



Vatican Chapels

Pavilion of the Holy See

**16th International Architecture Exhibition | La Biennale di Venezia
Island of San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice**

**opening 24-25 May 2018
on view 26 May – 25 November 2018**

press release

On Tuesday 20 March at 11.00, in the Holy See Press Office at Via della Conciliazione, 54 in Rome, His Eminence Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture, with Paolo Baratta, President of the Biennale di Venezia, and the Curator of the project, Professor Francesco Dal Co, will illustrate the Pavilion of the Holy See for the 16th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale.

In sort of triptych that includes the previous experiences at the Art Biennales of 2013 and 2015, the Holy See takes part for the first time this year in the Venice Architecture Biennale, through the creation of the Vatican Chapels Pavilion curated by Francesco Dal Co.

The project takes its cue from a precise model, the Woodland Chapel built in 1920 by the renowned architect Gunnar Asplund at the Woodland Cemetery in Stockholm, a work featured in an initial exhibition space, illustrated with original drawings of the project.

The theme of the chapel as a place of orientation, encounter, mediation and salutation – as Asplund put it – was suggested to ten architects who were invited to design and build ten chapels in a wooded area at one end of the Venetian island of San Giorgio Maggiore. Therefore this will be a composite, distributed pavilion, visited in stages along an itinerary that is also a spiritual pilgrimage. The chapels created by the architects, thanks to the indispensable support of important contractors and contributors, will be arranged in “an utterly abstract natural setting, marked only by its presence on the lagoon, its openness to the water,” as Dal Co explains, emphasizing the unique, original character

of the initiative that has granted the architects complete freedom to design “without any reference to commonly recognized canons.” Inside the chapels, the shared fulcrum and identifying, unifying feature is represented by the presence of the altar and the lectern.

The choice of the invited architects was based on the decision to focus on designers capable of applying different expressive languages, all strong characters from the standpoint of constructive experimentation, belonging to different generations and hailing from Europe, Australia, Japan, the United States and South America, in order to reflect the universal – indeed “catholic” – nature of the Church.

The architects who have designed the ten chapels and the exhibition space of *Vatican chapels* are: Andrew Berman (USA), Francesco Cellini (Italy), Javier Corvalàn (Paraguay), Eva Prats and Ricardo Flores (Spain), Norman Foster (UK), Terunobu Fujimori (Japan), Sean Godsell (Australia), Carla Juaçaba (Brazil), Smiljan Radic (Chile), Eduardo Souto de Moura (Portugal), while Francesco Magnani and Traudy Pelzel are the designers of the pavilion that will contain the exhibition of the drawings of Gunnar Asplund for the “Skogskapellet,” the “Woodland Chapel” in Stockholm.

The opening of the Pavilion, with the presence of Cardinal Ravasi, will be on Friday 25 May in the gardens of the Island of San Giorgio in Venice. The Pavilion will remain open to the public from 26 May to 25 November 2018.

The catalogue edited by Francesco Dal Co, with essays by Gianfranco Ravasi, Francesco Dal Co and Elisabetta Molteni, published by Electaarchitettura, available from 23 May, will have 280 pages in the format 24 x 22 cm.

Materials are available from the following link:

Beside the brief presentation on our website: <http://www.cultura.va/content/cultura/en/eventi/major/architettura.html> You may obtain more materials and images from <https://qlink.to/cortiledeigentili> (Username: vaticanchapels / Password: biennale2018 / File VATICAN CHAPELS)