

Young architects win International Competition for the Aurifícia Block in Porto

Humberto Silva, a young architect from Lisbon, has won the International Competition - Call for Ideas Norte 41° - Porto - Urban Regeneration of the Aurifícia Block, launched on 26 June 2013 by the Portuguese Council of Architects – Northern Chapter (OASRN). The Competition closed on 18 September 2013. All the relevant documentation had been made available on a micro-site created for the purpose, accessible via www.oasrn.org/concursos.php and the electronic platform www.anogov.com.

Entries were submitted by 34 teams from Portugal, Italy, the Netherlands, France, Lithuania, Brazil, Pakistan, Switzerland and Egypt, of which 31 were accepted, 3 entries having been disqualified as a result of failure to comply with the deadline, submission format/anonymity requirements or the stipulations of the preliminary programme.

The award ceremony, which included the inauguration of the exhibition displaying the projects submitted, took place on 24th October 2013, at Casa das Artes, Porto – Portugal, following the conclusion of the International Seminar ‘Rescued City, Restoring the City by (re) designing it’.

During the event, OASRN also awarded prizes to **[i]da arquitectos – Ivan de Sousa e Inês Antunes**, who submitted a project coordinated by architect Ivan de Sousa, and **Atelier Lupini Machado**, with a project coordinated by architect João Filipe Baptista Machado, ranked in second and third place respectively. In light of the Honourable Mentions awarded by the Competition Jury, **Atelier Orgânica Arquitectura Lda.** (coordinating architect Paulo Serôdio Lopes) and **Juan Marcos Rodriguez Díaz and Carmen Largarcha Polo** (coordinating architect Juan Marcos Rodriguez) were also distinguished.

After the official ceremony, OASRN inaugurated an exhibition of the projects in Casa das Artes.

The three monetary prizes awarded will be 8,000.00 € (1st prize), 5,000.00 € (2nd prize) and 3,000.00 € (3rd prize). No monetary prize is attached to the honourable mentions.

The Competition Jury consisted primarily of architects, presided over by architect **José Fernando Gonçalves**. Its members were architects **Manuel Fernandes de Sá** and **Alberto Cuchí** as commissioners, along with architects **Carlos Guimarães**, **Manuel da Rocha Ribeiro** (representing Porto Municipal Council), **Paula Silva** (representing the Northern Regional Directorate for Culture), **Rui Neto**, **Marta Labastida**, **Ana Neto Vieira**, and landscape architect **Teresa Andresen**.

In the words of OASRN chairman, architect José Fernando Gonçalves, “this diversity and multidisciplinary have led to a wide range of approaches and solutions for the block, and OASRN is delighted with the results. We are immensely grateful for everyone’s commitment and participation in what we hope will become a valid contribution to the urban regeneration of the City of Porto in general, and the Aurifícia Block in particular, with regard to the formulation of planning strategies, methodologies for action or tools which promote sustained development of the city”.

The aim of the competition was to formulate regeneration strategies for the block demarcated by Álvares Cabral Street, República Square/Mártires da Liberdade Street, Bragas Street and Cedofeita Street and adjoining public areas, and contribute to reflection and debate surrounding urban regeneration processes and interdisciplinary dialogue, proposing operational strategies for this particular part of the city in relation to the Boavista-Downtown axis.

The proposed site for the competition, the block in which OASRN owns a building, offers unique conditions to qualify as a case study in the context of this topic, being centrally located within Porto and having the potential to enhance the Boavista-Downtown axis due to the intrinsic richness of its buildings and the block’s exceptional interior spaces.

The competition called for anonymous submission of design/architecture proposals, and was open to architects or architecture companies licensed to practice architecture in their country of origin.

The competition received support from the following entities: Caixa Geral de Depósitos (Sponsor of the Norte 41º Programme); Porto Municipal Council (Strategic Partner for the Competition); Northern Regional Directorate for Culture (Partner for the Seminar and Exhibition of Projects); Porto Catholic University (Strategic Partner for the Open Forum); AICCOPN (Partner for the Open Forum); Público (Promotional Support); Porto Vivo, SRU (Institutional Support); ADDICT (Institutional Support), as well as Companhia Aurifícia and Companhia Santa Teresa de Jesus.

About the winning proposal

According to the Competition Jury, Humberto Silva’s proposal “regards the block as a stable entity, respecting its identity and potential. It comprises a restrained and appropriate approach, keeping architectural interventions to a minimum and emphasizing the relationship between the inside of the block and the surrounding areas. Of particular note is the way in which the submission deals with the interaction between the buildings and the open space which makes up the inside of the block, by proposing a set of residential buildings which demarcate private from public space, creating a new front for the block. The proposal integrates the Hermann Burmester garden, retaining its core features while resizing it and connecting it to Cedofeita Street. The proposed alterations to the Companhia Aurifícia building are very restrained, maintaining the building’s key features and facilitating reuse of the same by means of recreational opportunities. A prominent aspect in terms of sustainability is the categorisation of private and public green spaces, retaining their continuity and

permeability and enabling the organisation of the required ecological and social functions.

About Humberto Silva

Born in Cagnes-Sur-Mer, France in 1976. Qualified as an architect at Lusíada University, Lisbon, Portugal in 2003. Worked with architects Pedro Domingos and Ricardo Bak Gordon from 2001 to 2002. Worked with architect Samuel Torres Carvalho from 2004 to 2005. Worked with architect Manuel Aires Mateus from 2005 to 2012. Founded architecture studio INFANTARIA with Sónia Moreira and Humberto Fonseca in 2010.

More information at www.oasrn.org.

The images of the winning proposals are available for download at <https://app.box.com/s/26404x7ufvxc7jrfcavl>.

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