

Norman Foster Foundation Newsletter December 2025

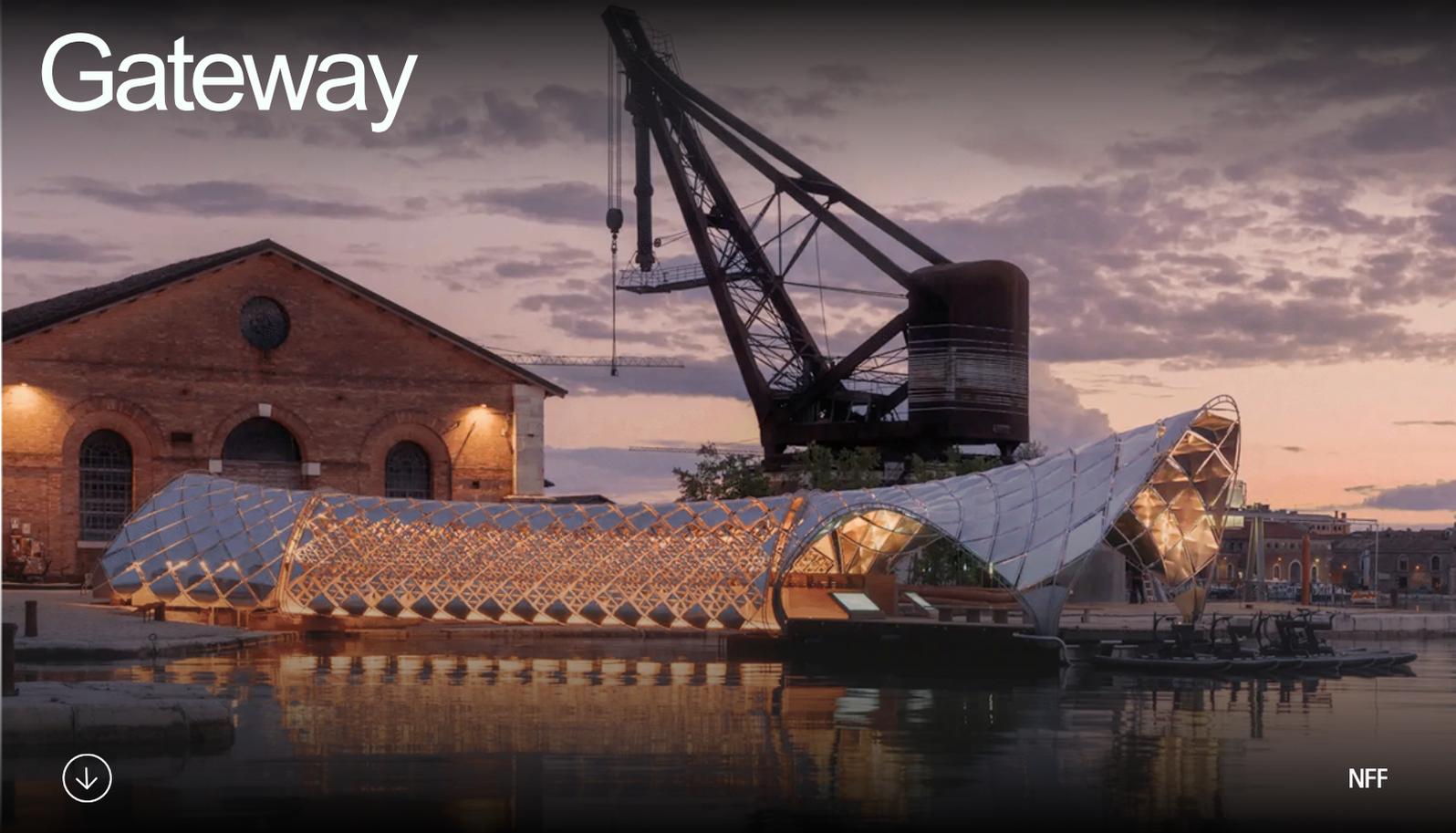


NFF

As we close the year, look back at the Norman Foster Foundation's 2025 key highlights in this first Newsletter of a new series.

[Video](#)

Gateway



NFF

Gateway was presented at the 19th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale from 10 May to 23 November 2025.

Developed by Norman Foster in collaboration with the NFF's Architecture, Design and Innovation Unit, the structure evokes Venice's historic network of bridges and attracted 298,000 visitors. Acting as a functional gateway and bridge, the hub served to connect new electric carbon-free modes of transportation on water and land. It not only works in its original setting but can be applied to all city landscapes with water.

[Video](#)

Essential Homes



NFF

The Essential Homes Research Project offers a sustainable solution for natural disasters and affordable housing. It was developed by the NFF as a response to temporary shelters used in humanitarian and climate crises too often becoming long term. First showcased at the Venice Biennale 2023, its design utilises lightweight frames and low-carbon cement to create cost-effective, durable homes with 70% less carbon footprint.

This year, the project has evolved to address Costa Rica's affordable housing crisis. With a population of 5.1 million and a housing deficit of nearly 200,000 units, 4% of the population lacks access to adequate housing. These homes are seismic-resistant (up to magnitude 7) and designed to withstand the region's heavy rains (8 months/year). Priced at \$20,000 per unit, they provide high-quality affordable housing.

[Video](#)

Towards a More Equal Future



Towards a More Equal Future, an exhibition curated by the NFF Archive and Exhibitions Unit in collaboration with the Norman Foster Institute Team, was presented at the 24th Triennale Milano International Exhibition 2025 from 13 May to 9 November.

As part of the International Exhibition's central theme, *Inequalities*, a selection of completed and ongoing projects from the NFF were showcased. Through these case studies—which span diverse geographies, from informal settlements in rural India to industrialised contexts in Portugal—visitors were able to engage with global challenges such as disparities in housing and climate vulnerability.

[Video](#)

Kharkiv Masterplan: Housing Pilot Project



From 2022 to 2025, the NFF, together with UNECE, the Kharkiv City Council, Arup and international teams from Germany, United Kingdom, United States and Ukraine, has developed the Masterplan concept for the reconstruction of the city of Kharkiv, Ukraine.

In 2024, the NFF oversaw an international housing competition with a jury of local and international experts chaired by Norman Foster. The competition received 18,173 brief downloads and 259 submissions from teams worldwide. This year, following three years of collaboration, the NFF has concluded its partnership on the housing pilot project.

[Video](#)

Third Edition Healthy Cities Public Debates

Participants
Marina Romanello
Professor of Health, Behavior, and Society, Johns Hopkins University
Mario Cucinella
Professor of Health, Behavior, and Society, Johns Hopkins University
Nigel Dancsey
Senior Lecturer in Health, Behavior, and Society, Johns Hopkins University
Moderator
Catherine Cummings
Associate Professor of Health, Behavior, and Society, Johns Hopkins University



NFF

On June 14, the third edition of the Healthy Cities Public Debates was held, organised in collaboration with Sanitas, inviting experts Joseph G. Allen, Mario Cucinella, Nigel Dancsey and Marina Romanello to explore the topic of designing a healthier built environment. The Debate was moderated by Catherine Cummings and Yolanda Erburu Arbizu.

[Video](#)

Master's Programme on Sustainable Cities



NFI

This year's Master's course, its second edition, took place from January to December at the NFI Campus in Madrid. The course, co-directed by Norman Foster and Kent Larson, included over fifty professors and professionals from architecture, urban design, public health, climate science and governance in its curriculum.

Students were given rigorous training in leadership, analysis, metrics and design tools. The Centre for City Science—a laboratory that generates its own innovative tools and methods to generate data-driven insights—continued to extend its city network, creating new partnerships globally.

[Video](#)

Pilot City Visits



The NFI's 2025 Pilot Cities were Freetown, Cape Town and Melilla. Students visited the cities in May to conduct on-site research and meet with city administration officials. These visits are vital to develop their projects which propose implementable interventions for each city's outlined targets.

Watch the NFI students' on-site videos: [Freetown](#) [Cape Town](#) [Melilla](#)

Commencement Ceremony



The NFI celebrated its Commencement Ceremony on December 5 for the second academic year of the Master's Programme on Sustainable Cities. The Ceremony honoured the students' dedication and accomplishments in advancing sustainable urban development.

[Video](#)

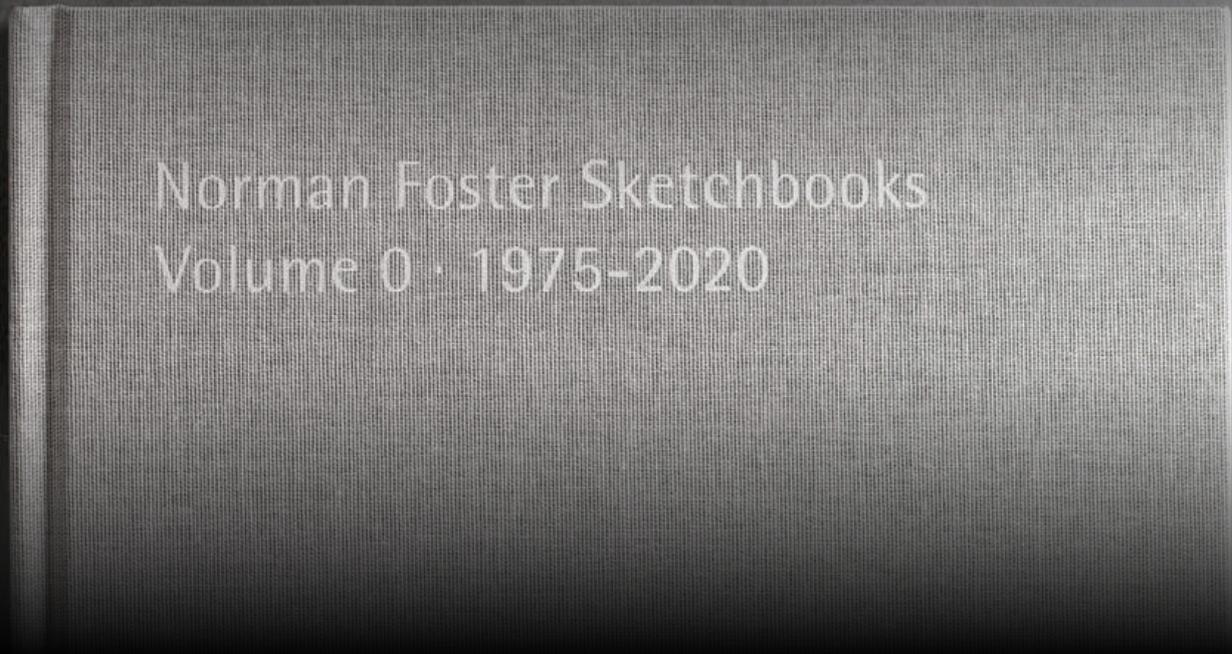
Conferences



NFF NFI

The NFF and NFI Teams participated in a wide range of conferences this year, including the Council of Architecture's International Conference in Mumbai, the World City Summit in Vienna, the Smart City Expo World Congress in Barcelona, the 'In Shaping In' symposium at the Triennale Milano and a seminar given at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, among many others.

Latest Publications



2025 saw the release of four new publications by the NFF:

- *Architecture and Technology Volume II: Cities in Climate Crisis*
- A second edition of the sold-out *Sketchbooks Series Volume 0 · 1975–2020*
- *Sketchbooks Series Volume VI · 2001–2005*
- *Healthy Cities Public Debates*

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Other News



New Partnership with MIT

In October, the NFI and MIT signed a Memorandum of Understanding to explore joint initiatives in urban innovation and sustainability, creating the NFI–MIT City Science Consortium

[+ Information](#)



RMIT New Global Partnership

In November, the NFI and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) signed a Global Partnership to expand collaboration in education and research at the PhD level

[+ Information](#)



Doctor Honoris Causa

The Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM) invested Norman Foster as *Doctor Honoris Causa*, the institution's highest academic distinction

[+ Information](#)



This year the NFF awarded 50+ scholarships and professorships

Including the RIBA Travelling Scholarship, Yale Professorship, BRIT School Bursaries and Prizes; and Academic Grants for the Norman Foster Institute

[+ Information](#)

[See more news](#)

Looking Ahead



Cultural Centre + Ivorypress

From 2026, Ivorypress will form part of the NFF. In March, a new venue will be opened, hosting the NFI Academic and Cultural Hub and the Ivorypress bookstore. More details will be announced in February, and Ivorypress' own Newsletter will be launched next year

[+ Information](#)



2026 Academic Year

Next year, the NFI will expand its scope to include new continents for its 2026 Pilot Cities. Students will focus their research on cities in the United Kingdom, Mexico and Qatar

[+ Information](#)

NFF Annual Report

For a full report of all the Norman Foster Foundation's activities over the year of 2025, download the Annual Report



[Download Here](#)

The NFF/NFI Teams want to thank all of their Patrons for their contributions to making all our endeavours possible, with a special thanks to Family Foster and Bloomberg Philanthropies

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