



La Biennale di Venezia

19. Mostra
Internazionale
di Architettura

Partecipazioni Nazionali

SONIC INVESTIGATIONS
Valentin Bansac, Mike Fritsch & Alice Loumeau,
with Ludwig Berger & Peter Szendy
Arsenale, Sale d'Armi, 1st Floor, 10.05 – 23.11.2025
LUXEMBOURG PAVILION



LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère de la Culture

Commissioners

Kultur|lx Arts Council
Luxembourg



www.venicebiennale.kultur|lx.lu

Curatorial concept

Sonic investigations is an immersive, joyful and radical invitation to shift focus from the visual to the sonic. In our image-saturated contemporary society, sight often eclipses other senses which are vital to understanding the unseen dynamics of our sensory relationship with environments. Inspired by John Cage's silent song *4'33"*¹, *Sonic Investigations* invites us to close our eyes and actively listen. As a counter-project to the hegemony of images, the act of listening opens up new possibilities for exploring both built and natural environments and to move our attention towards giving voices to more-than-human agencies.

As both a practical and theoretical investigation, the project serves as a tool to re-explore the dense territory of Luxembourg – a significant case study for global western paradigms in territorial planning. The sounds of the region emanating from biological, geological and anthropogenic beings blend into the intertwined soundscape of the Anthropocene and lead to the question: How to reveal the entangled character of specific contemporary situations in Luxembourg?

Through attentive listening and field recordings that capture a range of sounds from diverse environments, *Sonic Investigations* creates a new, uncanny and embodied experience of space, thus emphasising the value of sensorial approaches in spatial practices.

Investigating territories through the medium of sound, the project seeks to craft new narratives that reimagine Luxembourg beyond anthropocentric perspectives. By attuning to the auditory dynamics of the region's densely infrastructured landscapes, the pavilion will provide an immersive space to give voice to the invisible. Drawing inspiration from Murray Schafer's 1960s concept of *Acoustic Ecology*² and Steve Goodman's *Sonic Warfare*³, sound serves as a point of tension, offering alternative ways to perceive space and confront the challenges of a rapidly transforming environment.

1. John Cage, *A Composer's Confession*, National Inter-Collegiate Arts Conference at Vassar College New York, 1948.

2. Raymond Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World*, Random House Inc, 1997.

3. Steve Goodman, *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear*, MIT Press, 2012.

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Sound Piece

Commissioned to sound artist and field recordist Ludwig Berger, an in-situ sound piece is at the centre of the physical pavilion. The composition weaves together recordings from distinctive locations across Luxembourg, inviting listeners to explore space through a new auditory perspective. The field works spur from encounters and site visits with local specialists encompassing a broad spectrum of disciplines including ecology, social science, engineering, history and data science.

Focusing on multi-perspective field recordings, the piece critically examines the dynamics of the Luxembourgish territory and investigates how ongoing sustainable and digital advancements are shaping the country's landscape. By employing sound as a tool for spatial and territorial analysis, the project offers a fresh framework for understanding urban and extra-urban contexts, challenging conventional approaches to territorial planning along with the power structures and limitations it creates. The concept of *Ecotone* – a transitional space between two ecosystems – guides the field recording process, utilising liminal spaces to explore the impact of human intervention on the environment.

A multiplicity of voices are present in the sound piece, from the buzz of data centres to the silence of biodiversity loss, portraying, among other things, forests as spaces of exchange, energy production infrastructures and the architecture of digital technology. By exploring how complex networks coexist, the composition blurs the boundaries between human and nonhuman, natural and artificial, local and global, granting voice to silenced entities and overlooked systems. For media theorist Shannon Mattern, the complex opacity of logistical infrastructure “presents an opportunity for another mode of representation and investigation: listening [...] and a more intimate engagement with such systems”.⁴

4. Shannon Mattern, *The Pulse of Global Passage: Listening to Logistics*, Duke University Press, 2021.

Exhibition

Inspired by Bernhard Leitner's research on *Sound Spaces*, the pavilion provides an immersive environment where visitors are transported away from the abundance of images into a sonic experience. As banal as listening seems, concentrating solely on sound can create a surprisingly uncanny experience.

