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Selected
Visual Stories
from 2023

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Table of Contents

Introduction: The Stories Inhabiting Our Cities	4
Open House Athens	8
Open House Bilbao	14
Open House Brno	20
Open House Dublin	26
Open House Essen	30
Open House Lisbon	34
Open House Milan	40
Open House Slovenia	46
Open House Stockholm	52
Open House Tallinn	58
Open House Thessaloniki	64
Open House Vilnius	70
Acknowledgments	76

The Stories Inhabiting Our Cities

Martynas Germanavičius,
Lead of Open House Europe

Every year, Open House invites people to discover architecture made with care and attention. Hundreds of stories get told about the way these places were built and the people who live inside them. At first glance, that might look like a simple act of hospitality but when the doors of the architecture that defines our cities open, these stories welcome us all to get to know the built environment we share as citizens better. Moreover, with the help of Open House Europe, architectural stories traverse the continent from Stockholm to Athens, from Vilnius to Lisbon, and, like threads, become woven into a cloth around which we can discuss Europe's shared architectural legacy and its future.

But let's linger a little bit on the potential of a story. It's fascinating to experience how a story can live beyond the last words of its narrator. Once stories have been spoken, it feels as if the sun has filled the room with a light that gently covers all the corners and cracks in the walls, catching even the smallest details of the furniture. However, it's through our imagination and spatial perception that stories re-emerge and live alongside us.

Stories are always visual,
it's just up to us to see them!

Open House Europe offers the
possibility to learn and experi-
ence many of these stories.

This year in particular, we invited visitors throughout Europe not only to attend excursions but also to document and share what they discovered inside. More than a hundred authors from twelve cities responded to the call, their story formats varying from drawings, collages and watercolours to photographs and even videos. In the name of Open House Europe, we are very thankful to all of you for taking the time to share your experiences with us.

To create a link for joining these different local perspectives in a dialogue between cities, each year, Open House Europe orients towards an annual theme. By doing so, we highlight the movement and exchange of ideas within architecture, believing wholeheartedly that despite its local material presence, architecture is also a cultural medium standing at the very core of our shared European identity. Architecture's potential to stimulate discussion is explored in Open House Europe's first annual theme, for which we chose to delve into one of the most pressing questions in the architecture of today: How can we imagine a sustainable building culture in the time of the climate crisis?

(The need for radical change in our building, dwelling and thinking habits is spurred on by the state of emergency. Given the present context, simply doing things the old way is not an option.)

It also feels as if we have to rediscover our relationship to our environments, which has been lost in the unyielding pace of progress and exponential growth. Climate change is also a question of scale: one action is just a drop but millions of them make an ocean. From citizens to politicians, from commissioners to architects and from makers to users—to change the paradigm of this crisis, we have to address it collectively. How can we build our futures together? Maybe doing so actually requires less physical construction and more creation of opportunities for connection between us. How can architecture respond to these needs and focus on the flourishing of societies and their environments? Last, but not least, what role does storytelling have in achieving this transition?

(The visual stories comprising this book invite you to explore how visitors of Open House Europe envisage our shared futures and the principles they could be built upon.)

The first thing that stands out is the importance of our attitude towards the built environment itself. As one of the contributors, Josefin Dorkhom from Stockholm, noticed: despite a building's troubled past, we should aim to evaluate it with open hearts so that we can see the encounters it enables and the different emotions it contains.

Interestingly, a recurring concern in some of the visual stories was architecture's ability to respond to our changing needs. One of the main spatial qualities of architecture is the possibility to trace multiple layers left by its various users and their activities, as depicted in the works by Carla Hella Sofie Riechardt from Tallinn. Following a similar thread, Jelena Kazak took us to abandoned yet architecturally astonishing spaces that only require some playful fiction to envisage their future purpose.

Rafaela Anastasia Nikou from Athens raised similar questions from a different perspective: how can we adapt our environment to present needs without compromising future generations? When we make decisions, are we thinking of those who haven't arrived yet? We can also see that cities are not just habitats for humans, as remarked by Jessica Daly from Dublin. With all these intermingling inhabitants and their needs, our buildings and cities emerge as palimpsests-in-the-making, like the ones captured in the works of Clara Sprung and Wladimir Pulupa from Lisbon.

(Another common notion in many visual stories was that our shared future is grounded in the present.)

Architecture has always aspired to envisage the upcoming, so when we look back at early modernist functionalist architecture, like the one in Brno, we can trace back how our ancestors imagined the future almost a century ago. Thus buildings emerge as more than just functional infrastructures—they also carry the testimonies of past visions of futures.

Tomás Alberto Saraiva da Silva Delgado dos Reis' drawings made in Milan depict architecture's role in enabling contemporary media broadcasts, which significantly influence the way our societies operate. Could architecture itself become a communicative medium for discovering different lifestyles? Maybe we should give it a chance. With this in mind, let the visual stories presented in this publication guide you through the potential of our shared futures and their architectures.

Open House Athens

Open House Athens 2023.
Odeio Athinwn. Photo by
Nikos Simos © Courtesy
of Open House Greece



Open House Athens 2023.
10 am lofts. Photo by
Giannis Kritikos © Courtesy
of Open House Greece



Open House Athens, city's largest architectural celebration, returned between April 1–2. This event showcased over 60 buildings, offering the public insightful architectural tours across central Athens and Kifissia. This year's theme centred on bioclimatic architecture, highlighting its vital role in improving the quality of life for the city's residents.

The festival brought together a rich tapestry of activities and tours, emphasising sustainability and architectural innovation.

Complementing the architectural tours, the festival's programme featured a variety of additional engaging activities and competitions: OPEN WALKS presented thematic explorations of Athens, while the 3D VIRTUAL TOUR used cutting-edge technology to bring architecture to life; competitions like OPEN VOTE and OPEN YOUR MAP offered interactive experiences, and the OPEN YOUR PORTFOLIO contest, underscored the event's commitment to fostering educational opportunities in architectural design.

