

JKMM Architects wins global competition to design Finland's new Museum of Architecture and Design in Helsinki

- JKMM Architects selected to design landmark waterfront building at the conclusion of an international, open and anonymous competition launched in April 2024.
- Second prize was awarded to Cossement Cardoso. Third prize was awarded to Lopes Brenna. Purchase options were awarded to a collective of Finnish architects, and Atelier Orda.
- The construction project to build a new 10,050 sq m museum building on the waterfront in Helsinki's historic South Harbor is supported by financial contributions from the Finnish government and the City of Helsinki. The museum has set a target to open to the public in late 2030.
- Finland's new Museum of Architecture and Design brings together a collection of over 900,000 artefacts within an international cultural institution with the central mission of "democratising the tools of design".
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Helsinki, 11:00 EEST (UTC+3), 11 September 2025

The 18 month-long process of selecting an architect to design Finland's new Museum of Architecture and Design in Helsinki has completed, with the announcement that JKMM Architects, a Helsinki-based architecture practice, has won the international, open and anonymous design competition for the project. JKMM Architects' design, known during the competition as Kumma, will create a landmark waterfront museum that will showcase Finland's unique culture of architecture and design on a global stage.

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The international design competition received 624 proposals from around the world. Architects from all countries that are party to the WTO's Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) were eligible to participate, and most of them were represented. About a fifth of the proposals came from Finland. After Finland, the most represented countries were Italy, the USA, France and the UK.

The winner was announced by Mikko Aho, Chair of the Jury, at a prizegiving ceremony held at the Helsinki City Hall on 11 September. The prizegiving was attended by Mayor of Helsinki Daniel Sazonov, Permanent Secretary of Finland's Ministry of Education and Culture Heidi Backman, CEO of the Foundation for the Finnish Museum of Architecture and Design Kaarina Gould and the Director of the new Museum, Pilvi Kalhama, and representatives from each of the five finalist design teams.

JKMM Architects' winning design was awarded €60,000 in prize money. A second prize of €35,000 was awarded to the City, Sea and Sky entry by Cossement Cardoso, an architecture office founded by Charles Cossement and Gil Cardoso, based in Portugal and Belgium. Third prize and €25,000 was awarded to Lopes Brenna, an architectural practice based in Chiasso, Switzerland, for its entry, Moby.

The jury awarded fourth prize and €20,000 to the Tyrsky design completed by a collective of Finnish architects. A purchase option of €10,000 was made to secure the TAU design by the French practice, Atelier Orda.

JKMM Architects' winning team was led by the practice's founding partner and principal designer Samuli Miettinen and includes Akukon (acoustic and AV design), Granlund (HVAC Engineering, Energy Calculation), MIR (visualisation), Pentagon Design (service design), and Ramboll Finland (structural design, carbon footprint calculation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, electrical and lighting, geo design), as collaborators.

JKMM Architects is one of Finland's leading architecture practices, responsible for internationally celebrated projects including the Amos Rex art museum in Helsinki, Tammela Stadium in Tampere, University of the Arts Helsinki, Dance House Helsinki and Finland's contribution to Expo 2020 Dubai. The practice is currently working on an Annexe to the National Museum of Finland, also in Helsinki, due to open in 2027, and an annexe to the Lillehammer Art Museum in Norway. JKMM Architects was founded by Asmo Jaaksi, Teemu Kurkela, Samuli Miettinen and Juha Mäki-Jyllilä in 1998. The practice has twice been a recipient of the Finlandia Prize, the highest annual award for Architecture in Finland.

A new museum in Helsinki's South Harbor planned for 2030

The location for Finland's new Museum of Architecture and Design is a vacant former dockside site in the South Harbour, a historic waterfront area in central Helsinki, close to landmarks including the City's Market Square, Alvar Aalto's famous 'Sugar Cube', the Orthodox and Lutheran Cathedrals, and the popular Esplanade Park. The competition site and the area around it is a designated buffer zone of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of The Suomenlinna Sea Fortress.

