

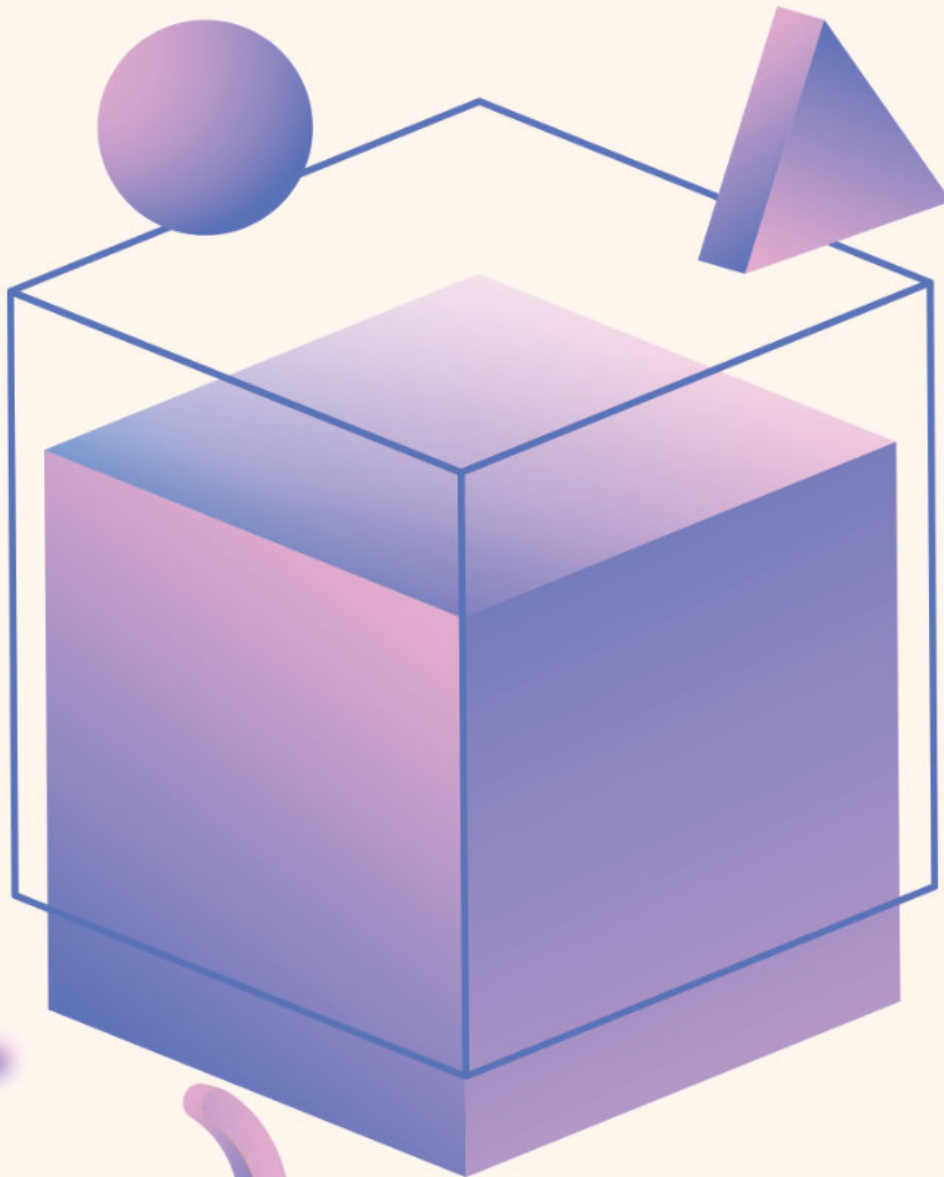


THE UNBOX 2026

Architecture Competition

Edition #2

Total Prize - USD 10000



Click Here to

REGISTER NOW

INTRODUCTION

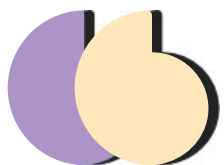


Public space is where collective life unfolds. It is where communities gather, differences coexist, and civic culture becomes visible. From informal meetings to public debate, from everyday routines to shared celebrations, these spaces shape how we live together.

Yet the way we interact with these spaces is rapidly evolving. Digital platforms increasingly mediate how we communicate, work, learn, and socialize. At the same time, climate instability, social fragmentation, and spatial inequality are redefining the responsibilities of architecture.

While the world often focuses on large infrastructure and landmark architecture, everyday public life frequently unfolds in much smaller spaces. In this context, public space can no longer remain static. It must adapt, respond, and remain relevant. These small-scale environments can be delivered faster, adapted more easily, and implemented more affordably than large civic projects.