Balance



"Balance" Video stills, 2023 © Rafaela Anastasia Nikou



As I looked at the volume of buildings around me, at the glass, the reflections and the people walking above the transparent floor, it made me think of the processes that created this environment. Someone bought a plot of land, made a storage building, then someone else bought and renovated this building

and we, as visitors, visited the site to admire its sustainable concept and get inspired to recreate and achieve the major goal of meeting our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same.



A short film shot during Open House Athens 2023



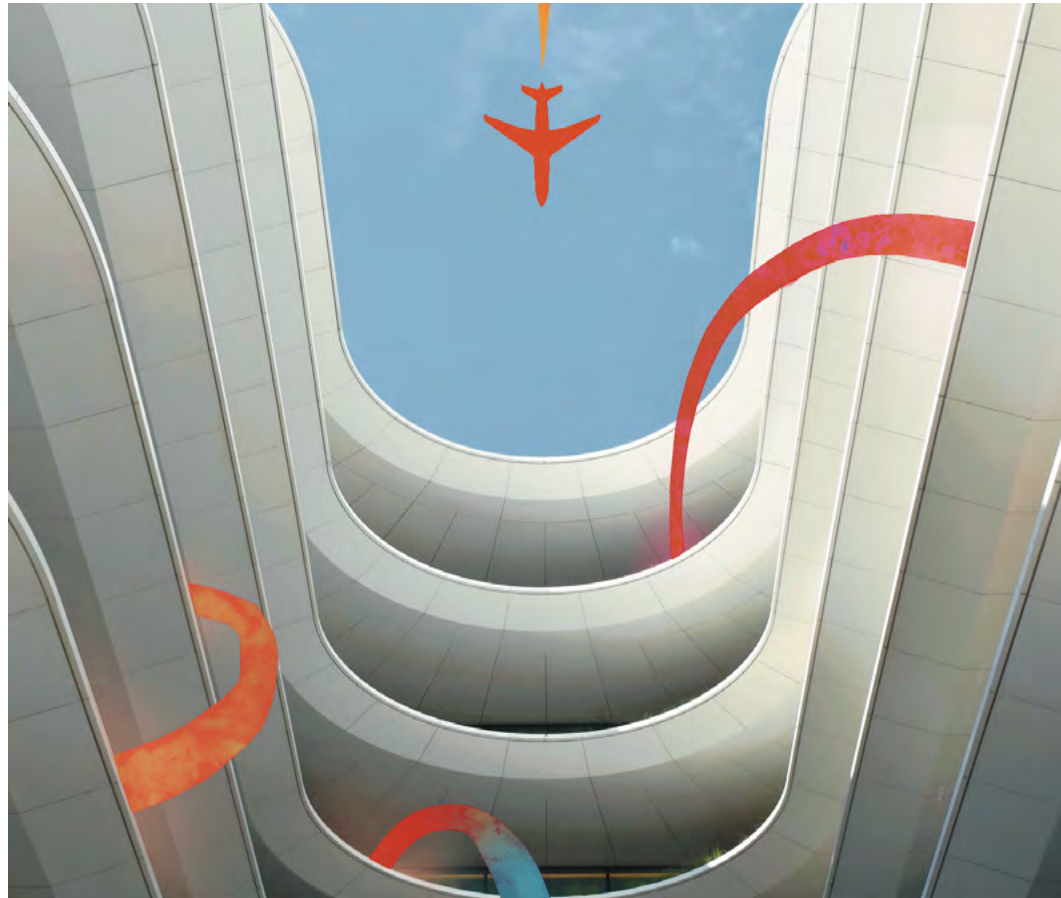
"A short film shot during Open House Athens 2023" Video still, 2023 © Elpida Spyrou



This short film was inspired by observing visitors of Open House Athens 2023 experiencing architecture. In order to build our futures together, it's necessary to understand architecture and how it reflects society.



Bauhaus & the Oblivion



"Bauhaus & the Oblivion", 2023 © Dimitris Panos & Michael Alexakos

Inspired by the Bauhaus movement whose main values of enrichment through art and culture that respond to needs beyond functionality, sustainability in harmony with nature and inclusivity that encourages a dialogue across cultures, disciplines, genders and ages, we present the visual story Bauhaus & the Oblivion.

Each photo depicts a building that opened its doors for the Open House Athens 2023 festival during the first weekend of April, connecting to the other images through the visual bridges of Bauhaus colour theory and techniques.



Open House Bilbao



Open House Bilbao 2023. Photos by Zerikusi
© Courtesy of Asociación Open Urbanity



Open House Bilbao, held between October 7–8, marked its seventh edition with the theme of 'The (im)material city'. This event delved into the concrete and abstract elements which shape urban environments, focusing on sustainable architectural and urban planning practices.

Attracting over 28,000 visitors, the festival stood out as Bilbao's largest Open House event to date, transcending the usual showcase of architecture to engage the public in the discipline's relevance to daily life.

Providing access to 66 spaces in the city, the festival's diverse programme offered insights into green infrastructure, urban resilience, social usage, mobility and road safety, featuring architect-led tours, urban walks, family workshops on sustainable cities and a unique boat tour. With over 600 volunteers, the event exemplified community participation and was supported by the Bilbao City Council, among other partners and collaborators.

This Is Us

THIS IS US



"This Is Us", 2023 © Asier Angulo Medina

The future lies in people, in their ingenuity, creativity and the way they relate to each other. Despite our technological advances and material creations, it is the human mind that drives progress and innovation. People can adapt, learn and evolve, making them the most valuable resource in building a sustainable and

prosperous future. Our ideas, values and aspirations pave the path to a better world and give meaning to the technologies and material creations we build.



THIS NOT

Urban Mandala



"Urban Mandala" Collage, 2023 © Iñigo Goicoechea Alagon

Rediscovering various buildings during the Open House Bilbao 2023 festival inspired me to create a kind of urban mandala in which culture, history, the avant-garde, heritage and trade constitute a new image of Bilbao. It expresses my vision of a friendly and optimistic city, born through collaboration in the pursuit of a common goal.



