

City Visions Europe
Bordeaux, Kosice, Mechelen, Pilzen
European Exchange Program, 2008-2010

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION
Architectural and Urban Design Research.

The Berlage Institute – Centre for Architectural Research & Development (Rotterdam, NL), with the Centre for Central European Architecture (Prague, CZ), the Flemish Architecture Institute (Antwerp, BE), MMMechelen (Mechelen, BE), and arc en rêve – centre d'architecture (Bordeaux, FR), **invite architects and architectural practices** to submit their candidacy for participation in this European Exchange Program. *City Visions Europe* aims to engage architects, policy-makers, experts and citizens in an **exchange and reflection on the concrete future of the European city.**

Focusing on four middle-scale European cities – **Bordeaux (FR), Kosice (SK), Mechelen (BE), Pilzen (CZ)** – this design-research program offers the framework **to develop, present and debate speculative architectural projects and ideas** on the future of (parts of) these cities. As each of the **eight selected practices** will address the concrete challenges of two of these cities, their projects will provide the basis for an exchange and debate on the future of these cities, and of the European city.

Progressing through a sequence of conferences and seminars in the four cities, closely involving local city-governments as well as international experts, the selected architects and urbanists will be presenting their portfolio and their contribution to this program in the form of **lectures, exhibitions and publications** in Bordeaux, Kosice, Mechelen and Pilzen.

Submission of candidacies before **18 February 2009, 17:00 CET.**

From a Professional Exchange to a Public Debate

The 18-month program *City Visions Europe*, running from autumn 2008 to spring 2010, builds upon the prospective dimension of architecture and urbanism – professions that are able to materialize ideas for our living environment and thereby go beyond the economic logic that is necessarily embodied in building commissions. *City Visions Europe* will be the framework for the development of sixteen architectural projects for the mid-size European cities of Bordeaux (France), Kosice (Slovak Republic), Mechelen (Belgium) and Pilzen (Czech Republic). The development and presentation of four projects for each of these cities, developed by eight European architectural practices, will provoke a concrete debate amongst and between city-governments, specialists and citizens about the future of their city, and about the notion of the European city as such.

As all four cities have been developing their candidacy to carry the title of European Capital of Culture – a rotating title that highlights the cultural program of a city during an entire year, and aims to reinforce its structural and sustainable development – the European ambitions of these cities in terms of their spatial development is evident. In light of the current tendency towards a generic and global architecture for generic and global cities, *City Visions Europe* chooses their future development as the concrete context for a reflection on the European city, and the role of architecture in defining its form, scale and organization.

Under the coordination of the Berlage Institute's Centre for Architectural Research and Development (CARD), during a first phase, the selected practices will engage in a series of workshops with local authorities, European colleagues and international experts. Each of these seminars will include a public debate and seminar. After having developed the final conclusions, plans and visions by summer 2009, these will be presented to a professional audience and a general public during a series of simultaneous exhibitions in all four cities to take place from end 2009 to March 2010. Following these presentations, a series of public presentations and roundtable discussions will aim at drawing conclusions, both for the future development of each of these cities, as with regards to the development of the European city as such.

Design Research: Architectural Prospects for Cities

The end of the 20th century will surely be remembered for its conviction that the immaterial flows of goods, people and information represented the essence of a world that was globalizing through the pervasion (and often imposition) of the principles of economic liberalism. As a consequence of this credo, the city's sprawling space was considered rather as a field of economic opportunity than as the public framework of a society's progress. And more often than not, architecture (and archi-stars in particular) developed the spectacular and sculptural built images that city-marketing campaigns required.

Today however, we witness a renewed consciousness of the material context – the physical space of our urbanizing world – in which the process of globalization is sited and tangible. As also climate change, worldwide migration and massive urbanization

have painfully made clear, many of the challenges and urgencies that our civilization is facing are bound to the form, the organization and the scale of the territory and cities we inhabit. The relevance of the physical environment in describing and in localizing those challenges logically implies the need of new visions, strategies and projects to structure this same physical space. Architecture, as the profession that is able to materialize visions for the future of the built environment, finds its field of speculation, or design research, in these challenges.

City Visions Europe aims to structure a program of speculation on the architecture of the European city. Contrary to its American and Asian counterparts, the European city is a historical category of cities that have been growing through an accumulation of architecture. Focusing on a 'typical' scale of mid-size European cities, *City Visions Europe* centres its program of exchange and prospective design on the relevance of this historical category in addressing the challenges four cities are confronted with today. By establishing the framework and platform for the development of sixteen – hopefully challenging and contradicting – propositions for the development of Bordeaux, Kosice, Mechelen and Pilzen, its final aim is to draw conclusions with regards to the operative potential of the European city as a contemporary category, and of a range of principles, projects and visions in defining its future form.

