

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Philippe Rahm: The Anthropocene Style
Decorative style in a new age of global warming

The first solo exhibition in the United States of Swiss architect Philippe Rahm, known internationally for his groundbreaking work at the intersection of climate, architecture, and physiological space

Presented in partnership with swissnex San Francisco

March 29 – May 19, 2018

Opening reception: Thursday, March 29, 6-9pm

(San Francisco, CA, February 26, 2018) In a newly commissioned exhibition for San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI), award-winning Swiss architect Philippe Rahm embraces the urgency of climate change to propose a roadmap for a field eager to adapt to and mitigate our changing climate.

Citing evidence that construction and maintenance of buildings account for nearly 50 percent of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide, Rahm offers a new set of questions around aesthetic choice: By what process does an architect, a designer, and even a painter or sculptor choose a material or a color for an artwork? What are the criteria for choosing one material over another, one color over another? In the context of accelerating climate change, Rahm argues that properties such as effusivity, emissivity, conductivity, and reflectivity should guide these decisions—a development that inspired Rahm to coin the term *Anthropocene Style*, referring to a new decorative style specific to our aesthetic and environmental era.

The Anthropocene Style: Decorative style in a new age of global warming is the first solo exhibition of Rahm's work in the United States. It manifests his ideas surrounding the urgency of climate change through an architecture and design process that takes climate, atmosphere, and physiology as its primary material. SFAI is happy to partner with swissnex San Francisco on the exhibition and with the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States which will support a public program to take place on April 28.

SFAI's Walter and McBean Galleries at its historic Chestnut Street campus will become a testing ground for Rahm's experimental new interior design 'fabrics:' emissive tapestries, effusive carpeting, and spectral light, all of which will be calibrated to interact with human body heat depending on external temperatures. The exhibition centers on a series of spatial and physiological audience experiences involving prototypes of tapestries, carpets, and other materials. Designed to shift the audience's perception, the exhibition will also include didactic materials in the form of publications and lectures by the architect (video recordings of which will be projected in the galleries).

Rahm's exhibition models a design that integrates materials such as fabrics, lighting, and patterns into interior building design, a contrast to the spare, minimalist "white cube" style of the later twentieth century. Rahm argues that minimalist Modern architecture, which in its sparseness often relies on artificial heating and cooling systems that use precious resources and produce harmful elements, has hastened global warming and is unsustainable for the future.

Rahm says, "Climate change is forcing us to rethink architecture radically, to shift our focus away from a purely visual and functional approach towards one that is more sensitive, more attentive to the invisible, climate-related aspects of space. Might not climate be a new architectural language, a language for architecture rethought with meteorology in mind? Between the infinitely small scale of the physiological and the infinitely vast scale of the meteorological, architecture must build sensual exchanges between body and space and invent new approaches capable of making long-term changes to the form and the way we will inhabit buildings tomorrow."

"This project represents SFAI's curatorial commitment to addressing issues of vital concern to our community and the world, through the imaginations and investigations of artists," says SFAI President Gordon Knox. "This is a singular opportunity to introduce U.S. audiences to one of the most progressive and vital cultural and design practices based in Europe. We believe this exhibition and Rahm's practice is at the vanguard of thinking about the future of humanity in an era of rapid climate change."

About Philippe Rahm

Philippe Rahm is a Swiss architect and the founder and principal of Philippe Rahm architectes, based in Paris, France. His work, which extends the field of architecture from the physiological to the meteorological, has received an international audience in the context of sustainability. In 2002, Rahm represented Switzerland at the 8th Architecture Biennale in Venice and was one of the 25 Manifesto's Architects of Aaron Betsky's 2008 Architectural Venice Biennale. He has participated in a number of exhibitions worldwide including Centre Pompidou, Paris; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal; Manifesta 7; and more. He has taught and lectured widely, including the AA School in London, Mendrisio Academy of Architecture in Switzerland, School of Architecture of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Cooper Union, UCLA, and more. His recent work includes the new 70-hectare Taichung Gateway Park in Taiwan, which opens in August 2018. Monographic books include *Physiological architecture* published by Birkhäuser in 2002, *Distortions* published by HX in 2005, *Environ(ne)ment: Approaches for Tomorrow* published by Skira in 2006, *Architecture météorologique* published by Archibooks in 2009, and *Constructed atmospheres* published by Postmedia in 2014.

Exhibition Credit and Partnership

Philippe Rahm: The Anthropocene Style is curated by Hesse McGraw, former Vice President for Exhibitions and Public Programs at SFAI, and current Principal of el dorado inc, and organized with Philippe Rahm, Katie Hood Morgan, SFAI Curator of Exhibitions and Public Programs, and Robin Beard, SFAI Chief Preparator.

The exhibition is co-presented with swissnex San Francisco and supported by Pro Helvetia, Swiss Arts Council. *Philippe Rahm: The Anthropocene Style* is supported by Etant Donnés Contemporary Art, a program of FACE Foundation, developed in partnership with the Cultural

Services of the French Embassy in the United States, with lead funding from the Florence Gould Foundation, the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, the French Ministry of Culture and Institut Français-Paris. The exhibition at SFAI coincides with a related version presented during del Salone del Mobile 2018 in Milan, Italy, organized by the Swiss Institute in Rome. In 2018, the publisher Lars Müller will publish a book surveying Rahm's work over the past decade, including the exhibitions in San Francisco and Milan.

About Walter and McBean Galleries

SFAI's Exhibitions and Public Programs provide direct access to artists and ideas that advance our culture. The Walter and McBean Galleries, established in 1969, present exhibitions at the forefront of contemporary art practice. The galleries serve as a laboratory for innovative and adventurous projects and commission new work from emerging and established artists.

About San Francisco Art Institute

Founded in 1871, SFAI is one of the country's oldest and most prestigious institutions of higher education in the practice and study of contemporary art. As a diverse community of working artists and scholars, SFAI provides students with a rigorous education in the arts and preparation for a life in the arts through an immersive studio environment, an integrated liberal arts and art history curriculum, and critical engagement with the world. Committed to educating artists who will shape the future of art, culture, and society, SFAI fosters creativity and original thinking in an open, experimental, and interdisciplinary context.

General Information

SFAI's Walter and McBean Galleries are open to the public Tuesday 11 AM – 7 PM and Wednesday – Saturday, 11 AM – 6 PM and are free. For general information, the public may visit sfai.edu or call (415) 749-4563. SFAI's Walter and McBean Galleries are located at 800 Chestnut St., San Francisco, CA.

MEDIA CONTACT

Nina Sazevich
Public Relations
415.752.2483
nina@sazevichpr.com