

7th OISTAT THEATRE ARCHITECTURE COMPETITION 2007

Introduction

The OISTAT Theatre Architecture Competition is an international ideas competition, aimed at students and emerging practitioners, which is organised every four years by the Architecture Commission of OISTAT (International Organisation of Scenographers, Technicians and Theatre Architects). Selected entries are exhibited and cash prizes awarded at the Prague Quadrennial (PQ) the major international exhibition of scenography and theatre architecture, which takes place in Prague in the Czech Republic. The next PQ is due to take place in June 2007.

Competition Theme

The aim of this competition is to pose a design problem for a new performance building with approximately 500 seats and to encourage a detailed exploration of this building type and the way in which it responds to a particular set of needs, which will be defined by the competitor. This may be a conventional performance or something more experimental. In this way it is hoped to encourage innovative thinking based on a deeper understanding of the relationship between the performance itself and the architecture, which facilitates it.

Collaborations between architects and other theatre practitioners such as directors, designers, technicians, actors, dancers, musicians, or students in those fields, will be welcomed, although it is not an essential requirement. As well as being a place for performances, a theatre is also a public building and its relationship to its setting and the design of its public circulation spaces will be of equal importance to the performance space itself.

The Site

As in the previous competition in 2003, competitors will be able to choose their own site in a location they are familiar with. This is intended to encourage a response which

is rooted in a particular culture and setting, anywhere in the world. There is however a specific requirement that the site is located close to water, be it the sea, a river, canal or lake. The way in which the building looks outwards to its setting will be of equal importance to the way it looks inwards to the performance space. Many performance buildings around the world enjoy waterfront settings and the competition is intended to encourage innovative thinking about how these can be exploited.

Key Issues

Successful performance spaces have some very particular requirements, which competitors are expected to understand and explore in order to create an environment in which the unique interaction between audience, artists and technology, which constitutes a live performance, can flourish. Key issues to be considered are as follows:

Audience Cohesion

The way in which an audience is arranged, in relation to the performance area, plays a key role in creating a successful atmosphere where audiences feel engaged by the performance and performers can communicate well with them. How does this chemistry work and what factors are at play in a successful performance space? This can take many different forms but the key is maintaining an appropriate human scale where a single performer can command a whole audience. To achieve this the audience must be as close as possible to the performance and be able to see and hear well.

Sightlines

To see well the audience must be arranged so they can all see the performance. Not only must their view be free of obstructions, but they must also be sufficiently close to the performers to distinguish their gestures and appreciate the scenic or architectural space

they occupy. There are many different ways in which this can be achieved, depending upon the type of performance and the configuration of the space, but the essential principles are constant.

Acoustics

Good hearing is as important as good seeing. Different performance types require different acoustic conditions to be best appreciated. Speech, for instance, requires a less reverberant environment than that required for un-amplified music. Where a space is to be used for a range of different performance types some means of varying the acoustic may be necessary. The acoustic of a room is determined by its shape, volume and materials. Good hearing is also promoted by the exclusion of unwanted background noise caused by external break-in (traffic /trains/aircraft) or noise generated by building services. Competitors are not expected to carry out detailed acoustic studies but should demonstrate an understanding of the factors, which contribute to a successful acoustic environment.

Technical Requirements

Most performances rely upon some form of stage technology to facilitate them. This includes stage lighting, projection, sound systems and mechanical systems, which are used to move scenery or reconfigure the room. Provision for these systems needs to be integrated into the architecture and must be accessible and safe to use. Safe access, particularly to high-level lighting positions, is of increasing concern in the theatre, particularly where technical set-ups have to be changed quickly between performances.

The Brief

The issues above are some of the key factors to be considered in the design of any performance venue but they will vary considerably depending upon the performance type and pattern of use. It is for each competitor or team to define the type of building they are designing, how it will be used and its location.

Each entry must include the following information:

The Site / Location

This must be a real location, anywhere in the world, with a waterfront setting, selected by the competitor. Competitors must explain why they have chosen it and give details of its context and the community in which it is located. Information about the location in the form of drawings, photographs and a written description must be provided to allow the design to be understood in relation to its setting.

The Purpose

Competitors must state what type of performance(s) the design will be used for. Establishing a clear link between the performance and the architecture is a key aim of the competition. The design may be specific to a single performance, a particular performance type or a range of different uses. Drawings of the theatre space should show it in use for a performance.

Accommodation

Having defined the location and purpose of the project, competitors must design a proposal for a new building, which provides for the following general requirements:

- A space for a live performance with an audience of 500 people.
- Facilities for the audience, including toilets and the sale of tickets, food and drink.
- Provision for technical installations for the performance (lighting, sound, mechanical systems).
- Backstage accommodation for up to 40 performers.
- Provision for delivery and setting up of scenery and equipment.
- Other facilities appropriate to the type of venue or performance proposed (workshops, rehearsal space, offices, plant).
- Provision for safe evacuation of all occupants in an emergency.
- Good access for people with disabilities

Competition Rules and Conditions

1. The Architecture Commission of OISTAT (the International Organisation of Scenographers, Theatre Technicians and Theatre Architects) is promoting an international ideas competition in a single stage, open to architects and students of schools of architecture. Collaborations between architects and other theatre practitioners such as directors, designers, technicians, actors, dancers, musicians, or students in those fields, will be welcomed, although it is not an essential requirement. Architects or students associated with members of the jury are not permitted to enter.

