

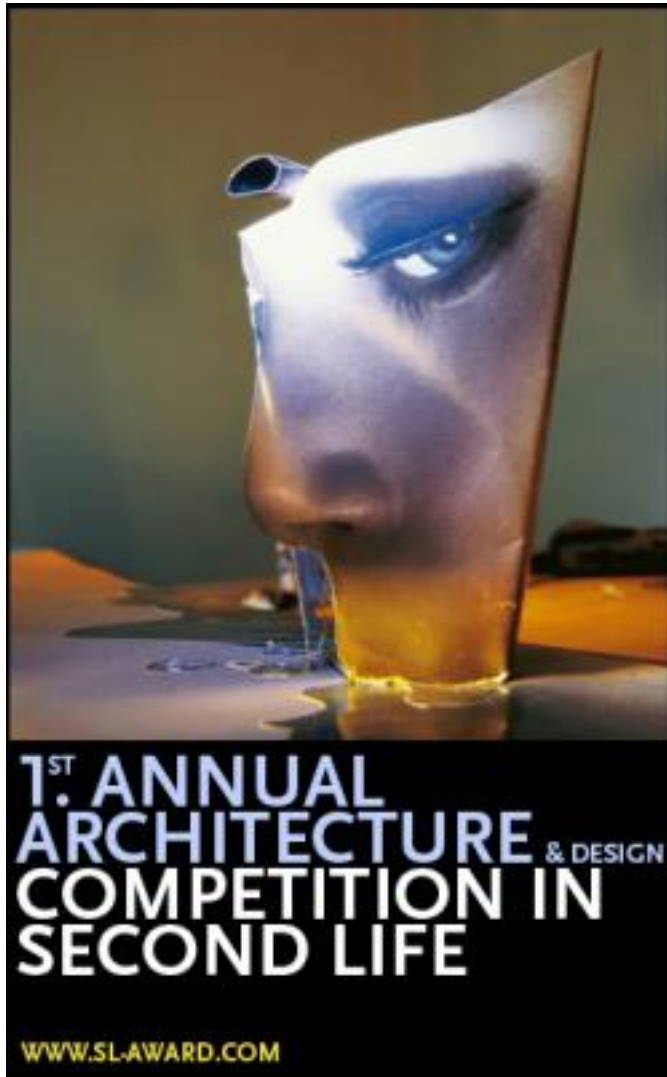
## Call for submissions to the First Annual Architecture and Design Competition in Second Life

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Press release from: [SL-Award / Stephan Doesinger](#)

Agency: **up200**



Munich, 28 February 2007. The Austrian artist Stephan Doesinger has begun the First Annual Architecture and Design Competition in Second Life in the virtual world of "Second Life." Spatially interesting and aesthetically independent pieces of architecture are sought from the inhabitants of the digital parallel world that has almost four million participants. The competition is open for all. Information and an online registration form are available at: [www.sl-award.com](http://www.sl-award.com)

A highly qualified, independent jury of designers and architects will award the prizes. A detailed list of the participants will soon be announced on the website, [www.sl-award.com](http://www.sl-award.com)

The results of the competition will be documented in a book and presented in a Hall of Fame on the internet.

In addition, the prized buildings will be presented in an exposition in the "real world," and it goes without saying that in Second Life there will also be a museum built, in which the winners' constructions can be visited. The contest will be repeated each year.

### Theoretical Background

Computer games have stopped copying the world, and instead the world seems now to function more and more like a computer game. The aesthetic and cultural consequences of this twin relationship can already be seen in architecture at its best. Second Life consists of pixels, yearning, and fantasy. While in the real world architectural utopias play only a small role, the digital worlds of computer games, including Second Life (SL), have become the actual venue for this (and other) utopias. Freed from practical necessities and economic and technical obligations, a new architecture has established itself that will not remain inconsequential for the so-called real world.

Though there are still technical limits of the 3D programs in Second Life, they shouldn't distract one from seeing the aesthetic and cultural developments that are in the course of forming. How independently will the SL-architecture develop? How closely will the ideas stay bound to the real world? The buildings in SL serve only as representations of communication and commerce. Inside the parallel world of Second Life, one can meet others and make appointments with an avatar, a digital alter ego. One can do business or go to a virtual U2 concert. The Potemkish planet of Second Life reminds one of what Robert Venturi reported about the iconography of modern business cities in the 70s in his "Leaving Las Vegas." He described the metamorphosis of buildings into signs. The goal of this transformation was later called "Corporate Identity." But what will happen now that people are starting to create their personal identities pixel by pixel in SL?

On the "cross-hatching" of Second Life, all the buildings and all the characters are – lacking other functions – pure projection surfaces. They are covered with pictures, so-called Skins, and become signs themselves, just as Oscar Wilde places the whole truth in the mask. These masks have become pieces of a new language. Through them, new communication possibilities and possible architectural designs are created – because they enable communication of real people, and with it also "real places." If one accepts the thought that the house is an extension of the body, then one ought to be excited about the new expressional forms and experimental spaces inside SL. Alone in the "superhuman" physicality of Second Life – one can, as an avatar, fly or be transported – new spatial relations emerge. The spatial relations in our real world have dramatically changed in the last few years: not least through the internet. It has opened up innumerable exiting questions with the new "SIM" sensibility, one of which is: Which relation does the real architecture (-culture) have to this development, which is reflected and refracted in Second Life – on all levels?

### Second Life and Linden Lab

Second Life is a 3D online world with a rapidly growing population from more than 100 countries around the globe, in which the Residents themselves create and build the world which includes homes, vehicles, nightclubs, stores, landscapes, clothing, and games.

The Second Life Grid is a sophisticated development platform created by Linden Lab, a company founded in 1999 by Philip Rosedale, to create a revolutionary new form of shared 3D experience. The former CTO of RealNetworks, Rosedale pioneered the development of many of today's streaming media technologies, including RealVideo. In April 2003, noted software pioneer Mitch Kapor, founder of Lotus Development Corporation, was named Chairman. In 2006, Philip Rosedale and Linden Lab received WIRED's Rave Award for Innovation in Business. Based in San Francisco, Linden Lab employs a senior team bringing together deep expertise in physics, 3D graphics and networking.

Note to editors: Second Life® and Linden Lab® are registered trademarks of Linden Research, Inc.  
Linden Lab is not involved in the competition and is not judging it or responsible for prizes.

### SL-Award / The Initiator:

Stephan Doesinger is a conceptual artist and architect living and working in Munich. He has held guest lectureships in the Design department at the University for Applied Arts in Vienna and at the Architectural Association in London. He has been the Art and Creative Director for many magazines, including, among others, Penthouse.

His second book, "Learning from Sim City," will be published by Revolver Verlag in a few months. Further information available at: [www.doesinger.com](http://www.doesinger.com)

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