

We attended the 2023 Biennale Architecture pre-opening ceremony in Venice

Last May 18th and 19th, our Executive Committee Member, Darinka Golubovic-Matic, along with our Member, Professor Aleksandra Stupar attended the **18th International Architecture Exhibition**, titled: **"The Laboratory of the Future"**.

With its 63 National Pavilions, 89 Participants, and 9 collateral events hosted in the city, the 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale stands as a paramount global gathering for the architectural field. At the forefront of the discussion is Lesley Lokko's distinctive approach to curating the theme and direction of the event, which envisions Africa as "The Laboratory of the Future." The aim is to infuse the architectural discourse with a genuine sense of authenticity and empathy, while also providing a platform for voices that are often overlooked in worldwide exhibitions.



Photo: The Netherlands Pavilion

Summary

The international exhibition of architecture in Venice is open from May 20th to November 26th, focusing on the theme of "Laboratory of the Future," as per the concept of the artistic director and curator, Lesley Lokko. According to Lokko, new

technologies, which are constantly emerging and disappearing, provide us with unfiltered glimpses into life in parts of the world that we will likely never visit or fully understand.

"In Europe, we talk about minorities and diversity, but the truth is that minorities in the West are a global minority, and diversity is our standard. There is one place on this planet where all these issues of equality, race, hope, and fear meet and merge: Africa. At some anthropological level, we are all Africans. And what happens in Africa happens to all of us," stated Lesley Lokko regarding the theme of the 18th Architecture Biennale.

The Laboratory of the Future program is enhanced by "Carnival", a six-month cycle of events to explore the themes of Biennale Architettura 2023. It includes lectures, panel discussions, films, and performances. A diverse range of participants, including politicians, filmmakers, writers, activists, and architects will share the stage, bridging the gap between architects and the public. "Carnival" serves as a form of architectural practice that fosters engagement and collaboration with the wider community. The awards ceremony took place on May 20th 2023.

See more on: <https://www.labiennale.org/en/news/awards-biennale-architettura-2023>

The exhibition space is extensive, encompassing both physical space and thematic significance. Therefore, our focus in this report is on a few national Pavilions and their respective visions:



The Pavilion of Brazil, known as "Terra" (Earth)] which takes a unique approach to representing the country, has been selected as the best national participation. The Pavilion highlights the physical and pervasive presence of Earth, symbolizing Brazil as a foundational and fertile element, an ancestral and territorial sign. The project is a collective effort involving indigenous peoples and local communities, aiming to portray Brazil as a home with deep historical roots.



The British Pavilion, named "Dancing Before the Moon," has received special recognition in this year's edition. It celebrates the diaspora and explores the essence of people, communities, rituals, social practices, and everyday customs. Rather than focusing solely on buildings and economic structures, this intervention breaks down such concepts, presenting an alternative viewpoint on how cultures collectively engage with land, geography, and social activities to shape a sense of place.



The German Pavilion in the Architecture Biennale draws inspiration from Berlin's Instandbesetzung (squat and maintenance) movement of the 1980s. Their exhibition, titled "Open for Maintenance," explores the concept of living within the structure located in the Giardini. The main room showcases materials collected from over 40 pavilions of the Biennale Arte 2022, which will be repurposed in workshops involving students. The remaining areas of the pavilion are designed to support these activities, including functional spaces such as an ecological bathroom and a kitchen.



The Pavilion of Uruguay is presented through the projects titled in Opera: Future Scenarios of a Young Forest Law. This project is based on the concept of the Forestry Law as a dynamic ecosystemic assemblage, continually evolving and engaging with various spatial and territorial dimensions. It aims to explore potential scenarios that envision Uruguay as a laboratory for the future of wooden structures. The team's proposal aims to foster interdisciplinary collaborations between music, visual culture, and architecture, seeking to establish meaningful connections between these diverse fields of practice.



The National Pavilion of Serbia explores the futures, presents, and pasts of architecture by focusing on the international Trade Fair that took place in Lagos, Nigeria, in 1977. This trade fair stands as a testament to the non-aligned cooperation between Yugoslavia and Nigeria. By connecting the concept and documentation of the past and present within a mirrored ellipse, the project seeks to identify a continuous present that can transcend the original idea and resonate in the contemporary era.

Photos by Darinka Golubovic-Matic and Aleksandra Stupar