

Albania in the 15th International Architecture Exhibition of la Biennale di Venezia, 2016

Commissioner: Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Albania

Project: “I Have Left You the Mountain”, Simon Battisti, Leah Whitman-Salkin, and Åbäke

Date: May 28 to November 27, 2016

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The Albanian Ministry of Culture, on the 21st of November 2015, announced the winner of the project which will represent Albania in the 15th International Architecture Exhibition of la Biennale di Venezia, 2016. The project is titled: “I Have Left You the Mountain”, submitted by Simon Battisti, Leah Whitman-Salkin, and Åbäke.

This project was selected through expression of interest to an open call for proposals announced by the Ministry of Culture (16th of September – 27th of October 2015) in its capacity as main commissioner of the Albanian Pavilion. The international jury set up on this purpose was composed by: Elisabetta Terragni, Gezim Qendro, Anri Sala, Adelina Greca and Arta Dollani. They voted unanimously for the project “I Have Left You the Mountain”, based on the judgement that fulfilled all the criteria introduced in the open call, after an intense day of individual presentations followed by questions and answers and productive discussion.

“I Have Left You the Mountain”, Singing in company, Migrations, and the Architecture of Displacement by Simon Battisti, Leah Whitman-Salkin and Åbäke is a clear proposal with strong capacity to evoke places and loss through polifonic singing, or multi part lyric.

The theme of displacement and migration anchors by its roots deep into Albania remote past and also reverberate, bouncing back the recent European history.

This Pavilion, through its minimalist installation, will try to make people thinking and fill the space with personal and unspoken memories silence and music.

The program for this laboratory on Migration and displacement it will be also very well articulated with performances, lectures a book and a record too.

Collective listening, respect of individuality and collaborative activities define a strong architecture position in the theme for the 2016 Biennale .

THE PROJECT :

Simon Battisti is an architect based in Tirana, where he was a 2014-2015 Fulbright Fellow. His Fulbright research sought to illuminate the family—as opposed to banks—as the major institution of construction finance in Albania. He cofounded Harvard University Graduate School of Design's Student journal *Very Vary Veri*. He has worked in design offices in Los Angeles Mumbai and New York City.

Leah Whitman-Salkin is deputy editor of Harvard Design Magazine and former editor at Sternberg Press. She has contributed to diverse international magazines and critical theory publications and has initiated and organized public events in the field of art, architecture and urbanism.

Abake is a transdisciplinary design collective based in London since 2000. They have been deeply involved with the publishing of music through their own Paris based record label (Kitsuné) and have been working with and designing records for musicians such as Daft Punk and The Cardigans. They've designed and released hundreds of records, mostly onto 12' vinyls.. Whether a book or a record, their design work focus on the narratives those objects carry, and the translation process they allow.

Other members of the team: Peter Meanwell- Producer, Edit Pula- Curator and Cultural Adviser to the Mayor of Tirana; Vasil Tole –Musicologist, Academic, Scientific Secretary of the Academy of Science of Albania.

THE JURY :

Elisabetta Terragni, Chair – She is an architect with international reputation, with a distinguished contribute in the field of architecture and museology in many countries of the world such as United States, Columbia, Germany, Switzerland, also in Albania with involvement in the design of the Leaves Museum. Specialized in the design of thematic exhibitions as well as in the field's critics.

Gëzim Qendro- Professor of History of Art in the “Polis” University. It's one of the most distinguished personalities in the field of painting, film directing, and critics with a postgraduate studies in the field of plastic arts. Author of “Socialist surrealism” book as well as other books: “The heroes are hungry”, He is a professor, art critic and has been Director of National Gallery for many years.

Anri Sala – is an Albanian contemporary artist whose primary medium is video. Participant in some of the editions of Biennale of Venice and organizer of some important exhibitions and events in some of the most famous cultural centres and galleries of the world such as Centre Pompidou-Paris, TATE Museum-London, etc. His exhibitions and works have been displayed in many cities such as Tokyo, New York, Munich, Madrid, Torino, San Paolo, Brussels etc., etc. He has been awarded many international prizes such as: “The Vincent Award 2014” in Holland, “The Recipient of Absolut Art Award 2011”, Stockholm, etc.

Adelina Greca-Director of the National Agency of Territorial Planning. She was graduated in Architecture with postgraduate studies in Urban Planning. She has participated in the working group for the National Plan for Territorial Planning of the city of Tirana and she has noted experience in the planning and organizing of the national and international competitions.

Arta Dollani – After graduating in 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.



The pavilion of the Republic of Albania is commissioned by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Albania.

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Location: Arsenale di Venezia

Duration: May 28th to November 27th 2016

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