



# COMPOSITE PRESENCE

ARCHITECTURE | MAY 17, 2021 | f t ✉



Composite Presence, Bovenbouw Architectuur, 2020 © We Document Art

## Composite Presence

**Pavilion of Belgium at the 17th International Architecture Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia**

**Giardini della Biennale - Venice, Italy**

**May 22 - November 21, 2021**

**Model landscape shows unique city-architecture relationship in Flanders and Brussels.**

This summer, **Venice** will host the **Biennale Architettura 2021**, the world's most important exhibition in the field of contemporary architecture. On the initiative of the Flemish Community and commissioned by the Flanders Architecture Institute (VAi), **Bovenbouw Architectuur** will present the exhibition **Composite Presence** in the **Belgian pavilion**. By means of 50 reference projects, curator **Dirk Somers** (Bovenbouw Architectuur) will show the **contemporary city in Flanders and Brussels** in all its complexity: 'Composite Presence embodies the love-hate relationship between **architecture** and **city**.'



RAAMWERK, Youthcenter 'De Lichting', 2018 © We Document Art

### **Memory as a design studio**

This is not the first time the **Flanders Architecture Institute** is producing an exhibition in the **Belgian pavilion**. Every four years since 2004 it has coordinated, alternately with the French Community of Belgium, the Belgian contribution. This year the theme 'Memory as a design studio' takes centre stage. 'After a century of belief in unbridled progress, it is evident that **architecture** as a discipline is in need of a **rethink**. This means it is necessary to **redefine** the bases of design so that memory plays a greater role', says **Sofie De Caigny**, director of the Flanders Architecture Institute, the commissioner of Composite Presence. 'The **history** of landscapes and places, of building

and design traditions, of materials and ideas must form the frame of reference for **new designs**. Memory must become a design studio.'

'Dealing in a respectful and inventive manner with the city's historical layers leads automatically to different perspectives on society. In that sense, Composite Presence draws on the core of the discipline of architecture to answer the question posed by curator Hashim Sarkis: how will we live together?'

– Sofie De Caigny, Flanders Architecture Institute, commissioner of Composite Presence



FELT architecture & design, Elementary School Zarren, 2018 © We Document Art

## Composite Presence

How can the **city** and **architecture** flourish together? This question is at the centre of the three-dimensional layout of a fictional yet recognizable Flemish urban environment. In the course of time, the **informal city** in **Flanders** and **Brussels** developed a unique relationship with its **architecture**. The staged urban landscape reveals how historical layers, morphological specificities and unforeseen clashes are an endless source of **inspiration** for contemporary architecture. For the Belgian pavilion, **Bovenbouw Architectuur** has designed a scenography that shows an urban landscape consisting of a series of models on a scale of 1:15. The models are laid out at table height and represent a linear, winding landscape of a typical **Flemish urban environment**.



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### **Fifty projects compose the model landscape**

Fifty different architecture projects of the past 20 years form the building blocks of this imaginary landscape. The selection shows a **balanced architectural ecology** in which

different styles, functions and typologies come together. Many of the projects consist of **refurbishments** and **adaptations** that feature a spectrum of forms, times and textures. Whether the projects are modest repurposings or shiny new constructions, they all contribute to a cobbled-together yet **balanced city**. The selected projects also testify to the importance of the **current policy** in terms of urban planning and tendering. Many of the designs in this urban composition find their source in procedures set up by city architects, the Flemish Government Architect and related public institutions in Flanders and Brussels with the purpose of creating a **high-quality urban environment**. Together with the Team Flemish Government Architect, the city architects of Antwerp and Ghent have lent their assistance to the Composite Presence project. The catalogue delves into this particular aspect of **architectural policy** through contributions by, among others, **Leo Van Broeck** (Flemish Government Architect), **Christian Rapp** (Antwerp City Architect), **Kristiaan Borret** (Brussels Government Architect), **Edith Wouters** (artistic director Ar-tur) and **Peter Vanden Abeele** (Ghent City Architect).

‘The model landscape is a unique illustration of the energetic friction between urban planning and architecture in Flanders.’

– Dirk Somers, curator of Composite Presence

more. [www.belgianpavilion.be](http://www.belgianpavilion.be)



DMT architecten, Meir corner building, 2006 © We Document Art



Tim Rogge Architectuur Studio, Broek, 2020 © We Document Art



dmvA, One Room Hotel, 2015 © We Document Art





Sofie De Caigny, director Flanders Architecture Institute © Dries Luyten



Dirk Somers, Bovenbouw Architectuur © Klaas Verdru



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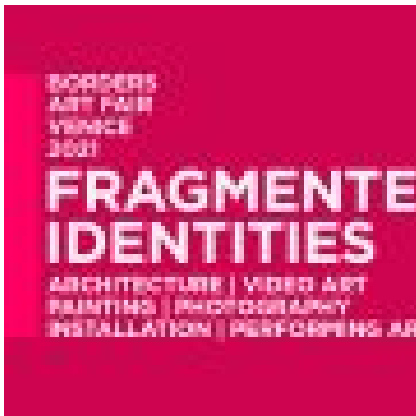
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