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Man and Architecture: The Architect's Personal Expression

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Abstract
In accordance with the theory of "Architecturally Defined Space (ADS)" - Environment. Man, Boundaries and Perspectives - The author of this paper was mainly concerned with the relationship Environment - Man, Boundaries - Man and the perspectives of architecture. In this paper, the focus is on the relationship Man - architecture. In this case, Man is the client of the job (mainly for his family house) and Man is the creator of the architecture (mainly a trained architect, but also a 'folk craftsman following tradition'). In order to reexamine this relationship, the author analyzed well-known international architectural competitions. In the case of empirical disciplines (mathematics, physics, chemistry, for example), each person will solve a task with the same result as another, while in architecture this is not the case - there will be as many different solutions as there are 'task solvers'. In this way, Man, as one of the fundamental components of architecture, generates diversity and complexity in architecture, in a similar way as the Environment (natural and social).

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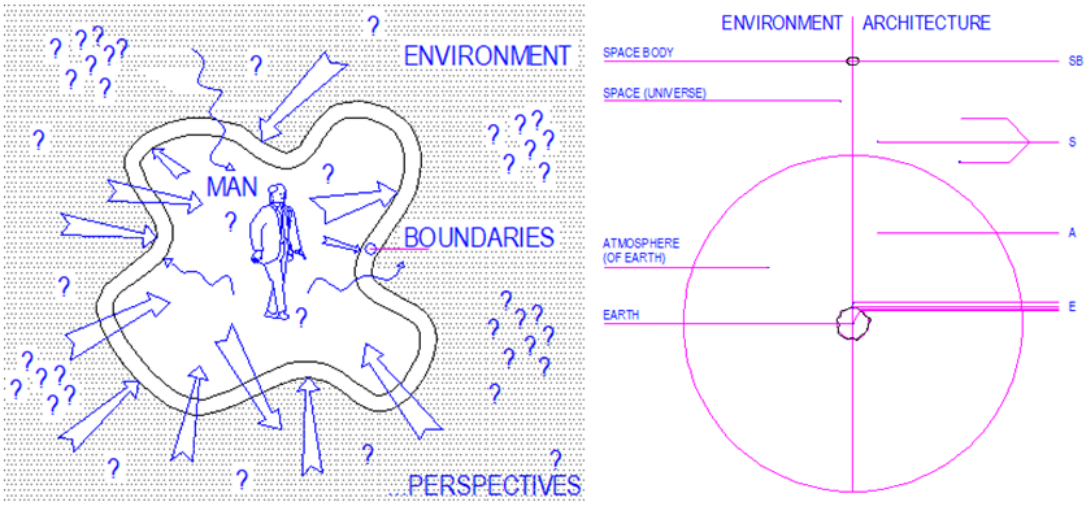
Keywords: Man, Architecturally Defined Space (ADS), Synergy of natural environment, social environment and man

1. Introduction

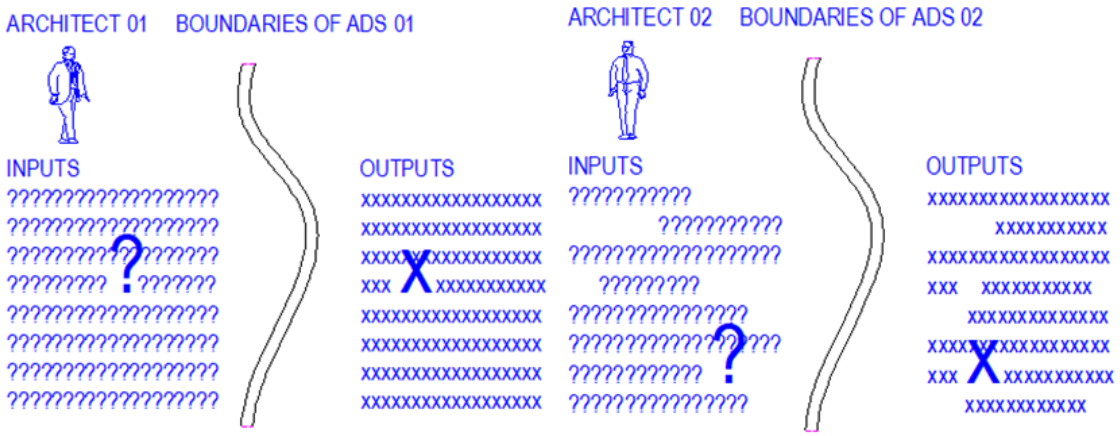
Architecture is the most complex discipline that anyone can possibly pursue [1]. Many books have been written about the essence of architecture and the extent of its boundaries. The fact that every architect (and every individual in general) has 'his own definition of architecture' prompted the Author of this paper to propose his own theory of architecture where nothing will be omitted from its essence, and it will be short and clear. This is presented (1987) in the Author's theory of architecture - Architecturally Defined Space (ADS) - where architecture consists of four basic elements: Environment, Man, Boundaries and Perspectives. Since all of the above components are extremely complex in themselves, architecture will also be complex and controversial. The author of this paper has so far dealt with each of these components, and dealing with the issue of 'Man', he has published several works, including "Architecture in Context" [2], "Man: Something or Nothing" [3], "Architecture in Drawings and Paintings) [4]. The author has also traveled extensively around the world, where he met different people and different natural and social environments. The aim of the study trips was to get to know cities on the spot and through their analysis (through 'cabinet work') to contribute to the Author's theory of "Architecturally defined space" [5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14]. With the same goal, the author visited many cities: in the Balkans [15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34,35], in Europe [36,37,38,39,40,41,42,43,44], in the Mediterranean [45,46,47,48,49,50] and in Asia [51,52,53,54,55,56,57,58,59,60,61,62,63,64,65]. When he was in his second year of studies (1978), the Author came across a book by Kevin Andrew Lynch (1918-1984) entitled “The Image of the City” (1960) and was delighted with its contents. At that time, he also wrote a student paper entitled “Image of the Sarajevo City” which delighted his professor Aleksander Trumic. Since the Author traveled a lot, he always tried to “capture” an image of a city and memorize it. Figure 1 presents the author's theory Architecturally Defined Space (ADS) - "Architecture as an Amoeba".



***Source*:** Author (1987 left, 2011 right)

Fig 1: Architecturally Defined Space (ADS)

In exact disciplines (mathematics, physics, chemistry) the solution to a task is the same (for the same inputs), while in architecture this is not the case; each 'solver' of the task will (for the same inputs) give 'his solution' which reflects the complexity of his being towards 'Man'. At the same time, 'Man' can be the client of work (mainly a family house) or an architect - the creator of architecture (Figure 2).



***Source*:** Author 2011.

Fig 2: Architect-ADS

2. The Aesthetics of Architecture of Some Great Architects

Architecture is not just about building shelter, but a profound medium for personal expression, acting as a 'mirror reflecting the minds of men'. It is the physical manifestation of the architect's inner world – their beliefs, emotions and intellectual abilities. While architecture serves society, it often thrives on the personal vision of a single creator. As noted in an analysis of Louis Sullivan's (1856-1924) 'Autobiography of an Idea', architecture is an 'intensely personal account' of the architect's journey and beliefs. The private home often serves as the best case study for the architect's personal expression, where the level of intimacy between designer and built object is highest. Personal expression is 'a reflection of one's own prejudices and limitations', as seen in the artistic intuition of Frank Gehry (1929-2025) and the use of imperfections or rectangular forms and structural honesty of Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969). Architecture acts as a 'poetic imagination' that engages the body and mind of the user, striving to be a 'coherent organism' that stimulates thought. As Norman Foster said, "Architecture is an expression of values - the way we build is a reflection of the way we live" [66]. This personal expression acts as a 'decoder' of the architect's way of thinking, transforming personal thoughts into tangible form. The personal voice of the creator is often a 'transcendent thought', a 'logos for the earthly city' that defies practical limitations. As Hans Hollein (1934-2014) stated, architecture must expand beyond traditional construction into a true architecture of our time that uses intangible means – such as light, sound and sensory experiences – to express the human, emotional and social needs of the era. Architecture is a 'cooking pot for life', reflecting a humanism that prioritizes the dignity and worth of humanity in the built environment. The private home allows for a deep, intimate connection, often reflecting the architect's own life and family needs.

The architectural aesthetic of Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959) known as 'organic architecture', emphasizes harmony between human habitation and nature, with horizontal lines, open floor plans, and natural materials. His designs, including the Prairie and Usonian styles, integrate buildings into their landscapes, use large windows, and incorporate built-in furniture to create a unique, flowing, and natural living environment. Buildings should appear to have grown

naturally from their sites, treating nature with respect and designing in harmony with the local landscape. Houses designed between 1899 and 1910 often feature low, long structures with hipped roofs, dormers, and clustered windows to blend in with the flat landscape. Wright minimized interior walls, encouraging a sense of community and free movement within the home. A strong connection to the outdoors is achieved through large windows, terraces, and the use of locally *Source*d materials such as stone and wood. He emphasized the 'intrinsic nature' of materials, often highlighting wood slats, the texture of stone, and using light to create dynamic, intimate spaces. Designs are often strictly geometric, with built-in furniture designed to fit the geometry of the room and maximize space. The Prairie Style (1899–1910) was characterized by strong horizontal lines, flat or hipped roofs, and wide eaves. The Usonian Style (from 1929 onwards) focused on affordable, simplified, and functional housing for the American middle class, often with flat roofs and underfloor heating. The Slap House (1935) is located in Pennsylvania; this house is famously cantilevered over a waterfall to blend directly into the rocky landscape. Taliesin (1909) is Wright's home in Wisconsin, located on a hillside and designed with extensive natural elements. The Guggenheim Museum (1959) is a stark contrast to the rectangular Prairie style; this building uses a spiral design to create a continuous, flowing gallery experience. Wright's work was heavily influenced by natural forms, Japanese architecture's appreciation for materials, and a desire to create a uniquely American architectural identity [67].

