



creative industries fund NL

Venice Architecture Biennale 2016 Reporting from the Front

Creative Industries Fund NL is the Dutch cultural fund for architecture, design, e-culture and every imaginable crossover. During the Venice Architecture Biennale 2016: Reporting from the Front, the fund supports presentations by 9 architects, designers, researchers and collectives. The presentation of these projects is a result of an open call issued by the Creative Industries Fund NL. During the biennale the Urban Labs, which are a partnership between the fund and UN-Habitat, will discuss interim results with local stakeholders. In the Dutch Pavilion the exhibition BLUE presents the research Design for Legacy, which was also supported by the Creative Industries Fund NL.

www.creativeindustriesfund.nl

Report to the Front

These are interesting times. The design discipline appears to be confronted ever more explicitly with major social and societal issues, many of which do not traditionally belong to the domain of the architecture discipline. Whether it is the recent massive influx of refugees, the informal settlements of new urban citizens, the increasing segregation of population groups, the dwindling supply of natural resources, the inevitable consequences of climate change, and the drive to make sanitation universally available, in all segments of society, the intricate relationship between spatial design and such human challenges is becoming steadily more apparent.

That a renowned platform such as the Venice Architecture Biennale engages with these complex challenges – and makes the contribution of design to better living conditions and social advancement its central theme – is commendable. In a time of highly compartmentalised professions – each operating within defined, often specialised perimeters, this 15th edition of the Architecture Biennale with its theme of *Reporting from the Front* is promising. Arguably, it reads less like an architectural but more a social manifesto: the future as a collective assignment. It states an eagerness to learn from experiences from the field, and other disciplines, to help designers get a grip on social issues.

From personal experience, I know how difficult it can be to gain a foothold in areas that pose new spatial challenges – there where design has not yet established its role and responsibility. To demonstrate the crucial significance of design, there where it is most needed – in the field – is a challenge on its own.

Still, venturing into uncharted territory also harbours great prospects to deliver real change. By conducting two years of work in Afghanistan – a country still gripped by decades of conflict and violence, which therefore literally gave occasion to reports from the front – an unique perspective on the spatial legacy of the Dutch reconstruction effort in Uruzgan province could be made.

In close collaboration with Dutch ministries, the findings provided concrete lessons for future missions and articulates the role of the spatial discipline within such undertakings, thereby contributing to more effective and future-proof reconstruction endeavours. Where challenging spatial issues occur, one thing above all turns out to be indispensable. Connecting different work fields and cultures, entering into unorthodox partnerships – for instance between politics, defence and design – shows a strong ability to deliver creative and sustainable solutions. The importance of collective innovation and interdisciplinary collaborations seems more relevant and decisive than ever before.

This 15th edition of the Architecture Biennale puts humanity at its core. With this choice, the event appears eager to shrug off all the rhetoric and encourage everyone to ‘show, don’t tell’. It is against this background that entrants submitted their proposals to the Open Call. The Creative Industries Fund NL is supporting nine projects by architects, designers, collectives and researchers which are either established or young and talented, in their presentation at the Venice Biennale. The broad selection of projects demonstrates where architecture is currently proving to be successful, where design is attempting to change the status quo, and where architecture can make a difference in the future.

A small number of proposals connect directly to the theme of the main exhibition in the *Giardini* and *Arsenale*. This prestigious 'mother of biennales' is not just an exhibition, but also and especially a moment of intense international attention. It is therefore the perfect spot to promote oneself on the international stage, but also – amidst this wealth of information, ideas and projects – an opportunity to present outstanding design qualities in an eye-catching manner.

Two projects – *NLÉ WATERFRONT Exhibition* by the Ghanaian architect based in the Netherlands, Kunlé Adeyemi, and *Cerberus and the Three-Headed Monster* by researcher Hamed Khosravi in collaboration with Behemoth Press & Matteo Mannini Architects – emphatically seek to relate to the dynamics and the theme of this year's Biennale. Both projects address social and political issues and, by means of a strong installation and exhibition design, manage to communicate their message in style.

In addition to the main exhibition, the Biennale is also held at a number of smaller locations dotted around the city centre. A number of entries have been selected for these. From diverse angles, these entries focus on a more universal understanding of architecture, art and culture. The link to the Biennale's main theme is less prominent here. Instead, a range of design qualities are presented to a broad international public in an accessible manner.

