

## **BETA 2018 competition - Jury report**

### **Categories:**

BUILT SPACE, INTERIOR SPACE, PUBLIC SPACE, GRADUATION PROJECTS, INITIATIVES/  
EXPERIMENTS/ VISIONS IN ARCHITECTURE

### **Jury members:**

Attila Kim (president), Grozdana Šišović, Irina Cristea, Levente Szabó, Oana Stănescu

Total number of submitted works: **115**

Number of works from Romania: **90**

Number of works from Serbia: **21**

Number of works from Hungary: **4**

Distribution of the submitted works, on categories:

BUILT SPACE: **18**

INTERIOR SPACE: **14**

PUBLIC SPACE: **4**

GRADUATION PROJECTS: **42**

INITIATIVES/ EXPERIMENTS/ VISIONS IN ARCHITECTURE: **37**

Disqualified works: **2**

Number of works to be evaluated: **113**

Distribution of the 40 preselected works, on categories:

BUILT SPACE: **10**

INTERIOR SPACE: **5**

PUBLIC SPACE: **3**

GRADUATION PROJECTS: **11**

INITIATIVES/ EXPERIMENTS/ VISIONS IN ARCHITECTURE: **11**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Jury was pleased to see the high level of the participating works in all of the categories. The diversity of the projects, even within the same category, put the Jury in a difficult situation in honouring all of the valuable works from the competition. The goal of such competitions is not just awarding the best works in every category, which in itself refers to the efforts of individual authors, but more importantly to start a dialogue, to bring all of the participants together, for a change of ideas, opinions, experiences and to build a colourful, diverse but also united community. The Jury was very pleased to accept the invitation of this year's BETA competition

to personally meet the authors of the selected projects and to be able to start a dialogue about the presented works.

#### PHASE 1

During the first phase of the evaluation process, the Jury members individually studied each of the 113 works remaining in the competition after the preliminary analysis, based on a set of personal criteria, selected a shortlist of 10 - 15. During the first Jury meeting, that took place on the 31st of August, the Jury established the way of the selection process and discussed each member's general views regarding all of the categories and the proposed evaluation methods. Each of the projects was briefly reviewed and discussed by the Jury and, considering the maximum available time for the personal presentations (two working days), the Jury selected the maximum number of projects that could fit into this limited period, namely 40 individual works. For the final list of 40 selected projects, all of the points given from 1 to 10 by the individual members were centralised, and the projects that had a difference bigger than 2 points were submitted to further debate, until the Jury members were able to reach an unanimous decision.

The overall conclusion after this Jury session, was that the works presented in different categories show a large diversity of approaches and thematics, thus it is quite difficult in the case of some categories to award a single price. The Jury consulted the organisers regarding the number of prices and based on the general rules of the competition, the Jury proposed to offer two prices to the Built Space category, one for a smaller construction and one for a larger development. A similar decision was taken in the case of the Initiatives/ Experiments/ Visions in architecture category, in order to honour both more punctual, shorter term and more strategic, longer term initiatives. Also, considering the large number of very good quality Graduation Projects, the Jury decided to give two prices in this category.

#### PHASE 2

The second part of the Jury evaluation involved a direct presentation and Q&A of the selected projects. Throughout the two days of presentations focusing on extra information about each work, a valuable dialogue was initiated between the authors and the Jury. The Jury would like to emphasise the major importance of this phase in the evaluation process. After each segment of presentations the Jury organised short meetings in which the fresh impressions and information were compared to the initial grades and impressions from the 1st Phase. These meetings also focused on the preliminary proposals for nominees, each of the project being discussed and compared with the ones with similar results.

The Jury deliberated the final list of Nominees at the end of the second day of the presentations, based on the conclusions of the previous short discussions and the overall conclusions. After the Nominees were decided, each Jury member proposed works for Mentions and Awards. All the proposals were discussed and the final distinctions were unanimously decided by the Jury Saturday, the 27th of October and communicated to the organisers.

Besides the obvious help and importance in taking the best decisions throughout this evaluation process, in the Jury would like to highlight another inherent value of this series of presentations, laying in the possibility for all participants to listen, to meet and to establish contact with colleagues living in different cities and countries and working in similar or very different areas of the architectural profession. The Jury encourages the organisers to maintain this evaluation process, that has the power to turn a competition, that showcases individual works, into a discussion about common interests, goals and visions, building bridges and shaping a community in an otherwise lonely profession.

