

Architect's Guide to the 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale: Part I — The National Pavilions



By [Katherine Guimapang](#)

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Crowds at the 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale. Photo by Jacopo Salvi, courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

With the opening week of the [18th Venice Architecture Biennale](#) now passed, there has been much discussion and media coverage of the anticipated international exhibition. It's safe to imply that the high-profile event aims to highlight, unveil, celebrate, and at times, provoke new and further existing discourse surrounding architecture. It can, however, be daunting to navigate the scene as a whole, especially for those who are learning about the pavilions, installations, participants, and overall event programming from afar.

To help Archinect readers who can only experience this year's Biennale virtually, we've created a handy reference guide to provide visuals and added context. In this two-part mini-feature series, we provide a summary and context for this year's exhibition theme, *The Laboratory of the Future*. Our guide offers a breakdown of important figures that make up the event, a list of participants, pavilions and installations, and upcoming events, as well as critical takes on the Architecture Biennale as a whole.

Part I brings attention to the key figures that have planned and curated the Biennale, award winners, jury members, and an extensive list of the National Pavilions.

Who's who at the Venice Architecture Biennale



President of La Biennale di Venezia Roberto Cicutto and the Curator of the 18th International Architecture Exhibition Lesley Lokko. Photo by Andrea Avezzu. Courtesy La Biennale di Venezia.

Since May 18, Venice was visited by thousands of exhibition guests and travelers hoping to see the culminating curation of renowned Ghanaian-Scottish architect, educator, and novelist [Lesley Lokko](#). The buzz surrounding her selection as curator and theme to spotlight Africa and the African Diaspora was met with eagerness and curiosity since [we first reported](#) on her appointment back in December 2021.

In January 2020, Italian film producer **Roberto Cicutto** was appointed president of the Venice Biennale by Italy's Minister of Culture Dario Franceschini. Cicutto replaced Paolo Baratta, who had held the position of Biennale president for several years. Under his directorship, Cicutto has shown support towards Lokko's curatorial decisions and changes for this year's event programming. In an excerpt from Cicutto's official Biennale introduction, he shared, "The 18th International Architecture Exhibition curated by Lesley Lokko will be the first to experiment in the field a path towards achieving carbon neutrality, to the point that the Exhibition itself is structured along the themes of decolonization and decarbonization."

Lesley Lokko is an acclaimed architectural leader, best-selling novelist, and academic advocate whose work within and outside architecture circles has proven her a formidable force for change. Her appointment as curator for the 18th Venice Architecture Biennale was met with excitement and much anticipation by the architecture community at large. Her commitment to positioning Africa and the African Diaspora as a light and bridge within the architecture world created quite the response at this year's Biennale. Her curatorial efforts and chosen theme, *The Laboratory of the Future*, have invited Biennale participants from around the globe to reflect, respond, and become present to the social, political, and environmental issues at hand. While Lokko is aware of the positive responses to the Biennale, she is also very cognizant of the negative and critical commentary as well.



Lesley Lokko speaks during the May 18th pre-press conference. Image © Jacopo Salvi. Courtesy La Biennale di Venezia.

Lokko addressed the community during her May 18th pre-press conference by stating, "So much has already been written about the expectation that this Biennale will change everything, simply by virtue of having more Black and African participants than previous exhibitions. But this misses the point. For difference, however, you construct it to make a difference, it has to do more. It cannot simply be. The invitation to participants was, therefore, threefold: bring yourselves your authentic selves, freed from expectations, professional mores, and masks. Frame your work in terms of the two guiding principles: decolonization and decarbonization. Think deeply and carefully about your choice of representation."

“ *So much has already been written about the expectation that this Biennale will change everything, simply by virtue of having more Black and African participants than previous exhibitions. But this misses the point [...] I have said it over and over again since this extraordinary project began. The intention is not to replace but to augment. To expand, not to contract. To add, not subtract. — Lesley Lokko*

She continued, "The exhibition aims to be experiential as well as informative; to produce a backdrop for participants' work that does not overwhelm or compete but supports the work in every way possible; generously, conscientiously, ethically. In the past couple of days, I've heard many responses to the exhibition, but one, in particular, stands out. A journalist remarked, 'It seems to stop short of architecture.' Whilst I appreciate and understand the comment, for me, the opposite is true: It is our conventional understanding of architecture that stops short. I have said it over and over again since this extraordinary project began. The intention is not to replace but to augment. To expand, not to contract. To add, not subtract."



Lesley Lokko poses with the 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale International Jury: Izabela Wiecek, Tau Tavengwa, Nora Awaki, Lesley Lokko, Thelma Golden, and Ippolito Pestellini Laparelli (L-R). Courtesy La Biennale di Venezia.

In our [May 2023 coverage](#) of this year's **International Jury** selection, we announced that the 18th Architecture Biennale will be judged by "Italian architect and curator Ippolito Pestellini Laparelli (who will serve as President of the jury); Palestinian architect and curator Nora Akawi; South-African *Cityscapes* co-founder, curator, and editor Tau Tavengwa; Spain- and London-based Polish academic Izabela Wiecek; and [Studio Museum in Harlem](#) Director Thelma Golden."

Each jury member was selected by Lokko herself and tasked with judging the Golden Lion for Best National Participation, which was [awarded to Brazil's 'Terra \[Earth\]' pavilion](#), the best participant in the International Exhibition, which was awarded to DAAR, and the Silver Lion for or a promising young participant, which was awarded to [Olalekan Jeyifous](#). Learn more about this year's Architecture Biennale award winners [here](#). It is also important to mention Nigerian architect, sculptor, and designer Demas Nwoko, who was awarded the 2023 [Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement](#).



Photo by Andrea Avezzù. Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

What to see at the Venice Architecture Biennale

It's easy to become engrossed by the industry's big names and high-profile architects participating in this year's Biennale. However, our aim is to bring attention and recognition to as many participating practitioners and the work they've invested in. For the event's programming, Lokko and her team describe the approach as "an exhibition in six parts." Along with the installations from the program's Main Event (*Dangerous Liaisons* and *Force Majeure*), the [Curator's Special Projects](#), [Special Participants](#), and [Collateral Events](#) have made media headlines.

