

Competition Open Call

A Bench in Venice

الجنّاح الوطني لدولة الإمارات
بينالي البندقية

National Pavilion UAE
La Biennale di Venezia

Curators
Collective

The National Pavilion United Arab Emirates at La Biennale di Venezia, led by co-curator Wael Al Awar in collaboration with the Curator's Collective, launches an international open call for Design students to propose a bench design for installation in Venice during the summer of 2021.



In the UAE, traditional benches of teakwood occupy areas of shade cast by the old souk walls, providing respite from the sun.

Image source: Unknown

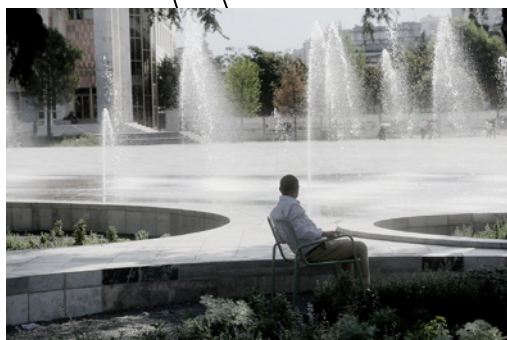


In the Dominican Republic, the Malecón bench reconnects citizens back to their sea by re-directing their gaze towards it. Designed by Manuel Valverde Podestá in the 1970's. Image source: Jose Manuel Azcona

For the first time in the Biennale Architettura de Venezia's 40-year history, national pavilion curators around the globe are working together to investigate new avenues for fulfilling the Biennale's potential as a platform for synergistic, expansive, and accessible collaboration. Known as the Curators' Collective (CC), over 50 participating national pavilions have joined in the ongoing dialog alongside the Biennale's chief curator,

Hashim Sarkis.

In this collaborative spirit, the CC contemplates one of the oldest and most basic units of social exchange, the bench. This open call puts forth the idea that the bench can be a key activator of Common Space, enabling observation, reflection and, therefore, dialog. As the world continues to grapple with today's twin urgencies of the pandemic and accelerating climate change, the need for dialog is greater than ever.



In Albania, lightweight two-seater benches by 51N4E, enable sitters to organize themselves around Skanderbeg Square as they please.

Image source: Blerta Kambo

How can the design of a bench both spark and frame this dialogue?

Who

The open call invites design students from around the world to enter.



In Italy, benches grow out of building facades in a civic gesture that integrates public seating directly into the urban fabric, as in the Palazzo Rucellai in Florence by Leon Battista Alberti. Image source: Francesca Santeusanio



In Korea, the pyeongsang's sturdy wooden construction and generous dimensions serve as a communal sitting area, especially in the summer as it is cool, clean and elevated from the ground. It is a space where people share food and company, and even sleep. It is a place of intersection where people can intentionally interact with their neighbors. Image source: news.bucheon.go.kr

Where

The winning benches will be fabricated and installed in Venice, Italy.

All entries will be showcased on the CC website.

What

The bench design must communicate an idea about gathering, contemplation and conversation across cultures, while exploring the connection between human and environmental awareness. The idea of a bench can inspire multiple and pluralistic interpretations:

Bench as connecting in the present
Bench as portal to a different place

Bench as coveted during the pandemic
Bench as avoided during the pandemic

Bench as a cultural symbol
Bench as solving a practical need

Bench as an individual
Bench as part of a collective

Bench as fixed
Bench as wandering

Value will be placed on entries that showcase the upcycling process. The bench must be able to function during both pandemic and non-pandemic times, be safe and durable for public use without need for maintenance during a three-month period.

When

Entrants are invited to submit their proposals by July 7th, 2021 at 7pm CEST for installation in August.

Bench Materials

Leftover pavilion construction materials to be upcycled into the bench design are provided. The list of materials, as well as their specifications, can be downloaded from the [OpenCall Materials link](#). Additional material may be used with justification.



