

Media Contact

Barbara Musso | Moosso
barbara@moossopr.com
t. +39.02.3675.1875

Press kit

bit.ly/biennalesvizzera2026

Press Release - For immediate release



6^a biennale svizzera del territorio

Opening 1-3 October 2026

The 6th biennale svizzera del territorio, organised by Istituto Internazionale di Architettura under the direction of architect Ludovica Molo, on view at Villa Saroli in Lugano, Switzerland.

A collective, multidisciplinary reflection on architecture as care, maintenance and attentiveness to the existing, as an alternative to an architecture of consumption, demolition and construction.

Opening 1-3 October 2026: three days of Symposium with leading international figures, 10 installations by emerging designers selected by a prestigious committee, a cultural walk, and other participatory activities open to the public.

An event centred at Villa Saroli and spread across the Ticino region, with activities taking place between Mendrisio, Bellinzona and Lugano.



Lugano, 1–3 October 2026 – The **6th biennale svizzera del territorio** opens the doors of Villa Saroli in Lugano (CH), renewing its multidisciplinary approach.

The event is organised by **Istituto Internazionale di Architettura** under the direction of architect Ludovica Molo, with an accompanying committee composed, for this edition, of Heike Biechteler, Marc Frochaux, Cyril Veillon and Ariane Widmer.

An event that since 2016 has stimulated **debate on architecture in relation to the social and economic transformations of the territory that shape contemporary society**. This year too, the Biennale brings together **leading figures from the international scene** – spanning design, urban planning and landscape architecture, economics and territorial culture.

The title of this new edition is "HANDLE WITH CARE": a timely invitation to reflect on the urgency of a **responsible architecture** centred on care – one that **repairs, maintains** and **regenerates** through **attuned listening to places** and to the pre-existing, and through **community** engagement. A **complex alternative** to the easier path of demolition and construction, hallmarks of an architecture that consumes territory and resources.

Exploring and reflecting through installations and the Symposium

Care as an act of resistance that holds within it the power of concrete change – this is the challenge the Biennale has put to practitioners of all ages and from all over the world through a Call for Action. The result is **10 installations, some performative in nature**, exhibited in the park of Villa Saroli, home of Istituto Internazionale di Architettura. Consistent with the biennale's theme of dialogue between past and present, the installations establish compelling relationships with the historic building that blends eclectic style with Art Nouveau decoration. The works were selected by a prestigious international committee composed of David Barragán, Laura Brenni, Catherine Gay, Marc Frochaux, Khensani Jurczok-de Klerk, Adrien Meuwly, Anna Puigjaner and Xu Tiantian.

"The biennale, from its very first edition, has been a place of encounter and exchange, where values and knowledge interweave and are shared. Since 2022, with the introduction of the calls, it has also become a space for



experimentation – a means of nourishing these encounters, amplifying the voices of young emerging practitioners and welcoming groups who arrive

from elsewhere and allow themselves to be shaped by the creativity this place holds, living together for a few days and bringing the park, the villa and the surrounding territory to life. In a direct and intuitive way, this experience is capable of drawing civil society closer to the power of imagination," says Ludovica Molo.

The cornerstone of the biennale is the **Symposium**, which explores the theme from different and complementary perspectives – from **debate on architecture itself** to the **political implications of territory**, through to broader reflections **on the concept of care**. Alongside the traditional sessions, there is also room for more open yet theoretically rich forms of exchange, such as the promenade through various areas of Bellinzona: a symposium in motion, punctuated by talks and conversations *en plein air*.

Pecha Kucha presentations further enrich the Symposium – a dynamic format of 20 slides shown for 20 seconds each. These were selected by a second curatorial committee comprising Nina Bassoli, Heike Biechteler, Sophie Delhay, Débora Mesa Molina, John Palmesino and Sascha Roesler.

"The Pecha Kuchas represent the strength of free research – not necessarily academic – in support of those taking their first steps in the world of research," underlines Ludovica Molo.

An open, diffused event

The program moves between Lugano, Mendrisio and Bellinzona, bringing the "Città Ticino" to life in keeping with the philosophy of the biennale svizzera del territorio.

Thursday 1 October opens with a conference at the **Accademia di Architettura di Mendrisio** – an evening of debate within the architecture and design community, dedicated to the values of political and civic responsibility within the discipline, addressing fundamental topics such as housing, reuse and citizen participation. The event is conceived and built together with students from the student association.



