilege. Superpowers take and arbitrarily partition the world's wealth, ignoring genocide as a collateral effect.