

Jury report Euregional Prize for Architecture 2018

By: Sereh Mandias

Every year the Euregional Prize for Architecture allows the professional world a comparative view of the graduation projects sent in by the five architectural schools of the Euregion: UHasselt, RWTH Aachen, ULg Liège, MAA Maastricht, FH Aachen. For this edition of the Euregional Prize for Architecture the schools selected a broad variety of graduation projects.

Out of over 400 master graduation projects, 28 were presented to the jury. The number of students in a school was normative for the number of projects the schools could send in. Yesterday the jury studied all projects and received a brief explanation about each project, given by a lecturer of the school. After a productive discussion ten projects made it to the second round and after more discussions seven made it to the third round. From these seven projects four honourable mentions were chosen, and a first, second and third prize.

Before announcing the prize winners, the jury would like to make some general remarks.

The jury highly appreciated a series of interesting themes that were set by the different universities. Themes such as rethinking rural territories, the re-use of seemingly banal buildings, and the densification of urban and suburban areas. Projects dealing with fundamental ecological issues, with spaces for contemplation, and how one could propose architectural projects for new economies. Challenging themes that not always produced concrete solutions, but allowed students to address relevant and upcoming societal developments through architecture.

Among the projects, there were therefore many provocative projects. Visionary projects that opened new perspectives on important themes in modern society. As such, this collection of projects is proof of the ability of students not only to learn, but also to teach us something. Even though it was not possible to honour them all, the presented projects provoked an intense debate amongst the members of the jury, and as such we thank them for their capacity to engage us in a discussion about the nature of architecture and its role within society.

Lastly, the jury appreciated the many projects that demonstrated a clarity and precision in their architectural representation. When present, the accompanying booklets were a wonderful addition and added depth to the understanding of the project. We believe that in a project presentation, it is important to include the research that informs the project.

Four projects have been awarded an honourable mention. Each one of these projects represents a particular aspect of architecture: urban repair, re-use of the modern, urban diversity, and utopian visions.

In alphabetical order, the honourable mentions are:

This project proposes an extension to the Diocesan Museum in Milan by mirroring the existing structure of the basilica and its chapels, creating a passage that is both entrance to the museum and to the park behind. The jury is convinced of the quality of the urban intervention in the city. The strength of the project lies in its realistic but at the same time sensitive answer to a scar left within the city by the second world war, where the student with his gesture manages to bring the city into order. The jury especially appreciates the emphatic reading of this particular part of Milan, demonstrating the student's ability to understand a place that he is foreign to.

The first honourable mention goes to:

Kaspar Berbuer, Museo Diocesano (RWTH Aachen)



This project is a transformation of the building of the National Bank of Belgium in Liège into a museum for contemporary art, and one in a series of interesting projects that deal with the transformation of Belgian post-war buildings. By adding a bold new roof as a unifying element the student manages to create a complex and rich building, within the existing structure of the former bank. The jury appreciates that both on a spatial and on a technical level, and in relation to the existing grid of the building, the project is very well thought through.

The second honourable mention goes to:

Maxime Coq, Art BNB (ULg Liège)



Art BNB - The Beauty of Bridges
Atmospheres

In taking on the project for an extension of the Bilal-mosque in Aachen with a space for an intercultural meeting, this project addresses the relevant question of how architecture might represent different cultures within the city. The jury not only appreciates the student's engagement with this contemporary societal question, but most of all her architectural answer. Her composition of arches refers to the room of the mosque but ultimately proposes a new kind of space; a layered, evocative interior, that can be appropriated by its diverse users.

The third honourable mention goes to:

Christina Klug, Intercultural Center Aachen (RWTH Aachen)



The last honourable mention goes to a project that is one in a series dealing with the idea of densification, both within and outside of the city. As such it gives a visionary answer to the important question of land-use in a dispersed landscape. The project proposes a new urban scheme for an allotment area of low-density. A new structure of dwelling circumscribes a series of existing suburban villa's that are reinvented as communal spaces, thereby minimizing the space of the private home. Absorbing many architectural references, the jury appreciates the radical and thought-provoking answer to how we might use the territory, and live together within it.