UNBOX invites participants to rethink public architecture for contemporary life, and imagine a micro architecture solution that is adaptable, inclusive, multifunctional and responsive to rapidly changing social, technological, and environmental realities.



Design Small. Big Impact!

OPPORTUNITY

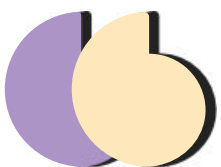


Public space remains one of the few truly democratic built-forms. It carries social, environmental, and cultural responsibility. These play a critical role in supporting social exchange, climate comfort, and inclusive gathering.

Today, these spaces must be capable of supporting diverse communities and multiple forms of use. They must respond to limited resources and environmental pressures while encouraging presence and interaction in an increasingly screen-mediated world.

This competition presents an opportunity to propose a micro public space that is adaptable, multifunctional, and context-sensitive. Rather than focusing solely on formal expression, participants are encouraged to explore how architecture can operate as prototype model of civic infrastructure serving real needs while strengthening shared experience. The spaces may work with combination of many functions that are not limited to.

- Libraries that double up as a Community Space.
- Public Squares that host learning, play, performances
- Observation Towers and Decks that act as Landmarks and Utilities
- Bridges that acts like a art or viewing gallery
- Playscapes that support climate resilience
- Public toilets that goes beyond a humble civic infrastructure



Less is More

Mies Van Der Rohe
German-American architect

CHALLENGE



UNBOX asks participants to open up what public architecture can be, to rethink how space is shared, sustained, and experienced. Participants are invited to design a micro public space with a maximum built-up area of 3000 square feet (278 square meters), designed to accommodate a minimum of 250 users per day.

The proposal must support at least three distinct uses across daily or seasonal cycles. It may take the form of a pavilion, a small public building, a hybrid landscape-architecture intervention, a modular system, or a deployable structure.

The design should demonstrate spatial clarity, multifunctional usability, and environmental responsibility. The proposals need to be sustainable as well as be a model for sustainability for its users. Participants are encouraged to explore non-conventional materials or innovative uses of traditional materials, responding to context, climate, and construction feasibility.

Technology may be incorporated where relevant, but it should reinforce physical interaction rather than replace it. Proposals should also address durability, maintenance, and long-term viability, acknowledging the realities that public spaces face over time.

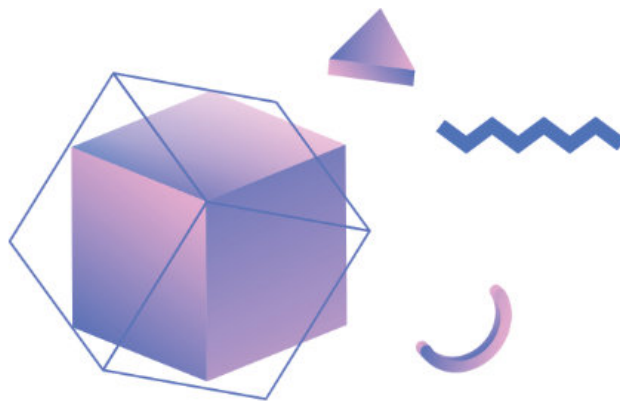
The aim is not to produce a monument, but to propose a thoughtful and resilient piece of public architecture.

SITE SELECTION

Participants may select a site anywhere in the world, including urban centres, small towns, or remote landscapes. The chosen location must be clearly identified and justified.

Entries should demonstrate a considered response to the social, cultural, and environmental conditions of the site. Participants must articulate who the space serves, what local need it addresses, and how the proposal engages with its context.

Site sensitivity and contextual awareness will be fundamental to evaluation.



JUDGING CRITERIA

Concept Innovation

The participants are to reimagine a prototype of public architecture that moves beyond static monuments. The participants have to design an innovative micro-public space and make it exceptional, as compared to conventional civic infrastructure today.

Spatial Design

The entries will be judged on the basis of creativity displayed in the spatial design and configuration of spaces.

Site Selection

The participants are to select a site of their choice for the design. The entries will be evaluated on the basis of the site justification given.

Functional Versatility

The efficiency and multi-use capability of a single micro-architectural intervention and its impact on the surrounding public space and community experience.

AWARDS & PRIZE MONEY

Total Prize - USD 10000



Certificate of Achievement
Publication



Certificate of Achievement
Publication



Certificate of Achievement
Publication



Certificate of Achievement
Publication

10 Honourable Mentions : Certificates

Winners and Honourable Mentions will be published on Volume Zero website and several international architecture and design magazines.

