

## **Jury report Euregional Prize for Architecture 2016**

by Marina van den Bergen

### **The very best of the best**

The schools – UHasselt, RWTH Aachen, ULg Liège, MAA Maastricht, FH Aachen – selected for this edition of the Euregional Prize for Architecture a very broad variety of graduation projects.

They not only selected the best of their graduation projects, the projects also showcase the educational and 'artistic' approach each school offers.

This gives an impression of what architecture is, and also what architecture can be.

In figures:

29 graduation projects designed by 35 young architects, urban designers and interior architects;

16 females and 19 males;

5 schools from 3 different countries;

3 languages;

1 time zone.

Some graduation projects had to be finished in only 6 weeks, others could work on it for 6 months, and some students could dedicate a year to their final project.

The jury saw narrative research projects, straightforward architectural projects, cinematographic projects and every kind of project in between.

The projects are located around the world: from Coney Island New York, to the Himalaya near Mount Everest; from Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), to the Isle of Islay in Scotland. 29 projects in 13 countries. Projects dealing with the size of a small cabin, and projects proposing a strategy for a 20 kilometer long stretch of land.

This diversity triggered some discussion within the jury. How do we compare these projects with each other? We didn't. We judged every project on its individual merits.

Before announcing the prize winning projects, we, the jury, would like to make some general remarks about the inspiring work that was presented to us and that we closely studied during these last two days.

Among the projects, some consist of a research part, presented in a thesis, and a design part. The translation of research into design proved sometimes difficult. As colleagues, we like to advise you to already make use of your design skills during the research period.

Furthermore we advise you to be bold. Question your teacher, question the assignment, push boundaries, try out, make mistakes, and if you fail, fail beautifully.

Communication is very important, not only for the presentation of your graduation project, but also later in life when you are applying for a job, entering a competition, or trying to convince a client. Make sure your presentation is self explaining.

We, the jury, are very optimistic about you as a new generation that challenges architecture and its boundaries. Prove that architecture is still relevant and address the big issues we as a society are confronted with now and in the future.

And now for the projects that stand out.

Three projects are given an Honourable Mention. We called these three projects 'colourful birds'. Projects that are bold, that address big issues in a serious and joyful, but not always perfect, way. The projects are mentioned in no specific order:

Despite the scale, the project has a modesty. The research is well done. The project is more about process than about design and shows how architecture can lift a community, can have a social relevance.

It's a long-term strategy on how to improve the ecological and economical situation in Dar es Salaam by proposing a mangrove nursery with research and visitors facilities.

The nursery creates a landscape, and this landscape helps to create a sustainable urban design. And the wood, produced by the mangrove, will be used for building activities in the city. The jury is convinced that this scheme could really work, when realised.

The first honourable mention goes to:

**Lore Smeets for her project DAR 2050 – Mangrove Park (UHasselt).**

The brief of this studio was to extend an existing building. Extending an existing building is a difficult task especially when it is designed by a famous architect, like Charles Vandenhove. His 'Magazine à Livres' is extended with an extra volume on top of the roof. With this gesture the quality of the Vandenhove building is acknowledged and improved or at least challenged. A new construction is added, the existing construction is made visible. The translucent façade becomes a beacon at night. The project is bold and presented with humour.

The second honourable mention goes to:

**Nathan Heindrichs and Cloé Janssen for their project Postures (ULg Liège).**

This project is cunning. Although small, it addresses a big issue: the condition of a city in relation to its history and identity. The way the project is presented is impressive and very much in line with the issue the designer wants to address.

The project tells the story of how the hot spring water that is hidden under the city of Aachen can create a new quality for the city in an almost casual way. Small interventions are made in not so obvious places. They inspire everyday life in a beautiful modest way. The jury particularly liked the unconventional way the project is presented.

The third honourable mention goes to:

**Adrian Steckeweh for his project Aachen Onsen (RWTH Aachen).**



### **And now for the prizewinning projects:**

After two days of reviewing and discussing, the jury awarded one project with the third prize, one with the second prize, and one project with the first prize. These three projects stand out by giving convincing answers to the set assignment, and for being reflective. All projects present this in a very informative and convincing way.

This project addresses the issues of shrinking rural villages and vernacular architecture. The jury saw quite a few projects addressing these topics. This project stands out from the other ones in the way it also added a social programme. In a convincing way the existing allotment structure is continued by adding new buildings that in

their typology refer to the local barns in an intelligent way. The construction of the 'barns' as such is well detailed. In the 'barns' will be a community centre, a small shop and co-working places for people working from home. It is this combination of functions that might be an answer to keep the social coherence in rural areas. The **third prize** goes to:

**Francois Gena for his project Herresbarn: towards a rural identity** (ULg Liège).



This project is a small jewellery box. It's modest and at the same time ambitious. The brief is relatively simple. A house for a female collector. It is not a museum and not a private house, but something in between. It addresses the designer's personal fascination with ephemerality and collecting. The jury was impressed by the way the project shows the power of craftsmanship in addressing materialisation, detailing, all in perfect harmony.

The **second prize** goes to:

**Nadine Nievergeld for Tour de Curiosité** (MAA Maastricht).

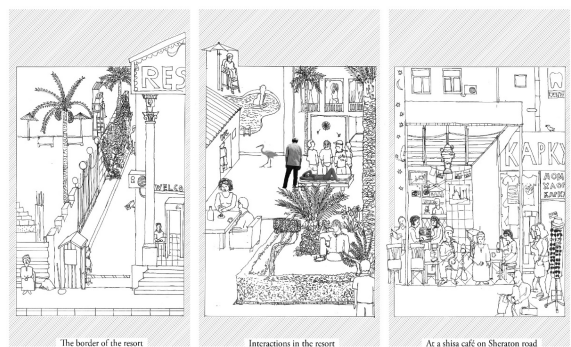


And now for the winner....

This project addresses the problems that come with globalisation. What happens when a holiday resort is outdated and left abandoned? After a thorough research by design the designer came up with an urban strategy in which the abandoned resorts are being taken over by the people who live on the other side of the road and who used to work in them. The walls between the resorts are broken down, holiday homes become family houses, and in what once was a kidney shaped swimming pool, now stands a money making Trump tower. The backland becomes the front land. The project is provocative, eye opening and is beautifully presented.

The **first prize** goes to:

**Heinrich Altenmueller for his project Ruin all inclusive** (RWTH Aachen).



Jury: Bart Creugers, Sascha Glasl, Jan Keymis, Hubert Lionnez, Rob Meurders (chairman).  
Jury secretary: Marina van den Bergen

Liège: 12th November 2016