

**Future
Architecture
Platform**

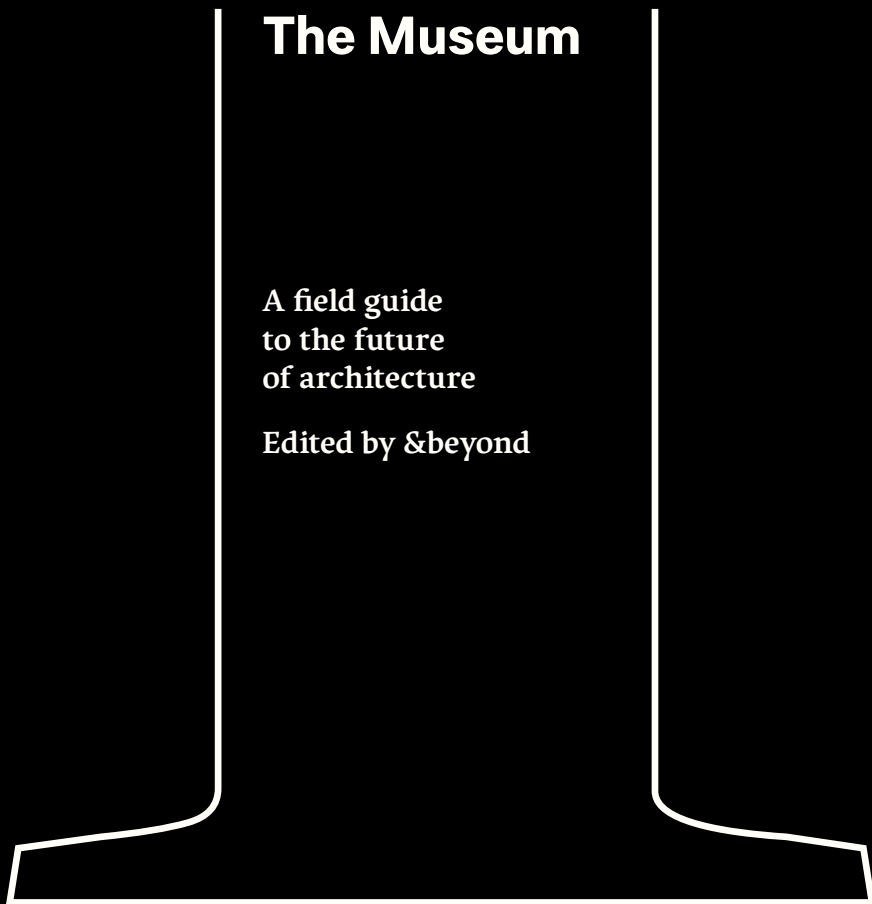


Archifutures

The Museum

**A field guide
to the future
of architecture**

Edited by &beyond



Think Future



**Introducing
the Future
Architecture
platform**

**Museum
of Architecture
and Design,
Ljubljana**

Think Future
Introducing the Future Architecture platform

By Matevž Čelik

Think Future

Ljubljana

“We are increasingly convinced that the distinction between the past, present and future in architecture is an outdated illusion.”



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MAO

Matevž Čelik is director of the Museum for Architecture and Design (MAO) in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

The MAO preserves and archives works from prominent architects and designers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and shares their resources via exhibitions, publications and a diverse programme aimed at a broad range of visitors. As a centre for research, the MAO also serves as a dynamic forum for the exchange of ideas, knowledge and dialogue. Since 1972, the museum has also organised and hosted the Biennial of Design (BIO), Europe's oldest design biennial.

The founder and head of the Future Architecture platform, Matevž Čelik, on the necessity for exchange, raising awareness and building commitment within the discipline.



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This page:
A Century of the Poster
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The Museum of Architecture and Design (MAO) in Ljubljana launched the Future Architecture platform, a pan-European programme involving 14 organisers to date from 13 countries, to open up a wider debate around architecture and the living environment. We believe that architecture requires continuous questioning, criticism, commitment, self-assessment and research, as well as a poetic reflection. The volume of new housing construction is now higher than at any time in human history and the level of human intervention on the face of the planet is reflected in the sheer number of catastrophic changes to our environment. At the same time the proportion of development resulting from thorough reflection and

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careful planning by architects has diminished. It seems that the new generation of professionals are all too often cut off from the possibility of using their knowledge to help to shape a more harmonious development of our living environment. The Future Architecture platform is intended specifically for them; the emerging talents of various disciplines who will shape cities and architecture in the future.



