

Text
Rafael Gómez-Moriana

Photos
Sergio Pirrone

Groupies

At the Venice Biennale, Rafael Gómez-Moriana explores group dynamics, team spirit, social interaction and politics.

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We've all heard of 'selfies'. What about 'groupies'? At the opening of the 14th International Architecture Exhibition – aka the Venice Biennale – photographer Sergio Pirrone and Rafael Gómez-Moriana casually interviewed and photographed various sets of attendees. Group photos normally commemorate an extraordinary collective achievement or an equally special occasion. Many are historical markers laden with cultural significance. Sergio and Rafael wanted to capture qualities like group dynamics, team spirit, social interaction – even political allegiances.

The Venice Biennale is architecture's biggest media event – its moment of truth. The aim of virtually any media event is to create as many trending topics as the web can handle and to stir up as much buzz as possible. And without people, especially big-name personalities, there is no buzz. The Venice Biennale is, therefore, mainly a social event. Who, after all, doesn't like to mingle with the rich and famous? The social calendar of this edition of the Biennale kicks off the evening before the three-day-long preview with cocktails at Ca' Giustinian, a Grand Canal palazzo that doubles as the Biennale's head office. The invitation informs us that the president of the Biennale, Paolo Baratta, will be in attendance, as well as the artistic director, Rem Koolhaas. The former wears a striped shirt and a dark sport jacket, the latter a polo shirt that fits loosely over his tall, lanky frame. Luckily, pleasant views of the lagoon and Saint Mark's Campanile make up for the ridiculously few canapés being served. Nearly everyone in sight seems to be associated with architecture periodicals of one sort or another, from newspaper critics to mega-online platforms such as *ArchDaily* / *Plataforma Arquitectura*, probably the biggest media contingent at the Biennale. The four who pose for us are, from left to right, Gili Merin, Becky Quintal, Joanna Helm, and Pola Mora.