A remarkable aspect of many of the entries is the underlying process. A large number of projects resulted from personal initiative or the wish to address a certain theme. It is perhaps an expression of the current time that many designers chose to immerse themselves in a local context. This

significantly expands the range of issues addressed by designers, and accordingly enriches the repertoire of the discipline. The projects *I'Abri*, *a Roof for Humanity* by Narda Beunders and *Pani Community Centre* by SchilderScholte Architecten are clear examples of how individuals wish to personally engage with certain themes. Not surprisingly, an active attitude and a personal on-site involvement are indispensable to the realisation of such projects.

Time for Impact by the Italian collective New Generations and the Dutch architecture office space&matter seeks to create a legacy for the Biennale itself. In the spirit of head curator Alejandro Aravena – who made his designs for dwellings available as 'open source' data – the project aspires to seduce the professional community to commit to the greater good.

The Biennale is also a cultural platform that seeks to stimulate the (professional) public more broadly. The project *Vertical Walking* by Rombout Frieling Studio casts a look in the future: the physical sensation of vertical motion prompts a reconsideration of routing in high-rise buildings. The entries titled *24 mm* by Arend Groosman and *Elements of Time* by Nynke Koster show a promising early personal development, which is sure to benefit from the exposure at the Biennale event. Finally, *Constructive Proposals* by Studio Frank Havermans takes an idiosyncratic approach to exploring the cultural and artistic dimensions associated with the design discipline, through an architectural installation.

The designers appear to have found their way to complex social and societal issues. But are we, as a profession, ready to appropriate such challenges permanently? The entries

seem to suggest, on a general note, that there is still much scope for development of the design discipline.

If we, as a professional group, wish to offer a persuasive response to the many spatial challenges that await us, then the 15th Venice Biennale stretches beyond the projects that present their *Report from the Front*. It encourages us to engage more emphatically with social, political and economic issues, and to mark out a position in a progressive spirit. Essentially, then, this is a call directed to each one of us: *Report to the Front!*

By Jan Willem Petersen, founder of Specialist Operations

The Creative Industries Fund NL appointed Jan Willem Petersen, together with Ronald Rietveld (architect at RAAAF and curator of the Dutch entry for the Venice Biennale 2010) and Francien van Westrenen (architecture curator at Stroom The Hague), in the selection of the first nine projects presented in this brochure.



1 NLÉ WATERFRONT Exhibition

NLÉ

Arsenale, quay-side

2 Cerberus, the three-headed Monster

Hamed Khosravi
together with Behemoth
Press & Matteo Mannini

Kuwait National Pavilion, Arsenale

3 Pani Community Centre

SchilderScholte
architects

Palazzo Mora, Strada Nuova 3659
1st floor, room 19

4 Constructive Proposals

Studio Frank Havermans
Palazzo Mora, Strada Nuova 3659
3rd floor, room 3F

5 Elements of Time

Nynke Koster

Palazzo Michiel,
Strada Nuova 4391

6 24mm

Arend Groosman

Palazzo Michiel,
Strada Nuova 4391

7 Time for Impact

New Generations
together with
space& matter

for locations see
Facebook: @Timeforimpact

8 L'Abri: A roof for humanity

Narda Beunders

Laboratorio Occupato Morion
Salizada San Francesco della
Vigna 2951

9 Vertical Walking

Rombout Frieling Studio

for location see
www.rombout.design

10 Design for Legacy

National Dutch Pavilion, Giardini

1 NLÉ WATERFRONT Exhibition NLÉ

NLÉ built the Makoko Floating School on the waters of the Lagos Lagoon in Nigeria. An initiative of the architect Kunlé Adeyemi, the floating school was designed and built in collaboration with the Makoko Waterfront Community. The school is a symbol for inclusive urban development and an alternative construction method in a setting that is confronted with the effects of climate change. For the biennale, NLÉ is building a replica of the Makoko Floating School on the water at the Arsenale quayside. In this replica of the school, NLÉ is staging an exhibition about the changing relationship between water and rapidly expanding cities.

