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SCIENCE ISLAND INTERNATIONAL DESIGN CONTEST LAUNCHED



Image © Kaunas City Municipality

- *Anonymous single-stage competition judged on designs*
- *Concept designs sought for the new National Science and Innovation Centre of Lithuania in Kaunas along with an urban integration plan for Nemunas Island*
- *Building scheduled to open in 2018*
- *Deadline for Submissions Wednesday, 14 September, 2016*

Kaunas City Municipality and Malcolm Reading Consultants today [June 27, 2016] launched an anonymous one-stage design contest for the new circa €25M National Science and Innovation Centre of Lithuania, known as Science Island.

The project encompasses the design of the Centre and an urban integration plan for Nemunas Island within the celebrated university city of Kaunas. Kaunas benefits from a delightful riverine topography as well as a unique legacy of pre-war and modernist architecture.



Full details of the competition are available on the dedicated website:

<http://competitions.malcolmreading.co.uk/scienceisland>

Science Island will celebrate recent achievements in science and global technologies, with the aim of inspiring visitors to expand their knowledge and support innovation in these fields. The Centre will focus particularly on environmental themes and ecosystems, demonstrating sustainability and future energy technologies in the design of its own building.

The Mayor of Kaunas, Visvaldas Matijošaitis said:

“ The architectural quality of the new Centre is of great importance, given Kaunas’ exceptional architectural heritage, and this must respond to the challenges facing the planet: integrating the very latest environmental thinking.

We’re seeking a design that communicates the Science Island vision and crystallises the emerging identity of Kaunas – one of the Baltic’s key knowledge and cultural hubs and an increasingly popular visitor destination.

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A number of the project’s partners and supporters operate from institutions which are within a few minutes’ walk of Science Island. These include the principal faculties of the Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas University of Technology and the Lithuanian University of Health Science; along with the Lithuanian Zoo, Tadas Ivanauskas Museum of Zoology, the Lithuanian Aviation Museum and the Museum of the History of Lithuanian Medicine and Pharmacy.

Malcolm Reading, Competition Director and Jury Chair said:

“ Lithuania is a world leader in producing science graduates per head of the population and renowned for cutting-edge technologies. This significant national project is extremely well-conceived, and hugely relevant: a centre that through its design will communicate how science can inspire positive change for the planet and humanity.

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The competition jury includes **Audrius Ambrasas**, Director, Audrius Ambrasas Architects; **Jonas Audėjaitis**, Kaunas Faculty Deans, Vilnius Academy of Arts, and Member of Kaunas City Council; **Jim Eyre**, Founding Director, WilkinsonEyre; **Robin Hoyle**, Director of Science, Glasgow Science Centre; **Svetlana Kauzonienė**, Vice Minister, Lithuanian Ministry of Science and Education; **Rainer Makhlamäki**, Professor and Founder, Lahdelma & Mahlamäki Architects; **Rolandas Maskoliūnas**, Chief Press Officer, Lithuanian Academy of Sciences and **Christos Passas**, Associate Director, Zaha Hadid Architects. The Jury will be chaired by **Malcolm Reading**.

The circa 13,000 sqm site area is positioned on the 33 hectare Nemunas Island, adjacent to the Žalgiris Arena and in close proximity to Kaunas' historic Centras district.

The project will be managed by Kaunas City Municipality in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science, and municipal Departments of Education, the Education Development Centre, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) centres and other educational institutions and Non-Governmental Organisations.

As the provisional capital of a newly-independent Lithuania in the interwar period, Kaunas experienced a cultural flowering as architects and engineers who graduated from Russian and European architecture schools created a unique concentration of Modernist architecture, drawing on international style tendencies – such as Bauhaus – as well as Lithuanian national styles.

Kaunas also has excellent connectivity as it is conveniently located within two hours of most of Lithuania's nearly three million inhabitants. It is considered the country's best student city and is designated a UNESCO creative city.

Three winners will be selected through the competition; they will then undergo a Negotiated Procedure without Publication of a Contract Notice with Kaunas City Municipality who will select one architect or team to take the concept through to completion on site. Each of the winners will receive an honorarium of €15,000.

Competitors' submissions must be sent to Kaunas to arrive no later than **14:00 GMT +3 Wednesday 14 September 2016**. The winner is expected to be announced in November 2016. Kaunas City Municipality anticipates construction will begin in 2017 and intends the National Science and Innovation Centre to open in early 2018.

Ends

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About the Science Island Design Competition

The competition has been advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). For full details of the process and biographies of the jury please visit the competition microsite:

<https://competitions.malcolmreading.co.uk/scienceisland>

About Malcolm Reading Consultants

Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC) is a strategic consultancy specialising in the selection of contemporary designers. MRC believes in the power of design to create new perceptions and act as an inspiration – either at the local level, or internationally.

MRC is the leading specialist in design competitions in Europe. Recent work includes competitions for the Museum of London, the gold medal-winning UK Pavilion at Milan Expo 2015, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, the Illuminated River, Tintagel Castle Bridge, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park's Culture & Education Quarter, the Mumbai City Museum, the Natural History Museum and New College, Oxford.

<https://malcolmreading.co.uk/>