



Pavilion of Switzerland at the 16th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

Svizzera 240: House Tour

- Curators & exhibitors:** Alessandro Bosshard, Li Tavor, Matthew van der Ploeg and Ani Vihervaara
- Project architect:** Milena Buchwalder
- Commissioner:** Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia - Head of Visual Arts, Marianne Burki; Project Leader, Sandi Paucic; Project Coordinator, Rachele Giudici Legittimo
- Press conference:** Thursday, 24 May 2018, 2 pm
- Official opening:** Friday, 25 May 2018 at 2.30 pm
- Exhibition:** 26 May to 25 November 2018

«All right, fine, I'll take the house tour.»
Larry David, *Curb Your Enthusiasm* (S03 E08)

The Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia is delighted to announce the presentation of «Svizzera 240: House Tour» at the Swiss Pavilion at the 16th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. The exhibition focuses on the unfurnished interior of contemporary housing by celebrating a peculiar form of architectural representation – the «house tour».

A house tour offers a meandering, eye-level view onto the apartment interior. This view consolidates into a series of images, which register the apartment according to the qualities and affects afforded by its quintessential architectural palette: a ±240 centimetre volume dressed with white walls, skirting board, wood or tile flooring and off-the-shelf components and fittings.

Visitors to the Biennale Architettura are invited to come into the Swiss Pavilion and take a house tour of the ubiquitous apartment interior. What is built within the Swiss Pavilion is not a «house» but a *house tour*: interior scenes are constructed at a range of different scales and spliced together, creating a labyrinthine sequence of interior perspectives.



In preparing this tour, the curatorial team assembled a vast archive of unfurnished interior photographs from the websites of Swiss architecture offices. By focusing attention on the apartment's unadorned shell, these «house tour» images foreground an iconoclastic surface that has historically avoided the purview of architectural representation by hiding behind the plan's promise of rationality and control. Like the whitewashed walls of art galleries or Protestant churches, the walls of a flat were never made to be *looked at*.

For «Svizzera 240: House Tour»'s architects, **Alessandro Bosshard, Li Tavor, Matthew van der Ploeg and Ani Vihervaara**, the paradoxical presence of the image of the unfurnished interior implies a challenge to the tradition of the inconspicuous interior and anticipates an alternate architectural sensibility through which to reinterpret this most intimate *surface* of contact between architecture and society.

The installation reverses the standard format of the architectural exhibition. Instead of *representing building* (or using representation in order to *build*), the architects *build representation*. The construction of the installation adheres more to the principles of the *image* of an apartment than those of an actual apartment. The image's inability to convey scale, dimension, depth or spatial adjacency is presented to the viewer in built form. You enter an impossible dwelling. On this tour, you are no longer an apartment dweller, builder or buyer –nor are you an academic or even an architect– you become an entirely new architectural subject, a *house tourist*.

Drawing on this year's Biennale Architettura theme of «Freespace», proposed by Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara, «Svizzera 240: House Tour» proposes that architecture's relevance lay not solely in its capacity to build generous spaces, but also in its ability to *construct representations* which, by soliciting alternate ways to see or engage the world, are capable of extracting latent potential from even the most restricted architectural conditions.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue produced in collaboration with Adam Jasper, Studio Martin Stoecklin and Park Books. This book takes the reader on a photographic house tour through the unfurnished Swiss apartment interior. This tour is complemented by texts from an interdisciplinary group of writers that directly respond to photographs of unfurnished interiors.

Further information and press images are available on:

www.biennials.ch and www.prohelvetia.ch
www.svizzera240.ch



Pro Helvetia
Schweizer Kulturstiftung
Hirschengraben 22
CH-8024 Zürich
T +41 44 267 71 71
F +41 44 267 71 06
info@prohelvetia.ch
www.prohelvetia.ch



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Pro Helvetia
Schweizer Kulturstiftung
Hirschengraben 22
CH-8024 Zürich
T +41 44 267 71 71
F +41 44 267 71 06
info@prohelvetia.ch
www.prohelvetia.ch

Media relations

Switzerland: Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, Communication
Marlène Mauris | Communication | Pro Helvetia | T +41 44 267 71 36 |
mmauris@prohelvetia.ch

International: Pickles PR
Caroline Widmer | Pickles PR | M +44 (0) 790 884 8075 | caroline@picklespr.com



Editors' notes

About the curators and exhibitors

The architects Alessandro Bosshard (MSc ETH Arch.), Li Tavor (MSc ETH Arch.), Matthew van der Ploeg (M.Arch, UIC) and Ani Katariina Vihervaara (M.Arch, BAS) live and work in Zurich. They have been working together since 2015 as assistant lecturers and researchers at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich, ETH. Alessandro, Li and Matthew currently work with Prof. Dr. Alex Lehnerer in the chair of Architecture and Urban Design.

About the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia

The Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia is responsible for the Swiss contributions to the Art and Architecture Biennale as the commissioner of the exhibition at the Pavilion of Switzerland. Mandated by the Swiss Confederation, the Swiss Arts Council promotes artistic creation in Switzerland, contributes to cultural exchange at home, promotes the dissemination of Swiss culture abroad and fosters cultural outreach. Switzerland has been present at the Biennale Arte since 1920 and at the Biennale Architettura since 1991. Two independent juries, commissioned by the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, are responsible for making recommendations regarding the nominations for both biennials. The nominees are appointed by the Director of Pro Helvetia.

About the jury

The jury, which nominated the team of architects for appointment, following an open call, is composed of Marco Bakker (jury president, architect, Bakker & Blanc architectes, Lausanne and Zurich, Professor, EPFL ENAC), Francesco Buzzi (architectural director, Buzzi studio d'architettura, Locarno), Irina Davidovici (writer and postdoctoral researcher, ETH Zurich), Céline Guibat (architect, mijong architecture design, Sion and Zurich) and Isa Stürm (architect, Isa Stürm Urs Wolf SA, Zurich).