

111 INCEPTION	David Kohn
Anna Bates	Derek Dellekamp
What is inspiration?	Dieter Dietz
What inspires you?	Do Ho Suh
Ada Tolia,	E. V. Day
Giuseppe Lignano	Ferda Kolatan
Adrien Verschuere	Filipe Madeira
Alexander S. Brodsky	Florencia Pita
Alexandre Loureiro	Francisco Cifuentes
Alvaro Puntoni	Frank Barkow
Andra Marin	Freek Persyn
Anna Puigjaner	Gary Bates
Anne Holtrop	Gilles Delalex,
Antón García-Abril	Yves Moreau
Armando Ruinelli	Go Hasegawa
Arno Brandhuber	Hernán Díaz Alonso
Aslı Çiçek	James Shen
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Bet Capdeferro,	Jan Edler
Ramon Bosch	Jan Olav Jensen
Bettina Götz	Jean Pierre Crousse
Bijoy Jain	Jennifer Bonner
Bostjan Vuga	Jing Liu
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Charlotte Truwant,	Johannes Robbrecht
Dries Rodet	Jon Lott
Christian Kerez	Jonathan Sergison
Clark Thienhaus	Jürgen Mayer H.
Clemens Bortolotti	Jun'ya Ishigami
Daniel Norell,	Kivi Sotamaa
Einar Rodhe	Leonid Slonimskiy



Anna Bates // 111 Inception

What is inspiration? What inspires you? 111 INCEPTION is a chain of inspiration, which involves 111 architects from around the world.

This book was not guided by theory, yet it grew out of a search for new ways to look at authorship, ideas and inspiration. The experimental and playful character of the project itself, with its unpredictable outcomes, allowed for a much needed change of perspective—away from the traditional approach to creation characteristic of modernity and towards inspiration—which does not respect borders.

The exhibition 100 Experiments. Inspiration in Design Processes was on show at AEDES Gallery, Berlin in 2019.

‘Design is not only what you see, but how it makes you feel today and how it creates your tomorrow.’ - Anna Bates

Just a century ago Theo van Doesburg, the leading representative of De Stijl, created the painting The Rhythm of a Russian Dance (1918). Van Doesburg worked not only as a versatile artist, but also as an editor of the magazine De Stijl. He contributed to various journals and was member of various artist societies. It was his strength, as a spider in the international web and an as a networker avant-la-lettre, to forge bonds between fellow artists, architects and graphic designers, to bring them together through congresses, lectures and artist groups to promote their work.

Eleven years later in 1929 this painting by Van Doesburg became an inspiration for Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Lilly Reich, for the German Pavilion at the 1929 World's Fair in Barcelona. Van Doesburg's geometrical abstraction helped to radically re-imagine the very idea of a building, gave freedom to space and quite literally brought down the walls of prior architectural conventions. The building was to become a major inspiration for the further development of modern architecture and an iconic example of the modernist aesthetic

How does inspiration move through the atmosphere? How do we inspire each other? And how does creative inspiration itself change through each person's unique experience? To find out, Anna Bates set an experiment by tasking one architect to use the painting of Van Doesburg as a stimulus for creating his/her own work, which would then be passed on to other architects, who in turn would draw inspiration for their new work, and over time growing into a web of conversation, interplay and inspiration—a dance all on its own.

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In 2017 as a starting point of this project, American architect Gary Bates of Space Group was invited to create the first work in the chain of architects.

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