



Pavilion of Switzerland at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

Moving Backwards

Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz

Curator: Charlotte Laubard

Commissioner: Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia – Marianne Burki, Head of Visual Arts;
Sandi Paucic, Project Manager; Rachele Giudici Legittimo, Project Coordinator

Press conference: Wednesday, 8 May 2019, 2pm

Official opening: Thursday, 9 May 2019, 2.30pm

Exhibition: 11 May to 24 November 2019

Pre-opening: 8 to 10 May 2019

Venue: Pavilion of Switzerland, Giardini della Biennale, Venice

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At the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, artist duo Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz will transform the Swiss Pavilion into a vast immersive installation. Entitled «Moving Backwards», the project explores, in a time of massive withdrawal, resistance practices, combining guerrilla techniques, postmodern choreography and urban dance, as well as elements of queer underground culture.

Curator Charlotte Laubard, who is responsible for the Swiss Pavilion at the Biennale Arte 2019, has invited artists Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz to present an installation, which includes a new video work. Entitled «Moving Backwards», the exhibition reflects on the current political situation, characterised by its regressive and reactionary forces of closure towards the other and towards difference. Faced with the scale of this recent backlash, the artists, instead of practicing an outright opposition, suggest «backward movements» as a potential tool for producing alternative forms of resistance and action.

Since the beginning of their collaboration in 2007, Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz have been continuously reflecting on the visibility and the existence of the other beyond the binarisms and categories that define our identities. Through filming and staging their performances in installations, the artist duo seeks to reveal what, in the constructed and composite character of identities, can undo our stereotypical representations in order to consider new relationships and to invent new modes of coexistence. As Charlotte Laubard observes: «*Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz conceive their installations as devices that lead us to renegotiate our representations. Their work produces a double inversion: it introduces gestures, images and objects that refer to current political and social issues. At the same time, it grants these elements a high degree of autonomy so that they can interact with the public and establish interrelations that challenge our modes of perception and identification.*»

For the Biennale Arte 2019, the artists will develop a large film installation involving performers Julie Cunningham, Werner Hirsch, Latifa Laâbissi, Marbles Jumbo Radio and



Nach who will experiment with backward movements. Invited to enter a dense choreography generated by body movements, film loops and animated objects, visitors will participate in strange encounters, in an environment reminiscent of a nightclub. Their physical and sensory experience will be complemented by moments of reflection on the Pavilion's theme in the form of a free journal containing statements written by a dozen authors from the fields of philosophy, art, political activism, post-colonial and queer theories.

Project journal and catalogue:

In addition to a project journal, which is to be distributed at the Pavilion, a catalogue will be on sale. It includes statements, installation views, and essays in order to deepen and extend reflections on the exhibition.

Further information and press images are available on:

www.biennials.ch and www.prohelvetia.ch

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Note to editors

Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz

Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz have been working together in Berlin since 2007. Their films capture performances in front of the camera that choreograph the tension between visibility and opacity. They upset normative historical narratives and conventions of spectatorship, via figures and actions that are staged, layered and re-imagined across time. Their performers are choreographers, artists and musicians, with whom they are engaging in long-term conversations about the conditions of performance, the violent history of visibility and the pathologisation of bodies, while also exploring companionship, glamour and resistance. Their most recent work, «Telepathic Improvisation», featuring a performance by Marwa Arsanios, MPA, Ginger Brooks Takahashi and Werner Hirsch, premiered in 2017 at Participant, New York. «Silent», including a performance by Aérea Negrot, premiered at the Biennale of Moving Images in Geneva in November 2016. In 2015, «I Want», with a performance by Sharon Hayes, was shown in their solo show at Kunsthalle Zürich and Nottingham Contemporary. Recent solo exhibitions include «Telepathic Improvisation» at the Centre culturel suisse in Paris (2018) and CAMH Houston (2017); «Portrait of an Eye» at Kunsthalle Zürich (2015); «Loving, Repeating» at Kunsthalle Wien (2015); «Patriarchal Poetry» at Badischer Kunstverein (2013); «Aftershow» at CAPC Bordeaux (2013); «Toxic Play in Two Acts» at South London Gallery (2012); and «Contagieux! Rapports contre la normalité» at the Centre d'Art Contemporain Geneva (2011).

Charlotte Laubard

Appointed curator of the 2019 Swiss Pavilion by the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, on the recommendation of an independent jury, Charlotte Laubard is Professor and Head of the Visual Arts Department at HEAD – Geneva School of Art and Design. Her current research focuses on the uses and value of art, the impact of digital technology in a society undergoing profound cultural change and self-directed learning practices. Prof. Laubard is also the co-founder of the «Société suisse des Nouveaux commanditaires» (New Patrons), an association aiming to transform the way artistic commissions are carried out in the public domain by enabling people from all cultural and professional backgrounds to take responsibility for commissioning a work from an artist for the general good. She contributes to this venture as a project leader and mediator.



Charlotte Laubard holds a master's degree in art history. She worked for several art institutions (MoMA-PS1, New York; Castello di Rivoli, Turin; Pinchuk Art Centre, Kiev) before directing CAPC, the contemporary art museum in Bordeaux, from 2006 to 2013, where she developed a rich programme featuring some 50 temporary exhibitions and over 200 multidisciplinary events. In 2017, she served as artistic director of the Nuit Blanche in Paris, which brought together some thirty projects with the ambition to «Work together».

The Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia

The Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia is responsible for the Swiss contributions to the Art and Architecture Exhibitions of La Biennale di Venezia as the commissioner of the exhibition at the Pavilion of Switzerland. Mandated by the Swiss Confederation, the Swiss Arts Council promotes artistic creation in Switzerland, contributes to cultural exchange at home, promotes the dissemination of Swiss culture abroad and fosters cultural outreach. Switzerland has been present at the Biennale Arte since 1920 and at the Biennale Architettura since 1991. Two independent juries, commissioned by the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, are responsible for making recommendations regarding the nominations for both Exhibitions of La Biennale di Venezia. The nominees are appointed by the Director of Pro Helvetia.

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