The architectural aesthetic of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886–1969) was defined by the minimalist principles of ‘less is more’, emphasizing structural clarity, material honesty, and spatial continuity. His work features expansive glass curtain walls, exposed steel frames, and open floor plans, striving for a ‘skin and bone’ minimalism that strips away all unnecessary ornamentation to create timeless, serene spaces. Mies’ work focused on reduction to essential forms, paired with obsessive, precise material detailing. His designs, such as the Farnsworth House (1951) and the Seagram Building (1958), used glass to connect interior spaces with the exterior, creating a sense of ‘conceptual transparency’. He favored flexible spaces that were not limited by load-bearing walls, using freestanding structures or foundational elements (as seen in the Barcelona Pavilion, 1929) to define areas. He used industrial materials—steel, plate glass, and luxurious materials like marble or travertine—expressing their natural characteristics without covering them up. The structural steel frame is not hidden, but celebrated as the primary design element. The cantilever technique is often used in his furniture and building designs, such as the Four Seasons bar stool (1958), for a slender, floating appearance. The philosophy is that the structural skeleton is enveloped by a delicate, transparent exterior. The Barcelona Pavilion (1929) is known for its minimalist intersecting planes and luxurious materials. The Farnsworth House (1951) is an icon of minimalist residential architecture with its pure white structure and glass walls. The Seagram Building (1958) is a defining example of a modernist skyscraper with bronze and glass. The Neue Nationalgalerie (1968) represents the pinnacle of his concept of 'universal space', with a spacious, open interior topped by a steel roof [68].

Toyo Ito's (born 1941) architectural aesthetic is defined by a fluid, organic minimalism that seeks to blur the boundaries between the built environment and nature, and between public and private space. A 2013 Pritzker Prize laureate, Ito has abandoned the rigid, uniform grids of modernism to embrace 'emerging grids' that enable complex, flowing spaces. Fluidity and 'lightness' - Ito strives to create spaces that feel light, airy and almost immaterial, often mimicking the behavior of air or wind. His designs often blur the distinction between walls, floors and ceilings, resulting in continuous, cave-like environments. The National Taichung Theatre in Taiwan (2014-2016) is characterized by curved, cavernous and shell-like structures. Ito's work is deeply influenced by organic structures, translating natural elements into structural design, such as trees, bubbles or rivers. He uses tree-like columns that branch out to create open, free-flowing spaces. The Sendai Mediatheque (2001) uses 13 tube-like columns that pierce seven floor slabs. Ito describes his work as ‘clothes that envelop human beings’, emphasizing that architecture should adapt to people’s daily lives rather than forcing human activity into strict, predetermined functions. He believes that maintaining an ambiguous architectural function allows for more joy and flexibility in space. Ito often uses glass and modern materials to explore the relationship between the physical and virtual worlds, creating structures that seem to dissolve. The envelope of his buildings is often key, acting as a luminous or translucent barrier that interacts with the urban surroundings. The MIKIMOTO Ginza 2 building in Tokyo (2005) has a facade with organic bubble-like cutouts, evoking falling petals. In recent years, following the 2011 earthquake in Japan, Ito has focused on creating community-oriented 'slow architecture' - a design approach that addresses the needs of the local community and uses locally *Source*d materials. The Tama Art University Library (Tokyo, Japan, 2007) features arched walls of varying spans that mimic the feel of a forest. Bijelo U (Tokyo, Japan, 1976, demolished 1997) is a private residence that established his focus on creating intimate, closed and introspective spaces [69].

Tadao Ando's (born 1941) architecture defines 'sublime silence' through minimalist, geometric forms, smooth exposed concrete and dramatic manipulation of natural light and shadow. His aesthetic combines modern, elegant materiality with traditional Japanese principles of spatial purity and sensory interaction with nature, creating serene, contemplative spaces. Ando uses cast, silky-smooth concrete as a neutral, textured surface, often featuring precise formwork joints. It functions as a 'canvas' for light, not just structure. Light is treated as a building material that defines space. By controlling entry points (openings, narrow slits), Ando creates dramatic, high-contrast, spiritual spaces (e.g. Church of Light, 1989). The structures are often composed of simple geometric shapes (cubes, cylinders, rectangles) that create complex internal circulation paths, maximizing simplicity and offering rich sensory experiences. Rather than conquering the landscape, Ando's work integrates with it. He often uses water, wind and sky to reflect the buildings, emphasizing the fluid and serene environment. Ando often creates 'enclosed' spaces that shield the inhabitants from the urban chaos, offering inward-looking, contemplative environments that encourage a sense of peace. Pools that reflect the architecture, adding tranquility and reflecting changing light. Complex, often indirect paths that encourage visitors to slow down and experience the space. The use of empty spaces (courtyards) to create a sense of Nothingness, allowing users to find their own meaning within the space.

Ando's work has been described as a 'rebellion' against the excessive ornamentation of postmodernism, returning to the basics of modern, minimalist design [70].

Frank Gehry (1929–2025) is an influential contemporary architect known for his deconstructivist, sculptural designs that defy traditional conventions, featuring fragmented forms, unconventional materials such as titanium and chain-link, and fluid, curved forms. His aesthetic fuses movement, chaos, and light to create experiential spaces, notable examples of which include the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (1997) and the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles (2003). Gehry's work often features fragmented volumes, non-rectangular shapes, and an appearance of chaos or incompleteness, which creates a sense of tension and energy. He treats buildings as massive sculptures, blurring the line between architecture and art. His designs emphasize dynamism, with curving walls, raised, curved, and irregular shapes that appear to be in motion. Gehry is known for using everyday or industrial materials in unexpected ways, including chain-link fences, corrugated metal, plywood, and, most famously, reflective surfaces such as titanium and stainless steel. The materials are chosen to capture and reflect light, transforming the building's appearance throughout the day. He rejects symmetry as a constraint, favoring imbalance to create visual interest. Gehry pioneered the use of sophisticated software—particularly CATIA, a tool from the aerospace industry—to map complex curves and guide the construction of irregular shapes. Despite their chaotic appearance, his designs are deeply functional and focus on user experience and light. The signature project, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (Spain, 1997), is known for its dramatic, titanium-clad curved forms. The Walt Disney Concert Hall (Los Angeles, 3003) is known for its stainless steel forms, sails, and excellent acoustics. Gehry's residence (Santa Monica, California) is a 1978 project that launched his career, with a radical renovation using raw materials such as corrugated metal and plywood. The Dancing House (Prague, 1996), which he co-authored with architect Vlado Milunić (1941-2022), is a unique structure that looks like two dancing figures [71].

Norman Foster (born 1935) is an influential British architect and a leading figure in the high-tech movement, combining structural expressionism with advanced technology. His work with Foster + Partners is characterised by an elegant, minimalist and often futuristic aesthetic, with a strong emphasis on sustainability, transparency and structural, functional beauty. Fundamental aesthetics and architectural principles Foster's design philosophy, often referred to as 'high-tech' or industrial, prioritises efficiency and structural honesty, often described as 'skin and bone' design. His buildings often feature steel and glass, with exposed structural elements to celebrate engineering excellence. Extensive use of glass façades and atrium spaces allows natural light to infiltrate and encourages a visual connection between interior spaces and the outside world. Floor plans are often open and flexible, designed to adapt to changing future technologies and user needs. Foster integrates environmental awareness into his aesthetics, using innovative natural ventilation systems, energy-efficient materials and, often, photovoltaic cells (e.g., Commerzbank headquarters (1997) and Apple Park, 2018). Many of his projects, such as the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich, England (1978), use a 'shed' design, offering large, flexible, and column-free interior spaces. 30 St Mary Axe ('The Shed'), London (2004) is known for its energy-efficient tapered design and diagonal structure. Apple Park, Cupertino (2018) is a massive, circular, sustainable campus focused on collaboration and nature. The renovation of the Reichstag, Berlin (1999), with its glass dome symbolizing transparency in government, has become a landmark. The HSBC Headquarters, Hong Kong (1985) is a pioneering high-tech tower with a revolutionary, modular design. The Millau Viaduct, France (2004) is the tallest bridge in the world, combining engineering prowess with elegant, delicate form. The Hearst Tower, New York (2006) is an environmentally sustainable skyscraper built on a historic base, with a unique diagonal structure. Although very modern, his work attempts to take into account the surrounding environment, topography and cultural context - what he calls the 'genius loci' (genius of place). Despite his high-tech appearance, Foster emphasizes that his designs aim to enhance the human experience, focusing on comfort, light and social interaction. His work often anticipates the future, focusing on technology, mobility and sustainable development, with a growing interest in the use of local, natural materials alongside steel and glass [72].

Zaha Hadid (1950-2016) was a pioneering architect known as the 'Queen of the Curve', who revolutionized modern architecture with parametricism, fluid organic forms and fragmented geometry. Her designs, and those of her firm Zaha Hadid Architects (ZHA), often feature sweeping, gravity-defying and interconnected volumes that depart from traditional Euclidean, angular buildings, resulting in iconic structures. Hadid rejected rectangular and standard grids, preferring continuous surfaces where walls, floors and ceilings merge, creating a sense of constant, fluid movement. Her later work used advanced computing to create complex, organic geometries that mimic natural forms, appearing to be shaped by environmental influences rather than constructed. Early work was influenced by the Russian avant-garde, emphasizing sharp angles, fragmentation and 'exploding' volumes, as seen in the Vitra Fire Station. Her designs often avoid separate rooms or corners, aiming for open, interconnected and shared spaces. Buildings such as the Heydar Aliyev Center, Baku, Azerbaijan (2012) emerge from their surroundings, blurring the boundaries between the building and the topography of the site. The MAXXI Museum, Rome, Italy (2010) features intersecting lines and sweeping concrete walls creating a dynamic, exhibition experience. The London Aquatics Center, London, UK (2011), which she worked with Patrik Schumacher, is a building characterized by a fluid, undulating roofline. The Guangzhou Opera House, China (2010) was inspired by river pebbles, this design features two rock-like structures clad in metal. In 2004, Zaha Hadid became the first woman to win the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize, often called the Nobel Prize for Architecture [73].

