

DECODE
AWARD²⁶

THE
SPACE

FOR

ARCHITECTURE

Organizer: DECODE Foundation for Contemporary Architecture and Art

“The name DECODE, for us, means deciphering the stories embedded as codes within our works — stories we create together with our clients and fellow creators. Through the DECODE initiative, we aim to uncover and interpret these hidden narratives, while creating space for new and compelling stories to emerge — each one uniquely our own.” – **Péter Bordás, BORD**

I. ABOUT THE DECODE FOUNDATION FOR CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE AND ART

Established in 2019 by BORD Architectural Studio, the DECODE Foundation for Contemporary Architecture and Art is dedicated to promoting contemporary architecture and art. Through its programmes, the Foundation highlights the significance of idea-driven creation and the value it can generate, giving rise to distinctive places, buildings with a strong architectural character, and compelling, inspiring works of art. Its mission is to make the work of contemporary creators more accessible and understandable to a wider audience.

The Foundation also seeks to foster dialogue between different artistic disciplines, uncover new points of connection, and support existing collaborations. Particular emphasis is placed on engaging and educating the younger generation, nurturing their interest in architecture and the arts.

Since 2019, the DECODE Foundation for Contemporary Architecture and Art has organized and coordinated the programme of events surrounding the DECODE Award. This includes launching the competition, inviting an expert jury to evaluate the submissions, presenting the DECODE Award in recognition of outstanding works, and organizing an exhibition showcasing the awarded entries.

Since 2025, the DECODE Award Ceremony has been preceded by DECODE Inspiration, an event featuring internationally acclaimed figures from the worlds of architecture and art. Through presentations and personal insights, they offer a glimpse into their creative thinking, exploring the processes, decisions and sources of inspiration behind their work.

ABOUT BORD ARCHITECTURAL STUDIO, THE FOUNDING PRACTICE

BORD Architectural Studio was founded in 2006 under the leadership of architect Péter Bordás. In addition to its headquarters in Budapest, the studio operates offices in Debrecen and Zurich, as well as dedicated in-house studios for building services engineering and landscape design.

Among its recently completed, internationally acclaimed projects are the Sauska Tokaj winery in Mád, thoughtfully integrated into its surrounding landscape, and the distinctive geometric volumes of BudaPrés Cider in Etyek. The studio's landmark projects contributing to the development of Debrecen include Nagyerdei Stadium and the rehabilitation of the surrounding Nagyerdei Park, together with the Aquaticum Waterpark, which offers an immersive, three-dimensional water experience; Forest Offices, one of the most advanced office buildings in Eastern Hungary; the Innovation Centre of the University of Debrecen; the Debrecen International School; and the Hotel Mercure and Hilton Garden Inn, located adjacent to the Great Reformed Church.

The studio's aim is to draw on the existing qualities and values of each place, giving its buildings a strong and distinctive character. Every project is built around a story of its own. This vision informs the architectural concept, serving as a guiding thread throughout the design process and giving each building its individual identity. This approach can be explored through the studio's projects, which are presented on its website.

More information:

bordstudio.hu

facebook.com/BordStudio

[Instagram: @bordstudio](https://www.instagram.com/bordstudio)

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE DECODE AWARD

The DECODE Foundation for Contemporary Architecture and Art aims to highlight idea-driven creative processes and emphasize the value they generate. By bringing together the fields of architecture and the arts, the DECODE competition seeks to create a shared platform that fosters dialogue between architecture, design and the visual arts, while uncovering new connections and points of convergence between different creative disciplines. These encounters can inspire new ideas, fresh perspectives and innovative approaches.

The DECODE Award does not evaluate finished architectural or artistic works; instead, it places at its centre the conceptual thinking that underpins their creation.

A further key objective of the DECODE competition is to support young creators, including through financial recognition. The total prize pool across the two categories — Architecture and Visual and Applied Arts — amounts to **HUF 2,600,000 net**.

III. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE DECODE COMPETITION

The DECODE Award is open to applicants **aged 18–35** who are Hungarian or international participants affiliated with a higher education or arts institution, including current students, scholarship holders and interns, as well as graduates in architecture or visual and applied arts, including designers and artists working in the fields of fine art, applied art, new media, video and photography.

The Organizer also accepts submissions from teams and particularly welcomes mixed teams bringing together participants from the two competition categories. In the case of a mixed team, the submission may be entered in only one category, as chosen by the team.

Participation in the competition is subject to registration. Registration is completed by filling in the online below, by 12 October 2026. Following registration, the Organizer will send applicants further information and practical details by e-mail.

„DECODE Award 2026 – Registration form”
<https://forms.gle/F23NUaXJtpahD66Q8>

Any further questions concerning the theme of the competition should be submitted by e-mail to decode@bordstudio.hu, with “Question” as the subject line.
The deadline for submitting questions is 9 October 2026.

IV. SUBJECT OF THE DECODE COMPETITION AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants are invited to present an original work of their own, built around a strong vision that forms the conceptual foundation of the work. The DECODE Award focuses on the ideas and creative thinking that drive the creation of a work.

Every work begins with a question, a situation or a moment of insight. In architecture, this is often a specific site, its history, inherent qualities and layers of meaning; in art, it may be a personal experience, a field of research, a phenomenon or an idea. Throughout the creative process, these starting points give rise to inspirations, associations and insights, from which the concept gradually takes shape — the guiding idea that directs the work as a whole and accompanies it throughout its development and realization.

It is this creative process that lies at the heart of the DECODE Award. The competition seeks works underpinned by a clear, original and consistently developed concept, capable of revealing the journey through which an idea emerges, evolves and ultimately takes shape.

For the jury, the focus is not solely on the quality of the resulting work, building, design or artwork, but on the intellectual and creative journey that led to it. The competition seeks to make visible the decisions, connections and narrative behind a work: the process through which an initial idea develops into a singular creation with a distinct character of its own. Above all, DECODE seeks to recognize the intellectual journey, the depth of creative thinking and the strength of the concept.

The awarded submissions from previous years, together with interviews with their creators, are available on the [DECODE YouTube](#) channel. For the latest news and further information about the competition, follow the [DECODE Instagram](#) page.

Applicants may enter in one of two categories:
Architecture or Visual and Applied Arts.



REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ARCHITECTURE CATEGORY

The starting point for the submission should be a realized or unrealized architectural work, design or concept that originates from a strong source of inspiration and, through an idea, insight or story connected to a place, function or social issue, articulates a distinctive architectural position.

At the centre of the competition, however, is not the resulting building or design itself, but the intellectual and creative process that underpins it: the inspiration drawn from the place or context, the development of the concept, the story behind it, and the design decisions that shaped the character of the architectural work. Applicants are asked to demonstrate, through their own architectural work, their creative approach, the story behind the work, and the journey through which an initial idea can evolve into an independent and meaningful architectural expression.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

The submission must be presented in a single video file with a **minimum duration of 30 seconds and a maximum duration of 3 minutes**. The purpose of the presentation is to communicate the ideas that shaped the creative process and its key stages. The video may include, among other things, slideshows, animation, film, drawings, images, stop-motion footage, hand-drawn or digitally created diagrams, sketches, captions, and any other visual elements that help communicate and contextualize the work.

The presentation must be comprehensible on its own and should convey the ideas, decisions and connections necessary to understand and interpret the individual creative process.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

Format: MP4
Encoding: H.264
Resolution: HD (1280 × 720 px)
Aspect ratio: Landscape (16:9)
Maximum file size: 1 GB

We also recommend that the presentation include both narration and subtitles.

If the presentation contains music, the applicant is responsible for ensuring that the music is used lawfully and may be publicly presented, including compliance with any applicable copyright, licensing and attribution requirements.

Submission materials may be submitted **in Hungarian or English**.

A **written statement** relating to the work must also be submitted for the jury, summarizing the concept, background and key ideas underlying the entry. The statement must not exceed 2,000 characters including spaces and may be written **in Hungarian or English**.

The presentation may be supplemented by a physical model, which awardees will have the opportunity to exhibit, subject to the conditions and limitations of the exhibition space. Decisions regarding its installation and/or storage will be made in consultation with the creator.



REQUIREMENTS FOR THE VISUAL AND APPLIED ARTS CATEGORY

The starting point for the submission should be a realized or unrealized project that originates from a strong source of inspiration, a personal or collective story, an idea or an insight, and articulates a distinctive artistic position.

At the centre of the competition, however, is not the resulting work itself, but the creative process of value creation that underpins it: the source of inspiration, the development of the concept, the ideas and thinking behind it, and the decisions that shape the character of the work. Applicants are asked to demonstrate, through a work of their own, their creative approach, the story behind the work, and the journey through which an initial idea can evolve into an independent and distinctive artistic expression.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

The submission must be presented in a single video file with a **minimum duration of 30 seconds and a maximum duration of 3 minutes**. The purpose of the presentation is to communicate the ideas that shaped the creative process and its key stages. The video may include, among other things, slideshows, animation, film, drawings, images, stop-motion footage, hand-drawn or digitally created diagrams, sketches, captions, and any other visual elements that help communicate and contextualize the work.

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The presentation may be supplemented by a physical artwork, which awardees will have the opportunity to exhibit, subject to the conditions and limitations of the exhibition space. Decisions regarding its installation and/or storage will be made in consultation with the creator.

V. SUBMISSION OF ENTRIES

Entries may be submitted until 12:00 (noon) on Monday, 19 October 2026, by completing the “DECODE Award 2026 – Application Form” and uploading the submission via the link below:

„DECODE Díj 2026 – Pályázati adatlap”
<https://forms.gle/9YNHS8zeyF3M6Vfe6>

VI. SELECTION PROCESS AND AWARDS

From the valid submissions received by 12:00 on 19 October 2026, the independent professional jury will compile a shortlist. The jury’s role is also curatorial in nature, as it will simultaneously select the works to be included in the exhibition. The shortlist will be announced on 9 November 2026.

In the second stage of the evaluation process, the jury members will jointly select the winners and awarded works from among the shortlisted entries in both categories. The jury may designate a maximum of three award recipients per category, as well as one recipient of the Spotlight Special Award.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- The originality of the concept and narrative presented, and their coherence with the architectural design or artistic work
- The visual quality of the submitted presentation

DECODE AWARD PRIZES (PER CATEGORY):

1 Grand Prize: HUF 1,000,000 net
2 Promising Project Awards: HUF 150,000 net each

In addition, the recipients of the Grand Prize will receive the DECODE award trophy, a unique hand-polished object crafted from crystal-clear glass by Fruzsina Zalavári.

CATEGORY-INDEPENDENT AWARD:

1 Spotlight Special Award, sponsored in recognition of creative works that contribute to and positively impact society.

The winners will be announced at the DECODE Award Ceremony on 17 November 2026, held at Apollo Gallery, Corvin Palace (1085 Budapest, Blaha Lujza tér 1.).

VII. SCHEDULE AND KEY DATES

4 September 2026

Competition announcement

9 October 2026

Deadline for submitting questions, in writing only, to decode@bordstudio.hu

12 October 2026

Deadline for online registration

19 October 2026, 12:00 (noon)

Deadline for online submission of entries

9 November 2026

Announcement of the shortlist

17 November 2026

DECODE Inspiration Lectures, Announcement of the DECODE Award Results, and Award Ceremony

Venue: Apollo Gallery, Corvin Palace (1085 Budapest, Blaha Lujza tér 1.)

18 November 2026

Return of exhibited works

VIII. MEMBERS OF THE DECODE AWARD JURY

- **Péter Bordás** – Ybl Prize-winning architect; founder and owner of BORD Architectural Studio; Chair of the Jury; founder of the DECODE Foundation for Contemporary Architecture and Art and Chair of its Board of Trustees
- **Dr. Anthony Gall PhD** – architect; recipient of the Ybl and Pro Architectura Prizes; Professor and Dean of the Ybl Miklós Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Óbuda University; Head of the Doctoral School of Architecture, Design and Technology
- **Nóra Demeter** – Ybl Prize-winning architect and interior designer; founder and director of Demeter Design Studio
- **János Golda** – architect; recipient of the Ybl, Pro Architectura and Prima Prizes; full member of the Hungarian Academy of Arts
- **Borbála Kálmán** – curator and art historian, Ludwig Museum, Budapest – Museum of Contemporary Art
- **Dr. Krisztián Kukla** – Artistic Director of aqb (art quarter budapest)
- **Ildikó Pém** – founder and owner of BORD Architectural Studio; founder and member of the Board of Trustees of the DECODE Foundation for Contemporary Architecture and Art
- **Edit Sasvári** – art historian
- **Erika Schneider** – communications consultant
- **Fanni Solymár** – art theorist and curator
- **Levente Szabó DLA** – architect; recipient of the Ybl, Pro Architectura and Prima Prizes; Head of the Department of Public Building Design, Faculty of Architecture, Budapest University of Technology and Economics

IX. RULES GOVERNING THE COMPETITION

- The competition is open and non-anonymous.
- By participating in the competition, applicants accept the decisions of the Jury as final and binding, without the right to appeal.
- Applicants are required to comply with the rules and requirements set out in the competition brief.
- Submission materials must be prepared in either Hungarian or English.
- By participating in the competition, applicants declare that they are the sole holders of the copyright to the submitted works.
- Ownership of the submitted works remains with the applicant.
- Applicants grant permission for their work to be photographed, reproduced and published, with proper attribution, in DECODE's online and printed communications without additional compensation.

X. DATA PROTECTION

By registering for the DECODE competition, applicants consent to the Organizer storing and processing their personal data for the purposes of administering the competition and communicating information related to it.

The Organizer undertakes to process all personal data securely, confidentially and in compliance with the applicable provisions of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council (General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR).

Applicants further acknowledge and agree that the presentation submitted to the competition may be used by the Organizer for communication related to the competition, the DECODE Award and the accompanying exhibition. In this context, both the applicant and the submitted work may appear in communication materials, including photographs and video recordings, across social media platforms, websites, and other online or printed publications.

By registering for the competition, applicants confirm that they have read, understood and accepted the terms and conditions set out in this competition brief.

decode-foundation.hu
facebook.com/decodefoundation
instagram.com/decodefoundation
youtube.com/@decodefoundation2756
decode@bordstudio.hu