

PRESS RELEASE

The artist Maria Eichhorn has been invited by curator Yilmaz Dziewior to create the German contribution to the 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia.

In her project *Relocating a Structure. German Pavilion 2022, 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia*, Maria Eichhorn examines the eventful history of the German Pavilion since the beginnings of the Biennale and the powerful resistance art demonstrates when it focuses on social conditions.

Relocating a Structure consists of a number of interacting components. Eichhorn's initial idea was to relocate the German Pavilion for the duration of the Biennale and then to faithfully reassemble it on its original site. The temporary relocation of the building would leave an empty space, increasing the undeveloped area of the Giardini, originally designed as a public park, as well as the visual and spatial environment around the adjacent pavilions. The German Pavilion's absence would open up space for movement, reflection, and an examination of the conditions to which art is exposed in the context of the Biennale with its national pavilions.

The German Pavilion represents a challenge for artists on several completely different levels. With every attempt at deconstruction, one is confronted with it yet again. I regard the German Pavilion not as isolated, but as part of an ensemble and engaged in interplay with other pavilions and other country participations in terms of national-territorial and geopolitical, global-economic, and ecological developments.

—Maria Eichhorn

Eichhorn's reflections on the relocation of the German Pavilion were accompanied by an analysis of the actual physical structure of the pavilion, which principally consists of two buildings: the Bavarian Pavilion built in 1909 and the extensions carried out by the Nazis in 1938, as seen today. Where is the original structure located? Where do the extensions and the reconstruction begin?

Eichhorn had the foundations of the pavilion excavated and layers of plaster removed from its walls to expose the joins between the earlier structure and the remodeled building. In order to comprehend the radical reconstruction and extension work, she also had the outlines of the window openings and doorways from 1909 laid bare. In this way, the original, hidden pavilion has been rendered visible and tangible.

Explanatory wall texts have been added to the exposed areas in English, German, and Italian. The texts were drawn on the wall using pencil and stencils to create fine outlines that were then filled in using a brush and white paint.

Not only were the transitions between the original architecture and the extension and reconstruction work revealed, but also the shift in dimensions. While the proportions of

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the Bavarian Pavilion were oriented to a human scale, the 1938 additions to the side rooms, the main room, and especially the facade dwarf visitors, producing an intimidating effect.

The other components of *Relocating a Structure* include a comprehensive publication and guided tours to historical places of resistance and remembrance in Venice, conducted twice weekly during the Biennale. The publication brings together essays and studies on the history of the Biennale and the German Pavilion, as well as on broader aspects embracing art history, philosophy, urban sociology, and politics. In addition, a brochure has been published to accompany the guided tours of places commemorating the anti-fascist resistance and the deportation and murder of the Jewish population during the German occupation from 1943 to 1945. For these tours, Eichhorn collaborated with the Istituto veneziano per la storia della Resistenza e della società contemporanea (Iveser).

The title of Maria Eichhorn's project, *Relocating a Structure*, can be interpreted in a figurative sense. "Relocating a structure" to a new context may refer not only to the architecture and history of the German Pavilion, but also to fundamental issues of human existence and ethical responsibility.

—Yilmaz Dziewior

The German contribution to the 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia is realized on behalf of the Federal Foreign Office and in cooperation with ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen.