

# ARCHINFO

ARKKITEHTUURIN TIEDOTUSKESKUS • ARCHINFO FINLAND

## OPEN CALL FOR EXHIBITION PROPOSALS

Pavilion of Finland

18th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia

20 May – 26 November 2023

### **Application Guidelines**

Stage 1: 21 March – 24 April 2022

Stage 2: 18 May – 14 June 2022

Interviews: 21–22 June 2022

# OPEN CALL IN BRIEF

Archinfo Finland seeks for exhibition proposals to be presented in the Pavilion of Finland at the 18th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. The Biennale Architettura runs from 20 May to 26 November 2023 (pre-opening 18–19 May).

The open call welcomes proposals from curators or multicultural and cross-disciplinary teams with at least one member from Finland. We are looking forward to a wide range of exhibition proposals that stem from topical issues facing the future and are relevant to Finnish architecture while resonating with a wide international audience and the global architecture community. The proposal is wished to reflect the ways in which architecture can support inclusivity, wellbeing, sustainability and diversity. The selected proposal will be suited for presentation in the context of the Venice Biennale and take into consideration the special nature of the Pavilion itself.

The selection panel comprises [Taru Elfving](#) (FI), PhD, Curator, Director of CAA Contemporary Art Archipelago, [Andres Lepik](#) (DE), Director of the Architecture Museum at Technical University of Munich (TUM), Professor of architectural history and curatorial practice, [Helena Sandman](#) (FI), ArtD, Architect, based in Helsinki, and [Katarina Siltavuori](#) (FI), Commissioner, Director of Archinfo Finland (chair of panel).

The selection process is organised in two stages:

## Stage 1: Open Call

21 March – 24 April: Concept proposals

## Stage 2: Shortlist

18 May – 14 June: Further development of up to six proposals (remuneration 500 euros)

21–22 June: Meetings with the selection panel for project presentation and interview

Following the selection of the winning proposal by the end of June and appointment of the curator or team, work toward the realisation of the exhibition starts in July 2022 and runs until the opening of the Biennale in May 2023. In all, the project continues until the closure of the Biennale in November 2023.

Archinfo Finland is responsible for overall project management in close collaboration with the appointed curator or team. The project has a starting budget of 40,000 euros towards exhibition expenses including curatorial and design fees.

Please read these guidelines carefully before submitting your application.

**Link to the Open Call website:** [archinfo.fi/en/venice-biennale/open-call](https://archinfo.fi/en/venice-biennale/open-call)

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# 1 BIENNALE ARCHITETTURA

The International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia has been organised in Venice since 1980. It alternates with the International Art Exhibition, which was established in 1895. The architecture exhibition has developed into the most esteemed international arena for showcasing architecture, with visitor figures growing every year. The last edition in 2021 had in total more than 300,000 visitors.

The Biennale takes place at two official sites in Venice: Arsenale and Giardini. The Giardini houses 29 permanent national pavilions and the Central Pavilion, which presents the Biennale main exhibition.

The 18th International Architecture Exhibition runs from 20 May to 26 November 2023 (pre-opening 18–19 May). La Biennale di Venezia has appointed architectural academic, educator and best-selling novelist [Lesley Lokko](#) (Ghana/Scotland) to curate the 2023 exhibition. Among her many achievements, Lokko is the founder and director of the African Futures Institute, a postgraduate school of architecture and public events platform in Accra, Ghana.

“After two of the most difficult and divisive years in living memory, architects have a unique opportunity to show the world what we do best: put forward ambitious and creative ideas that help us imagine a more equitable and optimistic future in common,” stated Lokko in December 2021.

Lokko will curate the main exhibition and be responsible for the theme of the Biennale, expected to be announced in summer 2022. Read more about the curator on the Biennale website through [this link](#).

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## 2 PAVILION OF FINLAND

The Pavilion of Finland is situated in the Giardini pavilion park in Venice. The historically and culturally prestigious pavilion building, completed in 1956, was designed by architect [Alvar Aalto](#) (1898–1976). The wedge-shaped structure was assembled of timber wall and roof units prefabricated in Finland and transported to Italy. The design was such that the structure could be dismantled and stored between exhibitions or re-erected on another site. However, the Pavilion has remained in place since it was first assembled in the summer of 1956.

The Pavilion has undergone three major restorations, the last in 2012, following damage caused by a large tree falling on the building. In 2022, a small staff room was built inside the Pavilion, according to Aalto’s original drawings for a “Commissioner’s room”. The size of the Pavilion is approximately 80 square metres, of which 75 m<sup>2</sup> is reserved for the exhibition.

Read more about the Pavilion on Archinfo Finland’s website through [this link](#).

### 3 COMMISSIONER

The commissioner for Finland's national representation is appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, which is the main funder of the exhibition. Since 2018, Archinfo Finland is the appointed commissioner and organiser of the architecture exhibition for the Pavilion of Finland.

Archinfo is a collaboration and intermediary organisation in the field of architecture. We are one of the eight information centres in the arts supported by the State of Finland. Our mission is to make Finnish architecture visible and known worldwide and to increase the social impact of architecture.

