

## **The Omrania | CSBE Student Award for Excellence in Architectural Design**

### **Jury report**

An award such as the Omrania | CSBE Student Award for Excellence in Architectural Design can greatly encourage establishing positive exchange of ideas among students, architects, faculty members, and universities. Moreover, the jury, through which both local and foreign architects are represented, helps establish linkages between academia and practice.

It is hoped that this event will be institutionalized to become a regularly recurring one, and that it will be expanded to include graduation design projects from both Jordan and the surrounding region.

The graduation design projects presented to this Award underline the considerable talent, ability, as well as the will to learn and grow evident amongst students of architecture in Jordan.

Even though we greatly appreciate the effort and passion expressed in the submitted projects, certain prevalent features in the projects do raise serious concerns regarding the general state of architectural education as it has evolved over the past few years in Jordan as well as in other countries of the region.

Our general consensus as a jury is that the students are relatively well-versed in the techniques of visual graphic presentation. However, much of the student design work coming out of our universities today is highly formalistic and focuses on graphic visual impacts and stimuli. In such work, clarity and discipline often are absent, and ambiguity prevails. The ordinary, silent, and neutral are feared; clutter often dominates in both design and presentation.

Such work portrays an unhealthy dependency on CAD technologies to produce images that are detached from architecture as a multi-disciplinary endeavor and as a material manifestation of the creative process. Under such circumstances, architectural representation techniques that denote basic design skills and delineate careful planning, spatial qualities, and materiality suffer greatly. Moreover, while a project may begin with very promising diagrams and sketches, these often are not developed fully or seriously, and, in many cases, function is sacrificed for the sake of form.

Although the process of architectural design requires a high level of critical and analytical rigor, the outcomes of architectural design studios today often consist of derivative and watered down versions of trendy vocabularies primarily disseminated through architectural magazines and the Internet. Students of architecture have become heavily dependent on superficial readings of such sources. Examining the rich and diverse examples of architecture and urbanism that history has to offer is absent. This deprives students from an in-depth intellectual and visual investigation of the making of

architecture, and prevents them from fully developing and polishing the considerable talent they possess.

Numerous student projects therefore are intended to impress at first sight and provide a degree of “shock value” through exhibitionist presentation techniques. These techniques often consist of collages of images that incorporate a multi-layering of forms, colors, and lines, and that do not adequately reflect the physicality and materiality of architecture. The final result often is an obsession with image and arbitrary form. Issues relating to physical, technological, social, and cultural contexts are to a great extent absent, resulting in what may be referred to as a state of disconnection between the architectural design process and architecture as built form.

### **Jury comments on winning projects**

#### **FIRST PRIZE**

This project expresses considerable restraint and sensitivity that establish a degree of connectedness to its context. It also shows an understanding of local preexisting vernacular typologies.

The project effectively addresses issues relating to conservation, materiality, and function. The final result is one that conveys an overall sense of "silence" and a sense of place.

The jury appreciates the project's clear design thinking processes as well as outcomes.

#### **SECOND PRIZE**

This project effectively addresses the challenges of program and function. It also resolves issues relating to siting and spatial components in a balanced manner. It develops an original conceptual diagram into a well thought-out design with considerably developed planning features.

The project expands the original function of the complex to include cultural and recreational activities that engage a wider range of users from the surrounding community.

#### **THIRD PRIZE**

This project shows a reasonably well-proportioned and refined articulation of forms, and presents clearly thought-out and developed planning features. Both plan and form are elegantly developed in a harmonious manner that takes into consideration the topography of the site.

The project's horizontality helps counteract the verticality of the adjacent large-scale development.

## HONORABLE MENTION

This project presents a creative interpretation and redefinition of a conventional building program. It allows a centralized, serious corporate function to fragment and expand throughout the city and moreover injects a recreational component into it.

Jury members:

Sahel Al Hiyari

Han Tümertekin

Farouk Yaghmour