nleworks.com



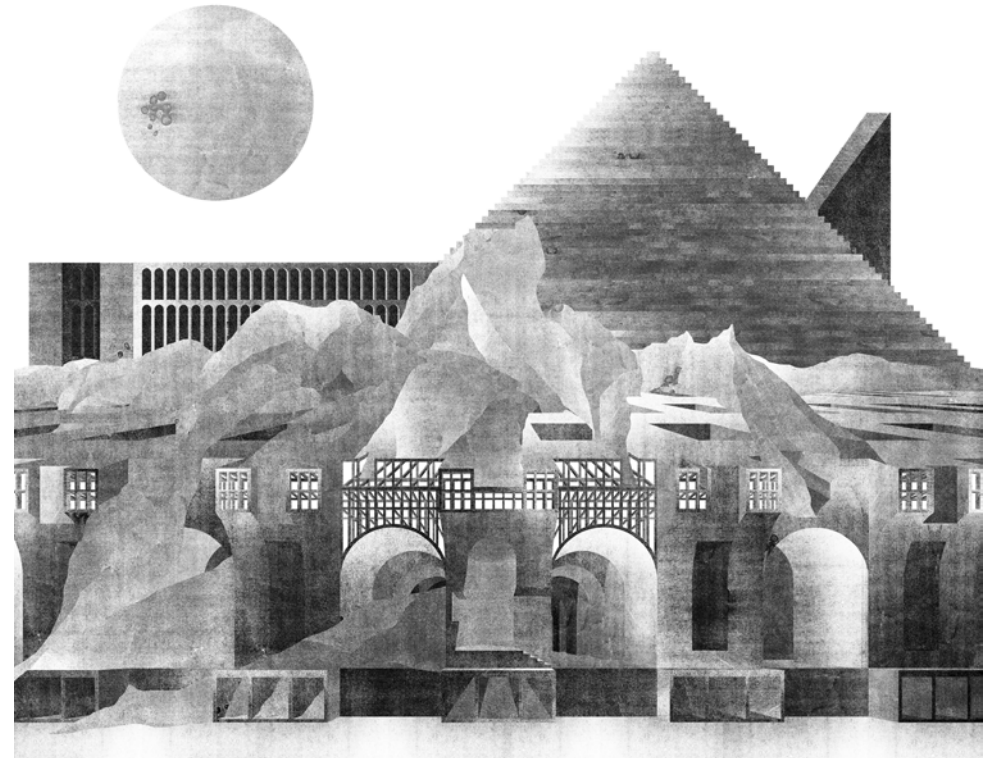
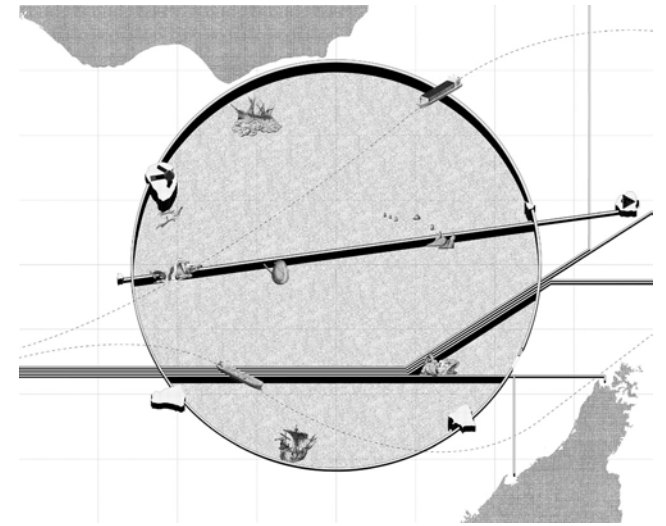
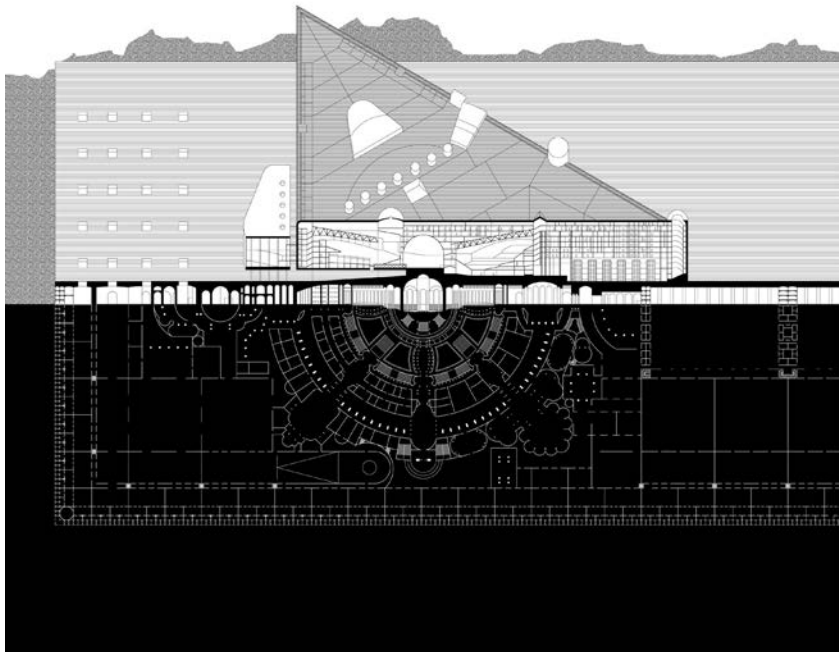
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Cerberus, the three-headed Monster

