

**PHILIPPE PARRENO** Artist participating in the Swiss pavilion

**As an artist rather than an architect, what are your feelings about the main exhibition?**

I was surprised by Rem Koolhaas's choice. Last year, the Venice [art] Biennale also focused on history. Is it a tendency towards revival? In the international exhibition, I saw some of these historical "fundamentals", mainly windows and stairs. The Modernist tradition has imposed this idea that there is nothing else apart from the physicality of the Euclidian space, but for me, architecture deals with complexity. And the fundamentals also include sounds, air pollution, pheromones and phenomenological perceptions.

**Do you think it speaks to a non-architectural audience?**

I don't know. I don't know what an audience wants – maybe people like technical stuff.

**Are there any pavilions that have resonated with you as an artist?**

I saw some interesting things, but I spent most of my time in the Swiss pavilion listening to the marathon that Hans Ulrich Obrist organised. But then again, I am not an expert.

**Can you tell us about your contribution to the Swiss pavilion?**

As a group, we wanted to invent some ways to present objects or knowledge in an exhibition space. We got together a couple of times with Hans Ulrich Obrist, the curator, and Tino Sehgal, Asad Raza, Liam Gillick and Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, but also Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron. Tino, Liam and I have been working on a show in Arles with the Fondation Luma, presenting models of Frank Gehry's work using a form of dramaturgy. The show in Arles follows on from one that I organised with Liam Gillick the year before called "To the Moon Via the Beach". This time, we had the difficult task of presenting ideas, since none of us – apart from Cedric Price – had physically built anything to do this. The scenario was the following: to have a space where the archives will be kept, for students, but also for Venice-based architects or designers to place drawings or texts from the archives on a series of rolling carts and present them to the visitors. We also needed to present some video films and slides, so I came up with the idea of motorised blinds to darken the space. It's a tool I have used many times to punctuate an exhibition space, to project films and to guide the attention of the viewers.

**You're an artist working on a cross-disciplinary project at an architecture biennial. Is this a new experience for you?**

Modern architecture derives from "the exhibition". Major Modern buildings were once shown as objects in exhibition spaces. This is where my interest lies. This is what I question: object display. When I do solo shows, it's all about developing a type of grammar, one that redefines the rituals of exhibition.