To kick off our digital guide to the Biennale, we start with a visual overview of the National Pavilions, presented and descriptions provided by the pavilion curators and exhibition teams.

The National Pavilions

This year's Biennale was met with much response and varying reactions from the architecture community and the general public. Most of these comments and reactions were positive, yet, it would be a disservice to say that there weren't "obstacles" and [critical or even hypercritical takes](#) surrounding the event that may have overshadowed this year's opening week as a whole. It's easy to project thoughts and opinions on whether this year's exhibition was "a success," however, I invite our readers to use this two-part guide as a means to explore, gain additional context to the theme, and learn how it was interpreted by the participating teams and practitioners involved.

In this latest iteration, 63 nations are represented throughout Venice. 12 pavilions are featured at the Giardini site, 23 pavilions are featured at Arsenale, and 14 pavilions are featured in Venice's city center. Click on the map previews below to get the bigger version.



Giardini



Arsenale



The Laboratory of the Future

Each participating team addresses this year's theme, *The Laboratory of the Future*, through literal and speculative investigations. Every pavilion comments on issues of social, political, economic, and environmental issues taking place around the world while responding to Lokko's overarching theme of decolonization and decarbonization.

*Pavilions are listed in alphabetical order.

Pavilion of Albania — *Untimely Meditations of: How We learn to live in Synthesized Realities*

Curators: heramarte (Era Merkuri, Martin Gjoleka)



Image © Jacopo Salvi/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"*Untimely Meditations or: How We Learn to Live in Synthesized Realities* uses architecture as a speculative tool to explore contingent situations. It materializes in the form of two narratives taking place in two civic spaces in Tirana and the Pavilion at the Biennale Architettura 2023. The Pavilion acts both as a container to display the possible narratives and as content itself. The exhibition displays the precarious distinction between fiction and reality, questions the role of the architect in post-contemporary society, amplifies the human experience via technology, and most importantly, allows the *homo ludens* in us to take over."

Pavilion of Argentina — *el Futuro del Agua*

Curator: Diego Arraigada



Image © Marco Zorzanello/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"Within *The Laboratory of the Future* in Venice, the Argentine Pavilion studies the Future of Water. The exhibition presents the many facets and scales of water across the country. The exhibition presents the multiple facets and scales of water across the country. Upon entering the Pavilion, we realize that a blue fluid has flooded the lower part of the pavilion while the upper part remains intact. This 'fluid' is not a literal liquid but a single color that covers it all up to a perfectly horizontal level of 70 cm in height."

Pavilion of Australia — *unsettling Queenstown*

Curators: Anthony Coupe, Julian Worrall, Ali Gumillya Baker, Emily Paech, Sarah Rhodes



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"*unsettling Queenstown* explores and participates in the questioning and reimagining of Australia's colonial inheritance at the end of the second Elizabethan age. Weaving between real and fictional Queenstowns, the exhibition encompasses a ghostly fragment of colonial architecture, immersive sounds and imagery, and representations of the country 'demapped' of its colonial patterns."

Pavilion of Austria — *Partecipazione / Beteiligung*

Curators: AKT (Fabian Antosch, Gerhard Flora, Max Hebel, Adrian Judt, Julia Klaus, Lena Kohlmayr, Philipp Krummel, Gudrun Landl, Lukas Lederer, Susanne Mariacher, Christian Mörtl, Philipp Oberthaler, Charlie Rauchs, Helene Schauer, Kathrin Schelling, Philipp Stern and Harald Trapp) & Hermann Czech



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"'Partecipazione' was one of the core demands of the 1970s for an 'open, democratic' Biennale, as was working on-site in the context of the city. *Partecipazione / Beteiligung* transfers these two approaches to the contemporary reality of Venice's old city."

Pavilion of Bahrain — *Sweating Assets*

Curators: Maryam Aljomairi, Latifa Alkhatat



Image © Andrea Avezzù/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The exhibition will explore the unique climatic conditions of extreme heat and humidity, along with current comfort requirements. Imagined as an exhibition of micro-environments, the research will examine the neglected offerings of infrastructure. The exhibition crosses scales — from domestic to industrial — identifying the weaknesses of cooling systems in relation to a broader ecology. The work investigates historical, present, and potentially future water practices in Bahrain."