Omer Zaballa Larumbe

Scales



Photopolymer printed on
Sunji paper (Korean paper),
30 x 43 cm, 2023

Open House Brno

Open House Brno 2023.
Photo by Nová Zbrojovka
© Courtesy of Spolek
Kultura & Management



Open House Brno successfully concluded its annual festival, offering free access to a variety of buildings typically closed to the public. This edition, building on the event's growth since its first full-scale edition in 2018, attracted a significant number of visitors. A notable feature of the 2023 festival was its emphasis on the contributions of female architects to Brno's architecture.

This focus complemented Open House's broader theme of sustainability, addressing not only the role of women in architecture but also encompassing broader ecological considerations like brownfield reanimation.



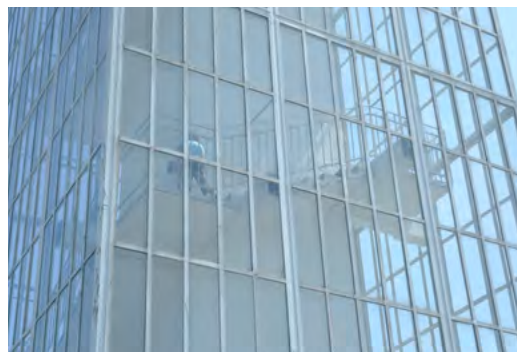
Open House Brno 2023. Ustav Soudního Lekarství. Photo by Ales Mylan © Courtesy of Spolek Kultura & Management

The event showcased an expanded range of 110 buildings and included diverse activities such as workshops for guides, podcasters, YouTubers and young aspiring architects from elementary schools.



Open House Brno 2023. Tělocvična Pod Hradem. Photo by Lisa Seredyuk © Courtesy of Spolek Kultura & Management

Elevating Sustainability: Exploring Brno's Architectural Heritage



"Elevating Sustainability: Exploring Brno's Architectural Heritage" Photos, 2023 © Nicola Sella

Step into the past and future simultaneously with the observation tower of Pavilion G at the Brno Exhibition Centre. Through my lens, this architectural marvel becomes a symbol of Brno's unwavering dedication to sustainable urban development. Rising above the city, not only does it offer breathtaking panoramic views but it also embodies historical ideas of functional architecture that aimed to improve urban

conditions and the lives of people. Brno, as a city of rich architectural heritage, has the unique opportunity to lead by example in championing sustainable urban development, representing functional architecture that continues to inspire Europe to embrace environmentally conscious initiatives and create a future where sustainable architecture thrives.



Mind Opener



"Mind Opener" Video still, 2023 © Michal Beredzas



Inspired by my visits during the Open House Brno 2023 festival to the Theatre at the Exhibition Centre, Pavilion G Tower, JAMU—Faculty of Music and Church of the Blessed Mary Restituta, Mind Opener is a visual poem that combines photos of interior details and verses inspired by them, capturing the thought processes different types of architecture can evoke in the observer.



Brownfields



How do you perceive brownfields?

As places of sadness, dusty memories, and ugly scars on city maps? As something nearing its end?

As places worth revitalizing? Or as places where hope for new life (of people, city and its architecture) slumbers in rubble and weeds?

It is clear that brownfields in our cities won't be around forever.

And it is important that we treat brownfields with consideration.

So what will our cities be like after brownfields?



"Brownfields" Photo collage, 2023 © Pavel Gurka



"Brownfields" Photo collage, 2023 © Pavel Gurka

Open House Dublin

Open House Dublin 2023. Clerys Quarter. Photo by Tra Nguyen © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation



The 2023 edition of Open House Dublin, organised by the Irish Architecture Foundation, marked a significant expansion in its scale and reach. Over nine days, the festival engaged more than 2,000 participants through a diverse array of more than 600 events and tours across over 200 venues. The festival began with a special weekend for young people and families, Open House Junior, fostering early architectural appreciation.



The 2023 theme, 'Dublin, We Are In It Together', highlighted the symbiotic relationship between Dublin's architecture and its inhabitants, acknowledging how each shapes the other.



Open House Dublin 2023. Four Courts. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation

Innovative elements like the Open Table conversation series, journal articles and podcasts enriched the festival's offerings and the collaborative effort of all four of Dublin's local authorities enabled a comprehensive programme encompassing tours, talks, exhibitions, films and more.

13a Portobello House



13a Portobello House by Gró. Works in Dublin's city centre is a small residence cleverly nestled within the backdrop of the Portobello suburb's Victorian surroundings. As a two-bedroom dwelling ingeniously built on a tightly confined plot, exempt from the need for parking facilities and traditional outdoor spaces typically found in apartments, it offers a fresh perspective on urban living.

The dwelling's layout places the primary living area on the first floor to take advantage of natural light from the roof, as the placement of windows had to be carefully considered to address privacy concerns. The design and choice of materials achieve a harmonious blend, striking a balance between sturdy functionality and sustainability.



"13a Portobello House" Photos, 2023 © Thomas Walorski

Met Éireann



This watercolour painting is based on a photograph I took while volunteering at Met Éireann for Open House Dublin 2023. I chose this building for the theme 'Building Futures Together', as it is here, at the meteorological centre, that climate change is being monitored.

The building's architect, Liam McCormick, was conscious of saving energy. Inspired by the way fungus grows in terraces to receive more light, he designed the Met Éireann building as a pyramid so that it would not cast shadow on neighbouring buildings. I think this is key for building a future together — we need to be aware of a building's impact on its surroundings and on other people.



"Met Éireann" Watercolour painting, 2023 © Jessica Daly

Open House Essen



Open House Essen 2023. Photos by Ravi Sejk © Courtesy of Forum Kunst und Architektur

Open House Essen, held between October 7–8, offered the public a unique opportunity to engage with the city's architecture and cultural heritage. The festival's third edition included free tours, guided visits and diverse activities, all aimed at fostering a deeper appreciation for the built environment and its profound influence on daily life.

With a focus on redevelopment, the festival highlighted sustainably redeveloped spaces, not just in Essen but across the North Rhine-Westphalia region, through an innovative VR exhibition.

Another standout feature was the gathering at a local mosque, where attendees could enjoy traditional food and tea, followed by a tour, underlining the festival's commitment to celebrating diverse cultural perspectives by bringing together people from various backgrounds to emphasise the city's pluralistic approach to architecture and community.

