H2O

Jan-Apr 2021

Theme Two

ISSUES OF TOMORROW

Our world is changing fast, while ambitions and challenges match in importance. In this context design can play a huge role. How do we imagine the world to be? What range of possibilities we haven't discovered yet? What could architecture become for a world in crisis? What is not architecture yet? In 2020 we started a second phase of competitions to address the issues of tomorrow.

In line with our style we propose 9+1 themes – ten critical topics to work on. They come with a framework to make sure that each theme is explored from different design angles. Rather than a program, a research ecosystem composed of various competitions running in parallel and exploring the same theme from multiple perspectives.

Our exploration journey continues now with theme two, a special step in our research program: H2O

Theme Two: H2O

Water is a precious and limited resource. Since the foundation of early human settlements, water has been a main driver to define the way people lived and prospered. Historically it has been a primary resource for life, a safety issue, a source of energy, a key ecosystem, an element for climate control, a stage for recreation and beautification of living environment.

Our life directly depends on water, and from the moment humans have been able to build shelters, they tried to facilitate their relation with it. Ever since, people designed domestic spaces to keep out rainwater, provide freshwater, access sewage, and have better climate control. They have incorporated water in their leisure space as a decorative element or as a playfull feature.

Architects have always tried to make the best possible use of the environmental resources, and water has become an important element to use towars calmness, cleansing, peace and fun.

There is something about water that continually captures our imagination. Tranquil, dramatic, or ever-changing, architecture have always tried to enhance the inherent qualities of it.

From playful indoor pools to tranquil exterior fountains to soaring waterfalls and grand lakes of enormous proportions, architecture throughout the centuries has engaged with water in endlessly innovative ways. Sometimes serving aesthetic purposes, but just as often acting as centers of activity or promoting sustainability, water features can take countless different forms and serve multiple different purposes.

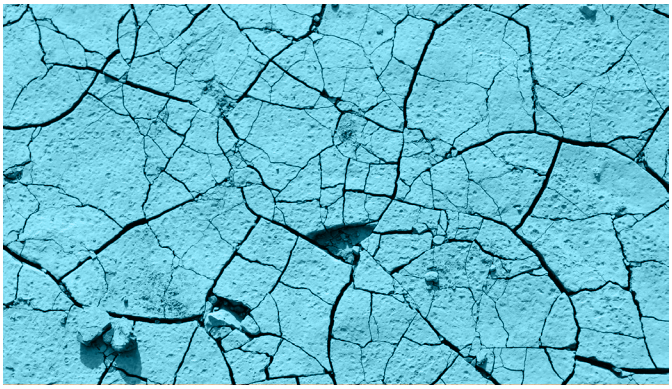
H2O series of competitions are in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) number 3, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15. While most of SDG might look distant from design, others are directly dependent from it.

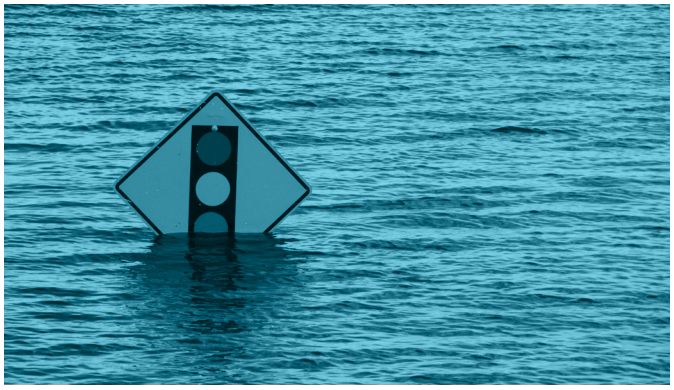
Cities, architecture and water are closely related, since any changes made to land can completely alter its natural water trends.

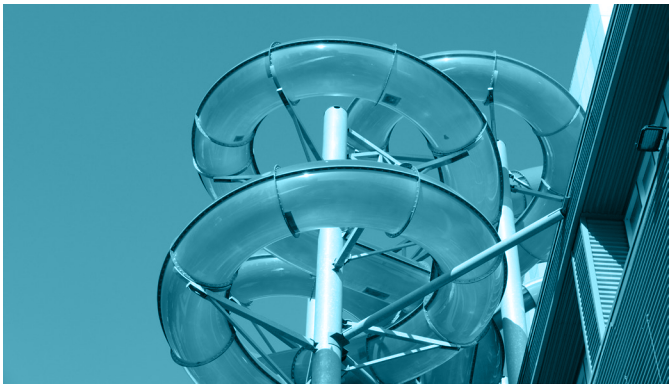
Covering 71% of the Earth, it is now time to look at the water again as a harbinger of life in the near future; a place where human life can again thrive in its original glory. Creating living spaces on water will soon become a need to survive as a response to the emerging ecological crises.

It is a glaring question as to how are we going to address the equation between the contrasting aspects of ecological crises and technological advancement for building our futures. What kind of role will water play in the future urban living?