In the Philippines, a tambayan is a place to socialize and hang out. Shown here is a roofed bench version, with angled walls that anchor against strong winds while doubling as a back rest. Image source: Alexander Furunes

Judging Panel

The competition, supported by the National Pavilion United Arab Emirates La Biennale di Venezia, will be moderated by Architect and Educator, Dalia Hamati.

The jurors consist of the following National Pavilion curators at Biennale Architettura de Venezia, 2021

Fiona Mali, Co-curator of the Albanian National Pavilion.

David Theodore, Co-curator of the Canadian National Pavilion.

Roberta Semeraro, Curator of the Dominican Republic National Pavilion.

Madeleine Kessler, Co-curator of the British National Pavilion.

Hae-Won Shin, Curator of the Korean National Pavilion.

Sara Anwar, Curator of the Pakistan National Pavilion.

Alexander Furunes, Co-curator of the Philippine National Pavilion.

Günther Vogt & Violeta Burckhardt, VOGT Landscape Architects.

Bench Design Evaluation Criteria

Submissions will be judged on the following:

- 1) Originality and demonstration of creativity.
- 2) Relevance to the brief.
- 3) Feasibility of construction.
- 4) Embodiment and expression of how the design upcycles pavilion construction leftover materials.



In Pakistan the Charpai is a hand-crafted object composed of natural materials, combining frame and weave, activating a spectrum of daily activities including play, conversation, and rest. Image source: Faizan Ahmad



In Scotland, a public bench inserts itself into a private garden wall blurring the boundary between public and private. Image source: Madeleine Kessler

Submission Requirements

Submission materials can be downloaded from the [CC open call materials link](#).
The submission should include the following:

1. The completed registration form, [found on the CC website](#), with the form-generated competition entry ID.
2. A single A3 format PDF (portrait or landscape) describing the bench design proposal, including:
 - a. A 200 word design statement; why are you creating this, what's the inspiration behind it and how does your proposal answer the brief?
 - b. 3D Imagery of the design proposal.
 - c. Plan, elevation and section drawings of the design proposal, drawn at 1:20 scale with key dimensions noted.
 - d. Outline of all materials used with a fabrication process diagram.
 - e. The registration ID on the lower right corner.
 - The PDF file size should be 5MB or less.
 - The file name should be labeled:
CC2021_OpenCall_IDnumber.pdf
3. A social media-friendly image of the design entry at 72dpi, in a square-crop jpeg format
 - The file name should be labeled:
CC2021_OpenCall_IDnumber.jpg

The submission materials should be uploaded to the (anonymous) [CC website submission link](#).

Any form of self-identification on PDF/JPG submission will result in disqualification.

Copyright will be retained by the entrant.

For any questions regarding your submission please contact us at:
vbcc.opencall@gmail.com



In Japan, The Engawa is a raised floor surface of a traditional Japanese house that faces outwards, doubling as a bench inviting passersby to rest at its periphery.
Image source: Kozo Kadowaki

Open Call Schedule

- Submissions Open: June 16th, 2021
- Submissions Closed: July 7th, 2021 at 7pm CEST (submissions received after this time will not be considered).
- Winners Notified: July 20th, 2021
- Benches Installed: August, 2021
- Benches Deinstalled: November, 2021

Full Curators Collective Participation List

Albania	Nordic Countries
Armenia	Pakistan
Australia	Peru
Austria	Philippines
Bahrain	Poland
Belgium	Portugal
Brazil	Romania
Canada	Russia
China	Saudi Arabia
Croatia	Serbia
Cyprus	Singapore
Estonia	Slovenia
France	Spain
Denmark	Switzerland
Dominican Republic	Turkey
Germany	United Arab Emirates
Great Britain	United States of
Grenada	America
Hungary	Uruguay
Ireland	Uzbekistan
Israel	Kosovo
Italy	
Iraq	
Japan	
Korea	
Kuwait	
Lebanon	
Lithuania	
Luxembourg	
Mexico	
Montenegro	
Netherlands	