Mies Memorial Library

much more
than just an
**architecture
competition for
students**

arkitekturo
by wikiarquitectura

Why participate

Participating in academic competitions for architecture students is a great way to complement your learning experience. Here is a shot list of our favorite reasons why students love joining our challenges.

To learn how professional competitions work

Competitions are how most important projects are awarded in the professional world. Big studios participate in competitions all the time, and if you want to work at well-known firms or want to establish your own, chances are you will be involved in the process.

To see how students from other schools and countries approach the same project

In architecture, unlike math, where 2+2 always equals 4. That is why learning from what has worked in the past in other projects is so important. That is why in architecture schools we see studio classes where everyone gets to see everyone else's projects, instead of one-on-one sessions with a tutor, so that students can learn from one another.

Now, if seeing how a handful of classmates approached the same brief you were given can be a powerful learning experience, imagine how enriching it could be to see how hundreds of students, from different schools, countries, cultures and backgrounds, solved a common brief.

To receive unbiased feedback

When the jury looks at a project, they don't know who's it's from, they don't know who you are, where you are from, how you look or what you've designed in the past. They will give you their honest opinion regarding your architectural design alone.

To work with your dream team

You are free to choose the team you want to work with, or to work by yourself. Many times, in studio classes you can be pared with students you don't necessarily share much in common with, and that can make it complicated to work together. When joining an arkitekturo competition you can choose who you want to work with. As long as they are students it doesn't matter if they are not on your same class or even study at your same school.

To build your portfolio

Participating in an academic competition can be an opportunity to finally work on that flagship project that you can really feel proud of and that will make your portfolio stand out amongst the rest.

To gain exposure as a future architect

Results of academic competitions are picked up by the media. These days, digital media in particular, can help you get noticed by studios around the world, many of which are always looking to hire great talent.

You never know where the next great opportunity might come from, but one thing is for sure, if you don't get yourself out there, how are these opportunities supposed to find you?

Brief

Mies van der Rohe's professional career was one of continuous exploration, endless ambition, and a tireless search for what modern architecture should be and stand for.

Becoming the director of the Bauhaus would have been the pick of a career for many architects, however, for Mies it was only the beginning. By the time the Nazis forced the Bauhaus to close, he had already designed such iconic buildings as the Barcelona Pavilion or the Tugendhat House, yet some of his best works were still to come.

Mies left Germany and emigrated to the US in 1937, looking for a more favorable environment to pursue his vision, and oh my did he achieve it!

But how could a single person's ideas have such a deep impact on a discipline as bast as architecture? Way before moving to the US Mies understood his buildings and the ones from a handful of contemporary colleagues who shared his ideals would not be enough to stand up against centuries of tradition. **Education was the only way to make his ideas endure. Only by planting that seed in future generations would modern architecture stand a chance of succeeding.**

So, when opportunity knocked on his door, Mies didn't hesitate to grab it with both hands, and in 1939 he became the head of the architecture school at Chicago's Armour Institute, which would soon thereafter merge and be renamed as the Illinois Institute of Chicago (IIT). There he led the way of what would later be known as nothing less than the "Second Chicago School".

Mies went on to develop the masterplan for the new IIT, as well as several on-campus buildings.

But his greatest contribution to modern architecture wasn't the Crown Hall or the Farnsworth house, it was a brand-new architecture curriculum, much of which is still taught at IIT to this day.

Mies believed his ideas could be translated into an architectural language that could objectively be taught and learned, and that this language could be applied, and give an appropriate solution, to any type of building.

Spoken languages have dictionaries, and in the case of Mies's architectural language, we have thousands of drawings, sketches, models, letters, articles and more, each a small but crucial piece when it comes to fully understanding his life, his work, his vision, and his legacy.

Times change, societies evolve, and so do languages. But evolution, requires a solid origin one can always look back to. The same way the Rosetta Stone will always remain an invaluable key to understanding the evolution of language, Mies's visual dictionary for a modern architectural language deserves to be studied, cared for and cherished.

As ambitious as he was, probably not even Mies himself could have imagined how far his ideas would spread. Vigorously embraced by architects such as Gene Summers or Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, **modern architecture spread further and faster than any other architectural style ever did, and ever has. Today modern architecture floods our cities, making Mies van der Rohe a part of them, forever.**

The challenge

Mies's drawings, letters and articles are all well preserved. He made sure himself by donating over eighteen thousand pieces of his work to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Other collections of his works also live at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Library of Congress in Washington D.C, at the

Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal or inside de Crown Hall itself at the IIT.