Jean Nouvel (born 1945) is a French architect and Pritzker Prize-winning architect known for his highly contextual, experimental, and non-stylistic approach to space, often described as an 'illusionist' of space. His architecture eschews a recognizable style, focusing instead on creating buildings that respond intensely to their specific cultural, climatic, and urban context. Nouvel's aesthetic is characterized by an inventive, often poetic, interplay of light, shadow, and transparency, often achieved with cutting-edge technology and materials. Nouvel believes that "before intervening anywhere, one must first understand the place"[73]. His buildings are conceived as extensions of their surroundings,

whether in modern urban landscapes or desert environments. Light is a primary, almost physical material for Nouvel, used to create dynamic, ever-changing spaces. He often plays with transparency, reflection, and 'photographic' renderings, as seen in the Fondation Cartier in Paris (2025), where glass facades connect the interior with the surrounding garden. His designs are often compared to cinema – experiential, cinematic and designed to be viewed in motion rather than as static, monumental forms. A defining element in projects such as the Louvre Abu Dhabi (2017) is the use of complex, layered screens (moucharabiehs) that produce intricate patterns of light, often referred to as 'rain of light'. Nouvel rejects the 'copy and paste' approach of early modernism, advocating for buildings that are uniquely adapted to their time and place. Nouvel is known for creating intelligent, movable or highly patterned facades, such as the metal, aperture-driven shell of the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris (1987). He often uses curved lines and organic shapes, such as the 'desert rose' concept for the National Museum of Qatar (2019), which mimics a natural crystal formation. Nouvel works closely with technicians to achieve thin, delicate structures, using glass, steel and concrete in innovative ways to create 'sensory experiences'. Torre Agbar (now Torre Glòries), Barcelona (2005) is a colorful geyser-shaped tower that represents a new landmark for the city [74].

The author of this paper, as an architect-designer, has his own aesthetics and philosophy of architecture, which he has published in his books and scientific papers; illustrative examples are the book „My approach to designing mosques" [75] (2017) and the work "Professor Ahmet Hadrovic's Philosophy of Architecture" [76].

3. Analysis of Major International Architectural Competitions

The author of this paper has selected several of the largest and most famous international architectural competitions whose analysis reveals and establishes the significance of the "Human" component in the creation of Architecturally Defined Space (ADS): Guggenheim Helsinki (2014, Finland), Grand Egyptian Museum (2002-2003, Giza, Egypt), Pompidou Center (1971, Paris, France), Chicago Tribune, Chicago, USA (1922), Palace of the Soviets, Moscow, USSR (1931-1933), New Passenger Terminal of Franjo Tuđman Airport (2008, Zagreb, Croatia).

The competition for the design of the new Guggenheim Museum in Helsinki, Finland, is considered the largest architectural competition in history, attracting 1715 entries from almost 80 countries in the period 2014-2015. This surpassed the previous record, the competition for the Grand Egyptian Museum from 2002-2003, which received 1557 entries. The winner of this competition is the Japanese-French architectural design firm Moreau Kusunoki Architectes.

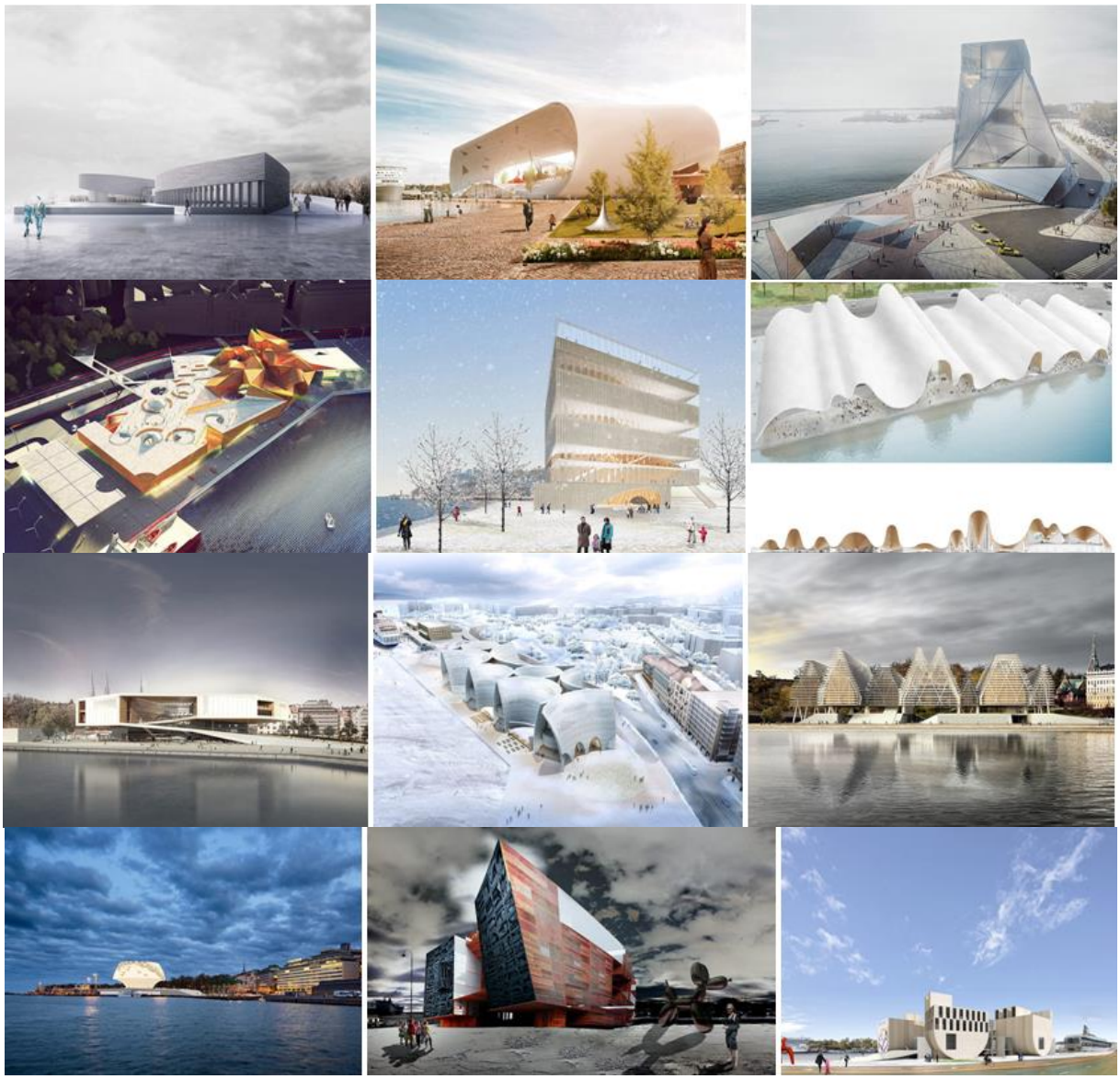
The Guggenheim Helsinki Plan was an initiative to establish the Guggenheim Museum in Helsinki, Finland. The proposal was presented to the Helsinki City Council in 2011. After the initial plan was rejected in 2012, a new plan was considered, presented in 2013, which was finally rejected in 2016. In September 2013, the Guggenheim Foundation submitted a revised proposal. Estimates of operating expenses were revised downwards, while the Foundation predicted an increase in income. In 2014, the city council agreed to reserve a new location for a potential museum in Eteläsatama and authorized the Foundation to hold an international architectural competition to design a potential museum. The competition, organized by London-based specialists Malcolm Reading Consultants, attracted a record 1,715 entries and six finalists were announced. In June 2015, the Franco-Japanese architecture firm Moreau Kusunoki Architectes was selected as the winner. In 2015, Franco-Japanese firm Moreau Kusunoki Architectes won the competition, although the proposed museum was ultimately rejected by the Helsinki City Council in 2016. The Guggenheim Helsinki design competition used a revolutionary two-stage, open and anonymous format that attracted an unprecedented 1,715 entries from 77 countries [77]. In the end, six finalists were selected: AGPS Architecture Ltd. (Zurich, Switzerland and Los Angeles, United States of America); Asif Khan Ltd. (London, United Kingdom); Fake Industries Architectural Agonism (Cristina Goberna, Urtzi Grau); Jorge Lopez Conde, Carmen Blanco, Alvaro Carrillo (New York, United States, Barcelona, Spain and Sydney, Australia); Haas Cook Zemmrich STUDIO2050 (Stuttgart, Germany); Moreau Kusunoki Architectes (Paris, France) [78]; SMAR Architecture Studio (Madrid, Spain and Western Australia).

The winning entry by Moreau Kusunoki Architectes proposes a new building typology that has the potential to change the way we live. The location of the Kaartinpunki/Ullanlinna harbor allows for the creation of a prominent architectural icon. Visitors entering Helsinki from the sea will be greeted by a building that embodies the qualities of the Finnish spirit, as well as the Guggenheim's artistic goals. The environmental conditions that have shaped a unique society of diligence and responsibility are one of the driving forces throughout the design process. Design decisions were made not only to create an extraordinary exhibition experience, but also to ensure a year-round active public place in the challenging Finnish climate. The Guggenheim's mission, complemented by Finnish technological capabilities, ensures success in this ambitious task. Based on these rational principles, an extraordinary space will be created. It serves not only to organize and present internationally significant exhibitions, but also to provide a common space where locals and tourists can gather, socialize, and explore the latest cultural ideas. The boundary between public space and museum is blurred by the many holes in the garden surface. The undulating and transparent building envelope creates spaces that are both indoor and outdoor. The additional space achieved by designing the garden can be used for many purposes, for example for outdoor exhibitions, concerts and meetings. Here, artists can work in the presence of the public, and residents can use this space to walk and run, inadvertently coming into contact with the art. Contemporary museums are not art storage boxes - they are moving towards a return to the ancient gardens of art, which were open to all citizens. This design is not just an art museum. The social mosaic will provide the area with an accessible, interpersonal and lively experience for everyone. The flexibility of this design outside this framework allows the Guggenheim and Helsinki itself to evolve and adapt according to needs and desires, so that the ongoing process can be as interactive as the finished project (Figure 3).

***Source*:** https://www.dezeen.com/2015/06/23/moreau-kusunoki-architectes-wins-guggenheim-helsinki-competition/ Accessed: May 29, 2026.

