

ARCASIA AWARDS FOR THESIS OF THE YEAR 2026

1. Overview

1.1 The **23rd ARCASIA Forum 2026**, curated and hosted by the **Indian Institute of Architects (IIA)**, will be held from **8–12 September 2026** across **Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur, India**, bringing together architects and institutions from across Asia under the theme **“Bringing Back... Vernacular Wisdom.”** As part of the Forum, the **ARCASIA Thesis of the Year (TOY) Awards 2026** will recognise outstanding graduating theses that reinterpret regional knowledge systems into sustainable and future-ready architectural solutions.

1.2 The **ARCASIA Thesis of the Year** is a prestigious architectural thesis competition that celebrates innovative and socially relevant work by architecture students across Asia. Initially conducted by the **Association of Siamese Architects (ASA)**, the competition was later adopted by the **Architects Regional Council Asia (ARCASIA)**, an assembly of 22 member countries, in 2015.

1.3 The competition aims to provide a platform for the brightest young minds in architecture to showcase their ideas and potential on an international stage. It focuses on theses that address pressing social concerns, demonstrate innovation and originality, and respond to wider global needs and challenges.

1.4 Each year, architecture students from ARCASIA member countries are invited to submit their work. The theses are first evaluated at the national level by their respective institutes. The top entries from each country are then submitted to the **ARCASIA Committee on Architectural Education (ACAE)** for final judging.

1.5 The competition culminates in an awards ceremony held during the **ARCASIA Forum**, where the winners are announced. More than a competition, the ARCASIA Thesis of the Year is a celebration of the talent, creativity, and commitment of the next generation of architects in Asia.

1.6 The ARCASIA Thesis of the Year (TOY ARCASIA) 2026 aims to establish a competitive platform for architecture schools across ARCASIA member countries. Its specific objectives are as follows:

1.6.1 Encourage Research-Based, Contextual Design

The competition encourages students to develop proposals backed by strong research and a clear understanding of local context. Entries should reflect sensitivity to climate, materials, culture, community needs, and ground realities so that the design remains rooted in place rather than becoming a generic solution.

1.6.2 Promote Vernacular Thinking for Today’s Challenges

The competition aims to motivate students to learn from vernacular knowledge and reinterpret it in a fresh and relevant way. The focus is not on copying the past, but on using traditional principles such as local building methods, crafts, typologies, and climate-responsive design to create solutions that are sustainable and suitable for the future.

ARCASIA AWARDS FOR THESIS OF THE YEAR 2026

1.6.3 Prioritise Sustainable and Responsible Design

The competition encourages students to think of sustainability as an essential part of design and planning. Participants are expected to understand how their thesis can contribute to broader goals such as responsible resource use, climate resilience, inclusive development, and long-term community well-being, in alignment with the spirit of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

2. Competition Details

2.1 Who Can Apply - The competition is open to architecture students from **ARCASIA member countries**. Each member institute shall follow its own internal selection process and may submit a maximum of **three (3) entries** to the **TOY ARCASIA Committee** for final evaluation by the **TOY ARCASIA Judging Committee**.

2.2 Eligible Theses - Only theses completed as part of a student's **first professional degree in Architecture** (such as **B.Arch / B.S. Arch.**, as applicable in the respective country) are eligible to participate. **Master's theses are not eligible** - Theses from post-professional or postgraduate Master's programmes pursued after completion of the first professional degree (for example, a Master's programme taken after B.Arch or an equivalent qualification) will not be considered for this award.

2.3 Thesis Completion Period - The thesis must be recent and should not be older than **two academic years** from the date of the award. For example, if the award is presented in **September 2026**, the thesis should have been completed between **September 2024 and September 2026**.

2.4 Individual / Group Entries - Entries may be submitted as either **individual** or **group work**.

2.5 Entry Characteristics

The entry should meet **one or more** of the following characteristics, keeping in mind the theme **"Bringing Back... Vernacular Wisdom."**

2.5.1 Thesis with High Social Relevance

The thesis should respond to real social needs and challenges through design that is rooted in local context and culture. It may address areas such as housing, community infrastructure, rural or urban development, or climate resilience. The work should show how vernacular thinking can improve quality of life, inclusivity, hygiene, safety, and overall community well-being.

2.5.2 Thesis with High Innovation and Originality

The thesis should present fresh ideas and original thinking inspired by vernacular principles. Innovation may be reflected through the use of traditional materials in new ways, the revival of craft and construction methods, climate-responsive strategies, adaptive reuse of older typologies, or the use of modern technology to strengthen local knowledge systems.

ARCASIA AWARDS FOR THESIS OF THE YEAR 2026

2.5.3 Thesis with High World Orientation

The thesis should connect local design thinking with wider global concerns. While rooted in local identity, the project should respond to larger challenges such as sustainability, resilience, equity, and environmental responsibility, showing how locally grounded solutions can add value to global architectural discussions.

2.5.4 Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The thesis should contribute towards achieving **one or more** of the **17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**, or their future global roadmap. This may be demonstrated through climate-responsive design, sustainable use of materials, conservation of cultural heritage, or planning that supports community development and long-term ecological balance.

2.6 Submission Requirements

All entries for submission must include the following:

2.6.1 Presentation Board (PDF)

- One (1) **A1 size board (594 mm × 840 mm), portrait format.**
(Sheet template attached for reference – Appendix 1)
- The presentation board must include all essential drawings and information the student wishes to showcase, such as the concept note, site plan, development strategy, plans, elevations, sections, and views.
- Students may also include any additional drawings or details they consider important to clearly explain their thesis.
- The file must be submitted as a **single compiled PDF**, created from **JPEG output**, with a **minimum 300 dpi resolution**.
- **External links will not be accepted.**

2.6.2 Details Sheet (PDF – Text Only) *(Template attached – Appendix - 2)*

A separate PDF must be submitted with the following details:

- Name of the submitting **ARCASIA member institute**
- Contact person's name, address, and contact details
- Student name(s)
- Degree programme name and duration
(for example: 5-year B.Arch / B.S. Arch., as applicable)
- Name of department and university
- Postal address, email ID, and phone number

ARCASIA AWARDS FOR THESIS OF THE YEAR 2026

2.6.3 Anonymity of Submission

This is an **anonymous selection process**.

- No identification such as student name, institute name, logos, signatures, etc. should appear on the **presentation board** or any other submission material, except the **details sheet**.
- The participant(s) must confirm that they hold the legal rights and copyrights for all submitted material.
- The participant(s) must keep the entry confidential and ensure that it is not shared with any third party until the official public announcement of results.

2.6.4 Language

The complete thesis entry must be presented in the **English language**.

3. Organization & Timeline

3.1. The launch of the competition shall be undertaken by the Convenor, assisted by the Co-Convenor. They shall ensure that the competition is launched in the most practical manner possible. The suggested timeline is as follows:

- **Announcement of Competition:** 10th April 2026
- **Submission of 3 Finalists from each Member Institute:** 10th June 2026
- **Compilation:** 10th June 2026 – 15th June 2026
- **Marking & Screening by Jury (Phase 1 marking):** 15th June – 6th July 2026
- **Final Online Judging by Jury (Phase 2) & Notification of finalist:** 6th July 2026 – 15 July 2026 (Tentative)

3.2 Jury Composition

The Asia-level judging shall be undertaken by a jury composed of the following:

Convenor

- Ar. Preethi Agrawal, Member, **The Indian Institute of Architects (IIA)**

Jury

1. Ar. Umar Saeed – Chairman, ACAE
2. Ar. Jonathan V. Manalad – IPC, ACAE
3. Ar. Sumitra Ghalley – Bhutan, Zone A
4. Ar. Suwardana Winata – Indonesia, Zone B
5. Ar. Shinezaya Enkhbat – Mongolia, Zone C

The selected entries received from all national institutes of ARCASIA will be judged on broad assessment guidelines.

ARCASIA AWARDS FOR THESIS OF THE YEAR 2026

3.2.1 Finality of Jury Decision

The decision of the Jury Panel shall be **final and binding** on all concerned parties and shall not be open to appeal.

3.2.2 Access to Jury Comments

Participants shall not have the right to request access to the jurors' comments or the adjudication records.

4. Awards

The following awards will be given:

4.1 Awards

- **4.1.1** The **Thesis of the Year Winner** shall receive the **ARCASIA Prize Medal**.
- **4.1.2** Other finalists shall receive a **Certificate**.
- **4.1.3** Special Award winners shall receive a **Certificate of Merit**.

4.1.3 Special Awards

- **4.1.3.1** ARCASIA Thesis with Highest Social Relevance
- **4.1.3.2** ARCASIA Thesis with Highest Innovation and Originality
- **4.1.3.3** ARCASIA Thesis with Highest World Orientation

4.2 The **ARCASIA Thesis of the Year 2026** may also be the recipient of any or all of the **Special Awards**.

4.3 The Awards Ceremony will be held during the **ARCASIA Forum**.

5. Intellectual Property

5.1 The **Intellectual Property Rights** shall remain with the author(s). However, by submitting an entry, the participant declares, warrants, agrees, and undertakes that the submission, including its Intellectual Property Rights, may be used for the **promotion and publication** of the event.

5.2 The participant affirms that the submission does not infringe upon the Intellectual Property Rights of any third party. If found otherwise, the participant shall be solely responsible for any legal consequences.

5.3 The participant has the right to withdraw the submission at any stage. However, once the work has already been used for promotion or publication, the organisers shall retain the right to continue such use.

5.4 The participant(s) understand and agree that the use of the submitted work for promotion or publication of the event shall not entitle them to any form of compensation. The organisers shall not be obliged to make any payment for the use of the work.



HOSTED & CURATED BY
THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

ARCASIA AWARDS FOR THESIS OF THE YEAR 2026

5.5 The organisers agree to provide appropriate credit to the participant whenever the work is used for promotion or publication of the event.

5.6 Any disputes arising out of the use of Intellectual Property Rights shall, as far as possible, be resolved amicably through mutual discussion.

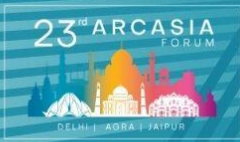
6. Submission Process

6.1 Students must submit their work to the **Architectural Institute of their respective country** to be nominated by that institute for **TOY ARCASIA 2026**.

6.2 Submission of the three national winners' works to TOY 2026 shall be made to ACAE Chairperson's desk: **Saeed.Umar@gmail.com**, **CC: convener.toy@arcasiaforum23.com**

7. Convenor's Helpdesk

For any queries related to the competition, please write to:
convener.toy@arcasiaforum23.com



HOSTED & CO-ORATED BY
THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

ARCASIA AWARDS FOR THESIS OF THE YEAR 2026

Appendix – 1

Sheet Template

A1 SIZE BOARD · 594 mm x 840 mm · PORTRAIT

<p>UNIQUE CODE</p> <input type="text"/>



HOSTED & CO-ORATED BY
THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

ARCASIA AWARDS FOR THESIS OF THE YEAR 2026

Appendix 2

Details Sheet

Name of the submitting ARCASIA member institute:

Contact Person's Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact Details: _____

Student name(s):

Degree programme name and duration (e.g., 5-year B.Arch / B.S. Arch. as applicable):

Name of department and university:

Postal address: _____

Email ID: _____ **Phone Number:** _____