

## V–A–C presents *Non-Extractive Architecture: On Designing without Depletion*

A year-long exhibition programme, research residency, materials workshop, lecture series and publishing platform at V–A–C Zattere, Venice

**Non-Extractive Architecture: On Designing without Depletion** is a new live research and exhibition programme curated by architect and curator Joseph Grima and design research studio Space Caviar. The year-long project looks at contemporary architectural production as the endpoint of a complex chain of activities. Some of these are far removed from the final building, and therefore broadly overlooked—from the extraction of raw materials to the sourcing labour, and from the production of emissions to the final demolition of the decommissioned structure.

Today, the building and construction industries are responsible for 39% of the total carbon emissions produced by humanity. The hunger for non-renewable resources such as sand, water, stone and steel needed to urbanise the world at speed is irreversibly depleting entire regions, fundamentally transforming their nature into habitats incapable of supporting human and animal life. *Non-Extractive Architecture* is an attempt to question some of the basic assumptions underlying contemporary architectural production from a material and social perspective, rethinking the construction industry from first principles in the belief that better alternatives exist.

### Research Lab

The transformation of Palazzo delle Zattere into an active laboratory for the definition and development of *Non-Extractive Architecture* takes form in parallel strands of research, residences, public programmes and publishing initiatives throughout the year. The research will inform an evolving exhibition produced on site by Space Caviar in collaboration with ten selected international research residents. Alongside the residency research initiative, invited designers will share new material research and conduct physical workshops within the new laboratory constructed in Palazzo delle Zattere. The Palazzo has been activated through a library, publishing and broadcasting stations designed by the art collective N55. Guest experts as part of a monthly talk series will contribute to the ongoing research of *Non-Extractive Architecture*. This programme will foster new interdisciplinary networks, record the results, and make them widely available.

### Exhibition

The results of this research, the records of the debates and conversations held in the Palazzo, and the contributions of an international network of designers, theorists, materials scientists, philosophers, planners and researchers are documented on the walls of Palazzo delle Zattere. Some of the questions the team will be asking over the course of the year include—How can we reduce architecture's dependency on non-renewable resources? How can the environmental damage caused by material extraction be made evident and reduced? How can we compel the market to factor in the true long-term costs of construction, deconstruction, and material production into the construction industry's budgeting practices? How can communities become more involved in every stage of the production of architecture, rather than just its final consumption? What kind of architecture will emerge once its primary purpose is community-building rather than the accumulation of capital? Do we really need so much concrete?

### Book

Published by V–A–C and Sternberg Press, the book **Non-Extractive Architecture: On Designing without Depletion Vol.1** establishes a theoretical framework for a new approach to architecture based on long-term thinking about the use of material resources and the integration of community values into the construction industry. It draws on a multiplicity of voices and perspectives to examine architecture as an expanded field that connects people and places well beyond the conventional definition of "site".

Contributions by Dele Adeyemo, Sofia Pia Belenky, Benjamin Bratton, Stephanie Carlisle, Emanuele Coccia, Keller Easterling, Swarnabh Ghosh, Macarena Gómez-Barris, Joseph Grima, Interiors Agency, Elisa Iturbe, Luke Jones, Chiara Di Leone, Armin Linke, Charlotte Malterre-Barthes, Nicholas Pevzner, Maria Smith and Mark Wigley. *Non-Extractive Architecture Vol.1* will be followed by a second volume which will collect the research developed through 2021 and is set to be published in early 2022.

## Non-Extractive Architecture: On Designing without Depletion

Curated by Joseph Grima and design research studio Space Caviar

15 Mar 2021–  
31 Jan 2022

### V–A–C Zattere

Dorsoduro 1401,  
30123 Venice

### For more information:

[helen.weaver@v-a-c.org](mailto:helen.weaver@v-a-c.org)  
[press@v-a-c.org](mailto:press@v-a-c.org)



## Notes to editors

**V–A–C Foundation** produces new culture together with artists and audiences alike. It is a platform for open discussion aimed at redefining the contemporary landscape. Working with local communities, V–A–C promotes its exhibition, publishing, performative and learning programmes beyond all disciplinary boundaries and thus constantly resets the coordinates for dialogue within a new global geography. This methodology is employed in all V–A–C initiatives, taking place in its Venetian space, through international, cross-institutional partnerships and in its future home for arts and culture in Moscow, GES-2.

**GES-2** is V–A–C's new major cultural venue for the city of Moscow, housed in an historic power station. Designed by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, GES-2 opens to the public in 2021.

**V–A–C Zattere** is the Foundation's Venetian headquarters launched in spring 2017. This renovated building, situated on Zattere overlooking the Canale della Giudecca, can accommodate exhibitions, events and residencies. Originally dating back to the mid 1800s, the building's interior was renovated at different times from the 1950s to the 1990s. The Foundation commissioned local architect Alessandro Pedron of apml architetti to carry out the more recent renovation project, transforming Palazzo delle Zattere into a new centre for contemporary culture for the city of Venice. The entire space covers 2000 m<sup>2</sup> over four levels, half of which is exhibition space.

**Joseph Grima** is an architect and curator based in Milan, Italy. He is the Creative Director of Design Academy Eindhoven and Chief Curator of Design at Triennale di Milano, and is also co-founder (together with Tamar Shafir) of Space Caviar, an architecture and research practice operating at the intersection of design, technology, critical theory and the public realm.

Grima was previously the editor-in-chief of Domus magazine and director of Storefront for Art and Architecture, an independent gallery in New York City. In 2014 he was appointed co-curator of the first Chicago Architecture Biennial, and in 2012 he co-directed the first Istanbul Design Biennial. He was also the artistic director of Matera European Capital of Culture 2019.

He has taught and lectured widely at universities in Europe, Asia and America, including Streika Institute of Media, Architecture and Design in Moscow, and has served on numerous international juries, including the jury of the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2010 directed by Kazuyo Sejima.

**Space Caviar** is an architecture and research studio operating at the intersection of design, technology, politics and the public realm. Founded in 2013 by Joseph Grima and Tamar Shafir, the office uses built work, exhibitions, publishing, writing and film to investigate and document contemporary modes of habitation and the spatialisation of social and political practice.

Space Caviar's work has been shown at the Venice Architecture Biennale, the Victoria and Albert Museum, Biennale Interieur, Vitra Design Museum and Nilufar Gallery, among others.



### **Non-Extractive Architecture: On Designing without Depletion**

Curated by Joseph Grima  
and design research  
studio Space Caviar

15 Mar 2021–  
31 Jan 2022

**V–A–C Zattere**  
Dorsoduro 1401,  
30123 Venice

**For more information:**  
[helen.weaver@v-a-c.org](mailto:helen.weaver@v-a-c.org)  
[press@v-a-c.org](mailto:press@v-a-c.org)