For us there is nothing unusual in the fact that a platform that deals with the future has been designed within a museum, a treasure house of history. Through the prism of the architectural heritage in the museum we are faced daily with the knowledge of how past thinking about the future has shaped contemporary reality. Knowing

Saša J. Mächtigt: *Systems, Structures, Strategies*
exhibition view
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that, we are increasingly convinced that the distinction between the past, present and future in architecture is an outdated illusion. We believe that in an institution that deals with architecture history, the present and the future should coexist and there should be no question of priorities related to time. The spaces we live in are shaped by historical and contemporary architecture whilst at the same time being constantly subjected to thinking, planning and the developing of projects for the future.



Slovenian Pavilion
presented by the MAO at
the Venice Architecture
Biennale 2016 © Dekleva
Gregorič architects

The platform is built upon the social mission of European architecture as a pragmatic intellectual discipline that involves innovation and has potential to improve quality of life for all. By applying a creative mind-set and cross-disciplinary endeavour, architecture has contributed to the sustainable development of cities, economy, social cohesion and environment.

The platform encourages us to rethink architecture as a fundamental cultural force with transformative potential that can solve significant problems beyond building. By presenting the work of emerging professionals via different activities, it strives to make these complex issues comprehensible to a wider audience. The platform enables us to manage and coordinate actions by different organisations that are committed to architecture, but usually operate separately, each at their own pace, and addressing different audiences. Under the umbrella of the Future Architecture platform our work can become interconnected. Through a joint, Europe-wide programme of activities we can reach a much broader spectrum of participants and audiences than was previously imaginable.

A multidisciplinary perspective garnered from different European cities and architectural approaches is the core of the platform. We want to engage various creative disciplines, build relationships between creators, institutions and audiences, and form strong cross-sector networks that will develop through time and last beyond the projects themselves. In November 2015 the Platform launched an open call for ideas. In order to communicate the social, environmental, economic and design potentials of architecture, we have sought out inspiring individuals from various disciplines; not just architects but also urban planners, curators, landscape architects, designers, artists, filmmakers and other emerging professionals involved with thinking, exploring, engaging and shaping our living environment. The open call attracted 524 applications from professionals based in 39 countries, who have contributed 291 ideas. The 14 member organisations from 13 European countries have created

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a pan-European programme of exhibitions, conferences, lectures and workshops that is intended to reach a minimum of 250,000 people. The ideas of the emerging professionals are also being spread via our web platform futurearchitectureplatform.org and highlights from them will be presented in the publication series *Archifutures*, of which this is the introductory volume.

By using an open call approach, the platform not only managed to reach and map a range of emerging contemporary critical practices, but also to reflect the values of the upcoming generation of creators. The range of ideas submitted to the open call show that, for this generation, architecture is not necessarily an activity whose sole purpose is to build, but rather a field of intellectual research. The contributors express both criticism and determination to tackle the most pressing problems of our time. Scrolling through their ideas reveals that young professionals feel the need to consider all aspects of architecture as their profession, to change the understanding of architecture as a business model and to rediscover the commitment of architecture to society. They show architecture to be a way of thinking, observing and analysing the modern world.

Another important message coming from these proposals is that the architecture of the future will not only be a practice that necessarily leads just to the construction of buildings and artefacts, but will also lead the way towards new fields in which to operate. The platform's open call also allowed professionals to think beyond everyday business relations between themselves, their clients and contractors. Instead of responding to the usual commission and trying to solve problems posed by the client, they have set themselves their own problems and challenges to

initiate personal projects, within which they were able to determine their own priorities and goals in attempting to solve them. The subjects of these projects frequently stand outside architecture or are tangential to it. This shows exactly the significant potential of the Future Architecture platform: to continue to elicit unexpected new ideas in the future.

For the MAO, the Future Architecture platform is an extremely important reflection of the ethics of our museological approaches. We believe that through collecting archives and objects of heritage as well as interpreting information, the programme of the MAO should reflect transparency, different opinions and the pursuit of the truth. Social and political events in the outside world affect the activities and events at the museum and, in our view, contemporary relevance and the capacity to react to change are of particular importance for the field of architecture and design. Therefore, it is vital for us to monitor the practical realities of everyday life and to constantly question the values that are driving architecture and design. Ideas that are being revealed through the Future Architecture platform and cooperation with organisations supporting the platform influence the museum with information that is of key importance in its development as a public institution.

The platform aims to start a long-lasting process of integration of activities of different organisations that promote architecture into a common Europe-wide architecture programme. We believe that by establishing common objectives, working methodologies and a brand, we can share and implement knowledge, connect organisations, audiences and professionals.

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I would like to thank to all the member organisations of the *Future Architecture platform* for their cooperation and support in establishing the platform and also for presenting a very interesting programme of activities in the first year of operation. In particular, I would like to thank all the participants who, with their applications,



Kiosk K 67 © MAO

have created a rich pool of ideas and helped to initiate a fruitful discussion, which I hope will continue to grow in the future with new collaborations and to help empower architecture to redefine itself as a profession – one that can rise to meet the challenges facing the future of humanity. ■