

Young  
Talent  
Architecture  
Award  
2020

# Jury Proceedings

The jury of the Young Talent Architecture Award 2020 met via videoconference on 13 and 14 August 2020 to discuss the nominated projects. Before starting these conversations, each member of the jury had reviewed the 382 nominated projects submitted by 478 students of 138 architecture, urban planning and landscape architecture schools, from 114 different cities and 33 European countries plus Brazil, Chile and Mexico participating as Guest Countries. The jury considered all the proposals and reviewed the drawings, videos and briefs of the nominated projects.

During the deliberation process, the jury members discussed how they envision the projects as being part of an exhibition: a group of works gathered around different subjects and attitudes that offers a range of different understandings of what concerns young architects.

Nonetheless, they all have a common ingredient, which is the virtue of critical thinking.

On the core of the selection there are the four award-winning works: *Off the Grid*, *Oasi*, *Three Places to Inhabit the Mountain Range in the Maule Region* and *Stage for the City*. The first two are closely related to water as an essential element to be considered in times of climate change. They both demonstrate the need to understand the territory from the perspective of water to propose actions and methodologies based on the knowledge acquired through rigorous research of its dynamics. **Off the Grid** is a very sincere project that intervenes in different scales to deal with the quickly growing population by implementing a sustainable way of supplying water in urban areas. With low-tech water recycling infrastructure, the project proposal transforms leftover spaces in new public places for the community. The project is designed as a series of strategies that would be implemented and self-managed by the local community. It is the result of field research into a place that considers the role of the architect as a translator rather than a designer. A sensitive observer who learns from the culture of the place to propose an open, collaborative and sustainable way of transforming the urban environment.

“How much do we need to build?” was one of the questions raised around the **Oasi** project. The jury was amazed by the professional approach of the project, which was built after a real commission and a real client. The design strategy promotes nature to regenerate a stretch of a river as it passes through an urban area. This is a strategy based on resilience as a key factor. The work is a piece of landscape that talks to nature through nature. The members of the team that created the project lay claim to a new attitude in our present: “In the human context of rediscovering a territory that assumes new climate conditions, our generation will have to regain respect and empathy towards the landscape, the space that belongs to nature”.

As well as *Oasi*, **Three Places to Inhabit the Mountain Range in the Maule Region** is a “real” built project. It features a group of three small-scale constructions on the landscape: the recovery of a series of natural pools of mud and hot water as public places for the local community and visitors, a snow shelter as the most elemental piece of architecture to survive in the middle of the mountains and a milestone to commemorate the encounter of two countries. The jury emphasised the value of developing research, management, financing, design and construction from the academy to the professional world with a painstaking process and results. The preciseness and care are also notable in the selection of the materials and the constructive details that each one of the authors demonstrated.

The fourth winner, **Stage for the City**, shows a high capacity for studying details and understanding their importance, a sensitive project that expresses the essence of the place through these details. It is a careful and rigorous exercise that talks about the language of monumentality and the need to democratise the image of the public institutions to regenerate an abandoned urban centre. The author designs a buildable project, a building through the creation of very subtle links through bonding. The jury members found that this work, with its dedication, deepness and care, represents excellence in the traditional version of the architect’s profession.

Following with the idea of an exhibition, the finalist and shortlisted projects would be placed around some of the issues explored by the winners. Territory and water management, landscape and how to intervene in it are questions also dealt with in the finalist projects *Golden Canal*, *Conditions and*

*Contradictions on the Furka Pass* and *Vulnerable Architecture as Ephemeral Fossil*.

**Golden Canal** talks about the recovery of an entire territory by regaining an obsolete piece of infrastructure: a series of small projects in an old canal that will serve as a meeting place for a new human-landscape relationship.

**Conditions and Contradictions on the Furka Pass** also departs from the relationship between the human being and geography (Swiss topography, in this case) from the point of view of a Swiss student. It is a radical project that is not necessary at all. It is so radically unnecessary that it has the power to open many intellectual discussions. It is an experiment that talks about the capacity of interacting and unveiling, of becoming art of the landscape that anticipates changes in the landscape. This capacity of revealing the forces of nature is the leitmotiv of **Vulnerable Architecture as Ephemeral Fossil**. A project located in a volcano that speaks about a spiritual journey, the construction of a ritual journey. The author proposes a gradual loss of materiality in the process of building fragile architecture.

