Jury report Euregional Prize for Architecture 2012
by Marina van den Bergen

The EAP is a great institution as it allows a comparative view at the architecture schools of the Euregion. The exhibition shows that there is great talent. The jury would like to elaborate here on our observations and on what we have been looking for:

First of all for the relevance of the chosen themes, secondly a research driven analysis, thirdly a methodical approach for the continuity and consistency of research and design. Finally we discussed at length the degree to which the work combines and translates these criteria into architecture.
Through the application of these criteria, the jury recognized significant differences between the faculties. These are differences in size of school, didactic methods and the way they define their projects.
This made the review of the graduation projects also somewhat like an evaluation of the schools. All five schools in the Euregion are complementary, each with their own qualities, and potentials. All projects submitted, given a few exceptions, are contextual. However, as the jury noticed, in many of the submitted projects architecture is being treated as an object and the project doesn't comment in an intellectual way on the relationship between architecture and the city.

By its tradition as a vocational school, the FH Aachen focuses more on the technical part of the architectural profession. The projects submitted by the FH Aachen demonstrate impressive craftsmanship. This, the jury finds, is a strong point. If craftsmanship could also be translated into strong design the school would have an outstanding opportunity to position itself.

The students of the Maastricht Master of Architecture work and study at the same time. Their working experience is part of the school's curriculum. In their graduation projects the students deal with all scales. Due to the 'Concurrency Model' of work and study, students tend to work longer on their graduation projects than their fellow students from the others schools in the Euregion. The jury would like to question whether the long duration and complexity of the final projects help to keep focus.

ULg Liège is a new school that emerged from a fusion between ISA and ISAI . The jury appreciates the way ULg Liège offers something to the city by formulating realistic briefs for real problems that the city of Liège has to deal with, especially on the urban level. Students are really being encouraged to think about their city. This focus on the city is a great potential for ULg Liège to define its own strong profile. Reviewing the projects submitted, the jury sometimes wondered whether the students were equipped enough to deal with the scale and complexity of some of the briefs. With this comment the jury doesn't want to advocate for simple programs; the jury is in favour of large-scale projects involving the city.

Honourable Mentions:
One of the projects deals with a very difficult location in the city, a former steel plant on the edge of the river Meuse, squeezed between roads and the city. On an urban scale the brief requests a connection between the new TGV station, the island, and the Médiacité. On architectural scale the brief asked for a job centre, an innovation centre and a museum showing the history of the steel works. The jury likes the way the new urban scheme connects with the river and the public streets that lead through the building. Therefore the jury gives an **honourable mention** to '**(Un) stable grid'** designed by **Margaux Darras and Axel Serveaux** (ULg Liège).
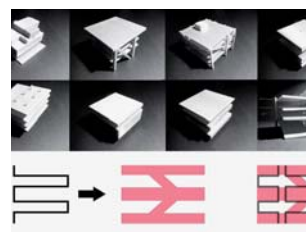
Of all the schools the RWTH Aachen is the largest and most international school in the Euregion. Although all projects submitted are contextual, none of them are local. The projects show the polytechnical profile of the school: most of them are well researched, developed, and presented.
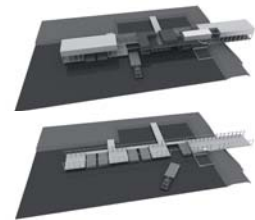
The next honourable mention goes to a project where all RWTH Aachen characteristics meet. Set in a wood on a hill in the Harz, the project is a sanatorium for people who suffer from 'burn out'. The longhouse is carved into the hill, the clear volume sets itself apart from the unspoiled nature, while the facade seems to disappear into the forest. The jury thinks this graduation project is a good example of so called 'Analoge Architektur'.

The second **honourable mention** goes to **'Zauberberg'** by **Thorsten Pofahl** (RWTH Aachen).

The jury like the way in which PHL Hasselt succeeds in integrating cultural references and regional strategies into the projects. They do this by working on new typologies with references to the past to find answers to contemporary problems. Like ULg Liège, PHL Hasselt deals with euregional problems.

Regional architecture, new complexities, research, history, modern infrastructure and technical solutions all come together in the next honourable mention. The jury likes the continuity of thought in the project: the architecture is what the program is. The building is a big workshop where ships are part of working and storage space. Boats with logs come in, the wood is processed into parts for prefabricated houses, and the parts leave the workshop via boat through the Flemish canals, to the customers.


The third **honourable mention** goes to **'One ship, one house'** by **Pieter Vanhees** (PHL Hasselt).

And now for the winning projects:
After two days of reviewing and discussing the projects, the jury awarded one project with the third prize, one with the second prize and one project with the first prize. All these projects go further than answering their brief. They excel in their implementation of research, method and their consideration of context.

One project deals with a very fundamental problem. Some parts of China suffer each year from heavy rainfall, destroying houses, crops and taking the lives of thousands of people, mostly farmers. The project is presented as a very detailed construction manual for a flood-safe and durable family house for farmers, which addresses cultural and traditional needs. It can be cheaply built by three people in three days because it uses the knowledge and the tools of the farmers themselves. In the manual the designer explains how to harvest and cut bamboo, how to make brick, and in which quantity, and finally how to build the house with these self-produced building materials. Although the knowledge that is in the manual is not new, the designer carefully composed all parts into one coherent system. The jury is impressed by the precision, and logic of the manual. The jury thinks it shows how the profession of the architect can contribute to a common wealth.
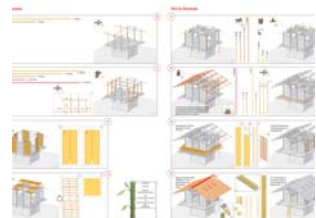
The third prize goes to **'S-O-S Save Own Souls'** by **Aryan Mirfendereski** (RWTH Aachen).

The second project deals more with the sociological and ecological aspect of the profession by proposing a neo-agricultural approach in a poetic and artistic way. After precise analysis the designer uses a set of rules given by the Flemish landscape, maintaining and reinforcing its inherent qualities. On a site where peat was harvested, new crops are planted for a bio-energy plant. In this landscape four abstract pavilions emerge with specific references to the landscape. The jury thinks the project is outstanding for its precise socio-economical strategy and its minimalistic presentation and implementation.

The second prize goes to **'RE:Peat Zwartenhoek'** by **Mattijs Brands** (PHL Hasselt).

The winning project deals very much with the city and historical references.

It is a research into typological aspects, cultural context and urban fabric. The project is not about purely aesthetical components and therefore shows no traces of vanity. The project is located in Istanbul and is a reinterpretation of the old Han courtyard type: closed on the outside and open around the courtyard. The ground floor is kept open and functions as a kind of bazaar. Because of its public nature it gives the pedestrian the possibility for a shortcut between two busy streets. Above ground floor are rooms for visitors.

It is a clear and convincing design in terms of how it ties into the urban fabric, its structural logic and materialisation.

The first prize goes to **'Eine Herberge für Karaköy-Istanbul'** by **Feyyaz Berber** (RWTH Aachen).

Maastricht, 10th November 2012

Jury: Christian Rapp (chairman), Stefan Korschildgen, Isabelle Blancke, Aglaée Degros, Dirk Krolikowski
Jury secretary: Marina van den Bergen