### **BUILT SPACE**

In the Built space category 18 projects were submitted. However it wasn't a too wide selection compared to the majority of the others, first of all due to the conditions of the euroregional area, this category represents the wideness of the different scales and approaches. The additional impressions from the presentations evolved extremely useful for the jury in this category, because the personal experience is very important for the judgement process especially among the realized projects, to feel something about the atmosphere, not only the conceptual background of the authors decisions. But how can the very different approaches be compared, which started from the hand-made-detailed small extensions and ended to the huge, urban scale developments? The main viewpoint was to appreciate those projects, which – independently from the scale – have some benefits for the public, for the city or which can express their cultural or innovative value in very different ways. The jury decided to give two Nominees and two Awards without the Mentions. On the one hand the decision emphasizes the difference between the generally good approaches and the outstanding projects, on the other hand expresses the duality of the different scales which was represented among the submitted projects.

**First Nominee** is awarded *The Dining Pavilion* (M. Ionescu House) in Timisoara, designed by Ovidiu Micsa from the Andreescu & Gaivoronschi office. The starting point of the project was extraordinary, the former client of the office commissioned the same team to design the extension of a 20-year-old existing family house. However the new pavilion-like extension didn't try to reinterpret the old phase, and it seems to offer a totally different approach for the family, the invention of the pavilion of the garden created a special atmosphere based on the close relationship between the interior and the garden spaces.

**Second Nominee** was given to the *Rilak's House* designed by Dejan Mitov. This small vacation house in Vojvodina reinterpreted the archetypal form of the traditional neighbourhoods, but constructed an inverse spatial structure, reflected the intimacy of the garden and the public character of the street. That is why the living areas turned to and opened for the garden with a huge openings and the additional rooms is situated on the front of the house with small windows. However the homogeneity of the form would have been stronger if the idea of the archetypal form had been more homogeneous without the yellow frame of the facade, the

elegant and clear concept of this small project could be a reference for the owners of this type of property.

The jury gave two **Awards**. The first Award was given to for the *WERK Restaurant* which was designed by Cătălin Trandafir and Irina Filofi from the Filofi și Trandafir Arhitectură. The abandoned elements of the former iron factory were extended, reconstructed and formed by the architects as a new unit in a very sensible way. The photos and the presentations could express strongly the atmospheres which evolved from the hand-maded details of the old and new brick elements. The maintenance of the design is clearly visible on the whole and the details as well, and this attitude could successfully make the connections between the past and the present, the historic and contemporary values of the project.

The second **awarded** project, a huge office building came from the other end of an imaginative line of the built spaces, it was designed by Vlad Gaivoronschi from the Andreescu & Gaivoronschi office. The urban scaled office development is a well-designed project which contains the required standards in a high level. But what is more important, with the opened passage in the ground floor it tried to make a quasi public square in order not to make a stranger object in the urban structure, but to connect the ground floor to the pedestrian zone of the city as much as possible in the case of this type of interventions. This development can be seen as a role model about the responsibility of the architects for the city when they work for a private investor.

## INTERIOR SPACE

The projects presented in the Interior Space category showed a high level of creativity, attention to details and to the client's needs. The projects came from a wide variety of thematics, and the Jury aimed to highlight works from different programs and from different types of approaches. Unfortunately, the Jury didn't have the chance to see a presentation of all of the selected projects. Two projects out of five were judged only based on the information presented on the mandatory exhibition panel, without the possibility to ask for any extra information on the initial brief, evolution of the project, constraints or construction details. The three chosen projects, two Nominees and one Award, proved a high level of professionalism, care and talent.

**First Nominee** is awarded to Vitamin Architects for the project of *Art Encounter's main exhibition venue*. The Jury appreciated the maturity and simplicity of the intervention, that proves a good understanding of the space and the architectural qualities of the existing and emblematic building and, equally importantly, of the special needs of the curatorial discourse. However, the Jury considered, that the intervention in some cases was too autonomous and could have been developed more along the general architectural concept, offering a more consistent and powerful solution.

**Second Nominee** is awarded to Alexandru Buftea and Ariana Țuțuianu representing NOI Studio / In lucru for the *Individual Notary Office C.I.A.venue*. The Jury appreciated the overall concept of the project, that carefully solved all the requirements of the brief in a very creative way, offering unusual functional solutions, that decluttered the functional flow of the office. Also, the Jury appreciated the effort put into the entrance area, showing a good understanding of the context and proposing a very discreet, but rigorous architectural solution. The Jury questioned the possibilities regarding the evolution of the interior space and pointed out the lack of flexibility resulted by the fixed and definite architectural solutions.

