



Pavilion of Switzerland at the 18th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

## Neighbours

<b>Curators and exhibitors:</b>	Karin Sander, Philip Ursprung
<b>Commissioner:</b>	Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia Sandi Paucic, Project Leader Rachele Giudici Legittimo, Project Manager
<b>Media moment:</b>	Friday, 19 May 2023 at 11:00 am
<b>Preview days:</b>	Thursday, 18 and Friday, 19 May 2023
<b>Official opening:</b>	Thursday, 18 May 2023 at 2:45 pm
<b>Exhibition:</b>	20 May to 26 November 2023
<b>Location:</b>	Pavilion of Switzerland, Giardini della Biennale di Venezia

## Karin Sander and Philip Ursprung represent Switzerland at the 18th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

Two national pavilions and a wall that connects as well as separates, are the focus of Karin Sander's and Philip Ursprung's project **Neighbours** for the Biennale Architettura 2023. By turning the architecture itself into the exhibit, the artist and the architecture historian introduce the audience to new perspectives on the territorial relations within the Giardini of La Biennale.

After an open call, the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia has chosen to entrust the exhibition of the Swiss Pavilion for the Biennale Architettura 2023 to the artist Karin Sander and the architecture historian Philip Ursprung, both professors at ETH Zurich. Their project **Neighbours** highlights both the spatial and structural proximity of the Swiss Pavilion to its Venezuelan neighbour and the professional bond of the two architects: the Swiss Bruno Giacometti (1907 – 2012) and the Italian Carlo Scarpa (1906 - 1978).

The Swiss Pavilion designed by Bruno Giacometti opened just over 70 years ago, in June 1952. In immediate vicinity, the Venezuelan Pavilion designed by Carlo Scarpa took shape four years later. Since the old plane trees on either lot weren't allowed to be felled, the architects designed their buildings around the protected trees. The walls, roofs, and exterior areas of their buildings meet at the closest distance.

Karin Sander and Philip Ursprung bring out the pavilions' interconnected ground plans, in which the structural neighbourship of the two close architects condenses: « The Swiss and the Venezuelan Pavilion form an ensemble of exceptional architectural and sculptural quality. Despite this, they are conceived as separate because of their representative

function, and thus, are staged accordingly. We are rethinking the functions of the two pavilions and their surroundings in a new light and are dissolving their borders with artistic means. In that, we question the spatial, cultural, and political demarcations as well as the conventions of national representation. In a utopian gesture, we are confronting the location with a poetic reality that momentarily gives room to a new point of view. »

Philippe Bischof, director of Pro Helvetia, about the project: « By invoking Bruno Giacometti's and Carlo Scarpa's architectural heritage and the structural history of the Biennale, Karin Sander and Philip Ursprung are exploring architecture as its own form of relationship work. Their artistic intervention offers a new way of exhibiting architecture. »

## Project Team

Karin Sander is an artist and professor of Art and Architecture, and Philip Ursprung is professor of the History of Art and Architecture, both at ETH Zurich.

For their project *Neighbours*, Sander and Ursprung are assisted by curatorial manager Sassa Trülsch, project leader Tobias Becker and researcher Berit Seidel.

## Biographies

Karin Sander was born in 1957 in Bensberg, Germany. In addition to her teaching at ETH Zurich, where she has spent the last 15 years building up the Chair of Architecture and Art at the Department of Architecture, and is responsible for the artistic training of students, Karin Sander's works are featured in exhibitions worldwide.

In her artistic practice, she questions given situations in relation to their structural, social, and historic contexts and renders them visible through different media. She stages locations with installations, architectural interventions, and sculptures, and creates new codes for existing systems and orders. Her works are in private collections and public galleries such as the Museum of Modern Art (New York and San Francisco, USA), the Metropolitan Museum (New York, USA), Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach (Germany), the Centro Galego de Arte Contemporanea (Santiago di Compostela, Spain), Kunstmuseum und Staatsgalerie Stuttgart (Germany), the National Museum of Art in Osaka (Japan), Kunstmuseum St Gallen (CH), and Kunst Museum Winterthur, (CH).

Karin Sander is represented by Esther Schipper (Berlin, Germany), Galerie nächst St. Stephan Rosemarie Schwarzwälder (Vienna, Austria), i8 (Reykjavík, Iceland), and Helga de Alvear (Madrid, Spain).

Philip Ursprung was born in Baltimore (USA) in 1963. Ursprung is an art historian specializing in late 20th- and 21st century European and North American art and architecture. His research and teaching focus on the interrelation between architecture and art in a political and economic framework. Active as a historian, critic, and curator, Ursprung has taught at the University of Zurich, Hochschule der Künste Berlin, Columbia University, and the Barcelona Institute of Architecture. After studying in Geneva, Vienna, and Berlin, he earned his Ph.D. in art history at Freie Universität Berlin. He is a professor of History of Art and Architecture at ETH Zurich, Switzerland, where he was dean of the department from 2017-19.

## Publication

The exhibition at the Swiss Pavilion will be accompanied by a book with essays and photographs, published by Park Books, Zurich.

## Supporting events

The exhibition at the Swiss Pavilion will be complemented by a side programme of panel discussions at the Swiss Pavilion and at Palazzo Trevisan degli Ulivi. The distinguished panels will be discussing questions such as future exhibition formats for architecture, the future of architecture photography, or the biodiversity at the Giardini of La Biennale. Further in-depth conversations will be held about the friendship between Bruno Giacometti and Carlo Scarpa, and the neighbourly relations between their national pavilions.

## Swiss contributions at the International Exhibitions of La Biennale di Venezia

The International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia takes place every two years and alternates annually with the International Art Exhibition. Switzerland has been participating in Biennale Arte since 1920 and in Biennale Architettura since 1991. Switzerland maintains its own pavilion in Giardini di La Biennale and Pro Helvetia has been responsible for the Swiss Pavilion since 2012. Two juries, appointed by Pro Helvetia, recommend a nomination for the Swiss Pavilion both in Biennale Arte and Architettura. The Swiss Pavilion in Venice was designed by Swiss architect Bruno Giacometti and built in 1951/52. It is owned by the Swiss Confederation.

Additional information and press images available on: [www.biennials.ch](http://www.biennials.ch)

## Media information

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