

HOLD THE PLACE
16th
international
design
contest
triestecontemporanea

deadline
july 5, 2026
at 11:59 pm, CET

APPLICATION FORM

art. 1 – PREMISES

The International Design Contest Trieste Contemporanea aims at showcasing the most original contemporary design projects proposed from Central and Eastern European countries on the theme of its current edition. The competition is a biennial event established in 1995 by the Italian aesthetics and design scholar Gillo Dorfles.

art. 2 – THEME

The 16th edition of the Competition is structured around two themes, each inviting designers to explore different aspects of the relationship between object, memory, and place.

GENERAL THEME

Participants are invited to propose an original concept for a small functional object that preserves a personal experience of Friuli Venezia Giulia, either lived or imagined, through the designer's perspective. This is not about describing this territory of North-Eastern Italy in a literal way, but about capturing its character in the form of a device for use: an object that, through its use, evokes the cultural, historical, social, or landscape context that inspired it.

Functionality, formal clarity, and conceptual strength must converge in a coherent and conscious proposal—an object in which use becomes a vehicle for storytelling and in which material houses identity (an encouraged option). The project must be accompanied by a short text that effectively conveys the essence of the object. Sustainability and practical feasibility are not secondary requirements, but expressions of design maturity and responsibility toward the context.

SPECIAL THEME

Fifty years after the Friuli earthquake, a Special Prize is dedicated to Venzone, a town that symbolises reconstruction after 1976. Through a functional object, connected to this place in accordance with the competition's General Theme principles, participants are asked to interpret the specific themes of resilience and community, transforming them into a project of continuity and renewal.

art. 3 – TERMS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

Participation in the competition is free.

There is no age limit.

Individuals and groups can participate in the competition. The competition is open to designers born in CEI Member States (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine—see the [CEI website](#)). In view of the enlarged territorial aspects, the 16th edition of the contest has been extended to include designers born in Austria. All group members must be born in the countries listed above. Groups and individuals can only submit one project, and choosing to respond to one of the two proposed themes. Submissions must be original and previously unpublished and do not infringe, for any reason, the rights of any third party.

Contestants should apply using the application form available on the www.triestecontemporanea.it website.

The projects must be submitted by July 5, 2026, at 11:59 pm, CET.

All material requested should be written in English and included in the application. Applications that are incomplete, late, not submitted online or that do not respect the formats and sizes specified in the form will not be accepted.

art. 4 – MATERIALS TO SUBMIT

Every participant entering the competition should mandatorily submit the following documents:

– A copy of an official identity document of the individual or group leader showing the place of birth must be provided _pdf or jpg file (failure to do so will result in exclusion from the competition). In addition, groups wishing to participate must complete the application form, providing the first and last names and the place of birth of all group members, and uploading the official identity documents of each member, each showing the place of birth.

– The project of the original design object, which should be unpublished and containing all the information required for its production_ pdf file, max 5 MB.

– A narrative capsule (a short text that effectively conveys the essence of the object)_ max 100 characters, and a rationale (a thorough account explaining the concept behind the new object, and design and production choices)_ max 2,400 characters.

– A candidate's descriptive CV text_ max 1500 characters.

art. 5 – CONFIDENTIALITY AND RIGHTS OF USE

All material submitted will be treated as strictly confidential and under no circumstances consigned to third parties, namely anybody not on the panel of judges, before the close of the competition. The contestants selected shall be bound by the same principles of confidentiality until the official publication of the results by the organizing Committee.

The Committee reserves the right to publish details and information of the selected and winning projects in its promotional material and in the final catalogue. If contestants wish to protect their work by applying for copyright or a patent registration, they may do so before entering their work in the competition.

art. 6 – PANEL OF JUDGES

The panel of judges, consisting of international experts and representatives from the Central European Initiative and Trieste Contemporanea, will select a number of best designs and award the contest's prizes.

The panel's decisions shall be final.

The Trieste Contemporanea website will announce the names of the members of the jury by the end of May, 2026 and publish their decisions by the end of July 2026.

art. 7 – SELECTED PROJECTS AND AWARDS

– The works selected by the jury will be exhibited in Trieste and published in an online catalogue on the Trieste Contemporanea website.

– BEBA PRIZE – for the youngest designer individually participating, among those selected: 1.000 €

– CEI PRIZE – for the best design from one of the non-EU CEI countries: 3.000 €.

– GILLO DORFLES PRIZE – for the best overall design of 2026 competition: 4.000 €.

– VENZONE SPECIAL PRIZE – for the project that best represents the special theme 2026: 2.000 €.

art. 8 – PUBLICATION OF THE COMPETITION RESULTS

The competition results will be accessible online on the www.triestecontemporanea.it website by the end of July 2026. They will also be announced by the organising Committee through the international media.

art. 9 – EVENTUAL PROTOTYPES OF PROJECTS

Should Trieste Contemporanea decide to realize prototypes from the awarded projects, the winners will be informed in due course. These prototypes will remain the property of Trieste Contemporanea.

art. 10 – HORS CONCOURS PARTICIPATION

Trieste Contemporanea reserves the right to invite a number of designers to take part hors concours.

art. 11 – EXHIBITION OF THE SELECTED AND WINNING PROJECTS

All the selected and winning projects, together with any presented by designers invited hors concours, should be displayed in a final exhibition in Trieste alongside the award ceremony. The Committee reserves the right to exhibit these projects elsewhere in Italy and abroad.

art. 12 – AWARDS CEREMONY

The awards ceremony will take place in Trieste by 15 of September 2026. The winning designers will be invited to Trieste in order to collect their prize, their travel and accommodation expenses paid for by Trieste Contemporanea.

APPLICATION FORM

CONTEST RULES

contest's previous editions

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