The **Award** for the Interior Space category is given to Loredana Gaiță and Miodrag Stoianov for the project *HOME*. The Jury considered, that this project was the most powerful and yet sensitive of all the admissions, proving that good quality interior architecture is not directly dependent on extravagant financing, but it is a result of creativity, sensibility, attention to details, respect and understanding of the initial space and clean choices of solutions and materials. This interior is an exceptional example of quality contemporary living in an old building, a real HOME, that sets a professional example and highlights a path to be considered and followed, creates with simple gestures strong and warm atmosphere, and above all, stays discreet and encourages the inhabitants to express and be themselves.

## **PUBLIC SPACE**

Public space is a crucial barometer for the cities we live in: a mirror for the current state of the society, a reflection of its past, yet projecting the future ambitions of its democracy. These are the spaces where we meet and play and run and go for walks, where we feel the other's presence and recognize our part in something bigger, where we come together in protest and dissent, and where we laugh, and cry, and flirt and love. Public space is the infrastructure of our life.

With only three regional entries the jury faced a difficult nominalization process, however we were overjoyed by the multitude of projects from the Initiatives/ Experiments/ Visions section which also addressed the issue of public space in an indirect way. This is symptomatic of an amazing proactive desire to participate in and sustain public life, though unfortunately also a sign of the lack of initiatives at an administrative level.

With this in mind, the jury analyzed the three entries from several points of view, considering the original vision, the execution of the vision into a cohesive design, the power of the design, as well as the presentation. The only prize in this category was a **Mention** for *PASSAGE* Light Installation, Aleksandra Stratimirovic.

We do hope the future competitions will be richer in public developments that both engage architects and urbanists in a transparent way, as well as participate in the public discourse with regards to the design of the cities we live in. After all citizens have to be active participants in the process, if not, who are we designing for?

## GRADUATION PROJECTS

The jury and the organizers were happy to receive a significant number of diploma works submitted - 42 projects, which as a whole demonstrated a great variety of topics and approaches. This variety was seen as a great contribution to overall richness and diversity of the architectural and urban themes and their interpretations embraced by BETA competition and exhibition.

Through the selection process the jury selected best 11 works in which not only an architectural quality, a genuine passion and a hard work could be recognized, but which are also engaged with inspiring and important topics. By the same criteria, 6 works were nominated for the awards and mentions. After a further evaluation, the chosen projects were graded as 1 Nominee, 3 Mentions and 2 Awards.

A **Nomination** went to Ariana Țuțuianu for the project of the *Craftsmen's House* in the village of Crivina de Sus, Timiș County. The Jury appreciated the excellent initiative in revitalising the village by saving its material (built) and immaterial (craftsmanship) heritage and the personal involvement in a real project. The relocation and reuse of the existing barn and the complementarity between old and new, a main element of the project, requires a special attention for the contemporary interpretations of the rural architecture, that in the view of the Jury was insufficiently studied and / or presented.

**First Mention** was awarded to Andrei Tiron for the project of a *Community Centre* in a traditional Banat village. The Jury was impressed by the choice of the graduation project topic and by the author's civic attitude towards this small community. The village, that has a very special history and heritage, could welcome the proposed community centre, that would act as an important link between the past, present and the future. The project proves a deep understanding of the local needs and offers a series of good functional and spatial solutions. From a strictly architectural point of view, the Jury thought that the proposal needs some minor interventions, in order to simplify some of the volumes and obtain a more fluid composition.

**Second Mention** was given to Andra Șodolescu for the project under the title *Horezu Ceramic Museum*, a strong architectural statement aimed to celebrate the historical and contemporary values of the world famous ceramic craftsmanship. The Jury was impressed by the boldness of the proposal and the carefully analysed, designed and presented interior spaces. The project was lacking a clear strategy regarding the everyday functioning, taking in consideration the

number of visitors and the necessary infrastructure, but all these aspects could be part of a larger plan, not presented, or in the focus of the project.

**Third Mention** went to Eged Csongor for the project *Mokembe - Public Space*, an intervention in the central residential area of Budapest, experiencing a current urban regeneration. The Jury found interesting the project's approach to the existing architectural heritage and urban tissue and appreciated the sensibility shown to the public and semi-public spaces. The proposed architectural intervention demonstrated a well balanced view between old and new, conferring the area a contemporary look and a boost for architectural development. The proposal presented insufficient information regarding the preserved buildings and their newly redefined architectural position by opening up the interior courtyards in a more semi-public urban setup.