**Hamed Khosravi together with
Behemoth Press & Matteo Mannini**

The Kuwaiti Pavilion invited Hamed Khosravi together with Behemoth Press and Matteo Mannini Architects to share their vision for a new territorial project for the countries around the Persian Gulf. Khosravi and associates are using the history of islands in the Persian Gulf to narrate the rise and impending demise of the nation state. The presentation investigates how societies around the Gulf are changing into a world where streams of refugees, uncertain labour relations, climate refugees and migrating knowledge workers are the order of the day. In the form of the national pavilion of a new Gulf archipelago, the collective presents the region's history and potential solutions for a new political, economic and social entity in the region.

kuwaitpavilion2016.com
hamedkhosravi.com
behemothpress.com



3

Pani Community Centre

SchilderScholte architects

How can you employ local skills and materials in an underdeveloped setting and at the same time elevate their use to a higher level? That was the key question when pro bono designing and building a new technical school in Bangladesh for the Pani Foundation. The architect couple SchilderScholte architects combined their knowledge with local construction techniques and the expertise of local craftsmen. The community feels a close connection with the building because of its participation in the construction process, and it is a facility where primarily women and children from the poor and landless of the population can learn a trade or receive other forms of education. The men use bamboo to manufacture bikes that are sold within the region. Pani's local staff serve as management and ensure the building's upkeep and maintenance together with local artisans. At the biennale, SchilderScholte is presenting the project using a scale model and videos.

schilderscholte.com



4

Constructive Proposals

Studio Frank Havermans

Havermans went in search of interesting remnant spaces in the partially renovated Palazzo Mora in order to create an installation. Some previously realized designs served as the basis for the installation. He structurally interconnects them using found and recycled materials from Venice. This results in a constructed landscape that, as it meanders between the other objects on display, infiltrates into Palazzo Mora.