JKMM Architects' winning entry answers the competition brief by proposing a new 10,050 sq m museum building that will meet the urban opportunity of this prominent site and deliver on the Museum's goal of being a flexible, inclusive, and welcoming space for Helsinki's residents and visitors. The competition jury commended the design for its characteristic of sitting harmoniously within the surrounding urban fabric, while still standing out as an original and clearly identifiable public building.

Finland's new Museum of Architecture and Design in Helsinki will draw on the rich traditions and contemporary strength of design and architecture in Finland and the Nordic region. It will offer engaging programs that reveal the relevance and potential of design in a changing world. The new building will house exhibitions drawn from The museum's collection of over 900,000 artefacts, including objects, correspondence, models and photographs documenting the work of internationally-famed practitioners such as Aino and Alvar Aalto, Eero Aarnio, Maija Isola, Eliel and Eero Saarinen, Paavo Tynell, and design brands such as Marimekko, Nokia and Fiskars.

The new building will also host high-profile touring exhibitions and offer attractive public services, from a design library to an open-access summer terrace.

Sustainability — ecological, social, and cultural — is a key principle guiding both the design and construction of the new museum. Helsinki has committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030, and the museum project actively supports this goal across its operations. The competition brief asked participants to deliver a building that would serve as a benchmark for climate resilience and accessible, inclusive design. In addition, each competition entry was subjected to a People Flow Analysis by KONE Finland.

Construction of the project is scheduled to commence in 2027, and the museum is planned to open in 2030.

Democratising the tools of design

The central mission of the new museum will be “democratising the tools of design”, drawing on the history and present of Finnish and Nordic architecture and design to guide a programme of public activities that will look at how design thinking and skills are relevant to the challenges we face as individuals and societies in a rapidly changing world.

Beyond architecture and cityscape, the jury has considered perspectives related to urban culture, design education, and how to better serve groups with special needs. To better cultivate the usability of the buildings, a series of workshops was arranged between the design teams and representatives of various user groups during the competition phase. The workshops were facilitated by Tommi Laitio, a Los Angeles based expert on public innovation. At each stage of the competition, proposals were placed on public display, with comments shared on the City of Helsinki’s Kerrokantasi (Voice your opinion) online platform. A summary of the public input was shared with the competition jury as part of the selection process.

Kaarina Gould, CEO of the Foundation for the Finnish Museum of Architecture and Design, said:

“This announcement is a pivotal moment for Finland’s new Museum of Architecture and Design, marking the conclusion of years of work to fundraise and lay the groundwork for a new museum, and the beginning of work to develop a new landmark on a hugely significant site for Helsinki. We also invite the museum’s audience to join in this work by participating in our workshops and exhibitions.

“In addition to architectural and cityscape goals, the competition brief asked teams to consider the future needs of museum operations, use environmentally friendly construction, and design to ensure that the museum would bring joy and inspiration to its users. The new museum building has to enable our social mission: shaping our common future through architecture and design. In Kumma, the jury saw potential for achieving all of these goals. It is a great pleasure to begin cooperation with the experienced and visionary team of JKMM Architects – – congratulations to the team! I also wish to express our sincere thanks to all the designers behind the finalist proposals.”

Mikko Aho, Chair of the Jury said:

“The jury made a unanimous decision in the anonymous competition. Kumma blends into the cityscape, protecting valuable views of the

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historic waterfront, while at the same time standing out as a recognizable landmark. The use of recycled brick on the facade brings sculptural, architectural warmth and the terrace surrounding the building strengthens the connection to the city. The winning proposal, which is perceived as monumental and angular, is intended to be developed in a more approachable direction. approachable direction. We and the design team share the view that climate-smart solutions are at the heart of further development.”

Daniel Sazonov, Mayor of the City of Helsinki said:

“Finland’s new Museum of Architecture and Design is a central initiative in the regeneration of Helsinki’s historic South Harbour district, supporting the transformation of this former industrial dockside into into an attractive waterfront district and show the world the best of what Helsinki has to offer.

“The concentration of skills and the culture of design in our city are central to Helsinki’s appeal among world cities. Finnish design is noted throughout the world and the inventiveness and resourcefulness of our designers is the basis of how our economy creates value. The City of Helsinki is proud to support the establishment of this new institution that will become a centre for design culture on the global stage.”

