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Venice Biennale Architettura 2021 National Pavilion Curators Launch Historic Collaborative Initiative

[AUGUST 2020] For the first time in the 40-year history of the Venice Biennale di Architettura, national pavilion curators from around the globe are coming together in a spirit of togetherness and solidarity. The ongoing online dialogue, initiated on May 23rd 2020 by the Republic of Korea, has been joined by representatives of over 30 participating countries as well as the Biennale’s chief curator, Hashim Sarkis. The shared goal of the gathering is to investigate new avenues for fulfilling the Biennale’s potential as a platform for synergistic, expansive, and accessible collaboration more suited to the challenges we must all face together in the age of COVID-19 and beyond. As the first manifestation of this undertaking, the curators present the following joint statement:

Joint Statement by the National Curators and Teams of 34 Participating Countries of the 17th Biennale Architettura

The 17th Biennale Architettura’s central question of “How will we live together?” has taken on new significance as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to wreak unforeseen and unimaginable disruption across the globe. With our lives and livelihoods at stake, we must re-evaluate how we think about our profession, our modes of collaboration and our built environment. The expanse of time ahead of us until the Biennale’s new 2021 opening date presents a unique opportunity for the representatives of participating nations to form community, discovering each other’s topics and voices and opening up the possibility of joint efforts.

We, a growing group of national curators, have come together for the first time to initiate an open dialogue. Moving forward, we commit to establishing a platform in the forthcoming months to share our exhibition content and investigate valuable correlations. We intend for this exchange to result in concrete collaborations and joint projects between nations which underline the communal goals and concerns within our shared profession. Our ultimate objective is the consolidation and establishment of this independent platform, securing a long-term open channel for continued exchange between curators and national commissioners not just for this upcoming 2021 Biennale but for all future Venice Biennales.

We see this initiative as a step toward building an even better Biennale Architettura, further emphasizing the role of discovery, understanding, and mutual exchange across boundaries in the existing structure of an international contest that selects and awards excellence. We also seek to ignite this global event’s potential to become an active assembly, where the whole is more than the factual sum of its parts.

As we publish this statement on August 29th 2020, the second planned opening date of the postponed Biennale, we do not yet know how these efforts will materialize. We have no doubt, however, that this is a necessary step forward for our community in this new age.

Signatory National Pavilions / Curators

ARMENIA / Allen Sayegh
BELGIUM / Dirk Somers
BRAZIL / Alexandre Brasil, André Luiz Prado, Bruno Santa Cecilia,
Carlos Alberto Maciel, Henrique Penha, Paula Zasnicoff
CANADA / Thomas Balaban, David Theodore, Jennifer Thorogood
CHINA / Zhang Li
CROATIA / Morana Matković
DENMARK / Marianne Krogh
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC / Roberta Semeraro, Jesus D'Alessandro,
Alex Martinez Suarez, Lidia Leon Cabral
GREAT BRITAIN / Madeleine Kessler, Manijeh Verghese
GRENADA / Marco Ballarin, Stefano Tornieri, Massimo Triches
HUNGARY / Attila Róbert Csóka, Dániel Kovács, Szabolcs Molnár, Dávid Smiló
IRELAND / Annex
ITALY / Alessandro Melis
IRAQ / Rashad Salim
JAPAN / Kozo Kadowaki
KOREA / Hae-Won Shin
LEBANON / Hala Wardé, Fortuné Penniman
LUXEMBOURG / Andrea Rumpf
MEXICO / Natalia de la Rosa, Isadora Hastings, Mauricio Rocha, Elena Tudela
MONTENEGRO / Svetlana K. Perovic
NETHERLANDS / Francien van Westrenen
NORDIC COUNTRIES / Martin Braathen
PAKISTAN / Sara M. Anwar
PERU / Felipe Ferrer
PHILIPPINES / Sudarshan V. Khadka Jr., Alexander Eriksson Furunes
POLAND / Mirabela Jurczenko, Bartosz Kowal, Wojciech Mazan,
Bartłomiej Poteralski, Rafał Śliwa, Robert Witczak
PORTUGAL / depA architects, Carlos Azevedo, João Crisóstomo, Luís Sobral, Miguel Santos
ROMANIA / Irina Meliță, Ștefan Simion, Ștefania Hirleață, Radu Tîrcă, Cristi Bădescu
SERBIA / Slobodan Jovic
SINGAPORE / Puay-peng Ho, Thomas K. Kong, Simone Shu-Yeng Chung ,
Tomohisa Miyauchi, Sarah Ichioka, Joella Qingyi Kiu
SLOVENIA / Blaž Babnik Romaniuk, Martina Malešič, Asta Vrečko, Rastko Pečar
SPAIN / Sofía Piñero, Domingo González, Andrzej Gwizdala, Fernando Herrera
TURKEY / Neyran Turan
USA / Paul Preissner, Paul Anderson