Pavilion of Belgium — *In Vivo*

Curators: Bento and Vinciane Despret

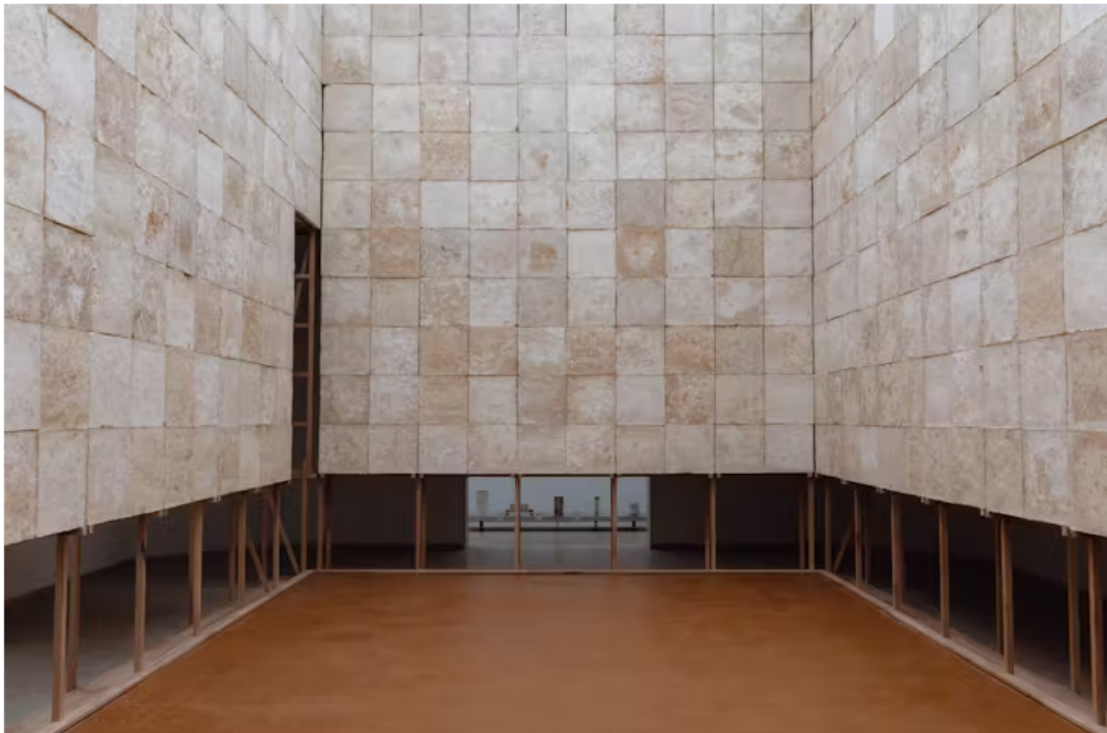


Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The *In Vivo* Pavilion will offer a time and a place for critical thinking, particularly because questions of responsibility, of taking other beings into account, and of justice will be discussed in relation to living and building. But its strength will be defined above all by concrete and inventive proposals for an enviable future of living."

Pavilion of Brazil — *Terra [Earth]*

Curators: Gabriela de Matos, Paulo Tavares



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"*Terra* is a founding motif in the narratives of the formation of Brazil. Representations of national identity were historically structured by idealised and racialised views of the frontier and tropical nature that subalternised Indigenous and Black peoples. *Terra* is also a founding motif in the philosophies and imaginaries of the Indigenous and African Brazilian populations that form the majority of the local cultural matrix. But here *terra* appears in a different form, drawing ancestral and diasporic territories that refer to artistic and architectural geographies more deeply and beyond Brazil."

Pavilion of Canada — *Not for Sale!*

Curators: Architects Against Housing Alienation (AAHA): Adrian Blackwell, David Fortin, Matthew Soules, Sara Stevens, Patrick Stewart, Tijana Vujosevic



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"*Not for Sale!!* is a campaign of ten demands, each with an associated activist architectural project, to end housing alienation. The Canada Pavilion is the campaign headquarters, connecting architects, advocates, and activists within the growing movement for housing accessibility and affordability. Architects Against Housing Alienation is mobilizing Canadians to demand socially, ecologically, and creatively empowering housing for all."

Pavilion of Chile — *Moving Ecologies*

Curators: Gonzalo Carrasco, Beals Lyon Arquitectos



Image © Marco Zorzanello/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The objective of this exhibition is to imagine this inventory: the collection and cabinet of species that will prepare for those worlds to come."

Pavilion of China — *Renewal: A Symbiotic Narrative*

Curator: Ruan Xing



Image © Marco Zorzanello/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The theme of the exhibition tells of Chinese experiments in shaping liveability in high-density environments. Through this unique Chinese narrative, we seek free discourses on the recent and emerging transformations in the built environment: where are we going, and what is at stake? Do conclusions lie in the architectural enigma of density? Will the future city feature modernist towers, traditional courtyards, or a symbiosis of the two? Or will other possibilities be brought about through VR technology, clean and renewable energy? Visitors are encouraged to come up with their own answers by 'viewing,' 'unfolding,' 'contemplating,' and 'strolling' in the China Pavilion."

Pavilion of Croatia — *Same As It Ever Was*

Curators: Mia Roth, Tonči Čerina



Image © Andrea Avezzi/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The Croatian Pavilion is an ode to ambiances of coexistence of the wild and the domesticated, natural and fabricated, inanimate and living [...] The Pavilion includes a spatial installation which is a part of the *bestiarium* of built and unbuilt observatories in the wetlands, while the pavilion's network includes workshops and discussions that test themes and future action in the education of architects."

Pavilion of Czech Republic — *The Office for a Non-Precarious Future*

Exhibitors: Eliška H. Pomyjová, David Neuhäusl, Jan Netušil



Image © Marco Zorzanello/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The Office for a Non-Precarious Future is an exhibition project that metaphorically takes on the form of a Factory and a Laboratory. The Factory, as a dystopian environment, reflects the negative status quo of the profession. The Laboratory provides critical analysis, tools, and best practice examples. As a work-in-progress space for exhibition visitors and ten residents, it offers cooperation, conversation, and speculation on the non-precious future of the architecture profession."

Pavilion of Denmark — *Coastal Imaginaries*

Curator: Josephine Michau



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"*Coastal Imaginaries* is an exhibition of nature-based design solutions in an age of human-based environmental destruction, as well as a training ground for emerging ecological imaginaries addressing the current crisis of the coastscape. The exhibition offers a catalog of proposals for a coastal future grounded in seven nature-based principles, addressing the perspective of the urgencies of floods and storm surges..."

Pavilion of Egypt — *NiLab - Il Nilo come laboratorio*

Curators: Ahmed Sami Abd Elrahman, Marina Tornatora, Ottavio Amaro, Ghada Farouk, Moataz Samir