We were pleased to have the opportunity to give two **Awards** in graduation projects category. One of the awarded projects is the work of Natalia Simina Dumitru under the title *New power plant. Rehabilitation of the Florești thermal power plant* - in which she successfully deals with regeneration and adaptation of a historical building from 1921-22. Another awarded work - *Anamnetic instances on the Danube* by Anisia Mouhamed was highly rated for its thoughtful choice of subject matter and a valuable historical analysis as well as for a successfully presented architectural idea.

### **INITIATIVES / EXPERIMENTS / VISIONS IN ARCHITECTURE**

With 37 works submitted, 11 selected for audition, 4 nominations, 2 mentions and 2 awards, this category was the second best represented, just after the Graduation projects category, in the 2018 edition of BETA - Timișoara Architecture Biennial.

What we have learned from this experience is that young architects by observing the world are ready to engage with a lot of energy and talent in future projects that make sense, that do not necessarily relate to architecture but that address also other pressing issues. This is a whole new way for architects to practice their profession today and we know that the possible areas of action are unlimited.

As architects, perhaps, but especially by taking seriously their role in the community and trying to act in multidisciplinary teams, these young architects want to be involved in multiple actions, such as the preservation of the environment around the cities, the revitalization of abandoned neighborhoods of the industrial age, the teaching of architecture to young people, or the creation of social ties. We all hope that these nominations and awards will help the recipients

to continue their projects and make their dreams come true and we believe that these projects can create an even larger emulation among architects, as actors of a better built society.

**First Nominee** was given to Klara Veer for the *Towers of Cluj - Papercraft book prototype* project, that in a playful way proposes a hands-on history lesson for young and old, an activity, that brings generations, ages and eras together. The Jury appreciated both the initiative and the exceptional graphic design of the project.

**Second Nominee** went to Tudor Vlăsceanu, Liviu Vlasiu and Romina Grillo for the *Persistence* exhibition from the Kolektiv Gallery in Belgrade. It was appreciated how the exhibition, comprising in a temporary intervention in the gallery space, is a creative and low profile architectural experiment, that creates a strong link between the permanent and the temporary structure, exhibiting architecture as an object not only as an image.

**Third Nominee** awarded to Iris Popescu, Mihaela Șerban and Sabrina Ahmad, representing Rhizome, for the *PopUP Răspiu* project, impressed the Jury by the thoughtfulness and attention these young architects have for the society we live in. The Jury congratulates the initiative and encourages the development of new and more diverse objects addressing special needs, that might become a permanent presence in our public landscape.

**Fourth Nominee**, given to stardust architects\* for the *Topophilia* exhibition, initially representing Romania at the UIA International Congress at Seoul, South Korea, attracted the Jury's attention by the sensibility of the approach in finding a representative symbol for a city large and diverse as Bucharest. The installation, poetic and visually multilayered, expresses a high level of creativity and depth of discourse.

**First Mention** was awarded to Marco Vucic for *FlexiSPOT* experimental study and structure. The project translates into simple constructions an architectural and structural principle, bringing it in an attractive way close to the people, regardless of age, and transforming it into a collaborative exercise. The modelled structure and object was appreciated by the Jury, especially for its interactive learning process and possibility of development in larger scale architectural experiments.

**Second Mention** project, the *Anina Mine of Ideas* by Oana Țiganea, Gabriela Pașcu, Marius Barbieri and Ovidiu Micșa, is a very important initiative for saving our industrial heritage, but more importantly for activating forgotten communities. The Jury was impressed by the

empathy, energy and dedication of the team for the city and its community and encourages all the efforts to continue this unique initiative for urban regeneration.

The two **Awards** of this category were given to initiatives focusing on two different ways of approach for developing our communities and cities. The *Trailer for Research and Activation of StudioBASAR* is an ingenious and simple way, how to bring people from local communities together and create a place for interaction, communication and learning. The Jury appreciated the versatility of the design, not only as an architectural object, but also as a host for different kind of events and functions.

*The Healing Grid - from drainage channels to ecological corridors* proposed and presented by Loredana Gaiță is in the view of the Jury the project, that expresses the true essence of initiatives: a creative way of analysing our surroundings, discovering and reusing in a creative way our existing resources and planning our future by shaping our cities with simple and ingenious solutions, that respond to our contemporary needs.

*Edited by*

Attila Kim (president)

Grozdana Šišović

Irina Cristea

Levente Szabó

Oana Stănescu