Based on the conclusions of the preliminary urban study (developed in concertation with the local authorities), the program and area of these projects will be defined in collaboration with the selected offices. The subjects, sites and challenges proposed in this preliminary study will cover a number of similar challenges in the four cities (centralities, neighbourhood, historical housing estates, etc). The scale of the projects will therefore be situated in between the architecture of a city-part and the urban form of the entire city.

The different propositions by four offices in one city, as well as the fact that each of the offices simultaneously addresses sites and challenges in two cities, will allow the organizing partners and the participating experts and offices to analyze, and exchange upon, the proposed architectural principles and models for the European city. While these projects will frame a debate on the development of each of the subject-cities in particular, the (thematically organized) group of architectural contributions to the European city will define the more general conclusion of this design research program.

Elements of Your Participation

1. Each of the selected architectural offices will work on two speculative architectural projects, each for one of two amongst the four cities. The sites and ambitions of these design research projects will be chosen and defined together with the project curator and his partners, and will be based on the preliminary and urban study currently executed by the Berlage Institute in close collaboration with city governments and representatives. These speculative projects will be developed from April through September 2009.

2. Following the phase of the urban study and the selection of eight practices, *City Visions Europe* will be launched as a public exchange program during an international conference on the 24th of April 2009 in Mechelen (BE). The conference will include a presentation of the conclusions of the urban study on Bordeaux, Kosice, Mechelen and Pilzen, and of the ambitions of *City Visions Europe* in each of these cities, as well as keynote lectures on the relation between architecture and the European City, a debate between the mayors of the participating cities, and a presentation by the eight participating practices. At the occasion of this conference, the above-mentioned comparative study will also be the basis for an exhibition that will open on April 23rd in Mechelen.

3. During the spring of 2009, and starting in Mechelen on the 25th of April, a two-day workshop will be organised in each of the cities. Besides the four architectural practices working on each of these cities, the local governments, local stakeholders and an international expert, will be participating in a workshop that aims to reveal the specific challenges the city is confronted with and review the preliminary ideas that the architects developed. At the occasion of these workshops, the four offices and the international expert (architect or urbanist) will lecture during a public seminar (April - July 2009).

4. Following the submission of each office's projects in September 2009, and the subsequent editing by the Berlage Institute's CARD and its partners, *City Visions Europe* will conclude with a presentation of the entire program and the specific projects in each of the cities that represent their subject matter. This final presentation will consist of an exhibition, a public presentation and a debate in each of these cities (Winter 2009-2010).

5. During the entire duration of the program, and for each of the single public events in Bordeaux, Kosice, Mechelen and Pilzen, the activities, seminars and (later) project results will be communicated both on the cityvisionseurope.eu webpage and in print-work (flyers, posters, brochures). During the entire process, the website will contain the work that is produced, from the comparative study in the first phase to the final projects and the conclusions of the presentations and debates during winter 2009-2010.

6. Upon completion of the design research program, and depending on the feasibility, the organizing partners will research the possibility to publish the results of the *City Visions Europe* program in the form of a book (to be confirmed).

Planning and Phases of the Program

Phase 1: Comparative Study and Selection of Architects (September 2008 – April 2009)

- 26 January 2009 Launch of Call for Participation
- 18 February 2009 Submission deadline, Call for Participation (17:00 CET)
- 3 March 2009 Press release announcing the Exchange program, the selection of offices, program of International Conference

Phase 2: Design-research and Workshops (April – September 2009)

- 23 April 2009 Opening of exhibition, Mechelen (BE)
- 24 April 2009 International Conference, Mechelen (BE)
- 25 April 2009 Local Workshop Mechelen (BE)
- Spring 2009 Local workshops Pilzen (CZ), Kosice (SK) & Bordeaux (FR)
- September 2009 Submission deadline

Phase 3: Editing and Summarizing for Presentation (September – November 2009)

- Autumn 2009 Concluding research & editing

Phase 4: Public Presentation and Debate (December 2009 – March 2010)

- December 2009 Opening simultaneous presentations in cities
- Winter 2009-2010 Public presentation of the proposals in all cities

Honorarium and Expenses

The budget that is available for each of the participating offices consists of the following components:

- A honorarium of € 8.000,00 (VAT excl.);
- Travel and accommodation costs covering the presence of (max) two representatives per office at (1) the opening conference in Mechelen, (2) the city-workshops in the two cities the office is working on, (3) presentation seminars in these same two cities, and (4) the closing seminar and exhibition in Bordeaux;
- Costs related to the production of the presentation material required for the project's exhibition and publication (panels, etc).