Reuse, Rethink & Tradition



"Reuse, Rethink & Tradition" Photos, 2023 © Felix Hemmers

The Heilig Geist (Holy Spirit) Church in Essen-Katernberg has been out of use for several years already, leaving the spaces and details of its modern architecture open to reinterpretation for different social functions.



Industransition



"Industransition", 2023 © Juanjo Marcos

Industrial spaces throughout the city of Essen have been reimagined and seamlessly integrated into everyday life, making room for pedestrian areas, cycle lanes, water features and greenery.



Open House Lisbon



Open House Lisboa 2023. Casa Imensas Janelas. Photo by Hugo David © Courtesy of Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa

Open House Lisbon, focusing on the life cycle of buildings—birth, life, decline and rebirth—delves into the city's architectural ecosystem and contributed to its urban vitality through a multifaceted approach. Emphasis the coexistence of voids, construction, buildings, and ruins, the festival celebrated transformations, repairs and the addition of new layers over time.

OPEN HOUSE
LISBOA



This approach highlighted the importance of Lisbon's heritage and sustainable practices tailored to the local context.



Open House Lisboa 2023. Palacio do Grilo. Photo by Hugo David © Courtesy of Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa

The event attracted nearly 30,000 visitors and featured five outdoor walks, soundwalks and other multi-sensory activities. Involving 92 experts and 240 volunteers, Open House Lisbon provided a rare glimpse into Lisbon's diverse spaces, including palaces, lofts, workshops, military facilities and synagogues.

(Re)Inhabiting the Collective Space: Vila Romão da Silva's (Re)Construction Site



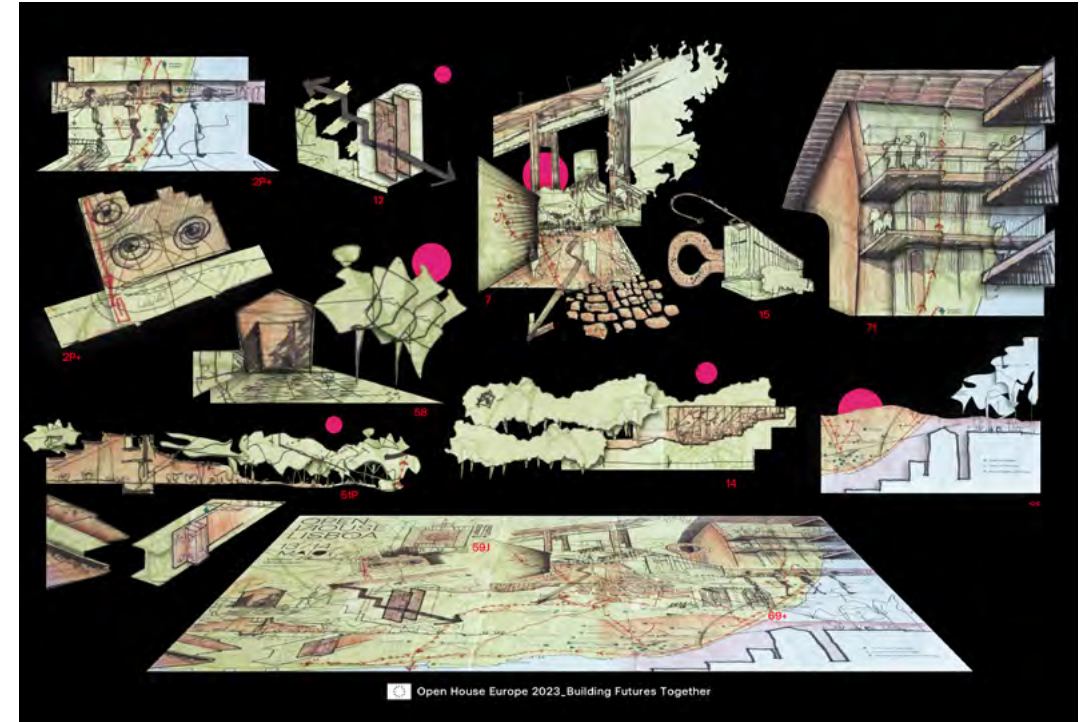
"(Re)Inhabiting the Collective Space: Vila Romão da Silva's (Re)Construction Site" Photos, 2023 © Clara Sprung

Silence as a result of abandonment and oblivion must be fought. We must think, design and build with a focus on strengthening human relations within today's fragmented society. Building a cohesive and sustainable city of the future requires design solutions with a focus on collectivity, overcoming social inequalities imprinted in the urban fabric, respecting both the memory

and history of places and innovating by using technology in an intelligent manner (i.e. in favour of humanity and never in an abusive fashion). This sequence of images portrays the reconstruction work of a typical old villa in Lisbon, grappling with its modernisation in the eternal exercise of a city-in-the-making. Will it be able to reinhabit the collective space sustainably?



Lisbon as a user manual



"Lisbon as a user manual", 2023 © Wladimir Pulupa

Building a collective identity in such a complex ecosystem as Lisbon is only possible by changing the current role of the built and unbuilt environment, renouncing the objective of unlimited population growth, and attending to the social relations of production and distribution of land, work, income, housing and culture. Returning to the local context means challenging the logic of growth in the

search for harmony between humans and the environment as a new model of relations.

The image expresses this collective identity through an extensive superimposition of plans and projects, juxtapositions and partial superimpositions for perspectival and psychogeographic purposes.



Sustainable geometry



"Sustainable geometry" Photos, 2023 © Ana Gil

This series of images expresses what I saw during my visits to the Open House Lisbon 2023 festival. The spaces within the photos reflect the concerns of sustainability within the realm of modern construction. I simply allowed the geometry to speak for itself.



Open House Milan

Open House Milan 2023.
Bicocca 336. Photo by
Luca Rotondo © Courtesy
of Open House Milano



For the eighth edition of Open House Milan, guests received the opportunity to experience and analyse the city's historic architecture and its relation to modern-day Milan. Within the theme of sustainability, the festival highlighted paths towards the future, circularity, redevelopment and technology, organising the festival with the prospect of exploring urban humanism and the relation between architecture, the urban environment and people.

The programme was developed with specific thematic routes, including circuits dedicated to landscape architecture (focusing on biodiversity and climate change), co-working spaces, social housing and places of creation such as architectural offices.



Open House Milan
2023. Ex Macello.
Photos by Luca
Rotondo ©
Courtesy of Open
House Milano

The Cage of the Blackbirds— Rustici House

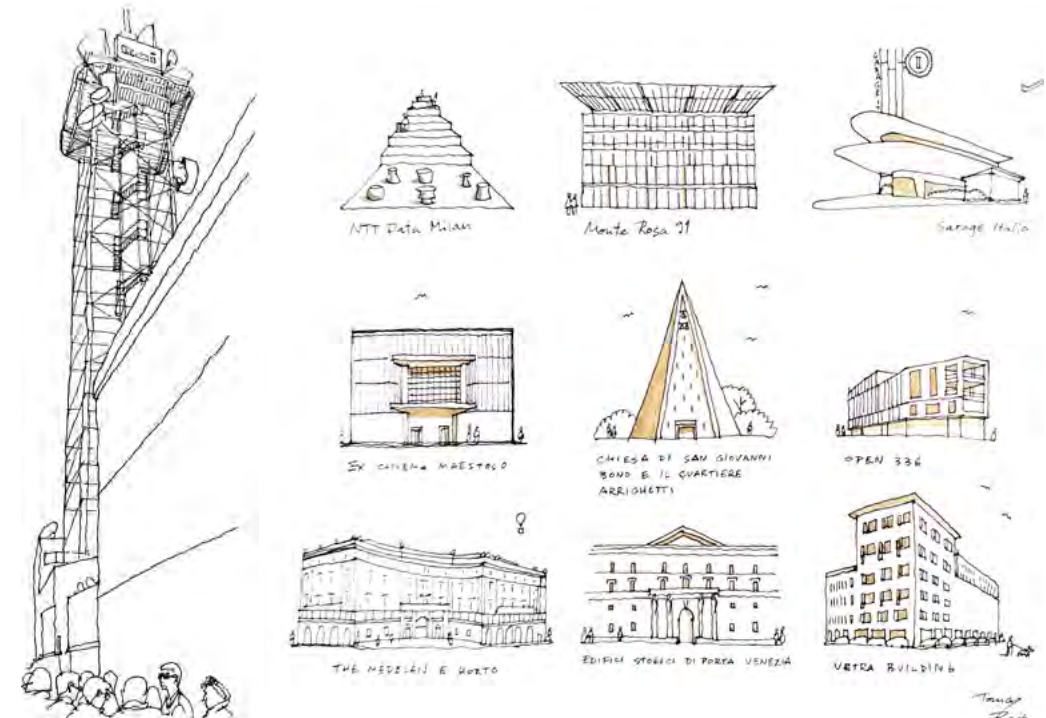


"The Cage of the Blackbirds— Rustici House", 2023 © Giancarlo Poli

Casa Rustici was ironically called the blackbird's cage. Inspired by The Beatles' song 'Blackbird', I imagined a pair of blackbirds flying away from a large, roofless cage—the courtyard of the building. It is a great example of rationalist architecture that is not hostile to the environment.



Transmission Lines



"Transmission Lines" Drawings, 2023 © Tomás Alberto Saraiva da Silva Delgado dos Reis

Hand-drawn lines, or 'thinking with hands' as Alberto Campo Baeza puts it, convey a strong sense of place, adding a distinctly human touch through personal gestures. These drawings depict various Milanese buildings, namely Gio Ponti's Rai Studio Building and its broadcasting tower,

highlighting the means of communication modern societies rely on. Creating a sustainable future is impossible without the media spreading information about good practices and encouraging people to adopt different lifestyles.



New life for buildings



"New life for buildings", 2023 © Giorgia Ionita

Nowadays, the reuse of spaces is becoming increasingly important. The architecture of the past begins to shine once again thanks to the will of the people that connect to it. In the images, interiors and exteriors complement each other in perfect harmony.



Open House Slovenia

Open House Slovenia 2023.
Photos by Megi Pilko
© Courtesy of Afront zavod
za prostorsko inovativnost



Open House Slovenia (OHS), held between April 14–16, operated under the theme of 'Commitments of Architecture'. The festival encouraged a more inclusive discussion about architecture, strengthening its role as a carrier of positive change in solving important social and environmental challenges.



Open House Slovenia
2023. Photos by
Špela Koščak ©
Courtesy of Afront
zavod za prostorsko
inovativnost

Explorations of wooden constructions and quality renovations in residential and cultural heritage projects also touched on the theme of sustainability.

Vlatka Ljubanović, architect and member of the OHS 2023 Expert Jury, said it was a festival of creativity. Although rational thinking has been responsible for the transmission of knowledge throughout human history, creativity and imagination are the driving forces behind innovation and so, it is important for the public to feel the power of creativity in architecture.

Alberto Rodriguez Arias

BFT—OH Slovenia by thehomelessarchitect



"BFT—OH Slovenia by thehomelessarchitect" Photos, 2023 © Alberto Rodriguez Arias

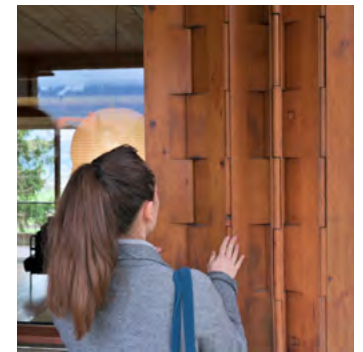
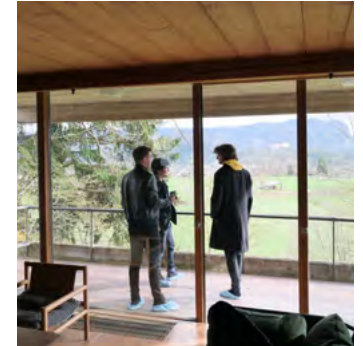
The visual story focuses on the renovation of existing buildings. The importance of finding new uses for them to make them socially sustainable exemplifies the feeling of togetherness that was present during the Open House Slovenia 2023 event, both in terms of the high levels of interest and demand from the

public to experience architecture and in their contributions to the buildings' preservation. We build our future together.