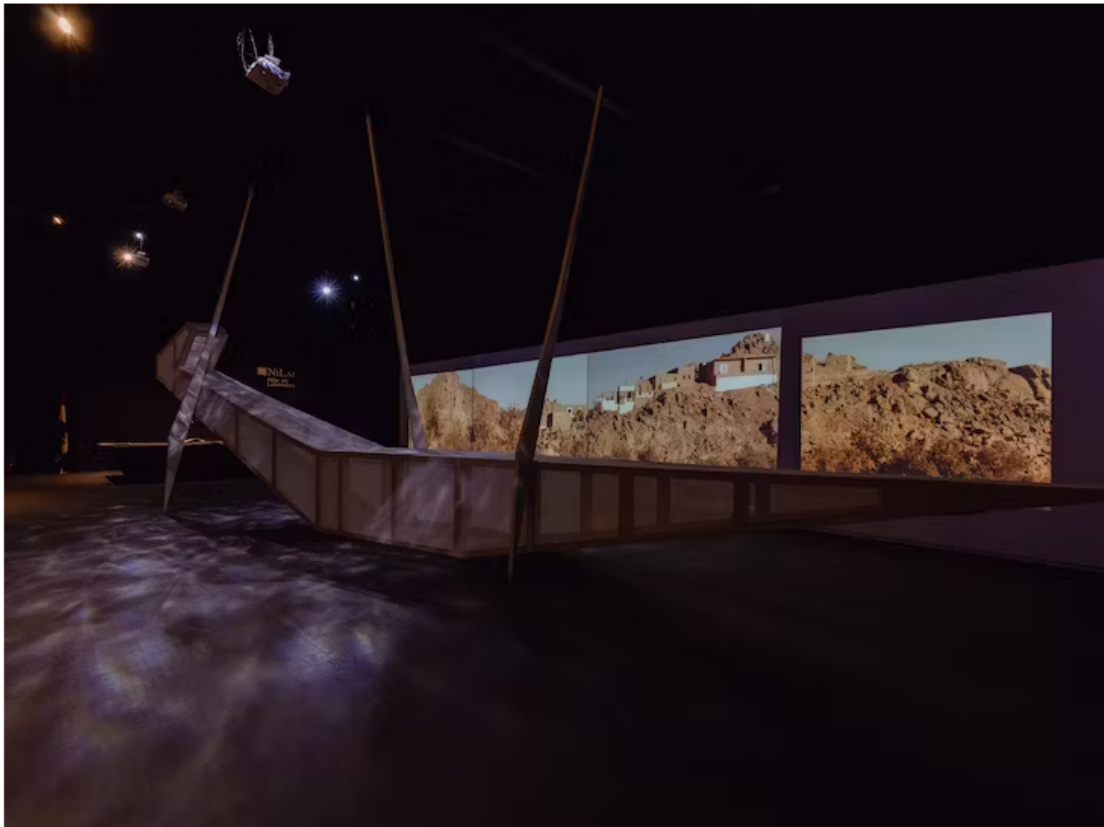


Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"NiLab is a laboratory for understanding and developing ideas and projects for the Nile River, a space for exploring the water theme [...] The Pavilion is conceived as a space-time dimension in which the visitor experiences the landscape of the Nile as an inclusive part along with water, nature, and history."

Pavilion of Finland — *Huussi-Imagining the Future History of Sanitation*

Curator: Arja Renell, The Dry Collective



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The exhibition critically reassesses sanitation infrastructure in the context of global freshwater shortages which have become a reality in Europe. Sanitation infrastructure is also connected with the possibility of restoring the nutrient cycle in food production."

Pavilion of France — *Ball Theatre*

Curators: Muoto, Georgi Stanishev



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"*The Ball Theatre* is an installation designed to reawaken our desires for utopia. Its hemispherical shape elicits multiple images. It can be interpreted equally as a terrestrial globe or as a mirror ball, a kitsch icon of an era when partying was still possible. This party aura suggests a new approach to today's crises, one in which the emphasis is no longer on emergency, but on the possibility of alternative futures."

Read Archinect's coverage of the French Pavilion [here](#).

Pavilion of Germany — Open for Maintenance — Wegen Umbau geöffnet

Curators: ARCH+ / SUMMACUMFEMMER / BÜRO JULIANE GREB (Anne Femmer, Franziska Gödicke, Juliane Greb, Christian Hiller, Petter Krag, Melissa Makele, Anh-Linh Ngo, Florian Summa)



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"Our installation is dedicated to matters of care, repair, and maintenance. Made entirely using leftover material from the Biennale Arte 2022, which left behind hundreds of tons of trash, the pavilion will become a productive infrastructure, promoting principles of reuse and circular construction in tandem with architecture's social responsibility. By squatting the German pavilion through a series of maintenance works, the contribution renders visible processes of spatial and social care work typically hidden from the public eye. The project demonstrates that ecological sustainability is inextricably linked to the social question."

Pavilion of Great Britain — *Dancing Before the Moon*

Curators: Jayden Ali, Joseph Henry, Meneesha Kellay, Sumitra Upham



Image © Marco Zorzanello/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

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Pavilion of Greece — *Bodies of Water*

Curators: Costis Panayiris, Andreas Nikolovgenis.



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"*Bodies of Water* address this evolving geological construct, investigating and presenting the problematic presence of these bodies and their technical works as a laboratory of the future."

Pavilion of Hungary — *Reziduum – The Frequency of Architecture*

Curator: Mária Kondor-Szilágyi



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

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"The focal point of our project is the new Museum of Ethnography in Budapest designed by Marcel Ferencz (Napur Architect). It was completed in 2022 as a part of the Liget Budapest Project, one of Europe's grandest urban development programs abundant with cultural content [...] The exhibition presents the new building, its ornamentation, and the museum's collection and contemplates the culmination of these elements observing the overall artistic relationship that connects this piece of architecture with music and light."

Pavilion of Ireland — *In Search of Hy-Brasil*

Curators: Peter Cody, Peter Carroll, Elizabeth Hatz, Mary Laheen, Joseph Mackey



Image © Andrea Avezzi/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"Ireland's national pavilion at the Biennale Architettura 2023 puts our islands' diverse communities, culture, and experiences right at the center of the discourse surrounding our shared future. To the forefront of our imagination. The installation offers an immersive experience that shifts between the local and the territorial, the micro and the macro, to make explicit the implicit intelligence of these most remarkable of places."

Pavilion of Isreal — *could-to-ground*

Curators: Oren Eldar, Edith Kofsky, Hadas Maor



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The exhibition explores the material nature of the technological cloud and modern communication networks via the unique case of Israel and its environs. By surveying the rapid changes endured by these information infrastructures, the exhibition highlights the economic and geopolitical processes currently underway in Israel and the region and the role of architecture in these. Focusing on the shift from sound to light, it extends throughout the pavilion as an immersive installation while examining the transition from analog to digital communication and from accessible buildings in urban centers to sealed structures in peripheral locations: the hardware of the Fourth Industrial Revolution."

Pavilion of Italy — Spaziale: Everyone Belongs to Everyone Else

Curators: Fosbury Architecture (F.A.)



