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Top 5: Futuristic Architectural Utopias

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They soar hundreds of metres into the sky and plunge deep into the earth or even into the ocean – futuristic buildings are pushing the boundaries of current concepts and possibilities. In the foreseeable future, our top 5 will remain utopian visions. However, the problems they may one day solve are already a pressing concern today.

5. Airscraper

The *Airscraper* was designed by Klaudia Gołaszewska and Marek Grodzicki from Poland. It is an 800-metre-high tower which not only provides infrastructure and green spaces for its residents, but is also intended to purify the air via a huge chimney. The modular structure comprises an oversized air intake on the lower floors and residential and recreational spaces for up to 7,500 people on the upper floors. The

modules are arranged around the chimney, which has a diameter of 30 metres. Inside the chimney are filters that purify the ambient air, thereby improving the microclimate. A visionary response to greenhouse gas emissions which – on a smaller scale – does not seem entirely utopian. In 2019, the *Airscraper* won a prize at the *eVolo Skyscraper Competition*, which recognises particularly visionary architectural designs.

4. Earthscrapers

The concept of so-called earthscrapers is not new. The first plans date back to the 1930s. Essentially, they are skyscrapers turned upside down. Instead of rising upwards, they are built deep underground. Originally, the idea was that they would provide a safe haven from earthquakes. Today, the main arguments in favour of this concept are the more consistent temperatures underground and protection from extreme weather events such as storms or heavy rain. The *Shimao Quarry Hotel* in

China, built in a deep ravine within an abandoned quarry, proves that this can, at least in part, be a realistic prospect. Of its 18 storeys, 16 lie below the edge of the quarry. Unlike the utopian designs, however, the hotel resembles more of a giant cave with a glass façade. The best-known of the utopian earthscraper to date is by *BNKR Arquitectura*. The design envisages a 300-metre-tall inverted pyramid in the heart of Mexico City.

3. Oceanscrapers

They are one response to overpopulated cities and the loss of land due to rising sea levels: the so-called oceanscrapers. Unlike small-scale projects that have already been realised, such as underwater hotels and restaurants, oceanscrapers are self-sufficient residential and living spaces that can be built offshore – either floating or anchored to the seabed. All oceanscrapers have one thing in common: they are a utopia. For now.

2. ITA.CA

The *ITA.CA* project was presented in the Italian Pavilion at the *19th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia 2025*. It develops visions for the planning and construction of infrastructure in the marine environment. The concept incorporates innovative solutions for coastal protection and the promotion of biodiversity through

modular and biomimetic structures. Whilst *ITA.CA* is purely utopian, it is intended to serve as a 'visual and narrative prototype' for concrete initiatives in the fields of architecture and research. *ITA.CA* was developed by *Studio 3Mark*, founded by architects Manuela Rosso and Michele Cassino.

1. Paris 2050 by Vincent Callebaut

Architect Vincent Callebaut has made a name for himself with his utopian designs. As part of the *2050 PARIS SMART CITY* project, his architectural practice has designed eight prototypes of energy-positive high-rises that counteract the urban heat island effect whilst increasing urban density in the long term. The vision for the Paris of the future includes solar, hydrodynamic and green towers, organic façades featuring green algae, light-sensitive towers, vertical farms, and

photovoltaic and solar thermal systems inspired by dragonfly wings. Organic forms and lush vegetation are intended to bring nature into the metropolis. The study was carried out in 2014 on behalf of the City of Paris by the architectural agency *Vincent Callebaut Architectures*, in close collaboration with engineers from *Setec Bâtiment*. Although the mixed-use high-rises were designed in great detail and for specific locations in Paris, they have remained architectural utopias to this day.