

19. International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia
10 Maggio–23 Novembre 2025

Press Preview: 8–9 May 2025
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“Lares and Penates: On Building a Sense of Security in Architecture”

Exhibitors: Aleksandra Kędziorek, Krzysztof Maniak, Katarzyna Przezwańska, Maciej Siuda

Commissioner: Agnieszka Pindera, director of Zachęta – National Gallery of Art

Polish Pavilion office: Michał Kubiak (deputy commissioner), Anna Kowalska

A multidisciplinary project by the Polish Pavilion at the 19th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

In an age of uncertainty such as ours, does architecture still fulfil its primordial role as a form of protection? The Polish Pavilion’s exhibition unfolds as an anthropological investigation into the emotional and rational dimensions of building practices. Through lingering rituals, living myths, regulations and safety mechanisms, boundaries begin to blur revealing the most intimate needs and desires tied to the idea of home. The project emerges from the multidisciplinary collaboration between curator and art historian Aleksandra Kędziorek, artists Krzysztof Maniak and Katarzyna Przezwańska, architect Maciej Siuda.

Venice, April 19th, 2025 - Since its origins, architecture has had the fundamental purpose of sheltering and protecting. But how does it succeed in doing so today? In a time marked by constant change and growing instability, the Polish Pavilion offers a compelling exploration of architectural anthropology with the exhibition "Lares and Penates: On Building a Sense of Security in Architecture."

The goal of the multidisciplinary team—comprising Aleksandra Kędziorek, Maciej Siuda, Krzysztof Maniak, and Katarzyna Przezwańska—is to examine architecture not from the designer's viewpoint, but through the eyes of those who live within it. By suspending judgment, the project gives space to fears, desires, and deep-seated needs, navigating both the emotional and the rational realms.

"Lares and Penates were Roman deities charged with protecting the household hearth. In many languages today, they still evoke the idea of guardianship and domestic safety. In tune with Carlo Ratti, curator of the 2025 Architecture Biennale, who includes the word 'intelligens' in this year's exhibition title, we look to lares and penates as a universal code—rooted in ancient tradition and deeply embedded in our collective human intelligence," explains Aleksandra Kędziorek.

Careful research conducted across Poland reveals customs and gestures still practiced today and passed down across generations: a candle placed in the window to ward off storms, a garland hung at building sites to prevent accidents, an ancient threshold salvaged from a village marking the symbolic boundary between outside and in, or a rod used to locate underground veins at new construction sites.

At the same time, the exhibition draws attention to safety features and infrastructure aligned with contemporary regulations such as the emergency exit or the fire alarm. These elements, already part of the Pavilion's architecture, are framed and highlighted as part of the display. Also included are peepholes, alarm systems, and padlocks—devices through which we watch and protect, often unseen.

With a humanistic gaze, the exhibition constantly weaves together the regulatory and emotional layers of architecture—two domains often perceived as separate. Thus, a fire extinguisher—quintessentially utilitarian—is set into a niche decorated like a fresco, or framed in a Venetian-style mosaic, revealing its symbolic and reassuring qualities.

The exhibition eschews digital abstraction. Instead, visitors encounter a constellation of found or assembled objects, presented at full scale and celebrated for their material presence within an essential scenography. These tactile, three-dimensional models are rooted in a shared cultural memory.

This fertile and vital undercurrent is one to be rediscovered as it points the way toward a more conscious architecture, one that meaningfully addresses the realities of the contemporary world. A contribution from the Polish Pavilion to the theme launched by curator Carlo Ratti for the 2025 Architecture Biennale: "Intelligens. Natural. Artificial. Collective."

About Zachęta – National Gallery of Art

Zachęta – National Gallery of Art is one of Europe’s leading cultural institutions, dedicated to promoting contemporary art as a vital part of social and cultural life. The gallery presents temporary exhibitions showcasing the most significant developments in 20th- and 21st-century art. It runs educational programs for children, youth, and adults, and hosts a wide range of accessible events that reflect the diverse needs of its audiences. Zachęta also publishes art books and documents contemporary artistic life in Poland. Its collection includes nearly 3,700 works spanning painting, sculpture, installation, video, graphics, and performance.

About the Polish Pavilion

For over 70 years, the Polish Pavilion at La Biennale di Venezia has been managed by Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, which organizes the national exhibition at each International Architecture Exhibition. Poland has taken part in the Art Biennale since 1932 and in the Architecture Biennale since 1991. The Pavilion itself was built in the 1930s, financed by the Polish government, whose property it remains. Its mission is to promote contemporary art, foster the exchange of artistic ideas, and draw attention to the pressing issues of our time.

