

# ARCHI PRIX



INTERNATIONAL ADDIS ABABA / ROTTERDAM 2023

ARCHITECTURE, URBAN PLANNING AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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THE WORLD'S BEST  
GRADUATION PROJECTS

## Jury report Archiprix International Addis Ababa 2021 - Rotterdam 2023

In accordance with good practice, during the festive award ceremony for the biennial Archiprix International, the educational institution that will host the next edition of Archiprix International is announced. That no mention of a next edition was made during the Archiprix International 2019 award ceremony in the monumental and vacant railway station of Santiago de Chile can, in hindsight, be taken as a bad omen. But on that fine day in May, nothing seemed to indicate that Archiprix International 2021 would be an exceptional edition. After all, preparations for the next edition were in full swing in the background. Visits were paid to the Ethiopian Institute of Architecture, Building Construction and City Development at Addis Ababa University, and a delegate from the university had been dispatched to Chile to see with their own eyes what an Archiprix International event involves. Because apart from the award ceremony to celebrate the world's best graduate projects in spatial design, there was a big exhibition that featured the more than 300 submitted projects. And in the two weeks leading up to the award ceremony there were workshops to which all Archiprix participants were invited, more than a hundred of whom attended. Even the date of the award ceremony had been agreed: 7 May 2021.

Dark clouds began to gather in the skies when Hunter Douglas, the main sponsor, decided to end its collaboration after two decades. The mood became more ominous in early 2020 when the world was paralysed by an invisible and unknown virus, and the gravity of the situation became clear when in late 2020 tensions between the Ethiopian government and the regional authority in Tigray escalated, resulting in an armed conflict that left millions homeless. In the meantime, over 1800 educational institutions around the world had received letters from the Archiprix organization, asking each of them to submit to Archiprix International the best graduation project made between 1 May 2018 and 1 May 2020. Some 359 institutions did just that. The designers of these projects had until 30 November 2020 to upload their graduation work to the Archiprix server.

Under normal circumstances, all submitted projects are printed, stuck on panels, and assessed by an international jury at the host university. Jury members spend three days reviewing the panels and online presentations and discussing the projects before eventually selecting from five to eight winners. For this edition of Archiprix International, the jury was composed of: architect Rahel Shawl, founder of RAAS Architects Addis Ababa; landscape architect Stacy Passmore, co-founder of

SUPERBLOOM in Denver; Aric Chen, educated as an architect and currently director of the Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam; Nathalie Jean-Baptiste, who holds a doctorate in urban planning and waste management and is currently Deputy CEO and Senior Programme Manager Wealth Inequality at the Julius Baer Foundation in Zurich; and architect Marlene Wagner, founding member of NPO buildCollective for architecture and development in Vienna and nominated for Archiprix International 2011. Owing to the exceptional circumstances, the jury deliberations took place online on 9 March 2022 and 21 April 2022, in sessions lasting more than two and a half hours on each occasion. As in previous editions, each jury member was asked to view 145 projects in advance so that each project could be briefly introduced.

All 359 graduation projects were reviewed and discussed in the first online session. In general, as one jury member put it: "What stands out are two kinds of projects. First, the ones that respond to the needs of underserved and vulnerable populations. Those who suffer from all sorts of injustice as well as environmental risks or social displacement. These projects stand out because they had to go deeper to forge new forms, to lift up and reimagine ways that are just, safe and sustainable. The second type are projects that go back to basics. They were exquisitely simple, yet they reminded us of how intimate our relationship with architecture is and how important it is to pay attention to 'needs'."

A total of 132 projects made it into the next round, and 22 of those into the final round. After intense discussions about speculative projects versus buildable projects, the need for clear models, guidance and inspiration to reimagine the act of building, and whether it is possible to judge the intrinsic quality of projects if they are based on a genuinely different world view than that of the assessor, a total of six projects were eventually – though not unanimously – selected as winners.

