VIRTUAL MUSEUM
INTERNATIONAL ONLINE INTERACTIVE IDEAS COMPETITION
By newitalianblood.com & kwArt.com

BRIEF   I guidelines - >>II theory

1. Objectives

In order to recognize innovative and original research, newitalianblood.com & kwArt.com are organizing an international, interactive ideas competition that explores the potential of exhibiting in real and/or virtual environments.
The competition calls for a re-conception of the traditional "exhibition space" within our current sensibilities and technologies, and at the same time, calls for the design of new digital interfaces, online or offline, as effective alternatives to physical spaces.
Participants are free to choose one of the two objectives or to confront one against the other.

The competition is organized under the 'patrocinio' of: Consiglio Nazionale degli Architetti, Ordine degli Architetti di Roma, American Academy in Rome, l'Arca, Assessorato alle Politiche del Territorio and Ufficio Concorsi del Comune di Roma, Assessorato alle Politiche Culturali del Comune di Roma.

2. Competition

For ideas. International, single-phase, anonymous, online, interactive, no registration fees.
Open to everyone, particularly for Architects, Artists, Engineers, Designers, Curators, Critics, Graphic Designers, Webmasters and Students of every kind.
Interdisciplinary groups are encouraged.
Categories of Participation: 1_Students; 2_Under 36; 3_Open.
Groups that can be described by more than one of these categories are to be considered in the category most inclusive.

3. Timetable

Online registration: May 7th 2001 until July 31st 2001 (24.00)
Submission (online self-publication): May 30th 2001 until July 31st 2001 (24.00)
Jury Review: August/September 2001
Publication and Exhibition: October/November 2001

4. Prizes

"Grand Prize" of **10.000 Euro**, offered by COLOMBO DESIGN & NEWITALIANBLOOD.COM
"Web Prize" of **5.000 Euro**, offered by AUTODESK
These two prizes are awarded irrespective of the Categories of Participation (Students, Under 36, Open).
Additional awards: Special Prizes specific to each Category of Participation and Honorable Mentions.
Organizers reserve the opportunity to commission the development of the most promising submission into a website.

5. Online Registration

The registration form for the competition is found under the heading **>>REGISTER** in the homepages of the following websites: newitalianblood.com, kwArt.com and archiworld.it.
When registering, indicate the contact email(s) to which all of the official competition correspondence is to be sent.
Only one registration per person is allowed.
Once registration is complete, a confidential user-id and password will be provided via email. Together the userid and password give access to the self-publication form for the projects (this process is described below under 'Interactive Self-Publication'). The same, assigned userid and password may be re-entered under 'REGISTER' up until the date of the competition deadline in order to access and modify the already posted registration.

6. Interactive Self-Publication

Enter in the assigned userid and password under the heading of **>>SUBMIT** found at the homepages of newitalianblood.com, kwArt.com and archiworld.it
Each of the self-published submissions is to be comprised of one (1) homepage for the participants and two (2) pages for the presentation of the project.
- HOME: 1 page
One jpeg, gif, swf, dcr picture of the participant(s) (also animated) 315x225 pixels, 100kB max. + the curriculum vitae text, max. 750 characters in English
+ up to 10 links of the participants' own work already posted on the internet (optional).

- PROJECT: 2 pages
One jpeg, gif, swf, dcr image of the project, per page (also animated) 945x225 pixels, 300kB max.
+ the descriptive text, max. 750 characters per page in English.
The participants self-publish their own projects online by way of a simple interface. In order to use this interface, only a basic knowledge of email is needed. Anyone who is able to send an email with an attached image is able to self-publish their own project without difficulty.
The user-id and password assigned upon registration, gives access to the first publication form for the group participant's homepage, and then to the second publication form of the two project presentation pages that open in succession. Insert the requested text, choose the text and background colors, and finally attach the desired image or animation to each page, whereupon a preview of the submission can be confirmed in order to conclude the process of auto-publication. If any modifications to the text or colors are needed, do not confirm the preview, but turn back to review the modification options and re-launch a preview. Once the auto-publication is confirmed, it is possible to re-enter the user-id and password to review and modify the submission up until the date of the competition deadline.

