

Swiss Pavilion at the 13th International Architecture Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia

## Miroslav Šik, «And Now the Ensemble!!!»

**Commissioners:** Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia (Marianne Burki, Head of Visual Arts; Sandi Paucic, Project Leader Biennials Visual Arts)

**Exhibitors:** Miroslav Šik in collaboration with Knapkiewicz & Fickert and Miller & Maranta

**Architect and ETH professor Miroslav Šik, one of the most radical and influential Swiss theorists of architecture, is representing Switzerland at the 13th International Architecture Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia. His exhibition entitled «And Now the Ensemble!!!» represents a call for any new construction to be planned as an integral part of its environment. Šik makes a strong case for evolving ensembles rather than stand-alone works of architecture. In addition to the exhibition at the Swiss Pavilion, a supporting programme under the heading of «Salon Suisse» is held at the Palazzo Trevisan degli Ulivi, where British curator Robert Guy Wilson has put together a high-calibre programme of events focusing on key issues in architecture today. «Salon Suisse» is one of the official Collateral Events at the Biennale.**

Miroslav Šik, a theoretician, teacher and architect, worked on the term «Analogue Architecture» in the late 1980s. He stands for an architectural approach that is oriented towards the existing environment, its atmosphere and the construction tradition in a subtly radical way. It made Miroslav Šik an unmistakable protagonist in Switzerland and Europe, one who has influenced a whole generation of well-known present-day architects in Switzerland and abroad. Šik, born in what was then Czechoslovakia, has little time for star architecture that stands out in solitary splendour. His preference, especially in urban settings, is for each new entity to be planned as part of a building ensemble.

### «And Now the Ensemble!!!»: exhibition at the Swiss Pavilion

Given the title «And Now the Ensemble!!!», it is hardly surprising that Šik chose not to design the exhibition on his own. Two architecture firms, Kaschka Knapkiewicz & Axel Fickert from Zurich and Quintus Miller & Paola Maranta from Basel, were invited to collaborate on the Swiss Pavilion project. Using photographic emulsion technology, the architects jointly created a giant fresco expressing their vision of an ideal city, which now spans the four walls of the main Pavilion hall. A forthcoming publication by Lars Müller Publishers, also to be called «And Now the Ensemble!!!», will provide an in-depth view of Šik's work and influence, with contributions by Adam Caruso, Hans Kollhoff, Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, Quintus Miller and Miroslav Šik himself. The book represents an appeal to architects, builders and authorities to view and plan urban construction as an ongoing, collective work of art.

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### **«Common Ground»: Swiss architects involved in the main exhibition**

With his programmatic call «And Now the Ensemble!!!», Miroslav Šik has captured something of the spirit of our times. British architect David Chipperfield, curator of the Biennale's main exhibition called «Common Ground», pursues a similar approach, urging fellow architects to cooperate on a larger scale. Numerous renowned Swiss architects and architecture firms are represented at the exhibition, including Diener & Diener (Basel), Annette Gigon & Mike Guyer (Zurich), Herzog & de Meuron (Basel), HHF architekten (Basel), Knapkiewicz & Fickert (Zurich), Peter Märkli (Zurich), Valerio Olgiati (Flims), Luigi Snozzi (Locarno), Günther Vogt (Zurich) and Peter Zumthor (Haldenstein). Also on display are works by Peter Fischli and David Weiss (Zurich) as well as Susanna and Antonella Perin (Aarau and Rome).

### **«Salon Suisse»: platform for lively international exchange**

Switzerland's second main contribution to the Biennale besides the Miroslav Šik exhibition is «Salon Suisse» at the centrally-located Palazzo Trevisan degli Ulivi. It is one of the Biennale's official Collateral Events and comprises a wide-ranging programme running up to the end of November. «Salon Suisse» aims to be a platform for stimulating knowledge exchange – not least for young architects. It is directed by British curator Robert Guy Wilson and designed to attract a broadly-based international audience. Partner of «Salon Suisse» is Laufen Bathrooms AG. The kick-off event will be held on 28 August in the form of a panel discussion organised by ETH Zurich, titled «Common Images: Architecture and the Iconic Turn». The topic is a re-evaluation of Miroslav Šik as the protagonist of «Analogous Architecture».