H2O is a compilation of design challenges that aim to approach the element of water in different perspectives.







30 KEY WORDS

The question now is how to think the element of water in the context of the urban living. In view of this, we are promptly questioning our lifestyle and the framework designed to support it. Non Architecture and its partners want to play their part by involving the design community in a series of explorative initiatives. By reflecting upon specific topics, we aim at generating dialogue and mutual inspiration on ideas.

In particular, Non Architecture and all the supporting organizations collaborated in identifying a range of 30 design issues related to the theme of H2O.

In relation to Biodiversity & Ecosystems:
1. Ocean Habitats,
2. Sweet water ecosystem,
3. Water Pollution,
4. Fish Farming,
5. Life below water,
6. Fresh Water Cycle,
7. Drought and Irrigation.

In relation to Society & Culture:
8. Water and Recreation,
9. Beautification & Public Space,
10. Mobility: Boats, ferries, cargo,
11. Water tourism & Cruise ships,
12. Cultural heritage around Water,
13. Water sports.

In relation to Climate Change:
14. Polar Ice Caps,
15. Weather patterns,
16. Global Warming,
17. Drylands,
18. Sea level rise,
19. Flooding,
20. Heavy rains & Monsoons,
21. Heat Island effect,
22. Water shortage.

In relation to Urban Development:
23. Freshwater availability,
24. Responsible Consumption,
25. Hydropower,
26. Large Water Infrastructure and accessebility,
27. Sewage & Wastewater treatment,
28. Clean water & Sanitation,
29. Underground Water Infrastructure,
30. Smart Cities.

For more insights on these topics you can subscribe to our newsletter or visit our online journal.

Designers can address one or more of the aforementioned topics through 3 different competitions. Each competition frames a specific design approach. The Non Architecture Competitions for the theme of H2O are the following:

- 72h Axo Battle - Details released on 19 February
- Waterless World
- Amsterdam Cycling Bridge

72h Axo Battle - Water Parks
Details will be released on 19 February 2021

Participants of the 72h Axo Battle are asked to create a design concept around the theme of water and parks. This is a design competition developed to explore the creative potential of architectural design through one of the most iconic architectural drawings: the axonometric projection. You have 72 hours to develop a proposal that responds to the program contained in the extended contest brief, which will only be available when the battle starts. The extended brief will be available on 19th February 2021.

Axonometric drawings are a powerful tool for visually communicating complex spatial arrangements. Their unique viewpoint allows for highly descriptive drawings that represent three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface.

This competition is an opportunity to experiment how an axonometric can communicate a project today. What kind of design choices can better respond to the issues raised in the extended brief and how can one drawing communicate the concept in the most effective way?

Deliverables: One image (axonometric projection)

Timeline:
Registration Period: 02 January - 21 February 2021
72h Battle: 19 – 21 February 2021
Winners Announcement: 15 – 19 March 2021

Waterless World

In this competition, we encourage participants to come up with visionary concepts for life in a scenario of extreme water scarcity – Only 2 drawings, absolute freedom of scale, site, or program.

Our water resources are at risk due to a series of human related issues: water pollution, intensive runoff in urbanized areas, climate change, saltwater intrusion, freshwater waste. Freshwater scarcity might soon be an outcome of all these processes. Participants are asked to propose conceptual ideas to mitigate and cope with the effects of a water crisis in our cities, landscapes and rural areas.

Waterless World is part of the “Cities of Tomorrow” competition series, developed to reimagine urban life through a variety of creative design concepts and ideas. What kind of role can we play as designers in reimagining urban life? How can we produce new inspiring visions to trigger a discussion around alternative models of living?

Deliverables: two images (presentation image + concept image)

Timeline:
Registration Period: 02 January - 15 March 2021
Submission Deadline: 15 March 2021
Winners Announcement: 05 – 09 April 2021

Amsterdam Cycling Bridge

We ask participants to design a cycling bridge in the context of Amsterdam, an effective connection over the river Ij for pedestrians and cyclists – 1 design expressed in 3 drawings.

The Netherlands are renowned for their popular biking culture, which made the country a world reference when it comes to cycling infrastructure. The city of Amsterdam embeds the value of slow mobility and biking, but today it lacks a cross river connection for cyclists and pedestrians.

As designers, how can we integrate the bridge in the existing context, merging the flow of cyclists and pedestrians within the city? What kind of architectural image should the bridge embed? What kind of experience should the bridge provide to users in order to encourage a sustainable mobility?

As part of the research theme H2O, we invite designers to create solutions that might visualize new/old opportunities and challenges, bringing the realization of a bridge one step closer.

Deliverables: three images (presentation image + technical image + functional image)

Timeline:
Registration Period: 02 January - 15 April 2021
Submission Deadline: 15 April 2021
Winners Announcement: 10 - 14 May 2021

CURATOR

non architecture

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