

implicit performance

exploring the hybrid condition

Belgian Jury Report

Date: May 21st, 2008
Location: Febelcem, Brussels

Jury Members:

Manuel Rocha de Aires Mateus
Rob Nijse
Olivier Bastin
Kersten Geers
Adrien Verschuere

Observing Members:

Jef Apers, organizer
Guy Châtel, secretary, national coordination
Siebe Bakker, international coordination

Schedule:

1. Briefing about the competitions background, concept and target.
2. Explanation and discussion of the design assignment
3. Jury

Participation:

18 entries, 3 team works, 15 individual works
23 students involved, from 10 schools.
i.e.

18 students from 7 schools in the Flemish Community
5 students from 3 schools in the French Community

Beside the schools of architecture, 3 schools providing for a education in interior design were involved.

Jury Procedure:

The jury chooses not to elect a chairman.

As a group the jury proceeds to a first elimination round.

Projects that don't clearly address the theme of the competition are eliminated.

Open discussion about the merits and limitations of the projects considered.

The jury is struck by the diversity of approaches prompted by the assignment. At least three categories of work can be distinguished:

- work focussing on the material and/or technological questions related to the theme,
- work developing an architectural proposal out of a (more or less) precise notion about material or technological aspects induced by the theme,
- work on an architectural project rooted in the conceptual field inferred by the theme.

The jury does not want to discriminate between these categories and decides to grant prizes to the best work in each of them.

In the first category BV007 clearly stand out, in the third RL384. In the second category PP413 and OO717 distinguish themselves. After discussion PP413 is chosen for the prize and OO717 for a honourable mention. The jury decides however to divide the 4000 euro prize money equally between those four entries.

Result:

3 prizes (all for individual work), each of them granted with 1000 euro and participation to the Master Class.

1 honourable mention (for individual work), granted with 1000 euro, and a follow up position for participation to the Master Class.

Jury Comment:

On the Belgian entries 2007/08 and the competition as such:

With a total of 18 entries implying the work of 23 students this competition cycle is less successful than the second edition. There is still a problem of quality about the entries. The fact that three out of the four awarded entries are issued from the same school and studio demonstrates that the range of quality obtained is very close to the one prevailing in a current studio. This reveals that the competition is, much more than expected, dependant on the active participation of regular studios organised in schools, and that the objective to appeal to ambitious individual students does still not come out.

Suggestions are made to open up the competition to young professional trainees. The jury members are indeed convinced that the need to take up opportunities to distinguish oneself, is much more acute in this group than among students whose first preoccupation remains to obtain a diploma.

On the other hand the participation of some students affiliated to three different interior design schools is a positive evolution, witnessing that the renown of the competition is extending.

While the jury members express their support to the principle of an open questioning and a brief focussed on qualitative aspects of concrete as a material and a technology, they recommend to avoid vagueness and ambiguity in its formulation. The full benefit of the involvement of a famed curator will be obtained if the participants are clearly challenged to take position with a project conceived as an architectural statement.

On the specific entries:

BV 007: (1st prize ex-aequo, 1000 euro + Master Class) Berten Vandael, Provinciale Hogeschool Limburg PHL – Architectuur, Diepenbeek.

This entry entitled 'Luminous Concrete' is conceived as the report of a genuine research about the possibility of manufacturing photo-luminescent concrete. The research is based on the adduction of aluminates in the composition of the concrete. While the tests lead to an efficient factor of light restitution, they impinge against a high production cost and a decrease in strength. Further research on a concrete based paste with adduction of thermosetting plastics proves to be more successful and applicable to various surfaces. The proposal includes various examples of possible architectural and infrastructural use of the luminescent concrete finishing. The panels used for the entry itself were appositely coated with the product.

PP 413: (1st prize ex-aequo, 1000 euro+ Master Class) Wouter Dreessen, Provinciale Hogeschool Limburg PHL – Architectuur, Diepenbeek.

The entry is based upon the recent development of so-called organic concrete, a product engineered with the purpose to retain water. Because of its property to release humidity gradually it can provide for a proper substrate for organic growth. The entry focuses on the architectural implications conveyed by the very existence of this material. Sharp distinctions between the natural and the fabricated are brought out of balance. The project is conceived as an enclosing landscape. By choosing for a cave-like spatiality, it pretends to challenge the reliance of architecture on geometric principles and its propensity to spell this out through tectonics.

RL 384: (1st prize ex-aequo, 1000 euro+ Master Class) Radim Louda - ISACF La Cambre, Brussels.

This project is an intervention on the site of the 'Place des Sciences' in Louvain-la-Neuve. The Library, the first building on site, plainly erected in bare concrete, is considered as being one of the last convincing representatives of an architecture celebrating devotion to design. The argument is put forward that the existing square doesn't match up to this historical status and monumental quality. The project superimposes a additional figure to the building configuration around the square. The ordered pattern of the underground structures are dug out, exposed and worked out to redefine them as the common base to the buildings. The informal square is thus replaced by a cloister court, a strong figure reuniting the scattered edifices and bringing up implicit monumentality into physical presence.

OO 717: (honourable mention, 1000 euro) Hans Ooms, Provinciale Hogeschool Limburg PHL – Architectuur, Diepenbeek.

This entry is to be situated in the same register as PP 413, trying to adjust architectural thought to technological development. 'Conkevlar' being a laminated system of concrete and Kevlar fibre allows for the fabrication of thin structural shells. The project takes inspiration in aeronautic design (the aircraft wing) to elaborate a proposal based on tubular wide span structures out of this concevlar. However, the architectural proposal is quite vague and rather loosely related to the engaged technology.