



la Biennale di Venezia

12. Mostra
Internazionale
di Architettura

Partecipazioni nazionali

PRESS RELEASE

www.labiennale.art.pl

POLAND

AT THE 12TH INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

EMERGENCY EXIT



la Biennale di Venezia

12. Mostra
Internazionale
di Architettura

Partecipazioni nazionali

PRESS RELEASE

www.labiennale.art.pl

12TH INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION IN VENICE *PEOPLE MEET IN ARCHITECTURE*

THE POLONIA PAVILION *EMERGENCY EXIT*

VENICE

29.08 – 21.11.2010

DIRECTOR

Kazuyo Sejima

ORGANISER

La Fondazione La Biennale di Venezia

www.labiennale.art.pl

PRESS PREVIEW

26–28.08.2010

OPENING OF THE POLISH PAVILION

27.08.2010, 4 p.m.

COMMISSIONER OF THE POLISH PAVILION

Agnieszka Morawińska

CURATOR

Elias Redstone

ARTISTS

Agnieszka Kurant
Aleksandra Wasilkowska

COMMISSIONER ASSISTANT

Joanna Waśko

PATRONAGE

Ministry of Culture and National
Heritage of the Republic of Poland

ORGANISER

Zachęta National Gallery of Art,
Warsaw

PRESS CONTACT

press@zacheta.art.pl

DOWNLOADS

<ftp.zacheta.art.pl>
user – prasa
password – wystawa
folder – Emergency Exit

MEDIA PATRONAGE

Architektura-murator,
Gazeta Wyborcza, TOK FM,
The Warsaw Voice, Stolica,
Art & Business

ALL PUBLICATIONS

DESIGNED BY

Ian Davies



THE EXHIBITION / THE IDEA

The installation by artist Agnieszka Kurant and architect Aleksandra Wasilkowska, curated by Elias Redstone, seeks to exceed the logic of urban reality through the creation of urban portable holes. The title, *Emergency Exit*, refers ironically to the health and safety regulations in buildings and urban space that seek to plan, control risk and eliminate the accidental and unexpected. The project consists of building a high structure in the Polish pavilion, resembling a diving board or a ski jump, that towers over a sea of clouds. The viewers will have to climb the stairs and go up to a window at the top through which they will be able to jump out into the clouds. The abyss of clouds will seem endless. The view will generate fear, danger, risk, and mystery. In fact, the jump will be totally safe since underneath the clouds a foam platform will be hidden, acting as a safety net. Falling on it will be a nice feeling, rewarding the fear felt prior to it.

Kurant and Wasilkowska interpret the city as an unpredictable, complex system whose collective understanding is composed of intersecting real and imaginary spaces changed through extremely rare events. The architects and planners are therefore unable to precisely anticipate all needs and transformations of the city. Invisible factors such as myths, rumours and legends overlay themselves onto the physical environment to create an invisible urban morphology of augmented landscapes. The inhabitants have contradictory needs that subordinate the existing order and alter it. On the one hand the need for safety, structure and an urban fabric that gives them the feeling of a controllable future. On the other hand, however, the need for spontaneity, risk and wilderness exist as symptoms of freedom against the rational layer of control and planning. If a rigid and deterministic masterplan is unable to integrate emergent needs and changes then the whole city loses its equilibrium.

Kurant and Wasilkowska search for the deliberate zones which people can appropriate with their own individual and uncontrolled desires. Kurant and Wasilkowska propose a new approach towards the body within the urban context by setting up a new urban activity; a fictional urban sport. The action of jumping into the clouds represents an ultimate freedom and urban escapism. This activity materializes the need and desire to lose control to free oneself both physically and metaphorically from the current system; from a dominant paradigm, logic or state. To get out from here.

Emergency Exit is a hybrid machine for the transfer to other realities, perforating the system of the city. It is a portable hole to the unknown; a catalyst for different contradictory emotions and needs. Through the transfer people fill in the gaps with their own emotions, ideas and desires.

