

## Italian Pavilion

### 19th International Architecture Exhibition

#### La Biennale di Venezia

10th May – 23rd November 2025

Arsenale, Tese delle Vergini

Opening ceremony: Friday, 9th May 2025, 4:00 PM

## Terrae Aquae. Italy and the Intelligence of the Sea

Commissioner: Angelo Piero Cappello

Curator: Guendalina Salimei

*Venezia, 7th May 2025* - From 10 May to 23 November 2025, at the Tese delle Vergini in the Arsenale in Venice, architectural, scientific, and cultural reflections on the sea will take center stage in ***Terrae Aquae. Italy and the Intelligence of the Sea***, the title of the exhibition project for Italian Pavilion at the 19th International Architecture Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, promoted by the Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity - Ministry of Culture and curated by Guendalina Salimei.

The Italian participation is dedicated to the **Mediterranean extended to the neighboring oceans**: the centrality of the structural relationship between water and land, between the natural and the artificial, between infrastructure and landscape, between city and coast, affects the identity of the country and the delicate balances between environment, humanity, culture, and economy, which must both be protected in their integrity and re-designed for that essential adaptation to a future marked by new and pressing needs. Looking at Italy from the sea implies a shift in perspective, requiring a rethinking of the boundary between land and water as an integrated system of architecture, infrastructure, and landscape.

The exhibition will welcome works from individuals and groups, both established and emerging, triggering an **intergenerational, intercultural dialogue with no gender distinctions**, in which the past and present will be brought together. It will involve designers, scholars, and cultural operators — but also young people, poets, artists, research institutions, and third-sector organizations — in rethinking the relationship between land and sea, with the display of both completed redevelopment projects and contributions created ad hoc through the use of multidisciplinary and multimodal methods, as well as the outcomes of institutional and academic research. The listening of different voices, welcomed in an inclusive spirit of people, ideas, and expressive means, aims to stimulate the awakening of a **collective intelligence capable of triggering a renewal that starts from the Italian coasts and expands globally**. Often neglected, degraded, and abused, our coasts are actually places of encounter between ecosystems, cultures, activities, and religions, where human action knows and must also express itself through poetry and respect. A relationship so visceral that it found its highest symbolism in Venice with the ritual of the marriage of the sea, celebrated every year by the Doge aboard the Bucintoro at the mouth of the port of San Niccolò at the Lido, where, after pouring a vase of holy water, he would cast the ring blessed by the Patriarch into the waves, pronouncing the words "Desponsamus te, mare nostrum, in signum veri perpetuique dominii" (We marry you, our sea, as a sign of true and perpetual dominion).

The **themes** we are called to reflect on stem from the need to ensure sustainable management and environmental and cultural enhancement of coastal and port areas, essential for the resilience of territories, the

preservation of natural heritage, and, in general, a more balanced dialogue between land and sea. Among these themes, some emerge with greater urgency: rethinking the divisions caused by port areas, coastal roads, tourist settlements, and illegal structures that disrupt the continuity between cities and the sea, as well as between natural ecosystems; reinterpreting threshold devices, transitional elements between land and sea such as dams, piers, breakwaters, coastal barriers, lighthouses, and artificial platforms; rewriting *waterfronts* as a process of urban regeneration that can transform coastal areas, both urban and non-urban, into livable, accessible, and sustainable places; rethinking hospitality and port infrastructures to adapt to climate change, reducing the risk of hydrogeological instability and impact on the natural ecosystem; repurposing industrial, port, and productive archaeology abandoned along the coasts; redefining active protection strategies for environmental heritage and rediscovering submerged, natural, and archaeological heritage.

The Italian Pavilion, for the entire duration of the exhibition, will be accompanied by a **Public Program titled // mare dell'intelligenza. Dialoghi**, consisting of numerous events — seminars, conferences, workshops, and labs — organized in places dear to Venetian and international culture.

The project ***Terrae Aquae. L'Italia e l'intelligenza del Mare*** is illustrated by a **catalog published by Electa**, which contains reflections by experts in the field, contributions selected following the *Call for Visions and Projects*, photographic essays, artistic interventions, research outcomes, and other cultural and design inspirations. Divided into three volumes and accompanied by special inserts, the catalog is conceived as a navigation chart capable of guiding the reader in discovering the collective design experiences.

The **Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity - Ministry of Culture**, part of the Department for Cultural Activities of the Ministry of Culture, contributes to the realization of the Italian Pavilion with an amount of 800,000 euros, formalized, as usual, through an agreement with the Venice Biennale Foundation.

The Italian Pavilion at the Biennale Architettura 2025 has been realised with the support of sponsors **Banca Ifis, OICE - Association of Italian Engineering, Architecture and Technical-Economic Consulting Organizations** and **Fondazione Berengo**, as well as technical sponsors **Layher** and **Vibia**. Special thanks to the official supplier **Arctic Paper Italia**.

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## Italian Pavilion - Biennale Architettura 2025

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