fundamentals
Running for over a century, la Biennale di Venezia is a series of major contemporary cultural exhibitions taking place in Venice, Italy. Since the first edition of the Venice Biennale in 1895, it has been at the forefront in the research and promotion of new artistic trends, organising International events in the field of the contemporary arts that are amongs the most important of their kind.

The world’s very best creative minds and practitioners present their latest and most innovative ideas at the Biennale, which has become a reference point for present and future artistic trends.

The Biennale attracts media and members of the creative elite from around the world. For them, the events – along with the magic of Venice – inspiration as well as a platform for meeting, networking and exchanging ideas.

The multi-disciplinary programme of the Biennale consists of four parts:

- International Architecture Exhibition
- International Venic Film Festival
- International Music, Theatre, and Dance Festivals
- International Art Exhibition

The International Architecture Exhibition
As the only event of its kind, the International Architecture Exhibition is where the best architects from around the globe present their latest and most imaginative ideas and works. It is a global hub and meeting point for the people who shape our built environment.

The multi-disciplinary cultural programme of the 2014 Architecture Biennale represents an excellent opportunity for companies to position their brands, products and services in a truly inspiring, creative and trendsetting environment.

“We are universally recognized as the most important event in the world for architecture; we are the place where architecture talks about itself and meets life and society at large.”
– Paolo Baratta, president of La Biennale di Venezia
About the architecture biennale...

1895 First Venice Biennale, dedicated to visual art
1980 establishment of Mostra di Architettura di Venezia, Architecture section of the Venice Biennale

2012: Common Ground, the 13th biennale, directed by David Chipperfield, attracted 178,000 visitors over 12 weeks

- 55 countries participated
- 119 exhibitors
- 3,153 journalists visited the exhibition
- 95 TV stations reported from the biennale
- 685,225 unique visitors to the Biennale official website
- 48 percent of visitors are under 25
- 77 affiliated universities with 28 Italian and 49 foreign universities, representing 3,500 visiting university students
- 53 seminars were organized by the participating universities
- 18 collateral events were programmed and sponsored by international bodies and institutions
- 4 newly participating nations: Angola, Kuwait, Republic of Kosovo and Peru

In 2014, Fundamentals, directed by Rem Koolhaas, will unfold its program over six months, starting in the first week of June and ending in the last week of November...
2. NATIONAL PAVILIONS
Absorbing Modernity 1914–2014

1. CENTRAL PAVILION
Elements of Architecture

3. ARSENALE
Monditalia

Why Fundamentals needs support
Benefits for supporters

About the director:
Rem Koolhaas
Fundamentals

Architecture, not architects...

An umbrella theme for the national pavilions: from national to universal...

The Arsenale as performance space...
A new kind of Venice Architecture Biennale...

The 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale – called Fundamentals – will consist of three main components:

**Elements of Architecture** – a research-based exhibition in the Central Pavilion exploring the often overlooked but universally familiar elements of architecture used by any architect, anywhere, any time: the floor, the door, the wall, the ceiling, the toilet...

**Absorbing Modernity** – the national pavilions of the Giardini and elsewhere will share a single theme: stories of their national architectural from 1914 till 2014. To enhance the coherence between the national presentations, for the first time, there is an invitation to the pavilions to communicate with the director about the theme.

**Monditalia** – setting the stage in the Arsenale for collaborations between the Architecture and Dance, Theatre, Music and Cinema Biennales, with all presentations dedicated to a single theme: the current state of Italy.

Together, these exhibitions and events perform an “audit” of architecture, asking: What do we have? How did we get here? What are our possibilities, and where do we go from here?

Rem Koolhaas
September 2013
1. CENTRAL PAVILION
Elements of Architecture

central pavilion, 2014 venice architecture biennale
A window is not a window is not a window any more.
– after Gertrude Stein

“Elements of Architecture” in the Central Pavilion will be an attempt to trace the history of architecture’s universally recognizable – though infinitely varied – basic elements, used by any architect, anywhere, any time. Each room will be devoted to an individual element – the stair, the door, the window, the floor, the corridor, etc.

From the Renaissance onwards, the discourse on architecture was largely based on the definition and analysis of architectural elements. Alberti’s six elements (locality, area, compartition, wall, roof, and opening; 1452), Gottfried Semper’s four elements (hearth, roof, enclosure, mound; 1851) and Le Corbusier’s Five Points of Architecture (pilotis, free facade, open plan, long window, roof garden; 1928) were all, in varying degrees, efforts to analyse the history of buildings. But since the globalization of modern architecture in the second half of the 20th century, the possibility of an elemental systematization of architecture has been largely ignored.

Elements that used to be the speciality of architects – the ceiling and the window, but also even the façade – have become devices and ceded to more advanced technological domains. But despite the attempts of parametric architecture to merge formerly distinct categories like roof, wall, and window into a continuous architectural surface, the fundamental elements of architecture endure, albeit in sometimes radically different forms...

By looking at the evolution of architectural elements that are common to all cultures, this exploration will avoid the Eurocentrism that still characterises architectural discourse.
Laboratory: In the office of Rem Koolhaas’s OMA, the exhibition team tests ideas for the elements in a 1:20 model of the Central Pavilion.
Windows and window section from the Brooking National Collection

Yakutian Balagan windows

Sobinco mechanical grinding machine

Sobinco window strength test structure
window

The window used to make space, it asserted place-ness. Window seats, sills, bay windows, verandas, shutters, blinds, curtains all marked the position of the window on the façade and in the room. Since the twentieth century, technological advances in window profiles and glass production have allowed many of these nuanced local components to be internalized in the window’s structures, magically invisible. Glass, which initially seemed the perfect partner for the window, took over entirely, culminating in the invention of the curtain wall—a Western invention, which allowed other regions to stake a claim in architecture, liberated from its historic discourses...

sobinco
An imported window factory from Belgium forms the basis of the installation, where real machines polish components and repeatedly test window fittings, against a backdrop of traditional English windows from the collection of Charles Brooking, salvaged from demolished English heritage, plus a rare Yakutian window from Russia’s Far East, made from birch bark. One wall explores the surrender of the window to the curtain wall through the Seagram building. The history and the contemporary condition of the window in one space...

brooking national collection
The Brooking National Collection contains approximately 500,000 pieces, 5,000 of which are complete windows, 10,000 window sections, and 30,000 sash pulleys. For the Venice Biennale, the collection will show many variations of windows, demonstrating the subtle and fascinating evolution of this important architectural element. The originals are now fast disappearing with the clamor for double glazing.
Sobinco's window frame test structure, in their factory in Zulte, Belgium, where ninety percent of their products are manufactured: chunks of aluminum and zamak are cast, milled, ground, coated, and assembled into the fittings that are typically hidden in the frame but make windows work. Every new fitting is embedded in the window and fitted in the test structure, where it is opened and closed up to 25,000 times by pneumatic machines.

Sobinco mechanical grinding machine for grips, fittings and handles.
2014 Remi Van Parys, founder of Sobinco. During the late 1950s, Remi Van Parys became the director of a Belgian ironmongery company in Congo. He travelled through Congo, visiting window and door makers, and heard the same complaint everywhere: the fittings they could buy came from Germany and did not fit in Belgian windows.

In less than one year he conquered eighty percent of the Congolese market with the first fittings specifically designed for the imported Belgian steel windows. Then, in 1961, back in Belgium, implementing the same strategy, he was the first to design fittings for steel and later for aluminum windows, forming the company the family still runs today, Sobinco (Société Belge de l’industrie et de la commerce).

Over the past fifty years what began on small scale in the owner’s back garden has grown into a leading company with 30,000 square meters of production space, offices in Belgium and Portugal and points of sale in Poland and China, and with products exported over sixty countries. In a globalized market of mass produced windows, Sobinco is the only factory in Europe capable of producing every moving part of a window—sixty-nine fittings is typical—in one factory.
SOBINCO on the 14th International Architecture Exhibition
Location: Venice - Giardini - Central Pavilion

Elements of Architecture: Een op onderzoek gebaseerde tentoonstelling in het Centraal paviljoen dat de veelal over het hoofd gezien maar universeel familiaire elementen uit de architectuur exploreert. Gebruikt door elke architect, overal, altijd: vloer, deur, plafond, raam, toilet, roltrap, lift...
Binnenin dit concept was Sobinco het basis onderdeel van de “window room”

Het Raam

Het raam of venster creëerde vroeger ruimte en identiteit. Vensterbanken, veranda’s, gordijnen, roluieken bepaalden de positie van het raam in de gevel en in de ruimte. Sinds de 20ste eeuw hebben technologische ontwikkelingen van het raamprofiel en de glas productie ervoor gezorgd dat de complexiteit van het raam geïnternaliseerd is. De complexiteit en lokale ornamenten die zich vroeger visueel manifesteerden bevinden zich nu binnenin het profiel, namelijk het grotendeels onzichtbaar raambeslag. “The window became a device”

In de “window-room” op de Biënnale in Venetië kan men bepaalde productieprocessen van Sobinco letterlijk in werking zien. Klinken en scharnieren worden er gepolijst terwijl ook de afgewerkte fittings van een draai-kip en pivoterend raam getest worden in de testkubus. Er staat er een rek gevuld met mallen en een groot aantal verschillende stukken van het raambeslag die geproduceerd worden door Sobinco. Dit alles is gepresenteerd tegenover een “backdrop” van klassieke Engelse ramen uit de collectie van Charles Brooking. Ramen die hij zelf heeft gered uit gesloopte Engelse erfgoed.

De historische en hedendaagse conditie van het venster in één ruimte.