The organisation of Switzerland's two main contributions to the Biennale – the exhibition at the Swiss Pavilion and «Salon Suisse» at Palazzo Trevisan – is, for the first time, in the hands of the Pro Helvetia. In accordance with the new Culture Promotion Act of 2012, the Swiss Arts Council is now responsible for the Confederation's entire cultural engagement abroad.

Further information on Switzerland's exhibitions and projects at the Biennale di Venezia can be accessed at the website [www.biennials.ch](http://www.biennials.ch)

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### **Miroslav Šik, «And Now the Ensemble!!!»**

#### Description of the project

Miroslav Šik at the 13th International Architecture Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia is staging in the Swiss Pavilion the exhibition «And Now the Ensemble!!!», a striking mural/collage inspired by and consisting of images of buildings designed by Šik himself and by the architectural practices of Knapkiewicz & Fickert (Zurich) and Miller & Maranta (Basel), whom he invited to assist with the project.

The mural/collage is the work of photographer Michael Zirn, who has transformed the Pavilion into a huge camera oscura, with a sequence of images developed all along the walls.

Miroslav Šik and his associates composed the image files, featuring a combination of their existing projects, in digital format. They were then handed over to Michael Zirn, who cunningly transformed them into photographic negatives and transposed them onto the walls of the Pavilion. Zirn adopted a very traditional analogue technique: the photographs were developed, however, not in the classic 20x30cm format but on 280m<sup>2</sup> of wall space, to create probably the largest analogue photograph ever displayed on a wall.

Zirn and his colleagues worked in *giornate*, as if creating a fresco painting, covering an area of 25/30 m<sup>2</sup> each working day. A light-sensitive emulsion was first applied to the area of wall concerned and the enlarged image was then projected onto it. After a given exposure time, the image was developed to achieve the final result. Working day by day in this way, they have composed this huge analogue panorama, a virtual city destined to exist only within the walls of the Swiss Pavilion.

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### Miroslav Šik Biography

Miroslav Šik, Professor of Architecture and Design at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich, was born as the son of reform-minded economist Ota Šik in Prague in 1953. Following the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia, the family emigrated to Switzerland in 1968. Miroslav Šik studied architecture at ETH Zurich under Aldo Rossi and Mario Campi from 1973 to 1979, followed by research work on Swiss architecture during the Second World War at the ETH's Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture (gta) from 1980 to 1983. Up to 1991, Šik then taught at ETH Zurich in the position of assistant lecturer.

As theoretician and initiator of «Analogue Architecture» Šik, now a Swiss citizen, launched numerous exhibitions in Zurich, Vienna, Berlin, Strasbourg, Oslo, Stockholm and Prague between 1986 and 1991. Since 1988, he has also maintained an architecture firm of his own in Zurich. After stints as visiting professor in Prague and Lausanne in the 1990s, he was nominated full professor at ETH Zurich in 1999. His most important work as an architect includes the Catholic Center St. Antonius in Egg (1990-2003), the congress and hotel center La Longeraie in Morges (1990-1995), the residence for musicians at Bienenstrasse in Zurich (1992-1997), the urban center complex in Haldenstein (2005-2008) and the Neustadt senior citizens' apartments in Zug (2009-2012).

### Bibliography

- *Analoge Architektur*, edited by Miroslav Šik, Edition Boga, Zurich 1988.
- Miroslav Šik, *Altneu*, with texts by André Bideau et al., Reihe De Aedibus Nr. 2, Quart publishers, Lucerne 2000.
- *Altneue Gedanken, Texte und Gespräche 1987-2001*, Reihe Bibliotheca Nr.3, Quart publishers, Lucerne 2002.
- *And Now the Ensemble!!!*, edited by the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia and Miroslav Šik, Lars Müller publishers, Baden 2012 (due to be published in autumn 2012).

Miroslav Šik has invited the architecture firms Knapkiewicz and Fickert from Zurich and Miller and Maranta from Basel to cooperate with him on the exhibition project for the Venice biennale.

