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«Neighbourhood»: Swiss contribution to the Venice Architecture Biennale 2023

The topics of neighbourhood and relationship will be at the heart of the Swiss contribution to the Architecture Biennale 2023 in Venice. The Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia has nominated the project entitled «Neighbourhood» by Karin Sander and Philip Ursprung after this year's open competition.

The project

«Neighbourhood» deals with the relationship – both in architectural and political terms – between the Swiss Pavilion (built in 1952 by Bruno Giacometti) and the Venezuelan Pavilion (with close, almost physically tangible similarities) that was created in 1954 by Italian architect Carlo Scarpa and is located in the immediate vicinity. The proximity of the two buildings is also a reflection of the close personal relations between the two architects. The jury were impressed by the simplicity of the concept and the broad-based knowledge and experience of the project team, which understands architecture as an integral component of art and approaches it accordingly in the project. The immediate neighbourhood of the Swiss Pavilion now also has a political dimension given the current geopolitical situation. Next to the Venezuelan Pavilion, which has been standing empty for years, also the future of the Russian Pavilion remains uncertain.

The project team

Karin Sander is an artist and professor of architecture and art, Philip Ursprung is an art historian and professor of the history of art and architecture, both at ETH Zurich. They are supported by their research associates Berit Seidel and Tobias Becker.

The selection procedure

48 projects in all were submitted to Pro Helvetia following its call for applications for the Architecture Biennale. Out of seven teams that were invited to present their projects to the jury in a first round, three were shortlisted. The five-strong jury ultimately made a unanimous decision in favour of the project «Neighbourhood» by the duo Sander&Ursprung and recommended it on behalf of the Director for nomination.

The jury

The jury consisted of Anna Hohler (president of the jury, architecture critic, UNIL, SIA, Lausanne), Verena Konrad (architecture curator, Vorarlberg, Austria), Lukas Meyer (architect ETH, FAS, Bellinzona), Rob Wilson (architecture editor, The architects' journal, London, UK) and Madeleine Schuppli (Pro Helvetia).

The project proposals and the jury's report can be accessed as of early April under

www.biennials.ch

More details on the Swiss presence at the Venice biennials: www.biennials.ch

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