



SAINT-GOBAIN REVEALS THE 5 WINNERS OF THE ARCHITECTURE STUDENT CONTEST

More than 224 universities from 29 countries participated in the 19th edition of the Architecture Student Contest. Students from all over the world imagined projects to transform a district of Helsinki in Finland. The winners have just been revealed during an event held by Saint-Gobain in the Finnish capital between June 10th and 12th, 2024.

This year's competition, organized by Saint-Gobain in close collaboration with the University and City of Helsinki, Finland, asked the students to provide building ideas and solutions for 4 different zones in a plot located in Viikki, at the north-east of Helsinki, through a combination of temporary housing for students and researchers or permanent housing for residents, and nearby outdoor functions, focusing to both renovation and new construction.

“We at Saint-Gobain are convinced that architecture together with construction can bring strategic responses to the key challenges posed by climate change, resource scarcity and urbanization. Like the construction industry, architects are at the forefront of the transition towards developing sustainable living places to ensure a high quality of life as well as resource-efficient building solutions that respect the environment. They can make a real difference when, in 2050, 7 out of 10 people will live in cities and 80% of existing buildings will still exist. The jury and myself were happy to meet future architects so deeply committed to imagining projects that have a better impact for the people and a lower footprint on the planet.” Benoit Bazin, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Saint-Gobain.

Every year, the projects have increased their focus on environmental aspects including for example Life Cycle Assessments, while responding to the functional and user needs.

This edition of the Architecture Student Contest was special: launched in Serbia in 2004, this is its 20th year of existence. A whole generation of students have now participated in the Contest and is shaping the future of sustainable architecture to make the world a better home.

The winners of the 5 prizes

New in the 19th edition is the **Teacher Prize** that is awarded to the project which received the most votes from all participating teachers.

1st prize: **Sieni Park, Portugal**

[Sieni Park](#) is grounded in Finnish culture and our sense of community. The project brings a peaceful retreat to Viikki, linking nearby homes, workplaces, and the University Campus. It combines old and new structures in a coherent design that rests on three foundational building blocks: sustainability, innovation, and comfort. Thus, producing a futuristic, long lasting, low-energy project, that honours and builds upon the local tradition of eco-conscious construction practices.

2nd Prize, **Rurban Habitat, Poland**

[Rurban Habitat](#) offers a vision of circular architecture in the rurban part of Helsinki. Following the ‘research, reduce, reuse, produce and integrate’ approach, the concept respects the existing context and utilizes vernacular and passive solutions. The modular design of the core houses



promotes adaptability, prefabrication, and green energy production. An allocentric design approach allowed for the creation of an inclusive habitat for everyone, complimented by an innovative research and creation space.

3rd Prize, From Boundary To Gateway, South Korea

From Boundary to Gateway provides both residents and visitors with nature-friendly experiences. It brings Finland's natural light and environment indoors, shown in the medium space, 'Barnacle', to make nature and light a daily aspect. The renovated building respects the original topography, improving the connection. The project repurposes the old museum for outdoor exhibitions. All buildings and recreational spaces kindly lead people to nature and this project will work as a gateway to nature.

Student Prize, Eco-Habitat: Greenhouse Dorms and Urban micro climate, Lebanon

Greenhouse Dorms and Urban micro climate blends Helsinki's farmhouse heritage with modern urban elements, incorporating traditional shapes and a central greenhouse courtyard for passive solar heating. It aims to create a cozy microclimate for residents as self-sustaining city model, with residential blocks, aquaponics, gardens, waste management, and more, forming a closed-loop system. It includes amenities like a library and birdwatch tower, offering a holistic blueprint for sustainable cities.

Teacher Prize, Viikki - The Edu-Buoyancity Malaysia

Viikki - The Edu-Buoyancity addresses the growing concern of floods in Finland with 'Urban Buoyancy,' establishing housing for bioscience students above a lake that brings in wildlife to reinvigorate the lands and waters, around an architecture of buoyant foundations. The student community is likened to Buoyant Urban Nomads, with residences designed to promote movement around the community and nature, aiming to provide a unique educational experience and become a model of resilience for Finland.

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