



The 4th IED Enric Miralles Award honours a library reimagined as a living landscape of the mind

As part of the public programme of activities celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Istituto Europeo di Design, “Mind Garden”, a project by IED Barcelona Interior Design student Anastassia Westenra, received this award in recognition of its outstanding ability to transform space organically.

Barcelona, 13 July 2026. - “Mind Garden”, a project based on neuroarchitecture that reinterprets the library as a space adapted to users’ cognitive and emotional needs in today’s age of digital overload, has won the 4th IED Enric Miralles and Benedetta Tagliabue Award for the Best Interior Design Thesis at IED Barcelona. Designed by student Anastassia Westenra, the project received the award during a ceremony held on 16 June at the Fundació Enric Miralles, where the most outstanding projects by final-year students from the Bachelor of Arts in Interior Design programme were presented beforehand.

The jury’s decision was announced by Benedetta Tagliabue, President of the Fundació Enric Miralles and Director of EMBT Architects, who highlighted that the decision had been unanimous, praising “Westenra’s outstanding ability to intervene organically within the chosen space”. In this case, the Montoya Building.

Two other IED Barcelona projects also received Honourable Mentions during the event: “The Contemporary Sanctuary”, by Giulia Martinelli, a proposal that reinvents the role of sacred space in contemporary society; and “The Nest”, by Maria Beata Strybe, a primary school design inspired by alternative educational approaches that

introduces healthy digital literacy into learning experiences.

In the first case, the jury praised the inspiring vision and the thorough development process behind the thesis, while in the second it highlighted the project's approach to childhood, addressing a tangible issue through creative solutions.

The 4th IED Enric Miralles and Benedetta Tagliabue Award for the Best Interior Design Thesis at IED Barcelona formed part of the public programme of activities celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Istituto Europeo di Design.

--

THE THEME AND THE PROJECTS

"In-Between: Rethinking Spaces in a Physical-Digital World" is the conceptual umbrella under which the projects are grouped. Since the emergence of digital technologies, the boundaries between the physical and the digital have progressively blurred to the point where we now inhabit hybrid environments in which objects, bodies, data and spaces interact continuously. Building on this premise, IED Barcelona invited students from the Bachelor's Degree in Interior Design to design interior spaces that promote well-being, equity and environmental awareness in today's phygital world.

THE WINNER: "Mind Garden" by Anastassia Westenra

A library reimagined as a living landscape of the mind, conceived to respond to learning and working environments that no longer meet users' cognitive and emotional needs in an information-saturated digital age. Based on the principles of neuroarchitecture, the project reimagines the library not as an archive but as an immersive cognitive landscape organised around mental states rather than functions. Located within the Montoya Building, the design proposes a journey that begins in a meadow-like entrance, passes through the social forest on the ground floor, and culminates in a contemplative mountain at the upper level. Biophilic design, adaptive spatial strategies and discreet technology shape distinct areas for focus, collaboration and rest, creating a future-oriented learning ecosystem aligned with the way the human mind truly works.

HONOURABLE MENTION: "The Contemporary Sanctuary" by Giulia Martinelli

A speculative interior architecture project that reimagines the role of sacred space in contemporary society. Located in Casa Sagnier in Barcelona, it proposes an immersive journey combining architecture, light, sound, nature and ethical ambient artificial intelligence to adapt the environment to collective rhythms. Conceived as a scalable model, it introduces a new typology of indoor public space where technology, ritual and design foster well-being and mindfulness.

HONOURABLE MENTION: "The Nest" by Maria Beata Strybe

In the new era of an increasingly digitalised world, how can we prepare future generations to use digital technologies in ways that support their development and integration into everyday life? This project proposes a primary school design inspired by alternative educational approaches, introducing healthy technological literacy into learning experiences. The innovative educational model aims to foster a balanced relationship with digital media by managing screen exposure while combining arts and crafts with the digital world. Its goal is to support children's natural development and help regulate their emotions and integration into everyday life, recognising that younger generations are among the most exposed to the negative effects of an increasingly digitalised society.

Cover photo:

From left to right: Benedetta Tagliabue, President of the Fundació Enric Miralles and Director of EMBT Architects, together with the award-winning students Giulia Martinelli, Anastassia Westenra and Maria Strybe, accompanied by Raffaella Perrone, Director of IED Barcelona.



Anastassia Westenra alongside the scale model of the award-winning project "Mind Garden".



"The Contemporary Sanctuary", by Giulia Martinelli, received an Honourable Mention.



The second Honourable Mention went to "The Nest", by Maria Beata Strybe.

About IED - Istituto Europeo di Design

IED is the largest network of European Arts and Design schools — Fashion, the Visual Arts, Design and Communication — formed of 11 schools: IED Milano, Barcelona, Cagliari, Firenze, Madrid, Rio de Janeiro, Roma, São Paulo, Torino, Bilbao, and the Academia di Belle Arti Aldo Galli in Como.

Founded in 1966 by Francesco Morelli, it has seen over 130,000 students graduate since its opening, welcoming 10,000 students from all over the world each year across its more than 300 master's degrees and advanced training courses, and 100 degree programmes, also enjoying a consolidated relationship with companies.

In 2022, IED was transformed into a private non-profit organisation (the Francesco Morelli Foundation) with the aim of contributing to a greater positive impact on society and the planet through design.

Over the course of the past two decades, the IED Barcelona school, located in the Gràcia neighbourhood, has stood out as a regional benchmark in design, and is a recognised Higher Education Centre for Design authorised by the Government of Catalonia.

Its educational offer includes a range of degree courses, taught in English and/or Spanish, covering the diverse specialisations that make up the world of design: Fashion, Fashion Styling and Communication, Product, Interiors, Transportation, Graphic Design, Motion Graphics and Video, Media Design and Advertising. The school also offers Bachelors of Arts (Honours) degrees in Fashion Design, Fashion Styling, Fashion Marketing and Communication, and Business Design awarded by the University of Westminster; IED Diplomas in the areas of Marketing, Communication and Advertising; and master's, postgraduate, specialisation and summer courses; in addition to tailor-made training for companies and professionals in all fields of Design, Marketing and Communication.

IED Barcelona is characterised by its clear commitment to strategic design as a driver of innovation, anticipating future trends and scenarios with the aim of shaping the new generations of future designers and creatives as agents of change.

Multicultural and multidisciplinary, it attracts 1,400 students of nearly 100 different nationalities each year.

Compasso d'Oro 2026

**Top 100 QS World University
Rankings® by Subject**

**Top 20 Fashion Schools Worldwide
CEOEWORLD**

IED Press Service

Helena Rosselló
h.rossello@ied.es
ied.es - 932 385 889

XXL Comunicación

Laura Desca
laura@xxlcomunicacion.com