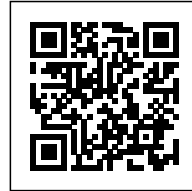




STEAM OF LIFE: A SEQUENCED SAUNA EXPERIENCE

Posted on October 9, 2019 by martabugues



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The circle-shaped Steam of Life Pavilion, co-designed by JKMM architects and Sauna on Fire collective, will be built at Burning Man festival to offer a sequenced sauna experience, as a deconstructed art installation.



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“Sauna” is the only Finnish word used in the English language, and it is probably one of the most common comparisons used in Finland to describe desert hot conditions. In a land of 5.5 million inhabitants and over 3.2 million saunas, the Finns’ approach to the sauna is profoundly philosophical and strangely straightforward and day-to-day.

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Deeply rooted in Finnish society, the tradition of the sauna stems from the Finnish people's closeness to nature and the country's forests and lakes and has remained unchanged throughout the centuries. Even today, the sauna is at the center of all the important events in life. It symbolizes camaraderie, solidarity and the collective social domain. In addition to these social aspects, the sauna is a place for bathing and detoxing as well as private spiritual purging and peaceful meditation. It is a place of both physical and spiritual metamorphosis.

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Marcus Kujala, Hannu Rytty, Päivi Aaltio and Samppa Lappalainen – three architects and the CEO of JKMM Architects – will contribute to the unique participatory culture of Burning Man by joining the Sauna on Fire collective, an interdisciplinary group of artists, thinkers, scholars and Burners with an ambition and curiosity for co-creation, volunteerism, positive spirit and the inclusion of participants with diverse backgrounds, by contributing the essence of the Finnish mindscape in the physical form of a sauna pavilion at Burning Man 2019.

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“Steam of Life”, the co-created timber pavilion, embodies the typical physical elements of a Finnish sauna. It is a human-scale wooden building, minimalistic in its aesthetic and focused on embracing ambient natural light and shade, in response to what will be a major gathering within a hot desert environment. A passageway will guide visitors to circulate through the round shaped sauna pavilion.

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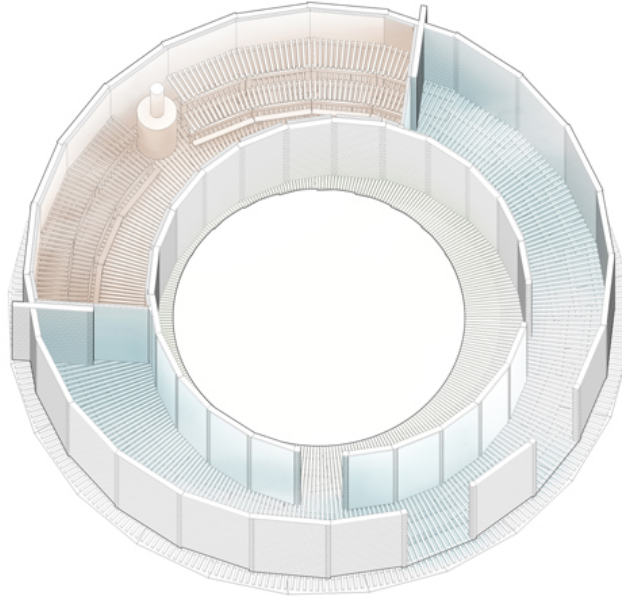
Stepping in from the harsh desert light, visitors enter a low-lit passage that leads to the steam room, the heart of a Finnish Sauna, with wooden benches and the "kiuas" stove. After enjoying a sauna, visitors will enter a softly lit space opening onto the atrium yard in the middle of the pavilion. In the absence of a lake, sea or a pile of snow to dip into, the atrium yard offers a shaded oasis for cooling down and meditative relaxing.

Just like saunas in Finland, the Steam of Life pavilion is about capturing the same ideal of a shared sense of humanity in a memorable and timeless way.

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