

EUROPAN 11

Austria, Kosovo, Hungary

Minutes of the second Jury Session
Oslo, 6.11.2011

Austria	Graz
	Linz
	Vienna
Kosovo	Pejë/Peć
Hungary	Szeged

Europan 11 Austria, Kosovo, Hungary
Sunday, November 6, 2011, AHO, Oslo
9:00 am – 21.00 pm

present in alphabetical order:

Liza Fior (architect, London)
Kaye Geipel (architectural critic, Berlin)
Patrick Gmür (architect, head of the City Planning Department, Zürich)
Lulzim Kabashi (architect, Zagreb)
Klaus Kada (architect, Graz/Aachen)
Tamás Lévai (architect, Budapest)
Mirza Mujezinovic (architect, Europan 8 winner in Vienna, Oslo)
Sabine Oppolzer (ORF Austria, national broadcast corporation, Wien)
Angelika Schnell (architectural theorist and critic, Wien/Berlin)
Wolfgang Schön (CEO WAG, housing developer, Linz)
Rolf Touzinsky (architect, Linz)

Alfredo Navarro, Europan Kosovo
Karoline Streeruwitz, Europan Austria
Arpad Szabo, Europan Hungary
Bernd Vlay, Europan Austria

The jury unanimously confirms Klaus Kada to be the chair of the jury.
The jury members have been made familiar with the projects the day before.
Representatives of the different organisations of Europan (Austria, Hungary, Kosovo), as well as the representatives of cities and clients have explained the development goals, the context of the site and the preselected projects.
Bernd Vlay introduces the procedure of the jury. In general, there is one winning project and one runner-up. There is the possibility to split the first prize in 2 runners-up. In addition, the jury can decide about the amount of awards according to the level of the projects. The winning projects should be chosen not for easy and fast implementation but as contributions to architectural and urbanist discourse which offer new strategies and ways in the implementation process. They should enable the cities and clients to understand the potential of the sites and to imagine new and unconventional ways to deal with them.
The jury decides to first discuss the projects, then to make a preliminary selection for the final decision at the end of the day.

Pejë/Pec, KOSOVO

GU 101 “New urban footprints / Green Campus Peja”

The project proposes a green corridor to connect the site with the city centre. Two different typologies of buildings frame this corridor on the site: in the western part hybrid objects made of horizontal slabs and vertical towers; to the east a linear structure that is cut diagonally.

It is stated as a crucial issue how to deal with the programmatic vagueness of the brief; the flexibility of the proposed structures therefore is an important criteria. The project suggests a vertical organisation of uses through the different forms of slabs and towers; otherwise no differentiation is made between buildings. The jury discusses if this fact is to be interpreted as programmatic openness or lack of specificity. For some members of the jury, it is not clear how students and tourist are housed in buildings of the same shape and size. There seems to be a jump in scale from concept to building. The diagram is judged as very strong, but the translation seems too literal. It is not comprehensible why the footprint of all buildings is exactly the same. The project apparently relies on concepts of modern urbanism that distribute points in empty space. It is discussed whether this is so or whether the space in between is actually a dense forest, with the buildings creating clearings in the forest. The images show a well-manicured park rather than wild nature. The very schematic translation of the concept into architecture does not suggest that the authors of the project will be able to react to the evolving program.

FR 123 “Fratres”

The project proposes megastructures instead of single objects. Two types of megastructures frame the site: to the west, snake-like buildings create a transitional edge and form courtyard situations, to the east an open structure of rectangular buildings with slim towers above marks the limit to the mountain. The most important drawing is the diagram that shows how the building creates an edge towards wild nature. This line also suggests the formation of a retaining wall to the soft and earthy structure of the hills. The space in between buildings seems to offer an idea of open nature instead of a park. The presence of the mountains in the images of the project suggests an interesting atmosphere, bringing together city and landscape. The skyline of the towers corresponds to the line of the mountains; the dispersed character of this new part of the city therefore unfolds a poetic quality. On the other hand, the clear separation from the landscape confers an urban quality to the central area.

It is discussed whether the large scale of the proposal is realistic and if it allows for a successive development. It also has to be taken into account that a certain critical mass is necessary to make the project attractive to the private sector that the city needs for implementation.

