Homo sapiens have been evolving for approximately 2.5 million years. During that time, our species has gone through a long series of drastic changes, but our planet, our home, has stayed largely the same. From the beginning, Man has been fascinated by earth’s mysteries. What makes a fire burn? What lies awake at the bottom of the ocean? Which mountain peaks reach highest to the heavens? Which cave plunges deepest to the center of the earth? In an effort to answer these questions, to take one step closer to the truth, our ancestors have not only sacrificed their time and energy, but also their lives.

We have created belief systems and religions. We have scoured the earth from every angle with our tools of science. All in an effort to understand our world, to understand why things happen the way they do; this inherent curiosity, this exploratory drive, is embedded, for better or worse, in each and every one of us.

And through all this effort and examination, we have found many answers, many fascinating truths about our race and our planet that we would have never believed possible. But with every answer found, there is another question that forms itself, there is another mystery waiting to be solved. No matter how deep we dig and how much we discover, our planet will remain a fascinating and intriguing place that will never cease to amaze us.

For many generations, the Northern Lights were one of nature’s greatest mysteries. Why did the sky turn green and yellow and purple in various regions of the earth, at specific times of the year, while other places, other skies, remained entirely unchanged? There have been numerous theories to explain this phenomenon, including the simple theory that the gods were responsible. More complicated theories included two holes, one in the north pole, one in the south pole, that shot light out from the center of the earth; yet another theory suggested a great war amongst the planets and the stars, being fought between legendary warriors that had earned their place in the night sky as a posthumous reward for courage and valor in their earthly battles.

Our explanation has changed over time. It is believed in our modern era that the Northern Lights are caused by a chemical reaction between solar winds, oxygen, and nitrogen that gets set off at very low temperatures. But even with a hard-tested, scientific explanation for the Northern Lights, the phenomenon doesn’t amaze us any less. Flocks of people still congregate around the Northern Lights to experience their mystery firsthand, to witness the miracle of nature, if only for a few nights, to breathe in the magical effect of the Northern Lights, to absorb the power and mystique that has drawn Man’s attention from their first blazing incarnation in the arctic sky.

Every year thousands of tourist travel to Rovaniemi, Finland to see the Northern Lights. They normally stay at generic hotels when they come to Rovaniemi: the same, ordinary type of place they would stay anywhere else in the country.

At ArchMedium we would like to propose a project that will help us rediscover our primitive instincts. We want to create a bond again with Mother Nature. We want to reestablish the ancient connection between Man and the glories of His planet. This is an experience that too frequently eludes us in our contemporary, urban lifestyles.

What we want to create is a Northern Lights observatory located in one of the most extreme latitudes inhabited by Man, surrounded by lush, endless forests and nature in its purest form. A place where one can retreat for a few days to completely
disconnect from the daily routine and experience a life of observation, relaxation, and learning.

The project is to design a small hotel which stands on its own as a tourist destination. This is much more than just a service to the city: there will be a Finish spa, a full astronomical observatory, and all the most charming accommodations in food, beverage, and lodging.

The hotel should be a phenomenon within itself. When people come to stay, they are not only amazed by what they see in the night sky, but they are amazed by the design of the temporary home in which they’re staying. The two experiences should be miraculous, engaging, and altogether unforgettable.

2.1 The site

Rovaniemi is the ideal location for such a project. Located in the icy curls of the Arctic Circle, this capital of the Finnish Lapland is not only the final stop north on the Finnish railway system, but is also the supposed hometown of Santa Claus! And best of all... the Northern Lights are visible in Rovaniemi up to 200 nights per year.

However, the Northern Lights are not the only interest that a project in the Arctic Circle has to offer. The weather conditions can be so extreme that designing for a place like this can be different from doing it in any other region of the world. During the winter, temperatures can reach -30°C (-22°F), the sun is gone for most of the season, and there is snowfall 183 days a year on average. In the summer, on the opposite end of the spectrum, Rovaniemi experiences twenty-four hours of sunlight, known around the world as “the midnight sun”, which includes a separate series of challenges for participants to consider.