Around these finalists, a series of shortlisted projects continue to consider how to intervene in the landscape with different scales and strategies. Like the *Golden Canal* project, **Riverside Archipelago** works with water and infrastructure. However, in this case, the project adds public programmes to the infrastructure, which is designed to absorb large amounts of water in case of flooding. Following the water line and the territorial scale, **The Wall as a Paradigm of the Territory** proposes a new way of understanding retaining walls that goes beyond their infrastructural role. The project treats them as unique elements, as pieces of architecture that become part of the landscape. The composition material could be made out of the construction site’s local rubble. **Reconversion and Recycling in the Central Valley of Chile** is an exercise that uses leftover materials to build architectural devices that can interact with the landscape where they are placed. If these projects use leftover material, **San Giovanni Bianco after the Quarries** works with the voids and traces left after extraction areas. It is a project that once again puts human beings in relationship with the landscape and arouses awareness on how we are taking material from nature.

In addition to floods, wildfires are also an increasing outcome of climate change. **A Chestnut Cooperative** is a project developed from an ecological point of view and asks: Can a building protect the landscape that surrounds it? It proposes a local response involving a productive model and a place for social encounters as a new firewall network model.

Blotting Ornithologics is the counterpoint of this group of projects grounded in the man-made landscape. It is a proposal that learns from birds to be adapted to the climate conditions of the place where it takes place, between urbanity and wilderness.

Based on the virtue of inhabiting a place, which is covered in the winning project *Three Places to Inhabit the Mountain Range in the Maule Region*, a second series of finalist and shortlisted projects evoke terms as inhabiting, domesticity and communality. The finalist project **Between the Things** is an introspective exercise based on architecture’s primary function of providing shelter. By designing a refuge in the middle of the mountains, the author explores architecture through a sensitive and phenomenological approach. The focus is put on the creation of atmospheres, as well as in the shortlisted **Wilderness Atelier in Vilniemi**, a simple and sensitive project that emerges from the ruins of an old construction to build a place for artists in the middle of the Finnish forest. It talks about a temporal duality: bringing back the past and proposing a new present. The use of craft models demonstrates the meticulous work done by hand.

While these projects focus on the human being as an individual immersed in an atmosphere, **Double Exposure** investigates domesticity through the layered identity of a family in a Swiss vernacular house. A narrative project similar to the one proposed in the also shortlisted 9x9x9, an abstract storytelling effort that questions the influence of objects, the house and the city in shaping the everyday life of human beings.

The finalist project **Polyvalent Models** uses the knowledge of making a 1:1 scale model in the middle of the countryside to create something bigger and construct a building within an urban context. It is a prototype that goes from the unit to aggregation, to test programmatic ambivalence through a sustainable construction and material system. The use of sustainable materials is also one of the main topics for designing the shortlisted project **House as Recourse**, a housing cooperative building that makes use of recyclable materiality, non-constructible details and climate conditions. Its design also works with the conception of lived-in community spaces, as does the finalist project **Commonplace**, a theoretical effort centred more on the psychological and perceptive perspective of the inhabitants. It is a delicate project that studies the small and ordinary details of everyday life to create atmospheres of domesticity. This sensitive approach is explained through hand-drawn sketches and an exquisite model.

The use of precise and subtle drawing by hand is essential to the shortlisted project **Vakhuis**. It talks about craftsmanship and bringing back the opportunity to share a place where knowledge would be transmitted. It creates a sense of harmony between the workshop and the space of interaction for the community. It talks about living and working together again in our society. Living together from an intergenerational perspective is the focus of the shortlisted project **CO-Building Communities**, a proposal for co-housing, co-living and co-working inserted in the middle of an urban context.

A third group of finalist and shortlisted projects deals with urban contexts. The winning project **Stage for the City** would guide this collection of pieces through the concept of urbanity and willingness touching on urban issues and urban communities.

**Temporary Use as a New Right to the City** is a finalist project that looks for changes in legislation to use the city in a more intelligent way. It is a solidly-researched exercise that makes use of legal and constructive tools, proposing a manifesto and developing a practical study case.

