

La Biennale di Venezia  
16<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition  
curated by Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara



## FREESPACE

Venice (Arsenale and Giardini), May 26<sup>th</sup> to November 25<sup>th</sup> 2018  
(Preview May 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>)

Venice, June 7<sup>th</sup> 2017 – The President of La Biennale di Venezia, **Paolo Baratta**, together with the curators of the 16<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition, **Yvonne Farrell** and **Shelley McNamara**, met the press today at Ca' Giustinian to launch the 16<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition that will take place from **May 26<sup>th</sup> to November 25<sup>th</sup> 2018** (Preview May 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>) in the **Giardini** and the **Arsenale**, and around other venues in Venice.

**Yvonne Farrell** and **Shelley McNamara** titled the 16<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition **Freespace**, and explained their choice with the following words:

«*Freespace* describes a generosity of spirit and a sense of humanity at the core of architecture's agenda, focusing on the quality of space itself.

*Freespace* focuses on architecture's ability to provide free and additional spatial gifts to those who use it and on its ability to address the unspoken wishes of strangers.

*Freespace* celebrates architecture's capacity to find additional and unexpected generosity in each project - even within the most private, defensive, exclusive or commercially restricted conditions.

*Freespace* provides the opportunity to emphasise nature's free gifts of light - sunlight and moonlight, air, gravity, materials - natural and man-made resources.

*Freespace* encourages reviewing ways of thinking, new ways of seeing the world, of inventing solutions where architecture provides for the well being and dignity of each citizen of this fragile planet.

*Freespace* can be a space for opportunity, a democratic space, un-programmed and free for uses not yet conceived. There is an exchange between people and buildings that happens, even if not intended or designed, so buildings themselves find ways of sharing and engaging with people over time, long after the architect has left the scene.

Architecture has an active as well as a passive life.

*Freespace* encompasses freedom to imagine, the free space of time and memory, binding past, present and future together, building on inherited cultural layers, weaving the archaic with the contemporary.

With the theme of *Freespace*, the Biennale Architettura 2018 will present for public scrutiny examples, proposals, elements - built or unbuilt - of work that exemplifies essential qualities of architecture which include the modulation, richness and materiality of surface; the orchestration and sequencing of movement, revealing the embodied power and beauty of architecture.

The exhibition will have a spatial, physical presence of a scale and quality, which will impact on the visitor, communicating architecture's complex spatial nature.

The exhibition invites emotional and intellectual engagement of the many who come to the Biennale in order to understand architecture more fully, to stimulate discussion on core architectural values and to celebrate architecture's proven and enduring contribution to humanity.

When Jørn Utzon thinks about a concrete and tiled seat at the entrance of Can Lis, Majorca, it is moulded perfectly to the human body for comfort and pleasure. Spatially, it is a 'word' of greeting, of welcome.

Angelo Mangiarotti 'says' the same thing at the entrance to 24 Via Quadronno, Milan where a gently sloping path, with a seat at the entrance threshold 'holds' you and welcomes you home from the city.

Lina Bo Bardi raised the museum of modern art in Sao Paolo in order to make a 'belvedere' for the citizens to overlook the city.

The Medici Palace in Florence represents power and wealth but the stone seat which forms part of the solid façade almost turns the building inside out. The solid wall becomes the enclosing wall of the public space. What is solid seems outward looking and generous.

We believe that everyone has the right to benefit from architecture. The role of architecture is to give shelter to our bodies and to lift our spirits. A beautiful wall forming a street edge gives pleasure to the passer-by, even if they never go inside. So too does a glimpse into a courtyard through an archway; or a place to lean against in the shade or a recess which offers protection from the wind and rain.

We are interested in going beyond the visual, emphasizing the role of architecture in the choreography of daily life.

We see the earth as Client. This brings with it long-lasting responsibilities. Architecture is the play of light, sun, shade, moon, air, wind, gravity in ways that reveal the mysteries of the world. All of these resources are free.

It is examples of generosity and thoughtfulness in architecture throughout the world that will be celebrated in the 16th International Architecture Exhibition. We believe these qualities sustain the fundamental capacity of architecture to nurture and support meaningful contact between people and place. We focus our attention on these qualities because we consider that intrinsic to them are optimism and continuity. Architecture that embodies these qualities and does so with generosity and a desire for exchange is what we call *Freespace*.

We invite all participants and every national pavilion to bring to Venice their *Freespace*, so together we may reveal the diversity, specificity and continuity in architecture based on people, place, time, history, to sustain the culture and relevance of architecture on this dynamic planet.

*“A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in” - Greek Proverb.»*

**President Paolo Baratta** stated: «As was the case for the previous editions of Biennale Architettura, we continue our investigation into the relationship between architecture and civil society. The divide between architecture and civil society, caused by the latter's increasing difficulty in expressing its own needs and finding appropriate answers, has led to dramatic urban developments whose main feature is the marked absence of public spaces, or the growth of other areas dominated by indifference in the suburbs and peripheries of our cities.

The absence of architecture makes the world poorer and diminishes the level of public welfare, otherwise reached by economic and demographic developments. To rediscover architecture means to renew a strong desire for the quality of the spaces where we live, which are a form of public wealth that needs to be constantly protected, renovated and created.

This is the path taken by the next Biennale Architettura.»

As usual, the **16<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition** will also present the **National Participations** with their own exhibitions in the Pavilions at the Giardini and at the Arsenale, and in the historic city centre of Venice.

This edition will also include selected **Collateral Events**, presented by international institutions, which will present their exhibitions and initiatives in Venice concurrently with the 16<sup>th</sup> Exhibition.

Official website: [www.labiennale.org](http://www.labiennale.org)

Official hashtag: **#BiennaleArchitettura2018**

**For further information**

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