

La Biennale di Venezia

17th International Architecture Exhibition



Declaration by Roberto Cicutto
President of La Biennale di Venezia

In 2020 we were forced to postpone the 17th International Architecture Exhibition until this year, but we nonetheless managed to stage the 77th Venice International Film Festival, the Dance, Music and Theatre Festivals, as well as organise *The Disquieted Muses. When La Biennale di Venezia Meets History* exhibition, curated for the first time by the directors of the six arts of La Biennale.

As it was for everyone, the 2020 was the year of COVID-19 also for La Biennale di Venezia. But we like to remember the great show of strength the Institution managed to muster by turning to its own resources and putting into play its extraordinary ability to react to the unforeseen and the unthinkable, also thanks to the fundamental collaboration with national and local Authorities.

The Biennale Architettura 2021 also found itself in the same uncertainty this year, but the situation was handled with a great sense of determination, courage, and sense of responsibility by the curator Hashim Sarkis and our invited professionals, along with those representing the more than 60 national participations.

We open the Giardini and Arsenale with an even greater awareness of just how much the work of the Biennale mirrors the contemporary world, which is here interpreted and sometimes foreshadowed by the proposals put forward by the curators and those who participate with their own work.

The query in the title *How will we live together?* has largely been seen as prophetic, and came well before the pandemic.

A hundred and twenty-six years of La Biennale di Venezia history demonstrates how its contemporaneity goes well beyond the forms of art it represents, welcoming the teaching, thought, and provocation of artists from every corner of the world.

If there is one thing in this first year of my presidency that has powerfully touched me it is realising the incredible observational vantage point the Biennale affords us: the Biennale represents a geopolitical map of the world that brings together the most diverse realities from the point of view of politics, economics, and the human condition of those artists who coalesce in Venice from so many radically different places.

And Architecture is undoubtedly the discipline that is most directly able to make headway into that map, revealing its criticality and grasping its positive aspects.

There are those who do not consider Architecture an art, or who at most define it an 'applied art'.

Architecture, however, just like other artistic expressions, finds its *raison d'être* in the profound ties it shares with life and society, when, through creative synthesis, it is able to represent all aspects of human living.

Paolo Baratta, whom I thank for having accepted to accompany this edition after having entrusted it to the curator Hashim Sarkis, says in his presentation: 'We have confirmed that one of the aims of an international exhibition was also that of increasing a desire for Architecture'.

And I would like to add that we have never before had such a need for Architecture.

Roberto Cicutto, *President of La Biennale di Venezia*