

Jury Proceedings

YTAA 2018

A graduation project has a particular feature which makes it different from a competition or the professional world: there are no written regulations no client requests. This special condition brings emphasis to originality, radicality and possibly utopia, to provide the opportunity to investigate and experiment at architecture school. A graduation project understood as an opportunity to develop an explorative process which begins with research into a subject followed by taking a position and, then finally, proposing a specific design. Architecture is often seen just as a problem-solving thing, but the core of the profession resides in going beyond it by adding values. Architecture works with complex situations that require a broad understanding and taking action, which means that research and positioning are essential.

In order to identify some evidence of these features, the jury members decided to establish a set of criteria for assessment split into two parts: what we are looking for and what defines excellence.

*1- What we are looking for:
framework, issues and subject area, process of exploration, resolution,
techniques in relation to subject area (here how representation is related to the
project as a whole)*

Summary in short: framework, exploration/ research and resolution

2- What defines excellence:

*Originality, complexity, coherence, exploration
and research, rigorousness, resolution.*

*independent and critical thinking, new emerging fields and study areas,
engagement, actuality of topic, context for the project*

-- Example of other criteria/ qualitative aspects

*Poetry, tectonics, emerging conditions, new subject areas/ fields of study,
original approaches, research agenda, social agenda*

Being guided by these criteria, the Jury found the 4 graduation projects that fit them best and considered them the YTAA 2018 Winners: *Neue Bau/akademie Berlin - a club for the former & future architecture*; *Perdido (Lost) - P.R.U.S. of Madrid*; *The Bank of England: a dialectical project* and *Deplorable Framework*. These four projects are complete thorough works, which bring up a set of questions and enquiries, all of them have an implicit social and cultural relevance which is materialised according to each personality and the personal arguments on how each author understands architecture and his social environment.

The project in Berlin is a contribution to the contemporary debate on the programmatic and architectural future of the Bauakademie. Working on reconstruction is accompanied by a set of questions that expands typical design problems: All future design decision negotiates its justification with a building long gone but very prominent in mind. **The Jury considered that the author sets a rhetorical project with questions to be asked with engagement, implicitly having a social and cultural relevance.**

The P.R.U.S of Madrid is the Plan of Recovery of the existing Underground Spaces of Madrid. The purpose of the project is to recover that forgotten and latent landscape converting it to public space. Starting from research, the Plan is developed by recovering the existing spaces, designing a new network of accesses and connecting the urban scenes.

The Jury highlighted that the project works with different scales at the same time: urban, infrastructure and the tectonics, through experimentation with the architectural system.

Critically inspired by John Soane's legendary 'ruin-esque' Bank of England, the project explicitly engages the architectural dialectics of ruin and construction, interiority and exteriority with those of genuine publicity and institutional power.

The Jury was startled by the originality of this project, an intellectual piece of work which is extremely solid: the ruin, the money, the bank. The drawings are amazing and they are complemented by an incredible piece of writing.

Deplorable Framework is a proposal for the holistic reinvention of the British countryside. The formation of a vast new forest recomposes the landscape of the Peak District National Park and the structures within it. As human intervention becomes legible, impressions of nature are emancipated from naive conceptions of beauty.

The Jury was attracted by the complexity of the post Brexit situation and how the author deals with a strong concept to reimagine this new situation.

All four projects deal with pre-existence issues/structures and concepts: the *Perdido* project turns an obsolete medieval underground water infrastructure into public space through a net strategy; the Berlin and the London ones look back at iconic buildings that were once built by masters such as Schinkel and Soane, go deep into study of the original projects in order to understand their tectonics and programmatic approaches, and finally design an entire new building and transform and extend the still existing one in the London case; and *Deplorable Framework* imagines a new approach to landscape establishing a new relationship between human and nature framed into the British National Parks.

As well as the winning projects, the eight finalists operate with reuse, reinterpretation of the old and new programmes as strategies to face landscape, infrastructure, urban and building scale. The *Ceramics – Design of a Factory* project looks at historical ceramics factory referent cases to propose an updated version of this specific typology, addressing the relationship between production sector and rural contexts. This is connected to the *Fallen Monuments of Egerkingen* where the the logistics landscape of ordinary warehouses is

monumentalized by adding housing and working spaces as "bases" and "crowns". The *May I Use the Front/Backdoor?* adds new compact housing units to densify a residential area in Ghent while *Rhizome* designs a housing block system, replacing the existing ones and adapting to the complex urban condition of an area of Addis Ababa. These two projects work with specific urban fabrics to optimize and improve the current built environment, while the *House, Kitchen, Garden* and the *Last Landscape*, revitalise urban voids settling a series of poetical artefacts on no man's land turned into new landscapes. From the landscape scale, *Citadel of Tides* builds a piece of waterfront infrastructure able to protect the lower lands of Oostende against floods turning the meaning and purpose of the historic Atlantic Wall. Going back to the urban context, *Confluence*, alike *Perdido*, creates new public space from an archaeological world, in between the old and the new city, uncovers ruins and prepares the foundations for the new buildings that will be raised on the riverside of London.

Looking at the entire group of the 40 shortlisted some relevant issues came up. We are not heralding back to a kind of 1960s utopia but the act of architecture is considered inherently visionary and each project presents a kind of vision of how one would start to work for the future: the dichotomy between urban and rural contexts, clear designs with spatial responses to a set of concerns or issues and use of cross-disciplinary tools.