(Drum roll)

The winners of the 11th edition of Archiprix International are, in alphabetical order:

**Wild [life] nomad bootcamp: Back-to-basics for the age of the amateur - Toby Fong**

The National University of Singapore Department of Architecture (Singapore)

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, 'Wild [life] nomad bootcamp' offers a solution for import-dependent Singapore. By rewilding Singapore into a productively secure nation, it can address the continued crises. Singapore's rewilding suggests production security as a shared responsibility between companies, the state and the individual. Wild nature exists in many material forms, from barnacles to wild mushrooms. By manipulating such materials, the architect enters into an equal partnership with the wild to sculpt spaces of learning. This proposal demonstrates one such partnership through the detailed development of architecture's collaboration with the native *Ficus Kerkhovenii* plant. This thesis proposes a Back-to-Basics Bootcamp, an intermediary between the north-west and the city. Over the course of 50 years, the Bootcamp mints an urban population into resourceful and productive agents for Singapore's rewilding. By the year 2070, after the gathered north-west practices root themselves into our daily existence, the Bootcamp will be rendered obsolete.

The jury: The project shows architecture as a process of transition and speculates on what this transition process could look like. With the suggestion of rewilding for food production security as a shared responsibility, the project conveys un-learning and re-learning with processual, indigenous, generational and endangered knowledge, mediating between urban and rural life as a reciprocal plant-architecture relationship.

**Choyü Fen Park - Sebastián León, Cinthia Olate, Constanza Jara**

Universidad Autonoma Arquitectura (Temuco, Chile)

The Choyü Fen Park project – the rebirth of the ancestral – accommodates everything that once was, and everything that will be at the time of rebuilding and healing our wounded culture to forge living heritage. Mapuches (People of the land) are a fundamental part of everything that the Araucanía region symbolizes in Chile and the world: the culture of the indigenous people. Their culture and way of life prevailed and still lives among us, recognized for the strong and unbreakable bond with nature and everything that Mother Earth encompasses, a powerful deity in their culture, expression and way of life. Under this Mapuche concept of respect and union, it repeatedly presents an eternal struggle between the way of life of the ‘White race’, and the ‘Mapuche’, so that one's way of life alters the other's way of inhabiting. For example, it is manifested in the contamination caused by a former landfill, which depleted the ecosystem and all forms of life related to nature. The Choyü Fen Park project works along three fundamental axes: 1, regenerate the ecosystem; 2, value the cultural meeting; and 3, rescue patrimonial agricultural vegetation. This is how the outline of the park is shaped into a masterplan that recognizes fundamental spaces within the delimitation of lots, with wetlands, esplanades and spaces of great value for the development of these three long axes. The structure of the park is defined around three triggering infrastructure projects that respond to the aforementioned axes: 1, Ancestral border; 2, Seedbed; 3, Ngen Mapu ecosystem regeneration spot. The jury: The project is set in a contested place, which is also subject to a lot of tension. The designers use architecture to take a site, the site of the Mapuche, and propose a meeting place between two cultures – that of the oppressed and that of the oppressor – for a shared history. It's a beautiful project that shows the potential of architecture as a tool of significance.

### **Silk-Skin City: A women's cooperative dedicated to silk crafts - María Martínez-Morón**

Universidad Europea de Madrid Escuela de Arquitectura (Madrid, Spain)

Silk-Skin City is located in Varanasi (India) and presented as a women's textile cooperative, focused on transforming silkworm into saree, and as a strategy to restore an artisanal treasure. It demonstrates how architecture can contribute to redefining the role of women and, with that, to building a healthier, freer and fairer world. The project is structured into events that define the process: urban productive events that revitalize degraded urban voids, and domestic productive events that introduce the productive character into the domestic scale through a lightweight, foldable and transportable device, and a catalogue of solutions that improve housing and the climatic conditions of dwellings. The materiality is based on the use of local and recycled materials and on a construction process that can be carried out by all the women. It also creates cycles to use and reuse energy and water. In this way, Silk-Skin City draws a new productive, urban and social landscape, teaching the city to be resilient to the monsoon, while defending the textile tradition, not only as a strategy to restore a treasure from the past, but also as a construction of a philosophy that defends manual work, in the face of our highly mechanized world.

The jury: The project is socially relevant. The designer has dealt not only with the building but also with the activities around it, and the significance of the building for its surroundings. Silk-Skin City deploys architecture to force change and does this in a convincing and consistent way, with an eye for details.