MH 124 “walking roofs on the roots”

The project proposes connections on two to three levels, allowing a direct access from the hillside onto the roofs. The approach to topography is different from the first to projects: it does not accentuate the topographic border but positions the linear buildings transversal to the topographic lines. The buildings therefore connect to the next plateau rather than separating from the hillside. It is questioned if the height differences in reality correspond to the ones shown in the project’s section. The disposition of the buildings seems arbitrary. Also, the appearance towards the street is very fragmented and difficult to imagine. The idea of walking on the roofs is weakened by the fact that no programs are placed there that would take people up from street level; the main access to the roofs is from the mountains which does not seem very realistic and reasonable.

WH 015 “teenage wasteland”

The project proposes an L-shaped structure of a large scale that separates the campus of the university from the city. The booklet shows that the project actually consists of three elements: student accommodation, university campus and residential buildings. This is not shown on the panel; the jury therefore discusses whether it has to be taken into account. The strength and clarity of the idea to frame the outdoor space as a university campus is appreciated by parts of the jury. On the other hand the approach reminds the jury of ideas from the 1970s that seek to combine urbanism with large-scale architecture. The question of materiality is raised; the jury is again studies the booklet, where a metal lattice structure is mentioned in the text. It is discussed whether this lack of materiality is a problem or not.

In difference to the other projects this proposal seeks to produce an image for the new university campus with one single gesture. The project does not directly offer a space for the city but creates a separate campus space framed by the building and the mountains. It offers a unique setting for the university which does not respond literally to the necessary connections to the urban fabric. Local benefits are promoted by creating a monastery-like, isolated space. While not taking into account the financial feasibility of such a mono-functional complex, the project is appreciated for asserting the importance of education as a public function.

DM 101 “un cadaver exquis”

The project proposes a megastructure that organizes the different programs on four levels: on ground level open public space, acting as a gateway to wood and mountains, on the first level the university, on the roof a landscape with sports infrastructures, and as a fourth level circular towers that contain housing for students, tourists and social housing. A phasing of construction is proposed. Acting as a threshold between city and nature the building relates to two quite different conditions. The programming of the urban side, the area towards the city, is problematic: instead of evolving a lively public space the only use for this area is car parking. It is not clear how the form develops and there seems to be little correspondence between the university program and the contour of the building. But since the shapes are basically rectangular slabs at an angle to each other, it would probably be possible to fit in the program. The phasing of the project seems arbitrary and the project is presented too much as one building so that the strategy of phasing loses credibility.

DR 138 “Diana’s ring”

The project proposes one large square block and a green central space. The sides of this block are specified with 200 meters length. The building is explained as an abstraction of the territory of Kosovo, with small towers (“minarets”) as representation of the different localities and their ethnic identities.

What is appreciated is the clarity and strength with which the project positions the university at the heart of the site and claims for it to be an independent entity. It also questions the tendency to create a hybrid between nature and architecture, creating a clear sense of inside and outside. It is not clear whether the space inside is meant to be accessible for all citizens or if it is to be understood as a campus or even as a monastery. The central space remains quite bleak and its potential as a public heart is not explicitly explored, its orthogonal form creates a strong contrast to the topography or city contours.

The plan promotes a strict zoning which addresses highly ideological issues such as the separation into female and male areas. This separation provokes a strong rejection in the jury. If it is taken literal it is unacceptable. The jury tries to figure out the intention behind this zoning. It is not clear whether it is an interpretation of

muslim tradition, or if it is a metaphoric way to describe atmosphere. Both explanations are seen as problematic. Applying the most “optimistic” reading, one could say that the provision of a female area suggests that women are an integral part of the educational programme: in order to include them they have to be given a space for themselves.

“Diana’s ring” can be interpreted as a provocative statement, rather than as a proposal for the concrete construction of a new neighbourhood for the city. In this sense the project critically reconfigures the demands given in the brief. Since the shape and configuration of the building is simultaneously form, ideology and symbol the phasing of construction is no issue, Parts of the jury do not appreciate this lack of process in the project’s conceptual consideration.

The project’s simple geometry could be seen as an ordering device which aims at transforming the world into a tidy place. It is mentioned that for the city representatives of Pejë the proposed form brought up the connotation of military barracks and their watchtowers.