Miran Kambič

OHS, Holiday Home by Jugovec



"OHS, Holiday Home by Jugovec" Video stills, 2023 © Miran Kambič



Architecture Then and Now



"Architecture Then and Now" Photos, 2023 © Mateja Jordović Potočnik



Durability is the ability to last.



Open House Stockholm

Open House Stockholm 2023.
Fisksätra VR Skola. Photo by
Ivana Komatina © Courtesy of
Open House Stockholm



The eighth edition of Open House Stockholm welcomed visitors for a three-day celebration of architecture, art and urban development. The event offered a unique chance for the public to engage with the city in a novel manner, featuring 67 sites throughout the Greater Stockholm area.

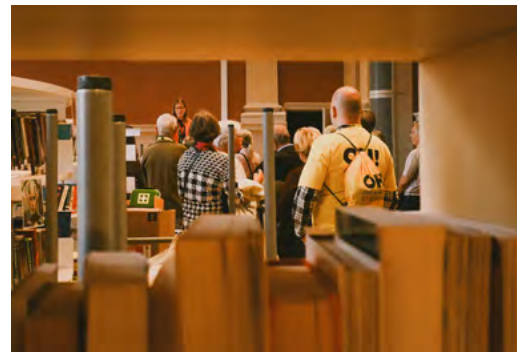
Along the themes of sustainability, architectural evolution, urban growth, infrastructure and urban life, this year's festival showcased both new and reimagined elements of Stockholm's urban landscape, delving into the city's ongoing transformations, technological advancements and climate adaptation strategies.



Open House
Stockholm 2023.
Kapsylen. Photo by
Andre Eriksson ©
Courtesy of Open
House Stockholm

Each site provided fresh insights,
enlightening moments and a deeper
appreciation of architecture, art
and the surroundings.

The future is supposed to be young!



"The future is supposed to be young!" Photos, 2023 © Megi Pilko

My visual story is a parable about the importance of adapting older, unsustainable architectural practices in a way that allows us to look actively at the past. Only then, we can try to learn from it and work to preserve the environment for future generations.

Trying to build a future without changing anything from the past will not make the world more sustainable.



Stockholm in my heart—the heart of Stockholm



"Stockholm in my heart—the heart of Stockholm" Photo, 2023 © Josefin Dorkhom

Stockholm will always be my hometown. This place, the heart of Stockholm, has been criticised for decades and hasn't always been a safe and beautiful place. In the centre of the city lie opportunities for meetings, the opportunities to watch and be seen, to listen and be heard, to pass by and stay.

The scale is simultaneously large and small, and the place is both finished and in a state of constant change. It seethes with life and emotion. This is where my heart lives.



Preparing for the future



"Preparing for the future" Collage, 2023 © Jens Aronsson



In every moment of innovation and creation exists a consideration about the effect on the future, regardless of the time of its creation. When creating the future today, we can learn a lot from how the future was created earlier to form an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable future.



Open House Tallinn

Open House Tallinn 2023.
Linnahall. Photo by Evert
Palmets © Courtesy of Eesti
Arhitektuurikeskus MTÜ



Open House Tallinn
2023. Krullii kvartal.
Photo by Evert Palmets
© Courtesy of Eesti
Arhitektuurikeskus MTÜ



OPEN HOUSE
TALLINN

In 2023, with over 360 tours conducted in Estonian, Russian and English, Open House Tallinn made architecture accessible to a wide audience. Returning for its fifth edition, the festival focused on educational spaces, showcasing 39 diverse locations and led by a dedicated team of 155 volunteers from different age groups and nationalities.

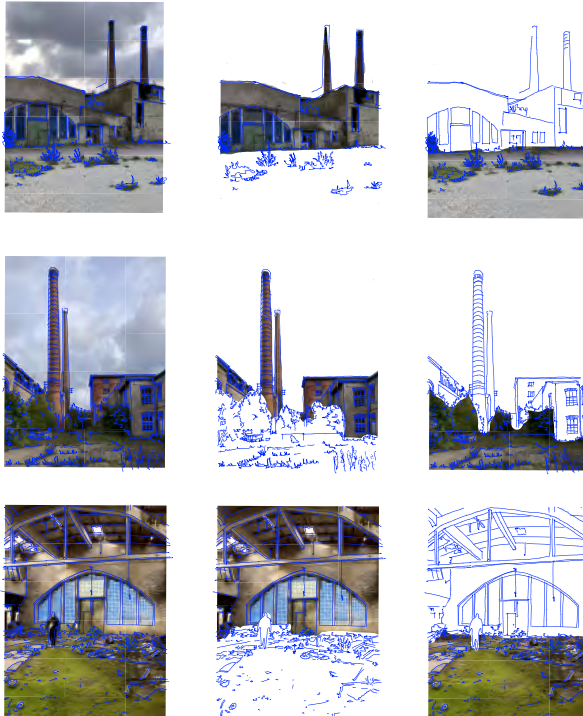
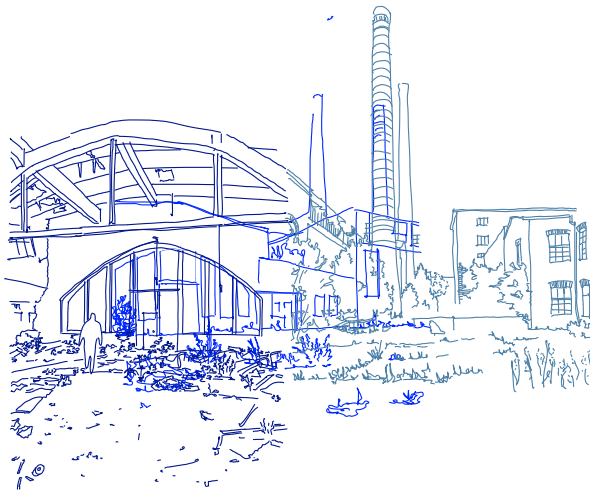
A significant portion of the programme featured school buildings of various styles and eras, including two major gymnasiums that had opened just a month before the festival.