Submission and Selection Information

Who can apply?

All architects, architectural offices and urbanism practices located in one of the member countries of the European Union, and its surrounding countries.

What to submit?

1. Fact sheet of the architectural practice (name, address, collaborators, contact)
2. Project Portfolio, including mission statement and project curriculum
3. Letter of motivation (max. 2 A4), including the selection of two projects from the office's portfolio that best relate to the challenge of this design research program.

How to submit?

All documents (formatted as PDF) can be sent by email to Françoise Vos (vos@berlage-institute.nl), or by mail on cdrom/dvd to:

Berlage Institute – CARD, To the attention of Ms. Françoise Vos
Botersloot 25, 3011 HE Rotterdam, The Netherlands

All requested documents have to be at the Berlage Institute before 18 February 2009, 17:00 CET. Candidacies received later than this date and time cannot be considered.

Selection criteria

- Quality and consistency of the portfolio;
- Relevant experience in the fields of architecture and urban design;
- Capacity to produce speculative, prospective research by design;
- Position and experience within an international and European discourse;
- Relevant experience in one of the four participating cities;
- Motivation letter, relating the candidate's portfolio to the aims of the program.

Selection committee

An international committee (composition to be completed) will select eight practices from the total number of regularly and timely submitted candidacies. The committee will actively look for a geographical balance between West and Central Europe in selecting eight practices.

- Joachim Declerck, curator of the program and director of Berlage Institute's CARD
- Michiel Dehaene, assistant professor, University of Eindhoven
- Francine Fort, director, arc en rêve, Bordeaux
- Filip Geerts, assistant professor, Delft University of Technology
- Igor Kovačević, architect and founding member of CCEA, Prague
- Vedran Mimica, director, Berlage Institute, Rotterdam
- Martino Tattara, unit professor, Berlage Institute, Rotterdam
- Katrien Vandermarliere, director, Flemish Architecture Institute, Antwerp

More information

Roeland Dudal, Program Coordinator, rdudal@berlage-institute.nl

Organizing Partners

In addition to its postgraduate and PhD programs, the Berlage Institute performs applied research under the auspices of the **Berlage Institute – Centre for Architectural Research and Development (BI-CARD)**. Located in **Rotterdam (NL)**, BI-CARD organizes a series of applied research projects and a continuing education program for professionals, to contribute and implement the research policy that it shares with the postgraduate and PhD programs. It focuses on the transmission and further advancement of the architectural knowledge developed within the Institute's overall research trajectories into the professional sector; while, at the same time, addressing new fields of speculation that may eventually feed back into the postgraduate and PhD programs. www.berlage-institute.nl

arc en rêve centre d'architecture was founded in **Bordeaux (FR)** in 1981 and its mission is to stimulate cultural awareness in the fields of architecture, urban planning, landscaping and design, while also playing the role of interface working to improve the quality of the spaces we live in. Right from the outset, arc en rêve's activities benefited from the support of Bordeaux Town Hall and additional sponsorship has also been provided by the State, the Regional and City Councils and a number of private partners. www.arcenreve.com

The **Centre for Central European Architecture (CCEA)**, based in **Prague (CZ)**, is an alternative space for further education and research in architecture. It focuses on experts and professional architects, as well as wider public interested in following current developments in architecture. CCEA does not define its own mission as the mere popularization of architecture, but mainly as searching, reading and redefining the architectural identity of Central Europe. The region remains neglected by contemporary architecture culture, even though a strong historic association (socially and economically) exists between now individual states. www.ccea.cz

The promotion of the city of **Mechelen (BE)** as a contemporary city of art and culture is the core business of **MMMechelen**. This non-profit organization actively initiates, organizes, coordinates, promotes and supervises multidisciplinary urban cultural projects with tourist appeal for the city of Mechelen. Through the development of its own initiatives and supporting outstanding projects of other cultural partners, MMMechelen contributes to dynamic city marketing, both abroad and at home. www.mmmechelen.be

The **Flemish Architecture Institute (VAi)**, located in **Antwerp (BE)**, is a centre for contemporary architecture whose aim is to increase awareness of high-quality architecture among both the public at large and professionals, researchers, the media and the authorities. The VAi organises a range of activities including talks, debates, guided tours and educational work for children and adolescents, and develops publications, studies, websites, etc. In this way the VAi stimulates critical reflection on topical subjects currently exercising minds in the architectural world. www.vai.be

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mmm^{vw}echelen



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Education and Culture DG

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