Generally, the jury can appreciate that the issue of education is taken very serious. On the other hand the project can be criticized for imagining the space of education as elitist or detached from city life. Parts of the jury see exactly this isolation not as elitist but as a necessary condition to promote education as a main development program of the country of Kosovo.

Concerning the idea of spatializing the primary importance of education the concept is very similar to project WH105. One can ask: what does it mean for Kosovo today if an approach makes reference to 1970s utopian projects from Italy such as “Superstudio”. The jury discusses whether the building typology can be judged as outdated and even conventional, or if it is an interesting contribution to the discourse about the contemporary city.

Nevertheless, one has to appreciate the conceptual approach which opens up the discussion about the role and responsibility of architecture in the ongoing and future development of Kosovo. The project rightfully extends this question to a cultural issue, reminding of the necessity that the building industry has to face and reflect the existing cultural situation in order to provide substantial urban developments.

In this sense the proposal raises a number of important questions that have to be taken seriously:

what is the meaning of education for the city and the country, how can a strong identity of a place be established, what is the relation between the new construction and the city around it?

If the project gets a prize it would be important for Europana to take further this kind of debate and convey the issues raised to the city representatives.

The plea is made to select three projects through single majority and leave the final voting for the end.

Voting:

GU 101 6:5 votes – IN

DR 138 5:6 votes – OUT

WH 115 8:3 votes – IN

MH 124 0:11 votes - OUT

FR 123 10:1 votes - IN

DM 101 0:11 votes – OUT

The jury discusses the outcome of this first voting, The jury decides to eliminate only the projects with 0 votes.

Therefore DR 138 is brought back.

For the final decision remain:

GU101, DR 138, WH115, FR123.

FINAL DISCUSSION

Pejë/Peć, KOSOVO

The jury discusses whether to identify one winning project or two or more runners-up. It is stated that, on the one hand, the jury decision needs not fulfil the expectation of the city. Instead, the jury has the obligation to decide for the most productive contribution, be it in terms of possible implementation or of contributing to the discussion about the meaning of this new part of the city. On the other hand the jury decision is of high significance because Europana 11 is the first international architecture competition to be ever held in Kosovo. It therefore is extremely important to convey the competition result as a productive contribution to the local discussions.

DR 138: further discussion

Again the separation of male and female areas is discussed. Some members strongly question this separation as discriminatory. Is it legitimate to contextualize this separation, speculating about it as a metaphoric separation that designates different atmospheres? One could also speculate that the proposal is a provocative way to see women as an integral part of the educational system: designating a space for women within the university campus might also be understood as a demand to balance the rate between male and female students offering half of the campus space to women. This then might be understood as an anti-discriminatory measure. But none of these speculations is supported by the author's text. It therefore has to be kept in mind that these assumptions have only a speculative base. This uncomfortable ambiguity makes it difficult to rely on the project's strategical strength, especially when it comes to establish a productive dialogue with the city.

The jury raises the question in what way the idea of social life in an enclosed sphere, as suggested by the project, might respond to the realities of contemporary society. Parts of the jury observe that the notion of an open grid seems contradictory to the kind of separation from the outside and the determination of the inside. The dimensions of the project introduce another interesting ambiguity: on the one hand being too huge for one single building, on the other not even filling up the project site. Development in steps does not seem realistic or even intended. Against these doubts the point is made that scale and time are less relevant than the concept itself: a strong architecture based on a paradigmatic typology might be able to create a new identity for the region, the city and the site.

WH 015: voting for discussion – 6 votes for discussion

This project proposes a similar atmosphere to DR 138: an enclosed campus as a separated from city life. The suggestion of the social life within the enclave is not elaborated. The drawings show a very simple idea that has not been developed, although the potential is appreciated by the jury.

The plea is made to vote between GU 101 and FR 123. The jury decides against this plea.

The plea is made to vote for each project once more. The voting takes place.

GU101: 3:8 – OUT

FR123: 9:2 – IN

DR138: 7:4 – IN

WH015: 5:6 – OUT

Two projects remain in the competition for further voting. In the next voting each jury member has only one vote to give for a winning project.

DR138 for winner: 5 votes

FR123 for winner: 4 votes

Vote abstention: 2 votes

The jury members who abstained from voting explain why they did so: they are against giving a first prize. Nevertheless they are clearly in favour of one of the two projects.