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"With the aim of transforming consumption into investment and the end into a beginning, SPAZIALE foresees a three-pronged approach: SPAZIALE presenta, an observatory on nine site-specific actions staged throughout Italy and promoted thanks to the support of the General Directorate for Contemporary Creativity of the Ministry of Culture; SPAZIALE. Everyone Belongs to Everyone Else, which as part of the Padiglione Italia, embodies the formal and theoretical synthesis of processes triggered elsewhere; and, finally, the SPAZIALE platform itself, to be launched after the inauguration as an incremental workshop over an expanded timespan."

Pavilion of Japan — *Architecture, a place to be loved — when architecture is seen as a living creature*

Curator: Onishi Maki



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"Architecture, a place to be loved, is possible when architecture encompasses its engraved memories and stories and embodies the backdrop and the activities that took place, giving the architecture a broader meaning. It is also possible to perceive architecture as a living creature rather than an entity separate from nature. The members of our team have many different specialties: textiles, ceramics, photography, design, editing, and architecture. Through the Japanese pavilion, we create a spatial experience that invites visitors to think about architecture as a place to be loved."

Pavilion of South Korea — 2086: Together How?

Curators: Soik Jung, Kyong Park



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"2086: *Together How?* is an exhibition imagining a future ecocultural revolution through critical assessment of our anthropocentric legacy. Central to it is a game that invites audiences to make choices regarding environmental crises. Their choices are visualized on a scoreboard and measured to show the players' control of our Faustian ideology of progress and materialism, which is leading us to extinction. It begins from research and design collaboration between architects and community leaders in three small communities in South Korea, a cross-section of urbanization, modernization, and globalization. The exhibition uses environmental crises to visualize a better ecoculture in our future."

Pavilion of Kosovo — *rks² transcendent locality*

Exhibitors: Poliksen Qorri-Dragaj, Hamdi Qorri



Image © Andrea Avezzi/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"Migration has played a significant role in Kosovo's social development up to the present day. During the tense political situation from the late 1980s to the late 1990s, hundreds of thousands of people sought refuge and protection abroad, where they often remained for decades. The perceived locality of this migration group is the starting point for a spatial-philosophical concept: transcendent locality, implying the process of crossing a boundary that separates two different spheres. Not being able to return to their homeland for an indefinite period represented a deep caesura in immigrants' lives, leaving them in an intermediate state of suspension. Boundaries between the immanent being in the now and the transcendent being in the mind blur — the migrated individual is in a transcendent locality."

Pavilion of Latvia — T/C LATVIJA (TCL)

Curators: Ernests Cerbulis, Uldis Jaunzems-Pētersons



Image © Andrea Avezzi/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The connection between La Biennale (as a 'supermarket') and National Pavilions (as 'products') is an analogy which the Latvian Pavilion explores. Find everything for your desires, visions, and needs in *TC Latvija's* idea shop, a space where all ideas meet and find place on the same shelf. Welcome to the infinite horizons of shopping shelves. It's not the products that are important, it's your *decisions* that matter."

Pavilion of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg — *Down to Earth*

Curators: Francelle Cane, Marija Marić



Image © Marco Zorzanello/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"*Down to Earth* critically unpacks the project of space mining through the perspective of resources. With the space of the pavilion itself turned into a lunar laboratory, a *stage* where the performance of extraction takes place, the exhibition focuses on the unveiling of the *backstages* of the space mining project, offering another way of seeing the Moon that goes beyond the current optics of the Anthropocene."

Pavilion of Mexico — *Infraestructura utópica: la cancha de básquetbol campesina / Utopian Infrastructure: The Campesino Basketball Court*

Curators: APRDELESP, Mariana Botey



Image © Marco Zorzanello/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The Mexican Pavilion is an immersive space based on a 1:1 scale fragment of the expanded model of the campesino basketball court, an infrastructure that has become repurposed as a space for poly- and pluri-valent processes of decolonization in Mexico's indigenous communities. Our case study on these basketball courts functions as a laboratory for the investigation of the adaptations and transformations that have allowed these spaces to transcend their original purpose and to become instead focal points for the construction of political, social, and cultural processes."

Pavilion of The Netherlands — *Plumbing the System*

Curator: Jan Jongert, Superuse



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"Architecture can be seen as an articulation of systems — economic, social, political — that shape the built environment and organize and regulate flows of people, activities, resources, and ecologies. Often based on extraction and exploitation, these systems seem so thoroughly entrenched as to appear immutable. But in order to move towards a more sustainable, regenerative, and just future, many of these systems will need to be rethought. The Dutch Pavilion aims to show how alternatives might work on a macro scale while attempting to enact (and test) real changes on a micro level — offering a site where global thinking and local action can meet."

Pavilion of Nordic Countries (Sweden, Norway, Finland) — Joar Nango — *Girjegumpi: The Sámi Architecture Library*

Curators: Carlos Mínguez Carrasco, James Taylor-Foster (ArkDes)



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"*Girjegumpi* is a spatialisation of conversations and research initiated by Joar Nango over two decades of practice at the intersection of architecture and art. As an itinerant, collective library, the project has evolved and expanded as it has travelled. Everywhere it stops, it involves numerous collaborations with architects, artists, and craftspeople. Central to the project is the archive that it contains and shares — from rare titles to contemporary books, the collection of more than five hundred editions embraces topics such as Sámi architecture and design, traditional and ancestral building knowledge, activism, and decoloniality."

Pavilion of Peru — *Walkers in Amazonia*

Curators: Alexia León, Lucho Marcial



Image © Marco Zorzanello/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"Walkers in Amazonia have been reconfiguring their territories by hand for at least ten thousand years. The maintenance of this networked knowledge and its care depended upon the collective cooperation between humans and non-humans. This has made it possible to regenerate the diversity and variations of tropical rainforests. Waman Wasi, through *The Calendar Project*, conserves and renews them. The installation allows the visitor to explore, through a dynamic audio-visual experience, the obverse and reverse of a reality at once near and far, articulated by the collective act of walking. Engaging with an Amazonia inhabited by people with their own cultural history enables us to shift our usual ways of seeing, understanding, communicating, and doing. It helps us to imagine an active future."

