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27 APRIL 2026

SHARE MALTA 2026 INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURE FORUM: SUSTAINABILITY, HERITAGE AND COASTAL URBANISM

Following the success of its inaugural 2025 edition, the SHARE forum returns to Malta, evolving from a pilot initiative into a definitive platform for the Mediterranean region. While last year's agenda established the foundations of quality of life and showcased large-scale developments led by Foster + Partners and Zaha Hadid Architects, the 2026 edition marks a significant evolution, pushing the architectural discourse even further

We have reached a critical tipping point where climate change is no longer a distant threat but a tangible reality. In the Mediterranean, record-breaking temperatures are shifting architecture from a realm of aesthetic preference to a mandate for climate adaptation. The most compelling narrative today is the collision between the grand visions of international 'starchitects' and the granular reality of the local landscape. While global experts propose revolutionary concepts, local practitioners must navigate the friction of spatial scarcity, stringent regulatory frameworks, and the profound responsibility of historical preservation

In this context, the SHARE forum seeks to provide the industry's answer to the crucial question: how can we build today in a way that we won't regret tomorrow?

Moving beyond conceptual presentations, this year's edition focuses on a rigorous analysis of industry practices. We are navigating the friction between the pursuit of luxury and the preservation of memory, as well as the gap between mere development and true sustainability. Our objective is to catalyse a genuine shift in how we shape the modern urban fabric.

1/7



NEWS

27 APRIL 2026

Is this a date?

On Friday, May 22, 2026, the SHARE forum returns to Malta, hosted by the DoubleTree by Hilton in St. Paul's Bay, a landmark formerly known as the Dolmen Hotel.

At its core, beyond the technical specifications, SHARE Malta 2026 is fundamentally a summit on the transformative power of space. The forum explores how intelligent design can recalibrate a region's entire identity, turning overlooked structures into thriving economic and cultural landmarks

The day offers a comprehensive agenda of technical sessions and expert panels, followed by an immersive cultural excursion to a nearby archaeological landmark at 6:00 PM. The forum concludes with the SHARE Malta After Event Party at 7:30 PM, providing guests with a relaxed, open-air atmosphere to foster professional connections and celebrate the day's insights.



NEWS

27 APRIL 2026

Who will be there?

The event brings together

- Visionary Architects who design with centuries-long legacies in mind;
- Institutional Leaders representing professional associations from Malta, Kosovo, and Egypt;
- Strategic Developers and Officials—the decision-makers shaping budgets and landscapes;
- You.

Three core pillars

The event is structured around three core pillars, each reflecting the urgent challenges and transformative potential of today's global urban landscape:

1. Identity-Based Rehabilitation (Building on Memory): The central issue here is how to graft ultra-modern architecture onto historic structures without destroying the spirit of the place. This is a critical issue for Malta (an island-museum) and for the rest of Europe;
2. Large-Scale Urban Planning (Master Planning): this segment focuses on the concept of 'cities within cities' and serves as the forum's premier showcase. We will

3 / 7



NEWS

27 APRIL 2026

explore multi-billion-dollar benchmarks from Asia and the Middle East, ranging from Zaha Hadid Architects' iconic hospitality landmarks in Dubai to the visionary cultural districts in Shenzhen designed by 2Portzamparc;

3. **Beyond Greenwashing:** this is the ethical approach. Architects acknowledge that simply adding plants to a facade does not equate to sustainability. The focus will be on innovative materials (laminated wood, disruptive technologies) that genuinely reduce the carbon footprint.

Key discussion themes and speakers

1. How can architecture be used as a city branding tool?

Architectural landmarks designed by firms such as Zaha Hadid Architects or BIG (Bjarke Ingels Group) significantly bolster the market value of their surroundings. In this light, the forum will examine urban regeneration initiatives that pivot industrial or neglected districts into premier global destinations. The discussion will also explore how iconic architecture has become a decisive factor in the strategic competition between cities to attract talent, tourism, and investment

- **Anat Stern** (Zaha Hadid Architects) will explore how projects such as Alba Residences in Dubai and Studio City in Macau are attracting foreign investment and luxury tourism. ZHA's fluid, unmistakable style serves as a mark of prestige.
- **Rex Bombardelli** (2Portzamparc) will offer a uniquely French perspective on large-scale cultural infrastructure, drawing on landmark projects such as the Suzhou



NEWS

27 APRIL 2026

Cultural Centre in China. His presentation will dissect how monumental cultural investments can serve as economic engines, revitalising entire regions through the 'Bilbao Effect'

- **Hanna Johansson (BIG)** will speak about “hedonistic sustainability”, meaning the idea that a sustainable building can also be highly profitable and visually appealing, thereby changing perceptions of business districts.

2. How to navigate the friction between innovation and local identity

Under the banner of 'Building on Memory,' the forum addresses the sensitive intersection of heritage and gentrification. The challenge lies in introducing luxury and modern infrastructure into historic settings without compromising their cultural authenticity. The experts will argue that innovation, far from being a threat, is the essential mechanism for adaptive reuse, saving heritage from decay. This is especially pertinent in the Maltese context, where a scarcity of space meets an abundance of history at every turn

- **Paolo di Nardo (ARX)**, who is an expert on the Italian context (which is very similar to the Maltese one), will present case studies such as Stella Maris, demonstrating how modern technology can be integrated into historic structures to extend their lifespan without altering their identity.
- **Javier Villar (JVAD)**, who has over two decades of experience working alongside Kengo Kuma in Japan, will discuss minimalism and respect for local materials. He will explain how the Japanese aesthetic of fragility and transparency can be applied to allow historic monuments to breathe alongside new structures.



NEWS

27 APRIL 2026

- **Emre Arolat** (EAA) has redefined how we build in historically sensitive contexts. Using his landmark Museum Hotel Antakya as a blueprint, he will illustrate his philosophy of architectural coexistence. Arolat's session will prove that historical layers are not obstacles to progress; rather, they are assets that, when handled with vision, can turn a complex site into a world-class landmark that honours its heritage

3. The Green Pivot

Acknowledging that architecture remains one of the world's most carbon-intensive industries, this year's forum adopts a rigorous stance: 'Beyond Greenwashing.' The focus shifts from superficial labels to substantive change, exploring alternative materials and the concept of adaptive longevity. The goal is to design buildings that can be repurposed in 50 years rather than demolished. Furthermore, the discussion will focus on bioclimatic design. How can the architecture harness the Mediterranean sun and wind as assets, rather than relying on energy-heavy systems for climate control

- **Jeremy Smith** (Irving Smith Architects), a global pioneer in sustainable materials, will showcase the SCION Timber Innovation Hub. He will present Mass Timber (CLT—Cross-Laminated Timber) as the viable, carbon-sequestering alternative to concrete and steel for high-rise construction. Smith's presentation will illustrate a fundamental shift in the industry, moving toward buildings that act as 'carbon sinks,' storing CO2 within their very structure rather than emitting it during production.



NEWS

27 APRIL 2026

- **Ken Mackay** (Mackay + Partners) will introduce the concept of 'architectural camouflage' through the lens of the Comporta Eco Resort project. The focus remains on buildings designed to be nearly invisible, blending into the Portuguese coastal landscape with surgical precision. This session will highlight a shift toward low-impact development, where the goal is no longer to dominate the site, but to inhabit it with profound environmental sensitivity.
- **Iman Gawad** (African Union of Architects) will offer a critical perspective on sustainability in arid climates, explaining why green solutions from Europe do not always work in Africa or the Mediterranean, and how vernacular design is, in fact, the most environmentally friendly.

Participation Details

Registrations are open for professionals and technology partners.

Full details and the agenda are available on the event website: share-architects.com.

About SHARE Architects

SHARE Architects is an international platform dedicated to promoting excellence in architecture and facilitating professional dialogue on a global level. By organizing conferences, forums, and networking events across Europe, Central Asia, and the Middle East, SHARE Architects brings together renowned architects, industry leaders, and professionals from related fields, contributing to the exchange of ideas, innovation, and best practices. Over time, the platform has become an important landmark for the architectural community, supporting sustainable development and the quality of the built environment.

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7/7