Fig 3: Guggenheim Helsinki Design Competition (Winning entry, architects: Moreau Kusunoki Architectes, Paris, France)

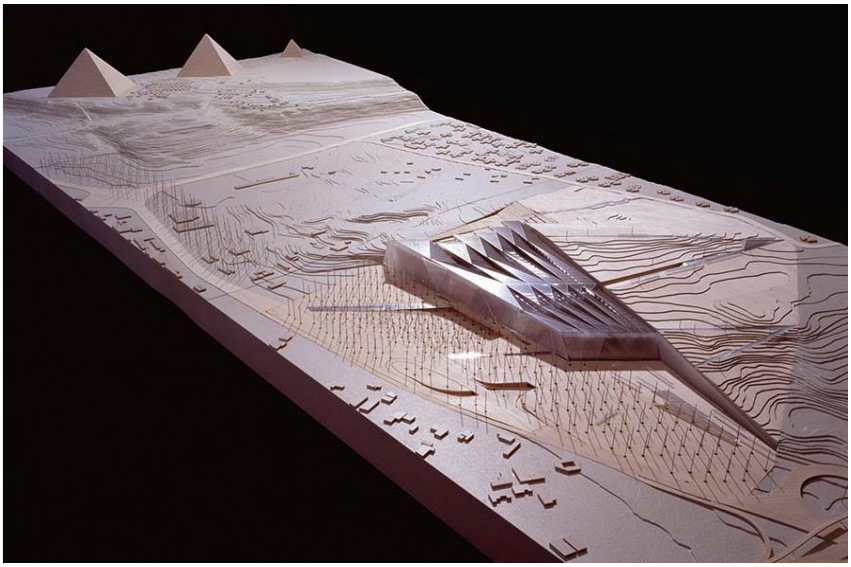
Figure 3 shows some of the competition entries that demonstrate different approaches to design and understanding of the place and role of the Guggenheim Museum in Helsinki.

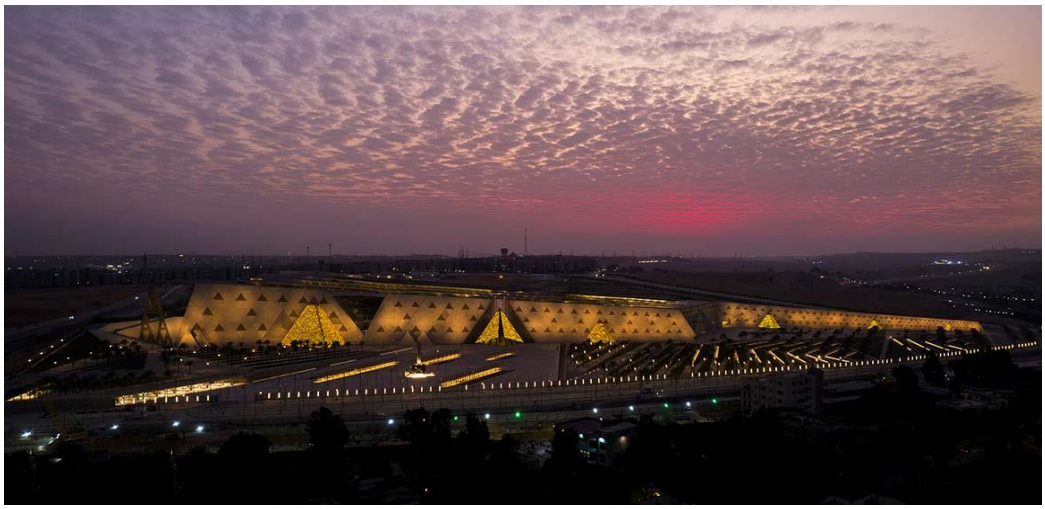


***Source*:** https://bustler.net/news/3977/what-do-you-think-of-the-guggenheim-helsinki-stage-one-entries, Accessed: May 29, 2026.

Fig 4: Guggenheim Helsinki Design Competition (Gallery of some of the competition entries)

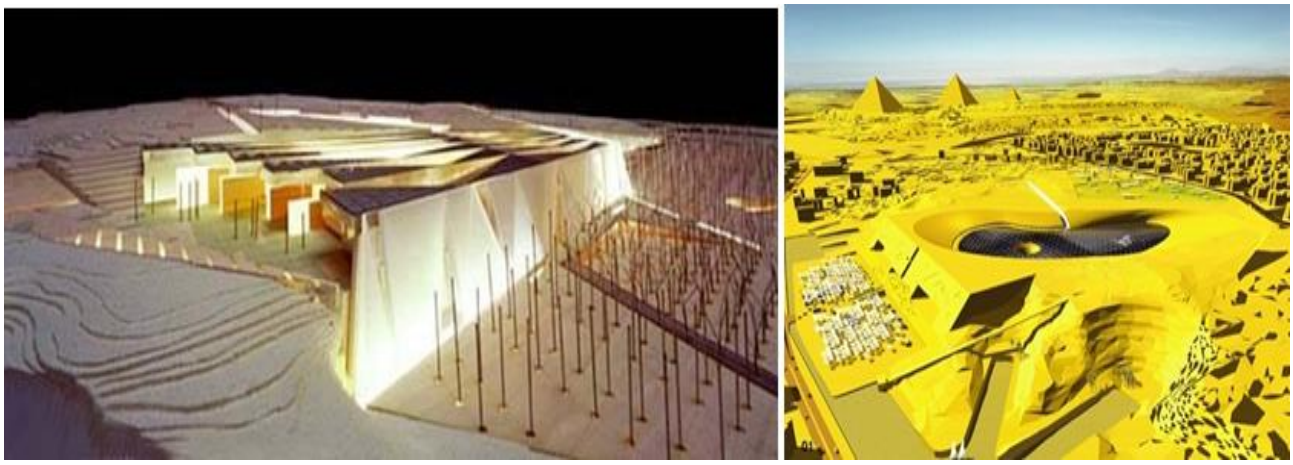
The 2002-2003 Grand Egyptian Museum competition was one of the largest architectural competitions in history, attracting 1,557 entries from 82 countries. The winning design by Dublin studio Heneghan Peng Architects was celebrated for its geometry and its resemblance to the pyramids of Giza [79]. The competition was launched by the Egyptian Ministry of Culture under the auspices of UNESCO and supervised by the International Union of Architects (UIA) [80]. The goal was to build the world's largest museum dedicated to a single civilization, housing over 100,000 artifacts. While Heneghan Peng won the $250,000 first prize, the multi-stage competition produced a number of highly acclaimed concepts that were widely published. Many of the world's leading architectural firms submitted visionary concepts. Some of the most notable published entries from the competition include: Heneghan Peng Architects (winner - Ireland): The winning proposal features a monumental, stepped facade oriented directly towards the Pyramids of Giza. The building takes advantage of the natural 50-meter drop of the desert plateau to embed the structure, framing the pyramids from within. Coop Himmelb(l)au (2nd prize - Austria): Their striking proposal focused on dynamic, deconstructivist forms and dramatic spatial voids, highlighting the collision between modernity and ancient heritage. Renato Rizzi (3rd Prize - Italy): A highly conceptual design that drew heavily on geometric studies and ancient Egyptian cosmology to dictate the layout of the exhibition spaces. Utopus Studio: This work integrated the migration patterns of biological cells, attempting to mimic the natural flow and organic growth of the Nile River throughout the gallery. Preliminary phases included visionary proposals from global giants such as Zaha Hadid Architects, Frank Gehry Partners and Future Systems, offering a diverse range of avant-garde approaches. Located about two kilometers from the Giza Pyramid Complex, the Grand Egyptian Museum stands on a desert plateau as a symbol of the intersection of ancient civilization and modern architectural technology. The site was designated by President Hosni Mubarak in 1992 and its development took place over several decades. Despite political instability, economic crisis and a global pandemic, the project has steadily progressed. After a partial opening in 2024, the museum was officially opened on November 1, 2025. The museum, which covers 50,000 m2 with a total floor area of 81,000 m2, contains more than 100,000 artifacts from the Pharaonic era, many of which are on public display for the first time. Heneghan Peng Architects describes the project as the largest museum in the world dedicated to a single civilization. The design is characterized by its relationship with the pyramids of Giza. The massive wedge-shaped volume is precisely aligned with the pyramidal axis, establishing a visual and spatial dialogue with the ancient tombs of the pharaohs. The form, shaped in response to the desert terrain and the movement of sunlight, transcends geometry to evoke the sacred landscape of the kingdom. The concrete structure expresses a restrained yet monumental materiality, while its envelope of translucent alabaster, Egyptian limestone and triangular glass panels captures the changing brightness of the desert light. These materials create subtle gradations of tone and reflections throughout the day, harmonizing with the golden atmosphere of the surrounding sand. The repetition of triangular patterns on the façade reinterprets the geometry of the pyramids in a contemporary way, adding rhythm and depth to the exterior. Inside, the wedge-shaped form continues, creating a spatial sequence that gradually ascends. At its core, a monumental staircase rises through six levels, leading visitors upwards through the museum's narrative journey through ancient Egypt. From the entrance plaza, visitors move through permanent galleries, temporary exhibition halls, and archaeological storage rooms, and finally arrive at the Tutankhamun Gallery, where over 5,000 artifacts are displayed. The chronological flow culminates in a breathtaking view of the pyramids framed at the top of the grand staircase. The exhibition design by German studio Atelier Brückner subtly interweaves artifacts and space, creating a dialogue between object and architecture. Light and shadow play with each other in the galleries, transforming the museum into a vast theater of time—an experiential journey through layers of history rather than a conventional display (Figures 5,6,7).