All these pieces are safe and sound. However, **there's a difference between preservation and celebration, and we believe Mies's work deserve to be celebrated.**

For the sake of this challenge, we are going to consider that the IIT is planning to make a move to bring many of those pieces back to its campus to establish the new "Mies Memorial Library". A building not only meant to preserve, but also to celebrate the life, works and contributions of one of the founding fathers of modern architecture. A building that will look into the future without forgetting the past. A building capable of encouraging young architects to be ambitious and remind the established ones to never settle. A building which this brief, if you choose to do so, invites you to envision and design.

The Mies Memorial Library will stand withing Mies's own masterplan at the IIT campus in south-Chicago. The new building will need to consider the other buildings already on campus, some of which are catalogued and international landmarks, and establish a dialog with its surroundings, in order to be able to stand up for itself while also elevating the status of the campus as a whole.

Inside the building people will be immersed in the universe of Mies and will be able to work and study surrounded by pieces of his furniture and other works on display. The library will have a "Open Collection" freely accessible to anyone without supervision. Members of the library will also be able to borrow these books just like in any other library. The "Complete Mies Collection" on the other hand, containing more unique and valuable pieces, will only be available for research purposes under supervision.

The new library's aim is not to become an isolated fortress or museum, but a necessary complement to the needs of the Architecture School and the IIT campus. It will help ease the burden on the Graham Resource Center, located inside the Crown Hall and which has already been expanded twice. This will free up space inside the Crown Hall to accommodate more offices, classes and workshops. The new library will also be a complement to the Paul V. Galvin Library, which is IIT's main library.

Mies devoted his life to architecture and education, and with the creation of the Mies Memorial Library, his lessons will continue to live on and inspire the architects who will lead the evolution of architecture for centuries to come.

The project

The new Mies Memorial Library must accommodate the following spaces:

Shelving for the 60K books Open Collection – 800 m2

The Open Collection will have around 60K books related to the fields of architecture, urban planning and design. This collection will work as the one from any other library, where anyone with access to the library can freely search for, read and borrow the books.

Storage for 25K items in the Complete Mies Collection – 350 m2

The Complete Mies Collection will include 25K one-of-a-kind items. These will include books, but also building floorplans, letters and photographs, which members of the library will be able to access and study only by request and under supervision.

200 reading/study stations – 800 m2

Read/study space that any student can have access to. This will be where people can check the books they pick up from the shelves, study for an exam or write a paper. Since different people work differently this can be a combination of shared tables and more secluded seats.

15 research stations – 80 m2

These stations will be reserved for people reviewing items from the Complete Mies Collection. Each station must be independent from one another.

Copy room – 50 m2

This room will be equipped with several printers, scanners and copy machines and will allow students to reproduce fragments of the Open Collections for their own use and study.

Administration – 70 m2

This space will be dedicated to the administration affairs of the library and will only be accessible to the staff.

60 seat Auditorium – 100 m2

A small auditorium that can be used to host presentations or to screen documentaries to small groups.

Bathrooms – 50 m2

Separate bathrooms for men and woman as well as a unisex accessible bathroom.

These areas must be understood as a general rule of proportion between spaces. Your total built up area should be 2300 m2 (+- 10%), including circulation spaces and stairs (if needed). You can also choose to change the suggested proportions between spaces (within the ~2300 m2 range) to better fit your design. For example, if you choose to make the auditorium a central piece of your project, you might want to slightly increase its area to make it more prominent, decreasing the area assigned to other areas. As long as these decisions are justified in your presentation, the jury will consider them and might award such projects if they consider it appropriate.

The site

The first decision you'll need to make is where exactly should the new library be located. Most architectural projects start with a predefined site, however, in this case, since the new library will be located within the boundaries of the IIT campus, there is some room for flexibility.