A discussion about the prizes starts. Kosovo takes part for the first time. Europana is an important sign for internationally opening up the country. Seen in this light the task of Europana must be to give a clear result to the country and the city of Pejë. Not to give a first prize would be the wrong signal.

The plea is made to decide for one winner and one runner-up. The plea is accepted unanimously.

Final voting takes place.

DR138: 5 votes in favour for first prize

FR123: 6 votes in favour for first prize

FR123 is the winning project (first prize), DR138 the runner-up.

Pejë-Pec

FR 123 – FRATRES

DR 138 – DIANA'S RING

The detailed discussion about the content of the winning- and the runner up-project has already been recorded in the minutes.

The jury had a lot of controversial discussions, in particular about the runner up project which parts of the jury consider to be a highly problematic project, whereas other jury members appreciated its conceptual sharpness.

One also has to consider the enormous size of the site which asks for a rather urbanistic solution which still has to be developed further to a socially, politically, economically *and* architecturally plausible plan.

The further development should be conditioned by mutable web of relations that constitute the global/local, cultural/ technological etc. The process shall include, as the selected projects imply, the physical and especially the cultural reality.

The jury recommends to invite both teams for the further implementation procedure in order to address a broader field of development which explicitly involves cultural issues.

The winning project – 'fratres' is a reasonable blueprint for the future urban project. Taking into consideration the aforementioned relations and realities during the design process, it is a great option to create a contemporary landscape in the city of Peja. Emphasis should be on the cultural realities / education, without neglecting the fact that the project must be attractive to private sector in order to make implementation possible.

The jury appreciates the clear concept of the proposed structures that frame the site, to the west and to the east. The buildings in the west intelligently integrate nature in every level - on the groundlevel and as well on the higher levels. Their proportions make them appear as actors in front of a nature - "stage setting" the quality of the landscape.

The space in between seems to offer an idea of open nature, a huge area linked to the huge existing park. The architects should precisely define the content of this huge area.

The strength of „Fratres“ is to provide an open frame, nevertheless with clear premises: the relation to the landscape on a larger scale, the formation of borders as

limits and inhabitable spaces, the accessibility of common spaces, the possibility of flexible programming and adaptable volumes.

All these qualities not only have to be respected and carefully explored in order to become usable assets for the urban development. Above all they would need an monitoring commission who makes their values manifest introducing them to different institutions, groups and people of Kosovo.

Diana's Ring, the runner up project, in this sense, can be seen as a programmatic statement „ideologizing“ the future of Peje. It is clear that the drawings and the text have to be critically discussed. By using theory as a design-method it addresses the context between geography (political site), landscape (cultural / wild nature), and history (past / future):

The design brings decisive issues on the table of the discussion:

- > education as a main programme for the development of the city and the country
- > cultural identity as a parameter which one must not exclude in the concept of future urban developments
- > typological performance as a disciplinary tool which has to „decipher“ the codes of architectural language in the specific context of Kosovo: by means of which gesture do we, in fact, achieve open space?

The implementation process has to be seen as an insistent series of carefully taken steps. These steps establish preparatory measurements creating an agenda for the future implementation. Essential parts of this agenda are:

Exhibition of all projects as a medium for launching a public discussion, organized by Europan Kosovo with involvement of the city of Peje. The exhibition should also launch the topics of Europan Europe on urban development in order to initiate a sensitivity for these issues.

Presentation of the winning projects to the city officials and local representatives, The winning teams, Europan, and at least one jury member introduce the concepts of the winning projects.

A workshop should follow this presentation with the participation of the winning teams, one jury member, Europan Kosovo, Europan Austria (optional), city representatives and locally involved actors. The goal of the workshop should be to clarify the potential of the selected projects concerning the future development process. As well the workshop should outline the way how to involve the teams in the future process.

A local task force as a project support group shall take care of the process providing continuous „maintenance“ for the gradual evolution of the project. Part of this group should be the town of Peje, European, and further actors with contact to government or development organizations.

Finally, the jury would like to remind all involved actors that it is absolutely important to be aware that we face an implementation process which is radically new. Therefore the urban and architectural project need a strong support on the political, administrative, cultural levels. The process will be exciting if its „durability“ is acknowledged. Its success absolutely relies on the commitment of all parties and people involved: that they provide and create the necessary framing conditions with all available means.