

Curatorial Statement

to gather examines the different ways in which we share space – in our city, with one another, and nature. The exhibition grew out of a desire to pull together stories on the ground. The relationships within and between communities living in public housing and neighbourhoods are the bedrock upon which many collective actions in this exhibition are built. These efforts, in turn, transform and reinvigorate the spatial environments they reference.

The 2021 Singapore Pavilion features a total of sixteen projects that represent the cross-section of local cultures and society. Singapore is deeply urban and affable. Against this cosmopolitan backdrop, spatial typologies such as hawker centres, community centres and void decks are constant fixtures in facilitating and nurturing practices of sociability in the city.

The curators are interested in bringing these modes of conviviality and inclusivity into the context of an exhibition. The Biennale Architettura 2021 poses a prescient and important question: how will we live together? This is a question that opens up a plethora of possibilities. The Singapore Pavilion addresses this through a community-led focus, and the built spaces that facilitate these gatherings. The spatial typologies of the hawker centre and the living/dining room of a public housing flat emerged as a natural and seamless way with which we could introduce a uniquely Singaporean mode of gathering and living together.

In the process of curating, we gathered around a quote by Donna J. Haraway (2016):

Sympoiesis is a simple word; it means, ‘making-with’. Nothing makes itself; nothing is really autopoietic or self-organising. [...] Sympoiesis is a word proper to complex, dynamic, responsive, situated, historical systems. It is a word for worlding-with, in company.

We understand sympoiesis as the building of a relationship, a role that architecture and the built environment in Singapore have actively played over the years. Sympoiesis also takes time, and so does sitting with the projects in this space. **to gather** is an invitation to view and experience up close the gathering of ideas, stories, and solutions that respond to Hashim Sarkis’ call to forge a new spatial contract for living together.