We would like you, as future architects who have been commissioned to design this building, to **choose the exact location where the building should stand, the exact spot you think will be more favorable for the library individually and as part of the campus.**

You are free to design on any of the red areas highlighted on the map below.
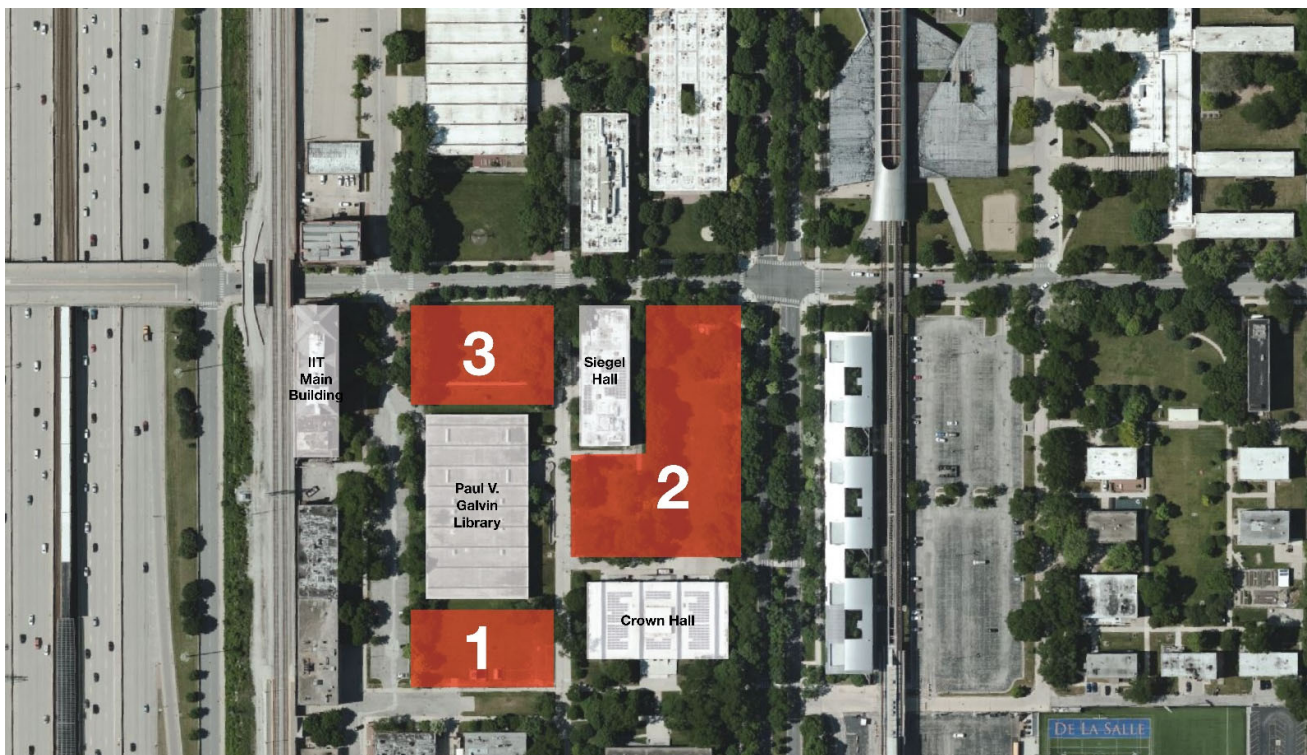
Jury

NOMO Studio

NOMO STUDIO – based in Barcelona and Stockholm – is a team of architects and designers within various fields of architecture, urbanism, graphic/product design and social research.

Founding partners Alicia Casals and Karl Nyqvist´s international background and years of professional experience in acclaimed offices such as OMA (Rotterdam), BIG (Copenhagen), ShigeruBan (Tokyo), Kengo Kuma (Tokyo), MVRDV (Rotterdam), UnStudio (Amsterdam), BüroOS (Beijing), give the company a solid base of knowledge in large scale projects.

We believe in design as a powerful tool for creating extraordinary spatial qualities. Our interests lie on cutting-edge design, experimentation with materials, details and structural solutions. The strong curiosity we feel for diverse social and cultural environments leads us for always seeking a specific approach in each project. We do not resign ourselves to anything less than creativity, uniqueness and strong concepts in our work.

Baukunst Academy

The Baunkunst Academy team is made up by Eugenia Soto Cellino (art and contents director) and Iñaki Volante Negueruela (executive director).

They both studied architecture at the Universidad Central de Chile, graduating in 1995 and 1996 respectively. They also obtained their doctorate degree at ETSAB-UPC in Barcelona between 1998 and 2001 under the umbrella of the "Forma Moderna" program.