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## Participating architecture firms

### **Miller & Maranta**

Quintus Miller (1961) and Paola Maranta (1959) set up their joint architecture office in Basel in 1994. They became well-known through their extension of the Altes Hospiz on top of the St. Gotthard pass. Their current projects include housing developments in Basel and Zurich as well as the refurbishment of historical business and hotel estates in Zurich, one of the Grand Hotels in St. Moritz and an office building in Berlin.

Since 2000 the two architects – both ETH Zurich graduates – have been teaching as guest lecturers at several universities. They are also members of various municipal committees (urban development and cultural heritage preservation). In 2009, Quintus Miller was appointed full professor at the Accademia di Architettura in Mendrisio.

Further information at [www.millermaranta.ch](http://www.millermaranta.ch)

### **Knapkiewicz & Fickert**

Kaschka Knapkiewicz (1950) and Axel Fickert (1952) are currently working on several residential estate projects in Zurich. Housing construction has been their main focus since they set up their architecture firm in Zurich in 1992. In the past few years, the emphasis has shifted to urban development projects, one of which was the «Klee» housing development in Zurich.

The two ETH Zurich graduates have both been employed by their alma mater as guest lecturers in the past and are now teaching at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences in Winterthur. They were awarded the «Prix Meret Oppenheim» by the Federal Office of Culture in 2005 and the «Schelling Medaille» by the Schelling Architecture Foundation in Karlsruhe in 2010 for their architectural achievements.

Further information at [www.axka.ch](http://www.axka.ch)

Miroslav Šik's exhibition in the Swiss Pavilion is sponsored by Horgenglarus and Michael Zirn Photography.

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We recommend for review:

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**Adam Caruso, Hans Kollhoff, Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani,  
Quintus Miller, Miroslav Šik**

**AND NOW THE ENSEMBLE!!!**

Edited by Miroslav Šik and the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia

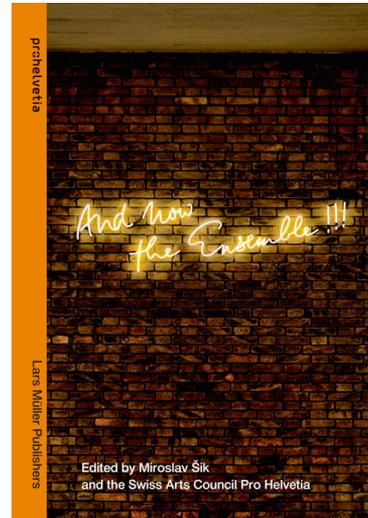
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*And Now the Ensemble!!!* is intended as a challenge to architects, their clients, and commissioning authorities to understand and create urban development as a dynamic and collective work of art; in short, to make dialogue central to design. Design, atmosphere, and usage can make every new building relate to its local surroundings. As a design process, this contextual expansion does not simply imitate the urban pattern, but also interprets what is already there, to some extent modernizes it, makes the familiar alien by employing unusual atmospheric imagery, and ultimately transforms the accumulated chaos of soloists into an orchestrated whole.

MIROSLAV ŠIK, born in Prague, Czechoslovakia in 1953, is a Swiss architect, architectural theorist, and professor in the architecture department at the ETH in Zürich.

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## Collateral Event of the 13th International Architecture Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia

### Salon Suisse

**Curator:** Robert Guy Wilson

**Location:** Palazzo Trevisan degli Ulivi

A programme of wide-ranging events under the heading «Salon Suisse» will supplement Miroslav Šik's Swiss Pavilion exhibition in Venice. It is to be held at the centrally located Palazzo Trevisan degli Ulivi and is one of the official Collateral Events at the Biennale. Taking up the tradition of art and literary salons in past centuries, «Salon Suisse» aims to foster exchange on architectural issues among specialists and visitors alike, and to add an international touch to Switzerland's exhibition at the Swiss Pavilion. With regular opening hours spanning several weeks, it is destined to become a popular meeting point for the international Biennale audience.

«Salon Suisse» 2012 is curated by **Robert Guy Wilson**, the London-based editor of the architecture magazine «Block» and the online magazine «Uncube». Wilson, a British architect, is currently curating the «Chromazone» exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, which highlights the use of colour in architecture. He also teaches at the Central Saint Martins art college.

