The Venice Biennale

The Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia is responsible for the Swiss contributions at the Venice Biennale of Art and Architecture. Switzerland presents its exhibition in a permanent, purpose-built pavilion, which is located in the ‘Giardini della Biennale’ in Venice. About 90 national pavilions are present at the Art Biennale. Additionally, a thematic exhibition is dedicated to a current theme, chosen by the artistic director. This year’s Biennale is entitled ‘The Milk of Dreams’. In her statement, the appointed artistic director Cecilia Alemani writes:

“The Milk of Dreams takes its title from a book by Leonora Carrington (1917–2011) in which the Surrealist artist describes a magical world where life is constantly re-envisioned through the prism of the imagination. It is a world where everyone can change, be transformed, become something or someone else; a world set free, brimming with possibilities. But it is also the allegory of a century that imposed intolerable pressure on the very definition of the self, forcing Carrington into a life of exile: locked up in mental hospitals, an eternal object of fascination and desire, yet also a figure of startling power and mystery, always fleeing the strictures of a fixed, coherent identity. When asked about her birth, Carrington would say she was the product of her mother’s encounter with a machine, suggesting the same bizarre union of human, animal, and mechanical that marks much of her work.”

The Swiss Pavilion in the Giardini della Biennale in Venice, built in 1952 by architect Bruno Giacometti

The International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia is due to open in April 2022 and last until November 2022.
The Swiss project for the Venice Biennale 2022

For the 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia (23 April - 27 November 2022) the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia appointed artist Latifa Echakhch to represent Switzerland at Biennale Arte 2022. Echakhch conceived and realized the exhibition titled ‘The Concert’ in collaboration with percussionist and composer Alexandre Babel and curator Francesco Stocchi.

The exhibition plays with harmonies and dissonances, with the mixed feelings of expectation, fulfilment, and disappearance. The sculptures are part of an orchestrated and enveloping experience, a rhythmic and spatial proposal that allows viewers to experience a fuller perception of time and of their own body.

“We want visitors to leave the exhibition with the same feeling they have when they come out of a concert. That this rhythm, those fragments of memory, still echo,” says Latifa Echakhch. “The Biennale is an eruption of artistic greatness every time. A wave that culminates in a cathartic grandeur only to then recede, leaving a deserted landscape of abandoned buildings.”

For more Information on the project: www.biennials.ch.
Intensifying the mediation work for visitors of the Swiss Pavilion

Currently, the local team of the Swiss Pavilion, is composed of local mediators. The team is led by a local pavilion manager. Pro Helvetia would like to increase the impact of the Swiss exhibition for visitors and strengthen its mediation, by integrating specialised student mediators within the framework of an internship or work experience for students from Switzerland. At the same time Swiss students gain the opportunity to become part of the Biennale Team during six weeks and thus, undertake a unique work experience in Venice and encounter contemporary art from all around the world.

The selected participants for the programme will receive training by the Pro Helvetia Biennale Team in order to fully understand the project and be prepared to mediate the exhibition to visitors of the Swiss pavilion. They will be responsible for introducing the exhibition to both individuals and visiting groups. They will be able to answer questions regarding the Swiss exhibition and the 2022 Biennale more generally.

Structure of the work assignment as mediator and exhibition supervisor

Internship as exhibition mediator and exhibition supervisor in the Swiss Pavilion at the Venice Biennale during 6 weeks in the time span from 18 April to 27 November 2022.

The six-week assignment with an employment level of 80% is possible under the following conditions:

1. As an internship during studies recognised by your school/university
2. As an individual work experience placement during the summer break, during an intermediate semester, or just after your diploma
How to apply

The application and first selection will happen through the students’ home schools/universities. The interested students may send a **motivation letter and CV to the school’s contact** address communicated in the school’s job advertisement and **suggest the preferred time frames** (see below).

Pro Helvetia is responsible for the final selection, considering students from several Swiss schools. The deadlines for the applications are communicated by the schools. The final selection of the participants by Pro Helvetia will be made in March. The students will be informed individually by email.

The Pro Helvetia team will then provide the students with reading materials and documentation on the upcoming exhibition and literature on the Biennale’s main theme in order to prepare for their mediation mandate.

The participants of the programme will receive a working agreement and the necessary social insurance for the time of their work in Venice. A valid Swiss health and accident insurance is also required and must be shown prior to the assignment.

There will be an information event, held by Pro Helvetia and the nominated team, to prepare them for their upcoming work in Venice and inform them on the next steps.

Pro Helvetia will help the students with tips for accommodation. However, it is the students’ responsibility to organize their own accommodation.

**Time frames**

The applicants can choose between the following fixed time frames. The applicants should check if ever possible more than one option to increase the chances of being considered. The agreed time frames are binding:

**Slot 1:** 18 April – 29 May (this slot starts during the Preview days of the Biennale)

**Slot 2:** 17 May – 27 June

**Slot 3:** 7 June – 18 July

**Slot 4:** 5 July – 15 August

**Slot 5:** 19 July – 29 August

**Slot 6:** 18 August – 28 September

**Slot 7:** 5 September – 16 October

**Slot 8:** 29 September – 9 November

**Slot 9:** 18 October – 27 November
Requirements

- Fluent English and at least one Swiss national language. Italian is an advantage
- Willingness to thoroughly familiarise with the exhibition topic and the main topic of the Biennale
- Communicative personality and willingness to present the exhibition actively to visitors
- Willingness to organise own accommodation in Venice (room / student apartment, PH will help with tips and local network)
- Willingness to regularly perform small supportive tasks for the maintenance of the pavilion and the exhibition
- Willingness to do statistical work (visitor numbers, etc.)
- Ability to work in a team and be punctual and reliable

Duties

- Actively understand and present the exhibition content to visitors
- Guided tours for groups and individuals
- Greeting and introducing visitors during their visit and proactively engaging with them in answering questions
- Support the local team in opening / closing the pavilion and maintain the exhibition
- Being able to detect issues and technical problems, and flag them to the pavilion manager
- Carrying out statistical surveys on the mediation activities
- Supporting the pavilion management during the opening/closing ceremony of the Biennale, during panel discussions and other side events in the context of the Swiss participation at the Biennale

Remuneration:

A remuneration (Italian salary) is offered. More information to follow.

For more information please contact: intern-biennials@prohelvetia.ch