At the same time, in 1998, they founded their first professional practice, PROUN Arquitectes, in Barcelona.

In the teaching field Eugenia was a lead Studio teacher between 2002 and 2008, while Iñaki taught Studio and Architecture Theory between 1996 and 2013. Iñaki was also the director of the architecture department at UMayor and UFT, and has been invited to teach at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), Tulane, ETSAB, UBA and the Escola da Cidade.

Their proposal for the Museum of the Atacalma Desert in Antofagasta, Chile, received the prize "Obra Bicentenario de la República de Chile" in 2009.

Cristina Gastón

Cristina Gastón graduated from the Architecture School of Barcelona (ETSAB) in 1992, where she also obtained her doctorate degree in 2002. Her thesis titled "Mies and the awareness of the surrounding" was awarded the IV Thesis Award by the Fundación Caja de Arquitectos and the Extraordinary Doctorate Award by the Universidad Politécnica de Cataluña in 2003.

Today she manages her own professional practice alongside her partners Xavier Vidal and Isidre Roca, and also collaborates with the doctorate program "La forma moderna" within the UPC.

In 2004 she published her book titled "Documentos de arquitectura moderna en América Latina. Primera recopilación".

Prizes

This competition is all about giving you the freedom to design without pressure and providing the platform for you to learn from an expanded network of architecture student peers. However, we know a little incentive has never hurt anyone, and so, with the help of our sponsors, we've put together an amazing pool of prizes!

	1st price	2nd price	3rd price	Hon. Mentions (x10)	Finalists	Others
Cash [1]	1.500 €	1.000 €	500 €			
rektangulo gift cards	250 €	150 €	100 €			
Subscription to Arquitectura Viva Proyectos [2]	✓	✓	✓			
Pack of TASCHEN architecture books [3]	✓	✓	✓			
Poster Hause prints [4]	A3	A3	A3	A5		
Publication on digital media	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Access to exclusive on-line lectures	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jury feedback [5]	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	15 €
Printed participation certificate [6]	✓	✓	✓	✓	18 €	18 €

[1] Funds will be transferred to a PayPal or Bank account. Transaction fees will be deducted from the total amount. (Prize is per team)
[2] One year subscription to the Arquitectura Viva Proyectos magazine. (1 subscription per team)
[3] Pack consisting of 3 architecture books selected by TASCHEN (1 pack per team)
[4] Winners will get their winning project ilustrated and printed on A3. Second and third prize can choose any A3 from the existing catalog. HM can choose any A5 from the existing catalog. (1 print per team member combined in a single shipment)
[5] Roughly 300 words of personalized feedback from the jury about your project, its strengths and areas where it could be improved.
[6] Participation certificate, printed on high quality paper and hand signed by the organization, shipped to your home address worldwide.

Calendar

All dates are expressed in GMT-7 times. No registrations or submissions will be accepted after midnight on the specified dates.

Special registration period	October 4th – November 28th
Early registration period	November 29th - December 26th
Regular registration period	December 27th 2021 – January 16th 2022
End of questions period	January 21st
Submission deadline	January 28th
Winners announced	February 25th

Organization

Eligibility

Registration is open to any student actively enrolled in an undergrad program. Master students can also be eligible as long as they started their masters no longer than 18 months after finishing their undergrad program.

If you are not a student yet, but are about to be, or if you are about to graduate, don't worry. We only require that you meet the above-mentioned criteria at some point between the first day of the special registration period and the last day of the regular registration period.

This brief is especially tailored towards architecture students, however, students from other fields, related to architecture or not, who have an interested in participating are also welcomed to do so, as long as they meet the previously mentioned criteria.

All participants will be required to submit a copy of their student ID or enrollment papers with a valid expiration date to prove their student status.

Teams

Each registration will automatically create a "team". **Teams can be "solo" teams, made up by a single student, or group teams, made up by up to 8 students.**

Members of a team can be from different schools, countries and be enrolled in different majors, as long as they all meet the eligibility criteria established for this competition.

Registrations

All registrations must be completed on the arkitekturo's website. Once you complete the registration form you will receive an email with your registration ID, which will identify you as a team until the results of the competition are announced.