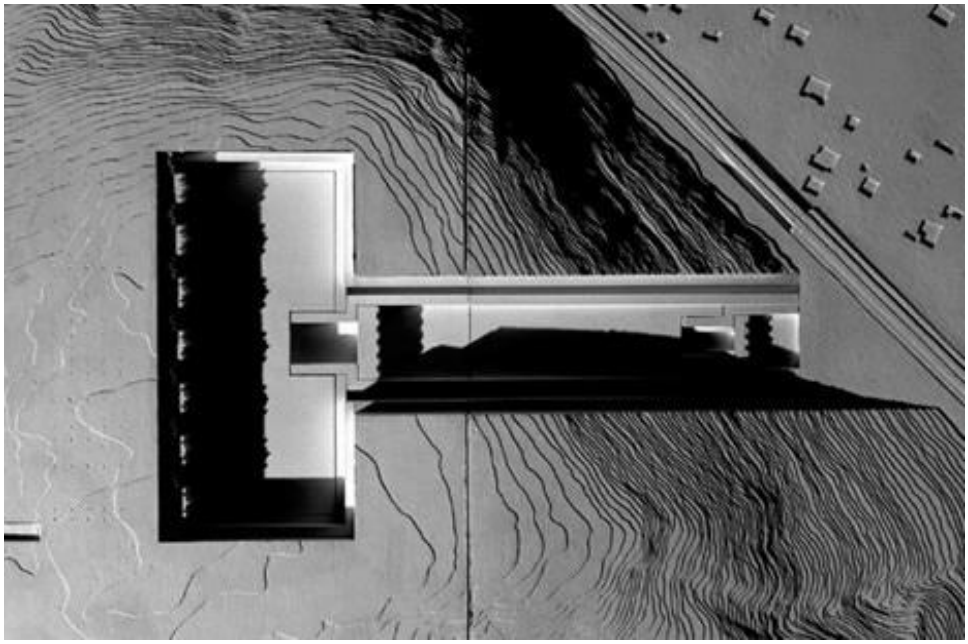
***Source*:** https://c3globe.com/the-grand-egyptian-museum-by-heneghan-peng-architects/, Accessed: May 29, 2026.

Fig 5: The Grand Museum of Egypt, Giza, Egypt, 2025 (Architects: Heneghan Peng Architects)



***Source*:** https://www.domusweb.it/en/architecture/2003/07/25/grand-egyptian-museum-project-by-shi-fu-peng.html Accessed: May 29, 2026.

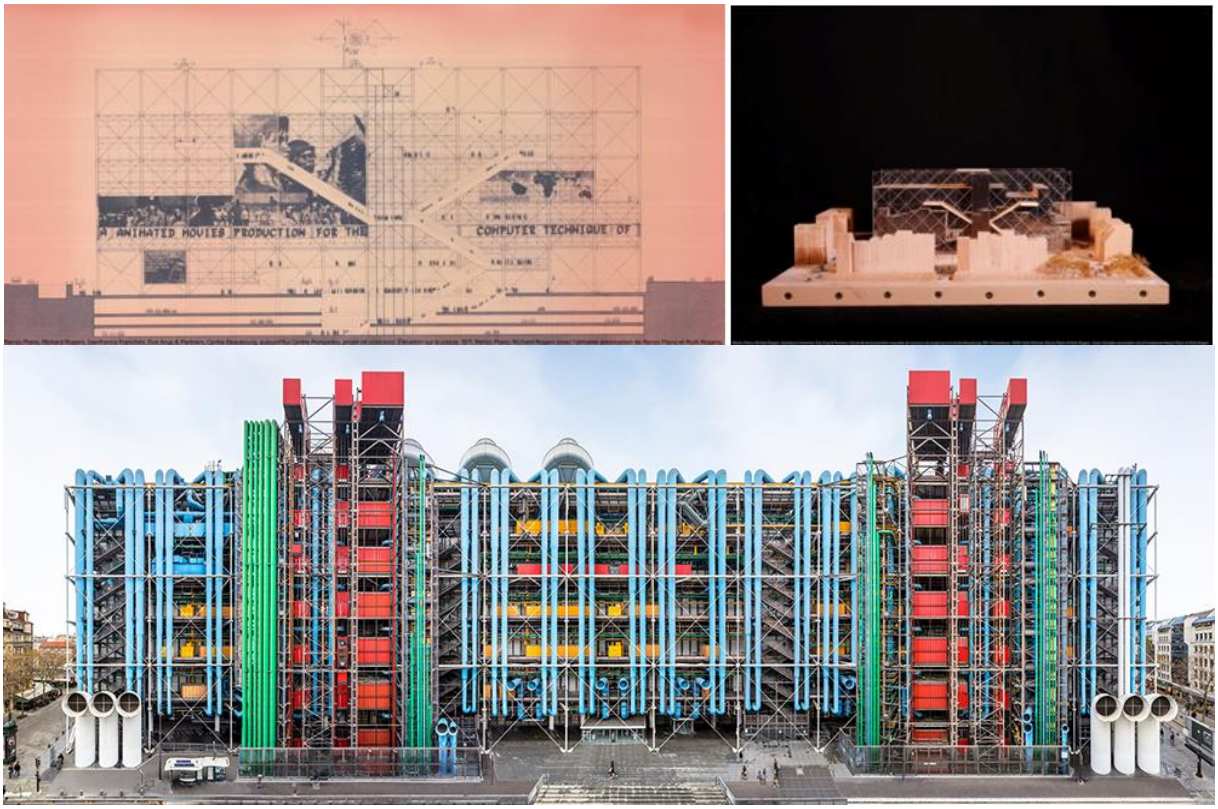
Fig 6: Competition entries for The Grand Museum of Egypt. Left: Reza Pian's work. Right: Coop Himmelb(l)au's work (second place)



***Source*:** https://www.domusweb.it/en/architecture/2003/07/25/grand-egyptian-museum-project-by-shi-fu-peng.html Accessed: May 29, 2026.

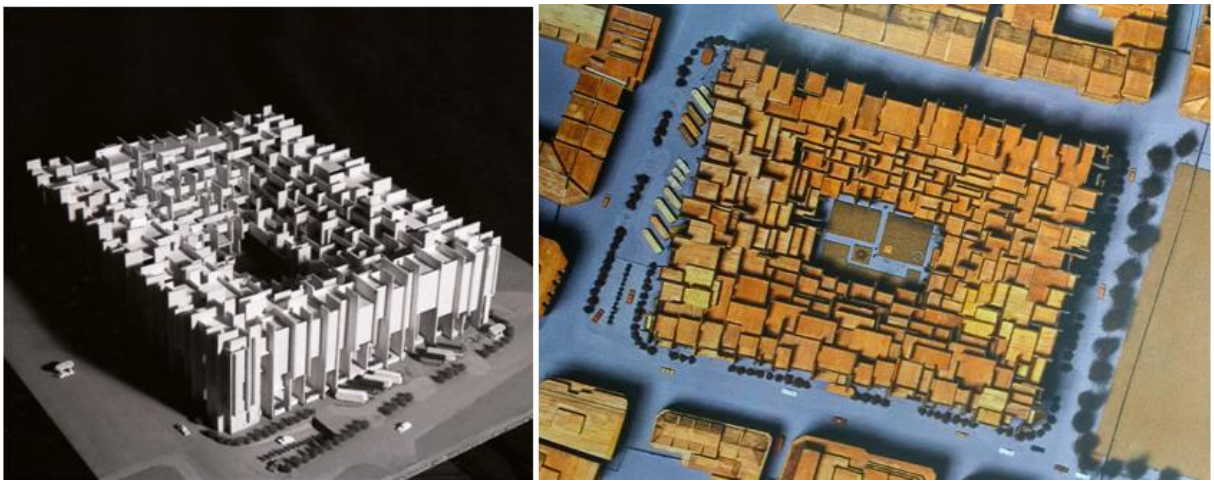
Fig 7: Competition work by Renato Rizzi (third place) for The Grand Museum of Egypt

In 1971, the international competition for the design of the Pompidou Center received 681 entries. The jury, chaired by engineer Jean Prouvé, chose the radically 'high-tech' inside-out design by (then) young architects Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers [81]. Their vision transformed the Parisian museum model by placing all structural elements, elevators and color-coded pipes on the exterior to free up fully flexible interior gallery spaces. While Piano and Rogers' work eventually became an architectural icon, the competition presented a vast gallery of alternative works that encompassed megastructures, brutalism and utopian avant-garde concepts. Moshe Safdie designed a multi-layered, cascading brutalist complex of modular geometric volumes, reflecting his interest in prefabrication and integrated vertical urban spaces. Prominent Korean architect Kim Swoo Geuna proposed a complex centered around open terraces and gardens, emphasizing a cultural hub connected to natural and transitional spaces. Chanéac and Claude & Pascal Häusermann's proposal features organic, amorphous and biomorphic forms, organizing programs around a central structural arch. André Bruyère's radical, futuristic concept (L'Œuf) conceptualized as a 'flying saucer' or giant egg, representing the era's fascination with radical, unconventional forms. A vast collection of these alternative proposals, which highlight the deep ideological divisions in 1970s architecture, is curated and researched by scholars from the Centre Pompidou archives (Figures 8,9,10,11).



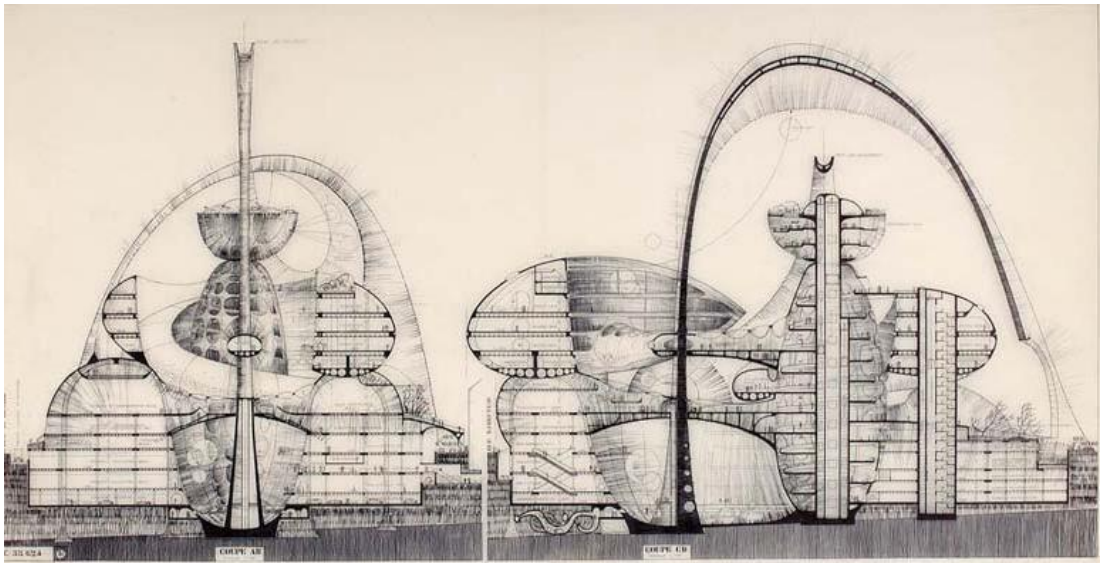
***Source*:** https://www.architecturedecollection.fr/en/concours-beaubourg-1971-une-mutation-de-larchitecture-un-exposition-pour-redecouvrir-lhistoire-du-centre-pompidou/, Accessed: May 29, 2026.