Pavilion of the Philippines — *Tripa de Gallina: Guts of Estuary*

Curators: Sam Domingo, Ar. Choie Y. Funk



Image © Marco Zorzanello/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"Estuaries, or the *esteros*, are the mouth of a river, where freshwater meets saltwater. However, the enormous sludge amassed by the people along *Tripa de Gallina* (Guts of the Rooster) impedes this conversation. The estuary remains silent [...] The exhibition offers a diagnosis of the water's condition and a prognosis of the people's future in a procedure of modular urban acupuncture. The pavilion inspects the estuary's guts: a flawed ecology of humans, waters, and dregs. Consisting of bamboo structure, windows, and projections, it welcomes a future assemblage that is in good shape."

Pavilion of Poland — *Datament*

Curator: Jacek Sosnowski



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The *Datament* exhibition brings us closer to data in its raw form, allowing us to experience it as it is, beyond its field of interpretation. Starting with the basic need to have a roof over one's head, *Datament* shows the importance of data and the problems it can cause in terms of architecture and urban planning."

Pavilion of Romania — NOW, HERE, THERE

Curator: Emil Ivănescu, Simina Filat



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The Romanian Pavilion is a generator of ideas, bringing to the fore the creation journey of innovations or inventions made only as a result of interdisciplinary collaboration. Ideas and objects become the ingredients of a dialogue about the future in which the visitor is invited to take part. The visitor interactively explores four research areas: *Lost Inventions*, *Lateral Pedagogies*, *Instant Garden e Co-Thinking Installation*, as an activator of ideas, all representing a way of education through research, innovation, and social activation, seen as new solutions to respond to a people- and context-centered future."

Pavilion of Saudi Arabia — *Irth* اِرتْ

Curators: Basma Bouzo, Noura Bouzo



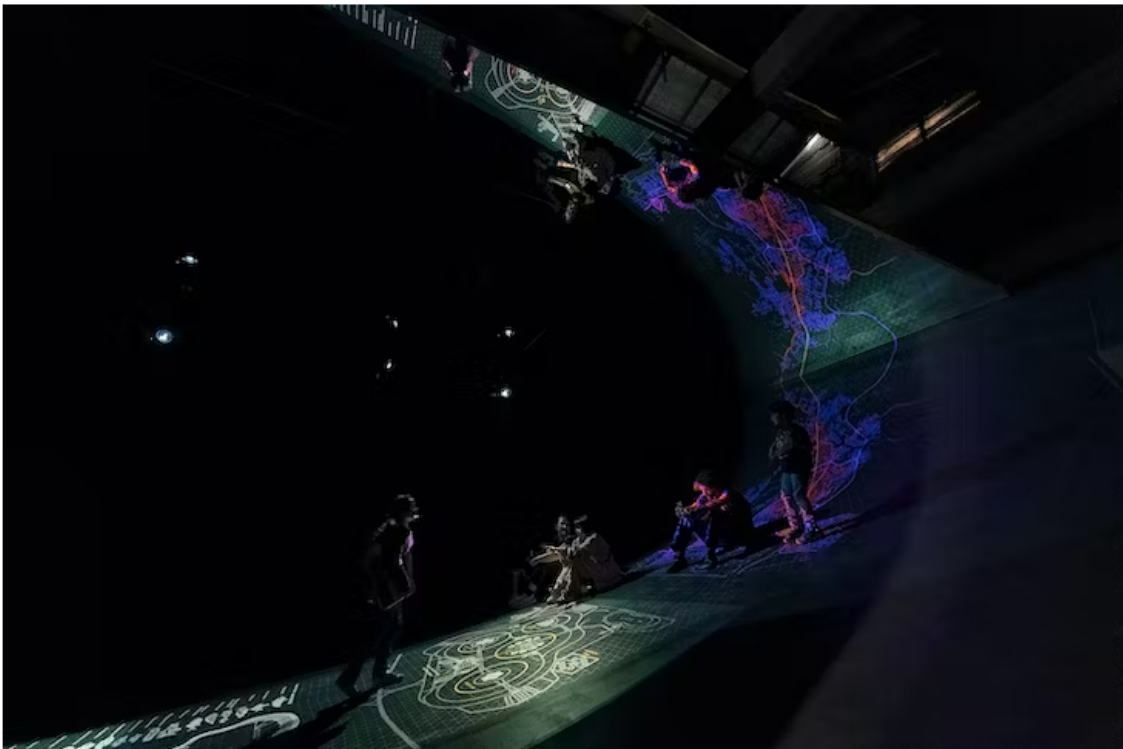
Image © Marco Zorzanello/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"For the Biennale Architettura 2023, the Saudi Pavilion will examine the symbiotic relationship between material and immaterial. The cohesion of both informs perception and brings to the surface the narratives embedded within these architectural building blocks. Earth used in Saudi vernacular architecture is explored alongside organic material experimentation upon which future-proofed legacies and practices can be built. The intent is to present the empirical as a window into the essentials. The archival attempt here aims to capture the anthropological and historic and provokes contemplation of how the past presents the answers to the conundrums of the future."

Pavilion of Serbia - IN REFLECTIONS 6°27'48.81"N 3°14'49.20"E

Scientific Committee: Biljana Jotić (President), Dubravka Đukanović, Jelena Ivanović Vojvodić, Miljana Zeković, Snežana Vesnić, Ana Đurić, Jelena Mitrović

Exhibitors: Iva Njunjić, Tihomir Dičić



Exhibition In reflections, Pavilion of Republic of Serbia, Biennale Architettura 2023, 2023. Photography. Private Collection. © Relja Ivanić

"The exhibition addresses reflections on the past and present of the architecture created through the politics of global non-alignment on the African continent. The trip to Lagos and the encounters with the architecture of the International Trade Fair in Lagos aim to re-evaluate and activate the processes associated with these spaces today. In a direct experience, the authors seek to establish spatial and temporal reflections and to create their own relationship, both personal and generational, with this architecture. The exhibition turns its attention to the architecture created through international cooperation, considering it as a potential and a resource for the future."

Pavilion of Singapore — *WHEN IS ENOUGH, ENOUGH? The Performance of Measurement*

Curators: Melvin Tan, Adrian Lai, Wong Ker How



Image © Marco Zorzanello/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The Singapore pavilion foregrounds architects and researchers whose practices aim to elicit inclusion, connection, freedom, attachment, attraction, and agency in the city. In examining design processes that work for these six goals, we uncover challenges and contradictions, bring to light methods of addressing diverse preferences and the conundrums that arise, reveal tensions between extreme positions as well as envisage potential spectrums in between. What measures do we have to take to live by our values? How do we calibrate for different entities, environments, and dreams? When is enough, enough?"

