



---

REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA  
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

**PRESS RELEASE**

**ALBANIA IN THE 16<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION OF LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA, 2018**

**COMMISSIONER:** Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Albania

**PROJECT:** “*Zero Space*” developed by **Commonsense.Studio/PRGBR Architektur FABLAB Tirana**).

**DATE:** May 26<sup>th</sup> to November 25<sup>th</sup> 2018 (Preview May 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>) in the Giardini and the Arsenale

In the frame of the open call for exhibition proposals for the Albanian Pavilion at the 16<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Albania, congratulates the two teams qualified for the third phase of the selective process, for their passion, commitment and professional attitude.

The Ministry of Culture announces that the project that will represent Albania in the 16th Edition of the International Architecture Exhibition at Venice Biennale 2018 is "Space zero", developed by Commonsense, Studio / PRGBR Architect FABLAB, Tirana.

This project was selected through an open call for proposals (2 August - 3 November 2017), by the Ministry of Culture in the role of Albania's pavilion commissioner, following three phases of the selective process, by an international jury composed of: Mr. Gëzim Qëndro, Mr. Bekim Ramku, Simon Battisti, Ms. Adelina Greca and Ms. Arta Dollani.

Jury members concluded that this is the best project and the most convincing team for the successful realization of the Albanian Pavilion at the Biennale, which meets the criteria set out in the open call.

The jury was inspired by the teams proposed linkage between Venice and Tirana to bring a piece of the urban setting of Tirana to Venice, a piece Tirana is losing in the process of urban expansion/ reconstruction.



---

REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA  
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

---

### **The Project \_ “Zero Space”**

The richness of the rituals and methodology of the spiritual traditions, both in East and West, attributes to the door (porta) a wide and meaningful symbology. In different cultures, the act of crossing the threshold (pragu) holds the significance of unifying with a new world, and at the same time the door represents the division and communication of two areas, not simply as a means to identifying the borders of inside from outside and vice versa; but also as a transition between two different levels: the known and the unknown, the divine and the earthborn. It's also for this very reason that the team has chosen doors as the element to explain Tirana; the old and the contemporary one. The series of doors installed in the “Zero Space”, aligns the transition between indoor and outdoor in the contemporary urban context of Tirana, characterized by the presence of many shops, workshops, bars, distributed all over the city and almost 24h in service to the city. All of this, based both in personal and collective initiative, in a total freedom of acting towards the modification of ground floor from a private zone to an open public space. Without the complexity of maintaining the identity or creating an urban style, but simply by forming a lifestyle which seems to be an indisputable feature of this city. Opening a door, closing another, transforming and modeling the spaces, adapting with the constant change of the dynamics that this lifestyle requires. Opened doors, which traditionally both in pain and joy, in Albania have been a symbol of the united community, all around the Man.

‘Freespace’ is interpreted as the liberation of the space at level zero, creating a city where everyone serves something to the fellow citizen. Throughout being served in a cafeteria or at a shoemaker, barber shop, tailor or even butcher, this level, simply, slowly, in it's own pace but at the same time in a chaos which with its spontaneous evolution, differently from the classic planning of the territory, has created the city where the public space is similar to a physical social media, with it's feet on the ground.

‘Zero Space’ in the ground floor of the city, from our perspective considers a social role that is enabled by the presence of small stores and diversified services inside the city, as space resources which are coherent with the generosity of nature. Citizens of Tirana design their lives in between securityies of the ground floor in the city where they freely interact with each other, closely related to the territory which in the case of a city, is derived by the atmospheres around the dwelling units, in “Zero Space”. The active participation and the sense of community takes place in the forming of a lifestyle based on opportunities given in the zero level of the city.

The doors of shops, cafeterias, workshops and services in Tirana are communication networks. They don't divide the unknown form the safe closed, they don't divide “chaos” from “cosmos”. In Tirana, doors are spaces turned into extensions that organize it's urbanistics. Antic cultural heritage adapted in a creative manner with the daily necessities of the citizens fort a space totally in disposal, which is a free public space. For this reason, “Zero Space” of Tirana is now transformed in a space where the future generations will find themselves.

The team translates and interprets the instant nature of life in Tirana, crops a moment from its flow and offers it to the public of Biennale. This installation positively interprets a phenomena that is born as a social one but is turned into an energy that molds our whole lifestyle through the architecture of the



---

REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA  
**MINISTRY OF CULTURE**

city, in a significant intersection of humanity with space. Tirana opens its comfortable doors, full of colors and primordial sounds, in the 16th International Biennale of Architecture.

**Commonsense.Studio/PRGBR Architektur FABLAB Tirana**

PRGBR Architektur is an independent practice based in Tirana/Albania since 2005 operating within the fields of architecture, urbanism & research. It concerns itself with developing strong concepts and design decisions informed deeply by mining the context and reflecting on how contemporary life evolves. Actively involved in designing of public spaces, housing and civic buildings, PRGB R Architektur is led by young enthusiasts and senior experienced collaborators aiming to implementing their vision in local developments and competitions.

**The team**

**Team Leader\_ Dorian Tytymçe – Architect**

Member of “Albania Architects Association” from 2014 Partner/ Architect/Urban Designer in PRGB R Architekture office. From 2011 and on teaching Assistant at EpokaUnievrsity, Department of Architecture. During 2009-2014 have been professional engaged both in the field of design and implementation as a construction – site. Some important projects he actively took part in the design and implementation phase, in collaboration with well-known international architecture offices are:

- Mix-use (commercial and residential) 9-storey building in Bogdani Street, Tirana/ Architectural Design project: Henning LarsensTegnesteue
- The Toptani Shopping Centre, a 7-storey building complex in “Murat Toptani” Street, Tirana/ Architectural Design project: MVRDV.

