



Visitors view 'Material Culture' curated by Achim Menges and Jan Knippers University of Stuttgart at Germany's pavilion, on a press day at the 17th Venice Architecture Biennale in Venice. — AFP photos



Visitors view "Entanglement" curated by Annex at Ireland's pavilion.

Venice Architecture Biennale explores post-pandemic living

The world's most prestigious architecture event, the Venice Architecture Biennale, opened last Saturday for a six-month show exploring the question of coexistence in a post-pandemic world. Postponed from last year, the 17th International Architecture Exhibition is titled "How will we live together?" with curator Hashim Sarkis asking architects to reflect on the future and its challenges. "The hardest question is how to resolve the problems that led us to the pandemic. How are we going to solve climate change, poverty, the huge political differences between right and left," he told AFP.

Sarkis, a Lebanese architect and dean of MIT's School of Architecture and Planning, believes the city of the future will be born from the need to share collective spaces, consume less and create or encourage new forms of solidarity. There would be "spaces to assemble, where people pass by, seeing the daily life of others... places where economic, ethnic differences are revealed", he said. In allowing different people to come together in spaces, Sarkis hopes to start a dialogue, hoping that "in this way architecture can help transform" society.

'Most innovative'

Sarkis has brought together 112 architects and studios for the biennale, almost all of them working on the event for the first time and the majority of aged between 35 and 55. As a new and more diverse generation challenges existing models and shows off a better mastery of the latest technology, does it mean the end of big-name architects? "I looked everywhere for the solutions that were most innovative and creative. That was my criteria to choose the participants. It's not a question of stars," Sarkis said.

There are 63 national pavilions set up

among the vast gardens on the eastern edge of Venice, as well as within the immense halls of the Arsenal, Venice's former shipyard and armory, and some areas of the city's historic center. In the exhibition open through November 21, strict sanitary measures will remain in place, as Italy makes its first tentative steps towards normalcy amid a drop in new COVID-19 cases.

With Grenada, Iraq, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan participating for the first time, this year's show boasts a high number of participating countries from Africa, Latin America and Asia. The Biennale poses the question



Visitors view 'How will we live together, Chileans and Mapuche Building places to get to know each other (Kunu) Building places to parley (Koyau-we)' at Chile's pavilion, curated by Alejandro Aravena, Gonzalo Arteaga, Victor Oddo, Diego Torres, Juan Cerda, at the 17th Venice Architecture Biennale.



A visitor views "Rural Nostalgia - Urban Dream" by Meng Fanhao at China's pavilion.



A visitor views 'Eco to Eco: Learning from Nature' at Denmark's pavilion by Sinus Lyngbe and Tue Hesselberg Foged.