A registration will not be valid until the corresponding payment is received, and it can be revoked at any time if the transaction is disputed.

Entry fees

All registrations will require the payment of an entry fee to be completed. The registration fee applies to the team, regardless of how many students are in it.

In order to encourage the participation of students from any country and background, **the registration fee price will not be fixed, and will instead be determinate by the price of a commodity that is available worldwide** at a price determined by several local economic indicators: the price of a movie ticket.

Teams made up by students enrolled in schools in different countries will have to pay the highest fee assigned to their pool of countries.

The registration period will be divided into three subperiods; special, early and regular. Teams who complete their registration during one for the first two periods will see a substantial discount in their entry fee.

Considering the above, the entry fees will be determinate as follows:

	Special period	Early period	Regular period
Registration fee	6 movie tickets	9 movie tickets	12 movie tickets

The complete list of entry fees per country can be found at: https://arkitekturo.com/competition/mies-memorial-library/entry-fees

Registration fees are non-refundable, but can be transferred to other students as long as the meet all the eligibility criteria

Open forum

A public online forum, open to all participants, will be active during the whole competition on the arkitekturo's website. We want this event to be a learning and enriching experience for everyone, and this will be the place to introduce us to each other, ask questions and share ideas and opinions.

All questions regarding the brief must be asked on the forum in English, where arkitekturo will answer them diligently. This will ensure that all teams have access to the same information, explanations and clarifications.

The forum will also remain open after the winners are announced to encourage an open debate about any project submitted, whether it was awarded or not.

Submissions

All submissions will be made through the arkitekturo website. Once registered, participants will have access to a private dashboard where they will be able to upload their student IDs and project.

English is the official language of the competition and therefore we recommend that any text on your board is English. Projects with text in other languages will not be disqualified, but the jury might not be able to understand it and the media might choose not to publish it.

Traditionally, architecture competitions ask for projects to be presented in one, or a series of panels. That makes sense if those panels are going to be printed onto a physical support. However, these days your work will be seen on digital media a lot more than it will be printed. That is why, in addition to an A1 panel, we will ask all teams to also upload their renders, drawings and texts, separately and independent from each other. This will ensure that they jury can properly read all texts and see all images if they want to dive into a project. It will also ensure that the awarded projects can be published on digital media in a way that makes sense. Have you ever tried to read the text of an A1 panel on an Instagram post? Exactly!

The presentation technique is free. Renders, collages, models, watercolors, sketches… you are free to use the techniques you feel more comfortable with, as long as it can be photographed or scanned and be submitted in a digital format.

So, to summarize. **You work on your project freely. You select the pieces that explain your project best. You lay them out on an A1 panel that can ONLY be labeled with your registration ID code. Through your arkitekturo dashboard, you submit your A1 panel, plus all the pieces contained in the panel, separately.**

Working material

Arkitekturo will make available a variety of working material (photos, drawings, etc.) to all participants. These materials will be available for download before and after the registration to the competition is completed.

The provided working materials might include modifications that do not match reality. In such cases the material provided by arkitekturo should be considered as the only one valid in the context of the competition, to ensure that all participants have access to the same information.

Authorship and copyrights

Students will always keep ownership of copyrights or any other intellectual property originated from their work, as well as the right to use their project in any other way they see fit, including submitting it to other competitions or

awards, after the results of this competition are announced.

By submitting their projects, students grant arkitekturo perpetual rights to use all graphic and written material, in both printed and digital media.

Additional notes

- Arkitekturo reserves the right to make any changes to this document (dates, requirements, etc.) as long as such changes are in benefit of the majority of participants. Any changes will be announced on the competition's website and social media, and it is each team's responsibility to check for such announcements.
- This brief is purely academic. The winning project will not be built. There is no requirement to follow any existing building or urban planning regulations that would need to be considered if this was a real-life project meant to be built.

- The working documents provided on the competition's website might have been modified to better fit the brief and might not correspond with reality.
- No one has hired arkitekturo to organize this competition. This brief has been fully developed by arkitekturo with the sole purpose of serving as an academic exercise.
- Arkitekturo has no ownership over the land mentioned in this brief or relationship to the actual owners. There is no guaranty that students will be able to enter the site if they choose to visit it.

Sponsors

We want to thank our sponsors for supporting this event and contributing to making this academic experience for future architects much more exciting!

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