

# VIRTUAL

## June-Oct 2022

Theme Five



non|  
ø

# 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+2 themes – eleven 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 five, a special step in our research program: **Virtual**.

# Theme Five:

## VIRTUAL

Virtual Reality technology made possible to immerse and experience worlds and environments previously unthought of. Virtual environments aim to temporarily transport us to another reality – unbuilt designs, foreign lands and imaginary scenarios.

The importance of the use of advanced technologies, such as the likes of virtual reality in the scene of architecture, is becoming increasingly dominant as a medium for representation of architectural design. This means of representation can have two purposes: a simulation of physical architecture or a functional virtual place.

When we refer to “virtual” is not only virtual reality, that’s only one sense of reality simulation. Virtual starts the moment someone stopped seeing code and started seeing a designed user interface. Everything from there on is virtual and everything from there on can be designed to appear to the end-user in a visual form. That includes how social media works, videogames of all ages, apps, software, websites and so on.

The simulation of physical architecture is the most common purpose of virtual architecture and is increasingly being used to visualise, understand, and present architectural designs. We have seen a gradual but

persistent move from visualisation as drawings on paper to visualisation as digital media on computer screens and other devices.

The second purpose of virtual architecture involves the design and creation of virtual places in terms of its functional organization and electronic representation. Architects design buildings to provide places for people to live, work, play, and learn. Such places are embodied as buildings with internal spaces called rooms, halls, theatres, etc. An emerging concept for designed virtual places is to provide an electronic location for people to socialise, work, and learn. The metaphor of buildings and rooms can be revisited and used in virtual places, suggesting the potential for virtual places to be designed by architects and then constructed by programmers.

In the real world, we can say that architecture is about building an interface and user experience just like in the digital world, so much that the word “Architecture” is currently being used to define any kind of systemic structure, such as websites and apps. For this reason, architects have a predisposition to design interfaces and user experiences, as it is embedded in our field.

We can envision that technology has the ability to create a novel form of space and therefore architecture, where users can participate with their own bodily presence in an environment that augments aspects of both the real and virtual.

Since the users of virtual architecture do not have physical needs or extents, the geometric description of the space does not hold the same significance as it does in a physical building. Virtual space, with its emergent properties

of heterotopy and heterochrony, serves as a novel platform for architectural speculation. Virtual architecture, the content of these environments, is immaterial but sensible, and unhindered by the limitations of the physical world can be made to resemble – transport us to – anything real or imaginable.

Virtual series of competitions are in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) number 4, 5, 8, 9 and 12. While most of SDG might look distant from design, others are directly dependent from it.

How is virtual reality technology changing the field of architecture presently? What if you, being here, could be a virtual presence anywhere? Will we end up creating a world that mirrors our own or something completely different? Will it be a place of freedom, equality, and self-expression, or one of corporate control and environmental and social degradation?

Virtual is a compilation of design challenges that aim to approach the idea of virtual environments in different perspectives.





# 30 KEY WORDS

The question now is what are the possibilities of future architecture and space design with virtual worlds emerging. 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 Virtual.

In relation to the **User Experience**:

1. User interface,
2. Content filtering,
3. Gamification of the digital experience,
4. Graphics and aesthetics,
5. App and Web Design,
6. Interaction between digital and physical world,
7. Augmented reality vs Virtual Reality.

In relation to **Virtual Reality**:

8. Digital Space 3d / 2d Architecture,
9. Virtual Real Estate and Ownership,
10. Infrastructure of the virtual city,
11. Mobility and 2d/3d/?D experience,
12. Limitation and boundaries,
13. Operations and Maintenance.

In relation to **Digital Heritage & Culture**:

14. Digital Twins & Architectural doubles,
15. Heritage reconstruction,
16. Access to information and education,
17. NFT's and Cryptos,
18. Cyberpunk and dystopian scenarios,
19. Solarpunk and utopian scenarios,
20. History of digital design,
21. Vintage Videogames & Graphics.

In relation to **Society & Lifestyle**:

22. Alienation and addictions,
23. Social interactions in the virtual world,
24. E-shops and digital products,
25. Avatar creation,
26. Entertainment industry,
27. Artificial Intelligence and Bots,
28. Governance of the virtual space,
29. Capitalism models for the digital,
30. New forms of societal organization.

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 **Virtual** are the following:

- Meta-City
- Infinite Labyrinth
- ????



# Meta-City

Participants of this competition are asked to create a visionary concept for an urban block in the Metaverse. This time we challenge designers to reinterpretate and design what could be a city in the virtual world, by taking advantage of the absence of real-life rules or restrictions such as gravity, structural stability, climatic issues, or physical laws. On the other hand, new rules will apply. Designers should foresee which those rules will be and how to play with them. Designers are free to explore in a critical way the different interpretations of such topics, from practical approaches to more dystopian/utopian scenarios.

The “Meta City” is a design competition developed to explore the creative potential of architectural design through one of the most iconic architectural drawings: the axonometric projection.

This competition is an opportunity to experiment with how an axonometric can communicate a project today. What kind of design choices can better respond to the issues raised in the brief and how can one drawing communicate the concept in the most effective way? Participants have only one axonometric projection to answer those questions.

**Deliverables:** one image (axonometric projection)

**Timeline:**

**Registration Period:** 01 June – 30 September 2022

**Submission Deadline:** 15 – 30 Sept 2022

**Winners Announcement:** 01 – 15 November 2022

# Infinite Labyrinth

The aim of this design competition is to explore the creative potential of architectural design through one of the most basic architectural drawings: the floor plan. To do so, we challenge all participants to design a labyrinth – with a specific size and entrance points. All the remaining aspects of the maze are completely open to interpretation.

Labyrinths are a system of intricate passageways and blind alleys, used symbolically, as a walking meditation, site of rituals and ceremonies, and entertainment, among other things. Labyrinths have always been about the journey, at least as much as the destination. In this competition, we ask you to design the path and define the destination by playing with the concept and form of the labyrinth; infinite, like a social media scroll.

All finalist projects will be published in our online journal, combined in an endless maze, that when scrolling through the page becomes an Infinite Labyrinth.

This competition is an opportunity to experiment with how a floor plan can communicate a project today. How can a two-dimensional drawing communicate it in the most effective way?

**Deliverables:** one images (floorplan)

**Timeline:**

**Registration Period:** 01 June – 30 September 2022

**Submission Deadline:** 15 – 30 Sept 2022

**Winners Announcement:** 01 – 15 November 2022

CURATOR

non|  
architecture

RESEARCH PARTNERS



MEDIA PARTNERS



CONTACTS

info@nonarchitecture.eu  
www.nonarchitecture.eu