

SHORT CURATORS' STATEMENT

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To illustrate the Biennale's theme «Laboratory of the future», we naturally envisioned a collective work centered on a sensitive architectural installation that the public would be invited to walk through, touch, and experiment.

This intuition came to life through two workshops held with 25 architecture students from the Ajou University in Tashkent, and three associated artists. Being neither professors nor theorists, we simply wanted to share with the students some themes related to contemporary issues as well as others at the center of our own architectural practice: materiality, context, archaism, modernity.

This joint work was carried out along two moments in time:

The first week, through theoretical research, we invited the students to question the notions of modernity and context, and then to visit several *Qalas* - Zoroastrian ruins of Karakalpakstan. By thus feeding our imagination, we delved into the scenographic challenges of the Biennale Pavilion, where the idea of a labyrinthian form was collectively discussed.

The week after, a more practical approach led us to Bukhara to work with ceramist master Abdulvahid Bukhoriy. From earth to brick and enamels, we experimented with materials and learned from him the techniques of hot glazing, of which we tried to push the limits. It seemed relevant that the students become aware of this historical craftsmanship whose survival is threatened. With the precious help of the plastic artist and model maker Miza Mucciarelli, notions of scale and representation were also discussed before we finally discovered together the architectural form of the 1:1 wood mock-up of the installation realized in Tashkent.

This opportunity to travel within a country and its history, along with the questioning about the traces left behind, nourished the material necessary for the project. These elements are the very tools of the architect.

Relics of the students' works, discussions, and exchanges, all patiently collected during the sessions and projected at the heart of the installation through El Mehdi Azzam's film, as well as Emine Gözde Sevim's photographic diary, freeze this moment in time.

As its ultimate testimony, a structure occupies the space, which one does not know whether it is ephemeral or pre-existing. Made of bricks salvaged from Venetian construction sites and scattered with glazed Uzbek terracotta fragments, this architectural installation revisits temporal and spatial limits, establishes unexpected bridges between eras and tries to deconstruct, unbuild, the opposition between archaism and modernity.

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