



# MEDIA ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE

*#FUTURES IMPLIED*

Amsterdam  
Utrecht

## Call for Student Awards: MAB20 – *Futures Implied*

Amsterdam – Utrecht, The Netherlands, 28 June - 2 July, 2021

### Call for Student Awards

The Media Architecture Biennale 2020 (MAB20) invites students to send in their projects for the MAB Student Awards. An internationally acclaimed jury will select nominees and winners in five categories. A selection of projects will also be presented in an on-site exhibition that takes place from June 28th to July 2nd 2021, in Amsterdam and Utrecht. Awards will be given out during a special event during MAB20. We especially encourage submissions that address the Biennale's theme of *Futures Implied* and demonstrate the implications of media technologies for urban development, the design of our public spaces, and the well-being of the ecosystem at large. Entries for the Student Awards should take the form of a poster explaining the project, optionally accompanied by a video explaining or showcasing the project in action.

### Important Dates

Submissions open: 1 October 2020

Submissions close - sharp: 1 April 2021

Selections announced: 15 April 2021

Camera ready version: 15 May 2021

Opening of the exhibition: 28 June 2021

Exhibition open to the public: 28 June - 2 July 2021

Takedown of the exhibition: 2/3 July 2021

## ***MAB Theme #Futures Implied***

Our cities and daily life are increasingly shaped by the emergence of digital technologies such as digital platforms, geolocated services and online maps, sensor technology, Internet of Things, responsive technologies as well as surveillance systems. None of these technologies brought into the city are neutral enablers, mere decorative structures or just simple marketplaces connecting demand and supply in fields as diverse as 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 both social relations as well as their effect on the natural ecosystem. It is time therefore for the discipline of media architecture to address the implied futures of new technologies.

We are thus 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 flows, efficiency, and safety. The introduction of these technologies often compromises public values; they may interfere with citizen's rights or be detrimental to the ecosystem. This might, in the long run, set the ground for techno-deterministic dystopian futures. It is time therefore to 'leap' into the future and further explore the possible outcomes, paths and challenges of the technologization of cities and its implied futures.

Embracing the spectrum between innovation and critical thinking, speculation and pragmatism, the student awards aim to spark and materialize conversations on current and future urban paradigms. Projects can range from speculative future visions to concrete solutions aiming to showcase innovative ideas or uncover potential pitfalls of urban transformation. They can take a wide spectrum of formats and shapes: 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, as well as technologies that monitor, construct, design, manage and structure the use of urban resources.

The student awards, 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.

*Is technology made to support social structures and circular urban systems or leading to an increase in consumption as well as a waste of resources?*

*Does it enable a balanced interaction of humans and their environment or does it lead to uncontrolled development and exploitation of scarce resources?*

*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?*

*Could online participation lead to more inclusive engagement in cities, or would it lead to tokenism in disguise guided by vested interests?*

## **About The Media Architecture Biennale**

The Media Architecture Biennale is the world's premier event on media architecture, urban interaction design, and urban informatics. It brings together architects, artists and designers, leading thinkers on urban design, key industry and government representatives as well as community activists. Together, they explore the design and role of media in the built environment and its implications for urban communities and ecosystems.

MAB20 consists of a series of events, meet-ups and publications taking place on- and offline between March 2019 and July 2021. A final event including an award show, workshops, and a conference with keynotes and an academic track, is scheduled from **July 28th - July 2nd, 2021** to take place in Amsterdam and Utrecht.

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 government, cultural institutions and the creative industries. Close ties to both research as well as industry are a central element of these events.

## **Practical**

The competition is open to students and recent graduates from around the world. Students can enter individually or as a group who have collaborated on the project. The project should be the outcome of a course, internship, graduation project, extracurricular activity or other assignment/initiative at an educational institution, and is produced in 2019, 2020 or 2021. Submission is free of charge.

Submissions consist of a description of the project, a series of images, a poster (free design format, A1 format) explaining the project. A video explaining or documenting the project in action is recommended but not required.

Projects can be submitted in one of five categories that relate to MAB20's main theme of Futures Implied. These categories are:

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

See the [curatorial statement](#) to learn more about these themes.

### **Selection and presentation**

The projects will be evaluated by an international jury and three nominees will be selected for each category. A larger number of projects will be invited for the on-site exhibition. Most of the submitted projects will be featured on a dedicated website.

The exhibition will take place in Amsterdam from June 28th - July 2nd 2021. The exhibition will present the selected posters and videos submitted by the students. MAB will print out the posters of the works in a standard format, and provide video screens for the presentation of project videos.

In addition to these, for selected projects, there is an opportunity to present small scale installations, prototypes or other representations of the work. If they wish to make use of this option, 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, tables to display material.

Ideally, students or their representatives are able to be present during the exhibition to discuss their work with exhibition visitors at set times during the conference. Presence at the conference, however, is not a requirement for participation.

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.

### **How to apply**

To register and submit your projects at [CLICK HERE](#)

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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](http://www.mab20.org)

## More information & Contact

Twitter: [@MABiennale](https://twitter.com/MABiennale).

Facebook: [facebook.com/MABiennale](https://facebook.com/MABiennale)

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/media-architecture-biennale/>

Instagram: <http://instagram.com/mabiennale>

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## Papers Chairs

Juan Carlos Carvajal Bermúdez, Media Architecture Institute - [juan@mediaarchitecture.org](mailto:juan@mediaarchitecture.org)

Olina Terzi, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences - [o.terzi@hva.nl](mailto:o.terzi@hva.nl)

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The Media Architecture Biennale 20 is organized by the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences in collaboration with Utrecht University.

Executive Committee & General Chairs: 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.

[www.mab20.org](http://www.mab20.org).