frankhavermans.nl

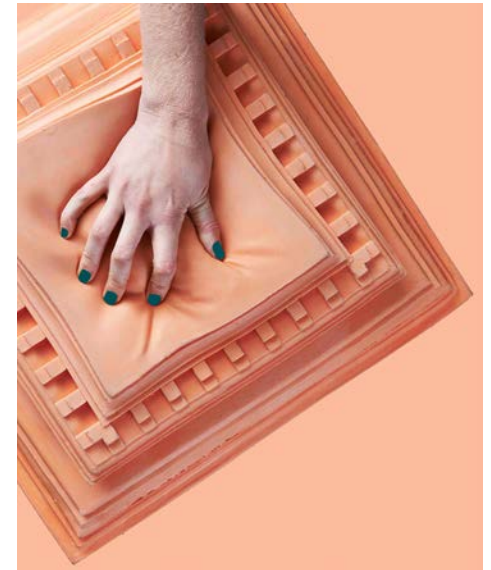
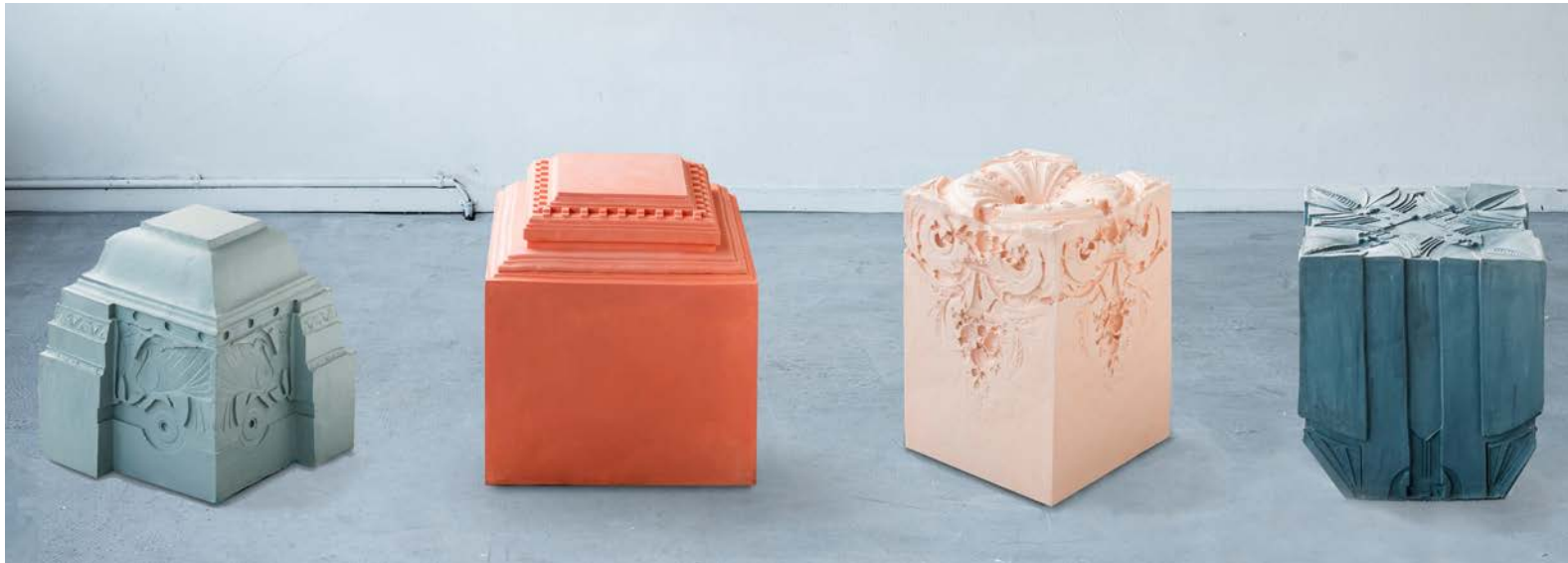


5 Elements of time

Nynke Koster

Elements of Time consists of moulds or elements of buildings and symbolizes architectural fragments of time. Koster makes people look at the past and what currently exists from a fresh perspective, for which she has devised a methodology to transform fragments of a building into a mould. This results in objects moulded from a rubber casting that represent a fragment of a building or an ornament.