Fig 8: The winning entry by Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers in the competition for the design of the Centre Pompidou, Paris, 1971



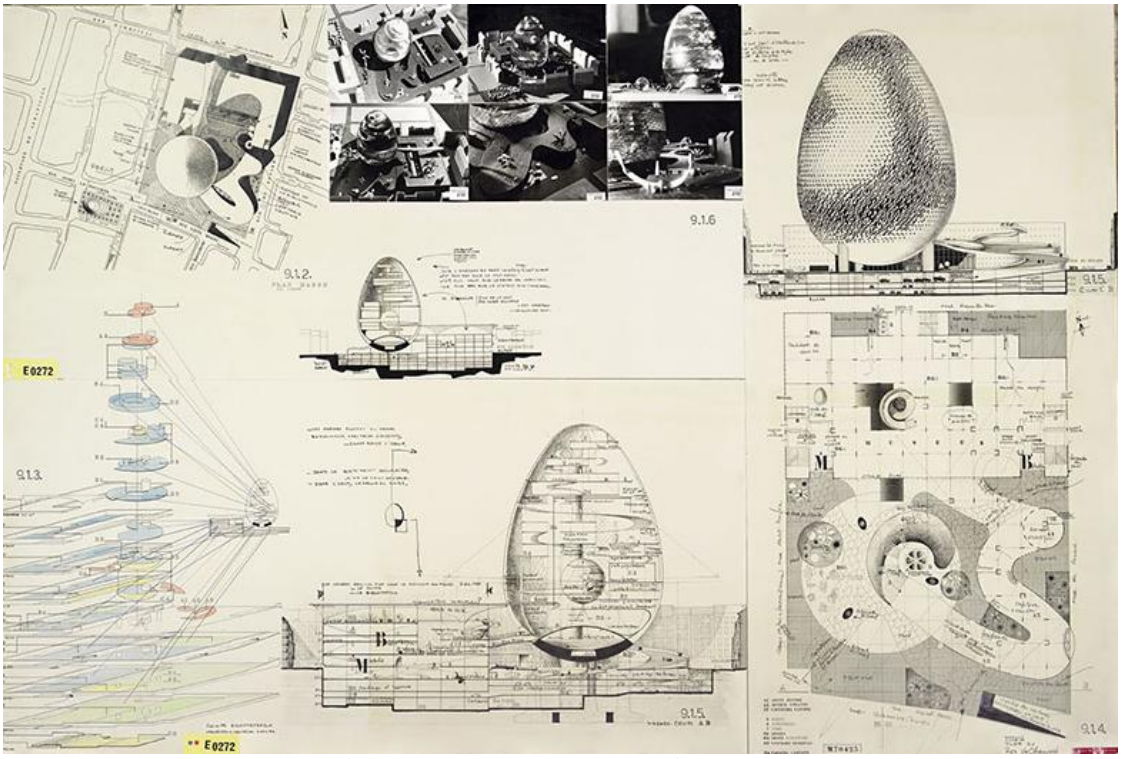
***Source*:** https://hiddenarchitecture.net/centre-beaubourg-competition-for-the-pompidou-center/, Accessed: May 29, 2026.

Fig 9: Kim Swoo Geun's entry for the design competition for the Centre Pompidou, Paris, 1971



***Source*:** https://hiddenarchitecture.net/centre-beaubourg-competition-for/, Accessed: May 29, 2026.

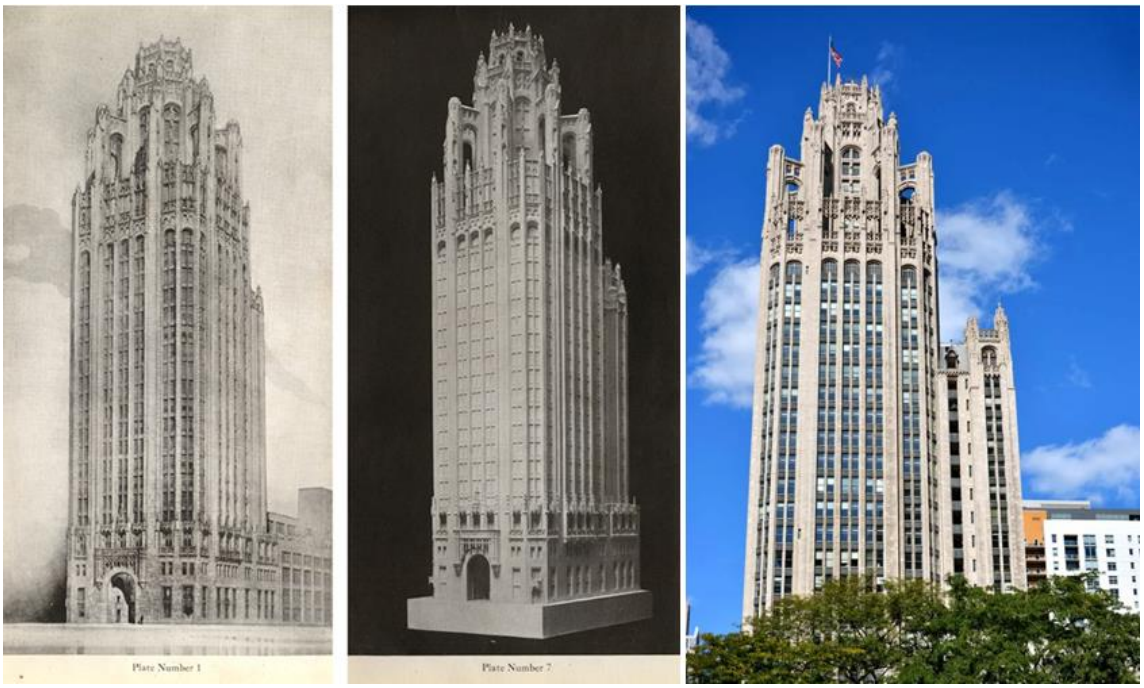
Fig 10: Chanéac and Claude & Pascal Häusermann's entry for the design competition for the Centre Pompidou, Paris, 1971



***Source*:** https://www.centrepompidou.fr/en/pompidou-plus/magazine/article/flying-saucer-giant-egg-the-centre-pompidous-you-never-got-to-see, Accessed: May 29, 2026.

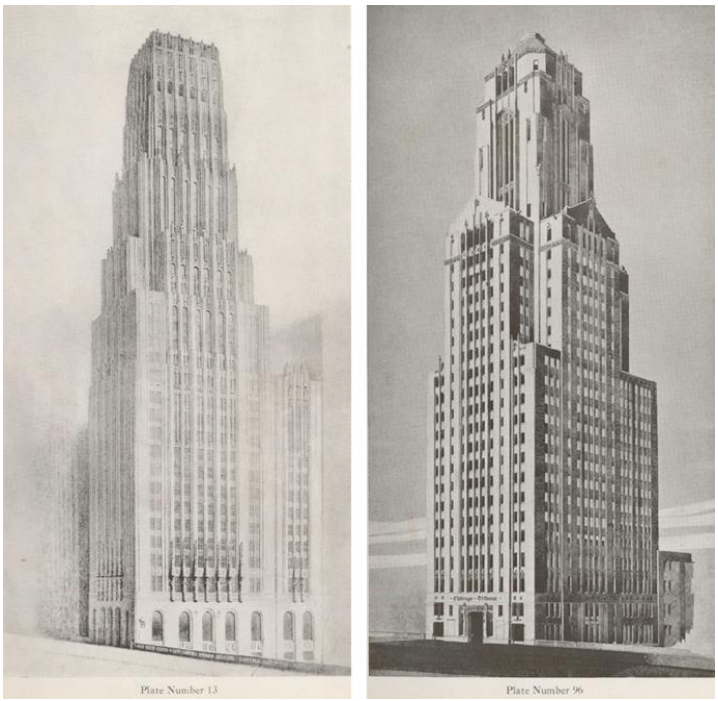
Fig 11: André Bruyère's work (L'Œuf) in the competition for the design of the Centre Pompidou, Paris, 1971

In 1922, the Chicago Tribune hosted an international architectural competition to design the 'most beautiful building in the world.' Offering prizes of $100,000, it attracted over 260 entries from 23 countries, ultimately defining the future of skyscraper architecture [82]. The winners of the competition were New York architects John Mead Howells and Raymond Hood with a striking neo-Gothic design with buttresses. Their winning design stands today as the iconic Tribune Tower (Figure 12). The runner-up entry was submitted by Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen. His elegant concept of a saucer-shaped skyscraper became incredibly influential in modern architecture, although it was never built. The competition attracted an eclectic mix of styles. Modernist pioneers such as Walter Gropius proposed a glass-and-steel design, while architect Adolf Loos proposed a massive building in the shape of a Doric column (Figures 13,14,15,16,17).



***Source*:** https://old.skyscraper.org/EXHIBITIONS/PAPER_SPIRES/chitrib01.php, Accessed: May 29, 2026.
***Source*:** https://www.britannica.com/topic/Tribune-Tower, Accessed: May 29, 2026.

