

Media Release Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia

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Pro Helvetia sends Christian Kerez to the Biennale

The Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia has nominated Christian Kerez, architect and professor at ETH Zürich, to exhibit at the Swiss Pavilion at the 15th International Architecture Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia in 2016. «Salon Suisse», the supporting programme, has been assigned to the Geneva-based architecture expert Leïla el-Wakil. The 15th Architecture Biennale in Venice is scheduled to run from 28 May to 27 November 2016.

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Swiss architect Christian Kerez, born 1962 in Maracaibo (Venezuela), will be responsible for creating the exhibition at the Swiss Pavilion for the 15th edition of the Architecture Biennale in Venice.

Kerez studied at ETH Zürich and has been teaching there as Professor of Architecture and Design since 2009. Internationally acclaimed for his commercial tower building in Zhengzhou, China, and a large-scale social housing development project in Brazil, he has also made a name for himself in Switzerland with the construction of a new school in Leutschenbach. The compact building is characterised by huge steel lattice formwork and a top-floor gym offering a panoramic view. The load-bearing structure, material and spatial concept form a unity that is both clear and complex.

The conceptual stringency of Kerez' designs also becomes apparent in his «house with one wall», a two-family home in Zurich-Witikon formed from a single slab of concrete. Kerez seeks to enable a new spatial experience that can only be brought about by architecture. Within the design process, he combines fundamental considerations with the question of how a specific architectural concept can make a worthwhile contribution to the everyday.

Globally leading platform for architecture and urban design

Pro Helvetia nominated Christian Kerez on the recommendation of its biennial jury for architecture, which is composed of Marco Bakker (Lausanne), Francesco Buzzi (Locarno), Irina Davidovici (Zurich), Beatrice Galilee (New York) and Isa Stürm (Zurich). Art historian Sandra Oehy has been appointed as the curator of Kerez' exhibition at the Swiss Pavilion. The Venice Architecture Biennale, one of the most important platforms for architecture and urban design worldwide, will be held from 28 May to 27 November 2016.

Leïla el-Wakil from Geneva responsible for «Salon Suisse» 2016

In addition to its presence at the national pavilion, Switzerland is also represented at the Biennale through «Salon Suisse». Initiated by Pro Helvetia, this has become a well-established platform for discussions between art and architecture professionals and aficionados from all over the world. «Salon Suisse» is located at Palazzo Trevisan degli Ulivi and has been hosting debates on contemporary art and architecture in a relaxed atmosphere since 2012. For the 2016 Biennale, art historian and architect Leïla el-Wakil will be responsible the Salon. Born in Cairo and raised in Switzerland, she now teaches at the

University of Geneva. El-Wakil's research focuses on historically influenced Oriental and Occidental living spaces and benefits from her international network ranging from Europe to the Middle East. As a blogger for the daily paper «Tribune de Genève», she advocates on behalf of Geneva's cultural heritage and regularly reports on topics related to contemporary architecture.

Further information and high resolution press photographs at www.biennials.ch

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