Sonic Investigations will present a collection of original content, including a sound piece, written texts, and fieldwork documentation. The aim of the project is to utilise the Biennale Architettura 2025 context as a platform for generating knowledge rather than physical objects. Therefore, the pavilion's scenography is designed with minimal intervention, creating an ideal acoustic environment to display the soundscapes recorded in Luxembourg. A sustainable material strategy focuses on rental, reuse, recycling and reusability. The physical materials used consist of standard construction elements with minimal modifications, facilitating reimplementation within circular systems.

Before entering the pavilion, a speaker sparks curiosity for the listener. As visitors exit the immersive space, they will enter a "behind the scenes" area that provides insight into the project's methodology. This space offers an opportunity to explore the creation of the sound piece through "making-of" images, field recording documentation, and other relevant material.

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Book
Ecotones: Investigating Sounds and Territories

Edited in collaboration with philosopher and musicologist Peter Szendy, the book extends the investigations on the relevance of sound in territorial studies outside the context of Luxembourg. Developed as an autonomous book, it offers a curated collection of texts from various disciplines that examine spaces, territories and ecologies through sonic ventures. Much like the sound piece, the book fosters new cultural frameworks and theoretical tools for spatial practitioners.

Structured in three chapters that provide a multiplicity of textual forms including essays, fictions and situated case studies, the book begins by exploring sound as a perceptual medium and the potential for a politics of listening. The second section narrates sonic practices, investigations, methodologies and the sensorial engagement of the listener's body. Finally, the third section enters territories and field experiments, exploring how to portray sonic entanglements within specific contexts.

The book includes contributions by Peter Szendy, Shannon Mattern, Tim Ingold, Soline Nivet and Ariane Wilson, David George Haskell, Ludwig Berger, Philip Samartzis and Madelynne Cornish (Bogong Centre for Sound Culture), Nadine Schütz, Laure Brayer (CRESSON), Julia Grillmayr, Christina Gruber and Sophia Rut (Lobau Listening Comprehensions), Yuri Tuma (Institute for Postnatural Studies), Emma McCormick Goodhart, as well as a fiction piece by Xabi Molia and poems by Laura Vazquez and Cole Swensen. The graphic identity of the project and the book are designed by Pierre Vanni.

Activations

A series of three events will activate and resonate with the pavilion at key moments, such as the opening week, the Pavilion Days and the closing week. These activations extend the reflection on embodied practices and sensorial approaches to space through sound, engaging with what composer Pauline Oliveros calls *Deep Listening*⁵. The programme will include an off-site sound performance by Ludwig Berger with readings from the book, a short residency with Gaia Ginevra Giorgi culminating in a performance within the pavilion's immersive space, and an audio-walk through the Venice lagoon guided by Nicola Di Croce, each offering a unique exploration of the audience's body within soundscapes. The events will create a dialogue between the pavilion's production and the local Italian sound research scene.

Visual identity

The 2025 visual identity is built upon video documentation of the sound exploration process in Luxembourg, created by the curators and invited artists. It uses *Depth Map* rendering technology—an AI-based method for interpreting space and depth—to produce liminal and vaporous visuals. These visuals form a minimalistic iconography that challenges our visual attention while heralding the audio experience of a pavilion designed to disrupt our sensory perception of the territory.

5. Pauline Oliveros, *Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice*, Deep Listening Publications, 2005.

Biographies: curatorial team

Valentin Bansac is an architect, researcher and photographer from France. He previously worked at OMA/AMO with Rem Koolhaas where he participated in *Countryside, the future*, a research and exhibition project at Guggenheim New York. Valentin graduated from the *Experimentation in Arts and Politics* Master's led by Bruno Latour at the Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po). He is currently involved in the two-year research programme, *Domesticated Foodscapes*, at EPFL (École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne), and recently participated in *Organismo: Art in Applied Critical Ecologies*, an initiative facilitated by TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, an international art and advocacy foundation based in Madrid.

Mike Fritsch is a Luxembourgish architect, urbanist and educator working between Luxembourg and France. A practising architect, Mike spent several years with OMA in Rotterdam and now oscillates between large-scale transformation strategies and architectural repairs, including collaborations with l'AUC in Paris. Mike teaches at ENSA-M (École nationale supérieure d'architecture de Marseille), where he manipulates new territorial narratives on the "already there", through adaptations and social interactions.