During 2008 – 2009 he has been partner in “Apricot”, Architekture/Urbanism Office, Tirana, Albania. From 2005 he has participated in different international competitions.

**Other members of the team**

Jurtin Hajro, Architect

Florian Pollo, Architect

Enri Leka, Model Maker/Architect in the making

Egin Zeka, Urban planner

Elton Koritari, Exhibitions curator

Genti Tavanxhiu, Artist / sculptor

Jonid Koritari, Audio Artist

Artemis Hajdini, Video Artist

Laedia Hajdari, Snenographer Artist

Mirjana Pali, Cultural Mediator

Eni Molla, Content Manager

Anisa Hysko, PR Financing Coordinator

The Team that has been carefully put together has a strong common denominator in it’s critical approach to designing, one that searches for stimuli not only in the visual world, but also drawing



---

REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA  
**MINISTRY OF CULTURE**

inspiration from the social fabric, humanity, history and the local culture as a whole. The process aimed at freeing itself of all social, political or architectural complexes and just viewing the daily exchange between people and architecture in all its cultural layers as vibrant energy shaping a rich social life in contemporary Tirana.

---

**THE INTERNATIONAL JURY**

**GëzimQendro \_ CHAIR**

Associate Professor of Art Theory and Criticism Head of Architecture and Design Department, POLIS University, Albania His formation includes the B.A diploma at the AcademievoorBeeldendeVorming, Amsterdam, Netherlands (1992 -1996) and a PhD degree in Aesthetics at the University Paris VIII (2009) as a painter. He was art director of animation films at the former Kinostudio "New Albania", Director of the National Gallery of Arts in Tirana (1997 – 2002), Director of the Art magazine PamorART. (1998 – 2002), Co-director and one of the curators of the first three editions of Tirana Biennale, curator of the exhibitions "Socialist Surrealism", "Homo Socialisticus", "Post EVA", "Nostalgia", "Glocal"; Co -curator of the exhibition "In & Out", the annual international contest on contemporary art Onufri (1997, 2001). Since 1992 on he has published more than 100 articles in the Albanian and foreign press on issues related to the Albanian art history. Author of three monographies on Albanian artists and translator of 14 titles of books related mostly to art history and art theory.

**Simon Battisit**

Simon Battisti is an architect and educator based in Tirana, Albania. He is curator of the Albanian Pavilion at the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale, with Leah Whitman-Salkin and Åbäke. His research focused on the development of central Tirana in the 1990s.. He holds a B.Arch with distinction from the Southern California Institute of Architecture, and an M.Arch from the Harvard Graduate School of Design. He is editor of Flexible Leviathan: Reconsidering Scale and Fixity in Iztapalapa, Mexico City (Harvard GSD, 2016), with Diane Davis



---

REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA  
**MINISTRY OF CULTURE**

and Jose Castillo. He writes regularly about architecture and urbanism, most recently in Log, Clog, and many others.

**Bekim Ramku**

Bekim Ramku is an architect and urbanist from Kosova. He is the Director of Kosova's Architecture Foundation, and heads the Office of Urban Drafters+Architects in Prishtina. He holds a Master's degree in Housing and Urbanism from the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London, and a Diploma in Architectural Engineering from the University of Prishtina, Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering. Mr. Ramku was the initiator and Assistant Commissioner of Kosovo's first ever participation at the Venice Biennale in 2012, and its second entry in 2014. He is also founder, director and curator of the Prishtina Architecture Week. In addition, Mr. Ramku has served as an external advisor to the Kosovar Minister of Culture on issues of cultural heritage and infrastructure. He is an International Consultant to the NACTO Global Street Design initiative and Regional Coordinator for South-Eastern Europe for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

**Adelina Greca**

Director of the National Territorial Planning Agency. She is a graduate of architecture at the Middle East Technical University, Faculty of Architecture, Ankara, Turkey and has continued postgraduate studies in the field of Urban Planning. She has participated in the working group for the preparation of the National Plan for Territorial Planning of the city of Tirana and has experience in the organization and planning of national and international competitions in the field. Starting from 2011 onwards she is also a part-time lecturer at Epoka University.

**Arta Dollani**

After graduating in Krakow, Poland in architecture, she has a noted experience as urban planner in the Municipality of Tirana, being in the same time a lecturer in the Architecture Faculty of Tirana. She has taken part in a considerable number of projects of urban qualification, she has a notable experience in implementation of projects. Currently, she is Director of Institute of Monuments of Culture, and co-author of many projects of restoration and musealization. She participated also as member in many international juries.



---

REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA  
**MINISTRY OF CULTURE**

**THE PAVILION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA IS COMMISSIONED BY THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA.**

**COMMISSIONER** Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Albania

**PROJECT** “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”, by

**LOCATION** Arsenale di Venezia

**DURATION** May 26<sup>th</sup> to November 25<sup>th</sup> 2018 (Preview May 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>) in the Giardini and the Arsenale

**Address of the Commissioner** “Aleksandër Moisiu”, No. 76, Tirana, Albania

**Tel. :** +355 (4) 2222508

**Email:** [info@kultura.gov.al](mailto:info@kultura.gov.al), [bienale2018@kultura.gov.al](mailto:bienale2018@kultura.gov.al)

**Website:** [www.kultura.gov.al](http://www.kultura.gov.al)

**PR & Communication: Milena Selimi- Ministry of Culture**

**Tel.:** +355 68 20 14 441; +355 68 806 2673

**e-mail:** [milena.selimi@kultura.gov.al](mailto:milena.selimi@kultura.gov.al)