Although Rovaniemi is a remote village, the slightest hint of artificial light, noise, or any other urban activity could spoil a guest’s experience at the observatory. To prevent that from happening, the project won’t be located inside the village itself, but on a virgin hill in front of it, approximately two kilometers away, on the other side of the Kemijoki River.

Currently, there are no roads connecting the village to the build site, so as part of the project a pedestrian walking road will need to be constructed. Participants are encouraged to pay special attention to the relation between the project and the surrounding nature; topography, vegetation, etc. As well as to the visual connection that will result between the city and the new building.

2.2 Spaces

Pedestrian access road
Entrance hall + Reception 30 m²
Restaurant area 75 m²
(kitchen, storage and eating area)
Planetary 80 m²
(8m Ø approx.)
Observatory 85 m²
Double rooms* 7 x 30 m²
Quadruple rooms* 3 x 50 m²
Circulations 100 m²
Sauna areas x2 (M/F)
   Social area 15 m²
   Sauna 10 m²
   Dressing room 20 m²

Total 800 m²

*The proposed rooms will have between 30m² and 50m² and should have their own private bathroom, sleeping area and contemplation/relaxation area. Participants are encouraged to pay special attention to the transition between the inside space and the outside space of the rooms, and are allowed to treat the exterior spaces immediately surrounding the rooms.

**Topography and the existing infrastructures such as streets and the railway define a unique possible access point to the hill from the Kajaanintie Street. From this point a small pedestrian road will take the visitors up to the hotel/observatory.

***The project can be developed as a single building or a series of dispersed volumes. The access to the rooms can be done either through an inside space or directly from the outside.
3. Organization Criteria

3.1 Eligibility

This competition is public and open to all undergraduate, graduate, masters, and PhD students, as well as to young professionals with less than 5 years of experience in architecture and other related fields—engineering, urban planning, interior design, industrial design, etc.

In order to be eligible, all members of the team must meet at least one of the criteria mentioned above on the day the competition begins. The members of the team must be able to provide documentation to prove their student/young professional status.

Teams can be formed by just one member or up to six. Members of a team don’t necessarily have to be students at the same university or live in the same country.

It is not necessary that all members of a team are architecture specialists. Having a photographer, artist, philosopher, etc. on a team can help to see the project in a new way, thus enriching the final result. However, it is recommended that at least one member of the team has some experience in architecture.

Under no circumstances will members of the jury, members of the organization, or persons with a direct personal or professional relationship with members of the jury or the organization be allowed to participate in this competition.

3.2 Prizes

**1st Prize**

- 3.000€
- Publication in architecture magazines (“WA” y “Future arquitecturas”)
- 1 year subscription to the ON Design magazine.
- Exhibition at the Architecture School of Barcelona (ETSAB) and the Aalto University in Helsinki.
- Reviews in several architecture webs and blogs.

**2nd Prize**

- 1.500€
- Publication in architecture magazines (“WA” y “Future arquitecturas”)
- 1 year subscription to the ON Design magazine.
- Exhibition at the Architecture School of Barcelona (ETSAB) and the Aalto University in Helsinki.
- Reviews in several architecture webs and blogs.

**3rd Prize**

- 500€
- Publication in architecture magazines (“WA” y “Future arquitecturas”)
- 1 year subscription to the ON Design magazine.
- Exhibition at the Architecture School of Barcelona (ETSAB) and the Aalto University in Helsinki.
- Reviews in several architecture webs and blogs.

**10 Honorable Mentions**

- Exhibition at the Architecture School of Barcelona (ETSAB) and the Aalto University in Helsinki.
- Reviews in several architecture webs and blogs.

*Depending on which country you live and pay taxes in, the cash prizes might be subject to some withholding to comply with the corresponding legal regulations.

**Publications**

ArchMedium is in constant contact with some of the major architecture magazines and publishers around the world. For each competition, we agree to publish with the magazines that best match the theme of the particular contest. Depending of the final result, other publications might be interested in publishing the content as well.

We also keep very close contact with the most visited architecture blogs and websites on the internet, where the content of the competition will be reviewed. It’s hard to estimate how many websites will publish the competition since many of them find inspiration for their content in magazines or other blogs of reference.
Exhibitions

We will hold a free, public exhibition at the Architecture School of Barcelona (ETSAB) and the Aalto University in Helsinki. The exhibition might become a touring exhibition depending on the interest that other universities and cultural centers show for it.