2. Documents to be Submitted

2.1 Drawing requirements

- a Plans of each level, at least two sections and important elevations to a scale of not less than 1/200.
- b three-dimensional images of the building and the auditorium
- c Auditorium studies showing it in use for a performance or performances.
- d Site plan to a scale of 1/1000
- e Description of the existing site (drawings, photographs)
- f Models cannot be accepted, although photographs of models can be included.
- g Drawings must not carry any means of identifying the entrant(s) apart from the code number referred to in para 2.2 (d) below.

2.2 Every entry shall comprise:

- a A maximum of 6 panels at A2 size (594 x 420 mm) mounted on card or suitable lightweight backing. If an image will not fit on one A2 panel it may be continued on an adjacent panel. Please provide a diagram indicating how panels should be assembled.
 - b A CD containing electronic copies of the panels (in .pdf format). Entries which do not include electronic copies will not be included in any subsequent publication. Entries in electronic format only will not be considered.
 - c A short written description of the performance(s) to be housed, the site and an explanation of the design concept (maximum 200 words). The text will be incorporated on the panels but will also be provided separately on A4 size paper in an unsealed envelope.
 - d All the documents and the CD are to be identified by a code of six numbers to be chosen by the competitor(s), 10mm high, written or printed in the top right hand corner of each document.
 - e A letter with the name(s), address, telephone no. and email address of the competitor(s) in a sealed envelope, marked with the same code no. as in para 2.2 (d) above.
 - f Colour techniques are permitted but competitors are reminded that if their drawings are selected for publication, they may reproduced in black and white, and reduced to A4 size or smaller.
 - g All text is to be in English.
- 2.3 This is an ideas competition and there is no intention that the winning entry will be built.

2.4 Entries will not be returned or insured by OISTAT. Competitors should retain copies of their work.

3. Competition Schedule

3.1 The competition documents and conditions will be available from 1 June 2006 on the OISTAT Website: www.oistat.org/archcomp2007

3.2 Questions can be sent by email to archcom@oistat.org Questions should be written in English and must be received no later than 1 October 2006.

3.3 The answers to the questions will be posted on the Website from 1 November 2006.

3.4 Competition entries are to be sent to:
OISTAT - Architecture Competition
c/o Beneke Daberto
BDP Muenchen GmbH
Augustenstraße 59
D - 80333 Muenchen
Germany

Entries must be despatched on or before 16 February 2007. Entries will be disqualified if:

- the postmark is a date after 16 February 2007, or
- the entry is received after 16 March 2007.

3.5 The entry fee for the competition is €50 per entry. Competitors can pay via pay pal on the website, or via bank transfer with their code number as described in 2.1(d) above to:
ABN-AMRO Bank
Dam 2, 1012 NP Amsterdam
The Netherlands
STICHTING OISTAT
BIC: ABNANL2A
ACCOUNT NUMBER: 59.34.16.732
IBAN: NL62ABNA0593416732
All entries will be handled by a third party, and there will be no way for the jury to know the origin of the entry.

3.6 Entry fees must be received no later than 16 March 2007. Entries submitted without an entry fee will not be considered.

4. Prizes

4.1. The first prize will be €5,000, the second prize will be €2,500 and the third prize will be €1,000. There will be three additional prizes of €500 each. In addition to these prizes, there will be honourable mentions. The jury reserves the right to modify the distribution of prize money, within the same total amount and number of prizes.

4.2 The prizes will be announced and awarded at the Prague Quadrennial in June 2007.

5. Publication

5.1 The competition entries will become the property of OISTAT and may be published and exhibited in any country at the discretion of OISTAT.

5.2 OISTAT will respect and acknowledge the copyright of the participants.

6. Acceptance of Conditions

6.1 By submitting an entry, participants or participating teams will:

- a agree to the rules and regulations as set out in this programme.
- b declare that the proposed design is their own work.
- c agree to accept the decisions of the jury as final.
- d agree not disclose their identities or publicise their entry in any way before the jury have made their selection. Any breach of this rule will render the entry invalid.

7. Jury

- 7.1 The international jury will consist of 4 architects from the following continents: Europe, Russia, Asia, North America, plus one other experienced theatre practitioner.
- 7.2. In case of the absence of a juror, OISTAT will assign another qualified person as a member of the jury.
- 7.3 The jury will produce a report explaining the reasons for its decisions and commenting on the prize-winning and honourably mentioned entries.
- 7.4. The report of the jury will be published on the internet and distributed by the OISTAT Centres.
- 7.5 The jury will select entries for an exhibition at the Prague Quadrennial in June 2007.
- 7.6. A brochure illustrating at least 25 entries will be published and will be available at the Prague Quadrennial 2007, after which distribution will be by way of the OISTAT Centres or via the internet.
- 7.7 OISTAT will offer the results of the competition to the press (publications covering theatre design and architecture)

8. Time schedule

1 June 2006

Brief and Conditions posted on the OISTAT Website and notification sent to OISTAT Centres and schools of architecture.

1 October 2006

Final date for questions.
Questions received after this date will not be considered. Answers to questions will be posted on the OISTAT website from 1 November 2006.

16 February 2007

Closing date for despatch of entries.
Postmark validates despatch date.

16 March 2007

Closing date for arrival of entries and entry fee at OISTAT.

30 March - 13 April 2007

Jury meeting and report.

16 April 2007

Notification of the prize-winners.

14-24 June 2007

Exhibition of prize-winning and selected entries at the Prague Quadrennial.

15 June 2007

Official announcement and prize-giving at the Prague Quadrennial. The first prize-winner will also be recognised on June 18, 2007 at the PQ awards ceremony.

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