Fig 12: Tribune Tower, Chicago, USA, 1923-1925 (Architects: John Mead Howells and Raymond Hood)



***Source*:** https://old.skyscraper.org/EXHIBITIONS/PAPER_SPIRES/chitrib01.php, Accessed: May 29, 2026.

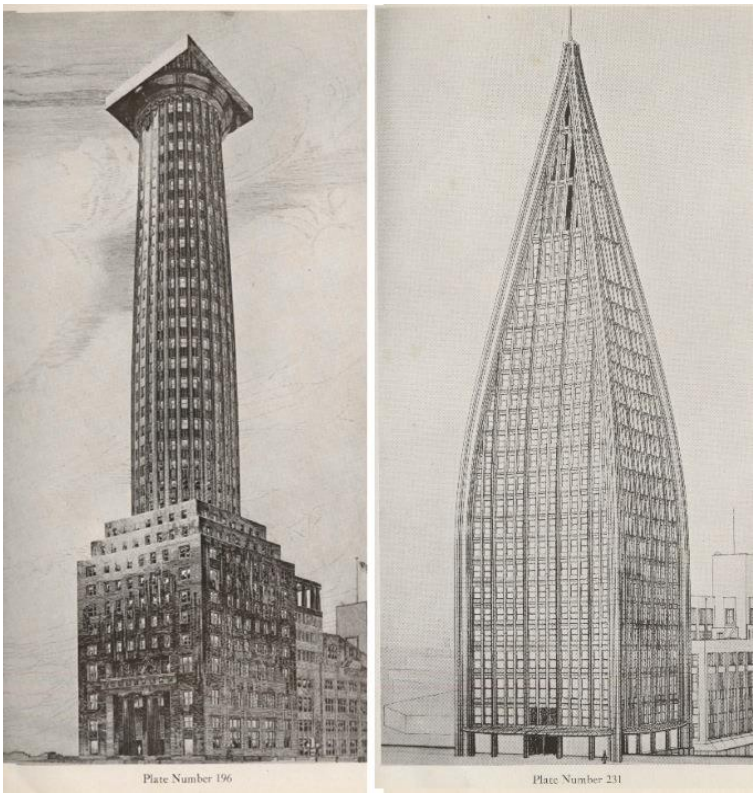
Fig 13: International Architectural Competition for the Tribune Tower, Chicago, USA, 1923-1925 (Architects: Second Prize, Eliel Saarinen (Helsingfors, Finland) with Dwight Wallace and Bertell Grenman (Chicago); Ralph Walker of McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin, NYC)

***Source*:** https://old.skyscraper.org/EXHIBITIONS/PAPER_SPIRES/chitrib01.php, Accessed: May 29, 2026.

Fig 14: Tribune Tower, Chicago, USA, 1923-1925 (Architects: Bertram Goodhue (NYC); Third Prize, Holabird & Roche, Chicago)

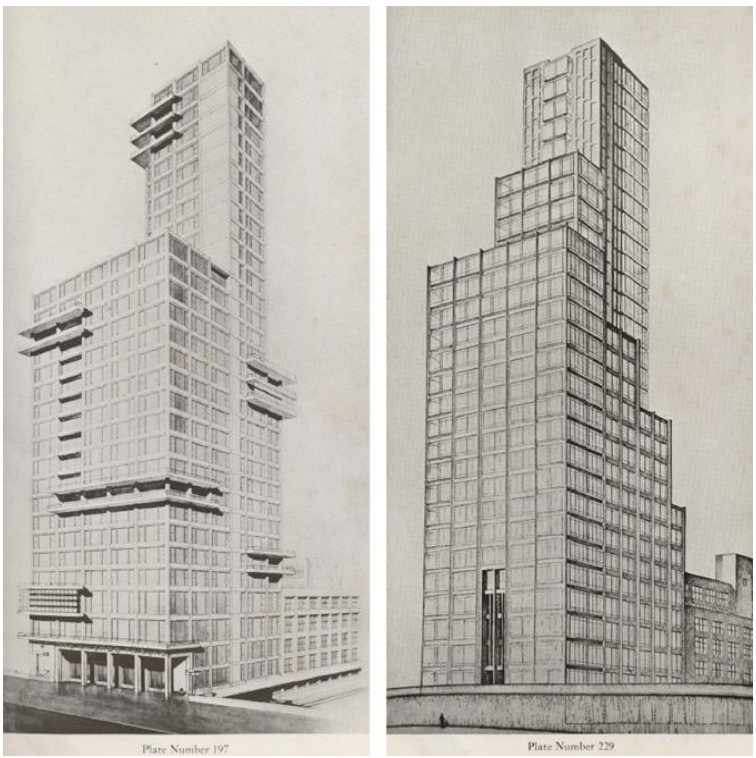
***Source*:** https://old.skyscraper.org/EXHIBITIONS/PAPER_SPIRES/chitrib01.php, Accessed: May 29, 2026.

Fig 15: Tribune Tower, Chicago, USA, 1923-1925 (Architects: Helmle & Corbett (NYC); D. H. Burnham & Co., Chicago)



***Source*:** https://old.skyscraper.org/EXHIBITIONS/PAPER_SPIRES/chitrib01.php, Accessed: May 29, 2026.

Fig 16: Tribune Tower, Chicago, USA, 1923-1925 (Architects: Adolf Loos (Nice, France); Bruno Taut, Walter Gunther, and Kurz Schutz, Magdeburg, Germany)

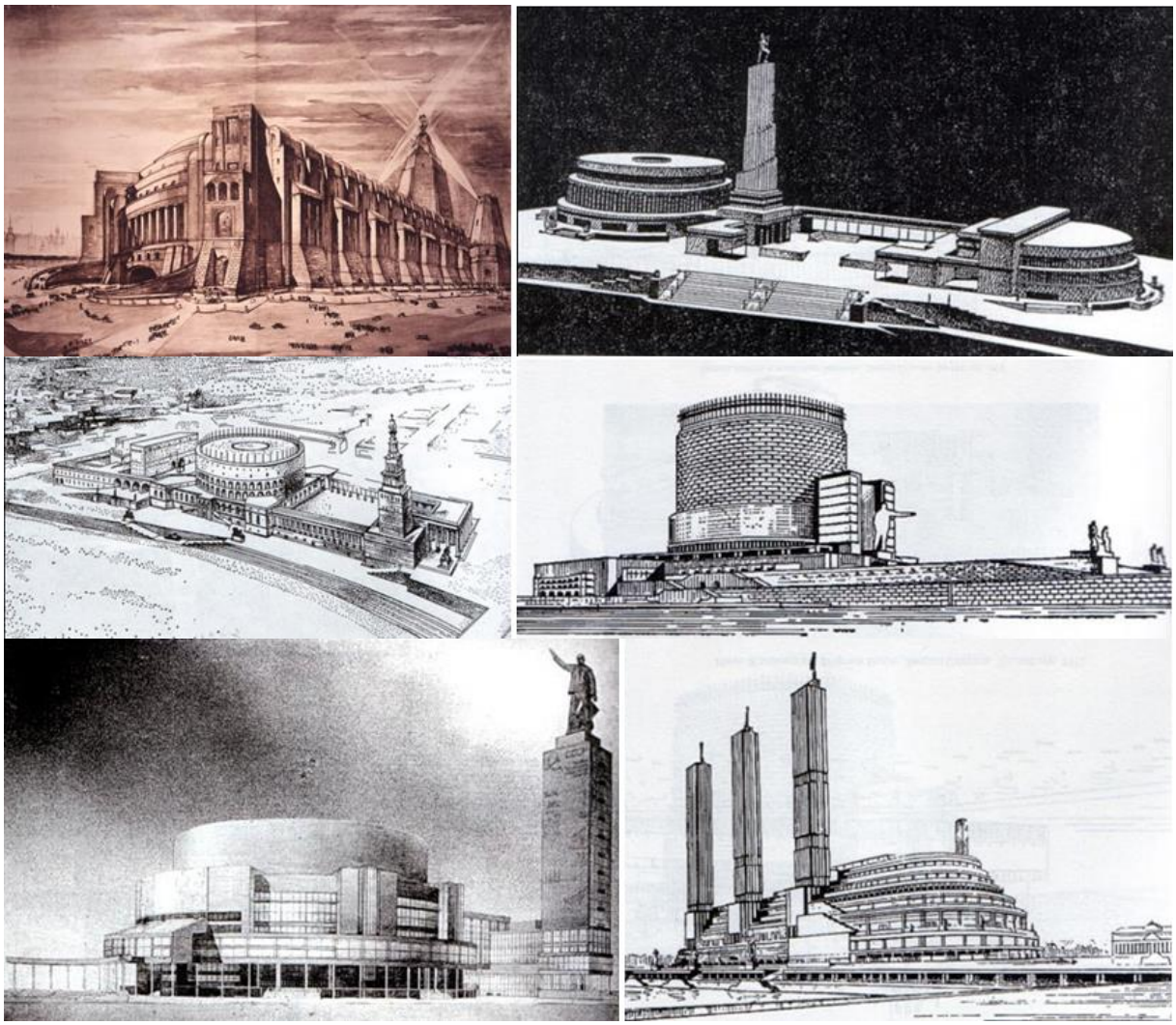


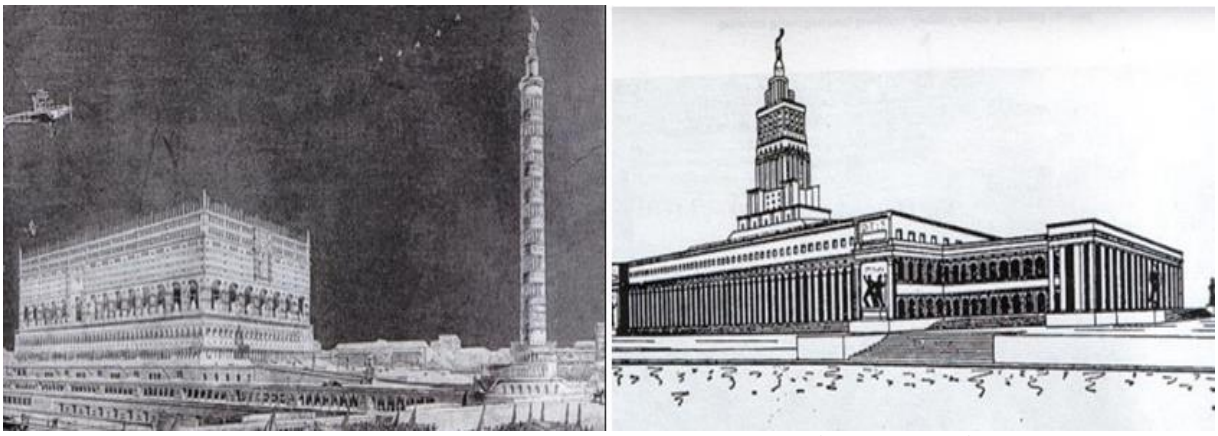
***Source*:** https://old.skyscraper.org/EXHIBITIONS/PAPER_SPIRES/chitrib01.php, Accessed: May 29, 2026.