Open House Tallinn
2023. Vene Teater.
Photo by Marina Karaseva
© Courtesy of Eesti
Arhitektuurikeskus MTÜ

This selection emphasised education as the foundation for future generations and highlighted the importance of meaningful and functional learning environments as spaces for inspiration and connection.

Habitat Lutheri



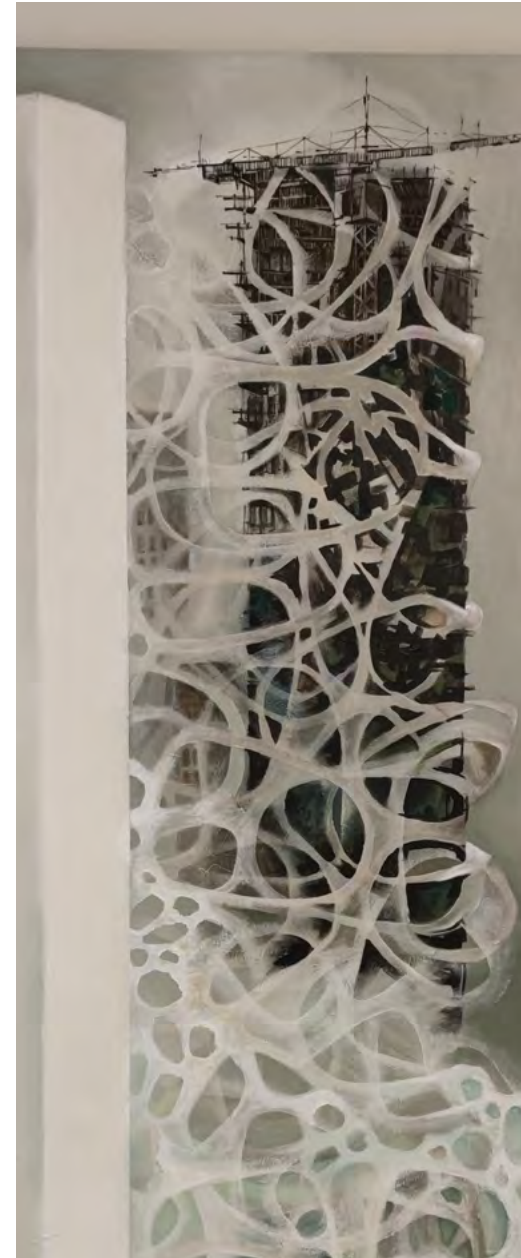
"Habitat Lutheri", 2023 © Carla Hella Sofie Riechardt

Habitat Lutheri highlights different fragments of an area and how each fragment contributes to a unified space whose unique character is made up of both natural processes and human interventions. The Lutheri Kvartal (Luther Quarter) in Tallinn is a former industrial area due to be transformed and start a new chapter of its life. During the Tallinn Open House 2023 festival, we walked through the area and got our first insights and some background information. There was something special about how different aspects came together to form the Habitat Lutheri, explored more closely in my visual story through atmospheric vignettes, sketches and collages.

A part of preparing for the future is learning to perceive places and their qualities with all our senses—hearing, smelling and feeling them. In addition, questions of the past play a major role: what happened at these places? What functions did they have? How were they changed and adapted to different needs?



Architectural Station



"Architectural Station", 2023 © Anu Koppel

Just like we choose the right bus at the bus station, there are times when we stand at the Architectural Station and choose where to live, where to work and so on. Today, it seems that we 'travel' with architecture as quickly as we do with a bus. Architecture must not become like fast fashion. My Tallinn has changed a lot over the years.

The city has spread and expanded at the expense of nature. Instead, Tallinn should be densified within its existing borders. But what is the best way to do this? With whom do we have to build the future? The only way forward is in collaboration with nature, the provider of almost all of our resources. We must listen and acknowledge it, bringing it back into our lives. As writer Tõnu Õnnepalu asked in his book 'Flandria Päevik'—who said we have to live better and better? Rather, we should ask: what do we really need?



Recurrence



"Recurrence", 2023 © Jelena Kazak

Recurrence (noun): a new occurrence of something that happened or appeared before; a repeated occurrence. Sustainability involves conscious and forward-thinking decisions and actions. Often, to come up with something new, we turn to the past for inspiration, find an idea we like, interpret it in a new

way and by adding further nuances or modifications, we get something unique. The idea is repeated but slightly differently, as a recurrence. A sustainable future involves new ideas, inspiration, reinvention and repetition. I took all the presented photos while volunteering for Open House Tallinn on their tours

of Linnahall (Tallinn City Hall). I liked the empty interiors of the abandoned building, although it still seemed like they could be used somehow, in whichever peculiar way. Afterwards, I started imagining dreamy solutions for the spaces, adding small details and creating new collages with embedded stories.



Open House Thessaloniki

Open House Thessaloniki
2023. Western Walls. Photo
by Dimitra Argyropoulou
© Courtesy of Open House
Greece



Open House Thessaloniki
2023. Made in Thessaloniki.
Photo by John Simitopoulos
© Courtesy of Open House
Greece



Open House Thessaloniki
2023. Western Walls. Photo
by Dimitra Argyropoulou
© Courtesy of Open House
Greece

This event, appealing to both professional architects and casual enthusiasts, provided a unique chance to explore and understand the city's architectural landscape.

Open House Thessaloniki returned for its 11th year between November 25–26, continuing its tradition of celebrating architecture. The annual two-day festival opened public and private buildings to visitors, showcasing the city's rich architectural heritage, from historical to modern buildings.

The 2023 edition, under the motto 'Building Futures Together', emphasised the significance of bioclimatic architecture in improving residents' quality of life. The festival included tours of 70 buildings guided by 500 volunteers, offering visitors the opportunity to delve into the architectural design, history, construction and usage of each building.

Elisavet Anesti

A brief story about clay



"A brief story about clay", 2023 © Elisavet Anesti



While participating in MADE in Thessaloniki, a parallel event of Open House Thessaloniki, I had the opportunity to meet many ceramists from various art studios. Used around the world since ancient times, clay is one of the most widespread and sustainable construction materials.

