

[Oxford Dictionary of English] reinterpret imaginatively

Concrete is the world's most used construction material. Due to its relatively easy handling, its ability to be shaped in almost any form, its forgivingness in terms of material inconsistencies, its excellent strength and durability; concrete is used everywhere and for a vast array of different purposes. These benefits, combined with the availability and affordability of its raw materials, have led to perceptions and practices that focus on the volume rather than the value of concrete. To engineer and develop optimal long-lasting concrete structures, with as few resources as possible, seems to be far more challenging than just relying on traditional approaches.

Current global challenges force all of us to rethink the ways we use and use up our surroundings. Preserving raw materials, saving energy, pressures on economical viable space, lead us to rethink our habits. We must challenge the traditional in order to built smarter. We must deploy the properties of concrete differently to meet our needs and challenges.

In other words, we should imaginatively reinterpret concrete as a material for constructing elements, buildings, and structures by tapping into its existing benefits from a different perspective. Our ambition must be to push beyond the easy abundance of concrete and give the world durable structures, that are more inspiring, more considered, with less raw materials, more reusable elements, clever methods for using/re-using/not using formwork; while delivering extended energy efficiency, comfort and performance. We need to focus on the value rather than the volume of concrete.

The circularity of concrete can deliver significant 'value'. The most effective circular strategy in the built environment is to keep reusing the structure. Ownership and occupation may change many times over without demolishing the built structure, thanks to the unsurpassed durability of concrete. And when a structure is demolished, it can provide secondary raw materials to produce new concrete. How we assemble our structures also needs to be rethought; durable concrete elements should find a new life in the next structure. Obviously for this to happen clever design is essential, looking beyond the current assignment at hand. A vision is needed that sees across generations to make design compatible with our changing needs.

The 10th Concrete Design Competition on REIMAGINE asks students of architecture, design and engineering to explore and exploit the potential of concrete's properties with respect to any notion of REIMAGINE. These can be related to inherent material properties, it's production process, and to concrete's application in new or existing structures. They may address aesthetic desires, structural systems or fabrication methods and comment on economic realities, sustainability demands or social issues.



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This competition does not prescribe a specific location or program; participants can choose a context of their own that supports their fascinations and ambitions and that fits an acute presentation of their ideas. Proposals may range from objects, furniture and architectural details to housing, landscape interventions, complex buildings, infrastructure and structural systems. Competition entries need to address technical and functional aspects as well as formal and programmatic ones – ideas need to be tested through design proposals to convincingly demonstrate their potential. They will be reviewed on the combination of inventiveness in addressing the competition’s theme and architectural implications.

The 10th Concrete Design Competition – REIMAGINE runs in five European countries during the academic year 2021 - 2022. National laureates will be invited to participate in a weeklong international workshop facilitated by the industry’s expertise featuring renowned lecturers and critics, further exploring reimagining concrete.