

THE WORLD ARCH BRIEFING · DAILY BRIEFING

22 October: A Museum Lifted, a Classroom Buried, and Architecture Beyond Growth

A lifted museum gallery, a buried mountain classroom, a biennale themed on shrinkage and a waterfront competition — five stories on architecture's widening brief.

By World Arch Journal · Published 22 October 2026 ·



The Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach. Photo: Tamanoeconomico, via Wikimedia Commons — CC BY-SA 4.0. Photo source ↗
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This edition selects five reports published on 20–21 October 2026 and checked on 22 October. Each story links directly to its original publication, and every photograph is an independently licensed image of

the actual subject — never a news outlet's own picture. "Our reading" is independent commentary, not on-site reporting. Estimated reading time: eight minutes.

DAILY BRIEFING · GLOBAL ARCHITECTURE NEWS

Sources checked 22 October 2026. Source statements and our interpretation are distinguished below. How we work ↗

EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

What these stories mean together

Across these five stories, architecture appears less as a finished object and more as a set of responsibilities: extending a beloved museum without erasing it, carving a classroom into a mountain so children learn from the landscape itself, designing for cities that are shrinking rather than growing, staging international debate in a planned capital whose own legacy is contested, and choosing who designs a city's next neighbourhood.

- Expansion: how can a museum grow its public offer while the original building — and its neighbours — stay legible?
- Shrinkage: which adaptation methods from shrinking cities are genuinely transferable — and which only document decline?
- Representation: who benefits when a biennale or a competition is staged, and how is that influence measured afterwards?
- Extreme sites: what does a classroom buried at 2,173 metres teach about designing with, rather than against, landscape and climate?

This issue draws on five published reports from Dezeen, designboom, ArchDaily and The Architects' Journal. It does not independently assess the museum expansion proposals, the Alpine classroom's construction, the biennale curatorial proposals or the competition designs.

Five stories: a museum expansion, an alpine classroom, shrinkage, Brasilia and Sydney

This edition selects five reports published on 21 October 2026 and checked on 22 October. It pairs two new commissions — Johnston Marklee’s elevated expansion for the Bass Museum in Miami Beach and Officina 82’s underground “marmot den” classroom at 2,173 metres in the Aosta Valley — with Korea’s shrinking-cities theme for the 2027 Venice Architecture Biennale, the Ibero-American biennial’s move to Brasília, and the six-team shortlist for Sydney’s new waterfront suburb. Each story links directly to its original publication, and every photograph is an independently licensed image of the actual subject — never a news outlet’s own picture. “Our reading” is independent commentary, not on-site reporting. Estimated reading time: eight minutes.

oi / Johnston Marklee unveils elevated expansion for the Bass in Miami Beach

Source published: 21 October 2026



The Bass Museum of Art in Miami Beach, Florida. California studio Johnston Marklee has unveiled designs for an expansion into the 22,000-square-foot southwest corner of the museum campus, adding elevated gallery pavilions with courtyard spaces beneath them. Photo: P. Hughes, via Wikimedia Commons — CC BY 4.0. Photo source ↗ · CC BY 4.0

California architecture studio Johnston Marklee has unveiled designs to expand the Bass Museum of Art in Miami Beach into the 22,000-square-foot southwest corner of the museum's campus. The scheme adds indoor and outdoor space: two rectangular pavilion structures set on a thin concrete plane and lifted off the ground, with courtyards passing underneath and connecting to the trees of Collins Park. Primary exhibition space will sit inside the pavilions, which are shown in renderings with white-wall galleries, rectangular windows and a rooftop skylight.

The renderings suggest a deliberately restrained material register — sheer white walls for the upper volumes, more textured surfaces at ground level, perforations along the top of the pavilions and the

courtyard walls, and a backlit oculus that lights the passage beneath the structure at night. One blank pavilion face would double as a projection screen. Elevating the building off the ground is also a resilience move, responding to Miami-Dade County's floodwater and sea-level-rise exposure. The expansion threads a long architectural lineage: the original 1930s Art Deco building by Russell Pancoast, built as a library and opened as the Bass in 1964, and the later porous campus by Arata Isozaki. Founding partner Sharon Johnston called the project transformative; her partner Mark Lee framed it as preserving Pancoast's design while honouring Isozaki's vision of an open campus.

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the strongest gesture here is not the galleries but the ground plane. Lifting the building to meet resiliency guidelines turns a climate constraint into public benefit — covered outdoor space, gardens and open passages where a walled corner of the campus used to be. Miami's cultural institutions are all wrestling with the same problem: how to keep growing in a city where the water keeps rising. Treating the ground floor as civic infrastructure rather than lobby space is an answer worth copying, provided the open courtyards are programmed for locals rather than reserved for private events.

Read source: Dezeen — Johnston Marklee unveils designs for Bass Museum expansion, 21 October 2026 ↗

02 / An underground “marmot den” classroom opens at 2,173 metres in the Alps

Source published: 21 October 2026



The Pavillon intermediate station of the Skyway Monte Bianco cableway at Mont Fréty, Italy — the site of Officina 82's new underground learning installation, Tana delle Marmotte. Photo: Tiia Monto, via Wikimedia Commons — CC BY-SA 3.0. Photo source ↗ · CC BY-SA 3.0

Tana delle Marmotte — the Marmot Den — is a permanent underground learning installation for children and teenagers, set at an altitude of 2,173 metres beside the Pavillon intermediate station of the Skyway Monte Bianco cableway in Italy's Aosta Valley. Designed by the practice Officina 82, led by Fabio Revetria and Lara Sappa, it translates the subterranean habitat of the Alpine marmot into an experiential environment where play and environmental education meet.

The structural shell is formed by three prefabricated Corten steel conduits — an eight-metre central tube with two transverse access pipes of 2,200 and 1,300 millimetres — laid on a bed of fine gravel with no concrete foundations, so the whole structure is fully reversible. The components were manufactured off-site with flanged connections, calibrated by weight for helicopter delivery, and dry-assembled to shrink the construction footprint at altitude. Inside, custom-contoured spruce plywood ribs anchored to

perimeter timber rings form a fluid tunnel volume modelled on the winter hibernation tunnels dug by marmots. The timber lining doubles as ergonomic seating, display cases, graphics mounts and a carved staircase that climbs to a clear acrylic porthole overlooking the terrain, while overhead LED strips trace the curved interior profile.

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this is alpine architecture at its most disciplined. Rather than importing a standard mountain hut and decorating it, the team has let the animal that actually lives at this altitude dictate the plan — and matched that biomorphic interior with a construction method that could vanish without a trace. The gravel-bed, no-foundation approach is the part the profession should study: at a moment when “regenerative” is often just a word on a competition board, building something that can be completely undone is a design decision with real consequences.

Read source: [designboom — corten steel tubes lined with spruce ribs form alpine learning burrow by officina 82](#), 21 October 2026 ↗

03 / Korea's 2027 Venice pavilion confronts “hyper-shrinkage”

Source published: 20 October 2026



The Korean Pavilion in the Giardini, Venice — the venue for Korea's 2027 Architecture Biennale exhibition “Catabolism.” Photo: Jennifer 8. Lee/WikiPortraits, via Wikimedia Commons — CC BY-SA 4.0. Photo source ↗ · CC BY-SA 4.0

Korea's contribution to the 2027 International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia will examine the country's condition of “hyper-shrinkage”: an accelerated stage of population contraction and societal ageing, set within global demographic change. Commissioned by Arts Council Korea and led by curator Janghwan Lee — who runs the studio Urban Operations and co-directs the Mid-Size City Forum — the exhibition, named “Catabolism,” takes its title from the metabolic process by which complex molecules break down into simpler units and release energy. Contributors Bae Yoonkyung, Kyo Suk Lee and Jaehyub Ko will present field research from Korea's small and medium-sized cities.

The curatorial team describes the phenomenon as “urban perforation”: outside the major metropolitan regions, demolition of vacant houses leaves scattered open plots that become parking lots, vegetable gardens or simply remain unused, while existing buildings are subdivided, connected, partially demolished and repaired into new uses. The exhibition argues against both the expansion-focused view of cities and the romanticisation of decline — treating disappearance as movement and possibility, and the architect’s role as one of dismantling, removing and reusing. The contrast is deliberate: while Seoul pursues densification projects such as the SeoulOne masterplan and the transformation of the 1975 Daegyo Apartments, the rest of the country is quietly unbuilding itself.