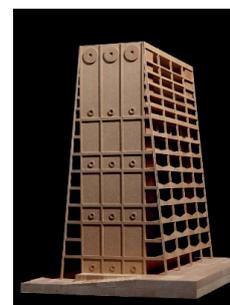
The fourth honourable mention goes to:

Cente van Hout, Rooms and Resistance (UHasselt)

And now for the winning projects. After two days of intense discussion the jury awarded one project with the third prize, one with the second prize and one with the first prize.

These projects distinguish themselves through the personal engagement of each student, the in-depth research that lies at the basis of each project, and the way the research has materialized into complete, elaborate projects often conceived up to the smallest detail, leading to projects that have a strong sense of authorship.

The third prize goes to a project that is engaged with the 21st century city. A project that rethinks the position of production within our society, by proposing a building that is highly specific in its urban presence, but at the same time open to all kinds of unexpected future uses. The jury was intrigued by the powerful architectural gesture that becomes a primary element in the city scape. A bare structure capable of supporting different uses, in which the jury recognized the idea of 'Edelrohnbau'. It appreciates the way that the idea of adaptability was translated into a convincing architectural project, and the student's admirable power of imagination. Within a city that is emblematic for modernisation, this student again proposes a convincing project for the future city; a solid structure, for innovative ideas.



The third prize goes to 'The Productive Metropolis' by Mihails Staluns (RWTH Aachen)

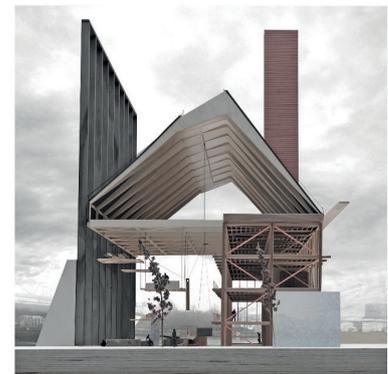
The second prize goes to a poetic, highly personal project. In its particularity, it sparked a debate amongst the members of the jury about the idea of 'Stimmung', a word that is hard to accurately translate into English but addresses the way a building evokes a kind of atmosphere, by finding the right tune for a certain place. The jury appreciated the highly personal investment of the student, her search for poetics, something that the jury considers to be at the root of architectural creation. The project proposes a minimal architecture, a shelter that forms a counterpoint to the open landscape enveloping it and that creates spaces that trace the natural elements around it. A project that is a celebration of architecture, and whose representation is wrapped in a dreamlike ambience. A building that might have just emerged, or was present within the forest all along.



The second prize goes to 'Morpheus' by Channah Mourmans (MAA Maastricht)

And now for the first prize...

The first prize goes to a project that was in many ways outstanding. It is situated in a post-industrial wasteland, affected by the crisis, in a superdiverse society, and proposes a community project. A project that is social, environmental and political, but also imaginative and bursting with architectural detail. The location in a harbour is intelligently chosen, making use of the existing infrastructure and creating a monument for manufacturing architecture. It is a building that is both clear and effective, but also multi-layered and full of convincing architectural references. It is both a machine and a craftsman's cathedral, a device through which an area in decline might find new ways of production. The author is deeply involved in the project, and develops a concept of a growing building that adapts to its purpose. Combined with the impressive craftsmanship of the presentation of the project, the jury was unanimous in choosing the winner.



The first prize goes to VAKhuis, a house for craftsmanship, by Yves Dupont (U Hasselt)

Jury: Aldo Nolli (chairman), Oliver Konrath, Maarten Van Den Driessche, Heribert Wiesemann

Jury secretary: Sereh Mandias

Hasselt, 17 November 2018