In 2018, the Pavilion of Finland presented the exhibition Mind-Building, which was a study of over 100 years of Finnish library architecture leading up to the opening of the new Helsinki Central Library Oodi in December 2018. Based on the original idea put forward by Archinfo and curated by Dr Anni Vartola, the exhibition received a record-breaking number of visitors, 90,000, and was enthusiastically received among international media and the architectural community alike. Read more at [mind-building.fi](http://mind-building.fi).

Due to the pandemic, the 2020 Biennale Architettura was postponed to 2021. For the first time, Finland's exhibition concept was selected through an open call process, which resulted in New Standards. Curated by Laura Berger, Philip Tidwell and Kristo Vesikansa, the exhibition presented the history and legacy of Puutalo Oy (Timber Houses Ltd.), a Finnish industrial enterprise that was established in 1940 to house war refugees and expanded quickly into a worldwide exporter of prefabricated wooden houses. Again, the Pavilion of Finland broke records with visitor numbers reaching 107,000. Read more at [newstandards.info](http://newstandards.info).

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### 4 SELECTION PANEL

The exhibition for the Pavilion of Finland will be chosen by a selection panel comprising:

Taru Elfving (FI), PhD, Curator, Director of CAA Contemporary Art Archipelago

Andres Lepik (DE), Director of the Architecture Museum at Technical University of Munich (TUM),  
Professor for architectural history and curatorial practice

Helena Sandman (FI), ArtD, Architect, based in Helsinki

Katarina Siltavuori (FI), Commissioner, Director of Archinfo Finland (chair)

The selection panel reserves the right to consult expert advisors if necessary. Moreover, the right is reserved not to appoint any applicant, to reissue the brief, and to extend the period for applications if needed.

## 5 SELECTION CRITERIA

### Proposal criteria

With the 2023 exhibition in the Pavilion of Finland, we are looking forward to a wide range of proposals that stem from topical issues facing the future and are relevant to Finnish architecture while resonating with a wide international audience and the global architecture community. We wish the exhibition to reflect the ways in which architecture can support inclusivity, wellbeing, sustainability and diversity.

The selected proposal should be original and suited for presentation in the context of the Biennale Architettura while taking into consideration the scale and limitations of the exhibition pavilion itself. Furthermore, the concept of the proposal shall be thoroughly thought out to lead to producing a sustainable exhibition.

We are looking for exhibition proposals that

- reflect the ways in which architecture can support inclusivity, wellbeing, sustainability and diversity
- are topical and engaging projects of architectural culture in or relating to Finland
- are relevant to current international architectural discourse
- will lead to a sustainable and socially responsible exhibition production
- are deliverable for the Pavilion of Finland within the available budget (see p. 8)
- take into account the possibilities for outreach back in Finland.

### Applicant criteria

We will accept submissions from curators or multicultural and cross-disciplinary teams with at least one member who is a Finnish citizen or based in Finland. The team may include, e.g., curators, architects, researchers, writers, artists and critics. If required, Archinfo Finland may assist in identifying curatorial support for the selected project.

If the applicant is a working group, the team shall select one person to be the project leader who also acts as the contact person. The project leader should have experience in working with projects of similar qualities and extent.

The applicant shall be committed to realising the project within the agreed schedule and budget and participating in regular meetings with Archinfo Finland.

We are looking for a curator or team that

- understands the context of exhibiting architecture
- has experience in exhibiting, curating or working on exhibitions
- wishes to develop architecture exhibition practices
- engages sustainable practices in the exhibition process
- is able to produce clear and engaging writing about the project
- is confident in public speaking in English
- can commit to and participate in a significant press and marketing campaign.

## 6 HOW TO APPLY

### Stage 1: Concept proposals 21 March – 24 April

Stage 1 submission consists of

- Application Form saved as a PDF or Word document
- A3 format PDF file (max. 3 pages and 30 Mb) of visual material

The information to be filled out in the Application Form includes

- working title of the project
- one-liner describing the idea (max. 200 characters including spaces)
- description of the project (max. 3,000 characters)
- project leader, short biography and team composition including description
- motivation for taking part in the Open Call
- ideas for possible collaborators or partners
- description of how the proposal meets the criteria outlined on page 5.

The PDF file containing the visual material should not exceed 30 Mb. The A3 material may include, e.g. drawings, photos, collages or mood boards illustrating the idea. No precise technical drawings are required at this stage. However, it is crucial to keep in mind the feasibility of the project. All submission documents shall be written in English.

The files shall be named using the working title of the project, as stated here: "VB23\_Stage1\_Working\_Title\_form" and "VB23\_Stage1\_Working\_Title\_visuals". Both documents shall be submitted via email, using WeTransfer if needed, to [venice@archinfo.fi](mailto:venice@archinfo.fi).

By submitting the Application Form, the applicant agrees to the processing of personal data as stated in Archinfo's Privacy Policy through [this link](#).

The deadline for submitting Stage 1 proposals is 24 April 2022 by midnight (GMT+2).

