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Architecture Biennale 2020 Selecting Switzerland's contribution

The Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia has commissioned a team of architects comprising Mounir Ayoub, Vanessa Lacaille, Fabrice Aragno and Pierre Szczepski from Laboratoire d'architecture in Geneva to create the Swiss Pavilion exhibition at the 2020 architecture biennale in Venice. Their project was chosen out of 51 applications. It deals with the spatial perception of Swiss borders.

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The International Architecture Exhibition (Biennale Architettura) in Venice is one of the most important platforms for architecture and urban planning in the world. The Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia for the second time conducted a competition to choose a team, which is to represent Switzerland at the 17th edition of the Biennale opening in May 2020. Out of the 51 applications submitted, seven teams were picked to present their project. Five of these projects were subsequently selected for a second round. At the unanimous recommendation of the Biennale jury appointed by Pro Helvetia, the assignment to create the exhibition at the Swiss Pavilion went to Mounir Ayoub, Vanessa Lacaille, Fabrice Aragno and Pierre Szczepski from Laboratoire d'architecture in Geneva.

The project

The winning team had opted for the politically topical theme of «borders», exploring it as a spatial phenomenon. The project also raises the question of how borders are perceived by people who actually live close to them. In what different ways do people experience borders? How do we relate to them? What spatial and physical dimensions does a border take on? In order to find some answers, the team actively involves inhabitants from the catchment area of the Swiss borders. Drawing from this research, the team aims to create an exhibition that speaks specifically of Swiss borders, but also raises for debate the subject of borders in general.

The project team

Mounir Ayoub, architect and journalist; Vanessa Lacaille, architect and garden designer; Fabrice Aragno, film director, producer and cutter; and Pierre Szczepski, painter, sculptor and model maker. All four work together at Laboratoire d'architecture in Geneva. The firm combines architectural and landscaping experiments with research and writing activities.

The jury

The jury was made up of Céline Guibat (jury president, architect EPFL, SIA, Zurich, Sion), Anna Hohler (architecture critic, UNIL, SIA, Lausanne), Verena Konrad (architecture curator, Vorarlberg, Austria), Lukas Meyer (architect ETH, FAS, Bellinzona) and Rob Wilson (architecture writer, The architects' journal, London, UK).

All 51 projects submitted and the jury reports can be viewed from the beginning of April at www.biennials.ch.

For further information on Swiss activities at the Venice Biennials, see www.biennials.ch.

Information

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