

Meet Gendo, AI to transform how architects and designers bring ideas to life

As part of our quick founder questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to George Proud, cofounder and CEO of Gendo about the importance of visualisation in architecture, reducing rendering time and cost and working with passion.

Temps de lecture : minute

21 August 2024

Over the last decade I've had the privilege of teaching at world-class universities, working in leading design studios, and bringing architectural projects to life both through design and visualisation. Visualisation is a hugely important part of architectural practice: designers communicate through rendered perspective images because all too often words aren't enough to communicate a vision.

I, and I think every other designer, has felt frustrated at the slow and often painstaking process of producing renders and visualisations. It can take weeks to produce a final image, incurring huge costs and taking precious time and attention away from actually designing.

With the advent of generative AI my co-founder and I wanted to develop a professional-grade AI platform tailored specifically to the needs of architects and designers. Our platform enables architects to generate visualisations quickly with absolute precision and control in a matter of minutes.

Tell us about the business – what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers and so on?

Gendo is a browser-based AI platform designed to enable architects and designers to transform their ideas into realistic visualisations in a fraction of the time rendering currently takes.

Using a combination of generative AI models and machine learning techniques, designers can use Gendo to generate visualisations in seconds by uploading their 2D drawings and sketches, and 3D uploads will be available soon. They can then easily add and edit specific details - like materiality and lighting - whilst maintaining accurate representation of their design.

Our aim is to streamline the visualisation process, reducing the time and costs associated with rendering so architects can make these assets themselves in a fraction of the time, allowing them to focus on creative design work.

Our platform has been tested thoroughly by leading global architecture practices such as Zaha Hadid Architects, KPF, David Chipperfield Architects, and Benoy. We came out of beta and released v1 of the product in early July 2024.

How has the business evolved since its launch?

We launched in early July and prior to that we were being tested in beta by a number of leading names in the architectural industry. Getting so many big names on board so early on in our journey was a huge privilege and a testament to the strength of our tech and the size of the problem

we're solving for the industry.

Now that we're live, we'll be expanding the platform's capabilities to become the go-to AI copilot for architects and design teams. In the first week of launch the platform already had over 1000 users sign up and counting.

Tell us about the working culture at Gendo

The team is all design-oriented, which is hopefully clear not only in every part of the product, but also in all of our processes and documentation. We're building a product for designers, and are product obsessed, so want to make sure it's as beautiful, and functional, as the images themselves.

We have also tried to instil the critical and candid conversations typically found in design offices within Gendo. We review work regularly and discuss it empathetically but critically, ensuring that we make the most of our team and their shared expertise.

How are you funded?

We raised \$1.1M in an oversubscribed pre-seed funding round in mid 2023. The investment was led by Concept Ventures and joined by Ascension Ventures, Carles Reina's Baobab Ventures, and various angel investors from the AI and architecture sectors, including the former Global Head of Design Studios at WeWork.

What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

Hiring has been one of the most time-consuming and impactful challenges we've had so far. As a small startup each person has a huge impact on

the company in every possible way. So we were extremely selective about who we hired and what we looked for in each person.

Technical skills were important, but the truly essential qualities have been found in their enthusiasm for the mission. We're building something complicated and entirely new, so needed people who are excited by the prospect of that, and wanted to contribute positively to the company in all aspects.

Indexing for those kinds of people made the pool of candidates smaller, but made the individual conversations much more pleasant, as we could push the conversation beyond just the technical much quicker.

How does Gendo answer an unmet need?

Gendo addresses the unmet need for an efficient, precise and reliable way to produce visualisations in architecture and design. Traditional methods are time-consuming and costly. Gendo is reshaping this process by allowing architects and designers to generate and edit high-quality visualisations in seconds, significantly reducing the time and effort required and freeing up precious resources for creative teams.

This process has also been so prohibitively expensive and time consuming that many smaller studios just haven't been able to produce these visualisations. It is already clear from our launch, and from the feedback of users, that this is no longer the case. Gendo is democratising image production and making smaller firms much more competitive in the process.

What's in store for the future?

We'll be introducing new features and tools to the platform this year, tailored specifically to the needs of architects and designers. The beta

period has validated our roadmap, so the next 18 months are crystal clear in terms of product development. We also plan to scale our London-based team and dive deeper into custom AI models to expand Gendo's core models and features set.

What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

Have strong opinions, weakly held! You need to be decisive and certain in what it is you want to build and why, but continue to test your thesis from every angle, take on critical feedback and adjust accordingly. Anything else will slow you down.

The only other thing I'd add is to find an area you are truly passionate about. If you find something serious it will quickly become all consuming, so it helps if you are deeply invested in what it is you're building.

And finally, a more personal question! What's your daily routine and the rules you're living by at the moment?

We have been very ambitious recently. Between product launch, PR efforts and increasing investor interest we've not had a huge amount of time for anything else. So I've been trying to make sure that I get away from my desk, unplug and spend even a small amount of time somewhere green! I've also been trying (and often failing) to maintain relationships with friends and family, so I will need to redouble my efforts here to make it up to those very patient and forgiving people, to whom I am very grateful.

George Proud is the cofounder and CEO of *Gendo*.



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