

PRESS RELEASE | Friday 13 May 2022 09:00 BST / 10:00 CET

## Where Art Meets Science: The Novartis Pavillon Opens in Basel, Switzerland



Novartis Pavillon in Basel, Switzerland © iart

**The Novartis Pavillon designed by AMDL CIRCLE and Michele De Lucchi has opened in Basel, Switzerland. Located on the Novartis Campus, the new exhibition, meeting and event centre is the first publicly accessible building on the site that aims to promote a dialogue about life sciences and become a resource that showcases the past, present and future of healthcare.**

The Milan-based practice was appointed to design the new structure following an international design competition in 2017 organised by Novartis under the creative direction of Vittorio Lampugnani. The Novartis Pavillon is the latest addition to the Novartis Campus Basel and joins a collection of buildings designed by other high-profile architects including David Chipperfield, Frank Gehry and Tadao Ando.

The Novartis Pavillon is intended to be a place of learning, knowledge and exchange for the general public, to bring the world of science and medicine closer to the community. It houses Wonders of Medicine, a permanent multimedia exhibition designed by ATELIER BRÜCKNER with content created in close collaboration with the scientists from Novartis.

### **A zero-energy media façade**

The new building features a distinctive, zero-energy media façade that plays a symbolic role in the architecture. AMDL CIRCLE carried out a series of parametric design studies to define the geometry and graphic image of the façade, which was further designed and engineered in collaboration with iart. The façade uses a new generation of organic photovoltaic and a grid of LED lights to screen the works of three international artists, Daniel Canogar, Esther Hunziker and Semiconductor. Curated by HEK (House of Electronic Arts) in Basel, the selected artists collaborated with scientists to develop light installations inspired by the shapes and colours of cells and molecules, as well as the themes of sustainability and the convergence of art and science.

### **Flexible architecture that communicates the values of science**

Designed to reinforce the promotion of connectivity for visitors and staff alike, the building's circular plan is structured across two levels, a ground floor and mezzanine, that will cater to different functions. At ground floor, 360 glazing allows natural light to enter the space in perfect continuity with the outside. The open space with expansive external views overlooking the river Rhine is designed to welcome visitors, as well as provide flexible spaces for learning, meetings, and events. Adjacent to the entrance foyer is a café and a check-in area that includes an informal and reconfigurable presentation space that is designed to promote interaction and provide a platform to carry out events but also to welcome visiting groups such as schools and associations. The use of acoustic curtains to divide the spaces and the wide range of digital technologies make it a state-of-the-art destination for the campus and the city of Basel.

### Wonders of Medicine

On the mezzanine, a multimedia theatre with stair seating acts as a link between the ground floor and the upper floor, leading visitors to the subjects of the Wonders of Medicine exhibition. AMDL CIRCLE designed the space as a fluid gallery, with no walls or dividing elements creating a stage for the exhibition designed by ATELIER BRÜCKNER. Visitors are taken on a circular journey through four distinct themes: Fragility of Life which describes how diseases and therapies affect the lives of patients; From Lab to Patient which shows the processes involved in medicine development and production; Steps Through Time which tells the history of medicine and the emergence of the pharmaceutical industry in Basel; and The Future of Healthcare which invites visitors to join virtual discussions with experts on the social and ethical implications of trends shaping the future of healthcare. Artificial lights run along the underside of the double pitched roof, that takes the form of a large ogive, and merge with the luminosity and vibrancy of the video monitors placed along the wall. The result is an immersive environment where the visitor has the sensation of being inside the world of science, research and the evolution of knowledge.

### A collaborative team

AMDL CIRCLE collaborated closely with local architect and general planner Blaser Butscher Architekten AG, who were responsible the planning, tender, technical design, construction, and delivery of the project. Overseeing a team of 25 planners and over 50 separate contractors, they were also responsible for the construction and assembly of prototypes for all relevant structures, finishes and interiors on the site.

### Customised furnishings

The internal material palette was chosen to create a luminous and humanistic appeal. The 'whitened' laminated wood structure and ceiling slats are combined with a continuous light grey terrazzo floor provide a background for the dark green division curtains and details in natural oak wood. AMDL CIRCLE designed customised furnishings for the project that were produced by Produzione Privata, the company created by Michele De Lucchi to develop experimental design objects and promote craftsmanship.

**Commenting on the project, Michele De Lucchi, architect, designer and founder of AMDL CIRCLE, said:** *"Future-orientated, innovative, open and optimistic. The floor plan of the Novartis Pavillon is inspired by the universal symbolism of the circle, considered a powerful field of psychophysical energy, a sort of sacred area where all physical and spiritual forces are concentrated. Because the architecture itself must communicate energy, must inspire and promote connections between different voices and cultures."*

**Christian W. Blaser, architect and founder of Blaser Architekten AG said:** *"We have been very fortunate to work with a client that promotes interdisciplinary teamwork and have thoroughly enjoyed the process. We have worked in close collaboration with AMDL CIRCLE and the wider design team from the design through to the construction to deliver a building that gives back to the city of Basel."*

**Valentin Spiess, Chairman and founder of iart, added:** *"Based on the idea of a network of cells, the façade spans the building as a semi-transparent membrane. Organic photovoltaics combined with LEDs create a symbiosis of material and light, resulting in a multi-layered appearance. The required energy is produced by the membrane itself, thus realising our vision of a zero-energy media façade."*

**Shirin Brückner, Managing Director ATELIER BRÜCKNER, says:** *“The Novartis Pavillon is a state-of-the-art platform to meet and learn about the life sciences industry. The exhibition design makes the visit a unique experience. A flowing, luminous tour provides four, story-driven chapters. The narration takes the visitors close to the people involved in medicine and makes the content approachable: Healthcare is a topic that affects all of us.”*

The Novartis Pavillon will be open to the general public from May 2022.