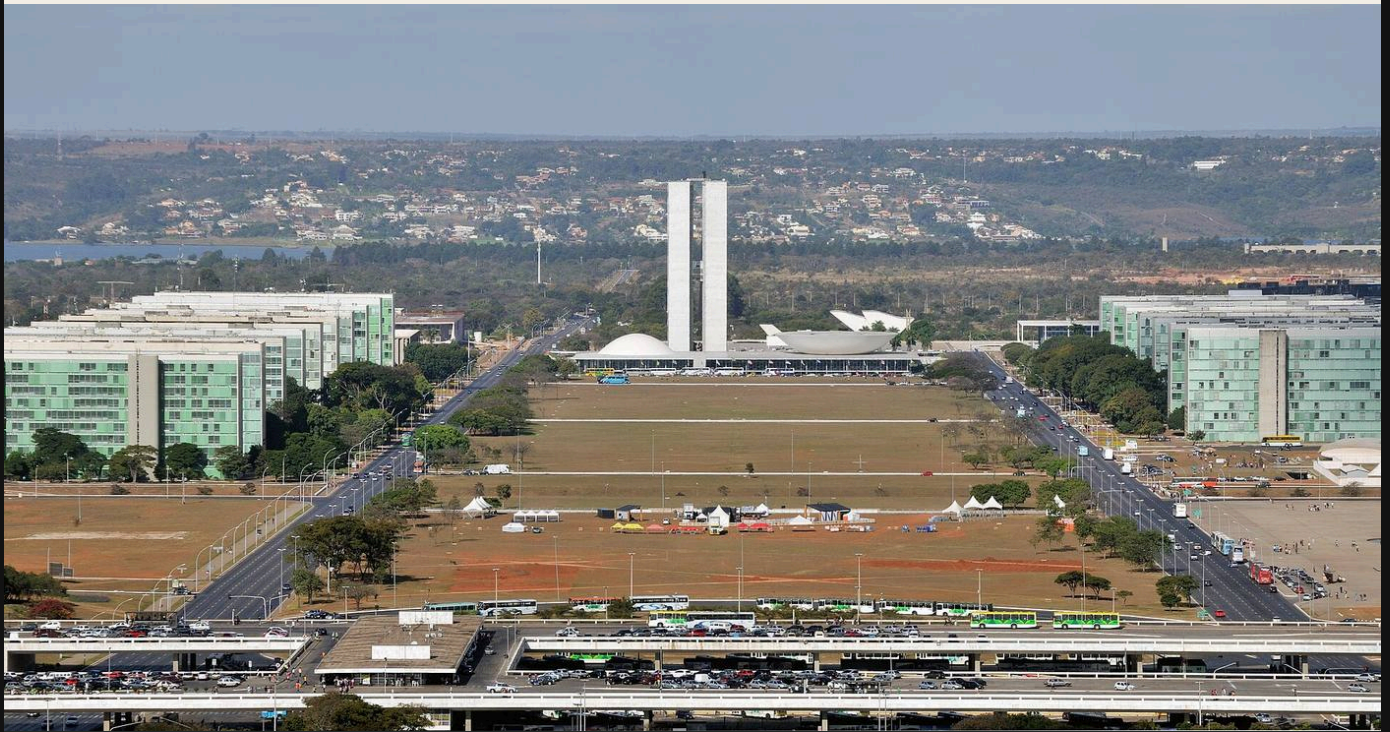
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this is the most consequential curatorial announcement of the cycle, because it gives institutional weight to a question most architecture media still treat as marginal. Vast regions of Europe, Japan and the Americas are already managing shrinkage; the profession’s growth-first reflex leaves them without a playbook. The test for “Catabolism” will be whether Venice sees methods worth borrowing — how to subtract, adapt and share — rather than a beautifully documented elegy.

Read source: ArchDaily — Korean Pavilion to explore urban shrinkage at the 2027 Venice Architecture Biennale, 20 October 2026 ↗

04 / The Ibero-American architecture biennial comes to Brasília

Source published: 21 October 2026



The Eixo Monumental in Brasília, host city of the XIV Ibero-American Biennial of Architecture and Urbanism, 3–6 November 2026. Photo: Cayambe, via Wikimedia Commons — CC BY-SA 3.0. Photo source ↗ · CC BY-SA 3.0

The XIV Bienal Iberoamericana de Arquitectura y Urbanismo (BIAU) will take place in Brasília from 3 to 6 November 2026 under the theme “Cuidar la Vida” (Caring for Life). Promoted by Spain’s Ministry of Housing and Urban Agenda since 1998 and held every two years in a different city across Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula, the biennial recognises and disseminates architecture and urbanism from the region. This edition structures its programme around four themes — water, vegetation, housing and communities — and will combine debates, exhibitions, awards and tours across venues including the Teatro Nacional Cláudio Santoro, SESI Lab, the Universidade de Brasília and Cine Brasília.

