



MEDIA ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE

#FUTURES IMPLIED

Amsterdam
Utrecht

Call for Participation Student Exhibition: MAB 2020 – *Futures Implied*

Amsterdam – Utrecht, The Netherlands, May/June 2021

Call for Participation Student Exhibition

The Media Architecture Biennale 2020 (MAB20) invites students to send in their projects for the MAB Student Exhibition that will be on display during MAB20 on location in Amsterdam in Spring 2021. We especially encourage submissions that address the Biennale's theme of #FuturesImplied and demonstrate the implications of media technologies for urban development and the design of our public spaces. An award will be given out to the best student project, to be presented during the Media Architecture Awards Show in Amsterdam.

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Important dates

- Submissions open: 1 April 2020
- Submissions close: EXTENDED to Fall 2020
- Selections announced: To be announced
- Build up of projects on site: To be announced
- Opening of Exhibition: To be announced
- Exhibition open to the public: To be announced
- Take down of Exhibition: To be announced

How to Apply

Details for application will be published when the call opens April 1st.

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MAB Theme: Futures Implied

Our cities and daily lives are increasingly shaped by the emergence of digital technologies such as digital platforms, geolocated services and online maps, sensor technologies, the Internet of Things, responsive technologies, and surveillance systems. None of these technologies brought into the city are neutral enablers, mere decorative structures, or simple marketplaces connecting demand and supply in fields that vary from energy and transport to commerce and leisure. They are built upon numerous spoken and unspoken assumptions about urban life, each with their own implications for social relations and their effect on the natural ecosystem. It is therefore time for the discipline of media architecture to address the implied futures of new technologies.

We are witnessing an unprecedented and multifaceted transformation that is not only changing the way in which cities are designed and managed, but also the way in which we as humans behave, communicate, and connect with each other and our environment. This emerging spectrum of interactive technologies often appears in the form of top-down smart city solutions aiming to optimize flow, efficiency, and safety. The introduction of these technologies often compromises public values and may interfere with citizens' rights. This might, in the long run, set the ground for techno-deterministic dystopian futures. It is thus time to 'leap' into the future and further explore the possible outcomes, paths, and challenges of the technologization of cities and its implied futures. This is the central challenge we put in the hands of students.

Embracing the spectrums between innovation and critical thinking, and speculation and pragmatism, the student exhibition will spark and materialize conversations on current and future urban paradigms. Projects will range from speculative future visions to concrete solutions aiming to showcase innovative ideas or uncover potential pitfalls of urban transformation. They can be presented in a wide range of formats and tools: from responsive public spaces, urban screens, media facades, media kiosks, and displays, to digitally mediated urban games, media art installations, local community platforms, mapping and navigation tools, and technologies that monitor, construct, design, manage, and structure the use of urban resources.

The proposals are anticipated to relate to one or more of the MAB20 main curatorial themes:

- The Aesthetics and Poetics of Responsive Urban Spaces
- Citizens' Digital Rights in the Era of Platform Ecologies
- Playful & Artistic Civic Engagement
- Restorative Cities
- More-Than-Human Cities

The student exhibition, being an experimental space, encourages a critical as well as a constructive approach to the above themes. The following open questions aim to kick-start a discussion oscillating between utopia and dystopia, speculation and pragmatism.

Possible Approaches

Online platforms are being used to create new channels of communication between citizens and institutions. For example, problem reporting applications allow citizens to monitor and contribute to the maintenance of public infrastructure, while emerging and playful methods of citizen participation collect creative input from citizens generating a common vision for the future of cities. However, engagement is not free of complications. Manipulation, lack of information, and indifference are recurring problems in participatory processes. Could online participation lead to more inclusive engagement in cities, or would it lead to tokenism in disguise, guided by vested interests?