Participation Certificates

To show our appreciation, all the participants would receive participation certificate.

JURY PANEL



Chen Xi
Atelier Xi, China



Jose Gomez
Natura Futura, Ecuador



Lui Hanxio
LLLab, China



Luis Ricardo
LLLab, China



Varudh Varavarn
Vin Varavarn Architects, Thailand

ELIGIBILITY

The Unbox: Rethinking Public Spaces Architecture Competition is open to all.

We invite architects, students, engineers, product designers, thinkers, companies, organizations and everyone interested in the mission of the competition to submit their ideas. No professional qualifications are necessary.

SCHEDULE



**Competition
Launch**

05 March 2026



**Registrations
Deadline**

13 November 2026



**Submissions
Deadline**

03 December 2026



**Winners
Announcement**

05 February 2027

REGISTRATION

Standard Registrations

25th Sep 2026 - 13th Nov 2026

For participants from India

INR 4130 / per team

INR 2700 + 18% GST

For participants from other countries

USD 112.1 / per team

USD 95 + 18% GST

SUBMISSION

The entrants must complete the online registrations and the submission must include, (but are not limited to) the following required drawings.

Building / Site sections which illustrate key aspects and major spatial or programmatic elements.

Floor plans to show the interior spatial arrangements and program.

Large scale drawing that illustrates innovative details or integrated aspects of design.

Three dimensional representations explaining the design, perspectives and montages which display the character of the project.

Elevations demonstrating qualities such as material, texture, and colour.

All drawings should be presented at a scale appropriate for the design solution and include a graphic scale for reference.

FORMAT

A single A1 sheet must be submitted in JPEG format (150 DPI Resolution), file size not exceeding 5 MB.

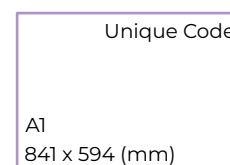
The file must be marked with your unique identification number, presented clearly in the top right corner on the A1 sheet.

The sheet must not include ANY INFORMATION (Name, Organization, School, etc.) that may give away your identity.

Any other submission other than the above-mentioned format would not be accepted.

All text must be in English, with a MAXIMUM of 200 WORDS for project explanation with a readable font size to be provided on the A1 sheet.

All dimension should be in imperial or metric unit.



SHEET FORMAT

FAQs

Q: How does a team receive their

A: All the participants will only receive the team unique code on completion of registration process.

Q: Can I change team members after I register?

A: Teams are welcome to add any new members as long as their total members do not exceed 3. However they are prohibited from swapping or removing any existing member of the team. To do this please send your request to questions@volumezerocompetition.s.com with the details of the new team member requested by the organizer with the team unique code.

Q: What are the modes of submissions?

A: The participants are requested to submit their work in JPEG file format in 150 DPI resolutions.

Q: What should the participants do in case the payments are not available in our country?

A: We request the participants to send us the queries on questions@volumezerocompetition.s.com to get an alternate payment method. We would send you all the possible payment methods.

Q: Where all do the participants need to use their team unique code?

A: All the participants would be using their team code on the top right corner of their sheets, as the name of their submission and wherever requested by the organizer. This code will be their only identification for the process related with this competition.

Q: What is the limit or cap on the number of team members and can anyone participate individually?

A: A team can have up to three members and cannot exceed this number. The participants who desire to participate individually can do so by filling and submitting the details for the team leader.

Q: What is the nature of the competition and is it open for all?

A: The Unbox Architecture Competition is an open ideas design competition with no intentions to execute the proposals submitted in any form. The competition is open to all and students and professionals from all walks can join the competition.

Q: What should be the submission file size?

A: The file size should not exceed more than 5MB.

RULES & REGULATION

English is to be used as the language of communication for all drawings.

The deadline for submissions is 11:59 PM IST 3 December 2026. Submissions after this deadline will not be considered.

The identity of the participants needs to be anonymous. The registration number is the only form of identification for the entries.

The registration fee is non-refundable.

The participants should not contact the jury under any circumstances.

All participants must accept the rules and regulations of the competition.

The participants may face disqualification if any of the rules are not followed.

Volume Zero reserves the right to modify the schedule of the competition.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

We invite everyone, irrespective of their professions or qualifications, to join the competition and present their ideas. Participants are free to submit multiple entries but each entry needs to be registered separately.

Alongside individual entries, team entries are also allowed. A team can have a maximum of three participants. Interdisciplinary teams are also welcome to join.

After your registration has been approved, you will be sent a unique identification number for your team / entry which will be necessary to submit your proposal. If you haven't received a confirmation within two business days, please contact us at questions@volumezerocompetitions.com or our Facebook profile.