

SOM  
FOUNDATION

2021  
EUROPEAN  
RESEARCH  
PRIZE



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## 1. Fellowship

In 2021, the SOM Foundation is introducing the European Research Prize as an expansion of the US-based Research Prize. The €20,000 European Research Prize is awarded annually to a faculty-led interdisciplinary team based in Europe to conduct original research that contributes to the SOM Foundation's current topic.

## 2. Topic: Envisioning Responsible Relationships with Materiality

According to a United Nations Environment Programme report published in 2020 “natural resource extraction and processing still account for more than 90 percent of global biodiversity loss and water stress, and around half of global greenhouse gas emissions.” In a context of global environmental crisis and enduring resource inequality, it is essential to continue to reevaluate our relationship with materiality.

This year's topic seeks to explore materiality from the micro- to the macroscale, bringing together designers and researchers from multiple disciplines in order to envision sustainable, responsible, and ethical relationships with materials and the communities that they come from. How do we shape nonexploitative networks of extraction, production, distribution, and waste? What type of social, cultural, and environmental landscapes do those new networks define? What are the roles and responsibilities of nations, corporations, communities, and individuals in shaping these networks? What are ways to limit the long-term impact on Earth of the human consumption of materials? And what material innovations—technical or in their application—present new possibilities?

## 3. Eligibility

The European Research Prize is open to faculty currently teaching at a professionally accredited bachelor's degree, master's degree, or PhD program in architecture, landscape architecture, or urban design in Europe. For a list of eligible countries, please visit the Architects' Council of Europe: <https://www.ace-cae.eu/architects-in-europe>. The research must be developed in an academic studio or other research structure within the academic institution. The lead faculty member(s) will be expected to work in a collaborative manner with faculty from other disciplines, leading professionals, nonprofit organizations, and/or community representatives in addition to students enrolled in the studio. Collaborator(s) can be based worldwide. The winning team will be required to thoroughly document their research findings and develop conclusions or suggestions for application to professional practice.

SOM Foundation affiliated members and SOM employees should not be included as part of the proposals. Faculty from previously awarded proposals are not eligible. However, previously awarded academic institutions can submit new proposals.

## 4. Expected Outcomes

During the research period, the SOM Foundation is anticipated to have periodic interactions for the purpose of providing feedback and focus to maintain a high level of excellence throughout the research effort.

The research portion of the prize is expected to be completed a year after its start date. The start date can vary to match academic calendar but needs to be no later than September 30, 2022.

The winning team will be required to thoroughly document the research findings and develop conclusions or suggestions for application to professional practice. The final product should advance the discussion around the selected topic and be visually compelling.

The leading faculty and academic institution submitting the grant application may present the results at the end of the project at a public event held at their institution. Faculty will be responsible for seeking out additional opportunities to disseminate research findings at relevant professional, public, and civic events, as well as in online and print publications.

## 5. Application Requirements

### 5.1 Title Page

- Title of Research Project
- Name(s) and institutional affiliation of lead faculty member(s) and collaborator(s)
- Keywords
- Date of application

### 5.2 Abstract

Maximum 250-word abstract summarizing the topic of the proposed research. Specifically, the problems or the conditions that demonstrate the need for the research, the research question that will be addressed, the scope and proposed methodology of the work, and the expected outcomes of the project.

### 5.3 Description

Maximum 750-word expository description of the area of focus, scope, and outcomes of the proposed work. Include the institutional context of the of the research (e.g., team composition, travel, facilities, institutional support, etc.).

### 5.4 Work Plan

Identify project collaborator(s), a schedule, key milestones, preliminary budget, final products, and a draft syllabus.

### 5.5 Preliminary Budget

Provide itemized use of the grant funds (e.g., research assistance, travel, equipment, software, supplies, etc.). Please include additional funds or in-kind support, if any, provided by other funding sources.

## 5.6 Supporting Documentation

- CV(s) of lead faculty member(s)
- Examples of student studio work produced under the instruction of the lead faculty member(s); examples from multiple students in a single studio are preferred
- Letter of support from the supervising department head or chief academic officer of the department, college, or university of the lead faculty member(s)

## 5.7 Supplemental Documentation

Maximum of 20 pages of additional documentation directly related to the proposed research program (e.g., copies of completed or speculative creative work or building designs, relevant writings or other documents that establish unique qualifications).

## 6. Application Format

- Single PDF format
- 8.5" x 11", portrait orientation
- 35 pages maximum
- 150 MB maximum

## 7. Application Deadline

Submit information via the application page form no later than **Monday, November 8, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. CST**. Applications received after that time will not be considered.

## 8. Jury

The inaugural jury will be led by SOM Foundation Executive Director **Iker Gil** and will include:

- **Marco Ferrari** (Cofounder of Studio Folder, Milan)
- **Kent Jackson** (Partner of SOM, London and Secretary of the SOM Foundation)
- **Tim Marlow** (Chief Executive and Director of the Design Museum, London)
- **Débora Mesa** Molina (Principal of Ensamble Studio, Boston and Madrid)
- **Sumayya Vally** (Founder and Principal of Counterspace, Johannesburg)

The SOM Foundation reserves the right to choose not to award, to co-award, or to split the prize as the jury deems appropriate.

## 9. Evaluation Criteria

- Proposal relevance to goals and objectives
- Research program innovation and rigorousness
- Clarity of approach to student engagement in the proposed research program
- Transferability of research outcomes to practice
- Qualifications, prior achievements, expertise, track record of performance
- Capacity to administer, including contract and budget management
- Content and quality of supporting documentation

## 10. Notification of Award

The winner will be notified no later than Monday, January 10, 2022.

## 11. Recipient Responsibilities

By accepting an award, the recipient(s) agrees to:

- provide progress reports via email to the SOM Foundation Executive Director.
- complete the research and final report by December 31, 2023, or within an agreed-upon time, depending on circumstances.
- forfeit all fellowship money to the SOM Foundation in the event that research is not completed by December 31, 2023, unless prior written approval is received from the SOM Foundation Executive Director.

Any changes to the proposal, including the schedule and budget allocation, need to be submitted in writing and approved by the SOM Foundation.

## 12. Copyright

The winning application will become part of the SOM Foundation's archive. The SOM Foundation reserves the right to use the winning application—and the recipient's monthly progress reports and final report—or any portion of them in press releases, presentations, exhibits, history books, and similar publications, as well as for public access for student and educational purposes in all media, including online. Authors will retain the copyright of their work.