



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

Neighbours

Curators and exhibitors:	Karin Sander, Philip Ursprung
Commissioners:	Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia Sandi Paucic, Project Leader Rachele Giudici Legittimo, Project Manager
Media moment	Friday, 19 May 2023 at 11 am
Preview days:	Thursday, 18 and Friday, 19 May 2023
Official opening:	Thursday, 18 May 2023 at 2:45 pm
Exhibition:	20 May to 26 November 2023
Location:	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.

Following an open call, the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia chose 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. » They continue: « We see the two pavilions as a spatial continuity and articulate what already exists. The pavilion is no longer functional as a container for housing an exhibition of some kind – instead, the architecture itself, its material and spatial relations is turned into the exhibit. Acting within the perspective of art, we can do things differently than within architecture. *Neighbours* is also an open conversation between art and architecture. »

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 Gallery (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.

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*, Karin Sander and Philip Ursprung are supported by managing curator Sassa Trülsch, project leader Tobias Becker and researcher Berit Seidel.

Supporting events

For the Vernissage and Finissage weekends, Karin Sander and Philip Ursprung host a series of public dialogues with various experts, ranging from architecture to photography and plant ecology. The talks will be held in English, partly at the Swiss Pavilion and partly at Palazzo Trevisan degli Ulivi at Zattere. The supporting events programme can be found here.

Publication

The exhibition at the Swiss Pavilion will be accompanied by a book, published by Park Books, Zurich and designed by Bon-Bon, Zurich. The book includes a play for two pavilions by Adam Jasper, Elisa Silva and Philip Ursprung, various essays and conversations about their history, their representation as well as the documentation of the process that led to the exhibition. Contributions are by the Swiss architecture historians Roland Frischknecht, Kurt W. Forster, Dora Imhof and Berit Seidel, the Italian architecture historian Orietta Lanzarini, the Italian photographer Guido Guidi, the Venezuelan architect Elisa Silva, the Venezuelan historian Margarita López-Maya, the Venezuelan photographer Paolo Gasparini, the Swiss-Venezuelan botanist Fred Stauffer, the historian of science Michael Hagner (ETH Zurich), and the plant ecologists Janneke Hille Ris Lambers and Alana Chin (ETH Zurich). Lastly, the book includes a conversation between art historian and project leader of Pro Helvetia, Sandi Paucic, Karin Sander and Philip Ursprung about Making Neighbours. Editorial team consists of Adam Jasper, Berit Seidel, Philip Ursprung and Kristina Hinrichsen (managing editor).

A special thanks goes to Neuco for their contribution to the lighting in the pavilion, as well as Fondazione MAXXI, Rome, and Stepevi for their generous support.

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