

# Thein Manimekalai Sowrirajan

## About

Thein is an architect and an urban planner with a keen interest in qualitative research, architectural design and policymaking. She is a graduate of Anna University, Chennai with a Bachelor's in Architecture and Diplomas in Urbanism and Jewelry Design from Architectural Association London and PTU respectively. She has travelled across the world and lived in many countries like the UK, Russia, Italy, and India, gaining experience working in municipality offices and think tanks. Her design proficiency encompasses a wide array of scales and fields from Jewelry design to Urban planning, Research to Building construction and student fellowships to Associate Lectureships. Her goal as a planner is to use her expertise in decoupling the urban growth and reconceptualizing the nonurban areas of the world. This led her to start a non-profit organization called 'nonurbanism'.

## Jury Statement

The call for nonurban ideas is for young professionals who can refocus their knowledge and skill towards the rural fabric. This can seem like a broad and daunting task, as for many years, we were taught that rural areas are too unique, sociologically complex, economically poor, and technologically backward. Here, I implore that you shift your strategy from a place-based definition to a process-based definition. Rather than perceiving the rural areas as areas that require the urban 'assets' and 'amenities', review and deliver them as livelihood systems with their own social identities and scientific adeptness. Having said that, my expectations for this call would be to see how well you can identify such rural processes and develop social frameworks to benefit many comparable communities.