Pavilion of Slovenia — +/- 1 °C: *In Search of Well-Tempered Architecture*

Curators: Jure Grohar, Eva Gusel, Maša Mertelj, Anja Vidic, Matic Vrabič

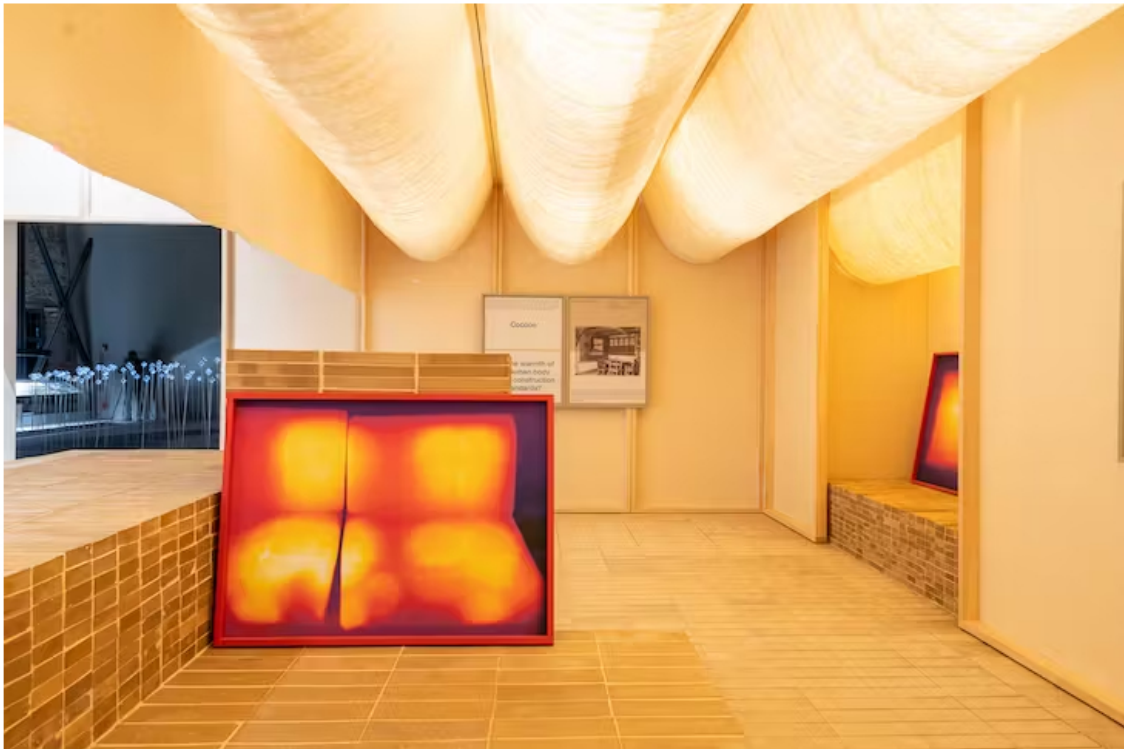


Image © Andrea Avezzi/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"Ecology is addressed by architecture rather paradoxically. Architecture tends to address ecological issues exclusively through applied technology hidden inside walls. 'Energy efficiency' thus appears as an entirely separate component of a building. In the past, ecology generated and was inseparable from architecture itself, which means that buildings were ecological already in their conceptual design.

We have sought out examples of vernacular buildings that address the issue of ecology as an intrinsic part of architectural design and divided them into categories according to their main energy principles."

Pavilion of South Africa — *The Structure of People*

Curators: Sechaba Maape, Emmanuel Nkambule, Stephen Steyn



Image © Marco Zorzanello/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The South African Pavilion, titled *The Structure of a People*, revolves around the architectural representation of social structures – in historical and contemporary terms. The exhibition unfolds through three zones. *The Past is the Laboratory of the Future* traces links to the architectural representation of social structures as documented in pre-colonial southern African societies. *The Council of Non-Human Beings* contains contemporary drawings on the topic of animism in architectural practice. And *Political Animals* presents the organizational and curricular structures of South African architecture schools as architectural objects, as the result of an architecture competition."

Pavilion of Spain — *FOODSCAPES*

Curators: Eduardo Castillo-Vinuesa, Manuel Ocaña del Valle



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"*Foodscapes* is a journey through the architectures that feed the world, from the domestic laboratories of our kitchens to the vast operational landscapes that nourish our cities. At a time when energy debates are more pertinent than ever, food remains in the background, yet the way we manufacture, distribute, and consume it shapes our world more radically than any other energy source. Through five films, an archive in the form of a recipe book, and an open research platform, the exhibition surveys the present landscape of our food systems and looks to the future to explore other possible models capable of feeding the world without devouring the planet."

Pavilion of Switzerland — „Neighbours“

Curators/Exhibitors: Karin Sander, Philip Ursprung.



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The artist Karin Sander and the art historian Philip Ursprung exhibit the Swiss pavilion as such instead of using it as a container for an exhibition. They highlight the proximity of the pavilions of Switzerland (1951–1952, Bruno Giacometti) and Venezuela (1954–1956, Carlo Scarpa). Of all pavilions in the Giardini, they are the closest. They share a wall. A carpet in the main hall depicts the two combined ground plans. A temporary opening, cut into the brick enclosure of the courtyard, makes visible the connection..."

Pavilion of Turkey — *Ghosts Stories: Carrier Bag Theory of Architecture*

Curators: Sevince Bayrak, Oral Göktaş



Image © Marco Zorzanello/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"Based on Ursula Le Guin's 1986 essay 'The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction,' the exhibition draws strength from the radical changes the world of architecture has undergone in the last two decades and suggests listening to and understanding the stories of abandoned buildings, rather than focusing on more successful examples. The research included an open call aimed at compiling recent documentation of unused buildings across Türkiye. Considering these buildings as 'the laboratory of the future,' the exhibition introduces novel tools to transform existing structures based on collective dreams and discussions."

