21 août 2026

Press release

« Domesticating the Office » at the Belgian Pavilion, Venice Architecture Biennale 2027

The Ministry of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and Wallonia-Brussels International are pleased to announce the selection of the curatorial team **MULTIPLE + Gérald Ledent + Maïa Descamps** to represent Belgium at the 20th Venice Architecture Biennale (8 May–21 November 2027) with 'Domesticating the Office'.

Their proposal was selected by the jury from among the four submissions received as part of the selection process. 'Domesticating the Office' examines the disparity between the amount of unoccupied office space and the growing housing crisis, by exploring the potential for repurposing these spaces and the ways of living they might enable.

The curators' statement reflects their sensitivity and their desire to ensure the project's message resonates beyond the duration of the Biennale. It convinced the jury as much as the multidisciplinary nature of the team, which brings together a variety of skills, including architectural practice, academic research and film creation and production.

In terms of exhibition design, the curators will experiment with a concrete example of repurposing within the Belgian Pavilion itself: they will install an office landscape, reconstructed using reused elements. This installation will be juxtaposed with a film trilogy '*that narrates the paradox of vacancy in the face of poor housing, the potential of these empty spaces and the prospect of a re-inhabited world*', the team states in its application.

"'*Domesticating the Office' describes a fundamental tension between the office – a mass-produced space, codified according to an immutable grid and now readily available – and the domestic, the intimate, care and the home*. *This tension is the space where an architecture of conversion can be invented.* (…) *However, among current projects, two realities stand out: the development of converted housing remains conventional, as if the potential of these spaces were not being fully exploited, and the proportion of affordable housing within them remains negligible. The pavilion aims to serve as a laboratory for these issues of typological innovation and accessibility for all.* "

Drawing on concrete examples and existing research, the curators also propose to explore innovative residential typologies that go beyond what is already being done.

'*Our team proposes to work with these spaces of potential and to inhabit them. The office grid becomes a framework for new ways of living. In this reinterpretation, vacancy becomes a resource, and architecture the lever for political transformation, which we propose to enshrine in a* 'Pacte de Venise' – a collective manifesto for the right to housing in Europe – which follows in the tradition of Belgium's mobilisation on international issues at the heart of Europe.

The team comprises the architectural practice MULTIPLE (founded by Abdel Majid Boulaioun and active in Wallonia and Brussels for the past 25 years), Gérald Ledent (Doctor of Civil Engineering and Architecture, and coordinator of the Uses&Spaces research team at UCLouvain) and Maïa Descamps (video artist, director of the short films *Les huîtres* – which won multiple awards and was nominated for the 2023 Magritte Awards – and *Les homards* in 2025). Several partners are involved in the development of the exhibition: Inès Cabane (installation management), Pedro Goïs (reuse coordination), the third-place space La Mûrisserie (installation of habitable modules) and Inclusio, a company specialising in social housing (for its expertise).

Catalogue

A catalogue will be published as part of the 'Domesticating the Office' project. Excerpt from the application: '*The entire project centres on a founding act: the Venice Pact, a collective manifesto for the right to housing in Europe. Drafted in collaboration with our partners—lawyers, economists, architects, and Belgian and European civil society organisations—this pact will be symbolically presented at the opening. A living document, it will be amended throughout the six-month exhibition period thanks to visitor participation. During this time, the pavilion will function as an echo chamber: figures from a variety of backgrounds—policy-makers, civil society organisations, architects, academics, artists and residents—will be invited to debate and share their experiences.* (…) *The catalogue extends the pavilion's role as a space for critical discourse. Structured in three sections, it brings together portraits of residents and their aspirations for today and tomorrow, a typological atlas of real and visionary transformations of office spaces, and insights from experts. It concludes with the Venice Pact, which serves both as an archive and a tool for mobilisation.*"

More information : https://cellule.archi/fr/international/biennale-venise

Media contacts : WBI's communications department and the Cellule architecture.

Cellule architecture : Anne-Catherine De Bast – anne-catherine.debast@cfwb.be – 0492 19 90 54

WBI : Dominique Lefebvre - d.lefebvre@wbi.be - 02 421 83 63