

Making Waves: Floating Architecture Across The World

As technology advances, cities are no longer confined to terra firma.



As land becomes an ever-more scarce resource, cities and designers are turning their attention to the world's great lakes, rivers and oceans as the next frontier in urban development.

Rotterdam's Floating Forest

Famously in constant battle with the sea, the Netherlands are at the forefront of amphibious architecture. While cities like Amsterdam have built entire districts on reclaimed land and directly on the water, a collective from Rotterdam have taken things a step further with their Bobbing Forest. The floating trees were originally conceived by Colombian artist Jorge Bakker back in 1973. Artist Jeroen Everaert teamed up with cultural entrepreneur Anne van der Zwaag and designer Jurgen Bey to realise the Bakker's vision in real size. After a small-scale test in 2014, the full project was launched in spring 2016 with 20 elm trees floating autonomously in Rotterdam harbour, to commemorate Dutch National Tree Day. The trees, which sit in buoys and are resistant to salt water, will grow over a decade, turning the waterway gradually green with each passing year.

Polynesia's Floating City

French Polynesia is another region notoriously vulnerable to rising sea levels. The idyllic archipelago in the South Pacific is set to do deal with a Silicon Valley organisation to build a floating city to accommodate 90 residents. Brainchild of billionaire investor Peter Thiel and Google engineer Patri Friedman, the Seastead Institute is a nonprofit think tank that works with a multidisciplinary team of experts to experiment with new technology and social systems. The Seasteaders envision an utopian, self-sufficient island that floats in French Polynesian waters, benefiting from the nation state's infrastructure. If all goes well, the city can be expanded to accommodate a larger population



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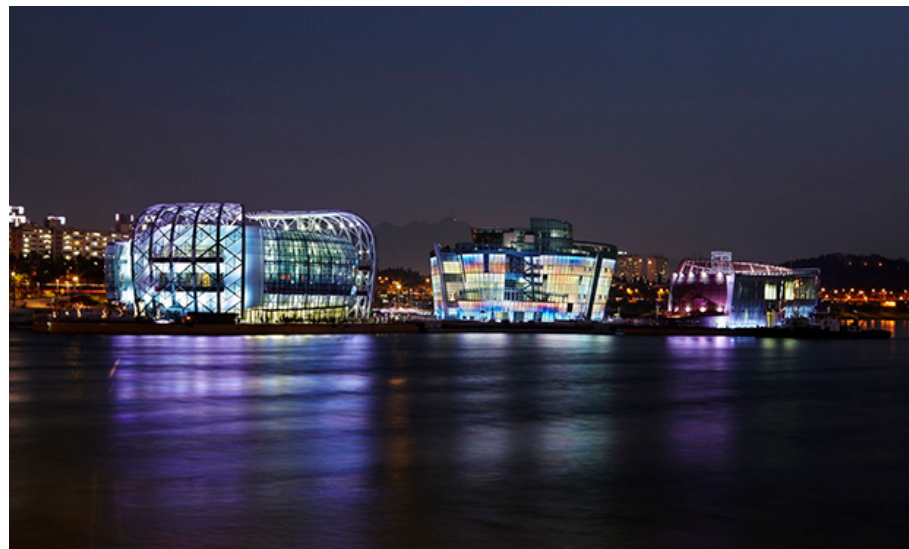
- but for now, there are plenty of administrative, economic and technical challenges still to overcome.



Credit: Polynesia's Floating City by Seastead // Header: The Bobbing Forest

Seoul's Floating Islands

Among the most densely populated of the world's cities, Seoul is a breeding ground of [urban innovation](#). In 2011, as part of the Han River Renaissance project, the city government set a called for design ideas that use water to solve the problem of limited urban space. A collaboration between [H Architecture](#) in [New York](#) and Seoul locals [Haeahn Architecture](#) won the contest with their concept for three Floating Lantern Islands. Named "[Some Sevit](#)", the island designs take [inspiration](#) from a blooming flower, representing a seed, bud and blossom respectively. The futuristic structures house recreation facilities, restaurants and an exhibition venue, and since opening in 2014 have become a beloved addition to the city for residents and visitors alike.



Credit: Seoul Floating Islands by Haeahn Architecture

Linz's Floating Garden

The Austrian city of Linz sits next to the Danube River and is known globally as the setting for annual arts and technology festival, [Ars Electronica](#). The city's 120-year-old railway bridge was recently the cause of some controversy among locals, some of whom wanted it renovated, while others pushed for outright replacement. Working with crowd storming platform [jovoto](#), in a creative move, the local government put out a public call for ideas to upcycle the old bridge, in the hope such a solution would mollify both sides of the debate. It worked. The [winning design](#) put forward the idea of transforming the old bridge into a [Floating Garden](#) that residents could enjoy



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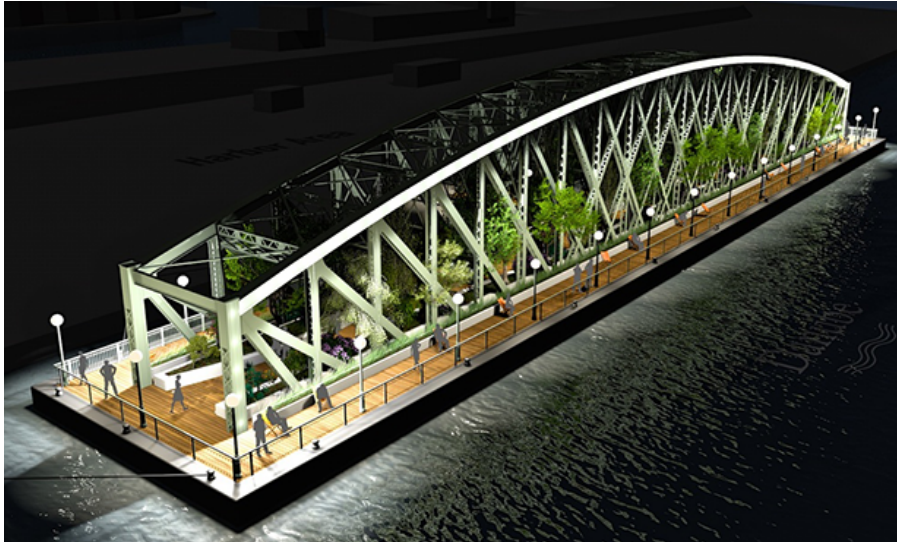
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year-round, while a new bridge was put in place to serve the railway. The imagined bridge floats on pontoons and comprises a seating area along the indoor and outdoor green spaces.



Credit: Brücke für Linz by Wolfgang Biebach

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Wohnen auf dem Wasser

Berlin-based architecture studio Büro13 is pushing boundaries with their "Wohnen auf dem Wasser" (Live on the Water) concept. Offering a range of futuristic floating homes, including a [villa](#), [loft](#), [pavilion](#) or even townhouse, the units come complete with all the mod cons you'd expect from a standard construction, with the added bonus of vast lake or sea views. The studio has partnered with [Waterkanthus](#), a company with shipbuilding experience, to ensure the build goes swimmingly.



Credit: Floating Loft by büro13

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