Friday 2 October, organised in collaboration with the **Canton Ticino Department of Territory** and the **City of Bellinzona**, opens with an **urban walk** through the places that best represent the city's transformation — from industrial fringes to public spaces, from rewilding areas to new residential and school hubs, ending at the Bellinzona Public Baths, designed by architect Aurelio Galfetti in the late 1960s. Each stop is animated by speakers in dialogue with the biennale's guiding thread. In the afternoon, the Symposium continues at the **Institute for Research in Biomedicine (IRB)** – Galfetti's final work – with a focus on political practices related to territory. This day offers a reflection on the vocation of a distinctive territory: a bridge between northern and southern Europe, situated between the Lombardy metropolis and the rest of Switzerland, marked by complex dynamics and fragile balances. Two round tables invite participants to interrogate these conditions, imagine the future vocation of the territory and identify the tools with which to act in the present.

In the evening, the projects in the **park of Villa Saroli** are officially inaugurated. The **10 selected installations** are unveiled and will remain **on view to the public until 28 November**.

"An added value of the Actions selected for this edition is the dialogue that forms between them: a conversation across different languages that moves through the park," observes Ludovica Molo.

Saturday 3 October, the Symposium moves to **Lugano** – between the **Italian Consulate General** and **Villa Saroli** – for a day dedicated to the theme of **care**, with the participation of international speakers. Lectures, case studies, dialogues and Pecha Kucha presentations alternate throughout the day, bringing national and international experiences and perspectives to bear on the theme. The evening concludes at Villa Saroli, where the installations are activated through performative moments, followed by an open convivial gathering in keeping with the participatory spirit that runs throughout the entire event.

Three intense days in which Villa Saroli becomes an open laboratory, animated by ateliers, workshops, installations open from the very first day and further events spread across the territory – an opportunity to experience how care for the territory also passes through the practices of encounter, exchange and the building of a collective dimension.



"This edition consolidates the formula of an architecture festival capable of making meaningful contributions to the territory – in terms of knowledge and stimulus – while at the same time opening itself to the most current international reflections on the state of the disciplines, rooting itself in the local context and addressing all audiences," concludes Ludovica Molo.

For press office communications and image requests, please contact:

Moosso – Strategic PR and Communication

team@moossopr.com t. +39.02.3675.1875

Press kit

bit.ly/biennalesvizzera2026

Notes to Editors

Istituto Internazionale di Architettura

Istituto Internazionale di Architettura is a centre for urban culture dedicated to exploring themes related to territory and sustainability. An open and dialogic space, it believes in architecture as a tool for reading and understanding the major transformations of contemporary life. It fosters the participation of civil society, professionals and institutions in the formulation of a design vision for the future of the territory we inhabit. It engages citizens of all ages through diverse languages and formats, with a programme that includes conferences, talks, exhibitions, summer schools and workshops. Founded in 1983 in Vico Morcote as the European home of SCI-Arc – Southern California Institute of Architecture in Los Angeles, since 2015 Istituto Internazionale di Architettura has been based at Villa Saroli, in the heart of Lugano.

i2a.ch

Biennale svizzera del territorio

The biennale svizzera del territorio is a nationally recognised event with international reach, founded in 2016, which opens the doors of Villa Saroli to representatives from a wide range of disciplines as well as to the general public. It addresses the many and diverse stakeholders involved in the process of Baukultur. Through its open and interdisciplinary approach, it contributes to the debate on the social, economic and territorial transformations shaping contemporary society. In addition to a Symposium of lectures, presentations and convivial moments that enliven the park of Villa Saroli, the biennale includes a Call for Action for proposals of installations and performances inside and outside the park, a Walk open to everyone, and a Lab for children.

i2a.ch/en/biennale



Press Kit | Annex A

6^a biennale svizzera del territorio

► **Bios of the Selection Committee/Call for Action** (in alphabetical order)

DAVID BARRAGÁN

David Barragán is an architect based in Quito, Ecuador. He is the co-founder of the architecture studio Al Borde (Quito). The studio's work has been widely recognized with prestigious awards such as the Bancastato Swiss Architecture Award (2024), the Global Award for Sustainable Architecture (2013), and the Schelling Architecture Prize (2012).

LAURA BRENNI

Laura Brenni holds a Master's degree in Art History from the University of Lausanne and a Diploma in Exhibition Design from the School of Applied Arts in Vevey. She worked for several years as a project manager for exhibition design projects in Switzerland and abroad. Always interested in cultural policy issues, since 2020 she has been heading the office dedicated to cultural development within the Culture Division of the City of Lugano.

MARC FROCHAUX

Marc Frochaux is an art historian (UNIL) and architect (EPFL/ETH Zurich), and has been editor-in-chief of the magazine *espazium* – TRACÉS since 2019. He also works as an architecture guide and member of the board of the Forum d'Architectures de Lausanne (F'AR), where he is responsible for exhibitions and organizes professional and public debates. He is regularly invited as a critic and chaired the jury of the Grand Prix d'A in 2023.