Fig 17: Tribune Tower, Chicago, USA, 1923-1925 (Architects: Walter Gropius and Adolf Meyer (Weimar, Germany); Max Taut, Berlin, Germany)

The largest international architectural competitions in the USSR, primarily in the 1930s, attracted global talent and served as mass propaganda exercises, with iconic projects such as the 1931–1933 Palace of Soviets competition, which received 160 entries (Figures 18,19,20,21). Other important competitions included the 1934 Narkomtiazhprom (Commissariat of Heavy Industry) building and the Kharkov International Competition of the early 1930s. The 1931–1933

Palace of Soviets competition was a massive international event, involving both prominent Soviet constructivists and well-known Western modernists, and was ultimately won by Boris Iofan with a neoclassical design. Notable participants included Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, Erich Mendelsohn, Hector Hamilton, and Moisei Ginzburg. The competition received 272 entries, including 160 architectural designs (136 Soviet, 24 sides). The process saw a shift from modernism to monumental, neoclassical/Stalinist styles, resulting in Iofan's concept of the 'stepped tower'. The competition for the Palace of Soviets (1931–1933) in Moscow was a pivotal moment in 20th-century architecture, marking the transition from radical avant-garde modernism to Stalinist neoclassical monumentalism. The competition, which attracted top international and Soviet architects, aimed to create a central administrative building and congress hall on the site of the demolished Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. Iofan's design was selected in the final stage, moving from an Italian-influenced neoclassical style to a monumental 'wedding cake' skyscraper, later topped with a 100-metre-high statue of Lenin. The design combined American skyscraper technology with classical, monumental forms to symbolize the triumph of communism. Le Corbusier proposed a celebrated, but rejected, modernist design for the second competition. The work envisioned a vast, functional meeting hall with a parabolic ceiling, designed as a 'machine for life'. Walter Gropius (a modernist), founder of the Bauhaus, provided a technically advanced, functionalist entrance in 1931, characterized by complex multi-level structures, with different auditoriums and clear, efficient circulation routes. Ivan Zholtovsky (a neoclassicist), a proponent of the classical tradition, was an early favorite and runner-up. His design was very conservative, favoring academic, classical forms over modern. Moisey Ginzburg (a constructivist), a prominent Soviet constructivist, proposed a building in the shape of a 'sphere'. His design was noted for its spatial elegance and integration, although it lacked the monumentality demanded by the Soviet leadership. Hector Hamilton (modern/classical hybrid), a British architect whose work was selected as one of the three finalists along with Iofan and Zholtovski, proposed a design that was noted for being slightly more modern than Zholtovski but still monumental. Erich Mendelsohn (modernist), another important international figure, submitted a functionalist proposal that was part of the 1931/1932 applications. The Vesnin brothers (constructivists), leading Soviet avant-garde architects, submitted proposals that represented the pinnacle of constructivist thought in the 1920s. The competition was a clear signal that the Soviet government was moving away from the constructivist, avant-garde styles of the 1920s in favor of a new, monumental 'Stalinist' style that would project power [83].



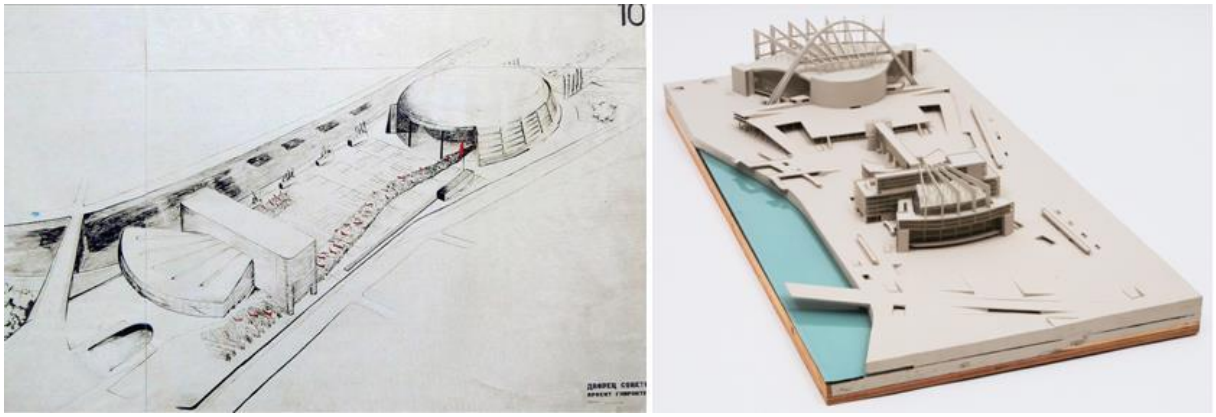


***Source*:** https://www.reddit.com/r/architecture/comments/z8o6uh/some_rejected_proposals_for_the_palace_of_the/#lightbox Accessed: May 29, 2026.

Fig 18: Gallery of works from the competition for the Palace of Soviets 1931-1933

***Source*:**https://thecharnelhouse.org/2013/07/02/der-palast-der-sowjets-entries-by-german-architects-to-the-palace-of-the-soviets-competition/#jp-carousel-10132, Accessed: May 29, 2026.
***Source*:**https://thecharnelhouse.org/2013/07/02/der-palast-der-sowjets-entries-by-german-architects-to-the-palace-of-the-soviets-competition/#jp-carousel-10123, Accessed: May 29, 2026.

Fig 19: Left: Work by Hans Poelzig (1869-1936) in the competition for the Palace of Soviets 1931-1933. Right: Work by Walter Gropius (1883-1969) in the competition for the Palace of Soviets 1931-1933



***Source*:** https://www.reddit.com/r/architecture/comments/ywzas0/palace_of_the_soviets_competition_entry_by_le/#lightbox Accessed: May 29, 2026.

Fig 20: Left: Entry by Hannes Meyer (1889-1954) in the competition for the Palace of Soviets 1931-1933. Right: Entry by Le Corbusier (1887-1965) in the competition for the Palace of Soviets 1931-1933

***Source*:**https://thecharnelhouse.org/2013/07/02/der-palast-der-sowjets-entries-by-german-architects-to-the-palace-of-the-soviets-competition/mendelsohn-palace-of-the-soviets-2/, Accessed: May 29, 2026.
***Source*:** https://thecharnelhouse.org/2014/01/12/moisei-ginzburg-competition-entry-for-the-palace-of-the-soviets-1931/#jp-carousel-14557 Accessed: May 29, 2026.

Fig 21: Left: Work by Erich Mendelsohn (1887-1953) in the competition for the Palace of Soviets 1931-1933. Right: Work by Moisei Ginzburg (1892-1946) in the competition for the Palace of Soviets 1931-1933

The architectural competition for the Palace of Soviets (1931–1933) was won by Boris Iofan with a neoclassical concept, which Iofan, Vladimir Shchuko, and Vladimir Gelfreikh later revised into a skyscraper. If built, it would have become the tallest building in the world of its time. Construction began in 1937. The competition captured the world's imagination and was broadcast internationally. To make way for it, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was demolished (see the video link below for rare footage of its demolition). However, as World War II was underway, the project was delayed and ultimately never completed in the grandeur depicted in the original drawings (Figure 22).

***Source*:** https://s3.amazonaws.com/atg-prod-oaas-files/eurasia/original/ce9a5798601062d7691b745a52269e70.jpg , Accessed: May 29, 2026.
***Source*:** https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10158101775122744&set=p.10158101775122744&type=3, Accessed: May 29, 2026.

Fig 22: Work by Boris Iofan (1891-1976) in the competition for the Palace of Soviets 1931-1933. Palace of Soviets, by Boris Iofan, Vladimir Shchuk and Vladimir Gelfreikh, 1933 (never completed according to the original drawings)

The 2008 international competition for the design of the new passenger terminal at Franjo Tuđman Airport (Zagreb Airport) featured 17 visionary entries, including concepts from Pritzker Prize winners (Figure 23). The competition was a turning point in contemporary architecture, attracting global talent to design a functional and sustainable transport hub that reflects Zagreb's mountainous panorama. The winning architects, the Croatian consortium of Branko Kincl, Velimir Neidhardt and Jure Radić, won first place and the contract to build the terminal, which officially opened in 2017 [84]. The terminal features a massive, undulating double-curved spatial steel lattice roof that reflects the silhouettes of the nearby Medvednica mountain range (Figure 24). Notable Unbuilt Works in the Competition Notable participants in the competition submitted spectacular concepts that are still widely celebrated in architectural design galleries: Shigeru Ban (2nd prize): The Japanese architect proposed an eco-friendly terminal covered in a wide timber and bamboo structure to dramatically reduce emissions (CO2). Zaha Hadid (5th prize): Her firm's fluid, tapestry-like grid system was designed to blur the line between building and landscape. Norman Foster (3rd prize): The renowned British architect submitted a highly flexible, transparent design focused on sustainability and rapid future expansion [85].

***Source*:** https://shigerubanarchitects.com/works/timber-and-bamboo/zagreb-airport-new-passenger-terminal/, Accessed: May 29, 2026.
***Source*:** https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=587304881424771&set=pcb.587307761424483, Accessed: May 29, 2026.
***Source*:** https://www.d-a-z.hr/hr/projekti/nova-zra%C4%8Dna-luka-zagreb,420.html, Accessed: May 29, 2026.

Fig 23: Airport Zagreb, Croatia. Some competitive solutions

***Source*:** https://www.architectmagazine.com/project-gallery/new-passenger-terminal-at-franjo-tudman-international-airport-zagreb_o/ Accessed: May 29, 2026.

Fig 24: Airport Zagreb, Croatia, 2017 (Architects: Institut IGH, Kincl, Neidhardt)

4. Conclusion

In defining architectural space, the relationship between the natural environment and architecture and the social environment and architecture are most often considered. This paper aims to highlight the strong relationships between humans and architecture. In order to examine this relationship, the Author analyzed well-known international architectural competitions. In the case of empirical disciplines (mathematics, physics, chemistry, for example), each person will solve a task with the same result as another, while this is not the case in architecture – there will be as many different solutions as there are 'task solvers'. In this way, Man, as one of the fundamental components of architecture, generates diversity and complexity in architecture, in a similar way to the Environment (natural and social).

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