3.3 Jury

The jury will be formed by the following members:

- **Presidente del jurado:** Josep Llinás
- **Studio:** Pere Joan Ravetllat (Ravetllat Ribas)
- **Young Architect:** Mara Partida (MX-SI)
- **Architect & Historian:** Celia Marín (ETSAB/UPC)
- **Invited Architect:** Philip Tidwell (Aalto university)

Each member of the jury will vote the projects according to how well they did on their area of expertise, always remembering that each part of the project needs to be in relation with the rest.

*All members of the jury have expressed their willingness to take part in the voting process of this competition. However, their participation is subject to their professional commitments.

3.4 Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 16th 2012</td>
<td>Special Entry period starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 18th 2012</td>
<td>Special Entry period ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 19th 2012</td>
<td>Early Entry period starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 15th 2012</td>
<td>Early Entry period ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 16th 2012</td>
<td>Regular Entry period starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 15th 2012</td>
<td>Regular Entry period ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 31st 2012</td>
<td>Submission deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun 18-24 2012</td>
<td>Jury meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun 27th 2012</td>
<td>Winners announce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 Registrations

The entry periods will be divided as follows:

- **Special** Jan 15th – Mar 18th 50€ + TAX*
- **Early** Mar 19th – Apr 15th 75€ + TAX*
- **Regular** Apr 16th – May 15th 100€ + TAX*

*18% TAX must be applied to these prices (Special 59€, Early 88,5€, Regular 118€).
The registration fee is per team, regardless of how many members are on the team.

If a team wants to submit more than one proposal to the competition they will have to register each proposal separately and pay an additional fee for each proposal they wish to submit.

For a project to be accepted the team must be properly registered to the competition. All registrations will be done through the STCenters website (www.stcenters.com), where you will be asked to choose between several payment options.

After completing the registration form, the first member of the team (who will act as the team’s spokesman), will receive an e-mail (please check your junk folder too) with instructions on how to complete the registration if further steps are necessary. In the same e-mail you will also find the username and password that will give you access to the STCenters intranet where you will be able to check the status of your registration, change your team name, change your member names, etc.

3.6 Payments*

All payments made through Bank Transfer or Western Union must be identified with the registration code of the team they belong to so that we can relate them correctly. If we receive a payment that is not properly identified we won’t be able to relate it to your team and your participation will not be confirmed until you provide a proof of payment.

Accepted payment methods:

Pay-Pal, Debit or Credit cards.

It is the fastest, easiest, and most secure way to pay online. Your registration will be received instantly. We do not charge any service fees when you use Pay-Pal, debit cards, or credit cards.
Bank Deposit

You must make a deposit of the stipulated amount (according to your registration period) to the account below.

Bank: Caixa Catalunya
Account holder: ArchMedium
# Account: 2013 0405 96 0203831706
Concept: Código de inscripción (tres letras)
IBAN: ES6220130405960203831706
SWIFT: CESCESBBXXX

Western Union.

You must send a money order of the stipulated amount (according to your registration period) to the beneficiary below. After sending the money order, please send your name, country, and transaction ID by e-mail to inscriptions@stcenters.com. Any transaction fees that Western Union or the intermediary you are using might charge must be paid by the sender.

Beneficiary: Gastón Saboulard
Address: Duran i Bas 1, 3º1ºA. 08002 Barcelona. SPAIN

* Once the payments are received and the registration is confirmed the fees won’t be refunded or transferred to other competitions under any circumstance.

** The date that must be considered to identify which registration period you belong to is the date that ArchMedium will receive the deposit and not the day that it is sent. Any bank fees that this operation might generate must be paid by the sender.

3.7 FAQ

During the competition, all participants are permitted to ask questions which help them better understand the project description and/or any other aspect of the competition.

Any questions that are not resolved in this document or in the FAQ section on our website must be made through the ArchMedium’s Facebook page. This ensures that all participants have access to the same amount of information.

3.8 Documentation

All the necessary documentation to develop the project, such as pictures of the site, videos, AutoCad drawings, etc. will be available at the ArchMedium website so that anyone can download them before or after joining the competition. They may access and download the materials as many times as they need to.

Participants are free to use all this material in the context of this competition. They are also allowed to create their own graphic documents or to find new ones from other sources.

3.9 Submission

Each team will submit only one din-A1 size, landscape panel with their proposal.

This panel must be identified with the registration code of the team and the registration code ONLY; any panel including team names or personal names will be disqualified without refund.

Each team is responsible for choosing which information they include in their panel so that the jury may gain the clearest understanding of their project. However it’s recommended to include at least the following information:

- Main floor layout drawings.
- Full and partial cuts.
- Some kind of 3D view.

The representation technique is completely free (2D drawings, pictures of models, sketches, renders, collages, etc.). The jury will not only evaluate the quality of the project but also the clarity and quality of the presentation.

We do not recommend including large amounts of text on the panel. The project should be explanatory enough through the graphic material. However, certain notes might be acceptable. These notes must be written in English or Spanish ONLY—any text written in a different language will not be taken into account and may lead to a team’s disqualification.

Submissions must be done through the ArchMedium’s intranet only, before the date indicated on the competition calendar. You must log in with your username and password and follow the upload process. No submissions will be accepted by e-mail or any other medium. The submission page will be automatically closed after the submission date and time are reached, not allowing any modifications or aggregations after that, so please, try to upload your project 24 hours in advance so that you have time to solve any issues that might come up along the way (they always do!).

The panel must be no other size than Din-A1 and be in no other format than JPG. The maximum weight of the file is 6MB.

We recommend to layout the poster with a 72dpi resolution, although you might use a higher
resolution as long as the file weight doesn’t exceed the established limit.

3.10 Evaluation Criteria

The projects will be evaluated as follows:

- **Presentation**: Ability to clearly express the main ideas of the project and quality of the presentation.
- **Integration with the Environment**: Ability to relate to the urban and historical environment.
- **Architectural Design**: Ability to design a project that will become a landmark of the city without disrupting its current state.

*The jury reserves the right to award any proposal that fails at any of the parameters mentioned in these rules, as long as it justifies the breach of the rule in favor of the architectural design of the proposal.

3.11 Voting System

The voting system to choose the winning projects is as follows:

1. ArchMedium team, following the jury’s instructions, will make an initial selection of 50 projects in response to the above criteria.
2. ArchMedium will provide members of the jury both the pre-selected projects and all others in digital format so that they can privately review and include, if they consider it necessary, any of the non-selected projects in the initial list of 50 projects.
3. At the meeting, the jurors will discuss all the pre-selected projects (The ArchMedium’s selected 50 projects plus the projects added by the jury) to decide the winner, second and third prize and honorable mentions.

3.12 Intellectual Property

All the material submitted to the competition will become part of ArchMedium’s files. ArchMedium will have full rights to publish and promote this material, always making proper mention of their authors. For any other purposes the authors of the projects will keep full rights over their design.

By submitting a proposal you are giving ArchMedium the right to use the received material in both printed and on-line publications. ArchMedium will also have the right to modify any of the mentioned material at its will in order to better adapt it to the different formats and layouts that different publications might have.

3.13 Additional Notes

- ArchMedium reserves the right to make any changes to this document (dates, deadlines, requirements, etc.) as long as the changes benefit a majority of the competition participants. Any modifications will be announced on the ArchMedium’s Facebook page. It is each team’s responsibility to check the ArchMedium’s Facebook page on a regular basis to follow and incorporate all changes.
- The project of this competition is a fictitious job and will not be built. The provided documentation has been modified to better meet the goals of this competition and, as a result, the provided documents do not fully correspond with reality.
- This project is only an exercise, and therefore it will not necessarily follow any existing building or urban planning regulations.
- No one has hired or contacted ArchMedium in order to organize this competition. The idea and program of this competition have been fully developed by ArchMedium to serve solely as an academic exercise.
- ArchMedium has no relation to the owners of the site where this exercise is proposed to be and therefore cannot guarantee that participants will have any access to the property.
ArchMedium wants to thank the collaborators that have contributed to the organization of this competition. We would also like to thank the jury members, without whom this project would not have been possible.