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# The Vitruvian Stamp

## *Tiago Borges*

The Vitruvian stamp is a thought,  
trapped in the form of a stamp.  
It is about impossibility.  
It is about imperfection.  
It is about choice.

The Vitruvian stamp refers to Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, an architect and the author of ‘De Architectura Libri Decem’ or ‘The Ten Books on Architecture’, the oldest surviving treatise on architecture in Europe. By codifying the practice of Roman architects, Vitruvius also sowed the seeds of architectural theory. In Book I, Chapter III, Vitruvius calmly proposes three criteria

that have become the ‘mother of all norms’. They are still present today as a touchstone for what defines architecture. Vitruvius’ three criteria echo and persist, hanging over every architect’s head; the ‘tyrannical norm’ of the Vitruvian triad cannot be escaped. Will it stand? Does it perform? Is it beautiful? Thus, one could argue that architecture’s fundamental substance lies beneath any local rules and national norms in this three-element equation.

The Vitruvian Stamp is a tool for speculation. Based on a ‘pick two’ diagram, the triple edge stamp is meant to trigger a personal and critical choice that questions this holy trinity.

*Tiago Borges, born 1983, studied architecture at the University of Coimbra and the EPFL Lausanne. He now works as an architect and independent researcher, based in Lausanne. He stamped 1000 exemplars of ‘trans24’ manually – this is one of them.*

