

For

EIDOS Foundation

Regarding:

The design competition for the Garden of University House

A. Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions in a short paragraph of no more than 150 words.

What is the mission of the EIDOS Foundation, and how did the UNFINISHED festival—now in its tenth edition—come to be? How has the festival evolved over the years, and what are the key values it promotes through its multidisciplinary format?

The EIDOS Foundation launched UNFINISHED in 2016 in response to the need for a space where ideas, art, science, philosophy, and technology could engage in open dialogue. Over the past ten years, the festival has evolved from a curatorial experiment into a global community of thousands of participants from over 70 countries, accessible via an app rather than tickets. The core values—interdisciplinarity, critical reflection, and human connection—have remained constant, even as the themes have shifted from trust and silence to practice and, now, to the courage to take a leap into the unknown **LEAP**. The festival has become a living organism, more than just an event, inspiring through its manifesto the philosophy that everything is unfinished—a process of continuous growth and transformation.

2. What is the relationship between the EIDOS Foundation and the Casa Universitarilor? How does the EIDOS Foundation collaborate with the University of Bucharest in managing and utilizing the spaces at the Casa Universitarilor? Is there a long-term cultural or educational partnership in place?

The University House, with its garden and historic greenhouse, is the physical heart of UNFINISHED, renamed the “House of Ideas.” The collaboration with the University of Bucharest has developed step by step, through the temporary rental and activation of spaces for the festival and its associated programs (such as UNFINISHED Democracy).

Beyond logistics, the partnership reflects a long-term cultural and civic commitment: transforming the House into an example of the cultural reuse of heritage and openness to the community. We aim to consolidate this relationship into a sustainable educational and cultural partnership that supports both the University and the urban community.

3. How have you utilized the spaces under your temporary management—including the garden—during recent editions of the festival? What kinds of temporary installations or site-specific interventions have you created in the spaces of the University House?

In recent editions, the garden and annexes of the University House have become a laboratory of ideas and a temporary stage: art installations, light projections, performances, debates, focus groups.

In addition to cultural activities, we carried out a cleanup and renovation project: we cleared the garden of dead trees, repaired hazardous areas, cleaned the greenhouses, restored the paths according to the original plans, and refurbished the gazebo.

In addition, we built wooden furniture adapted to the context: a small circular amphitheater (“CIRCO”) for 30 people, dedicated to face-to-face experiences and conversations; an auditorium with approximately 600 seats, a modern agora with a stage positioned below the audience for participatory dialogues; and long communal tables, designed to encourage debates and spontaneous gatherings.

At the same time, the street-facing building has been transformed into the UNFINISHED Gallery—“the smallest gallery in Bucharest”—with rotating exhibitions that integrate art into everyday life. The most recent work on display is one of artist Alfredo Jaar’s best-known pieces: *I can’t go on. I will go on.*

- 4.** Which specialists (artists, architects, curators, etc.) did you collaborate with in designing these experiences? What did you discover together with them regarding the garden spaces?

In designing the venue, we paid special attention to the historic garden that hosts the festival. Together with landscape architect Nicolas Triboi, we sought to restore the garden as closely as possible to its original 1865 plans, respecting the spirit of the place and breathing new life into it.

At the same time, we collaborated with architects and urban planners from Romania and abroad—including Alice Cabaret, Lior Steinberg, and Marko Brajovic—to design the spaces in a contemporary, welcoming way that is tailored to the community’s needs. We also involved visual artists such as Luca Zamoc and Alfredo Jaar, who brought new layers of meaning and visual expression.

At the same time, we benefited from the expertise of leading figures such as architect Oana Stănescu and the firm led by Maximilian Zielinski (Foster +Partners), who guided us in defining solutions for the harmonious integration of heritage, nature, and the contemporary.

- 5.** How did the public respond to the garden space during the UNFINISHED events? Did you notice any particular behaviors, interactions, or significant changes in the way people used this space?

The public’s reception of the garden and the University House was marked above all by dialogue and unexpected encounters. The spaces became fertile ground for cultural conversations and the exchange of ideas among people from very different fields, generations, and backgrounds. Friendships and projects were forged at the long tables; spontaneous discussions took place between artists and participants in the greenhouse; and the installations sparked collective reflections rather than solitary introspection.

The public perceived the garden as a catalyst for interaction—a place where strangers chatted for hours, where questions were asked and perspectives were confronted. In this sense, the garden was not merely an aesthetic setting, but an active cultural engine that facilitated a genuine exchange between diverse communities and sensibilities.

6. What are your future plans for developing the relationship between UNFINISHED, Casa Universitarilor, and the community surrounding the festival? Are you considering ongoing projects, sustainable artistic interventions, or opening the space to a wider audience?

Our plans aim to continue and expand our collaboration with Casa Universitarilor, so that the space can become a cultural and educational hub open to the community. We are looking to create lasting artistic installations (sculptures, plantings, site-specific installations) and develop complementary programs, such as:

- **UNFINISHED Residencies** – residency programs for artists and researchers, with a focus on interdisciplinarity and heritage.
- **UNFINISHED Future** – a hub for ideas and discussions about the future, where science, art, and innovation come together.
- **UNFINISHED Institute** – an educational platform dedicated to critical thinking and systems thinking.

All of these initiatives aim to support the University in transforming the House into a cultural and civic park—free of commercial elements—open to both students and the general public.

7. How do you envision the space coexisting with the University's activities and the future users of the space: students, young entrepreneurs, other cultural events, restaurant patrons, etc.?

We envision the garden as a shared ecosystem: a cultural hub for young entrepreneurs, a relaxation space for restaurant patrons, an experimental setting for academic departments (arts, architecture, social sciences), and a place open to the urban community.

This coexistence requires constant dialogue and clear rules, but it has the potential to transform Casa Universitarilor into a major public landmark. The partnership with the University, strengthened by trust and a shared vision, is the cornerstone of this sustainable coexistence.