

February 17th, 2022

## **18<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Biennale 2023: Architecture collective AKT and Hermann Czech will design Austria's pavilion**

The Austrian Secretary of State for Arts and Culture, Andrea Mayer announced today that the architecture collective AKT together with Architect Hermann Czech will represent Austria at the 18<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Biennale 2023 in Venice. A jury of Austrian and international architecture and design specialists, together with the State Secretary, selected the winning project entitled *Beteiligung / participation* from a shortlist of three projects. The competition was organised by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Arts and Culture, Civil Service and Sport.

Andrea Mayer, Secretary of State for Arts and Culture: "I am delighted to have acquired a highly qualified, internationally networked and cross-generational team for the 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale in the form of AKT and the Architect Hermann Czech. It was an unanimous decision. The innovative and participatory concept, the high quality of the project proposal, the theoretical and creative approaches as well as the specific plans for its realisation, has indeed convinced us. AKT and Hermann Czech pose relevant questions about the future – in their project they work in and with the city, they act in an inclusive way, and give thought to sustainability. I wish the team all the very best for the realisation of their plans and we are very much looking forward to the exhibition itself in 2023."

### **The project: *Beteiligung / Participation***

AKT and Hermann Czech's winning project will perform a socially effective conversion of the Austrian pavilion by connecting a part of the building to the neighbouring district Sant'Elena and making it available to its population. At the heart of this architectural intervention are distinctions between public and private, accessible and inaccessible, and communal and individual.

The pavilion is located on the northeastern border of the Biennale site. The Sant'Elena district behind it is one of the few neighbourhoods in Venice still inhabited predominantly by local people. AKT and Hermann Czech break through the historical boundary wall and shift the separation between the Biennale and the city into the pavilion.

A wall will divide the symmetrical pavilion between the main rooms at the entrance. The eastern part, including the courtyard, will be accessible from Sant'Elena via a newly constructed portal and will be made available to residents and local initiatives as a public meeting space. The western part will remain accessible from the Biennale. There, the challenges of Sant'Elena with its structural weaknesses, its residential environment and the concept of AKT and Hermann Czech will be explained.

Although the other side cannot be reached directly, the residents of Sant'Elena and the visitors to the Biennale will see and hear each other; the presence of the other can be perceived. Seclusion becomes participation; separation without relationships becomes neighbourliness that can be experienced in terms of content and space. Through the conversion of the pavilion, a new, condensed relationship between the city and the Biennale emerges.

A coordinated programme of events will take place in both parts, planned by AKT and Hermann Czech and initiated by the local population. The aim of the events on both sides of the pavilion is an exchange between city residents, Biennale visitors and the participating institutions and thus a future perspective for Sant'Elena.

Participation complements the built intervention in social relations, as aspired to by the experimental architecture collective AKT, in the joint design with the participatory and ironic architectural concept of experienced Architect Hermann Czech. In this sense, the Austrian contribution to the 2023 Biennale is a cross-generational approach to the possibilities of architecture in contemporary society, as a dialogue in both thinking and building.

AKT: "The city comes into the pavilion, isolation becomes participation, and separation becomes neighbourliness that can be experienced in terms of content and space".

Hermann Czech: "The Hoffmann Pavilion – like many others in the Giardini – is separated from the mainstream of modernism by one characteristic: symmetry; the main and secondary spaces are repeated in a mirror image. The content of one room can be juxtaposed with a second one of equal importance. It is precisely this non-modern quality that enables a current spatial demonstration: separation and participation."

#### About AKT

AKT is a seventeen-member architecture collective with the aim of promoting the independent and utopian production of space. The idea is that the design of our living environment, which is increasingly influenced by economic constraints, should be broken up, undermined and counteracted by alternative models via the construction of concrete spaces. AKT are: Fabian Antosch, Gerhard Flora, Max Hebel, Adrian Judt, Julia Klaus, Lena Kohlmayr, Philipp Krummel, Gudrun Landl, Lukas Lederer, Susanne Mariacher, Christian Mörtl, Philipp Oberthaler, Charlie Rauchs, Helene Schauer, Kathrin Schelling, Philipp Stern, Harald Trapp.

#### About Hermann Czech

Born in Vienna. Studied under Konrad Wachsmann and Ernst A. Plischke among others. Heterogeneous architectural and planning work; numerous critical and theoretical publications on architecture. Visiting professorships at Harvard GSD, ETH Zurich and in Vienna; numerous lectures and awards; solo exhibitions, including at the Architekturmuseum Basel, participation in the Venice Architecture Biennale in 1980, 1991, 2000 and 2012.

#### Images

Abb.1 - AKT und Hermann Czech - Model 1 © Theresa Wey:

Abb.2 - AKT und Hermann Czech - Model 2 © Theresa Wey

Abb.3 - AKT und Hermann Czech - Diagramme © Akt und Hermann Czech

Abb.4 - AKT und Hermann Czech - Axonometrie © AKT und Hermann Czech

Abb.5 - AKT und Hermann Czech - Montage © AKT und Hermann Czech

Please find the images here: <https://we.tl/t-239I3z3CZY>

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