«Salon Suisse» comprises three series of early-evening events – including **readings, lectures, presentations, performances, panel discussions and workshops**. The topic of the first series (28 August to 1 September) is architecture as an academic discipline, with the focus primarily on the influence of Miroslav Šik. The second series of events (16 – 20 October) is dedicated to architecture in practice, in particular to the special features of Swiss architecture – polytechnic training of architects, the system of competition for architectural assignments, and the Swiss construction industry – especially in comparison to the situation in the United Kingdom. The third series (20 – 24 November) focuses on the perception and dissemination of architecture by means of publications, exhibitions and media reports. Some of the events are conducted jointly with partners such as ETH Zurich and the British Council. All three programme parts include not only lectures and presentations, but also more informal elements encouraging encounters and discussions. «Salon Suisse» thus represents a forum for theoretical debate as well as a welcoming environment for a broadly-based audience to exchange views on impressions and insights gained at the Biennale. At once intellectually stimulating and entertaining – as one would expect of a salon.

The «Salon Suisse» programme kicks off on **28 August 2012** with a panel discussion called **Common Images: Architecture and the Iconic Turn**, organised by ETH Zurich. The event focuses on a re-evaluation of Miroslav Šik as a protagonist of «Analogue Architecture». It also considers the question of whether images become catalysts of a globalised, homogenous way of building, or whether they contribute to greater diversity in architecture. Moderator of the discussion is ETH professor and art historian Philip

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Ursprung. Besides Šik, the panel includes ETH professors Adam Caruso and Karin Sander, Spanish architect Iñaki Ábalos, photographer Hélène Binet from Switzerland, Barry Bergdoll, curator at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and architecture historian Beatriz Colomina, who teaches at Princeton.

During the three series of events, «Salon Suisse» will be open five days a week, Tuesday to Saturday, **from 17:30 to 21:30**, irrespective of whether an official event is planned for the evening or not. The detailed **programme** of «Salon Suisse» can be accessed at [www.biennials.ch](http://www.biennials.ch)

As partner of the «Salon Suisse», **Laufen Bathrooms AG** is contributing to the events at the Palazzo Trevisan with the intention to foster a lasting international exchange of architectural issues.

Palazzo Trevisan degli Ulivi, Dorsoduro 810, is close to Campo S. Agnese. The nearest **vaporetto stop** is **Zattere**.

Sponsor of «Salon Suisse»: Cassina

## Swiss presence at David Chipperfield's «Common Ground» exhibition

The 13th International Architecture Exhibition at the Architecture Biennale in Venice (29 August to 25 November) is titled «Common Ground». It is curated by British architect David Chipperfield, who is currently planning the extension to the Kunsthaus art museum in Zurich. The exhibition sites include the Giardini, the Arsenale and various other locations in Venice. Over 50 countries are represented at the Biennale, including Switzerland with its Swiss Pavilion.

The Architecture Biennale, which is held once every two years in alternation with the Art Biennale, has attracted a growing number of visitors over the past few years. Around 130,000 attended in 2008, approximately 170,000 in 2010. On both occasions, about half of the visitors were students.

Switzerland, with its internationally renowned tradition in architecture, is well represented at the Chipperfield exhibition. In all, David Chipperfield has invited 103 architecture firms, artists and architectural historians to participate, including the following – supported by Pro Helvetia – from Switzerland:

- Roger Diener, Marcus Diener; architects, Basel
- Peter Fischli, David Weiss†; artists, Zurich
- Annette Gigon, Mike Guyer; architects, Zurich
- Tilo Herlach, Simon Hartmann, Simon Frommenwiler; architects, Basel
- Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron; architects, Basel
- Kaschka Knapkiewicz, Axel Fickert; architects, Zurich, invited by Caruso St. John Architects
- Peter Märkli; architect, Zurich
- Valerio Olgiati; architect, Flims
- Susanna Perin, artist; Antonella Perin, urban planner; Aarau and Rome, invited in the context of the project «Self Made Urbanity Research».
- Luigi Snozzi; architect, Locarno
- Günther Vogt; landscape architect, Zurich
- Peter Zumthor; architect, Haldenstein

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