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International Design Challenge

SYMBIOCENE: ARCHITECTURE FOR A BIODIVERSE FUTURE 2025

First Edition

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Competition Title: Symbiocene: Architecture for a Biodiverse Future

Introduction:

Human activity has pushed the planet into an era of mass biodiversity loss. Expanding cities, deforestation, climate change, and industrial growth continue to fragment habitats and disrupt ecosystems. The built environment, often viewed as an ecological burden, is at the core of this crisis. But architecture also holds the potential to reverse it.

What if buildings were not just shelters for humans, but living frameworks that support multiple species? What if future cities could function as ecosystems, where flora, fauna, and humans coexist symbiotically?

This competition invites architects, students, designers, and visionaries to reimagine architecture's role in shaping a biodiverse future through speculative and imaginative proposals.

Timeline:

Competition Launch: 1st September 2025

Registration deadline: 30th November 2025

Submission deadline: 10th December 2025

Result Announcement: January 30th 2026

Theme:

Architecture as Ecosystem — Designing for Biodiversity Futures

Participants are invited to speculate on a future where architecture and ecosystems are inseparable. The challenge is to design spaces, structures, or environments that restore, support, and expand biodiversity, redefining the relationship between humans and nature.

Design Challenge:

Propose an architectural vision for a future where biodiversity thrives alongside human existence. Projects may be buildings, urban interventions, or speculative ecosystems that explore multispecies cohabitation.

Guiding questions:

How can architecture become an agent of ecological regeneration?

How might built forms integrate with natural cycles like migration, pollination, or water filtration?

What would a multispecies city or habitat look like in a biodiverse future?

Could architecture act as a living, adaptive organism?

Context:

Participants may select from the following speculative scenarios or propose their own:

The Vertical Wilderness (Urban Megacities) – Skyscrapers as forests, rooftops as habitats, facades as pollinator fields.

The Rewilded Ruins (Post-Anthropocene Landscapes) – Abandoned human cities transformed into biodiversity hubs.

The Floating Biome (Rising Seas) – Amphibious, floating structures that double as marine ecosystems.

The Desert Bloom (Arid Futures) – Architectural systems seeding biodiversity in barren deserts.

The Sky Gardens (Aerial Futures) – Suspended habitats where humans, birds, and insects coexist.

The Underground Sanctuary (Subterranean Futures) – Subsurface ecosystems cohabited by fungi, roots, insects, and humans.

Aim:

The competition seeks to push architectural imagination beyond human-centered design, exploring futures where architecture becomes symbiotic, regenerative, and ecologically alive. The goal is to inspire new design languages that contribute to biodiversity resilience, shifting from an anthropocentric to a symbiocentric worldview.

Awards:

Top 3: Publication | Certificate of Recognition | Jury Report | Interview | Free Memberships in architectural communities, forums, or libraries. & more

Honourable mention: Publication | Certificate of Recognition

Special Mention: Publication | Certificate of Recognition

Shortlisted Entries: Name & project title listed in competition results | Certificate of Participation

Fees:

STAGE	START	END	USD
EARLY REG.	1 st Sept	15 th Sept	10
STANDARD REG. 1	16 th Sept	30 th Sept	12
STANDARD REG. 2	1 st Oct	15 th Oct	15
STANDARD REG. 3	16 th Oct	31 st Oct	18
STANDARD REG. 4	1 st Nov	15 th Nov	20
LATE REG.	16 th Nov	30 th Nov	25

Discounts:

5% Discount: Available for university student (individual or team participants).

10% Discount: Available for universities that register 10 individual or team participants.

20% Discount: Available for universities that register 20 individual or team participants.

Evaluation Criteria:**Vision & Originality:**

- Boldness of the speculative concept
- Creativity in imagining a biodiverse future

Ecological Integration:

- How effectively the proposal fosters biodiversity
- Integration of natural cycles and multispecies interactions

Design Innovation:

- Novel use of form, space, and materiality
- Speculative use of technology or systems thinking

Narrative Strength:

- Clarity of the written concept
- Depth of ecological and architectural reasoning

Visual Communication:

- Quality and effectiveness of drawings, renders, or diagrams
- Strength of the ecosystem diagram in explaining interactions

Submission Requirements:File Format:**Sheets (JPG./JPEG. format.):**

- Minimum of 3 sheets, maximum of 6 sheets.
- Each sheet should include designs, drawings, and views that effectively communicate the project concept.

Text Explanation (300 + words – DOCS. Format):

- Docs. File must contain explanatory text that describes and supports your design decisions.
- Text should be clear and concise, highlighting the main ideas and features of the project.

Content to Include (per sheet):

- Design Concepts: Conceptual drawings, diagrams, and sketches.
- Plans, Elevations, and Sections: Architectural plans, cross-sections, and elevations.
- Views and Renderings: 3D views, perspectives, or rendered images of the project.
- Diagrams: Illustrations explaining circulation, spatial relationships, environmental or structural concepts.

Resolution and Quality:

- All sheets should be high-quality, legible, and visually clear.

Naming Convention:

- The file should be named as: CompetitionName_ParticipationCode.pdf

Anonymity:

- No names, logos, or identifying marks should appear on any of the submitted sheets to ensure anonymity during judging.

Registration & Submission Guidelines:

Follow the video link below:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDOxFd_RHwY&feature=youtu.be

Eligibility:

- Open to architects, designers, students, artists, and visionaries worldwide.
- Interdisciplinary teams are encouraged.
- No professional qualifications required.

Contact Details:

For any inquiries or further information, please contact us at:

- Email: info@archiolcompetitions.com
- Website: www.archiolcompetitions.com
- Competition Link: <https://www.archiolcompetitions.com/competitions/symbiocene-architecture-for-a-biodiverse-future>