

La Biennale di Venezia

16th International Architecture Exhibition

Statement by Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara
Curators of the 16th International Architecture Exhibition



Freespace

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.

Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara