

## Özel '02 Wins NASA Prize for Mars Housing Solution

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What do you do with a degree in architecture, philosophy and sculpture?

For one, you win a NASA competition to design a 3D-printed habitat to be used in Mars exploration.

That's what a team led by Bennington alum Guvenc Özel '02 did recently.

Özel's team, Hybrid Composites, secured fourth place out of 165 in the competition, which challenged entrants to create a housing solution that would be light and compact enough to transport to distant planets without taking up precious cargo space on a space vehicle. Winners were announced on September 27 at the New York Maker Faire.

In their [brief for the competition](#), NASA suggested that a winning design might incorporate "indigenous materials" -- such as sand from Mars -- into its design. Özel and his team proposed instead to use a combination of locally harvested composite fibres soaked in fast-curing polymer resins.

The design grows out of Özel's current research on the use of robotics and sensors in architecture and on the use of composite materials in building-scaled 3D printing.

Özel came to the U.S. from his native Turkey to study at Bennington. He went on to earn a master's degree in architecture from Yale University. He worked in the architecture offices of Rafael Vinoly, Jürgen Mayer H. and Frank Gehry, among others, before starting [Özel Office](#), "an interdisciplinary design firm creating spaces, objects, and experiences at the intersection of architecture, technology, and media."

He is currently director of the IDEAS technology lab for cross-disciplinary research at UCLA Arts and Architecture.