Mari-Leena Talvitie, Minister of Science and Culture at the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture said:

“Finland has a global reputation for excellence in design and innovation. With the establishment of the new Museum of Architecture and Design, we have made a significant investment in a public institution that continue our proud tradition of public education in the skills of design, and record, represent and promote the unique design culture of Finland worldwide.”

Samuli Miettinen, founding partner and principal designer at JKMM Architects said:

“I hope that the planning and realization of the new Museum of Architecture and Design can show the way for how new things can be built responsibly and with skill. Architecture and design are deeply human – they are born from dreams and longing, and they gain their meaning in the places where we can experience and live together.”

Notes to Editors

Finland's new Museum of Architecture and Design

Finland's new Museum of Architecture and Design in Helsinki, is planned to open in 2030. A major step in the process of establishing the new institution was completed in January 2024, with the successful merger of the Museum of Finnish Architecture and Design Museum Helsinki.

Both the City of Helsinki and the State of Finland have committed to backing the new museum with significant donations. Four private foundations have joined forces, with the total capital raised almost reaching the target of 150 million euros.

In January 2025 it was announced that Pilvi Kalhama has been appointed Director of Architecture & Design Museum Helsinki, and will play a key role as the inaugural director of Finland's new Museum of Architecture and Design. Kalhama commenced her new role on 4 August 2025. Her task is to steer the museum toward its new building opening in South Harbour and toward museum activities that serve broad audiences.

The new museum building will house state-of-the-art exhibitions and forward-looking programmes that draw on the history and present of Finnish and Nordic architecture and design to guide a programme of public activities that will look at how design thinking and skills are relevant to the challenges we face as individuals and societies in a rapidly changing world.

About the competition and organisation

Finland's new Museum of Architecture and Design is made possible through significant public and private funding. In February 2024, The Foundation for the Finnish Museum of Architecture and Design announced that it had secured €120 million in public funding, half from the City of Helsinki and half from the State of Finland, to bring this new building project forward. This is supplemented by €30 million to be raised from private donors, with a €20 million donation secured from the Jane and Aatos Erkko Foundation.

The international open design competition was organised by the Real Estate Company ADM (a jointly-owned company established by the City of Helsinki and the State of Finland) and the Foundation for the Finnish Museum of Architecture and Design, in collaboration with the City of Helsinki and the Finnish Association of Architects (SAFA). Strategic partners for the museum project are DVDL Cultural Planners (New York) and Haahtela Group.

An open call for entries ran from 15 April to 29 August 2024 seeking for conceptual proposals for a new 10,050 sq m (GFA) museum building on a prominent and historic site on Helsinki's South Harbour. 624 entries were submitted to Stage 1 of the competition, and a selection of five finalists was invited to progress to Stage 2 of the competition in December 2024.

The total budget of the project is around €105 million, with construction costs of the museum not to exceed €70 million (price level Sept 2023). Construction is timetabled to complete by 2030.

The Competition Jury:

Chair: Mikko Aho, Architect SAFA,
Real Estate Company ADM (Vice Chair of the Board)

Vice Chair: Juha Lemström, Architect SAFA,
Real Estate Company ADM (Chair of the Board)

Gus Casely-Hayford, Director, V&A East

Beatrice Galilee, Architect, Executive Director, The World Around

Kaarina Gould, CEO, Foundation for the Finnish
Museum of Architecture and Design

Salla Hoppu, Architect SAFA, Leading Architect, City of Helsinki

Riitta Kaivosoja, Master of Laws with Court Training;
Director General, Ministry of Education and Culture,
Department for Art and Cultural Policy (until June 2025)

Beate Hølmebakk, Architect, Professor, Partner, Manthey Kula Architects

Matti Kuittinen, Architect, Associate Professor, Aalto University

Miklu Silvanto, Chief Design Officer, Oura; Member of the Board,
Museum of Architecture and Design (until August 2025)

Anni Sinnemäki, Vice Chair for Helsinki City Council;
Deputy Mayor for Urban Environment (until June 2025), City of Helsinki

Sari Nieminen, Architect SAFA, Architectural Office Sari Nieminen

Hannu Tikka, Architect SAFA, Professor, APRT Architects

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