Networks have opened new decentralized and ubiquitous channels of communication. Through such channels, horizontal social structures in cities achieve common goals through peer to peer collaboration and sharing of resources. For example, food cooperatives employ technology to optimize the use of resources and eliminate waste. However, piles of discarded shared bicycles in China as well as the increase in traffic due to shared vehicles in New York City reveal a different side of this trend. Could technology support social structures and circular urban systems, or would it lead to an increase in consumption and a waste of resources?

Technology has been historically used in planning processes. Surveying, aerial photographs and satellite imagery have changed the way in which cities are conceived and resources are managed. For example, system planning and demographic models have helped to make the use of resources more efficient. However, the results are not always in harmony with the environment. Unrestricted urban growth has long term environmental consequences and leads to inefficient use of resources.

Could technology enable a balanced interaction of humans and their environment, or would it lead to uncontrolled development and exploitation of scarce resources?

The properties of emerging interactive technologies have an activating and engaging potential for cities. They can materialize as physical objects in specific locations and be fueled by data or agents from different locations and points in time. As such, they are opening up a new way of thinking about spaces and the interaction between people, ecologies and physical elements. However, a purely technical approach can also lead to sterile spaces, dominated by surveillance devices. Can these technologies activate and recreate public places for communities, or are they more likely to generate passive spaces that come alive only in the digital sphere?

About the Media Architecture Biennale

The Media Architecture Biennale is the world's premier event on media architecture, urban interaction design, and urban informatics, bringing together world-renowned architects, artists and designers, leading thinkers on urban design, key industry and government representatives, and students. The event offers workshops, symposia, a conference with an academic research track and keynotes by leading thinkers in the field. It closes off with a ceremony in which the biennial Media Architecture Awards will be presented to outstanding works of art, architecture and design.

The Media Architecture Biennale is an initiative of the international Media Architecture Institute (Vienna/Sydney). After editions in Vienna, Aarhus, Sydney and Beijing, it is now organized by the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences in collaboration with Utrecht University and a number of local partners from governments, cultural institutions, and the creative industries. Close ties to both research and industry are a central element of these events.

MAB20 will take place in Utrecht and Amsterdam, May/June 2021.

An overview of all current and upcoming calls (Workshops, Papers, Demos & Posters, Late Breaking Work, Student Exhibition, Media Architecture Awards) can be found at our website.

www.mab20.org.

More information & Contact

Students can enter the competition as part of the official representation of their educational program. A list of participating programs will be published at our website when the call opens.

Students who are not affiliated with one of these programs can enter as an independent entry. Educational programs that wish to join the exhibition, please see our Call for Educational Programs.

The Media Architecture Biennale 2020 will provide an indoor exhibition space at the Marineterrein in the city center of Amsterdam. The site used to be a navy yard and is nowadays turned into an urban innovation district accommodating startups, research units, and, among others, the Amsterdam Economic Board and Amsterdam Smart City Council. More information about the Marineterrein can be found on their website: <https://www.marineterrein.nl/en/>. Information about specific Marineterrein buildings and how to travel to and between them can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

The student works can take the shape of (small scale) installations, prototypes, or representations of work through posters or videos. Students or their representatives are expected to be present during the exhibition to discuss their work with exhibition visitors at set times during the conference.

Contributors to the exhibition have to set up their own project space and bring their own technology, adhering to exhibition guidelines that will be shared later on. The Media Architecture Biennale will provide basic infrastructure such as electricity and tables to display material, and can print out posters. The Media Architecture Biennale cannot provide financial support for the participants. A special student fee ticket will be on offer for participants to take part in the various MAB activities.

For more information about the theme, see the curatorial statement on the MAB20 website, <http://www.mab20.org>.

Student Exhibition Chairs

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Olina Terzi, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences - o.terzi@hva.nl

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The Media Architecture Biennale 2020 is organized by the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences in collaboration with Utrecht University.

Executive Committee & General Chair: Martijn de Waal, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences; Frank Suurenbroek, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences; Nanna Verhoeff, Utrecht University; and Michiel de Lange, Utrecht University. Program Chairs: Dave Colangelo, George Brown College Toronto; and Ava Fatah, Bartlett, University College London.