I was impressed by its properties and interested in creating a short visual history about this simple yet unique natural material.



Anastasia Dossa

SPOLIA



"SPOLIA", 2023 © Anastasia Dossa

A spolia, Latin for 'spoils', is a stone taken from an old structure and repurposed for new construction or decorative purposes. As the idea of sustainability is often linked to innovation and state-of-the-art technology, the concept of spolia suggests we view the past as an inseparable part of our future. Instead of erasing the past to make space for a 'better' future, we can integrate what is already present and adapt it to our needs.

Cities are a great example of how demolishing and rebuilding everything would be much less sustainable than transforming and adapting existing infrastructure to match our emerging needs. Just like spolia, we can preserve the parts of our past that can be of value and create a stronger foundation for the years to come, blending together artefacts of yesterday with visions of tomorrow.



A glimpse of MADE in Thessaloniki



"A glimpse of MADE in Thessaloniki" Video stills, 2023 © Athanasios Xenitidis



During the weekend that Open House Thessaloniki hosted its MADE in Thessaloniki parallel event, I had the chance to visit some of the participating businesses. Each one, in its own unique way, has found a method to make items such as ceramics and clothes using sustainable practices to minimise any waste from

their production. Most of the businesses are small shops where a few people combine their passion for the same thing and make it happen. None of them would probably be open today if they hadn't worked together and so, I took the opportunity to give you a glimpse of the amazing things they do.



Open House Vilnius



Open House Vilnius 2023. Cooperative Union of Lithuania. Photo by Inga Lazarenko © Courtesy of Architektūros fondas

The ninth edition of Open House Vilnius captivated both residents and visitors by opening up 60 typically inaccessible buildings. Centred around the theme of 'Comfort of Being', the festival invited participants to contemplate the essence of comfortable architecture.

This year's line-up included nine new sites, ranging from educational institutions and ministerial buildings showcasing monumental architecture, to religious sites like the Vilnius Choral Synagogue and St. Joseph's Seminary.

OPEN HOUSE
VILNIUS

(The event attracted over 39,000 visitors, setting a new attendance record.)



Open House Vilnius 2023. Palace of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. Photo by Vytautas Luchtanas © Courtesy of Architektūros fondas



Open House Vilnius 2023. Lithuanian National Television and Radio building. Photo by Inga Lazarenko © Courtesy of Architektūros fondas

A dedicated team of 450 volunteers, including international volunteers, was crucial to the event's success. This year, the festival expanded its linguistic reach, offering tours in English and Ukrainian. This addition not only facilitated cultural integration but also provided support to the local Ukrainian community affected by the war.

Resurrected for a second life



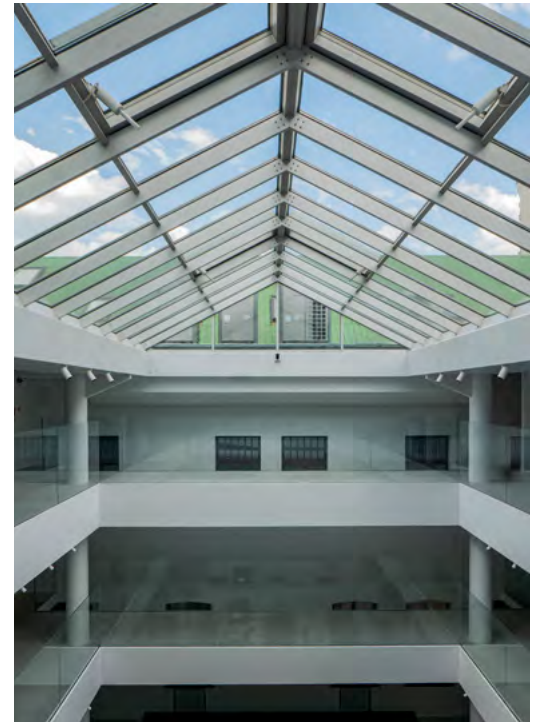
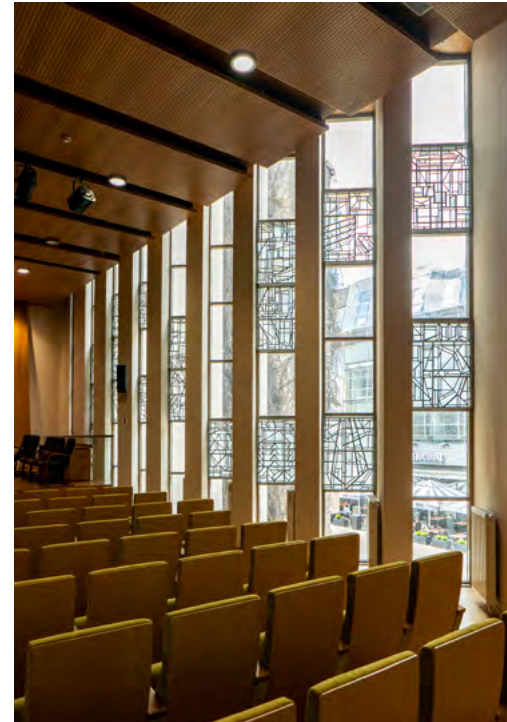
"Resurrected for a second life" Photos, 2023 © Arnas Šarkūnas

Let's not be in a hurry to throw things away and demolish walls. Instead, let's try to make sense of various objects—many would say already useless or out of fashion—and discover the history within them. After all, long-forgotten fashion trends are making a comeback, and seemingly ancient objects are finding

their place in our lives again. Open House encourages us to see these old objects with fresh eyes, such as the old lamp or pipe that just so happens to fit into a new build. Simultaneously, that same old piece of furniture fits perfectly in a half-century-old office as well.



Open House Vilnius 2023



"Open House Vilnius 2023" Video stills, 2023 © Karolis Zeltinis

A film highlighting the preservation of cultural heritage and new sustainable, energy-efficient buildings.



Partner festivals



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Thank You!

To all the participants who
contributed to this year's Visual
Stories of Open House Europe.

Exhibition host



**Trienal de Arquitectura
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Financed by



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