

A Europe Briefing

Q&A

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BODERO

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Norway



Oslo has inaugurated its first international biennial, which comprises art in public spaces that is, therefore, free. Eva González-Sancho Bodero, one of its two curators, explains the thinking behind the show's distinctive format. — LAB

What makes Oslo Biennial different from other shows?

Oslo has a long tradition of giving everyone access to the arts; the city really wanted a biennial that would take place in public. Most shows do something in the public space but only a couple do so exclusively, and on a much smaller scale. The city wants this to put Oslo on the map but not for the same reasons that other cities host these events – to attract tourists, for instance. It was because of Oslo's specific interest in public art.

Another thing that's different is that the show will last five years. Why is that?

It became clear to us that when you work in the public space, you need a different timeframe. You're not working with the same audience every time – you don't know who the passers-by are. It's also for the artists: we've set an evolving programme that will involve performances and installations that can last for as little as a day or for a year or more. That's what it takes to follow a work from the genesis of an idea through to its collection.

What do you hope will be the impact on the city of Oslo?

We hope that the biennial will leave tools that artists will continue to use. We've opened a big building that is not only for the biennial's offices but is also hosting 60 artists' studios. There are film and radio-production units as well. So we hope that the framework that we're creating will continue.

Market value

TURIN — F&B

A short walk from Turin's central Piazza Castello sits the Porta Palazzo market, the largest open-air market in Europe. Six days a week, more than 800 vendors set up stalls hawking fruit and vegetables, homeware, clothing, accessories and more. The market attracts about 100,000 people per weekend and the bustling surrounding area is experiencing a slow transformation as existing market façades and structures are spruced up, sanitation upgraded and new benches put in place.

However, the most striking change is the recent repurposing of a small building at the centre of the market. Designed by Massimiliano Fuksas, said building – often referred to as Aladdin's Lamp – has become the third branch (after Rome and Florence) of Mercato Centrale. That's all thanks to a €6m venture between Gruppo Human Company and Caffè Italiano Holdings.

The project brings street-food culture to Turin. Visitors can taste dishes from a number of Italy's leading gastronomic names, including Marchetti and Del Cambio. The new market buzzes during the week as crowds of young professionals gather for

lunch and drinks in the upstairs *distilleria*. On weekends the space hosts a popular *aperitivo* hour, live music, lectures and food workshops.

It's hoped that the market's popularity will bring a new clientele to other businesses in the area. "The renovation is welcome and a step in the right direction," says Chiara Rossi, who runs the nearby Gran Piemonte Café with her mother.

Porta Palazzo remains an important point of trade and a gathering place for immigrant communities in the city – and, thankfully, that isn't likely to change. But Mercato Centrale represents a step-change in typically traditional Turin's use of its outdated and unused spaces. It also shows investors that it is possible to create something new that also honours a neighbourhood's personality. — JKD



Voice of reason

BRATISLAVA — URBANISM

Big things are happening in Slovakia. The Metropolitan Institute of Bratislava, an ambitious new think-tank that opened in May, is tasked with turning the drab post-Communist capital into a modern European city.

Run out of city hall, the institute will focus on public space, urban planning and development, transport and architecture. Mayor Matus Vallo hopes that the think-tank – the first such institution in Slovakia – will draw some of the country's best minds. Its core team already includes architects, designers and urban planners, as well as some of the mayor's closest aides. — AKO



Hub of the green

TILBURG — TRANSPORT

In Tilburg it's not only the public-transport vehicles that are going green: its public-transport infrastructure is too. The Dutch city's new bus station has been kitted out with solar panels that generate enough energy to make it self-sufficient: its lighting, digital signs, vehicle-service point and staff canteen will not require any additional energy source.

The sleek look of the bus station, as well as the newly redesigned train station next door, were the work of Dutch firm Cepezed Architects. They prove that even the greenest of solutions can look smart. — MJG