### **Towards a New Architect - Tamar Ofer**

Bezalel Academy of Art and Design Architecture (Jerusalem, Israel)

The subtitle of this graduation project reads: ‘A Critical Roadmap for the Freshly Graduated Architect: Or, How I opened an Architecture Residency in Bat-Yam’. The project started with a critical analysis of the architect's role and challenged the precepts and ultimate goals of the profession by comparing

two neighbourhoods that were designed by the same architect under almost the same conditions. Seventy years later, one neighbourhood is slated for demolition, while the other is in line to receive protected heritage status. The major differences between the two neighbourhoods' planning agendas and policies highlight the missing links and values in the current planning discourse. The methodological gaps laid the foundation for establishing an Architectural Residency in the heart of the neighbourhood set to be demolished. It formed the starting point for assembling a methodology for architectural action, based on local collaboration between the architect, the municipality and the public. Out of this growing set of actions, four spatial actions exemplify alternative spatial agencies based on local efforts and reuse opportunities, set to broaden our notion of what architecture can be and what architects can do.

The jury: Many young architects reflect on the role of the architect and research new ways of practising architecture. For them, architecture is more than building. *Towards a New Architect* is a taxonomy of the profession of architect that pays attention to all stakeholders. It is a thoughtful and mature project, a handbook for architecture today.

### **Mapping the Feke Bigness in Relation to Pacific Voyaging - Icao Tiseli**

University of Auckland School of Architecture and Planning (Auckland, New Zealand)

Vava'u is a remote island nestled in the South Pacific Ocean, within the group currently known as Tonga. Vava'u is a microcosm of Polynesia, hosting its own archipelago. It is not merely a 'site' thought of as separate from its inhabitants. Rather, like the 'feke' (octopus), Vava'u is a watery creature and an all-encompassing participant in the everyday life of its people. The architectural structure is engendered by Eurocentric systems presently embedded in our processes of cultural production. This project reclaims an architectural process that adheres to and emboldens a world view that celebrates and advocates for the cultural values of the indigenous people of Tonga. It proposes a school for studying traditional Tongan practices of navigation.

The jury: A highly conceptual project and, at the same time, a political statement. The celebration of indigenous knowledge also amounts to a questioning of the Cartesian world view. The project narrates a cosmological journey based on indigenous Tongan culture and provides an ontological understanding with architecture as a processual spatial framework for continuous observation and learning.

### **The Ark of Antwerp. A Provocation and Provision against the Apocalypse - Andrew Zi Hang Law**

Mackintosh School of Architecture (Glasgow, United Kingdom)

*The Ark Anthropology:* An in-depth understanding of the societal, progressive and cultural norms of the Ark. Antwerp's Ark can be understood as a vessel for the conservation of the tangible (Artefacts) and intangible (Spatial Quality). The project is a story-based construction that eventually evolved in seven phases, within a timespan of 200 years, and a final endgame against the apocalypse. From a sole hydro-powered flood barrier as first line of defence with the existing quay walls (Sigma Plan), to a series of Celebratory Urban & Archives Rooms cast and inserted into the concrete grid system, Ark-Holder formed Grand Walkway, a space that recalls the interior of the Cathedral Lady of Antwerp, the Self-Sustaining Ark Capsule that preserves, and a confined environment of the Garden of Eden as the last green footprint. As the apocalypse emerges, the self-sustaining Ark Capsule turns into a memory-confined capsule, and slowly floats to different regions of the world as a provision and a message to the world.

The jury: As a speculative infrastructure, the project relates conditions of land-water transformations throughout centuries and proposes human spatial interventions such as the preservation of the city as memory to dissolve in phases, thinking 200 years ahead.

A last word from jury member Nathalie Jean-Baptiste: “My message to the participants is that we should not forget that the majority of people around the world build because they need to: whether is it a shelter, a road, a school, a health facility, a public space, etc... Architects have the opportunity to rethink and rework means and ways to foster protection and restoration of inner peace and harmony. This is needed more than ever! The time has come for a collective reassurance that we are better than what we have built and currently destroy, and the new generation of architects – that is you – is far better equipped to face and address the challenges of today.”