The organisers announced 46 finalists in September — 34 in the Projects category and 12 in Publications — selected from 174 proposals. The jury highlighted projects that treat water and vegetation as territorial infrastructures rather than resources to control, and housing proposals that address the street and the neighbourhood rather than the isolated dwelling. Lifetime achievement awards will go to Gonçalo Byrne, Erminia Maricato and Frederick Cooper Llosa, and the curatorial team spans Portugal, Spain and Brazil, including the founders of BLOCO Arquitetos.

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choosing Brasília is itself a curatorial statement. The planned capital — a radical bet on building a new future in 1960 — is exactly the kind of place where a debate about “caring for life” must confront contradictions: monumental ambition alongside uneven living conditions. If the finalists’ emphasis on water and vegetation as infrastructure holds, the edition could connect Latin American practice to a genuinely planetary conversation about climate adaptation.

Read source: ArchDaily — The XIV Ibero-American Biennial comes to Brasília, 21 October 2026 ↗

05 / Six teams shortlisted to design Sydney's new waterfront suburb

Source published: 21 October 2026



The White Bay Power Station precinct on Sydney Harbour — one of the two waterfront sites in the Bays West design competition. Photo: J_Bar, via Wikimedia Commons — CC BY 3.0. Photo source ↗ · CC BY 3.0

The New South Wales Government has named the six finalists in its international design competition for a new waterfront suburb in Sydney. The two-stage competition, led by the Bays West Delivery Authority with the NSW Government Architect, seeks a design-led urban framework for two harbour sites at Glebe Island and the White Bay Power Station Precinct. The shortlisted teams — pairing Australian and international practices — include Allies and Morrison with Bates Smart, Karakusevic Carson Architects with ORG and Breathe Architecture, BVN with Copenhagen-based Cobe, and Herzog & de Meuron with Michel Desvigne Paysagiste. The wider Bays West regeneration aims to deliver up to 8,500 homes with new public realm, transport connections and waterfront access.

Each shortlisted team will be paid AUD 200,000 to develop designs with a technical advisory panel, and the submissions are expected to be publicly exhibited in early 2027. NSW Government Architect Abbie Galvin described the shortlisted teams as bringing distinctive expertise across architecture, urban design and landscape, with experience of major urban renewal projects. The competition brief asks for street layouts, public space, built-form distribution and housing capacity — with explicit attention to regenerative systems, post-car mobility and climate adaptability.

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this is how a serious competition is run — paying finalists properly, exhibiting the entries, and asking for an urban framework rather than a skyline image. The shortlist reads like a survey of who currently shapes waterfront regeneration worldwide. The honest test will come later: whether the winning framework's climate and mobility promises survive the long journey from exhibition boards to 8,500 homes.

Read source: The Architects' Journal — UK teams shortlisted for new Sydney waterfront neighbourhood, 21 October 2026 ↗

The editor's test: responsibility, not just representation

These five items span very different kinds of evidence — a museum expansion, a mountain classroom, a curatorial announcement, a biennial programme and a competition shortlist. None of them is a finished building, and that is precisely the point. Each asks what architects owe to something beyond the project: the public walking through a lifted gallery in Miami Beach, the children learning inside a buried Alpine burrow, the residents of shrinking cities, the communities a biennale claims to serve, and the future neighbours of a Sydney waterfront framework.

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the week's through-line is architecture's widening brief. The profession is being asked to extend cultural buildings without erasing them, to teach inside extreme landscapes, to plan for less rather than more, and to argue its civic value in public. A reader's useful discipline is the same for all five stories: name who is speaking, check what is documented, and ask who answers if the promise fails.

Further reading

- Browse the previous briefing (11 October)
- Data centres and good architecture: what the brief gets wrong
- Solar facades and BIPV: the decisions that matter
- Read our guide to adaptive reuse and what to retain
- Explore climate-responsive facades and cooling design
- Browse every dated architecture briefing

Source notes

Official announcements and source reporting are linked below. Interpretations labelled "Our reading" are World Arch Journal commentary, not claims made by the source organisations. No sponsored placement is included in this edition.

1. Dezeen ↗
2. designboom ↗
3. ArchDaily — Korean Pavilion to explore urban shrinkage at the 2027 Venice Architecture Biennale, 20 October 2026 ↗
4. ArchDaily — The XIV Ibero-American Biennial comes to Brasília, 21 October 2026 ↗
5. The Architects' Journal — UK teams shortlisted for new Sydney waterfront neighbourhood, 21 October 2026 ↗

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