nynkekoster.com

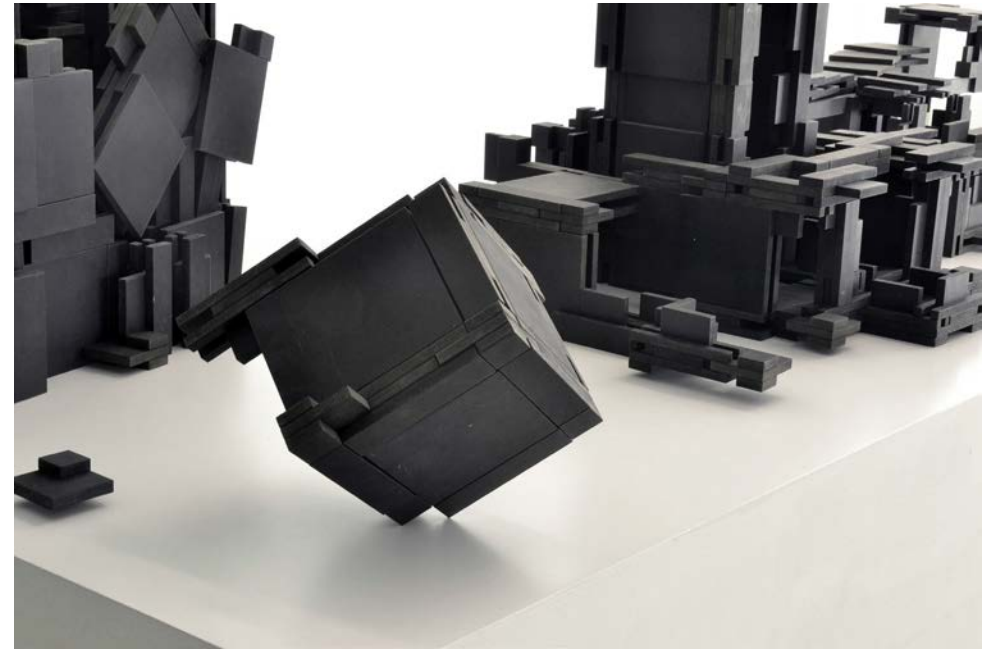


6 24mm

Arend Groosman

Groosman has developed a 24mm construction system, a modular and versatile building method that he uses to realize abstract, artistic and applied spatial structures. His primary focus is on experimenting with mobile and transformable architecture, thus exploring innovative design, atmosphere and quality. Groosman is keen to create architecture that stems from a playful construction system with which you can design the space around you – accurate down to the last millimetre – as a counterbalance to large-scale construction practices.

arendgroosman.com



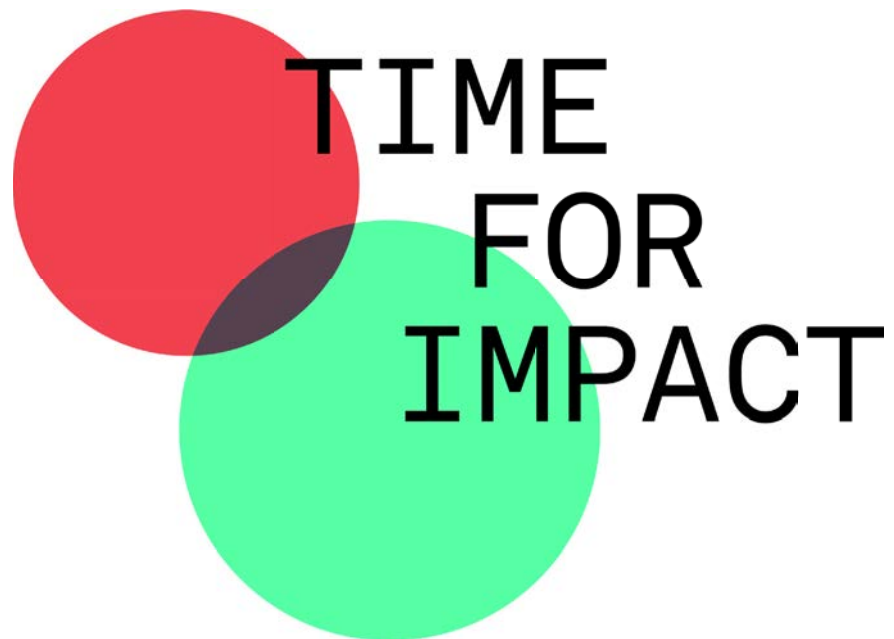
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Time for Impact

New Generations i.c.w. space&matter

Time for Impact is an online platform that works as an architectural time bank and kickstarting tool. During the biennale, New Generations and space&matter launch this initiative as a campaign instead of staging a presentation. Time for Impact promotes urgent challenges in the built environment that are in need of design expertise, spatial know-how and budget. Creative people from all over the world are invited to pledge their time and know-how to collectively boost socially relevant projects. During the biennale, Time for Impact will be crowdsourcing challenges, ideas and time in order to Kickstart projects that will make a difference; building momentum for continuing this biennale's mission long after its closing.

timeforimpact.org



2600/5.000

SUPPORTERS

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40/100

CHALLENGES

[submit a challenge](#)

8

L'Abri: A roof for humanity

Narda Beunders

In July 2015, Narda Beunders saw with her own eyes the miserable circumstances that refugees are faced with when arriving on the Greek island of Lesbos. In order to contribute to a more humane arrival and stay for these displaced persons, Beunders built a number of small pavilions on the island that, though very basic, provide a roof over your head. These abris – havens of refuge – are partially built from materials left behind on the beaches after the sea crossing from Turkey. The pavilions are constructed with the assistance of refugees and the available volunteers. At the biennale, Beunders is showing three films about the realization process.

crowdfundering.nl
ruimteomintegeloven.nl



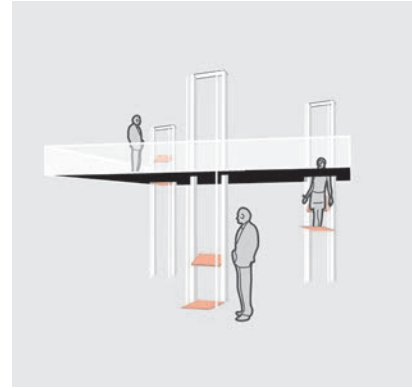
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Vertical Walking

Rombout Frieling Studio

Frieling points out that the built density of cities is increasing, the price of land is rising, and the city is therefore becoming increasingly vertical. Vertical Walking is an ongoing study into new typologies for vertical movement. The aim is to investigate how people can travel vertically within buildings by means of bodily movement. This way tall buildings become vertically accessible in an energy-neutral, sustainable and inclusive way. To achieve this Frieling is conducting this study in collaboration with architects, dancers, choreographers, bio-dynamics experts and a lift manufacturer. An operational prototype, VW1, will be presented at the biennale.

www.rombout.design



10

Design for Legacy

The Dutch pavilion in the Giardini will exhibit BLUE: Architecture of UN Peacekeeping Missions. Architect Malkit Shoshan has been commissioned by Het Nieuwe Instituut (HNI – The New Institute) to serve as curator of the Netherlands pavilion. In BLUE the research Design for Legacy will be presented as a series of design recommendations. Design for Legacy was supported by the Creative Industries Fund NL.

The Design for Legacy initiative aims to introduce architecture and design thinking to the planning process of UN peacekeeping bases. The goal is to leave behind a stronger city with infrastructure, resources and knowledge that will stay with the local populations after the mission has gone. UN bases are rapidly designed and built by military engineers. Although they are located in cities, they operate as islands, enclosed behind barbed wire and trenches. Inside the bases, there are wells, power plants, waste treatment plants and hospitals. Outside are cities that struggle to provide residents with access to basic human needs.

Design for Legacy proposes that the UN base should become a catalyst for local development and empower the local community to reconstruct their environments themselves. Design for Legacy was developed in collaboration with the Dutch Ministry of Defense, Foreign Affairs and Development, economists, anthropologists and with conversation with the local population. In 2016, the recommendations to the UN were presented by Malkit Shoshan at the UN headquarters in NYC as a presentation and an exhibition. It was hosted by the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Bert Koenders.

seamlessterritory.org



UN-Habitat x Creative Industries Fund NL



In 2015, UN-Habitat and Creative Industries Fund NL began collaborating in the field of urban development. Specifically, the partnership supports 20 designers who work together in teams at five urban labs. At each location, the local authorities and local UN-Habitat branch have committed to the process and prepared relevant assignments.

The assignments are real and urgent, and in a number of cases they are located in conflict zones and/or complex political settings. The commissioning authorities and UN-Habitat are focused on implementing these plans. Therefore, the reality of the situation and the development of the proposals require the designers to have outstanding design skills – individually, as well as in teams. The design teams must also take a broad perspective and be interested in considering the proposal in terms of legislation, funding models and political context.

The participating designers spend a year working at one of the labs, collaborating with an international, multidisciplinary team on urgent assignments which are formulated based on recommendations from the related cities or urban areas in Palestine, Myanmar, Mexico, Philippines and Ghana. Rogier van den Berg, project leader of the Global Network of Urban Planning and Design Labs, supervises the participating teams in cooperation with local UN-Habitat branches.

During the Venice Architecture Biennale the labs will discuss the progress and interim results with fellow designers, local stakeholders and policy makers. This enclosed meeting aims to discuss the involvement of designers in humanitarian issues and new models for sustainable urban development.



The Creative Industries Fund NL is a Dutch cultural fund that provides grants for innovative architecture, design and e-culture projects in the Netherlands as well as abroad. Projects that are eligible for grants enhance social and economic value from a cultural perspective. The fund also supports projects that develop and promote the distinctive qualities of the design sector to strengthen the global reputation of the Dutch creative industries. The Venice Architecture Biennale is an event that contributes to these objectives, especially with this edition's theme 'Reporting from the Front'.

creative industries fund NL

**architecture
design
e-culture**

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www.creativeindustriesfund.nl

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