Following from the use perspective on the city, **Blurring the Map** and **Beyond the Informal** are two shortlisted projects that make visible and work with urban dynamics and urban practices. While **Blurring the Map** talks about the appropriation of public space from its use and from the collective imaginary through maps, inventories and annotations, **Beyond the Informal** immerses us in understanding the strategies of the informal city to establish a design methodology with its arguments. A third project, called **Healing the City**, also traces relationships between housing conditions in the slums of Lima as potential factors for transmitting tuberculosis.

Within this urban realm there is a group of four shortlisted projects that relates and works with very specific human groups in concrete urban situations. **Silk-Skin City** introduces a series of light architectural artifacts within the urban tissue of an Indian city to house a textile cooperative for women. This project works as a net within a neighbourhood similarly to **Close to Home**, a disperse mental health facility that strives to create a more human model located close to the everyday spaces of the people of Beijing. Also set in urban Beijing, **The Floating Embassy** proposes a symbolic monument to recognise rural migrants, an excluded and under-represented population in the Chinese city.

While the previous projects worked on finding urban voids to find places for invisible human groups, the two shortlisted projects that follow work with intensification as a strategy to build over the already built. **The Twelve Crowns** densifies a consolidated urban centre by increasing the height of twelve existing common buildings through the idea of implementing a disperse university campus. **The Hamilton Ave Footbridge** reuses an elevated road to create a new pedestrian walkway with an overlapping series of civic programmes.

Far from urbanity and working on a gigantic scale, **The Post-Brexit Customs** is constructed as a piece of civic and logistical infrastructure to enhance the arrival to Europe from the United Kingdom.

A group of four shortlisted projects would come together around the idea of “taking action”. We have already seen that the greatest value of the award-winning projects **Three Places to Inhabit the Mountain Range** in the Maule Region and **Oasi** lie in the fact they are built projects that respond to real situations and contexts. The collection of proposals that follows are basically real actions as reactions to social problems. **A Sense of Home** responds by designing and producing a prototype (scale 1:1) of an architectural artifact that serves as shelter for homeless people in the centre of Amsterdam. This is a reaction to a social reality close to the student context, like the one addressed by the **Interdine** project to the massive arrival of refugees in Umeå in recent times. It is an intervention that acts on a local scale as a platform for integration through food by celebrating cooking and meal sessions.

Travelling far from the students’ context, **Jajja’s House** is a cooperative project in Africa to build a construction for rural women together with the native population. Two more projects could be added to this group as responses to social needs in distant contexts from the European point of view, but just from the theoretical perspective. Also in Africa, **Sense of Home** questions the temporality of refugee camps in Ethiopia and works with the notion of quality and stable living spaces able to provide a certain degree of belonging. In Bangladesh, **In Virtue of Time** is focused on designing a public facility for students from ethnic minorities in the area.

There is a last group of projects centred on the concepts of cemetery, memory and ritual. This collection is led by the finalist project **Forensics of Grenfell**, an exploration of demolition and mourning. The project departs from the well-known event of the Grenfell Tower fire to propose a memorial to heal the trauma suffered by the former inhabitants who lost their homes. The temporary installation focuses on the remains of the burnt building that would accompany the demolition process until the end.

The shortlisted projects **Paths that Life does not Erase** and **Mókembé – Cemetery** essay new archetypes of cemeteries departing from the transformation of abandoned and unused buildings. The first converts a former cement plant located in the periphery through the concept of a path. The second takes an abandoned military facility in the middle of a dense urban area to propose a new archetype of the necropolis. Both aim to enhance rituals as lost values in our society.

While the two previous projects took abandoned places to insert new cemeteries, the next two rethink the role of cemeteries within urban contexts to be partly or gradually transformed in public spaces for its living citizens. **Dead Space** creates new public pathways that pass through the enclosure area that today creates great discontinuity for the urban fabric in the city of Rio de Janeiro. **Hortopie Jacobi** works with 30 years of strategies to reprogramme and reuse the space left by a specific cemetery in the city of Berlin. The proposal is planned as a participatory process and as a pilot project that would be implemented in other cemeteries in the city in the same situation.

The project ending this group and the entire collection as an exhibition is **Where do Boats Lay to Rest?**, a project that sketches a very special funerary ritual and it is narrated through an encounter. The author proposes to build another kind of cemetery, a series of architectural devices to support this event.