

## **Shrinking Society: Architecture of New Equilibrium**

Over the past several decades, the hegemony that has governed our architecture has been confined to a single track of ‘growth’ and ‘expansion.’ Populations increased, cities continuously extended their physical boundaries, and architecture functioned as a key mechanism that materially sustained the pace of such growth. Today, however, we are **‘confronted with a major turning point—a shrinking society’**—driven not by temporary conditions, but by structural shifts including population decline, low growth, and regional depopulation.

The 45<sup>th</sup> International Competition (2026) seeks to define this phenomenon of “shrinkage” not as mere loss or regression, but as a condition of **‘New Equilibrium’** that our society now faces. Here, equilibrium does not signify a static halt, but rather a dynamic process of discovering an optimized “architectural proportion” between the inertia of quantitative supply inherited from an era of expansion and the new values demanded by a contracting social system. What is required of us is to abandon the inertia of blind expansion and to actively construct new architectural logics and orders that can respond with agility to the evolving needs of society.

Rather than remaining confined to specific architectural forms or methodologies, we seek to begin with a fundamental inquiry—**‘what constitutes the relevance of architecture in this era’**—and to explore its answers. This may take the form of proposing new spatial typologies that recombine fragmented urban structures, developing flexible systems that respond to shifts in demographic structures, or even reconfiguring social relationships beyond physical constructs.

We pose this question to all participants in this competition: in a moment when the myth of growth has come to a halt, what new order does your architecture envision? A reduction in physical scale does not imply a reduction in architectural imagination. Rather, this moment offers an opportunity to refocus on essentials and to restore the true social value and aesthetics of architecture. We look forward to bold proposals that **transform shrinkage—this defining constant of our time—into a creative variable**, and that present new points of equilibrium for the cities of the future.