### Stage 2: Developed proposals 18 May – 14 June

In Stage 2, the shortlisted concept proposals (up to six applicants) will be further developed into a more detailed exhibition plan. Shortlisted applicants will be offered a flat fee of 500 euros for their participation in Stage 2.

Shortlisted applicants will be notified of their selection and invited to Stage 2 by 11 May. The applicants will be provided with individual feedback and instructions for developing their proposal by 18 May.

Stage 2 submission consists of

- text file (PDF or Word document) including
  - core message (max. 500 characters)
  - further developed project description (max. 4,000 characters)
  - rough estimate of budget breakdown
  - thoughts on exhibition publication and programming
- A3 format PDF file (3–6 pages, max. 30 Mb) illustrating how the exhibition concept will be installed in the pavilion.

The deadline for submitting Stage 2 proposals is 14 June 2022 by midnight (GMT+2).

## Interviews and project presentations 21–22 June

Meetings with the selection panel are organised in Helsinki on 21–22 June 2022. Representatives of each shortlisted applicant are invited to present their proposal. The 10-minute presentation is followed by an interview with the selection panel.

Following the meetings, the selection panel will choose the winning project and Archinfo Finland appoints the curator or team to deliver the exhibition by the end of June.

## Questions

Questions concerning the practicalities of the Open Call may be sent by 28 March to [venice@archinfo.fi](mailto:venice@archinfo.fi). All questions and answers will be published (anonymously) by 1 April at [archinfo.fi/en/venice-biennale/open-call](https://archinfo.fi/en/venice-biennale/open-call).

### **Material Bank: [tinyurl.com/Open-Call-Material-Bank-VB23](https://tinyurl.com/Open-Call-Material-Bank-VB23)**

- Application Form (Word document) – to be downloaded and filled in locally
- Application Guidelines
- Drawings and photos of the Pavilion
- Pavilion Manual including information on restrictions for interior and outside use

## **7 SCHEDULE**

<b>Selection:</b>	21 March . . . . .	Stage 1: Open Call for proposals
	28 March . . . . .	Deadline for questions
	1 April . . . . .	Questions and answers published on the Open Call website
	24 April . . . . .	Deadline for Stage 1 submissions by midnight (GMT+2)
	11 May . . . . .	Shortlisted applicants invited to Stage 2
	18 May . . . . .	Stage 2 begins: applicants provided with guidelines
	14 June . . . . .	Deadline for Stage 2 submissions by midnight (GMT+2)
	21–22 June . . . . .	Stage 2: meetings with the selection panel
	23 June . . . . .	Shortlisted applicants notified of the final selection
<b>Production:</b>	June . . . . .	Appointing the team
	July . . . . .	Project defined and agreement signed; design begins
	August . . . . .	Pre-production with regular team meetings begins
	November . . . . .	Deadline for curatorial concept
	January 2023 . . . . .	Deadline for exhibitors and artworks and installation layout
	February–April . . . . .	Production, PR campaign and installation
	17–20 May . . . . .	Media day, pre-opening and opening in Venice
	May–November . . . . .	PR campaign and programming
	26 November . . . . .	Biennale Architettura closes

## 8 ROLES AND RESOURCES

As commissioner, Archinfo Finland appoints and commissions the curator or team and approves the final exhibition design. Archinfo Finland is responsible for overall production in close collaboration with the appointed curator or team. The roles and responsibilities will be set in an exhibition agreement, which will be produced in July 2022.

Archinfo Finland provides

- project management and programming
- management of the graphic design of all visual and printed materials
- publisher for the production and distribution of the exhibition publication
- PR, media relations and marketing, including publicity material, e.g. photography and digital content
- travel and accommodation
- logistics and transportation
- producing and installing the exhibition
- control of the project budget and fundraising.

The appointed curator or team is required to

- develop the exhibition concept to be approved by Archinfo Finland
- deliver the final exhibition design and manuscript by the agreed deadline
- produce written and visual material for PR and marketing purposes
- produce a concept and material for an exhibition publication
- take part in regular production meetings from July 2022 to May 2023
- follow the exhibition budget and take part in fundraising
- instruct and supervise the installation at the pavilion
- take part in the programming and act as a spokesperson leading up and throughout the Biennale
- be present in Venice during the media opening and pre-opening 17–19 May 2023.

### Fees and budget

During the application process, a flat fee of 500 euros will be offered to the applicants selected to Stage 2 to cover the proposal development expenses.

Archinfo Finland allocates the appointed team a starting budget of 40,000 euros towards exhibition expenses including curatorial and design fees, as part of the overall project budget. In Stage 2, all exhibition proposals should include a rough estimate of budget breakdown. The budget will not include installation, transport, travel and accommodation, PR and marketing or production and invigilation staff, which will be covered by the overall budget of the project.

The main funder of the exhibition is the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland. Additional support comes from partners and patrons. The appointed curator or team is required to assist Archinfo Finland in fundraising for the exhibition. This will include identifying partners suited for the selected project, taking part in application or negotiation processes and attending possible partner events.