7. Interactive Pre-Jury and Jury
The pre-jury is comprised of the competition participants that have successfully self-published their own project in accordance with the competition rules within the given deadline. The online voting is carried out under the heading **>>VOTE** from the homepages of newitalianblood.com, kwArt.com and archiworld.it whereby the participants enter in their user-id and password. The participants have the responsibility and opportunity of voting for their choice of the top five projects - always presented in an anonymous manner - in descending order of preference (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th). Each vote is added up to obtain a list of 50 finalists. The participants cannot vote for their own submission. Any votes that infringe upon this rule are automatically invalidated. Each vote will be monitored in order to avoid every kind of irregularity.
It is asked that the participants give great attention to the voting process and make their choices no later than 15 days after the voting is first initiated.

The 50 self-selected projects are submitted in anonymity to the jury of Critics, Curators, Architects, and Artists without any order of preference or merit. Each jury member selects 5 projects in descending order of preference. Each vote is added up to give the final results.
The jury that awards the "Grand Prize", the Special Prizes specific to each category (Students, Under 36, Open), and a series of Honorable Mentions is comprised of:
> Achille Bonito Oliva: art critic, professor Rome University - ITA
> Aaron Betsky: architect, curator of Architecture, Design & Digital Projects SFMOMA - USA
> Linda Blumberg: art director American Academy in Rome - USA
> David Carson: visual artist and graphic designer - USA
> Cesare Maria Casati: architect, director l'Arca - ITA
> Luigi Centola/S-TUFF: architect and critic - ITA
> Gillian Crampton Smith: director Interaction-Ivrea - UK
> Vicente Guallart/METAPOLIS: architect - ESP
> Fulvio Irace: architect, professor Milan University - ITA
> Thomas Leeser/LEESER ARCHITECTURE: architect - USA
> Michelangelo Pistoletto: artist - ITA
> Hani Rashid/ASYMPTOTE: architect - USA
> Antonino Saggio: architect and critic, professor Rome University - ITA
> Amedeo Schiattarella: architect, president Ordine Architetti Roma - ITA
> Raffaele Sirica: architect, president Consiglio Nazionale Architetti - ITA
> Lars Spuybroek/NOX: architect - NED
> Ben Van Berkel/UN STUDIO: architect - NED
Alternate jury members:
> Massimo Alvisi/AKD: architect, ITA
> Sandy Attia: architect, USA
> Paolo Ceccon: architect, ITA
> Claudia Clemente/NEMESI: architect, ITA

The 50 self-selected projects are submitted in anonymity without any order of preference, to a jury of Institutions and Webzines. Each Institution or Webzine selects 5 projects in descending order of preference. Each vote is added up to give the final results.
The jury that awards the "Web Prize" is comprised of:
> Archiworld/CNA - ITA Giorgio Marchetti & Massimo Canfailla, information & communication
> Archiworld/Ordine degli Architetti di Roma - ITA Luigi Catenacci & Francesco Ruperto
> Antithesi - ITA Sandro Lazier & Paolo Ferrara, contacts
> ArchiNed - NED Piet Vollaard, director
> Architecture.it - ITA Furio Barzon, director
> Arch'it - ITA Marco Brizzi, director
> Assessorato alle politiche del territorio del comune di Roma - ITA Gabriella Raggi
> Autodesk - ITA Giuseppe Suanno, marketing manager Autodesk Italy, Greece and Cyprus
> A-Matter - GER Michaela Busenkell, editorial director
> Death By Architecture - USA Mario Cipresso, director/editor
> Designboom - ITA Birgit Lohmann, editor in chief
> Domus Academy - ITA Claudio Moderini, coordinator Domus Academy research center
> Fabrica - ITA Renzo di Renzo, Colors editor in chief
> Kubos - FRA Arnaud Hadj Moussa, director
> Newitalianblood.com - ITA Paolo de Riso & Giuseppe Sacco, technical directors

Summary of the interactive, judging process:
- The competition participants that have self-published select the 50 finalists.
- The jury of critics, curators, architects and artists award the "Grand Prize".
- The jury of institutions and webzines award the "Web Prize".

8. Anonymity
All of the judging and voting is always carried out under absolute anonymity. The projects, up until the completion of both of the two juried phases, are individuated only by a random alpha-numerical code. During the jury phase, it is never possible to see the names and the personal data of the participants.
N.B. The project images and accompanying two texts are the only auto-published elements of the project visible by the jury, and as a result cannot contain any identifying material or elements, penalized by the exclusion from the competition.

9. Ineligibility
The following persons are ineligible to participate in the competition:
Direct relatives, continuing collaborators, employers and employees of the jury members.
Those who have participated in drafting this brief in any way.
Employees of newitalianblood.com and kwArt.com.

10. Language
The official language of the competition is English.

11. Publications
The winning projects will be published in the architectural section of kwArt.com
The winning and selected projects will be published in a special gallery of newitalianblood.com
There will also be a CD-Rom and Catalogue with text in both Italian and English that includes several theoretical essays and a selection of the participating projects.

12. Awards and Exhibition
The awarding of the winners and a video exposition of all the projects will be held in the American Academy in Rome.

13. Questions
Any questions or requests of further information regarding the competition and the technical phases of registration and submission of materials may be sent directly via email to
competition@newitalianblood.com. The organization will not respond to questions about a project's design concept, which is of exclusive interpretation by the participants based on the theoretical part of the brief.

14. Intellectual Property
The authors of the projects are the sole owners of the intellectual property rights of their submitted material. By participating in the competition, the authors authorize newitalianblood.com and kwArt.com - without any compensation - to display the submitted material at shows and exhibitions, or for purposes of publication (paper and online) relating to the communication of the competition, at the discretion of the organizers. Participants will be informed of all events via email.

15. Promoters
NEWITALIANBLOOD.COM
ARCHIWORLD
ORDINE DEGLI ARCHITETTI DI ROMA - PRIMAVERA DELL'ARCHITETTURA

16. Sponsors
AUTODESK
COLOMBO DESIGN

VIRTUAL MUSEUM
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BRIEF   II theory - >>I guidelines

Exposition environments & interfaces
The encounter between man and art, once an exclusive privilege of the rich and their elite entourage, has in time been slowly transformed into a cultural experience available to all. The opening of the great national museums to the public, as well as the development of cultural institutions and private galleries in great numbers, has begun to modify and intensify the relationship between the artistic production and the public. The work of the artist has also quickly transformed and evolved; gradually liberated from the specific demands of the client, the artist is able to produce work more searching and personally inspired. In every epoch, technology has furnished increasingly sophisticated media and tools such as photography, video, the computer and the internet, to cite only a few fundamental examples. In these past few years, the speed and simplicity of movement and communication have facilitated an ever-increasing influx of cultural tourism, giving further prominence to already notable institutions. Today the first stop of a cultural trip in a capital city is the modern or contemporary art museum. At times, paradoxically, a trip is organized, first to visit the museum, and then to experience and explore a new city.

With the enormous expansion of the public and its potential access to various kinds of cultural experiences, the resulting diversification of demand has been met by an inevitable diversification of supply. The traditional arts have fast broadened, crossing over into the fields of fashion, design, technology and in turn life. This diversification is clearly exampled by recently organized exhibitions dedicated to designer names such as Armani and Valentino, as well as those displaying everyday objects such as motorcycles and computers, which have subsequently been received with both great success and at times criticism. The millions of visitors that pack every kind of museum give testimony to the current shaping of these places, no longer as seats of culture alone, but also as places of meeting, recreation, and entertainment. The characteristics, specificities, necessities, functioning and uses of the museum should be given serious reconsideration, much more so than by simply inserting extra program. These supporting functions, usually commercial and located in strategic and localized areas, are rampant in the museum culture today - the media lounges, the bookstores, and the cafes. The additive and clearly 'other' nature of these inserted programs are based in the arguably already exhausted model of the museum that this competition rises up to re-think.

The centers of cultural production and entertainment are among the biggest resources for the leisure industry, and as a result are carefully attended to by entrepreneurs and administrators who understand these centers as catalysts of interests and multipliers of profits, as well as instruments of new developments and urban renewal. The program type of the museum affords not only a sensitive insertion into delicate urban and natural contexts, but also assures a multiplicity of activity directly or indirectly related to raising the standard of living.

The Museum Computer Network, a transnational organization that solicits a large number of institutions and disciplines, is preparing for a large symposium that discusses ways in which new technologies can be, and will be used for completing and enriching the experience of traditional exposition environments. In particular, certain key discussions focus on: the portable devices used by the visitors, the points of information and assistance positioned throughout the galleries, the 'intelligent' architecture, the prevalent screens, the computers and digital and traditional interfaces, the designated web resources intended to encourage pre- or post visits, the connected, web-based, programmed environments, etc. There are then the complementary and delicate fields of inquiry such as management and development strategies, the adjustments of infrastructure and the resulting social implications - particularly with respect to the redefinition of the relationships between the museum, the visitors, and the modes of preserving the physical and sensorial experience in technological environments.

Current reflections upon our information-age as well as on the transformations of art, architecture, exposition spaces, and even the participants themselves, have been inscribed into the museum world in a number of ways. The first of the two most pertinent ways is demonstrated in the paraphernalia, device oriented interests of the MCN; the innovative, transmissive modes and environments that are in support of, and integrated with the more traditional exposition spaces, do address and attempt to satisfy accelerated perceptions and stimuli, and even in limited cases, engender revolutionary museums. The second is manifested in the duplication of exposition spaces as virtual galleries on the web, currently put forward by certain avant-garde institutions. These galleries however, are in many ways simply re-organized, often banal, paper-catalogue replications of the collections. The challenge of the Virtual Museum is intended to simultaneously look beyond the additive, 'other' nature of technological devices and to re-think the spaces of exposition outside of the given model of the museum - perhaps in the unchartered possibilities of digital space. It is also possible and indeed designed to provoke the artist to respond to the evermore sophisticated virtual environments in ways which the current physical exhibition spaces cannot.

On the internet, emerging organizations whose focus is not yet specified are growing in parallel to traditional institutions with respect to the following areas of research: cultural and informative portals, virtual galleries, multimedia journals, magazines and newspapers, self-managed user networks capable of mobilizing the attention of the masses and, most of all, of the younger generation versed in the internet. Unlike the cumbersome, traditional structures of display, these fluid organizations offer specific

advantages: easy-access to space, economy of space, long-distance, part-time work unfettered by time/place constraints, quick and easy access to the most specialized personnel around the world, speedy installation, no shipping or insurance costs, no actual construction, access to a wider audience - drawn by the internet's interactive, participatory, and ever-surprising persona. However, the design of significant on-line expositions demands time, testing, new synergies of specialists and fields (conception, programming, planning, visualizing, animation, computer graphics, communication), and imply the use of considerable budgets for production, constant management and updating. The average cost of online exhibitions, per visitor, is however without a doubt cheaper, particularly because of the incredible number of users which continues to grow steadily. At the same time, since an entrance ticket is as of yet unthinkable, the only actual funding in the short-term can be provided by advertising and sponsorship. However, in the long run, well-designed and flexible 'containers' will attract works of artists, more or less known, to create a valuable cultural and economic resource. Those collectors who nowadays are willing to pay millions of dollars to acquire works of art could, in the future, be attracted to a different kind of art which we cannot yet picture.

In a few months, access to the web, by cable or satellite, will ensure a download time for images, sounds, and videos equal to that of texts. In the meantime, computer speed, memory and power will continue to increase, while phone rates will continue to decrease due to competition. It will then be possible to take maximum advantage of rendering, animation and immersion soft-wares such as those currently used in film production, using smaller and smaller files than those used for video. Web art development, net-art, art-of-the-net and their new virtual exposition environments can only become more complex and advanced while at the same time easier to use. If one were to recall the dawn of the desktop and compare it to those of today, the metaphor of a simplified version of the actual desk on the screen - the 'desktop' -has been enriched to become increasingly functional and elegant. It is now the time to think of non-linear developments for interfaces that can guarantee an appropriate complexity and allow for the exhibition of any kind of art.

Several browsers or meta-browsers such as Netomat, Iod, Riot and Hullpointer exist as alternatives to Netscape and Explorer and are trying in different ways to broaden the options of visualizing, reading, and connecting web pages. Browserday, a convention of the cutting-edge minds of the digital world, is one of the major events that puts forward the latest artistic and technological developments. Cube is the first example of a refined technique and immediacy which allows for traditional web-browsing with a conceptually fresh and easy interface; the user moves fluidly amongst five pages (represented as faces of a cube) displayed concurrently. Could all of these examples be thought of as virtual museums of information? Or could the transition towards increasingly smaller technological gadgetry such as palm-pilots, wireless communication systems, gps (global position system) continue their trajectory from portable, to wearable, to perhaps eventually nested within our bodies and minds become the real virtual museums?

The continuing computer science revolution explores worlds we know to exist and perhaps are always on the brink of discovering other worlds. Man, Art and Science can once again become inextricably tied - perhaps we can bring to life another type of 'Renaissance Man'. The characteristics, the abilities, the instruments and most of all, the interests of the new artists will inevitably keep transforming, interminably. So, each time we will find ourselves thinking of places we have never seen, we might even try bending our mind to create art we have never imagined.

In Bruce Sterling's *Holy Fire*, the digital artists of the late 21st century are no longer hyphenated or hybrids. They are simply artificers. And in Interface Culture, Steven Johnson refers to a similar melding, a kind of vocation: "The artisans of interface culture…have become some new fusion of artist and engineer - interfacers, cyberpunks, webmasters - charged with the epic task of representing our digital machines, making sense of information in its raw form".