The project promotes an approach to architecture and urbanism that exceeds the logic of the mundane urban reality and deterministic masterplan; embraces the unknown phenomena of the city; introduces higher flexibility of the urban tissue through integrating interstices, gaps and pores and leaving the people space to plug-in or plug-out of dominant urban structures through developing individual, self-organising activities and actions.



la Biennale di Venezia

12. Mostra Internazionale di Architettura

Partecipazioni nazionali



Emergency Exit. Test n°2. Sequences © Agnieszka Kurant and Aleksandra Wasilkowska, photo by Jan Smaga



THE ARTISTS

Agnieszka Kurant, born in 1978, is an artist based in Warsaw. She holds an MA in Art History from University of Łódź and an MA in Creative Curating from Goldsmiths College, London. She often collaborates with scientists and professionals whose activities are considered to be fictitious or paranormal to investigate the phenomena that exceed the logic of time, space, language and knowledge. She explores the economy and politics of invisibility and the existence of the future in the present. Her works have been shown in art institutions including Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Tate Modern, London; Yvon Lambert Gallery and Creative Time, New York; and Museum of Modern Art, Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw. She has also produced work in public space “(...)” with Anna Baumgart (2009). Kurant has participated in international contemporary art exhibitions including Moscow Biennale (2007), Bucharest Biennale (2008), Frieze Projects at Frieze Art Fair, London (2008), Performa Biennial, New York (2009) and Athens Biennale (2009). She has received numerous grants and awards and was an artist in residence at Palais de Tokyo, Paris in 2004; ISCP, New York in 2005; Konstfack, Stockholm in 2007 and at Paul Klee Center in Bern, 2009. Kurant’s monograph – *Unknown Unknown* was published by Sternberg Press in 2008.

Aleksandra Wasilkowska, born in 1978, established a studio in Warsaw in 2007 for spatial and social research and practice after studying architecture at Warsaw University of Technology and Ecole d’Architecture de Bretagne. She has collaborated on projects with artists, sociologists, scientists, and mathematicians to explore the territories between architecture, art and science. Projects investigating new urban strategies and modes of collective production in public space have included *Symbiotic City* (2005), *MultipliCity Disorder* (2008), *Warsaw as Emergent Structure* (2009), *Em_Wwa* (2009) and *Assemblage* (2010). Wasilkowska has participated in exhibitions including *Warsaw under Construction* in Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw (2009); *Expectation* in Foundation Bęc Zmiana, Warsaw (2009); and *Extremely Rare Events* in Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw (2009). Completed projects include *[No.Platform]* at the Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw; and a temporary structure for the Chelsea College of Art and Design, London (2010). *Warsaw as Emergent Structure* was published by Fundacja Bęc Zmiana in 2009. A self-sufficient house is currently under construction in Warsaw.

THE CURATOR

Elias Redstone, born in 1979, lives in London and holds an MSc in City Design & Social Science from the London School of Economics. He was Senior Curator at The Architecture Foundation, a non-profit agency for contemporary architecture, urbanism and culture, where he worked from 2003 to 2010. He initiated an innovative and experimental curatorial programme working with architects, artists, designers, photographers and filmmakers. Exhibitions include *Hairywood* (2005), *I Shot Norman Foster* (2005), *Renegade City* (2006), *Southwark Lido* (2008), *Temporary Eyesore* (2008) and *Moss Your City* (2010). He has curated projects for the 10th International Architecture Exhibition in Venice (in collaboration with MoMA, New York) and the London Festival of Architecture. He launched an international exchange programme for emerging architects in the UK and abroad (working with USA, Italy, Norway and Poland to date) and has delivered numerous collaborative projects with cultural institutions such as Barbican, Southbank Centre, Tate Modern, Victoria & Albert Museum and Design Museum. He is the co-founder and editor of the London Architecture Diary and is a columnist for the New York Times design blog. Redstone was awarded a D&AD Global Design Award in 2006 and a Winston Churchill Fellowship in 2008.



la Biennale di Venezia

**12. Mostra
Internazionale
di Architettura**

Partecipazioni nazionali

INFO

PRESS ACCREDITATION

until 30.07.2010

ACCREDITATION FORM

www.labiennale.org/en/architecture/exhibition/accreditation/

PRESS OFFICE IN VENICE

La Biennale di Venezia
Ca' Giustinian
San Marco 1364/A
30124 Venezia
Tel. +39 041 5218849
Fax +39 041 5218812
Email: infoarchitettura@labiennale.org

PRESS CONTACT FOR THE POLONIA PAVILION

Olga Gawerska
press@zacheta.art.pl

Joanna Waśko
j.wasko@zacheta.art.pl

ADDRESS

Zachęta National Gallery of Art
pl. Małachowskiego 3
00-916 Warsaw
Poland
www.zacheta.art.pl
Tel. +48 22 55 69 600
Fax +48 22 827 78 86