Pavilion of Ukraine — *Before the Future*

Curators: Iryna Miroshnykova, Oleksii Petrov, Borys Filonenko



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"By telling stories, we get an opportunity to comprehend each other and thus to share diverse visions of a changing future. Over four hundred days of living at war have shown us that stories cannot be told without defense. Wherever storytelling takes place, there is someone and something that allow the voice to be heard relatively safely. Under the roof or behind the rampart, we can gather and discuss the most urgent questions. Among these is the possibility of action for architects in a paradoxical situation before the future, in coexisting with the constant destruction of the past and present, with its spaces and interactions."

Read Archinect's coverage of the Ukraine Pavilion [here](#).

Pavilion of UAE — *Aridly Abundant*

Curator: Faysal Tabbarah



Image © Marco Zorzanello/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The exhibition works at the intersection between land-based knowledge and contemporary technology. It challenges perceptions of arid environments as spaces of scarcity and precariousness, focusing on the relationship between architecture and arid landscapes, and transforms the pavilion into an environment that exhibits the spatial, material, and tactical qualities of aridly abundant environments, creating a backdrop for architectural provocations suited for global contemporary and future arid contexts. The main question of *Aridly Abundant* is: What architectural possibilities can emerge when we reimagine arid landscapes as spaces of abundance?"

Pavilion of The United States of America — *Everlasting Plastics*

Curators: Tiziana Baldenebro, Lauren Leving



Image © Matteo de Mayda/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"Petrochemical polymers known as plastics were developed in the United States as a revolutionary material. Today the global urgency to reframe our approach to the overabundance of plastic detritus in our waterways, landfills, and streets is clear. Exploring our fraught yet enmeshed kinship with plastics, *Everlasting Plastics* considers the ways these materials both shape and erode contemporary ecologies, economies, and the built environment. This exhibition highlights our unseen dependency; demonstrates how plasticity has created expectations for the behaviors of other materials; and points to plastic's unknown, long-term, and indelible impact on our futures."

Read Archinect's coverage of the U.S. Pavilion [here](#).

Pavilion of Uruguay — *En Ópera Escenarios futuros de una joven Ley Forestal*

Curators: Mauricio López, Matías Carballal, Andrés Gobba, Sebastián Lambert, Carlos Casacuberta



Image © Marco Zorzanello/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The exhibition understands the Forest Law as an ecosystemic assembly under construction that dialogues with diverse spatialities and territorialities. It is an invitation to discuss and learn together about its implications in the decarbonization and decolonization processes and its ability to shape Uruguay as a laboratory for the future of wood.

An avatar will interpret the Law in a multi-author opera together with a series of visual pieces based on the spatialities of wood in Uruguay and musical irruptions by the new generation of Afro-Uruguayan artists."

Pavilion of Uzbekistan — *Unbuild Together: Archaism vs. Modernity*

Curators: Studio Ko, Karl Fournier & Olivier Marty, Jean-Baptiste Carisé, Sophia Bengebara



Image courtesy of ACDF, Photo © Gerda Studiio/Courtesy of Studio KO.

"Our response to the theme of the Biennale Architettura 2023, *The Laboratory of the Future*, can be read as an encounter of different horizons, allowing us to take a close look at the Uzbek architectural heritage, to delve into its past in order to find the necessary tools for the elaboration of tomorrow's world, unbuilding modernity together by questioning the notion of archaism. Participation is, above all, collaborative, placing the human being at the center of our approach. Through the exchanges between us and architectural students, craftspeople, and associated artists, a collective proposal will emerge, creating a sensitive and poetic architecture, reflecting a truly contemporary and contextual practice."

Pavilion of Venezuela — Universidad Central de Venezuela, Patrimonio de la Humanidad en recuperación. Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas

Curator: Paola Claudia Posani



Image © Marco Zorzanello/Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2000 and is considered by international critics as the masterpiece of the Venezuelan architect Carlos Raúl Villanueva. This architect applied the principles of modern architecture to the requirements of our country, adapting them to the richness of our climate and the social development needs of Venezuela at the time. We will show, with comparative images, original plans, and current photos the values of its spaces and especially the modern utopia of the University City that resurfaces to serve as a guide to the future, in the hands of Carlos Raúl Villanueva, one of the masters of world architecture."

In addition to the illustrated national pavilions above, the following pavilions did not have official photographs available. However, we've listed each pavilion to highlight their contribution and participation at this year's National Pavilion exhibition.

- **Bulgaria** — Curator: Boris Tikvarski
- **Cyprus** — Curators/Exhibitors: Petros Lapithis, Lia Lapithi, Nikos Kouroussis, Ioanna Ioannou Xiari, Cyprus Space Exploration Organization
- **Estonia** — Curators/Exhibitors: Aet Ader, Mari Möldre, Arvi Anderson
- **Georgia** — Curators: Gigi Shukakidze, Tinatin Gurgenzidze, Otar Nemsadze
- **Grenada** — Curator: Luisa Flora
- **Holy See** — Curator: Roberto Cremascoli
- **Kuwait** — Curators: Hamad Alkhaleefi, Naser Ashour, Mohammad Kassem, Rabab Raes Kazem
- **Lithuania** — Curators: Jurga Daubaraitė, Egija Inzule, Jonas Žukauskas
- **Montenegro** — Curator: Zoran Lazovic
- **Niger** — Curator: Boris Brollo
- **North Macedonia** — Curators: Ognen Marina Dimitar Krsteski, Aleksandar Petanovski, Darko Draganovski, Marija Petrova, Gordan Petrov
- **Panama** — Curator: Aimée Lam Tunon
- **Portugal** — Curator: Andreia Garcia
- **San Marino** — Curators: Michael Kaethler, Marco Pierini

Stay tuned for Part II of Archinect's Guide to the 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale, where we explore installations from the program's Main Event (*Dangerous Liaisons* and *Force Majeure*), the *Curator's Special Projects*, and *Special Participants*, along with comments and responses from the public.

Interested in learning more about a specific installation we've mentioned above? Let us know which pavilion you would want Archinect to dive into further.