CATHERINE GAY

Catherine Gay is an architect and co-founder of the architectural firm GayMenzel in Monthey. She has collaborated with renowned studios and architects, including Hans Kollhoff, Leslie Gill, Sabarchitekten, François Fasnacht, and Herzog & de Meuron. Since 2020, she has been a visiting professor at EPFL, and she recently taught at the École de la Ville & des Territoires de Paris-Est, where she served as *maîtresse de conférences associée*.



KHENSANI JURCZOK-DE KLERK

Khensani Jurczok-de Klerk is an architectural researcher and designer. She is the founder and creative director of Matri-Archi(itecture) and a doctoral fellow at the gta, ETH Zürich. Her practice frames architecture as a storyteller of place, memory, and possibility. She sustains a practice grounded in South Africa and Switzerland.

ADRIEN MEUWLY

Adrien Meuwly is an architect and co-founder of the studio Comte/Meuwly in Zurich and, currently, he is Associate Professor of Architecture and Construction at ETH Zurich. The work of Comte/Meuwly has been recognized with several prestigious awards, including the Distinction Romande d'Architecture DRA5 in 2023, the Arc Award 2020/21, and the Foundation Award 2021.

ANNA PUIGJANER

Anna Puigjaner is a PhD architect and researcher, co-founder of MAIO (Barcelona). Her work, rooted in feminist studies, focuses on inclusive domestic architectures that redefine former biased structures. She is currently Professor of Architecture and Care at ETH Zürich, and in 2016 she was awarded the Wheelwright Prize by the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

XU TIAN TIAN

Xu Tiantian is the founding principal of the DnA _Design and Architecture Beijing office and professor at Tsinghua University. Her work has been recognized with numerous prestigious awards, including the Swiss Architectural Award (2022), the Holcim Gold Award for Asia-Pacific and the Wolf Prize in Architecture.



Cartella Stampa | Annex B

6^a biennale svizzera del territorio

► **Bios of the Selection Committee/Call for Pecha Kucha** (in alphabetical order)

NINA BASSOLI

Nina Bassoli is an architect, researcher, and curator based in Milan. Since 2022, she is curator for Architecture, Urban Regeneration and City at Triennale Milano, where she recently curated the exhibitions Andrea Branzi by Toyo Ito. Continuous Present and Cities, dedicated to cities as spaces of opportunity and inequality, and to the new balances between inhabitants and territories. She is editorial director of Lotus International and has taught Architectural and Landscape Design at Politecnico di Milano, as well as Interior and Exhibit Design at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano.

HEIKE BIECHTELER

Heike Biechteler is an architect, curator, and lecturer at the Institute of Architecture, HSLU Engineering & Architecture in Lucerne. Her research explores the tradition of representation in architectural exhibitions, presenting architecture as a discipline through multiple actors and perspectives beyond the architect alone. She has co-edited the Lucerne Talks publications Drawing in Architecture Education and Research (2023) and Teaching Urbanism (2025) among others. She is also Head of Publikationen & Diskurs at BHSF Architekten in Zurich and Secretary General of the Architekturrat der Schweiz.

SOPHIE DELHAY

Architect based in Paris, she founded Sophie Delhay Architecte in 2010. Her practice focuses on social ecology and experimental, non-hierarchical housing that promotes shared living, as demonstrated by projects like the modular "Unité(s)" in Dijon. Winner of the 2019 Équerre d'argent and Schelling Prize, her work emphasizes user experience and reinventing living together, with notable projects including the "Machu Picchu" residence in Lille and projects in Paris. She is Associate Professor and Head of the Section EPFL-Architecture in Lausanne.



DÉBORA MESA MOLINA

Débora Mesa Molina is an architect, principal of Ensamble Studio (Madrid / Boston) and co-founder of WoHo. She learned the profession by combining design with hands-on experience in quarries, factories, and construction sites, where she translated innovative ideas into built reality. Ensamble Studio has received major awards, most recently the ACADIA 2025 Design Excellence Award and the 2022 American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Architecture. She is Full Professor of Architecture, Art and Technology at ETH Zurich.

JOHN PALMESINO

John Palmesino is an architect and urbanist. He is co-founder of Territorial Agency (London), an independent organisation working at the intersection of architecture, urbanism, and territorial transformation, combining research, design, and public engagement to develop innovative and sustainable approaches to contemporary spatial and social change. In his scientific and artistic work, he focuses on territorial transformations. He is Unit Master at the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London.

SASCHA ROESLER

Sascha Roesler is an architect and architectural theorist whose work lies at the intersection of architecture, ethnography, and science and technology studies. He has published widely on issues of global architecture, sustainability, and environmental technologies. In 2016 he was awarded the DAM architectural book award as one of the year's ten outstanding architectural publications. He is Associate Professor, Dr. sc. ETH, Co-director of the Doctoral School, Associate Professor for Theory of Urbanization and Urban Environments at the Accademia di Architettura in Mendrisio.