Biographies

Aleksandra Kędziołek (b. 1987) is an art historian, curator, and editor. A graduate of the Institute of Art History at the University of Warsaw and CuratorLab at Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm, her work spans architecture, design, and the visual arts, both within institutions and as an independent practitioner. In her curatorial approach, she is attentive to historically grounded and thought-provoking contexts. Her research-driven practice seeks creative insights from the past to respond to present-day challenges. Her recent curatorial focus has included *The Clothed Home*, an exhibition (with Alicja Bielawska and the Centrala design group) at the London Design Biennale 2021 exploring textile use in domestic interiors before the advent of electric lighting, and *Nenúfars blancs*, an artistic intervention with Centrala at the Mies van der Rohe Pavilion in Barcelona (2022), examining the role of aquatic plants in modernist architecture. From 2013 to 2017, she led the international research and exhibition project on Oskar and Zofia Hansen at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, including the preservation of their summer house in Szumin.

Krzysztof Maniak (b. 1990) is a visual artist and graduate of the Intermedia Faculty at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków, where he earned his PhD in 2018 and is currently affiliated with the Intermedia Art Phenomena Institute. His practice is rooted in landscape-based actions – quiet, minimalist gestures and interactions with nature. Living in Tuchów, he creates art while walking through its forests, meadows, and hills, which serve both as his setting and as a source

of materials for temporary installations and performative work. He is the recipient of the 14th Hestia Artistic Journey Award, the Grand Prix at the 5th Spring Salon (BWA Tarnów), and the 10th edition of *Views* at Zachęta – National Gallery of Art. His work has been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, SALT Ulus in Ankara, BWA Katowice, BWA Tarnów, BWA Bielsko-Biała, BWA Bydgoszcz, BWA Warsaw, ABC Gallery, Galeria Biała (Lublin), Baltic Gallery of Contemporary Art, State Art Gallery in Sopot, El Gallery (Elbląg), Contemporary Art Gallery in Opole, MOCAK in Kraków, and the Postartistic Congress in Sokołowsko.

Katarzyna Przezwańska (b. 1984) is a graduate of the Painting Faculty at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. Her practice spans sculpture, architectural interventions, installations, and paintings, often using natural materials such as rocks, minerals, and plants. Her work explores the intersection of nature and architecture, aiming to enhance human wellbeing and practical utility. She draws inspiration from vernacular building traditions, twentieth-century architectural classics, geological formations, and plant growth processes. Her projects include a playground in Lublin, a student square at the University of Warsaw, and contributions to the design of a state elementary school and kindergarten on Zaruby Street in Warsaw (in collaboration with Maciej Siuda's studio). She has exhibited widely, including at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, National Museum in Warsaw, Kunsthalle Tallinn, Museum Abteiberg (Mönchengladbach), and the Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art. She lives and works in Warsaw.

Maciej Siuda (b. 1983) is an architect and designer educated at the Wrocław University of Science and Technology. His work sits at the crossroads of architecture, the humanities, and art. He is driven by the potential of collaboration, experimentation, and the interplay between material tools of architecture—such as models, drawings, and samples—and the immaterial realm of ideas and scale shifts. Siuda designs objects, installations, exhibitions, and buildings. He co-created the *MYCOsystem* Polish Pavilion at the 22nd Triennale di Milano (2019) and the *Devebere* Pavilion for the 2012 Venice Architecture Biennale, both exploring air and nature as architectural material. He designed the scenography for *Reconstruction Disputes* at the 7th Warsaw Under Construction festival, awarded the Grand Prix of the Mayor of Warsaw (2015) and the Talking Buildings Down Award from the Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York (2016). He also created a wooden bas-relief for *Polish Table* at Expo 2020 Dubai and designed *Basic Forms* for the 2024 Art Biennale in Chiang Rai, Thailand. His architectural projects include a school and kindergarten in Warsaw (Art in Architecture Festival Grand Prize, 2021) and, as part of the Balon collective, a school in Jacmel, Haiti (Acknowledgement Prize, Holcim Awards, Colombia, 2014). He has designed exhibitions for major Polish institutions, including the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, National Museum in Warsaw, Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź, and Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden. He is currently preparing an exhibition for the London Design Biennale 2025.

Polish Pavilion at the Biennale Architettura 2025

Authors: Aleksandra Kędziorek, Krzysztof Maniak, Katarzyna Przezwańska, Maciej Siuda

Commissioner of the Polish Pavilion: Agnieszka Pindera, Director of Zachęta – National Gallery of Art

Polish Pavilion Office: Anna Kowalska, Michał Kubiak (Deputy Commissioner)

Organiser: Zachęta – National Gallery of Art

Patron: ORLEN

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Giardini della Biennale
Sestiere Castello
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Facebook → @polishpavilion

Instagram → @polishpavilionvenice

Zachęta – National Gallery of Art → <https://zacheta.art.pl/en/>

More Information: www.labiennale.org

Press Registration: [Accreditation Form – Biennale Architettura 2025](#)