



La Biennale di Venezia

Arte
Architettura
Cinema
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Archivio Storico

17th International Architecture Exhibition

**Statement by Paolo Baratta
President of La Biennale di Venezia**

The Biennale Architettura 2018 has brought our attention on free space, an essential element of our living that has been omitted in so many recent developments. With Hashim Sarkis we will try to expand our horizon to all the issues raised by our living together. Living together means first and foremost awareness of potential crises and old and new problems that do not get appropriate solutions, nor often appropriate attention, in the spontaneous development of our economies and societies and that require enhanced attention and an extensive and courageous planning capacity.

The changes under way, and those expected, all require to be seriously taken into consideration, as do the ensuing necessities and the so far inadequate responses; they also ask for new energies to face them, awareness of conflicts and obstacles, but also some enlightenment coming from projects under way offering suggestions and proposals and therefore recognisable as positive examples.

A significant dualism is emerging in the world. The divide between present housing conditions and the conditions we advocate is qualitatively different in the different parts of the earth. In a large area of the planet the living space issue is still to be considered in its traditional and elementary components (spaces to take refuge, to live in, to guarantee adequate housing conditions, public spaces). Other parts of the world are going through new phases of development in which the conditions for production, labour organisation and exchanges, the organisation of society, communities and households are changing, or have already changed, moving towards realities that are different, sometimes dramatically different, from those for which the recent territorial, urban and building developments had been designed and realised.

We expect from Hashim Sarkis' research and from the individual participating countries a number of examples that besides informing us on the different realities and the current trends and conflicts, can let us imagine a world at work to face those issues, and in particular a world of architecture committed to thinking, imagining and realising new solutions.

Being aware that in different parts of the world we are developing this new consciousness and are working for these new projects is in itself part of a different "living together" for which La Biennale offers itself as the ideal place.

Paolo Baratta, President of La Biennale di Venezia



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How will we live together?

**Statement by Hashim Sarkis
Curator of the 17th International Architecture Exhibition**

We need a new spatial contract. In the context of widening political divides and growing economic inequalities, we call on architects to imagine spaces in which we can generously live together:

- together as human beings who, despite our increasing individuality, yearn to connect with one another and with other species across digital and real space
- together as new households looking for more diverse and dignified spaces for inhabitation
- together as emerging communities that demand equity, inclusion and spatial identity
- together across political borders to imagine new geographies of association
- and together as a planet facing crises that require global action for us to continue living at all.

The architects invited to participate in the Biennale Architettura 2020 are encouraged to engage other professions and constituencies—artists, builders, and craftspeople, but also politicians, journalists, social scientists, and everyday citizens. In effect, the Biennale Architettura 2020 asserts the overlooked role of the architect as both cordial convener and custodian of the spatial contract

In parallel, the Biennale Architettura 2020 also maintains that it is in its material, spatial, and cultural specificity that architecture inspires the ways we live together. In that respect, we ask the participants to highlight those aspects of the main theme that are uniquely architectural.

The curators of the national pavilions are called upon to address one or more of the sub-themes of the Biennale. The need for more inclusive social housing and equipment or for more connective urban and territorial tissue remains as pressing in emerging economies as in advanced ones.

The year 2020 has often been referred to as a milestone on the path to a better future. Many nations and cities have devised a “Vision 2020.” The year is upon us. We look to the collective architectural imagination to meet this momentous occasion with creativity and courage.

Hashim Sarkis

Biographical Note Hashim Sarkis

Hashim Sarkis is an architect, educator, and scholar. He is principal of Hashim Sarkis Studios (HSS), established in 1998 with offices in Boston and Beirut. He is also the Dean of the School of Architecture and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) since 2015.

Before joining MIT, Sarkis was the Aga Khan Professor of Landscape Architecture and Urbanism at Harvard University. He has also taught at the Rhode Island School of Design, Yale University, the American University of Beirut, and the Metropolis Program in Barcelona.

The architectural and urban projects of HSS include affordable housing, houses, parks, institutional buildings, urban design, and town planning. HSS has received several awards for its projects in Lebanon, including for the Housing of the Fishermen of Tyre, Byblos Town Hall, and the Courtower Houses, on the coast of Aamchit. The firm's work has been exhibited around the world, including at the Pavilion of the United States at Biennale Architettura 2014 and the Pavilion of Albania at Biennale Architettura 2010, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and at the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam, the Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture of Shenzhen/Hong Kong, and the Bienal de Arquitectura y Urbanismo in Valparaíso. The work has also been published extensively, most recently in a monograph by NESS.docs (USA, Lots of Architecture - publishers, 2017).

Sarkis was member of the international jury of Biennale Architettura 2016.

Sarkis earned a Bachelor of Architecture and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Rhode Island School of Design, and a Master of Architecture and a PhD in Architecture from Harvard University. He is the author and editor of several books and articles on modern architecture history and theory, including *Josep Lluís Sert, The Architect of Urban Design* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008); *Circa 1958, Lebanon in the Projects and Plans of Constantinos Doxiadis* (Beirut: Dar Annahar, 2003); and *Le Corbusier's Venice Hospital* (Munich: Prestel, 2001).