More information and hi-res images can be downloaded from the [Novartis Pavillon | Media Pack](#).

**-ends-**

For press, hi-res images and interview requests please contact Ellie Mackenzie and Danai Papadimitriou at Caro Communications.

E: [amd@carocommunications.com](mailto:amd@carocommunications.com)

T: +44 (0)20 7713 9388

#### **Notes to Editors:**

##### **Team Members**

**Design Architects** – AMDL CIRCLE and Michele De Lucchi, Milan

**Project architect** – Nicholas Bewick

**Project team** – Anna Schiaretti, Guido Tarantola, Greta Rosset, Francesco Garofoli, Elena Naldi

**Executive architect and construction supervision** – Blaser Butscher Architekten AG, Basel

**General planner team** – Christian W. Blaser, Sonja Proksch, Lisa Lo, Daniel Mischler, Pavel Popov

Structural Engineering: Schnetzer Puskas Ingenieure AG, HVAC: Herrmann & Partner, Electrical:

Edeco AG, Facade: Emmer Pfenninger Partner AG, Sanitary: Locher AG, Building physics: Ehram

Beurret Partner AG, Fire Safety: Gruner AG

**Wonders of Medicine exhibition design** - Atelier Brückner, Stuttgart

**Media façade & exhibition technical development** – iart, Basel

**Media façade curation** – Sabine Himmelsbach, HEK (House of Electronic Arts)

**Media facade artists** – Daniel Canogar, Esther Hunziker, Semiconductor

**Landscape design** – Vogt Landschaftsarchitekt, Zurich

#### **About AMDL CIRCLE**

AMDL CIRCLE is a multifaceted studio that was founded by Michele De Lucchi. Internationally renowned for its humanistic approach, it works across many sectors providing its clients with expressive and strategic projects that embrace architecture, interiors, products and communication.

AMDL's team of architects, designers and craftspeople have worked on projects for public and private organisations, collaborating with large corporations such as Intesa SanPaolo, Deutsche Bank and UniCredit, and designing buildings and exhibition systems for Neues Museum in Berlin and the Gallerie d'Italia in Milan, Turin and Naples.

The Milan based studio has also designed spaces, products and furniture for Alessi, Alias, Artemide, Hermes, Poltrona Frau and Unifor.

[AMDLCIRCLE.com](http://AMDLCIRCLE.com)

#### **About iart**

iart is a studio for media architectures based in Basel, Switzerland. Founded in 2001 by Valentin Spiess, iart enhances physical spaces with digital technology, thus enabling novel experiences. By taking on complex engineering and scenographic challenges, and applying emergent technologies, the studio has built a reputation for seamlessly integrating the digital into the built environment. To date, it has collaborated with internationally renowned architects, artists, and museums, garnering numerous design awards around the globe.

Previous media architecture projects include the light frieze at the Kunstmuseum Basel in collaboration with Christ & Gantenbein; the media facade for the Herzog & de Meuron designed M+ Museum; the MegaFaces kinetic facade at the Sochi 2014 Olympic Games, created in partnership

with Asif Khan; and a solar-tech infused media skin for the Swiss pavilion at the 2010 Expo in Shanghai.

#### **About ATELIER BRÜCKNER**

ATELIER BRÜCKNER is one of the worldwide leaders in exhibition design. Founded in 1997, the office – based in Stuttgart and Seoul – is run by Shirin Brückner, Prof. Eberhard Schlag, Britta Nagel and René Walkenhorst. 120 employees are contributing to the development of narrative spaces for museums, brand and visitor centers. The focus is on communicating content in an emotional way with long-lasting experience. Among the current large-scale projects are the Museum of the Future in Dubai and the Grand Egyptian Museum in Cairo. In 2020 the Lindt Home of Chocolate opened in Kilchberg/Zurich.

#### **About Blaser Butscher Architekten**

Blaser Butscher Architekten AG is an association of two architectural firms based in Basel that act as local architect and general planner for various projects on the Novartis Campus, among others. The architectural office Blaser Architekten AG was founded in 1993 and is managed by Christian W. Blaser. It is characterized by its variety of projects and mandates and by its open-minded attitude in which architecture is created in a lively exchange. Butscher Architekten AG was founded in 2002 with focus on laboratory and healthcare buildings.

#### **About HEK (House of Electronic Arts)**

HEK (House of Electronic Arts) in Basel is dedicated to digital culture and the new art forms of the Information Age. Since 2011, the institution has been central to the creative and critical discourse on the aesthetic, socio-political and economic effects of media technologies. As a platform for contemporary art that explores and employs new technologies, HEK promotes aesthetic practices related to information technologies. This not only enables a better comprehension of the changing world we live in, but also serves to actively engage with these processes and confront pressing questions of 21st century culture, while actively contributing to their mediation.