Alice Loumeau is a French-Canadian architect, researcher and cartographer. She conducts multimedia spatial investigations through writing and cartography, exploring the transformation of territories of the Anthropocene. Alice graduated from the *Experimentation in Arts and Politics* Master's led by Bruno Latour at the Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po). She has worked as an architect in Rotterdam at OMA/AMO, at l'AUC and UR in Paris and Matheson Whiteley in London, and participates in exhibitions, publications and residencies. In the fall of 2024, Alice took part in a residency at the Villa Albertine in Texas, USA.

In 2022, Alice and Valentin co-initiated MATTERS.xyz, a tentacular collective endeavour that explores new territorial narratives through interdisciplinary alliances and multimedia projects.

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Photo *Sonic Investigations* © Simon Nicoloso

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Biographies: Extended Artistic Team

Ludwig Berger is a German sound artist, musician, and educator whose work explores the sonic presences of organisms and places. He focuses on interspecies, geological, and architectural listening in landscapes, with particular attention to microscopic sounds such as insect communication, plant rhythms, and glacial melting. Through installations, compositions, and performances, he uncovers hidden processes and non-human perspectives in various environments. Trained in electroacoustic composition, he was a researcher at the Institute of Landscape Architecture at ETH Zurich and is a certified *Deep Listening* instructor. His practice integrates field recording, scientific inquiry, and speculative listening across disciplines. His work has received recognition from *Prix Ars Electronica*, the *Sound of the Year Awards*, and *A Closer Listen's Best Soundscape Albums of the Decade*. Raised in a village in the Vosges-Palatinat Forest Biosphere Reserve (Germany/France), he is now based in Montreal.

Peter Szendy is a French philosopher and musicologist. He is Professor of Humanities and Comparative Literature at Brown University and musicological advisor for the book series published by the Philharmonie de Paris. His publications include: *Powers of Reading: From Plato to audiobooks* (Zone Books, 2025); *For an Ecology of Images* (Verso, 2025); *The Supermarket of the Visible: Toward a General Economy of Images* (Fordham University Press, 2019); *Of Stigmatology: Punctuation as Experience* (Fordham University Press, 2018); *All Ears: The Aesthetics of Espionage* (Fordham University Press, 2007); *Listen: A History of Our Ears* (Fordham University Press, 2001). He curated the exhibition *The Supermarket of Images* at the museum of the Jeu de Paume in Paris (February-June 2020).

Pierre Vanni is an independent graphic designer from France. Over the past ten years, he has worked with the Pavillon de l'Arsenal (Paris), the Maison de l'Architecture Occitanie (Toulouse) and Arc en r ve (Bordeaux). He is also the artistic director of the magazines *Audimat* (music) and *Habitante* (architecture and literature).

The jury

- Maribel Casas, Director, LUCA – Luxembourg Center for Architecture;
- Michelle Friederici, President, Ordre des Architectes et des Ingénieurs conseils Luxembourg;
- Claudine Hemmer, Visual Arts and Architecture Advisor, Ministry of Culture Luxembourg;
- Marija Marić, Curator of the Luxembourg Pavilion 2023;
- Eléonore Mialonier, Project Manager Architecture/Design/Crafts, Kultur | 1x – Arts Council Luxembourg;
- Marion Waller, General Director, Pavillon de l’Arsenal, Paris;
- Nemanja Zimonjić, Ten Studio, Zürich/Belgrade.

For the 19th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, the Luxembourg Ministry of Culture has appointed Kultur | 1x – Arts Council Luxembourg as commissioner of the Luxembourg Pavilion in collaboration with LUCA – Luxembourg Center for Architecture.

La Biennale di Venezia

La Biennale di Venezia was established in 1895 and is today acknowledged as one of the most prestigious cultural institutions. La Biennale di Venezia stands at the forefront of research and promotion of new contemporary art trends and organizes events in all its specific Departments: Art (1895), Architecture (1980), Cinema (1932), Dance (1999), Music (1930), and Theatre (1934) – alongside research and training activities.

