Space for Life Architecture Competition

Three Major Projects for Montréal’s 375th Anniversary in 2017

Montréal, February 10, 2014 — The Montréal Space for Life, in keeping with its desire to meld art, science and emotion, is pleased to announce the launch of an architecture competition of international scope, today, February 10. The competition, inspired by the Space for Life mission, will attract designs for three major projects: the Insectarium Metamorphosis, the Biodôme Renewal and a new Glass Pavilion at the Botanical Garden. After the success of the public forums held in January, the Space for Life is enthusiastic about this next step, for which it is seeking the creative and innovative input of the world’s top designers. An international jury made up of renowned members will select the winners. The Ministère des Affaires municipales, Régions et Occupation du territoire du Québec has allocated a $45 million budget for the three projects, which will stand as legacies of Montréal’s 375th anniversary and are part of the Space for Life development plan.

“We want Montrealers to feel even more attached to the Space for Life. That’s why we’re launching this architecture competition and calling on top talent from near and far. These three major projects will underscore Montréal’s 375th anniversary and contribute to positioning Montréal as an UNESCO City of Design on the international stage,” says Manon Gauthier, Montréal Executive Committee member responsible for culture, heritage, design, Space for Life and the status of women.

“Soon 70% of the world’s population will live in cities. Every new generation is spending less and less time in nature. It’s essential that we reinvent ourselves, find new ways of living in cities, of getting around, getting together, and getting closer to nature, while at the same time preserving biodiversity. With this architectural competition, the Space for Life is confidently launching itself into the 21st century and positioning itself as a leader. This is the legacy we want to leave for Montréalers for the city’s 375th anniversary,” explains Charles-Mathieu Brunelle, Executive Director of the Space for Life.

COMPETITION PROCESS
The two-stage competition, covering all three projects, is intended for multidisciplinary teams of architects, Living Building Challenge and LEED certification experts, scenic designers, landscape architects and engineers. It is designed to encourage the teams to reflect in depth on a host of issues as they seek creative architectural solutions.

The competition documents will be available as of February 10 on the mtlunescodesign.com/spaceforlife site. Louise Amiot, an architect with Amiot Bergeron, Architecture et Design urbain, is the professional advisor for the competition.

Each participant may bid on one, two or all three projects, by submitting a proposal. After examining the proposals, the jury will choose four finalists for each project. In stage 2, these finalists will be invited to expand on their concepts and present them to the jury in July 2014. The public will also be invited to this exceptional meeting. A winning team will then be selected for each project.
AN INTERNATIONAL JURY
A competition of this calibre requires a jury of highly qualified figures from the world of architecture and design, along with experts in biophilic design and sustainable development. Its members include William G. Reed, a sustainable development consultant, Integrative Design Collaborative and Regenesis (United States); Jean Beaudoin, architect, Intégral Jean Beaudoin (Quebec); Edouard François, architect, Maison Édouard François (France); Mario Cucinella, architect, Mario Cucinella Architects SRL (Italy); Normand Hudon, architect, Coachitecture (Quebec); and Stephen R. Kellert, an expert in biophilic design, Yale University (United States). In addition to these members from outside the Space for Life, the jury will include Charles-Mathieu Brunelle, Executive Director of the Space for Life; Anne Charpentier, Director of the Insectarium; Rachel Léger, Director of the Biodôme; and Gilles Vincent, Director of the Botanical Garden.

VAST PROJECTS
Committed to a creative and participatory movement aimed at reinventing our relationship with nature, the Space for Life intends to create living spaces that are permeable, ecological and evolving, while meeting the highest green building standards. LEED Platinum certification will be sought, depending on the project, and Living Building Challenge certification will serve as a source of inspiration. The three projects will be unique in terms of their architecture and design and the distinctive visitor experience offered by each institution, but they will all incorporate a creative approach based on the unique Space for Life mission and vision.

The Insectarium Metamorphosis project will expand and renovate the existing building and some outdoor areas. Inspired by nature and its biophilic principles, its architecture should provide sensory experiences and unexpected encounters that rekindle the connection between humans and insects.

The Biodôme Renewal project is intended to revamp some of its exhibition spaces, including the ecosystems. It aims to revive the debate on our relationship with nature through a more immersive, introspective and moving visitor experience that will encourage more environmentally respectful behaviour.

The Botanical Garden’s Glass Pavilion project will offer bold, innovative and organic architecture informed by biophilic design principles, with the focus on natural daylight, visibility, sensory connections with nature, and forms and natural materials that imitate nature. Versatile, technologically efficient and flexible, it will host eco-friendly horticultural events and corporate functions.

PUBLIC INPUT
A public dimension was added to the process. In addition to soliciting stimulating ideas for enhancing the visitor experience and the programming of the three projects, the Space for Life hopes to create a sense of ownership among participants and to continue the conversation begun in the public input workshops.

SHOWCASING MONTRÉAL AS A UNESCO CITY OF DESIGN
The city’s Bureau du design is working with the Space for Life to prepare and run the competition. Such competitions are among the many commitments made by the city and the partners in the 2007-2017 Action Plan - Montréal, Cultural Metropolis, which aims to promote excellence in design and architecture while helping to affirm Montreal’s status as a UNESCO City of Design. Montréal is a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, consisting of 41 cities in 23 countries. The network helps creators in member cities share their experiences, while promoting the international exchange of best practices and knowledge.

ABOUT THE SPACE FOR LIFE
The Montréal Space for Life is Canada’s largest natural science museum complex and the first space in the world dedicated to humankind and nature. It is initiating a daring, creative urban movement, urging everyone to rethink the connection between humankind and nature and to cultivate a new way of living.

For more information, see
http://espacepourlavie.ca/architecture-competition

Registration and documentation for the Space for Life architectural competition:
http://mtlunescodesign.com/spaceforlife

Photos, videos and fact sheets: