



 DIRECTION
ARCHITECTS

About us

Direction Architects, is an International Architecture and Design practice, based in London and Athens. It was founded in 2021 by John Kanakas, with the vision to create living environments, that aim to make people rethink and question their ways of inhabiting everyday spaces. On a broader framework our projects attempt to create experiential spaces that provoke new forms of existence and new ways of living. Our formalistic approach aims to awake our deeper consciousness and initiate a discourse across different fields.

Our Approach

At Direction, we believe that architectural form derives from a combination of parameters that relate to site specific conditions. Every project is addressed by examining a sum of factors that relate to topographical, environmental and social drivers. As a result each design proposal has unique design and material characteristics inspired by its local environment.

Our Philosophy

The practice operates at the intersection between architecture and philosophy. In fact, we believe that architecture is deeply related to philosophical, sociological and psychological notions and beliefs, which can be translated through form. We consider our work equally an architectural as much as a philosophical outcome.

Environmental & Design Sustainability

Our practice is rooted in sustainability and landform architecture. Passive design strategies are also part of our design process. In several cases, our projects aim to merge the boundaries between the built and the natural environment. In fact with sustainable elements such as green roofs, ramps and vertical gardens, we aim to create a larger green footprint than the plot land area of the site.

Forms & Technologies

Innovative construction technologies and new materials are always part of our design thinking strategies. We constantly question our strong formalistic design approach with new design techniques and construction processes, in order to come up with the most optimal outcomes, while implementing the fastest production methods and techniques.

Memberships & Registrations



Founder

John Kanakas is a Greek-British Architect with Cypriot origins, born in Athens and lived more than a decade in London, where he gained a vast experience, working at Zaha Hadid Architects and previously at Foster + Partners. He has also worked with the Brussels based practice, Lassa Architects and collaborated with the London based practice DH Liberty. John has been part of more than 25 global projects of various scales, stages, scopes and programs. His experience and portfolio, while working at international practices, varies from interiors, residential, hospitality, and office buildings all the way to masterplans, towers, aviation and transportation hubs. He has also been part of large scale commercial and civic projects, public squares as well as museums, consulates, embassies, culture, sports and conference centers.

John received his Part 1, 2 & 3 from the Architectural Association and he is a registered and RIBA Chartered Architect in the UK and Greece. He formed Direction Architects Limited in London in 2021 and currently works between Athens and London.



John Kanakas, ARB/RIBA UK, TEE GR

Founder, Architect / Designer

contact JK:

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The Team & Collaborators

At Direction, innovation goes beyond our projects and is reflected also in the way we work. We aim to break away from top down office systems and embrace new ways of working, based on a collaborative project based approach. We are extremely enthusiastic about leading a new model of collaborative team work, derived from authenticity, intuition and groundbreaking work methods.

For every project we form a team, from our list of trusted collaborators, appointed based on their expertise on the project program, the scope, the needs and the brief requirements. We strongly believe on new ways of working that create a meaningful and enjoyable work environment, liberating from redundant work methods, and heading towards a new paradigm for creative work environments.

Current and Previous Colleagues & Collaborators

Konstantinos Christopoulos, MEP / Athens, GR

Marios Triantafyllou, Columbia / New York, USA

Marilena Petalidou, Bartlett UCL / London, UK

Nikos Empeoglou, MEP / Athens, GR

Elena Stavrou, University of Cyprus, CY

Christina Panagiotopoulou, MEP / Athens, GR

Dimitris Stamatogiannopoulos, MEP / Athens, GR

Kostis Kallipolitis, MEP / Athens, GR

Sungbum Hung, AA / London, UK

Contact us

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House Symbiosis, Filothei

Status: Built

Type: Commission

Location: Filothei, Athens, GR

Program: Double Residency

Architect Designer: John Kanakas

Architect Engineer: Kostas Christopoulos

Structural Engineers: Christos Tzallas & Panos Christopoulos

Mechanical Engineer: Vasilis Christopoulos

Sustainability & Energy Consultant: Regeon

Photography: Studio Naaro

Furniture Provider: Avax Deco

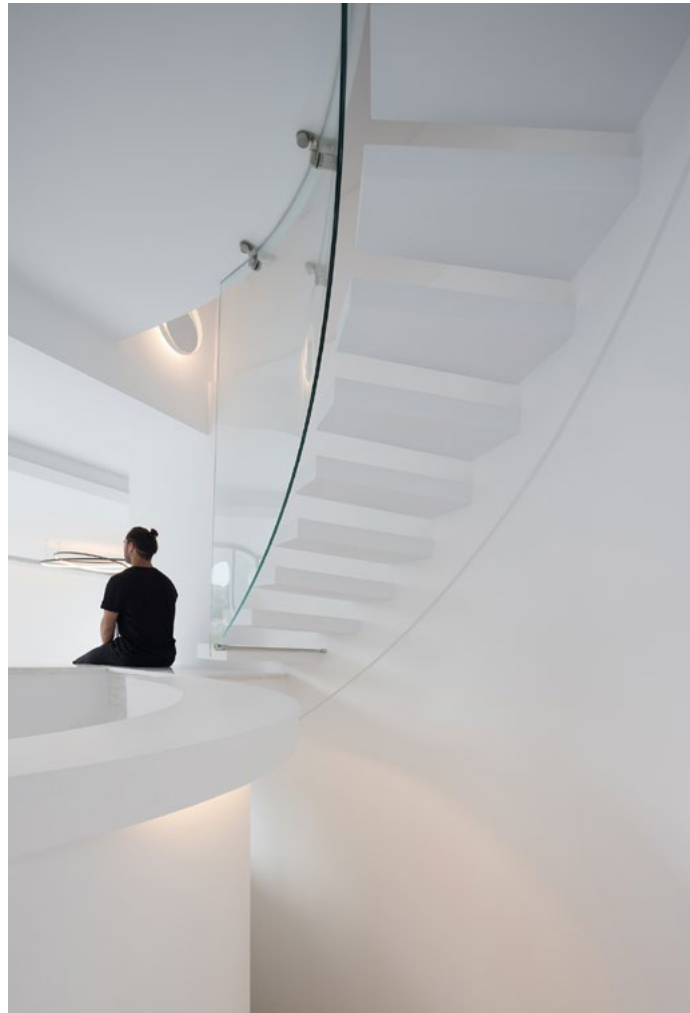
Furniture Brands: Roche Bobois, Molteni &C

House Symbiosis is a double residency with three main levels, that was created to shelter two families in identical size dwellings, while redefining the way they are organized in a single building. The project was designed based on the internal circulation, as the main design driver. The design process followed a sculptural tectonic approach, which is reflected on the volumetric massing of the final outcome. The two residencies, give the impression of moving towards opposite directions, while in the same time are bound in one building mass, through a continuous formal language. This curvilinear formalistic approach creates an effect of dynamism and motion in its living spaces.

The project is located at the back of a corner plot and it forms an L shape in plan, while letting the front part as open space. It is designed based on the internal horizontal and vertical circulation and the sequential layout of the spaces according to their functional dependence. The internal circulation is externalized in the morphology of the facades through directional architectural gestures, with the lower residency to unfold as its spaces are successively accessible, from the northwest to the southwest, while the upper one in the opposite direction.







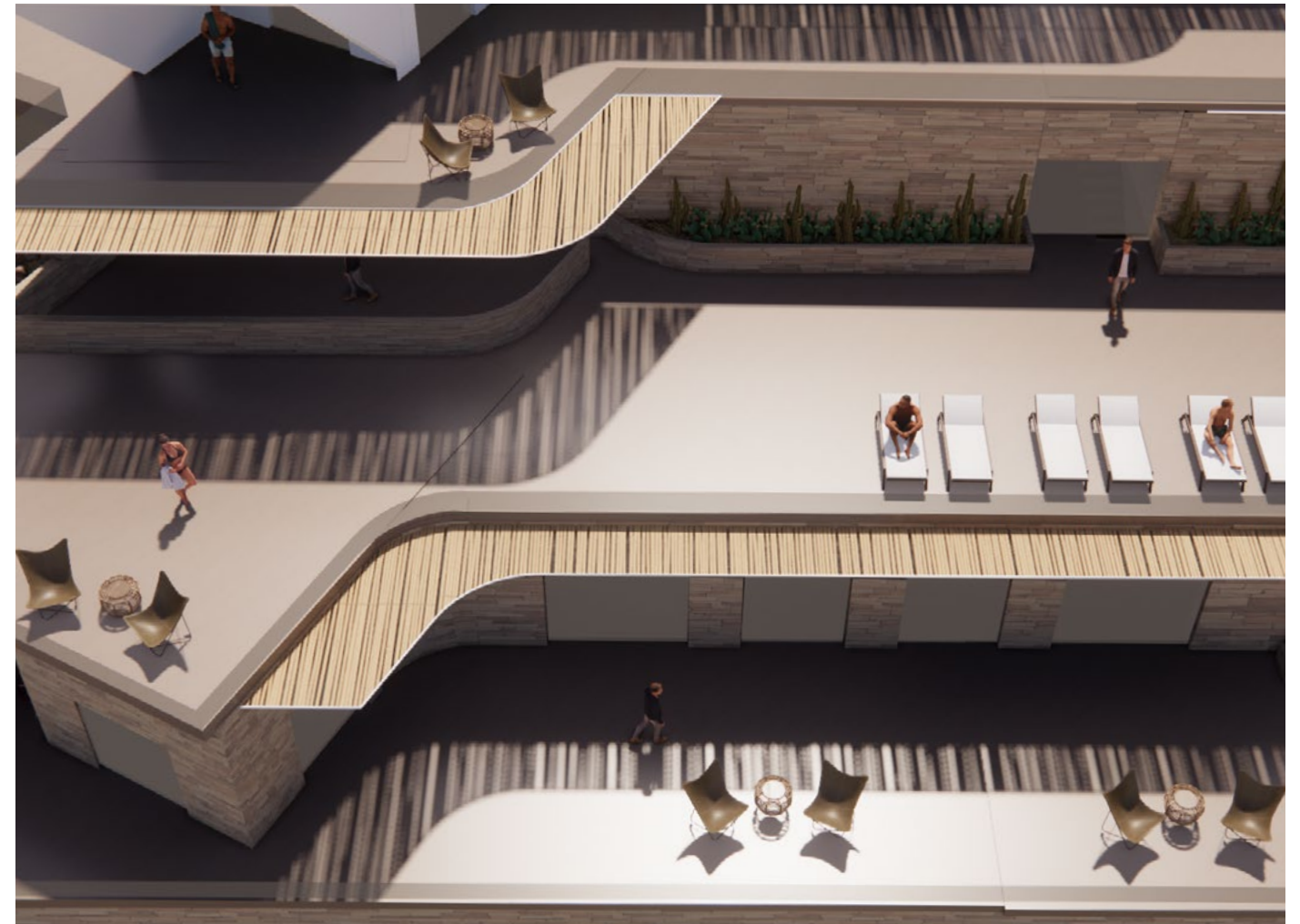
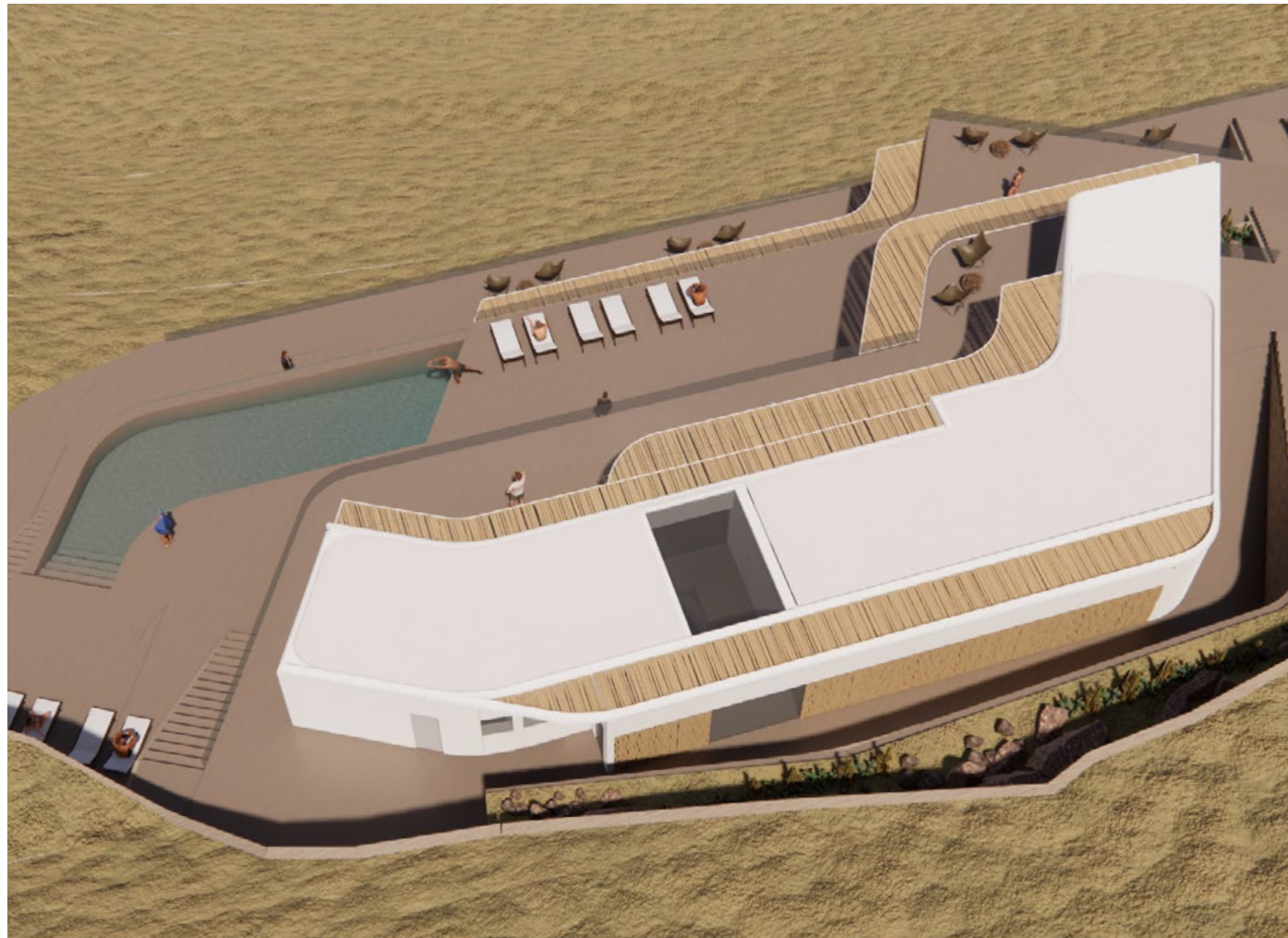
Villa Akra, Mykonos

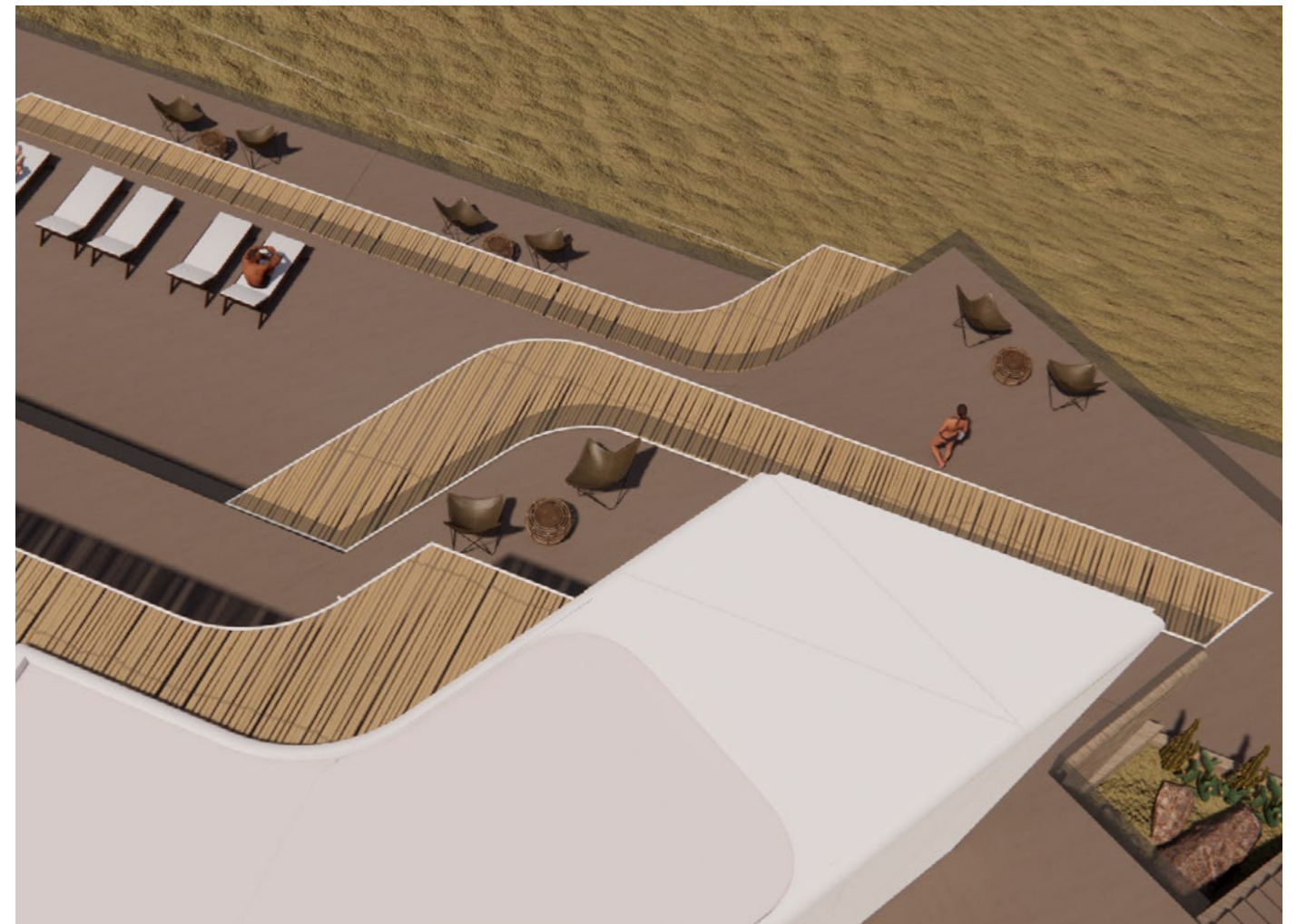
Program: Villa

Location: Mykonos, Greece

Type: Commision

Villa Akra is a summer villa, located on a steep cliff on the island of Mykonos, overlooking the Aegean sea. The villa has 3 main levels and is constituted by some semi subterranean parts and some above ground. The design proposal of the villa is a combination of cycladic style with elements of futuristic architecture. The proposal suggests both white typical cycladic finishing as well as local stoned walls. The villa expands in 3 main levels, which are connected by internal stairs, as well as external ramps and stairs. At the top level are placed the bedrooms of the project, and at the bottom level which is the main level, are situated the living spaces and is also the main entrance of the villa. The inbetween level has only an external area, where one can find the pool, a bar with a canopy and other amenities. Villa Akra took its name from the Greek word Akri, which means at the edge, and it symbolizes its position, since its proposed to be standing by a steep cliff.





Program: University

Project Title: Multimedia & Graphic Arts Department

Owner: Technical University of Cyprus - TEPAK

Collaboration: MIP Architecture

Period: 2023

Type: Open International Competition

Location: Limassol, Cyprus

The proposal for the international competition for "The Multimedia & Graphic Arts Department" of the Cyprus University of Technology in Limassol, aimed to design an educational center with all the prospects and highest standards of a modern university. A modern educational hub is a point of intellectual cultivation, research development, knowledge and innovation, while at the same time it should function as an environment for socialization, entertainment and interaction. Based on the two poles of education and socialization, indoor and outdoor, controlled and shared, our architectural proposal has been developed.

Our proposal is developed around a central atrium, which is used as a bioclimatic and social space, the heart of the university. Having the atrium as the core of the architectural proposal, the design evolved around it having a continuous circulation flow inside and outside around it. In the same the interior layout of the spaces aimed to have all its rooms overlooking it, in order to benefit from natural air and light. The volumetric massing of the building expands from the inside to the outside creating two opposite wings that are meeting at two corners of the plot. The curvilinear formal language of the massing, bring a dynamism to the core, which give the sense of movement around it. The facade of the building has a filtered pixelated envelope, which is designed to achieve the required lighting levels for its interiors.





Intoku Spa Centre, Bacalar

Program: Health Center, Spa

Location: Bacalar, MX

Stage: Concept

Status: In progress

Architect: John Kanakas

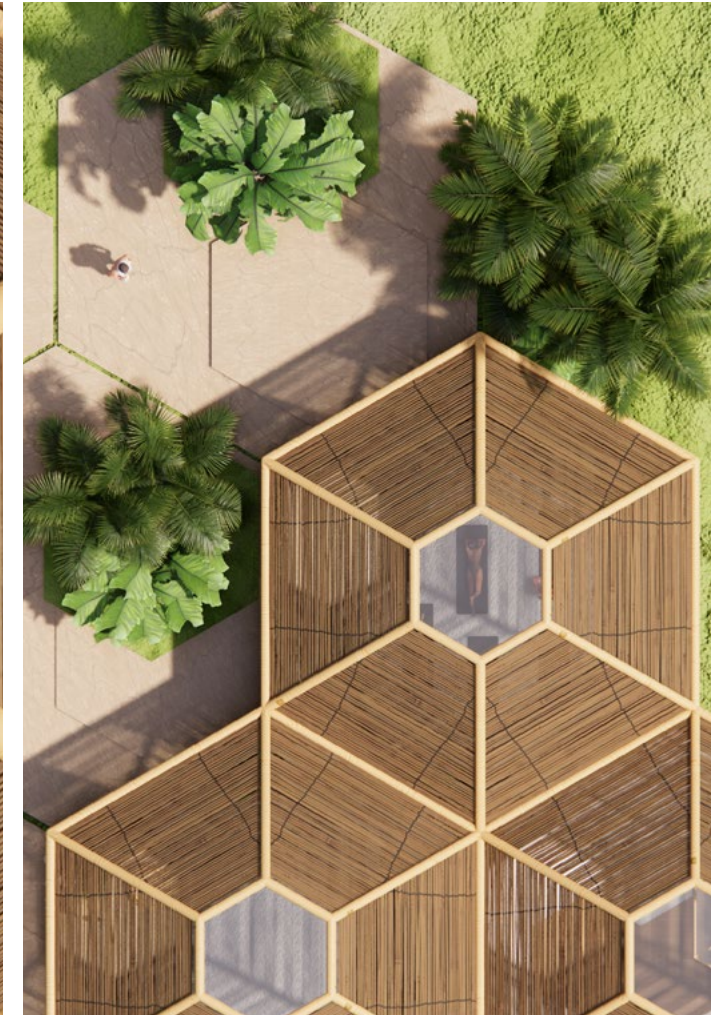
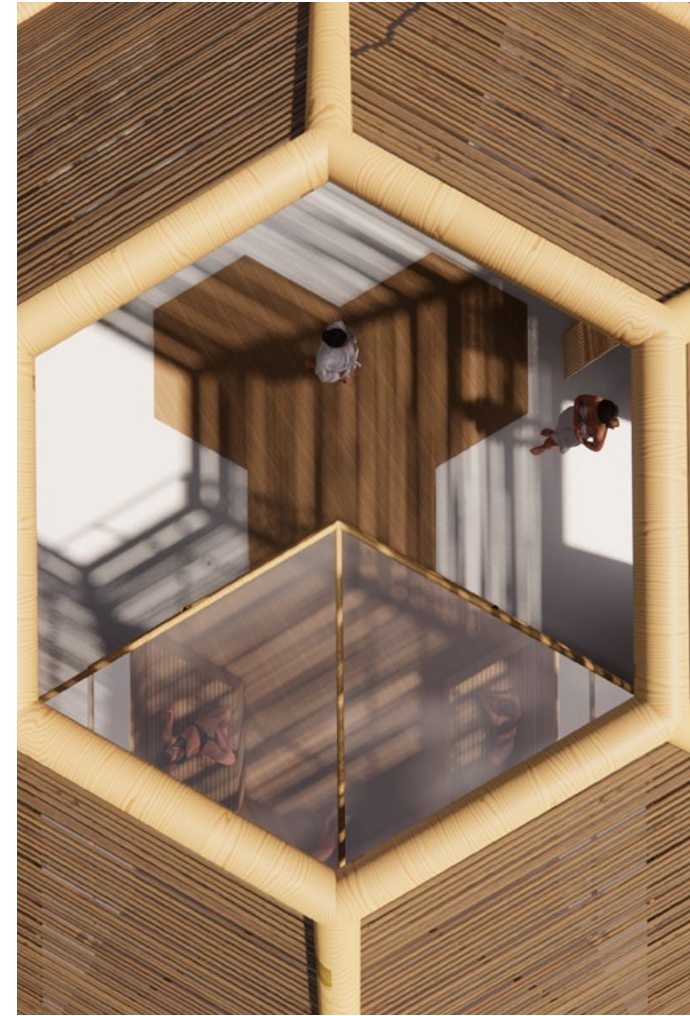
Holistic Well-being Consultant: Larissa Laudenberger

Health Centre & Spa Specialist: Mariah Joseph de Guardia

Period: 2022-ongoing

Owner: Alejandro Marin

A sustainable Spa Center proposal, part of a larger hospitality complex, located in the natural preserve area of Bacalar, Mexico. The hexagonal pods were inspired by beehives, as a natural shape found in nature. In the same time the hexagonal strategy allows for growth over time, while depending on the demand as well as the preferences of the visitors, anytime there can be easily build up and connected more pods to the on-growing structure. The specific eco structures have been proposed to be entirely made out of local and eco-friendly materials and techniques, while having sustainability as one the main design drivers. Timber, bamboo and rammed earth would be the primary materials that would come together in order to create the pods.



Far out Beach Club Restaurant, Ios

Program: Beach Club Restaurant Bar

Location: Ios, Greece

Type: Commission - Redevelopment

Status: Part Built & Part in Progress

Total Capacity: 3000

Architect: John Kanakas

Creative Direction: George Binas

Client: FarOut Group

Period: 2023-ongoing

The project scope looks at the partial redevelopment in stages of the iconic beach club placed as 54 best in the world, located on the shores of Mylopotas Beach on Ios Island, with a history spanning more than 50 years, while attracting the biggest DJ names from all around the world. The scope includes the addition of several new architectural elements as well as the renovation of previous ones. On the front part of the site, there will be developed a lounge area, with portable modular elements that would provide seating areas with tables, sunbeds and a set of more private enclosed pods. The front part of the site also includes the design of a large perforated pergola in pieces. A new bar with a similar language will also be developed in the same lounge area of the project. In the club area of the project, there will be a brand new backstage and booth area, as well as seating spaces overlooking the dancefloor. The scope will also look at an updated design for the food hall area. Shades of ivory colors have been chosen to be used for the color palette of the overall project.



Athens College Arts Building

Program: Arts School

Location: Psychiko, Athens, GR

Type: Open International Competition

Architectural Team: John Kanakas, Marios Triantafyllou, Kostas Christopoulos

Owner: Hellenic American Educational Foundation Athens College-Psychico College

The proposal for an Arts Building for the HAEF, constitutes a manifesto of landform architecture within a green context. We strongly believe that architecture needs to emerge and respect its environment and this was a catalytic parameter for the design of the arts school, since our proposal arises smoothly from the existing surrounding landscape, and in the same time is implementing sustainable materials. The proposal takes shape around a wide atrium, which allows for natural light and ventilation to reach all parts of the building, while in the same time creating a place for socialisation, the heart of the school.

On the ground, a diagonal sloping green axis creates a direct connection towards the park, while separating important functions by giving them their own space and entrance. A system of internal and external ramps constitute the main circulation system of the school, allowing students and visitors to walk to every part of the building. In terms of the overall programs of the building, the Arts school would include several types of studios and classrooms, an exhibition center, a library, offices, a rooftop cafe-bar as well as an internal and an external amphitheater. The project proposed construction methods and materials, that respect the environment and are in accordance with key principles of sustainability. Specifically, most of the external walls at the ground level, were proposed to be built with "rammed earth". Furthermore, one side of the exhibition center would be a vertical garden - planted wall. All the roofs were proposed also to be planted, while most of them would be walkable and free to access. Large parts of the building would have glass facades, in order to allow maximum natural light to reach the studio spaces. Lastly, adjustable vertical wooden blinds would be positioned on the outside of the glass facades, where depending on the orientation, it would achieve enough shading in order to avoid overheating during summer periods.





Athens New Archeological Museum

Program: Museum, Public Square, Sport Facilities

Type: Open International Competition

Location: Plato's Academy, Athens, GR

Owner: Athens Anaplasis, GR Gov

Architectural Team: John Kanakas, Marilena Petalidou, Nikos Empeoglou

Architectural Consultants: Kostas Christopoulos, Kostis Kallipolitis

Urban Planners: Nikiforos Mpalatsinos, Niki Vasiliopoulou

Structural Engineer: Konstantinos Tsionis

Mechanical Engineer: Georgios Katsamberis

Transportation Consultant: Ioannis Kouyiannos

Archeologist: Emmanouil Petrakis

Museologist: Argyro Batsi

The competition entry aimed to create a world class sustainable museum hub, that would attract visitors from all over the world in order to allow them explore and learn about the Greek history, while appreciating first hand rare ancient foundations, that have been safely preserved through the centuries. The proposal constitutes a manifesto of landform architecture within an urban green context, as we believe that architecture needs to emerge and respect its local environment, and this was a catalytic parameter for the design strategy. The suggested building, is following basic sustainability principles, while creating a new green route by reshaping the existing site's landscape. As the main goal of the proposal is the promotion of the museum and the overall park at Plato's Academy, into a pole of attraction of international scope, the dynamism of the architectural language in combination with the grounded green approach with respect to its local green environment, is a well thought match for a timeless and yet contemporary piece of architecture, while in the same time upgrading the wider neighborhood. The overall programs of the museum hub would include multiple open space as well as closed galleries, a wide atrium with a prestigious hallway and service areas, a museum shop, offices, a restaurant and a cafe, as well an internal and an external amphitheater.