The history of La Biennale di Venezia is documented in its Historical Archives located at Marghera Venice and in its Library at the Giardini's Central Pavilion. The International Art and Architecture Exhibitions have had a new structure since 1998. In recent years, La Biennale di Venezia promoted new Educational activities, training programmes (Biennale College), conferences and panels in its headquarters at Ca' Giustinian.

Luxembourg at the 19th International Architecture Exhibition
- La Biennale di Venezia

Since 1988, Luxembourg has been a regular participant at the art and architecture exhibitions organised by La Biennale di Venezia. After showcasing projects in various spaces, the Luxembourg pavilion found a new home in 1999, and welcomed visitors on the ground floor of Ca' del Duca, along the Canal Grande. In 2003, Luxembourg won the Golden Lion for the best pavilion with the artist Su-Mei Tse. Since 2018, the Luxembourg Pavilion (architecture and art) has been based in the Sale d'Armi, within the Arsenale, after a contract was signed in 2017 between the Luxembourg State and Fondazione La Biennale di Venezia guaranteeing Luxembourg's presence in the Arsenale for the next 20 years.

The 19th International Architecture Exhibition will be held from Saturday 10 May to Sunday 23 November 2025 (pre-opening May 8 and 9), curated by the architect and engineer Carlo Ratti, who has commented: "To face a burning world, architecture must harness all the intelligence around us. I am honored and humbled to have the opportunity to curate the Biennale Architettura 2025".

About the commissioners

Kultur | 1x – Arts Council Luxembourg was established in 2020 as an initiative of the Luxembourg Ministry of Culture for the support, promotion and dissemination of the Luxembourg culture and creativity.

Kultur | 1x has since become a key partner in the development and promotion of professionals from the following sectors: architecture, design and crafts; multimedia and digital arts; visual arts; literature and publishing; music; and performing arts.

Since 2022, Kultur | 1x has been appointed Commissioner of the Luxembourg Pavilion at the Venice Biennale by the Ministry of Culture.

The LUCA – Luxembourg Center for Architecture is a private, non-profit foundation whose main mission is to promote architectural quality and culture. Working in close collaboration with the main local players in the fields of architecture, urban planning, engineering, and heritage (OAI, INPA, MArch Uni.lu), LUCA addresses, through a multidisciplinary and multiscalar approach, the issues raised by the production of the built environment.

As the leading player in architectural culture in Luxembourg, LUCA has positioned itself as a platform for exchange and debate on architecture and its related disciplines. Each year, LUCA implements a cultural programme adapted to the diversity of its audiences: lectures, debates, exhibitions, workshops, study trips, screenings, etc.

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Luxembourg Pavilion
Arsenale, Sale d'Armi, 1st floor
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Sonic Investigations

Commissioners appointed by the Luxembourg Ministry of Culture:
Kultur | 1x – Arts Council Luxembourg
LUCA – Luxembourg Center for Architecture

Curators
Valentin Bansac, Mike Fritsch, Alice Loumeau

Exhibitors
Valentin Bansac, Ludwig Berger, Anthea Caddy, Mike Fritsch, Alice Loumeau, Peter Szendy

Visual identity
Pierre Vanni

With the kind support of
CNA - Centre National de l'Audiovisuel, Luxembourg
Luxembourg Embassy in Rome

Acknowledgements
Musée national d'histoire naturelle, Luxembourg
University of Luxembourg (Regenerative Social-Ecological Systems)
ANF (Nature and Forest Agency)
Enovos
SEO
SES - Société Européenne des Satellites
LuxConnect
POLYTEC

Official opening of the Luxembourg Pavilion
Thursday 8 May, 4 p.m.

Curators' tour of the Luxembourg Pavilion
Thursday 8 May, 2 p.m.

Preview days of the 19th International Architecture Exhibition - La Biennale di Venexia
Thursday 8 and Friday 9 May

Exhibition
10.05–23.11.2023

Opening hours
from 10 May to 28 September: 11 a.m. – 8 p.m.
from 29 September to 23 November: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Closed on Mondays (except on 12/05, 2/06, 21/07, 1/09, 20/10, 17/11)

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