

## 2012 in review: Peter Märkli Exhibition at the Venice Biennale

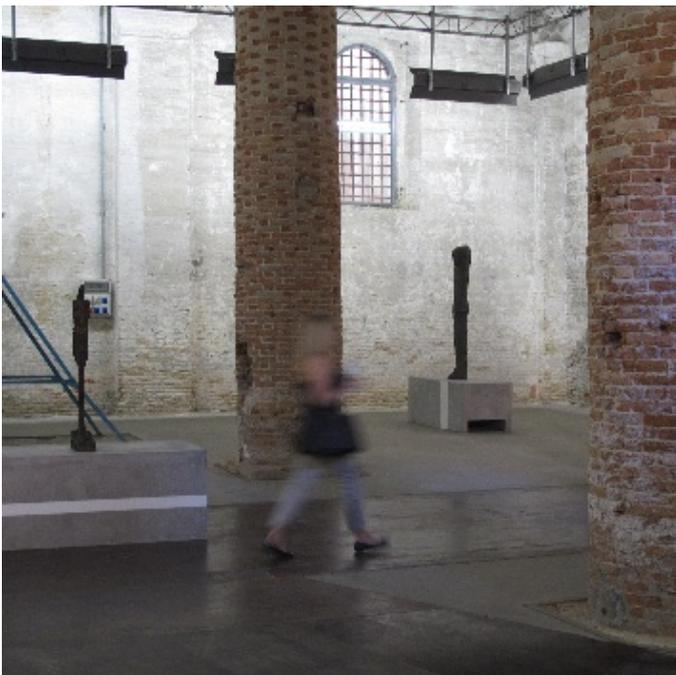
12 December 2012

Florian Beigel and Philip Christou on their highlight of the year in architecture

There is an extremely strong sense of common ground between Peter Märkli's architecture and the figure sculptures of Hans Josephsohn and Alberto Giacometti in this exhibition. It is not a sculpture exhibition and it is not an architecture exhibition, it is both.

The sculptures have a solemn archaic presence, like pre-historic standing stones that have been buried for millennia. Märkli thinks of the figure sculptures as proto-columns in dialogue with the gigantic cylindrical brick columns of the arsenal. The characterful silhouettes of these standing figure/columns are heightened by the illuminated walls, (sometimes rough brick, and sometimes white plaster) that appear like a sky in the background changing colour periodically from a white daylight to a more blue dusk sort of light.

Märkli has designed a series of horizontal concrete plinths that are quite unusual as bases for standing figures. The plinth becomes more part of the ground in its stability and gravitas. They are hollow, with a long low opening at either end, appearing like small buildings arranged in the room. The space between them has a quiet tension.



Peter Markli and Steve Roth's exhibition of sculpture by Hans Josephsohn and Alberto Giacometti

A white strip has been applied to the long side of each plinth. The stripe makes a visual connection with the white walls that are on two sides of the room. The white stripes, placed differently on each plinth, seem to make a gap in the plinth, appearing to divide it in two well proportioned pieces. Some stripes are horizontal making the mass of the plinth appear more weightless.

As one of many of the very special exhibits in the Biennale this year, this room had a powerful sense of integrity and spatial beauty.

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