

For the Pavilion of Iceland at the 55th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia in 2013, Katrín Sigurdardóttir has designed a large-scale sculptural intervention for the Lavanderia—The Old Laundry at Palazzo Zenobio. The artist has created a floating platform covered by an ornate, baroque-inspired design, measuring approximately 90 square meters. The outline of the architectural structure takes its form from the footprint of a typical 18th century pavilion. It intersects both interior and exterior spaces of this auxiliary building in the garden of the Palace, with two sets of stairs for access by visitors. The project is born from a career-long exploration of distance and memory and their embodiments in architecture, urbanism, cartography, and landscape. Sigurdardóttir's work often includes highly detailed renditions of places, both real and fictional, that incorporate an element of surprise. The piece will travel to the Reykjavík Art Museum and then to the SculptureCenter in Long Island City, New York. Sigurdardóttir will adapt the sculpture to the new architecture of each location, yet it will maintain its original footprint as well as the cut-out memory of the walls of the previous sites.

Upon entering the work, visitors will first climb the stairs leading from the garden to the platform, and then bend down to pass through the truncated doors of the building. The work extends beyond the confines of the Lavanderia's walls on three sides and allows the public to navigate diverse interior and exterior spaces. Visitors can also climb stairs to the roof of the building and look down on the sculpture's large footprint and intricate patterns. The size of this architectural piece dwarfs the building, and thus takes on a familiar theme in Sigurdardóttir's oeuvre, the playful manipulation of scale. Notably, Iceland lacks its own pavilion in the Giardini, and therefore the floating, disembodied structure of Sigurdardóttir's sculpture takes on a special significance. The outline of the form becomes a metaphor for the outline of the national space.

By superimposing an elevated, highly decorative surface onto the Lavanderia, Sigurdardóttir brings the two buildings, the pavilion and the laundry, together. The pavilion, symbolizing the opulence and leisure of the owner, is contrasted by the laundry's associations with labor. The surface of the platform replicates artisanal tile construction and is handmade by the artist and her team. Sigurdardóttir chose to use art materials instead of traditional flooring materials to emphasize the understanding of the surface as a sculpture that the viewer walks upon and wears down with every step.

Katrín Sigurdardóttir explains, "This work is about drawing. It's about labor, and it's about spatial immersion. I wanted to create a work that could be entered from different points, navigated in multiple ways, and viewed from several levels, so that the visitor is both in the work and at the same time able to observe herself in the work. This work is both new and familiar, familiar in that it will

key into a twofold perception—to experience and concurrently observe oneself experiencing—a kind of existential trickery that I have played with in previous works. It is new in that it's my first full-scale architectural interpretation."

Adds Dorothée Kirch, Director of The Icelandic Art Center, "Sigurdardóttir has in recent years achieved substantial acclaim in the domestic and international art scene where her ever-more-elaborate projects have been well received. She holds a unique position among Icelandic artists, particularly in terms of her diverse sculptures and installations that are based on a strong conceptual foundation."

Eva Heisler, American poet and art critic, writes in the exhibition catalogue, "The raised floor, extending throughout the space and projecting outside the building, appears to slice through the Lavanderia. From the roof, guests look down on the tiled platform as it extends from the building on three sides... rather like seepage of the interior. Sigurdardóttir's viewing platform is so intricate that it is the view. Traversing the decorative surface enhances awareness of the body's relationship to space as one struggles to make sense of the building's altered scale and the distraction of pattern at one's feet."

Sigurdardóttir has worked with two curators in realizing the exhibition, Mary Ceruti and Ilaria Bonacossa. Ceruti is Executive Director and Chief Curator at SculptureCenter. Located in Long Island City, New York, SculptureCenter is dedicated to experimental and innovative developments in contemporary sculpture. Ceruti has organized numerous solo and group exhibitions, as well as special projects, and commissions by emerging and established artists. Bonacossa is the Director of Villa Croce, Contemporary Art Museum in Genova since 2012. After ten years as curator at Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Torino, she co-founded Art at Work in 2009: a collective that commissions and develops contemporary art projects through an innovative working platform that operates in both public and private institutions, as well as for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. She has written about art for international institutions and magazines.

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